

THE AMERICAN DEMOCRAT
by James F. Cooper

I - Generally the book is *opinion* from its economic point of view, it is federalist in that it emphasizes principles of law, protection of minority, and natural rights of man.

A. Stressed that by overthrowing a tyrannical government doesn't create popular liberty.

1. Was a matter of order along with Jay and Madison
2. Was a Jacksonian against Whigg party although he was above partisan politics but he was also a realist.

B. Attempted to answer the question "What is a Democracy?"

1. Control rests in dispersed groups of people.
2. All power is a trust of people to representative.
3. Is a trust because it comes from people and is remitted and checked.
4. First congress as they dictate to other branches. The check of this is they can't discuss anything that they can't act on.

C. Cooper's thoughts on man-

1. Can be trusted.
2. Doesn't love common man.
3. Didn't realize how mean people could be.

D. Importance as to type of government -

1. Any government can be good if it isn't corrupt.
2. Greater opportunity of individual in democracy.
3. Aristocracy easy to corrupt.
4. Democracy can corrupt itself easily.

E. Liberty -- What it is.

1. Freedom within the law.
2. Free not by majority but by protection of minority rights.
3. Possibility of demagogue -
 - (a) In large democracy, more time to think before action is taken.
 - (b) In small democracy, too quick to act.
 - (c) Where majority rules with no restraint.

F. What is Equality -

1. Cooper doesn't believe in aristocracy but democracy which recognizes talent.
2. Believes in political equality where a government protects individual liberties.
3. Thinks that danger is mediocracy but first standards will be above mediocracy.
4. Notoriety, liberty that is in America will permit great differences in status economically and socially according to their skills. He believes in equality so long as society is constituted so it can recognize greatness. Realizes progress depends on inequality but on merit.

As felt you can only remake the future when you shoulder the past. You are responsible for facts done before you.

5. Cooper fighting for three things.
 - (1) Class consciousness on a flexible principle of moral words based on education.
 - (2) Individual majority and property protection.
 - (3) A controlled social life.
 - (4) He recognizes people for what they are and that institutions are organized to take care of them.
 - (5) Dangers of democracy -
 - (1) Hypocrisy
 - (2) Mediocracy
 - (3) Demagogues
 - (4) Public opinion replacing law.
6. He recognizes moral law and feels that moral right and good leaders will be in command if you speak out for what you think is right. He feels that it is hard for Americans to end on a note of pessimism.

G. What kind of America does Cooper reflect in his book?

1. Description of ^{frontier} friendlier group.
2. Reflects a fluid society, ability to go up and down.
3. Rise of commercial interest.
4. He is trying to provide a philosophical observation of political upset.
5. It shows we have a few people on a large amount of earth.
6. He is concerned in telling you how things ought to be.

H. Cooper's main values -

1. Practical approach
2. Reality is one's main obligation to society.
3. Peace in a material aristocracy where every man can express his own personality.
4. Despite his right for natural man he loved cultural life.
5. He had a conservative temperament and liberal thought.
6. He believed in aristocracy of talents.

I. Cooper's fear of a democratic society -

1. Everything that can produce good can also produce bad.
2. An institution must have power to benefit society but power has corruption so you must have a check system.
3. Disliked old European system but feared new revolutionary powers of democracy of can go too far in the other direction.
4. The gentleman's *function* is to make sure there is no equaling downward and defends against mediocracy.

J. Major forces that are shaping the national character.

1. Individualism - the end of liberty, the happiness of man, therefore his duty to stand up for his rights. Each man is his best judge of his own interest also those of his neighbors.
2. Political tendencies, loyalty to the democratic form of government.
3. Your country's size and resources.

K. Ideas of representation -

1. Why representatives are honest -
 - (a) Can't go against his conscience.
 - (b) Will not be forced to injure national welfare.
 - (c) High type people must be elected if our political system has a formative roll in shaping national character.
 - (d) A correlation between framework of government and the emotion commitment of the country in shaping national character made it possible to have men like Lincoln and Calhoun.
 - (e) The first part of 19th Century Romanticism helped shape our character.
2. Heritage of ideas shows why religious beginnings were hampered rather than helped.
 - (a) Against sectarianism, they should agree that religion is a simple matter.
 - (b) Seize eternal diety but throws it in the laps of men.
 - (c) Can't understand fanatical attitude.
 - (d) Doesn't see how puritan notions helped.

L. Cooper's General Thoughts -

1. Feels everything will be alright because of political freedom that we know.
2. Distribution of wealth is such that we will protect it and our neighbors interests.
3. Interest in privileges not getting out of hand and they should be based on a merit system.
4. Feels the underlying basic thing is moral character.
5. Admires the reliance yet wants institutions to come into being to protect the individual. He is simpathetic with rent owner problems and feels national character rooted in rents and ownership of property. Man's part of society is to uphold the established traditions and have faith in them.

6. Rise of commercialism

7. Admires self reliance

8. wants instrument to come into being to protect the individual

9. Found national character rooted in land & ownership of it