

Historical Introduction

Home as Found is a continuation of James Fenimore Cooper's *Homeward Bound* (1838), which he began to compose in July 1837. He worked steadily on *Homeward Bound* through the summer and fall, but by January 1838 he realized that the single novel would not be able to contain the plot as it had developed. On 21 January 1838, he wrote his British publisher, Richard Bentley, to say that he had determined "to continue the tale in another work to be put to press immediately."¹ True to his word, Cooper completed the first volume of the continuation in spring 1838; volume 2 was in the mail on 15 May and the third and final volume on 25 July.² *Homeward Bound* was first published in May in England and August in the United States; *Home as Found* was published on November 15 in the United States and on November 28 in England. From July 1837 to July 1838, Cooper wrote what is essentially a double novel, or a novel and its sequel. At the same time, he was completing and publishing *The American Democrat* (1838), proofing his fifth and final travel book (published as *Excursions in Italy* in England and *Gleanings in Europe: Italy* in the United States), publishing the slim historical volume *Chronicles of Cooperstown* (1838), and completing the research for an early draft of his two-volume *History of the Navy of the United States of America* (1839). One wonders what Cooper might have accomplished had he had a computer.

In *Homeward Bound*, the protagonists are in continual motion. After twelve years of living in Europe, the featured characters—Eve Effingham, her father, and her older cousin—embark on a return voyage to the United States from London. They are buffeted by storms, chased by a British cruiser, and shipwrecked on the coast of Africa. There is a budding but not-quite-fulfilled romance, and a daring and successful rescue. They finally approach Sandy Hook, New Jersey, with New York City visible in the distance, only to be halted by the British cruiser before being permitted to land on American soil. In

the second volume, *Home as Found*, Cooper began by placing the characters a few months later in New York City, where they engage in fashionable society and visit Wall Street, and then he brings them and others from *Homeward Bound* together again in Templeton, in central New York state, on the southern tip of Lake Otsego, where village life serves as a commentary on and counterpoint to the urban life of New York City. Although the journey from New York City to Templeton in chapter VIII is an important transition in this second novel, Cooper's focus is less on the characters' journey in space than on the nation's journey in time. From his point of view, the nation had changed tremendously in the preceding decade, and he wanted his readers to ponder the causes and consequences of that transformation.

The 1830s were a time of great social and cultural change in the United States. The election of Andrew Jackson as president in 1828 marked not just the emergence of a new democratic sensibility but the reconfiguration of economic, social, and cultural life in the new nation.³ Writing in the same year the steamship was first put into commercial use for transatlantic journeys, Cooper has his characters cross the Atlantic in a wind-driven commercial packet. But in chapter VIII of *Home as Found*, those characters take a steamboat up the Hudson River, and the narrator remarks on their perception that the "great velocity of the boat" made objects on the shore appear and disappear in quick succession. The world was rapidly changing, and the pace of change is a persistent theme of *Home as Found*, manifested in new forms of communication and travel, new ways of quickly developing and marketing property on Wall Street, new ambitions of quickly climbing the social ladder, and new desires for more information quickly gathered and disseminated.

Two of the main characters are returning to the United States after twelve years abroad.⁴ The heroine, Eve Effingham, spent her childhood and youth in Europe; she has relatively few preconceptions about the United States, and people and events appear new and often puzzling to her. She is a bit like Shakespeare's Miranda in *The Tempest*, curious about what at least some characters see as the "brave new world" of the young United States. Her father, Edward Effingham, contrasts the nation he left in his late thirties to the nation he sees before him at the age of fifty;⁵ people and things seem shockingly different to him. The third main character, John Effingham, is technically Eve's cousin, but he plays the role of her uncle, being the same age as her father. John lived in Europe during those twelve years, but he also made several

business trips back to the United States, and thus he is less surprised than Eve and Edward by what he sees in the world around them. He serves as a kind of jaded tour guide to his relatives. It is ironic at the end of the novel that John Effingham is humbled by his discovery that Paul Powis is his son. Rejected as a suitor by the woman who married his cousin, John had thoughtlessly and hurriedly married for the wrong reasons, then he abandoned his wife who, unbeknownst to him at the time, was pregnant. She died in childbirth, and the orphaned child was left to make his own way in the world. Careful readers will note how each character perceives the United States in the 1830s in light of her or his experiences.

Of course, Cooper wrote from his own personal experience about the shock of return. He, too, left the United States to live in Europe; and he, too, was surprised to learn upon his return seven years later that the United States had changed for what he thought was the worse. In these two fictions, however, Cooper creates leading characters who are less famous than he was but who are much wealthier; they move in lofty social circles because of their wealth. (In Europe, Cooper moved in some of those same social circles because of his *fame*.) Also, they remained in Europe for twelve years, not seven, and thus their shock is all the greater when they return. Home as they find it is not what they expected; one hundred years before Thomas Wolfe, Cooper has his characters discover that you can't go home again. And unlike Cooper, who knew that he was unlikely ever to return to Europe, they plan at the end of *Home as Found* to leave the United States and to return to Europe, perhaps forever. Those differences between the author and his characters seemed obvious to Cooper. He did not think he had written autobiographical novels. The reviewers disagreed.

