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WINSLOW HOMER'S SEASCAPES:
TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECTS, POPULAR RESORTS,
CRITICAL REACTIONS

Winslow Homer, acknowledged as a quintessential Yankee and one of America's foremost nineteenth-century artists, seems as formidable, stern, and ambiguous as the rocky shores that fascinated him. Homer's reception by critics highlights the impossibility of separating artistic achievement from the tastes and fashions of the society in which the artist worked. The "mystifyingly blank" faces that critics abhorred in Homer's early farm figures became the distinctively attractive features of his later seascapes.

Winslow Homer, who lived from 1836 to 1910, has long been acknowledged as a quintessential Yankee and one of the foremost American artists of the nineteenth century. Born in Boston and raised in Cambridge, at nineteen he became an apprentice in the printmaking firm of John H. Bufford.¹ He began his professional independence at twenty-one and went on to document the Civil War, illustrate the American scene for magazines such as *Harper's Weekly*, paint rural life, catch the colors of the tropics in watercolors, and in oils, contemplate the harsh shore near Prout's Neck, Maine. Though Homer's work was well received by art critics throughout his prolific career, this acclaim did not translate into financial success and other rewards until late in his life. While not quite the crusty hermit-bachelor of legend, he joined no groups of artists and taught no students. In location and temperament, he appeared as formidable and stern as the rocky shores that fascinated him. Indeed it seems



Winslow Homer.
William Howe Downes,
THE LIFE AND WORKS
OF WINSLOW HOMER
(1911)

impossible to extricate Homer's cultural reputation from the scenery he depicted and from myths of American place and character.

The context for his art includes the nineteenth-century search for an uniquely American culture. Many American writers and artists felt their traditions were thin but their possibilities immense; however, Europeans were condescending.² Calls for an American tradition ranged from the insecure to the optimistic, from dependence on European traditions to chauvinistic boldness. Homer, whose work depicted the contemporary moment without obvious reference to established painters, became the model of the American Painter who learned simply by looking at nature. In 1923, Royal Cortissoz, a promi-

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nent critic eager to establish what was "American" in American art, hailed Homer as

the most intensely American painter of his time....His art was born in him...nurtured from his youth on the racy elements of American character.... He did not paint American pictures because American life seemed to him, from the outside, to be fruitful of pictorial inspiration. He painted them because his temperament was in tune with his materials, because his sympathies spontaneously, and, one might say, unconsciously, found an outlet in the celebration of homespun themes. His nationality, in short, is to be found in the very grain of his art.³

Homer's reputation, often based on his "Americanness," contains paradoxes connected to conflicting and evolving ideas about a national art. Some scholars have difficulty reconciling the skill and suggestiveness of Homer's art with the seeming limitations of his training, his provincial scenes, his withdrawal to Prout's Neck, and his solitary, reticent personality. The "grain of his art" have been described as honest, direct, and virile, but also crude, narrow, and ugly.

It is virtually impossible to form objective distinctions between an artist's accomplishments and socially defined tastes and fashions. Homer's work holds an uncertain place in the cultural transitions from nineteenth-century conventions to Modernism in art. However, an examination of critical reaction to Homer elucidates his achievements and the New England coast as an artistic trope.

An idiosyncratic individual, Homer nevertheless participated in many of the cultural trends of the last century. Before he moved in 1884 to Prout's Neck to concentrate on the sea, Homer provided variations on a frequent theme in nineteenth-century American art: the agrarian ideal. Homer resided in New York City after the Civil War, but instead of painting the city he produced images from his travels to upstate New York and Gloucester, Massachusetts. His farm scenes did not receive the

acclaim granted his later seascapes. Their lesser status reflects not only the progress of Homer's art but also critical attitudes toward rural subjects.

In her study of nineteenth-century American art, Sarah Burns notes that farms in prints and paintings comprise "many layers of ideas about natural goodness, republican simplicity, family continuity, and Arcadian harmony." In the cultural context of the time, "the image of the good farm...was the offspring of the marriage of European pastoral traditions with Thomas Jefferson's agrarian politics." Burns also relates farm images to demographic shifts that chart "a momentous move to the cities and their suburbs." The idealized farm was transformed into a nostalgic emblem or entertaining mockery. The noble yeoman farmer became "the hick, the bumpkin, the geezer, and the peasant."⁴ Homer's depictions of rural New England reflect the tension between a desire for the native and original and a desire for the depth and grandeur of the European tradition, as well as the emerging demarcation between the lowbrow and highbrow.

