INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI®

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

WINSLOW HOMER AND HIS CRITICS IN THE 1870s

by

Margaret C. Conrads

Volume I

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1999

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UMI Number: 9946155

Copyright 1999 by
Conrads, Margaret C.

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9946155
Copyright 1999, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

© 1999

MARGARET C. CONRADS

All rights reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

5/18/99
Date

Chair of the Examining Committee

5/18/99
Date

Executive Officer

Sally Webster

Marlene Park

David Tatham

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Abstract

Winslow Homer and His Critics in the 1870s

by

Margaret C. Conrads

Adviser: Professor William H. Gerdts

Since the mid-1890s, fifteen years before his death in 1910, Winslow Homer had acquired the rank of American art hero. The works that secured Homer's high place in American art were his seascapes painted at Prout's Neck, Maine. With their success, Homer's earlier work and the struggles of his early career were mostly forgotten, and the assumption grew that Homer and his work had always been universally revered. The newspapers and magazines of the 1870s tell a different story. The saga told there is one of a leading painter caught in the crossfire of the aesthetic battles that defined American art during this time.

Winslow Homer was the artist who commanded the most sustained and penetrating commentary in New York City newspapers and magazines between January 1868 and March 1881, the years he spent in New York City between his two only trips to Europe. While other artists—for example, Sanford Gifford in 1870 and J. Frank Currier in 1879—had moments when their work monopolized the discussions on art, Winslow Homer and his art were a continual and pressing topic in the art writing of the 1870s. This dissertation investigates how Homer was discussed and why he was so often the focus of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the commentary on art. By thoroughly surveying the critics' reactions to Homer from 1868 to 1881, we can better comprehend the central position Homer held in creating the critical framework of the period and offer a better understanding of the artist at a critical point in his career at a defining moment in the development of American art.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I started work on my Ph.D. fifteen years ago and, over this extended period of time, I have benefited from the advice and support of many individuals. Throughout this decade and a half, William H. Gerdts of the City University of New York has been an enduring and most generous teacher and adviser. My debt to Professor Gerdts greatly exceeds the boundaries of this dissertation. I also thank Professors Sally Webster and Marlene Park, both of the City University of New York, and Professor David Tatham of Syracuse University for their help with completing this work.

The bulk of the research and writing of the dissertation occurred while serving as Curator of American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. I am especially grateful to Marc Wilson, Director, for his continued support of my work, including a leave of absence to complete the writing. Further, I would not have finished without the cooperation of my colleagues at the Nelson-Atkins, especially Julie Aronson. I also thank Briane Lawler, Susan Moon, Becky Prestwood, Dawn Sanders, Valerie Zell, and former staff members Maria Buczek, Sarah Burt, Daniel D'Alonzo, Josie Gordon, Kent Minturn, and particularly Laura Morris, Amy Scott, and Maggie Stenz.

Many others have aided and encouraged my work, but I owe special thanks to Abigail Booth Gerdts, Director of The Lloyd Goodrich and Edith Havens Goodrich Whitney Museum of American Art Record of Works by Winslow Homer, for her constant willingness to share with me her deep understanding of Homer's art of the 1870s as well as the facts of this body of work. Other professors, colleagues, and friends who have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assisted me in a variety of ways include: Henry Adams, Scott Atkinson, Linda Ayres, Sarah Bell and Gregg Trueman, Gerald Bolas, Beverly Carter, Nicolai Cikovsky, Carol Clark, James Crawford, Karen C. C. Dalton, Gail Davidson, David Dearinger, Charles Eldredge, Jonathan Harding, Kathy Harris, Erica Hirschler, Frank Kelly, Shelley Long, Carol Lowrey, Lily Milroy, Col. Merl M. Moore, Elizabeth and Tom Reefer, Jan Schall, Cynthis Sanford, Marc Simpson, Miriam Stewart, Judy Throm, Judy Walsh, Beth and Dustin Wees, and Mary Ellen Young. I also thank H. Barbara Weinberg for her teaching and guidance during the initial stages of the dissertation process. Many libraries were generous in their lending of the newspapers and magazines necessary for conducting this study. I particularly thank the staffs in both the periodicals divisions and interlibrary loan departments of the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, State Library of New York, and Williams College. In the Kansas City region, I am indebted to the staffs at both the University of Kansas and University of Missouri, Kansas City. I have also benefited from the use of the William H. Gerdts American Art Library. My initial research was aided by a generous Henry Luce Foundation Dissertation Grant.

I thank my parents, Ralph and Roberta Cohen, and my parents-in-law, Robert and Marjorie Conrads, for their continued encouragement during this project. I am especially grateful to Lee and Kim Conrads, my daughters, who have never known life without a dissertation. They have offered inspiration, practical help, and comic relief always at the right moments. My deepest gratitude belongs, as always, to David Conrads, who has lovingly provided professional and personal support every step of the way.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume I

List of Illustrations ix

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: The Art Press in New York Newspapers and Magazines: 1868-1881 15

Chapter 2: 1868-69: Getting Reestablished in New York 74

Chapter 3: 1870-73: Commanding Respect and Challenging Admiration 105

Chapter 4: 1874-76: "In the Midst of an Era of Revolution" 165

Chapter 5: 1877-79: Facing the "New Departure" 275

Chapter 6: 1880-81: Moving On 402

Conclusion 465

Appendix 471

Volume II

Illustrations 484

Bibliography 569

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

All dimensions are in inches.

