

Contents

PART ONE

BACKGROUND: THE WAY TO THE PRAIRIE

I. <i>Works and Days</i>	13
1. Preparations for Europe: Conception	13
2. Expatriate: Writing and Publication	20
3. <i>The Prairie</i> Revisited	27
II. <i>Literary Nationalist and Pioneer</i>	30
III. <i>The Cultural Context</i>	43
1. The Impact of the New West	43
2. The Fate of the Indian	53

PART TWO

THE ARTIST AT WORK: THE MAKING OF THE PRAIRIE

IV. <i>The Question of Sources</i>	65
1. Filling Scenes with Imaginary Figures	65
2. The Book on Cooper's Desk	68
3. Indians According to the Book	78
4. A Concert of Sources	87
5. 'A Remarkably Conscientious Writer'	90
V. <i>Visions and Revisions</i>	95
1. Stages of <i>The Prairie</i> 1826-1851	95
2. From Draft to First Edition	101
3. Character and Theme	108
4. Style and Coherence	120
5. The 1832 Edition	127
6. The 1851 Edition	131

PART THREE

INTERPRETATION: THE MEANING OF THE PRAIRIE

VI. <i>Reception and Criticism</i>	137
VII. <i>A Reading of The Prairie</i>	145
1. The Significance of the Setting	145
2. The Significance of the Characters	148
3. Denouement: Consolidation and Orderly Progress	165
Notes	173
Bibliography	195
Index	203