During much of the nineteenth century, the French Barbizon school of painters (including Jean-Francois Millet and Jules Breton) and its images of ennobled European peasants in a serene light were the rage. Homer, however, managed to paint "popular subjects...in an unpopular way."⁵ Henry James, the writer whose immense sympathies were matched by immense snobberies, perceived and rejected Homer's manner in his 1875 review of the rural scenes (fig. 1, *Gloucester Farm*):

The most striking pictures in the [National Academy] exhibition were perhaps those of Mr. Homer....[Mr. Homer] is a genuine painter; that is, to see, and to reproduce what he sees, is his only care....He not only has no imagination, but he contrives to elevate this rather blighting negative into a blooming and honorable positive. He is almost barbarously simple, and to our eye, he is horribly ugly; but nevertheless there is something one likes about him. What is it? For ourselves, it



Winslow Homer. Gloucester Farm, 1871. Oil on canvas, 20 1/2 x 30 1/2 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Purchased: John H. McFadden Collection.

is not his subjects. We frankly confess that we detest his subjects...his freckled, straight-haired Yankee urchins, his flat-breasted maidens, suggestive of a dish of rural doughnuts and pie....He has resolutely treated them as if they were pictorial, as if they were every inch as good as Capri and Tangiers; and, to award his audacity, he has incontestably succeeded....The want of grace, of intellectual detail, of reflected light, could hardly go further; but the picture is the author's best contribution, and a very honest, and vivid, and manly piece of work."

James' lively if snide remarks capture many of the cultural tensions of the era that would affect interpretations of Homer. It is worth noting that in the year of this review, James' novel *Roderick Hudson*, concerning the aspirations of an American artist and his patron, was published serially in *Atlantic Monthly*. The attitudes expressed in the novel suggest little openness to native talents and subjects such as Homer's. The patron,

Rowland Mallet, seeks to be a “good citizen” by purchasing “certain valuable specimens of the Dutch and Italian schools...and then present his treasures out of hand to an American city.”⁷ Roderick Hudson, the impassioned artist, impresses Mallet not with an image of an American child but with a “figure [that] might have been some beautiful youth of ancient fable — Hylas or Narcissus.” Hudson is described as “some beautiful, supple, restless, bright-eyed animal.”⁸ Even bearing in mind the author’s possible irony, we see James’ thoughts about promoting American art carrying him away from the reticent, business-like Homer, and back to Europe.

The American farmer was “unpaintable” in the view of Kenyon Cox, another notable critic of the era — unless saved by some “grace” or “intellectual detail,” usually provided by mimicking European romanticism.⁹ The fine, the high, and the beaux arts, represented by classical poses, refined technique, and polished surfaces or poetic mists, were associated with cosmopolitanism, European training, and often a “feminine” subjectivity and grace. The authenticity of an American view was linked with the rustic, the unintellectual, the manly.

In this context, Homer was admired with reservations, and his “honesty” cost him some popularity. The faces of his rural folk do not seem full of glowing virtue or simple merrymaking. As Sarah Burns explains,

His vision of the New England agricultural scene — unpicturesque, unembellished with humor, sentiment, or moral message — seemed mystifyingly blank. His sunburned youths and strapping maidens, naturalized versions of Millet’s monumental peasants, were the inhabitants of a new American pastoral too close to the truth to exert a strong appeal. Undistorted reflections of the American farmer’s real status and the true tenor of rural existence, Homer’s paintings...confronted an audience that still demanded rustic fancy dress...¹⁰

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Homer's reception highlights the impossibility of objective distinctions between an artist's accomplishments and socially defined tastes and fashions. The "mystifyingly blank" character of Homer's canvases that is detrimental in the pastoral scenes of the 1870s became intriguing in later seascapes. Perhaps Homer became more adept at making ambiguous, averted faces express a teasing mystery or implied anxiety in paintings such as *Gulf Stream* (1899), which depicts the indeterminate gaze of a black man stranded in a disabled boat. This ambiguity, rather than an agrarian ideal, would suit the deterministic mood of a later decade and the uncertainties associated with modernism.