Figure 1: Winslow Homer, *Prisoners from the Front*, 1866, oil on canvas, 24 x 38, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Frank B. Porter, 1922

Figure 2: Winslow Homer, *Cernay la Ville—French Farm*, 1867, oil on panel, 10 9/16 x 18 1/16, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

Figure 3: Winslow Homer, *The Studio*, 1867, oil on canvas, 18 x 15, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1939

Figure 4: Winslow Homer, *The Brierwood Pipe*, 1864, oil on canvas, 16 7/8 x 14 ¾, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund

Figure 5: Seymour Joseph Guy, *Evening*, 1867, oil on canvas, 14 ½ x 12 5/8, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, Stoddard Acquisition Fund

Figure 6: Winslow Homer, *Manchester Coast* (*Rocky Coast and Gulls*), 1868, oil on canvas, 16 x 28, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of Grenville H. Norcross

Figure 7: Samuel Colman, *The Narrows and Ft. Lafayette, Ships Coming into Port*, c. 1868, oil on canvas, 30 x 60, New-York Historical Society, Watson Fund, 1976

Figure 8: Asher B. Durand, *Trysting Tree*, 1868, oil on canvas, 27 ¼ x 42, private collection

Figure 9: William Trost Richards, *In the Spring*, 1867, oil on canvas, 18 x 14, private collection

Figure 10: Alfred T. Bricher, *Indian's Summer Sunset,* 1869, oil on canvas, 9 x 18, private collection

Figure 11: possible partial reconstruction of Winslow Homer, *Low Tide*, oil on canvas; photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 12: Albert Bierstadt, *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains*, 1868, oil on canvas, 72 x 120, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Bequest of Helen Huntington Hull

Figure 13: Frederic Church, *The After Glow*, 1867, oil on canvas, 31 ¼ x 48 ¾, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 14: Winslow Homer, *Bridle Path, White Mountains*, 1868, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Figure 15: Winslow Homer, *Eagle Head, Manchester, Massachusetts* (*High Tide*), 1870, oil on canvas, 26 x 38, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William F. Milton, 1923

Figure 16: Thomas Waterman Wood, *Return of the Flag*, 1869, oil on canvas, 36 x 29, West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy

Figure 17: Winslow Homer, *Lobster Cove* (*Fishermen at Sundown*), 1869, oil on panel, 12 ½ x 21 ¼, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Figure 18: Winslow Homer, *White Mountain Wagon*, c. 1869, oil on panel, 11 ¾ x 15 ¾, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Figure 19: Winslow Homer, *A Rainy Day in Camp* (*Camp near Yorktown*), 1871, oil on canvas, 20 x 36, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William F. Milton, 1923

Figure 20: Eastman Johnson, *The Old Stage Coach*, 1871, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 60 1/8, Milwaukee Art Museum

Figure 21: Winslow Homer, *The Country School*, 1871, oil on canvas, 21 3/8 x 38 3/8, The Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum Purchase

Figure 22: Winslow Homer, *Crossing the Pasture*, 1872, oil on canvas, 26 ¼ x 38 1/8, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth

Figure 23: Winslow Homer, *The Country Store (A Rainy Day in the Country)*, 1872, oil on wood, 11 7/8 x 18 1/8, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966

Figure 24: Winslow Homer, *The Morning Bell* (*The Mill*), 1871, oil on canvas, 24 x 38 ¼, Yale University Art Gallery, Bequest of Stephan Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903

Figure 25: Eastman Johnson, *The Wounded Drummer Boy*, 1871, oil on canvas, 47 ¾ x 38 ½, The Union League Club, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

Figure 26: Seymour Joseph Guy, *A Knot in the Skein*, 1870, oil on canvas, 30 x 24, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

Figure 27: engraving published by George Barrie after John Beaufain Irving, *End of the Game*, location unknown; photograph courtesy of National Museum of American Art Library

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 28: Enoch Wood Perry, *Preparing for Thanksgiving* (*Thanksgiving Time*), c. 1871, oil on canvas, 28 x 36, location unknown; illustrated in *Old Print Shop Portfolio* 12 (November 1952), p. 72

Figure 29: Winslow Homer, *Snap the Whip*, 1872, oil on canvas, 22 x 36, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio

Figure 30: Winslow Homer, *Reverie* (*Female Figure in Black Near a Window*), 1872, oil on canvas, 22 x 13 ½, private collection

Figure 31: Winslow Homer, *Girl Reading on a Porch*, 1872, oil on panel, 6 x 8 ¼, private collection