It is useful to step back in time here. In the 1820s, Cooper's first great successes in novels like *The Spy* and *The Last of the Mohicans* had been read through the lens of Walter Scott's novels. In Cooper's early novels, readers discovered historical romances centered (like Scott's) on intrigue, suspense, and love. But from the beginning, Cooper understood himself as a kind of cultural critic, a gentleman who wrote in the service of his country and of broader enlightened ideas. He was surprised, baffled, and then angered by the reviews and sales of several works dating from the late 1820s and early 1830s, including the nonfictional *Notions of the Americans* (1828); the Swiftian political satire *The Monikins* (1835); and the trio of European

political novels, *The Bravo* (1831), *The Heidenmauer* (1832), and *The Headsman* (1833). In 1834, Cooper threatened to stop writing novels altogether, and indeed spent much of the middle years of the 1830s completing the five volumes of his travel narratives, writing newspaper journalism for the *Evening Post*, planning his history of the US Navy, and purchasing and renovating the family house in Cooperstown.

He made his threat to give up novel writing in a long pamphlet, *A Letter to his Countrymen* (1834). In it, he paired personal and political issues. As James Beard put it, Cooper tried “to show how the unfriendly reception of his recent books in the *New-York American*, the *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, and the *New-York Commercial Advertiser* was inspired directly or indirectly by foreign hostility to him as a representative of republican institutions and ideas” (*Le&J* 3:7). However, his larger purpose in the pamphlet was to argue that the United States was too much under the influence of English thought, that the foreign press had been meddling in US affairs, and that some American representatives abroad were not holding fast to American principles. But his decision to conflate his personal complaints about the reception of his books with his political critique of the United States would have ramifications for the rest of his career. Most immediately, it led a number of Whig editors to attack Cooper for his egotism in thinking so highly of himself. Eventually, it would shape the reception of *Home as Found* and provoke Cooper into filing lawsuits to protect his reputation.

Cooper’s decision to begin writing fiction again in the summer of 1837 was driven at least in part by practical realities. The panic of 1837 initiated a major recession in the United States that would last into the 1840s. Indeed, Cooper’s portrait of wild Wall Street speculation in chapter VII of *Home as Found* was intended to demonstrate one cause of the panic and recession. Cooper’s own investment income was greatly reduced because of the economic downturn, and he had no other obvious sources of income. He began to write fiction again because he needed to make money. However, even as the economy struggled in the 1830s and 1840s, the publishing industry was undergoing rapid change. Steam printing technology, cheaper paper, and the expansion of markets because of the speed and reach of new transportation networks allowed publishers to lower the prices on books. Cheap editions became widely available, and authors struggled to make profits. As always, American and British authors were readily pirated by foreign publishers, further siphoning off other potential

sources of revenue. Relatively few authors directly benefited from these changes to the profession, although Cooper tried to be one of them. From the beginning of his career, he had aggressively managed his business practices, and into the 1840s he would experiment with new ways of managing the business end of his writing profession. For example, in the 1830s, he began to negotiate contracts that would make his publisher pay for the stereotyping of the work but allow him to own the stereotype plates. As copyright reverted to him after (typically) two years, he could then make a profit on future editions.⁶ In the 1840s, in *The Autobiography of a Pocket Handkerchief* and *Jack Tier*, he followed Dickens's lead by using magazine publication as one source of income, followed by book publication.⁷ Most of all, Cooper simply wrote at a very brisk pace after 1837. Of his thirty-two novels, fourteen were published between 1820 and 1835. The other eighteen were published between 1838 and 1850.

As Cooper planned the Effinghams' story in summer and fall 1837, he soon recognized that one novel could not contain all of the action and that the second novel would be quite different from the first. The first kept the characters at sea; it was driven by plot. Will the characters make it home to the United States? The second puts the characters in society; it is driven by social tensions. Will the characters be or feel at home in the United States after they return? When Cooper wrote to his British publisher in January 1838 to explain that there would need to be a continuation or sequel, he tried to persuade him "that the continuation will be better liked in England than America, as I do not spare the follies and peculiarities of this country [i.e., the United States]" (*LeJ* 3:306). He understood that the sales of the second novel might be reduced in England because it was a continuation (or sequel), and that the second novel might be seen as provocative in the United States. He did not know just how provocative it would turn out to be.

The British edition has a different title from the US edition; it is titled *Eve Effingham; or, Home*. This may have been done to protect the British copyright, since the American edition was published first, and thus the novel would have been unprotected in England. (This was highly unusual. To protect copyright in the United States and in Great Britain, it was safest to print a novel first in the United States and then publish it first in Great Britain.) It is also possible that his British publisher wanted to emphasize that *Eve Effingham* was a stand-alone romance, not simply a sequel to *Homeward Bound*.

We do not know for sure why the novel has two different titles. The British edition also lacked the preface, which explicitly declared the second novel to be a sequel.