When Homer settled at Prout's Neck and began to focus on the sea, his vision and his reputation advanced. Winslow Homer would have been a minor painter but not an important one, according to several scholars, if he had not turned to the sea. It is fascinating to speculate about how Homer's contemplation of wind, wave, and rock inspired profundity. Also compelling is that the sea as subject, more so than the New England farm, evokes among viewers the words "timeless," "universal," "mythic." The Maine coast may be distinctive, yet it could connect with literary and artistic traditions of revealing the timeless and eternal in nature.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the image of Maine fishermen was apparently more poetic than the farmer. The farm may have represented virtue, but as art it also suggested placid drudgery. Ocean fishing took place in wild nature, and daily work could have the thrill of a life-threatening challenge: the fisherman "was always in more or less peril, and he knew it."¹¹ Paradoxically, Homer, this most American artist, entered his "mythic" phase during a trip in 1881-1882 to the fishing region around Cullercoats and Tynemouth, England. While Homer's earlier depictions of the sea focused on the beach as a fashionable resort, a place of freedom for children, or a scene of delicate tones in the Gloucester watercolors, the paintings of the English years often dwell on a threatening nature and the anxiety or stoicism of a figure in an ominous seascape.



Winslow Homer. *The Gale*, 1893. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 48 3/8 inches. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Why Homer went to Cullercoats is a mystery, though some sort of nervous tension or breakdown has been proposed.¹² Whatever Homer's private thoughts might have been, scholars agree that the stay at Cullercoats was a turning point in his career.¹³ We can only speculate that Homer wanted something other than pleasant scenes of everyday life and sentimental subjects for Victorian illustrations. Biographer Philip Beam believes that Homer's daily notice of a demanding life "jarred" him from the comfort of his middle-class background. Thus the artist's subject-matter changed, as he ignored stylish women at nearby English resorts to focus on the robust, hardworking wives and daughters of fishermen.¹⁴ Danger and rescue at sea, along with statuesque figures, became prominent in Homer's art.

Homer absorbed not only the diffused atmosphere of the English climate, but also certain trends in English art.¹⁵ John Wilmerding suggests that the classical modeling of Pre-Raphaelite art may have influenced Homer. Contemporary painters like Edward Burne-Jones sought artistic truth in very un-Homer-like subjects — ancient myth or medieval romance — but the powerful

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forms of Homer's fisherwomen resemble the grandeur of Burne-Jones' statuesque figures.¹⁶ The almost expressionless faces of Homer's fishwives, like those of Burne-Jones' mysterious women, now evoked the serenity of a classical type. Wilmerding also suggests the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum — fifth century B.C. Greek sculptures from the Parthenon — as a possible influence. Homer updated the nobility of the marbles in his strong but less divine presentation of youthful women in *Hark! The Lark* (1882), which depicts three young women gazing into the muted sky.¹⁷

Not long after his return to the United States, Homer moved closer to the new family home at Prout's Neck. He continued to focus on one or a few individuals struggling against natural forces. *The Gale* (fig. 2, 1893) reworks an English scene to portray a woman carrying a child on her back and walking forcefully along a ledge against the ocean wind. The painting was awarded a gold medal at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and, along with other works Homer showed, established his national reputation. Mrs. Van Rensselaer, a critic who previously had thought Homer's work crude, praised these paintings for "strong sincerity," "originality of mood," "vigor of conception," and a "stern poetry of feeling...[Homer] had never reached before."¹⁸

In the 1880s Homer produced many works considered masterpieces and seen as representative of the Yankee character: *The Herring Net* (1885); *The Fog Warning* (1885); and *Eight Bells* (1886). Yankee fishermen replaced the sturdy English girls, but the themes of survival and quiet heroism remain. The paintings, simplified in composition, also reflect Homer's increasing command of form. Figures such as the fisherman of *The Fog Warning* (fig. 3) became icons of stoic reserve in an environment both life-sustaining and dangerous.

These paintings satisfied Homer's contemporaries (and later viewers) in part because they satisfy ideas about what art should be. Though Homer's seafolk are not as gauzy as some Barbizon peasants, their depiction, compared to his earlier figures, is, to paraphrase Henry James, less bald, their presence



Winslow Homer. *The Fog Warning*. 1885. Oil on canvas, 30 x 48 inches. Otis Norcross Fund. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

imposing. Shoreline and waves may have inspired Homer to experiment with form and with using paint to express force. The oils of the 1880s — though less obviously sublime than the landscapes of the Hudson River School in the first half of the century or of the later luminists such as Martin Johnson Heade or John Kensett — still evoke transcendental possibilities. To some viewers, the paintings convey the spiritual truths that a divine “Nature” shares with humankind. William Howe Downes, Homer’s biographer, uses the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson to explain “the superiority of nature to art” in the artist’s work. He also invokes the British Romantic poet, William Wordsworth, in this high-minded praise of Homer’s marine paintings:

The poet is he who discovers the interesting and beautiful aspect of common and everyday things....But a still more essential poetry is that of “the still, sad music of humanity” which makes itself manifest in [Homer’s] pictures of men in their age-long and unending struggle to bend the forces of nature to their uses.¹⁹

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While the farm scenes suggest a recorder of provincial facts who lacks imagination, the sea paintings suggest a poet, who is "a great figure painter and an interpreter of humanity."²⁰

The paintings, which to turn-of-the-century observers were expressions of the American spirit and Nature's great truths, also reflect social developments in New England. Prout's Neck may have presented timeless truths, but it was also an accessible resort. Lois Homer Graham, the artist's grandniece, recalls that her family first became familiar with Prout's Neck when the artist's brother Arthur honeymooned there in 1875. In 1881, while Winslow was in England, Arthur built a house there when the Checkley House Hotel failed to reserve enough rooms for his growing family: "I'll build a house in a week and move out — can't stand those squalling brats — they can sleep on the billiard table."²¹ He was eventually joined by the patriarch and older brother Charles with his wife, Mattie. The establishment of the Homers' summer home at Prout's Neck fits a familiar pattern. In the first half of the nineteenth century dairy farmers had the interior and herring fishermen the shore; but "[b]y 1873, when rail connections to Scarborough were completed, the once-remote farm community had become a burgeoning summer resort."²² Railroads and inexpensive steamers were changing the character of the Maine coastline, and while Homer's paintings seem far more than postcards, his art owes something to this resort trend, and he and his family were involved in the shaping of the area. The Homer Clan bought "large contiguous parcels of land on the undeveloped ocean-front at the southeast tip of the Neck," an act of preservation in the face of development with perhaps Winslow's artistic interests in mind.²³

Certainly the views Homer witnessed from his spartan studio-home (a carriage house near his family's large house, remodeled in 1884 by Portland architect John Calvin Stevens) were not always the stuff of sunny holidays. The resort was often the scene of work — Homer's own and the fishermen's. In the 1880s when great schools of herring came to Maine waters, local boy Roswell Googins rowed Homer out to observe the fishing

fleets and “waited until nearly nightfall for [the artist] to make sketch after sketch of the men and the boats.”²¹ Googins, as a grown man, recalled for Philip Beam that the fleet used an “old-time method”: they “fished from dories with gill nets...rather than the more modern pocket nets.” Not only did this method disappear as fishermen adopted new equipment, but the herring schools declined as well.²⁵ So in his “mythic” paintings, Homer captures a formidable way of life that is disappearing.

Homer’s work from 1880 through 1910 does not seem nostalgic, at least not in a sentimental sense, since the paintings express what the painter himself called “stern facts.”²⁶ However, the seascapes appeared so to viewers sensitive to the decline of New England’s economic and cultural importance. They are also examples of Maine as a place apart — a land still primeval, but also a retreat for a growing professional class bent on escaping steamy urban summers.

If Homer’s art is a retreat, it is often a serious one. Homer’s oils of the 1890s are more enigmatic than his portrayals of stoic fishermen. Often, no human figure is present in the artist’s study of the shore, or the figure appears, as in *High Cliff, Coast of Maine*, 1894, only to provide a perspective which makes the natural forms more daunting. While Homer had previously explored rescue at sea and the threat of storms, death looks inevitable in works such as *Fox Hunt*, (1893) and *Gulf Stream* (1899). In these seascapes, Homer may reflect the end of an era, the last meditations in a realistic and nativist tradition. He seems a world away from his contemporary, French painter Paul Cézanne, so-called “father of modern art,” and it seems fitting that Homer died before the 1913 New York Armory show shocked American audiences with Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase*.

Yet Homer’s art at the turn of the century is not just an elegy. Several scholars detect a modern sensibility in Homer’s late works, a sensibility also found in twentieth-century artists George Bellows, Marsden Hartley, John Martin, Rockwell Kent, Edward Hopper, and Andrew Wyeth.²⁷ Homer, though he appears in retreat from the concerns of industrialization, the

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city, and the avant-garde revolt, nonetheless participated in a move toward abstraction, toward an introspective and independent aesthetic, and toward ambiguous meanings.