Figure 32: Winslow Homer, *Sunlight and Shadow* (*Girl in Hammock*), c. 1872, oil on canvas, 15 ¾ x 22 ½, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Figure 33: Winslow Homer, *Boys and Kitten*, 1873, watercolor on paper, 9 5/8 x 13 5/8, Worcester Art Museum

Figure 34: Winslow Homer, *Longing* (*Waiting for Dad*), 1873, watercolor and gouache on paper, 9 ¾ x 13 5/8, Mills College Collection, Gift of Jane C. Tolman

Figure 35: William Trost Richards, *High Tide at Atlantic City*, 1873, opaque watercolor on paper, 8 7/16 x 13 5/8, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Purchased with funds given by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard L. Milberg

Figure 36: Winslow Homer, *School Time*, 1874, oil on canvas, 13 x 19 ¼, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Figure 37: Winslow Homer, *Dad's Coming*, 1873, oil on panel, 9 x 13 5/8, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Figure 38: Winslow Homer, *A Temperance Meeting*, 1874, oil on canvas, 20 ¾ x 30 1/8, Philadelphia Museum of Art, John H. McFadden, Jr. Fund

Figure 39: August F. A. Schenck, *Lost—Souvenir of Auvergne*, c. 1874, oil on canvas, location unknown, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

Figure 40: Frederic Church, *Petra*, 1874, oil on canvas, 60 ½ x 50 ½, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Figure 41: William Page, *Shakespeare Reading*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 52 x 42, Folger Library, Washington, D.C.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 42: engraving after George Boughton, *Miles Standish and His Men* (*The March of Miles Standish*), location unknown; photograph courtesy of National Museum of American Art Library

Figure 43: Seymour Joseph Guy, *The William H. Vanderbilt Family* (*Going to the Opera*), 1873, oil on canvas, 60 x 72, Biltmore House and Gardens, Asheville, North Carolina

Figure 44: Julian Scott, *Turkey Shooting,* wood engraving after the watercolor, *Harper's Weekly*, January 17, 1874, illustrated in Robert J. Titterton, *Julian Scott: Artist of the Civil War and Native America* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 1997), p. 12

Figure 45: Winslow Homer, *The Sick Chicken*, 1874, watercolor, gouache, and pencil on paper, 9 ¾ x 7 ¾, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1994.59.21

Figure 46: Winslow Homer, *A Basket of Clams*, 1873, watercolor on paper, 11 ½ x 9 ¾, private collection

Figure 47: William Trost Richards, *Lake Winnipesaukee at Weir's Landing, Nocturne*, 1874, watercolor and gouache on paper, 8 7/8 x 13 5/8, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Gift in memory of Grace Richards Conant

Figure 48: Winslow Homer, *Riding at Anchor* (*Boy with Anchor*), 1873, watercolor on paper, 7 5/8 x 13 ¾, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Norman O. Stone and Ella A. Stone Memorial Fund

Figure 49: Winslow Homer, *How Many Eggs?*, 1873, watercolor on paper, 12 ½ x 9 ½, private collection

Figure 50: William Merritt Chase, *The Dowager*, 1874, oil on canvas, 36 x 24, private collection

Figure 51: Frederick Bridgman, *The American Circus in Brittany*, 1869-70, oil on canvas, 23 x 48, private collection

Figure 52: John George Brown, *Gathering Autumn Leaves*, 1875, oil on canvas, 30 1/8 x 25, private collection

Figure 53: Winslow Homer, *Milking Time*, 1875, oil on canvas, 24 x 38 ¼, Delaware Art Museum, Gift of the Friends of Art and other donors

Figure 54: Winslow Homer, *Haystacks and Children*, 1874, oil on canvas, 15 ½ x 22 ½, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 55: Winslow Homer, *Uncle Ned at Home*, 1875, oil on canvas, 14 ¼ x 22, private collection

Figure 56: Enoch Wood Perry, *Old Story*, 1875, oil on canvas, location unknown; illustrated in George William Sheldon, *American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1879), p. 69

Figure 57: Winslow Homer, *Unruly Calf*, 1875, oil on canvas, 24 x 28, private collection

Figure 58: Winslow Homer, *Fiction,* 1875, watercolor on paper, 11 x 10, Detroit Institute of Arts

Figure 59: Winslow Homer, *Furling the Jib,* c. 1875, pencil and Chinese white on paper, 8 ¼ x 12 ¼, private collection

Figure 60: Winslow Homer, *Busy Bee*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 9 ¾ x 8 7/8, Berry-Hill Galleries, New York

Figure 61: Winslow Homer, *Contraband*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 7 x 5 7/8, Canajoharie Art Gallery and Library, New York

Figure 62: Winslow Homer, *Sunflower for Teacher*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 7 x 5 7/8, Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens

Figure 63: Thomas Eakins, *Whistling For Plover*, 1874, watercolor and gouache on paper, 11 5/16 x 16 11/16, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Museum Collection Fund

Figure 64: Eastman Johnson, *Husking Bee, Island of Nantucket*, 1876, oil on canvas, 27 ¼ x 54 ¼, The Art Institute of Chicago, Potter Palmer Collection