In that preface to the first American edition, Cooper argued that “It would be indeed a desperate undertaking, to think of making anything interesting in the way of a *Roman de Société* in this country” (iv). If the “novel of society” was a realistic fiction that grappled with the effects of social problems on specific groups of people, then Cooper was saying that in the United States the “frame” was too “homely” (iv), or too plain and uninteresting, to sustain critical investigation. The “field” in the United States, he wrote, is too “barren” for a writer of fiction (iv). He meant that social and cultural life in the United States took its cue from Europe; there was no native social or cultural center. The political capital of Washington DC bore little resemblance to European capitals like Paris or London. He seemed to mean that society in the United States was more homogeneous than in Europe, with no aristocracy on one end of the spectrum and little or no poverty on the other. Finally, he meant also that the American “character” was provincial and respectably average, lacking identifiable, prominent, or distinctive features. He complained that novels where the author wished to “illustrate a principle” were doomed to failure when featured in such a “homely” setting. Still, despite his sense that such an undertaking was doomed to failure, that was the frame he chose to work with in *Home as Found*! All of this contributed to the sense that the novel was fundamentally different from *Homeward Bound*. The first offered action and plot and thrilling changes of scenery; the second offered “principles” and ideas and a relatively “barren” field of action.⁸

In the preface to the American edition, Cooper says that the vital principle of *Home as Found* is the provincialism of the United States. The novel bears this out. He created characters who represent several kinds of provincialism, such as Howel with his unquestioning and naïve love of England and Wenham with his go-ahead boosterism of Young America. Other characters demonstrate the shallowness of an imitative culture, the duplicity of a new type of journalism, and the small-minded vanity of women. To careful readers, even the Effinghams come in for criticism. Eve and her father have never had to work for their money, so they find it difficult to understand or appreciate the successes of a man like Aristabulus Bragg; John Effingham turns out to have been a cad as a younger man, his sar-

castic cynicism more self-directed than he is willing to admit; and the Effinghams are curiously self-involved, with Edward and John having tried to marry the same woman, Eve in the end marrying her own cousin, and the entire family retreating to Europe at the end of the novel. If the American characters are provincial, the Effinghams can be seen as snobs, equating social status with human worth and seldom crediting the young country for its success.

Most of the early readers of *Home as Found* came to the novel with preconceptions about the author and his criticisms of the young nation. Many believed that Cooper should stick to tales of the sea and forest. Many believed that fiction should strive to entertain, not teach or lecture. Many believed that English travelers to the United States like Mrs. Trollope and Basil Hall had unfairly criticized and even belittled the young nation in print.⁹ They did not wish to be lectured at in a similar way by an American writer. Some had read, and many certainly knew about, the very early and very combative review of *Home as Found* published by James Watson Webb on 22 November 1838, one week after the book's publication. Webb had spent part of his teen years in Cooperstown before joining the US Army and rising to the rank of colonel. In 1827, he left the army and purchased a pro-Jackson newspaper, the *Morning Courier*. Two years later, he purchased a second newspaper, Mordecai Noah's *New York Courier*, forming the *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, a newspaper that by 1834 had become staunchly Whig. (Indeed, some sources credit Webb with supplying the name "Whig" for Henry Clay's National Republican Party, which coalesced in 1834.) It was one of the newspapers Cooper singled out for criticism in his 1834 pamphlet.

Webb's review of *Home as Found* ran to 3,500 words, not including a generous selection from the novel (extracts from chapters V and VI) to which he referred several times.¹⁰ As a journalist in the *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans) reported a few weeks later, the review was "as caustic a stricture as we . . . have [ever] read. The way it poked Mr. Cooper about, and made him feel unhappy, was singular."¹¹ Webb "poked" at Cooper and his double novel in three different ways. He claimed that Cooper denigrated the United States in the novels to increase sales in England, that Cooper was angry that his countrymen did not welcome him as enthusiastically on his return to the United States in 1833 as they had welcomed Washington Irving in 1832, and that Cooper tried to paint himself as a noble aristocrat (70–71). Webb spent relatively little time in his review discussing *Homeward*

Bound, which had been published in the United States in August 1838 to fairly positive reviews and steady sales. He reserved most of his venom for *Home as Found*, repeatedly insisting that Cooper “is” the haughty aristocrat Edward Effingham, that he paints nearly all Americans in the novel as fools and knaves, and that Cooper’s “insane vanity” is evident on every page (75). “As a novel,” Webb concluded, “‘Home as Found’ is absolutely beneath criticism. It is void of plot, and was written for the vile purposes we have named, and to enable Mr. Cooper to pamper his insatiable vanity” (76). He and his novel deserved only “silent contempt” (77). Like Cooper in his 1834 pamphlet, Webb conflated the personal and the critical. He attacked the novel (not unfairly at times), but he also attacked the author ad hominem. To Webb, Cooper’s novel was not fiction; it was an example of elitist, autobiographical, anti-American snobbery. Its author deserved to be punished.

Webb’s review had three effects relevant to this historical introduction. First, Cooper responded on the same day with a letter to the *New York Evening Post*. He refuted several specific claims Webb made, including the notion that Cooper (like the Effinghams) called his house in Cooperstown “Temple Hall” and the idea that he tailored the plot to increase sales in England. Most significantly, he promised legal action over Webb’s libels. This initiated a back-and-forth between Cooper and Webb. Webb returned fire by attacking Cooper again in May 1839, insisting that any attempt to silence him and other critics was an attack on the free press. Of course, Cooper’s portrait of Steadfast Dodge did not help him throughout this controversy; his scorn for newspaper editors no doubt rankled Webb and other editors.