However, Homer, whose work pushes realism's limits but never abandons it, can be labeled "modern" only with some strain. That label sometimes indicates less about Homer's work and more about a twentieth-century critic's need to justify admiring a painter who produced intriguing pieces from 1880 to 1909 — a period that saw post-impressionism and cubism disorient the art worlds of Paris, London, and New York. And the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century intensified cultural polarities: country versus city, local versus cosmopolitan, Victorian narrative versus modern abstraction, popular and lowbrow versus elite and highbrow.²⁸ Homer's reputation has been caught up in these polarities. Formalist critics, who evolved with modernism, judged a painting as an independent artifact, stressing its line, shape, form, and color; and they found narratives, morals, and representations of familiar subjects weaknesses. These formalists valued Homer's compositional skills, but were either condescending or defensive about the provincial subjects and narrative tendencies.²⁹

Clement Greenberg, one of the most influential commentators on modern art, sums up Homer as "small, dapper, reserved and dull. If we are to go by the evidence, he had no inner life apart from that which he put into his pictures."³⁰ Greenberg, a champion of abstract expressionism, explains how the moment of nativism passed, and the art of Thomas Eakins and Winslow Homer retreated:

That Eakins, like Homer (if we except the latter's water colors), produced his best work at the beginning of his career leads one to speculate on whether there was not some new current abroad in the late 1860s and early 1870s which exalted the art of painters committed to a truly radical naturalism; and that the ebbing of this current may have been partly responsible for the fact that in middle age both Eakins and Homer more or

less withdrew into themselves. Not that they stopped developing, but the further growth of their art took place within more provincial limits.³¹

Critics with greater sympathy and less suspicion about pre-avant-garde art have recently tried to get behind the "provincial limits" to reassess Homer and his impact on the twentieth century. Bruce Robertson's 1990 study of the painter begins: "Winslow Homer is as much an artist to reckon with today as he was one hundred years ago," and then explains that Homer still "evades our understanding."³²

This evasiveness may be a variation on Yankee reserve; it also suggests that a sophistication in Homer's art has often been overlooked. John Wilmerding emphasizes the range of thought and feeling in local subject matter of Homer's paintings:

It is possibly the central paradox illuminating Winslow Homer's later career that, in concentrating his vision on but a few acres of Maine rock, he was able to convey a universal sense of nature's forces. From introspection came philosophical breadth, from a finite physical world an expansive cosmos of ideas and feelings.... Within his realism [of the 1890s], he found a power of abstraction in both form and meaning.³³

Wilmerding calls attention to *The Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog* (fig. 4, 1894), in which an eerie light makes the shadowy outline of human structures inseparable from the rough rock formation of the coast. In discussing the painting's evocative atmosphere, Wilmerding links Homer with influential and famous European artists:

At the center of this period and of Homer's vision is *The Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog*...for it is in effect emblematic of the history, process, and future of Homer's art. Partially through the subconscious tradition of art history, its suffusive sunlight refers back to Claude Lorrain and Joseph Turner. At the same time, its bold brush-



Winslow Homer. *The Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog*, 1891. Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 1/2 inches. Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, New York. R.T. Miller Fund.

work and contrived design remind one of Homer's present attention to the purely formal elements of his art, while the studio stands literally in the middle of the composition, not just as the principal subject of the painting but as a metaphor for his making of art.³⁴

While contemporaries such as Henry James and modernists such as Clement Greenberg found Homer subservient to observed fact and lacking in imagination, Wilmerding sees Homer tackling the central subject of art history – the “making of art.” Such paintings as *Artist's Studio* transcend postcard views because they raise questions about the possibilities of form and about the artist's relation to what he sees. The reflection on process and possibility place Homer in another league: that of Cézanne, Claude, and Turner.

I am not attempting to argue that Homer's greatness rivals Turner's, but to stress that attitudes toward his "quaint" subjects have sometimes clouded the potential of the subjects and the artist's innovations. If Homer is "modern" in a valid way, it is because he reinvented his nineteenth-century realistic conventions and he probed questions of perspective and what meaning a painting could offer. His watercolors of the tropics show how far he could carry geometrical shapes and painterly washes of color. *Hurricane, Bahamas* (1898), with its outlined triangular roofs, is even reminiscent of Cézanne. His marines challenge the viewer because they test the possibilities and the limits of imagination; in the words of Bruce Robertson, they "present themselves as a blank screen on which his audience can project its own meanings: the figures turn away, the landscape is bare, the seas are almost empty, the light is dim. Full of the import of meaning and change...they are actually empty of it."³⁵ This is some distance from the view of Homer as a poet of heroic truths, but that the painter can elicit such wide responses suggests Homer's regional facts are open-ended challenges to interpretation.

