

Precaution, generally ignored by both literary critics and the reading public, was Cooper's first novel. Supposedly, while paging through a new novel just received from England, Cooper threw it aside and claimed, "I can write a better one." His wife Susan replied, "Well, why don't you?" Taking her up on a dare, Cooper launched an amazing literary career. The question, *which* novel disgusted Cooper has long since been established: none other than Jane Austen's final novel before her death, ***Persuasion***. This paper is geared to show that ***Precaution*** is not a cheap "imitation" of ***Persuasion*** but a *reaction*, hence the heading, "From ***Persuasion*** to ***Precaution***: The Difference." The Cooper family will be viewed in the context of the year of publication, 1820. The methods Cooper used to achieve maximum sales will also be reviewed. The collision of major motifs in both ***Precaution*** and ***Persuasion*** will be spotlighted to reveal Cooper's own mindset. Finally, the legacy of ***Precaution*** as it pertains to Cooper's future writings will be examined. Particularly, the theological framework for honesty, love of humanity and self-sacrifice — all of which lay the foundation of the story of John Maynard — are already awaiting the reader in ***Precaution***.