Second, Cooper did pursue legal action against Webb, securing two indictments for libel in spring 1839, one for Webb’s initial review and the other for the attack in May 1839. (Cooper repeatedly tried and failed to secure a third indictment for libel against Webb for an article published in September 1839.) One of those indictments was brought to an end in 1841 when Webb agreed to retract the article published in May 1839. The other indictment (based on the 22 November 1838 review of *Home as Found*) resulted in three trials, in the first two of which the jury could not agree on a verdict and in the third Webb was found not guilty. That verdict was announced on 23 November 1843, almost exactly five years after Webb had published his offending review.

This lawsuit was merely one in a series of legal actions that Cooper initiated beginning in 1837, many of which were related in some way to *Home as Found*. A second set of actions grew out of the Three Mile Point controversy that Cooper fictionalizes in chapters XIV–XVI of the novel. In July 1837, just as he began writing *Homeward Bound*, Cooper issued a warning to local citizens to stop trespassing on the family land known as Three Mile Point. Like in *Home as Found*, the villagers held a meeting and drew up resolutions against the owner of the property. A local newspaper editor in a neighboring county, Elias Pellet, wrote about the controversy in August 1837, mocking Cooper in the process. Cooper defended himself in another local paper and even published the villagers' resolutions to demonstrate their silliness. Still another local newspaper editor, Andrew Barber, reprinted Pellet's article. Cooper sued them both for libel in September 1837. However, he did not push the suits until November 1838, when Webb's review provoked him into action. Cooper won a judgment of \$400 against Barber in 1839. Pellet died before the other case could go to trial. Another set of legal actions grew out of Cooper's success against Barber, which no doubt emboldened him and, at the same time, rankled Whig newspaper editors. In 1839–41 Cooper brought suit for libel against four other newspaper editors (William Leete Stone, Park Benjamin, Thurlow Weed, and Horace Greeley) who had offended him in a variety of ways: reprinting articles against which judgment for libel had been made, attacking his *History of the United States Navy*, repeatedly needling him about his similarity to Edward Effingham (and more broadly about his "aristocratic" pretensions).¹² Some of those cases dragged on until 1845. Taken together, these cases are a tangled web involving politics (local and national), personality, the press, changing notions of authorship, and Cooper's pride.¹³

Third, Webb's early review of *Home as Found*, along with the resulting lawsuits over the next several years, inescapably shaped the reception of the novel. Cooper's legal actions kept him in court, constantly reminding readers of Webb's review and other criticisms, thus giving ammunition to Webb's claim that the aristocratic Effingham men were stand-ins for Cooper himself. Oscar Wilde's dictum "There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about" was not true in the 1830s. To many readers, Cooper *was* the Effinghams.¹⁴ This was the third effect of Webb's review: it colored the reception of the novel almost before anyone had a chance to read it. Other reviewers knew about Webb's

review and about the lawsuits. Sales were affected. The novel did not sell as briskly as *Homeward Bound*, which had almost immediately gone into a second printing in September 1838, and it certainly did not sell as well as *The Pathfinder* would in 1840, which sold out its initial run and was reprinted twice in the 1840s. *Home as Found* was not reprinted or reissued in Cooper's lifetime, except as part of the complete set of his novels that the publishing firm of Stringer & Townsend began to issue in 1849 (using the stereotype plates of *Home as Found* that were made by Lea & Blanchard in November 1838).¹⁵ What became known as the "Effingham Libels" framed all of the substantial reviews of the novel in the literary magazines. Although the reviewers in the literary magazines were slightly less vituperative than the newspaper editors, their critiques did not help the novel.

The longest and most substantial magazine review of *Home as Found* appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in March 1839. The reviewer was well aware of Webb's review and Cooper's response to it:

Soon after this novel made its appearance, both the author and his book were very severely handled by the editor of a New York paper—"The Morning Courier and Enquirer." The attack upon Mr. Cooper's private character we must consider unjustifiable, and unworthy of a respectable journal. And the strictures upon the book itself, though by no means entirely devoid of legitimate force and truth, were, at least, not remarkable for their fairness. Certainly, Mr. Cooper should not have noticed this critique.¹⁶

This reviewer was not the last person to suggest that Cooper should simply have ignored his critics. But the reviewer goes on to critique the novel as a work of art. He thought the writing was poor at times and that the plot was "not only meagre, but also as badly conceived as that of any tale with which we have lately met, put forth by the most infantile magazine or newspaper contributor that the public forbearance has emboldened" (170). He maintained that the purpose of fiction was entertainment, and thus Cooper's opinions got in the way of the story: "Instead of endeavoring to throw the fascination of romance around his opinions, he has attempted to make the latter supply the interest which his story lacks" (169). He defended the right of an author to describe "scenes of his own life" in a novel, but he also considered "it imprudent [of Cooper] to have given such occasion for sarcastic criticism" by hewing so closely to places and events that are so clearly drawn from his life (172-73). There was

too much “I”—too much of the author—in the novel. The reviewer emphasized Cooper’s “principle” that the United States in 1838 was too provincial, and he largely agreed with it, while nonetheless suggesting that Cooper need not have written about it (174). *Home as Found*, the reviewer concluded, “is immeasurably inferior to any of the same author’s former novels which we have read” (170). The novel was “written in a spirit soured by disappointment and rebuke . . . into spite and malignancy” (173); Cooper’s motto on the title page (“Thou art perfect,” from *Henry IV, Part 1*) was simply a bit of smug self-complacency if applied to the novel, because it was terribly flawed by “inconsistencies and absurdities” (175).

