



# **James Fenimore Cooper: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism (Bibliographies and Indexes in American Literature)**

*Alan Dyer*

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Famed for his novels of the American frontier (notably the *Leatherstocking Tales*) and of the sea, and also the author of a large body of social and political writings, James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) received mixed reviews from his contemporaries, who generally enjoyed the adventure tales but abhorred his social preachings. His posthumous reputation has fluctuated widely. Savagely trashed by, among others, Mark Twain in 1895 for his literary offenses, Cooper was resurrected in 1931 by critic Robert E. Spiller, who viewed him as a profound social critic. By the mid-twentieth century, Cooper was widely praised as a pioneer in the development of the American social and political novel, though his literary qualities remained subject to attack in some quarters. Cooper has continued to be studied from myriad points of views and critical stances both as a writer and as a critic.

The immense body of criticism has been carefully channeled in this annotated bibliography of 1,943 reviews, journal articles, newspaper articles and editorials, dissertations, and books. The material is organized in chapters by broad subject category--Bibliography, Biography, General Studies, Frontier and Indian Novels, Literature of the Sea, Social and Political Writings, and Miscellaneous Publications; where appropriate the chapters are subdivided according to individual Cooper publications, with further divisions relating to materials written before and after Cooper's death. This arrangement, together with a fascinating introductory survey of his critical reception and full author, and editor, and subject indexes, allows the researcher to trace the various topics and themes that have occupied a who's who of literary, intellectual, and social critics from 1820 to the present.

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