Figure 65: John La Farge, *Paradise Valley* (*New England Pasture Land*), 1866-68, oil on canvas, 32 ½ x 42, private collection

Figure 66: Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up* (*A Fair Wind*), 1876, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation, 1943.13.1

Figure 67: Winslow Homer, *Over the Hills* (*Rab and the Girls*), 1875, oil on canvas, 24 x 38, The Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee

Figure 68: Enoch Wood Perry, *A Quilting Party*, 1876, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 ¼, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 69: Winslow Homer, *The Cotton Pickers*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 x 38, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Acquisition made possible by the Museum Trustees

Figure 70: William Trost Richards, *A Sketch*, c. 1877, watercolor and gouache on paper, location unknown; illustrated in Linda S. Ferber, "William Trost Richards (1833-1905)," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1980, p. 550

Figure 71: Winslow Homer, *Woman Peeling a Lemon* (*Lemon*), 1876, watercolor on paper, 18 7/8 x 12, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Figure 72: Winslow Homer, *The New Novel* (*Book; Reading; Fiction*), 1877, watercolor and gouache on paper, 9 ½ x 20 7/16, Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, The Horace P. Wright Collection

Figure 73: Winslow Homer, *Backgammon*, 1877, watercolor on paper, 22 ¼ x 26 3/8, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3d

Figure 74: Winslow Homer, *Blackboard*, 1877, watercolor on paper, 19 ¾ x 12 ¾, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift (Partial and Promised) of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr., in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, 1990.60.1

Figure 75: Winslow Homer, *Answering the Horn*, 1876, oil on canvas, 38 1/ 8 x 24 3/8, Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan, Hackley Picture Fund

Figure 76: Winslow Homer, *Twilight at Leeds* (*Landscape*), 1876, oil on canvas, 24 x 28, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of David P. Kimball

Figure 77: Frank Duveneck, *The Turkish Page*, 1876, oil on canvas, 45 x 59 ¾, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Figure 78: Walter Shirlaw, *Sheep Shearing in the Bavarian Highlands*, by 1877, oil on canvas, 50 x 84, private collection, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

Figure 79: engraving after Wyatt Eaton, *Harvesters at Rest*, c. 1877, oil on canvas, location unknown; illustrated in G. W. Sheldon, *American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1879), p. 170

Figure 80: George Inness, *Autumn* (*The Homestead*), c. 1877, oil on canvas, 36 ½ x 54 ½, The Haggin Museum, Stockton, California

Figure 81: Jules Breton, *The Recall of the Gleaners*, 1859, oil on canvas, 36 x 70, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Arras

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 82: Winslow Homer, *Autumn*, 1877, oil on canvas, 38 ¼ x 24 3/16, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1985.64.22

Figure 83: Winslow Homer, *Summer (Butterfly Girl)*, 1878, oil on board, 37 ½ x 23 ½, New Britain Museum of American Art, Friends of William F. Brooks

Figure 84: Alfred Stevens, *Fall*, c. 1878, oil on canvas, 46 9/16 x 23 5/16, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Figure 85: Winslow Homer, *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, 1877, oil on canvas, 18 x 24, Cincinnati Art Museum, John J. Emery Fund

Figure 86: Winslow Homer, *A Visit From the Old Mistress*, 1876, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 1/8, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of William T. Evans, 1909.7.28

Figure 87: Thomas Waterman Wood, *Sunday Morning*, c.1875, oil on canvas, 14 x 10, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Figure 88: Winslow Homer, *Camp Fire*, 1877/80, oil on canvas, 23 ¾ x 38 1/8, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Henry Keney Pomeroy

Figure 89: Winslow Homer, *The Two Guides*, 1877, oil on canvas, 24 ¼ x 38 ¼, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Figure 90: Winslow Homer, *Watermelon Boys*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Figure 91: engraving after Winslow Homer, *Watermelon Boys;* illustrated in G. W. Sheldon, "American Painters – Winslow Homer and F. A. Bridgman," *Art Journal* 4 (August 1878), p. 226

Figure 92: Winslow Homer, *Shall I Tell Your Fortune?*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 x 24, Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama

Figure 93: Winslow Homer, *Song of the Lark (In the Field)*, 1876, oil on canvas, 38 ½ x 4, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia

Figure 94: John George Brown, *Pulling For Shore*, 1878, oil on canvas, 34 ¼ x 56 1/8, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia

Figure 95: Thomas Eakins, *Chess Players*, 1876, oil on canvas, 11 ¾ x 16 ¾, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the artist

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 96: John George Brown, *Passing Show*, 1877, oil on canvas, 20 x 30, private collection

Figure 97: J. Frank Currier, *Polling bei Weilheim, Bayern*, 1878, watercolor on paper, private collection

Figure 98: Winslow Homer, *Fresh Air*, 1878, watercolor and gouache on paper, 20 1/16 x 14, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Dick S. Ramsey Fund

Figure 99: Winslow Homer, *Apple Picking*, 1878, watercolor and gouache on paper, 7 x 8 1/8, Terra Museum of American Art