That was the best contemporaneous review of the novel!

The reviewer in the *New York Review* (January 1839) took on both *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found*. He indicated his awareness of Webb’s review and Cooper’s hypersensitive personality with his observation that in drawing the character of Steadfast Dodge, Cooper was responding to the newspapers: “We are not aware that the newspaper press, upon which, in the person of Steadfast Dodge, its caricatured representative, [Cooper] has endeavored to throw so much obloquy, was ever made the subject of his ridicule, until it presumed to suggest, that it was possible even for him to nod.”¹⁷ The reviewer offered a lengthy defense of newspapers (though not, he says, those “penny sheets professedly devoted to slanders”; 212). Turning to *Home as Found*, he asserted that the novel is a “malicious work. It is evidently the bursting out of superabundant bile, and that after the manner of a general deluge. . . . We should respect a manly and fearless exposure of the vices and follies of our social system—for vices and follies it unquestionably has;—but there is a wide difference between faithful rebuke, proceeding from the spirit of true patriotism, and scornful sneers arising from morbid feeling, disaffection, disappointment, and assumed superiority” (214). Like many reviewers of Cooper’s works in these years, he maintained that Americans were willing to be criticized—just not by Cooper. Cooper, he said, has “a strong determination to tarnish with the breath of calumny, every mirror which does not reflect his own admiration, as comely as it appears to himself” (212). In recent years, his “self love and vanity have corroded his heart and bedimmed his understanding” (221).

Other, shorter reviews appeared in the months after the novel’s publication. For example, a reviewer in the *New-York Mirror* asserted that

Mr. Cooper has been very generally and, we think, very justly rebuked for the publication of [*Home as Found*]. It is, in truth, an imposition upon the publick, put forth, as it is, in the form of a novel . . . it has about as much claim to be ranked under that head as a fourth of July oration, or a book of travels. . . . There is neither plot nor interest in the narrative, and neither fidelity nor effectiveness in the characters.¹⁸

The reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine and American Monthly Review* called the novel Cooper's most "inane production." "Considered as a novel, it is flat, stale, and miserably dull; as a literary composition, it is puerile and common place; as a national disquisition, it is marked with undeniable strains of prejudice and ill-temper. It has been severely, and generally, most justly handled by every portion of the American press, for the anti-national sentiments and arrogant tone observable in every page." The reviewer insinuated that Cooper was insane: "From some physical defect, or some deeply seated disease which has produced mental obscuration of the most dense description, Mr. Cooper has, within these few years, found fault with all creation, excepting alone his own immaculate self." The reviewer spent most of the review attacking Cooper's European travel narratives as "TEN VOLUMES of twaddle and ill-tempered gossip."¹⁹ He did not engage the plot or style or themes of *Home as Found*. The reviewer in the *Journal of Belles Lettres* was no kinder: Cooper's "late works have betrayed a mind ill at ease, a morbid sensibility to censure, and a weakness of intellect, that is painful to his countrymen. . . . He chafes under newspaper critiques at home in a manner so weak, and yet so sensitively, as to make us fear for his mind." Pretending at least to glance at the novel, the reviewer asserts that "We have looked in vain for a single redeeming feature in the whole production. . . . [finding instead] a succession of low caricatures, improbable events, and a silly development, little calculated to excite sympathy for the author, or interest in the characters."²⁰

These contemporary reviews circle around the same set of issues: *Home as Found* is stronger on opinions than on plot, the novel is too autobiographical, the novel is antidemocratic, the novel is unlike Cooper's best work, Cooper's response to Webb's review and other provocations in the press was too ill-tempered. Even the fairest reviewer, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, was unable to accept Cooper's criticisms of the United States or consider the idea that Cooper was

not equating himself with the Effinghams. Added to the reviews in newspapers, they ensured that the novel would sell relatively few copies.

The British reviews of *Eve Effingham; or, Home* were just as negative but less personal. The unsigned reviewer in the *Literary Gazette* prefaced two columns of excerpts from the novel with the observation that although Cooper was more at home on the sea or in the forest, his sketches of American manners might interest some readers.²¹ A week later, the reviewer in *The Atheneum* provided a few excerpts, all of them focused on the women of the novel, and concluded that the “tediousness of the incidents, the careful premeditated slowness of the arguments, [and] the solidity of the national vanity . . . compel us to express our opinion, that this is one of Mr. Cooper’s poorest publications.” The reviewer likens Cooper to a “he-Scheherazade” who had repeated his stories endlessly but over time has become less imaginative and less entertaining.²²