Homer's bond with New England may have provided a source for his art, but at times it undermined his reputation in the era of the urbane avant-garde. His independence, like that of other New Englanders, is not easy to fathom. Homer has been linked with Thoreau; he also shares something with other writers associated with the Northeast — Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Elizabeth Bishop. All show an "attachment to norms and the will to flout those norms."³⁶ Their guardedness and doubts, the pleasure they find in the material world, their pairing of common sense and vision contribute to a distinctive New England tradition that has value not only for the nineteenth century but also for the twentieth.

Winslow Homer's paintings are not just emblems of nostalgia. We inherit more than scenic views from the artist; we inherit his explorations and a complex set of assumptions about the social, cultural, and imaginative value of the land and sea which surround us.

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NOTES

¹William Howe Downes, *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer* (1911; New York: Dover, 1989), pp. 21-28.

²See Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 283.

³Royal Cortissoz, *American Artists* (1923; Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), p. 119.

⁴Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), pp. 3, 5, 6.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁶Quoted in Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, pp. 218-19.

⁷Henry James, *Roderick Hudson* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 24.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 31, 39.

⁹Kenyon Cox, *What is Painting? "Winslow Homer" and Other Essays* (1914; New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), p. 21.

¹⁰Burns, *astoral Inventions*, pp. 219-20.

¹¹Roger F. Duncan, *Coastal Maine: A Maritime History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), p. 431.

¹²See Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., *Winslow Homer* (New York: Abrams, 1990), p. 58. Also see Bruce Robertson, *Reckoning with Winslow Homer: His Late Paintings and Their Influence* (Bloomington: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University press, 1990).

¹³Mary Judge, *Winslow Homer* (New York: Crown, 1986), p. 48.

¹⁴Philip Beam, *Winslow Homer at Prout's Neck* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986) p. 19.

¹⁵The debate over "foreign" influences on Homer's art is longstanding. The artist presented himself as independent, declaring as an apprentice that "If a man wants to be an artist, he must never look at pictures" (Downes, *Life and Works of Winslow Homer*, p. 11). But scholars such as Lloyd Goodrich, Barbara Novak, Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, and John Wilmerding note parallels between Homer's works and a variety of artistic trends, including the Barbizon school, the plein-air movement associated with impressionism, and the decorative flatness of Japanese prints.

¹⁶John Wilmerding, *Winslow Homer* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 132-33.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Quoted in Wilmerding, *Winslow Homer*, p. 135.

¹⁹Downes, *Life and Works of Winslow Homer*, pp. 10, 5-6.

²⁰Cox, *What is Painting?*, p. 17.

²¹Lois Homer Graham, "The Homers and Prout's Neck," *Winslow Homer in the 1890s: Prout's Neck Observed* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1990), p. 28.

²²Patricia Junker, "Expressions of Art and Life in The Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog," *Winslow Homer in the 1890s: Prout's Neck Observed*, pp. 35, 36.

²³*Ibid.*, 40.

²⁴Beam, *Winslow Homer at Prout's Neck*, p. 66.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 68. Also see Duncan for a discussion of fishing in the Grand Banks and along the Maine coast in the 1880s, pp. 409-33.

²⁶Homer applied this phrase to *Searchlight, Harbor Entrance, Santiago de Cuba*, 1901, which was painted after the Spanish-American War of 1898 (quoted in Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer*, p. 135).

²⁷See Robertson, *Reckoning with Winslow Homer*, pp. 101-64, for an extended discussion of Homer's influence on the next generation of artists.

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²⁸For discussions of these cultural tensions, see Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). Also see H. Wayne Morgan, *New Muses: Art in American Culture, 1865-1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978).

²⁹For example, see John Canaday's discussion of Homer in *Mainstreams of Modern Art* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961). Also see Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience* (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 165-190.

³⁰Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 184.

³¹*Ibid.*, 185.

³²Robertson, *Reckoning with Winslow Homer*, p. 1.

³³John Wilmerding, *American Views: Essays on American Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 35.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵Robertson, *Reckoning with Winslow Homer*, p. 7.

³⁶Lawrence Buell applies this phrase to lesser known New England writers of the early nineteenth century in *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution to Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 372. This pattern of conformity paired with quiet resistance suits Homer as well.

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