Figure 100: Winslow Homer, *Weary*, 1878, watercolor and pencil on paper, 9 ½ x 12 ¼, Terra Museum of American Art

Figure 101: Winslow Homer, *On the Stile*, 1878, watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper, 8 11/16 x 11 1/8, National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Figure 102: Winslow Homer, *Girl with a Hay Rake*, 1878, watercolor and gouache on paper, 6 15/16 x 8 7/16, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel

Figure 103: Winslow Homer, *Warm Afternoon* (*Shepherdess*), 1878, watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper, 6 7/8 x 8 ¼, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Figure 104: Winslow Homer, *Upland Cotton*, 1879/95, oil on canvas, 49 x 29 ¼, private collection

Figure 105: Winslow Homer, *Shepherdess of Houghton Farm*, c. 1879, oil on canvas, 24 ½ x 28 1/8, private collection

Figure 106: George Fuller, *And She Was a Witch*, 1877/83, oil on canvas, 30 x 40, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George I. Seney, 1887

Figure 107: Sanford Gifford, *An Indian Summer's Day on Claverack Creek*, 1877-79, oil on canvas, 30 x 24, private collection

Figure 108: Winslow Homer, *Promenade on the Beach*, 1880, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 1/8, Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts

Figure 109: Winslow Homer, *Peach Blossoms*, 1879, oil on canvas, 16 x 22 ½, private collection

Figure 110: Winslow Homer, *Girl Swinging* (*Girl on a Swing*), c. 1879, watercolor on paper, 12 ½ x 9 ½, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 111: Eastman Johnson, *Cranberry Harvest, Nantucket* (*Cranberry Pickers*), 1880, oil on canvas, 27 x 55, Timken Art Gallery

Figure 112: George Fuller, *The Quadroon Girl*, 1880, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 ½, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George A. Hearn, 1910

Figure 113: John George Brown, *The Longshoremen's Noon*, 1879, oil on canvas 33 ¼ x 50 ¼, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 114: Thomas Dewing, *Morning*, 1879, oil on canvas, 36 x 59 ¾, Delaware Art Museum, Special Purchase Fund

Figure 115: Winslow Homer, *Gloucester Sunset*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 9 ½ x 13 ½, private collection

Figure 116: Winslow Homer, *Eastern Point Light*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 9 5/8 x 13 3/8, The Art Museum, Princeton University, Gift of Alistair B. Martin

Figure 117: Winslow Homer, *Gloucester Schooners and Sloop*, 1880, graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper, 13 13/16 x 19 3/4, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Figure 118: Drawing after Thomas Waterman Wood, *The Cup That Cheers*, 1881, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 198

Figure 119: Drawing after George H. Smillie, *Oaks Near Portland, Maine*, 1880, medium unknown; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 195

Figure 120: Drawing by F. S. Church after J. Frank Currier, *Landscape*, 1881, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 197

Figure 121: Drawing after Thomas Hovenden, *The Puzzled Voter*, 1880, medium unknown; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 199

Figure 122: Drawing after Samuel Colman, *The Tower of St. Mark's*, c. 1880, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 194

Figure 123: Winslow Homer, *Sunset Fires*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 9 ¾ x 13 5/8, Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, Gift of William A. Coulter Fund, 64.36

Figure 124: Drawing after Roswell M. Shurtleff, *Basin Harbor, Lake Champlain*, c. 1880, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 197

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Introduction

Introduction

On the occasion of the 1911 Winslow Homer memorial exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Arthur Hoeber wrote: "Winslow Homer was one of the few artists in the history of his profession who did not have to die to be fully appreciated.... [R]arely has there been a man upon whose work nearly everyone so agreed in appreciation."[1] Since the mid-1890s, fifteen years before his death in 1910, Homer had acquired the rank of American art hero. The works that secured Homer's high place in American art were his seascapes painted at Prout's Neck, Maine. With their success, Homer's earlier work and the struggles of his early career were mostly forgotten, and the assumption grew that Homer and his work had always been universally revered. The newspapers and magazines of the 1870s tell a different story. The saga told there is one of a leading painter caught in the crossfire of the aesthetic battles that defined American art during this time.

"What shall we say about Winslow Homer?" quipped Clarence Cook, the *New York Tribune's* art critic, in a review of the National Academy of Design's annual exhibition in 1870.[2] The simple answer to this question is that New York City art journalists had much to say. Winslow Homer was the artist who commanded the most sustained and penetrating commentary in New York City newspapers and magazines between January 1868 and March 1881, the years he spent in New York City between his two only trips to Europe. While other artists—for example, Sanford Gifford in 1870 and J. Frank Currier

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in 1879—had moments when their work monopolized the discussions on art, Winslow Homer and his art were a continual and pressing topic in the art writing of the 1870s. This dissertation investigates the more complex layers suggested by Clarence Cook's question: how Homer was discussed and why he was so often the focus of the commentary on art. By thoroughly surveying the critics' reactions to Homer from 1868 to 1881, we can better comprehend the central position Homer held in creating the critical framework of the period and offer a better understanding of the artist at a critical point in his career at a defining moment in the development of American art.