The longest review in England appeared in the *Dublin Review* in May 1839. The reviewer began by accurately noting that *Homeward Bound* “was most cordially hailed,” while *Home as Found* “has raised a loud and angry outcry against [Cooper].”²³ The reviewer noted that Cooper must have hit home with some of his observations, for his countrymen “denounce him with a vehemence and a fury which go far to prove that he must have spoken much truth” (491). Ironically, he said, Cooper spared the United States its worst sins: its “conduct toward the people of colour—the red man and the black” (491). Still, the reviewer went on to say, Cooper’s satire is overly virulent; passing by America’s worst sins, he focuses “on foibles and faults of a minor degree” (492). He noted that British commentators seem put out by Cooper’s criticisms of the United States because he was intruding “upon their especial province” of unsparingly criticizing the new nation (492). He turned to a summary of *Homeward Bound*, including short excerpts to praise Cooper’s “invention and ingenuity” (502). Before he turned to *Home as Found*, the reviewer explained that Cooper had mistaken “the bent of his own genius” in turning away from “the grave, calm, and dignified [voice of the] moralist and philosopher,” as in *The Bravo* (1831), to adopt the voice of “the keen-witted, brilliant satirist, whose sharp-pointed weapon dazzles while it wounds” (509). This second novel, he said, was reminiscent “of that most puerile and unhappy of all [of Cooper’s] productions, *The Monikins*” (509). To be clear, he insisted, the problem was not the accuracy of Cooper’s portrait of the United States. The problem

was twofold: Cooper had been personally offended by the nation and was intent on satisfying his pique, and his portrait was “rudely and inartistically limned” (510). In his summary of the novel, he emphasizes the role of class, arguing (as did the American reviewers) that the Effinghams’ anxieties of social leveling and social pretensions were really Cooper’s. We “do not relish . . . the constant and nervous anxiety Mr. Cooper displays, to impress upon the minds of all whom it may concern, that he considers himself no whit inferior, in position, to any person in any country” (522). He returned to the fact that Cooper, had he wished to reform his countrymen, could have chosen a different vehicle and to the glaring absence of the issue of race in a novel that wished to critique the United States (528).

An exhaustive review of *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found* appeared two years after the novel was published in *The New World: A Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News*. By Park Benjamin, one of the editors then under indictment for libeling Cooper, “Fenimore Cooper’s Libels on America and Americans” covered nineteen newspaper columns over two successive weekly issues. In the first part, Benjamin used the double novel to demonstrate “by extracts from the publications themselves, that J. FENNIMORE [*sic*] COOPER and Mr. EDWARD EFFINGHAM are designed by the author to be one and the same individual.”²⁴ In the second part, Benjamin broadens his case to argue that Cooper “has libeled America, Americans and every thing American, in a manner which should call forth the contempt and scorn of every man, woman and child in the country possessed of the smallest portion of patriotic feeling.”²⁵ In the face of such relentlessly negative commentary, the more nuanced and thoughtful reviews in the *Dublin Review* and the *Southern Literary Messenger* could hardly be heard.

Even before the early reviews were in and even as he initiated several lawsuits, Cooper moved on other work. He had to. Soon after Webb’s review appeared on 22 November 1838, he and his family moved to Philadelphia for the winter. There, he completed and read proofs for his *History of the Navy of the United States of America* (1839). It, too, would create controversy and generate lawsuits. By February he was thinking about writing a novel “in which *ships* should be the only actors” (*L&J* 3:369; it eventually became *The Two Admirals* [1842]). By June he was writing *The Pathfinder* (1840), a novel that would bring him great critical and commercial success. But there would be no time to slow down, ever again.

At this distance, we can see more clearly the significance of *Home as Found*. Its troubled reception reminds us that Cooper was often misunderstood. From the beginning of his career, he was invariably read as a mere romancer instead of as a serious political and social thinker. Ahead of contemporaries like Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Victor Hugo, Cooper wished to use fiction to highlight social problems and articulate a political and historical vision. But because he wrote to make a living, he always had to try to shape his political and social ideas into a sellable commodity that could appeal to male and female readers. Try as he might to succeed in genres like biography, history, and political philosophy, he always had to return to a certain kind of sellable fiction. It was where the money was.

Home as Found demonstrates Cooper's inventiveness. When he floated an idea like writing a novel in which ships would be the only actors, his publisher replied that he was "at a loss to know how you can treat it." Few readers would be interested in such a story, he said. Constrained to making money as a novelist, Cooper was repeatedly urged by publishers and readers to be a certain kind of novelist. Experimentation was not encouraged. "I wish I could persuade you to undertake a naval story on your own inland Seas" (*L&J* 3:370, note 3), his publisher went on in response to Cooper's idea to write a novel with ships as the only actors. Presto, *The Pathfinder*. But in adopting an autobiographical frame for *Home as Found*, even more than in, say, *The Pioneers* (1823), Cooper anticipated the direction of the mainstream novel. In Hawthorne's "The Custom House" (1850), Melville's *Typee* (1846), Dana's *Two Years before the Mast* (1840), and Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850), readers would soon grow accustomed to reading narratives grounded in the author's autobiographical experiences that blurred the line between fiction and memoir.

In continuing to interconnect his novels, Cooper anticipated the work of Balzac in the 1830s, Trollope in the 1850s, and dozens of later writers like Zola, Faulkner, and Proust. Beginning with *The Pioneers*, he interconnected five novels through the Leather-Stocking and three novels (*The Pioneers*, *Homeward Bound*, and *Home as Found*) through the Effinghams. In the 1840s, he would connect the Littlepage family through three interconnected novels. In a culture dominated by TV and film sequels, prequels, remakes, and reboots, this seems unremarkable to us. It was remarkable in the 1820s and 1830s.

After his death in 1851, Cooper's novels began to seem old-fashioned to critics grappling with innovative work by Melville, Rebecca Harding Davis, Henry James, and others. They remained very popular in numerous inexpensive collected editions, but they increasingly slipped into the category of adventure novels for boys. His *Leather-Stocking Tales* were notoriously mocked by Mark Twain in 1895. Relatively quickly, Cooper's novels came to seem less literary than Hawthorne's, less ambitious than Melville's, and less modern than James's. Cooper himself seemed somehow to be an aristocratic relic of an earlier age, almost Federalist (like his father!) in his politics. It was a strange turn of events for a supporter of Andrew Jackson and a lifelong Democrat.²⁶ In the twentieth century, some of Cooper's novels continued to be popularly successful. His plots served as the basis for a number of films, proved adaptable to comic books and television, and influenced a wide range of writers, from Owen Wister to Patrick O'Brian. However, literary critics often kept their distance. The New Criticism did his work no favors, biographical criticism was hindered until recently by the lack of source materials and by the Whig myth, and poststructuralist theorists gravitated to the work of Melville and Poe. Cooper seemed to some to be an apologist for the oppression of Native Americans, not a nuanced commentator on it.

Since the late nineteenth century, *Home as Found* seems to have been republished only once as a standalone print novel, in an inexpensive edition with an introduction by Lewis Leary.²⁷ That edition is still found in used bookstores. Copies are available online for \$3. The novel has deserved a better fate, especially in a culture that has been more willing since the 1960s to critique itself, its history, and its place in the world. We can see more clearly than his contemporaries that Cooper loved his country, despite his criticisms of its political, social, and cultural life. We can see more clearly that he was committed to large-scale democracy, even as he remained suspicious about how that kind of democracy would affect public policy, religion, the press, and other institutions. *Home as Found* asks readers to engage critically with the problem of democratic change. It asks readers to be critical not just of the United States and not just of Cooper's specific objects of satire but of the narrator and his affinity for snobbish elites who pretend to be above the fray. As Cooper knew from personal experience, democracy is *in* the fray. It is always in the process of becoming, through arguments and disagreements and strife. The Effinghams

retreat to Europe. Cooper remained, to continue to take part in that process. He asked the reader to do the same, offering not fixed formulas or pat answers but provocations. That's exactly how democracy is found.

NOTES

1. James Franklin Beard, ed., *The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper*, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960–68), 3:305. Cited parenthetically hereafter as *L&J*.

2. Cooper's letters demonstrate that he imagined the novel in three volumes as was expected by Bentley, his British publisher. He even agreed on payments in three installments, one per volume. Meanwhile his American publisher packaged the novel in two volumes, dividing the story as evenly as possible. Perhaps because there were an uneven number of chapters, however, the first volume proved to be slightly shorter than the second.

3. For example, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); David S. Reynolds, *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson* (New York: Harper, 2008); Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1818–1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005).

4. Several references in *Home as Found* suggest that the action of the novel takes place in the mid-1830s. For example, the great fire in New York described in chapter VII actually began on 16 December 1835. The “French quarrel” referenced in chapter VI alludes to Jackson's State of the Union addresses in December 1834 and December 1835. Eve and her father seem to have left the United States when James Monroe was president and returned near the end of Jackson's second term. Cooper himself spent the years 1826 through 1833 in Europe.

5. We learn in chapter V that John Effingham is “fifty.”

6. On 25 August 1838, Cooper rejected Carey & Lea's offer to stereotype the second (revised) edition of *Homeward Bound* because the publisher wanted Cooper to pay for the stereotyping. See *L&J* 3:335, note 1. Cooper compromised in a letter dated 1 September, agreeing to reduce his compensation for the new contract by \$200 (probably to contribute to the cost of stereotyping). In that second letter, he empowered Carey & Lea to stereotype *Home as Found*; J. Fagan of Philadelphia certainly stereotyped *Home as Found* and probably stereotyped *Homeward Bound*. In volume 2 of his biography of Cooper, Wayne Franklin explains that “The Careys paid Cooper \$1800 for the right to stereotype the new book [*Home as Found*] at

their own expense and issue the first four thousand copies; they also agreed to pay him for additional copies over the two-year life of the agreement at the same rate and method as *Homeward Bound* (i.e., \$500 per one thousand copies), after which the plates would be Cooper's" (Wayne Franklin, *James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017], 630, note 20).

7. For a nuanced discussion of Cooper's innovative responses to the changing market in the 1830s and 1840s, see Franklin, *James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years*, *passim*.