It is well known that American art commenced a period of significant transformation in the 1860s. By the close of the Civil War and after three decades of supremacy, the Hudson River School of landscape painting began to wane, but with no single aesthetic in place to replace it.[3] Rather, a variety of differing principles arose, chiefly due to an expanded awareness of European art. John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelitism of England as well as British academic painting, the Barbizon and academic schools of France, the academy at Munich and the more radical strains produced elsewhere in that city in the studios of artists such as Wilhelm Leibl, the art of Mariano Fortuny and his followers, and the aesthetic and decorative movements had a noteworthy impact on the development of American art. In this expansive art-atmosphere, nearly every component of artmaking in America came under scrutiny. The question of what did or should constitute American art formed an umbrella over the debates about what was the purpose of art; what comprised "progress" and what benchmarks indicated its presence; and what were appropriate subjects, media, and methods of treatment for its expression.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In this rapidly changing world, Winslow Homer worked determinedly to find his place.[4] In 1868 Homer was thirty-two years old and a celebrated, rising painter. At age forty-five, in 1881, Homer was one of the most loved and most disputed artists. Distinct from other periods of his oeuvre, the body of work Homer produced during the 1870s is widely varied in subject and style, and displays a great deal of experimentation.[5] It elicited periods of greater and lesser understanding and acceptance, and reactions to it ran both very hot and cold, and sometimes simultaneously from the same critic. A close look at the critical response to Homer's work in the 1870s brings to light the significant place his art held in the critics' discussions. It reveals the complexities and confusion that proliferated in the art world and that contributed to Homer's artistic development at the time. It becomes apparent that Homer's situation was tied to his identification as an artist who personified the promise of a successful future for American art. From this position, and while alternating between or combining a wide range of traditional and radical modes in his art, Homer and his critics struggled with each other. In the end, the study of responses to Homer's art in the 1870s gives us a more comprehensive picture of the artist's development and its relationship to the critical framework at the time of this complex chapter in the history of American art.

Historiography

The art writings published between 1868 and 1881 in nearly forty newspapers and magazines have served as the primary resource for this dissertation.[6] This said, my work would not have been possible without other scholarship in a variety of disciplines related

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to American art and history. Existing scholarship on Winslow Homer, post-Civil War art, cultural studies, and the history of journalism has provided important background material, factual information, and methodological models.

The voluminous body of writings on Winslow Homer is well known.[7] No writer on Homer can ignore the tremendous debt owed to Lloyd Goodrich for the foundation he laid for modern Homer studies, including our understanding of Homer's 1870s images. However, in monographic studies, Homer's work of the 1870s has received the least in-depth attention. This is due, in large part, to the fact that Homer's legacy rested with his later sea paintings. Thus, until recently, Homer's art created before the mid-1880s was treated predominantly as a prelude to a great opus, and received only cursory treatment.

For information and methodological practice, I have depended on a number of recent investigations of the first half of Homer's career. Most helpful have been the writings of Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., culminating in the recent retrospective catalogue with Franklin Kelly; Marc Simpson and Lucretia Giese on the Civil War; David Tatham on Homer's illustrations and his Adirondacks pictures; Peter Wood and Karen Dalton on the African-American images; Linda Ayres on Homer's relationship with his patron Lawson Valentine; David Park Curry on the croquet pictures and *Dressing for the Carnival*; Michael Quick on Homer in Virginia; and Henry Adams on Homer's trip to Europe in 1867.[8] In most of these cases, the writers noted critical reactions to Homer's work in the seventies, but, with the exception of the recent monograph produced by the National Gallery, they depended on a narrow set of responses that has been repeatedly used to the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

point of cliché.[9] This dissertation looks at the material, as it were, from the other end of the telescope. The critics' reactions provide the focus and are used as a guide and leading indicator in thinking about Homer.

Given this approach, thematic studies that have included Homer and/or the 1870s have provided an important background. The bibliography in the back of this volume attests to the wide range of writings that have contributed to my work. Especially germane have been Sarah Burns' *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth Century American Art and Culture*; Kathleen Foster's seminal study of the early years of the American Watercolor Movement; and Lesley Wright's dissertation on genre painting after 1860.[10] As with the monographic treatments of Homer, the thematic studies that include the 1870s have treated the decade as a preface to the exploding art scene of the 1880s and beyond. Thus, the lion's share of the attention in the broader investigations has centered on post-1875 occasions, such as the Centennial celebrations of 1876, the formation of the Society of American Artists in 1878, and the rise of cross-currents between American and European art after 1876.[11]

Scholarly studies of Homer and American painting of the last quarter of the nineteenth century are voluminous, but the lack of studies investigating American nineteenth-century art critics and criticism has been most noticeable. William H. Gerdts' writings on critics and criticism, although mostly on earlier periods, and his incorporation of criticism into his larger studies on such topics as American Impressionism and regional art have provided an important methodological model.[12] The few monographs on critics, such as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Clarence Cook and Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, and the studies of individual publications, such as *The New Path* and *The Crayon*, have been important resources.[13] Linda Docherty used late nineteenth-century criticism in a broader context in her dissertation, but her focus is primarily later than this study's.[14] The dearth of material specifically on American art criticism is somewhat ameliorated by studies of cultural and literary criticism. The bibliography at the back of this volume enumerates the most instructive of those sources. Of them, Vernon Louis Parrington's 1930 *Main Currents of Critical Thought* still provides an excellent overview as does John Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, *American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905*.[15]

The resources of American journalism history have provided good information on the general histories of the periodicals used here. However, as in other areas of American studies, politics, economics, and literature have been the subjects of most academic writings on the history of journalism. The art press of the nineteenth century, as a journalistic entity and practice, and its individual participants have received almost no attention. The work of Robert Scholnick on Eugene Benson, William Thorn on Montgomery Schuyler, and Frank Fletcher on William Crary Brownell are notable exceptions, yet all of them focus on these writers' literary engagements with topics other than art and the latter two fall mainly outside my time period.[16] Older volumes, such as Frank Luther Mott's *American Journalism* and *History of American Magazines*, remain the standard texts.[17] Thus, this dissertation suggests the great opportunities for study in the areas of the history of American art criticism and the art press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Organization and Structure of the Dissertation

Certain useful boundaries have helped shape this study. Its chronological and geographical parameters coincide with a discreet and understudied aspect of Homer's well known oeuvre. The primary focus on the New York City press reflects the facts that the city's art world was self-contained during this period and that it was where the bulk of criticism on Homer was written.[18] Only those works by Homer or incidents of his life that were discussed in the press have been considered.[19] These limits have allowed Homer's public persona to form the center of the dissertation. Attesting to Homer's prominent position at this time, little of Homer's art of the 1870s will be found missing from this discussion.

The dissertation consists of six chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter gives an overview of the art press in New York City during the 1870s. It provides information on both the serials and personalities that took part in the criticism of Homer's art. It ascribes aesthetic identities to the newspapers, magazines, and individuals as well, but, as will be explained below, there have been challenges to this endeavor. Nonetheless, the chapter serves as an outline to understanding the general framework in which the discussions of art occurred. Chapters two through six follow the chronology of the period under study. In each one, the intersection of Homer's yearly activities with the art world calendar provide a consistent approach to the material. Discussions of exhibitions, most notably the annual shows of the National Academy of Design and American Watercolor Society, serve as the basic armature for this framework. While an organization based on subject

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

matter or media might have been used, the organizing principle employed here casts a net widely over the material to suggest the complexities and multiple intersections within it. It has also provided a useful structure for including important elements of Homer's biography. The division between chapters mirrors logical breaks or changes in Homer's career and the response to it.

Chapter Two, which covers 1868-69, sets the stage for the story. It locates Homer on his return from a year-long sojourn to Europe as one of America's most promising artists. Although his work is only sporadically in the public eye in these two years, the reactions to it—that it stands distinctive, is to be praised for its home subjects, and is to be condemned for its lack of finish—are those that pervade discussions throughout the next decade. The larger issues in which he will become embroiled—questions of honesty and truth in art, the nature of originality, and what makes American art American—are also raised. These first criticisms after his return from Europe established the pattern and types of response that prevailed throughout the 1870s.

Chapter Three explores 1870-73, when Homer became not only firmly established in the art world but pursued his career as a painter with intense dedication. He is found to be front and center in the critics' minds, both for singular examples of his work as well as for groups of pictures and for his activities. A pattern began of intense periods of interaction with the art world at large alternating with periods of withdrawal, especially in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his exhibition habits. In his art and the discussions of it, the import of subject matter and its function in defining Americanness in art are pervasive and begin a period of reevaluation. Beyond subject (for which Homer is both praised and condemned), the notions of realism, use of color, and the sketch are issues added to the critique of his work. At the end of the three years, new interests and attitudes, for the press as well as for Homer, become apparent.

Chapter Four covers 1874-76, an "era of revolution" for both Homer and American art as the volume of art coverage in the press grew dramatically. Homer terminated his work as an illustrator as he took up the increasingly fashionable medium of watercolor. He began to experiment in oil and watercolor at the time when a number of contemporary European paintings and a generation of young European-trained artists infiltrated New York. The critics' more concerted interest in technical and stylistic issues, especially the concept of finish, brought Homer very mixed reactions. As the divisions between the champions of art for art's sake and those calling for the necessity of ideas as the basis of art constantly shifted, Homer and the critics grappled with his individual portrayal of American life. He continued to be hailed as the quintessential American artist and he experienced some of his greatest acclaim at mid-decade. Yet, at the same time, he was lambasted especially for his use of color and compositional devices, and disappointed certain elements of the critical body. By 1876 Homer's place as a young artist of promise began to vie with his being associated with the older, academic guard.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Five, exploring 1877 through 1879, finds Homer working hard to come to terms with the vast changes in the American art world. After the Centennial, American art quickly began to absorb international influences, and an emphasis on formal qualities in painting, such as line, color, and design, came to the fore. Many different artistic modes proliferated, and Homer, often working at a frantic pace, spent these three years experimenting with them. In his diverse watercolor subjects and techniques, the investigation of picturing light and color were at the foundation of nearly every work. The work intersected with the nascent tonalist and impressionist aesthetics as well as the growing interest in the decorative. Homer's experiments in oil refashioned identifiable American subjects to answer the call that art reflect the human psyche and its feelings. In every case, Homer was recognized for having a unique vision. Thus, despite some acknowledgement of European elements in his work, most critics continued to uphold Homer as the quintessential American artist. In the face of the arrival of a European-trained generation of painters, Homer was seen to be an antidote to the most radical practitioners as he continued to be recognized for investigating the most contemporary issues. His varied output received a greatly varied response.