8. One might note here that the "field" was also limited by the fact that the narrator aligned himself with the Effinghams, which, as noted below, led many readers to identify the narrator (and thus Cooper) with Edward Effingham in particular. The "barren" social field was in part caused by that narrative choice, since the Effinghams are only willing to operate in their own social circle. This point was emphasized in many ways, such as when Mr. Jarvis (in chapter IV) informed his wife that he did not expect to be invited to entertainments at the Effinghams. They "think themselves too good to visit us," his wife complains. They are better than us, her husband replies. From the Effinghams' perspective, entire sections of American cultural and social life were simply beneath notice. For example, they watch the local Fourth of July custom referred to as "the fun of fire" (chapter XXI) from a distance, with condescending snobbery. It was "charming," Eve comments: "There is something refreshing, as the magazine writers term it, to find one of these miniature towns of ours condescending to be gay and happy in a village fashion." This was exactly the kind of comment that angered some of Cooper's contemporaries; they assumed it came from Cooper, not a character. Indeed, the Effinghams' response to the "fun of fire" is almost as dispassionate as their response to the great fire in New York City in chapter VII. Before the great fire is extinguished, John Effingham had already turned it into a moral lesson that others will learn soon enough; he already knew it. One might contrast the point of view in *Home as Found* with the point of view in some of Cooper's novels in the 1840s. In *Satanstoe* (1845), for example, Corny Littlepage observed and described in great detail the working-class and African American festival Pinkster.

9. Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the years 1827 and 1828* (1829); Mrs. Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832).

10. James Watson Webb, review of *Home as Found*, *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, 22 November 1838. Rpt. in Ethel Outland, *The "Effingham Libels" on Cooper: A Documentary History of the Libel Suits of James Fenimore Cooper Centering Around the Three Mile Point Controversy and the Novel HOME AS FOUND 1837-1845* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1929), 69-77. Further references are cited parenthetically.

11. "Cooper, the Novelist and Col. Webb," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), 13 December 1838, n.p.

12. Benjamin published what purported to be a review of *Home as Found* on 1 December 1838 in the *New-Yorker* (a weekly newspaper), reiterating many of Webb's claims, referring to Cooper as a "superlative dolt," and implying that he was insane. Cooper did not file a lawsuit in response to that review. In 1839, Benjamin became editor of the *New World* (a weekly newspaper), where he continued to attack Cooper.

13. See Outland, *The "Effingham" Libels on Cooper*; Dorothy Waples, *The Whig Myth of James Fenimore Cooper* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1938); and chapter 8, "Libels upon Libels," in Franklin, *James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years*.

14. As Franklin points out, "In *Home as Found*, Cooper carried his autobiographical impulse to its logical—or rather illogical—conclusion. It is a curious book in its bearing on the author. Not only does it revisit, as he and his family had been doing, the literary territory of his (and its) past. It moreover so interlaces that territory with its fictional proxy from *The Pioneers* that it is at times hard to untangle the two" (2:199). Cooper made it easy for his detractors to see him as Edward Effingham.

15. Stringer and Townsend published *Home as Found* in their "New and Uniform Edition" of his "Standard Novels" in 1852, after Cooper's death, but as Wayne Franklin notes "the edition was neither new nor uniform" (*James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years*, 476). Stringer and Townsend owned the stereotype plates for *Home as Found* and sight collation revealed that the 1852 edition was printed from them.

16. "'Home as Found': By the Author of 'Homeward Bound,'" *Southern Literary Messenger* 5.3 (March 1839): 175. Further references are noted parenthetically.

17. "Art[icle] 7.—*Homeward Bound* . . . [and] *Home as Found*," *New York Review* 4.7 (January 1839): 211. Further references are noted parenthetically.

18. "Literary Notices: *Home as Found*," *New-York Mirror: A Weekly Gazette of Literature and the Fine Arts* 16.24 (8 December 1838): 192.

19. "Review of New Books. The New American Novels," *Gentleman's Magazine and American Monthly Review* 4.1 (January 1839): 66.

20. *Journal of Belles Lettres* no. 22 (27 November 1838): n.p.

21. "'Eve Effingham; or, Home' by James Fenimore Cooper," *Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Letters*, no. 1142 (8 December 1838): 774–75.

22. "'Eve Effingham; or, Home' by James Fenimore Cooper," *Atheneum*, no. 581 (15 December 1838): 894.

23. "Art. X. 'Homeward Bound.' A Tale of the Sea . . . [and] *Eve Effingham, or Home*," *Dublin Review* 6.12 (May 1839): 491. Further references are noted parenthetically.

24. [Park Benjamin,] "Fenimore Cooper's Libels on America and Americans," *New World; a Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News* 1.13 (29 August 1840): 194.

25. [Park Benjamin,] “Fenimore Cooper’s Libels on America and Americans [Concluded],” *New World; a Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News* 1.14 (5 September 1840): 210.

26. Jerome McGann has argued that it is a “scandal” of Cooper studies that his work has been dismissed by so many readers as mere romance. “Cooper’s pervading greatness as an artist,” McGann writes, “is a function of how he engages with the violence that suffuses ‘the American Dream.’” See Jerome McGann, “Fenimore Cooper’s Anti-Aesthetic and the Representation of Conflicted History,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 73 (2012): 123–55; quotations from 125 and 130.

27. James Fenimore Cooper, *Home as Found*, intro. Lewis Leary (New York: Capricorn, 1961). The novel was also republished in the many collected editions of Cooper’s works, such as those by Hurd & Houghton (1871–72), Houghton, Mifflin (1876–1884), Appleton (1892), and Putnam’s (1896–97).