In Chapter 6, the final fifteen months of Homer's time in New York—from January 1880 to March 1881—before departing for England are considered. His final public act, as he put his affairs in order, was the showing of an astounding group of watercolors that included sheets created throughout the 1870s and that exhibited his most recent radical experiments. The critics' reactions in the last months before Homer's departure illuminate

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the constants as well as the extraordinary changes experienced by Homer and his critics in the 1870s.

One hundred and twenty-seven years after Clarence Cook's 1870 questioning how best to discuss Winslow Homer, art historian Sarah Burns noted that "[t]he problem with Winslow Homer has always been understanding him."[20] The reliance on primary source materials in this dissertation brings to light a tremendous amount of writing by those who tried, in his own day, to understand Homer. In presenting his contemporaries' viewpoints, it is the hope that this dissertation allows us, at least in small measure, to better understand Winslow Homer and American art criticism of the 1870s.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to the Introduction

[1] Arthur Hoeber, "Art and Artists," *New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, 7 February 1911, p. 8.

[2] "Fine Arts. The Landscape at the Academy," *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

[3] On the rise and fall of the Hudson River School, see John K. Howat et al., *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987).

[4] That Homer struggled with his art in the 1870s has been long noted in scholarship. The most recent overview of it has been given in Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., "Reconstruction," in *Winslow Homer*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1995), pp. 102-104; hereafter cited as NGA 1995.

[5] Homer created over 800 drawings, watercolors, and oil paintings as well as a small number of tiles from 1868-81. Although they are discussed in passing, Homer's drawings for prints have not been included in this accounting. I am grateful to Abigail Booth Gerdts, director of The Lloyd Goodrich and Edith Havens Goodrich Whitney Museum of American Art Record of Works by Winslow Homer, for supplying me with these numbers. I have also benefited tremendously from Mrs. Gerdts' extensive factual knowledge and wealth of understanding of Homer's work during the period under study.

[6] Except in special cases explained in Chapter 1, the views of Boston critics have not been included. This choice was made because Homer's experience in New York stands as a discreet entity as the art world of New York yet remained relatively self-contained.

[7] See the bibliography for an enumerated listing.

[8] The key works on Homer are enumerated in the bibliography but the best of these studies are: Marc Simpson et al., *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*, exh. cat. (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1988); Lucretia Giese, "Winslow Homer: Painter of the Civil War," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986; David Tatham, "*Two Guides*: Winslow Homer at Keene Valley, Adirondacks," *American Art Journal*, 20 (1988), pp. 21-34; David Tatham, *Winslow Homer in the Adirondacks* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996); David Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1992); Peter H. Wood and Karen C. C. Dalton, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, exh. cat. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988); Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., "Winslow Homer's *School Time*: 'A Picture Thoroughly National,'" in *Essays in Honor of Paul Mellon* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986), pp. 62-69; David Park Curry, *Winslow Homer: The Croquet Game*, exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1984; David Park Curry, "Winslow Homer: *Dressing for the Carnival*," *Studies in the History of Art*, 26 (1990), pp. 91-114; Michael Quick, "Homer in Virginia," *Los Angeles County Museum of Art Bulletin*, 24 (1978), pp.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

60-81; Henry Adams, "Winslow Homer's 'Impressionism' and Its Relation to His Trip to France," *Studies in the History of Art* 26 (1990), pp. 61-89; and John Wilmerding and Linda Ayres, *Winslow Homer in the 1870s*, exh. cat. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[9] Probably the most frequently invoked remark on Homer's 1870s painting in modern scholarship is that of Henry James on Homer's entries to the 1875 National Academy of Design. Henry James, "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," *Galaxy*, 20 (July 1875), pp. 93-94.

[10] Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Kathleen Adair Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement, 1860-90," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1982; and Lesley Carol Wright, "Men Making Meaning in Nineteenth Century American Genre Painting, 1860-1900, Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1993. More recently Linda Ferber and Barbara Gallati's investigation of exhibition watercolors and Homer's relationship to the watercolor movement have made significant additions to Foster's original work. Linda Ferber and Barbara Dayer Gallati, *Master of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent and the American Watercolor Movement*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998).

[11] The most useful sources have been: Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983; H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991); Doreen Bolger Burke et al., *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986); David Huntington and Kathleen Pyne, *Quest for Unity*, exh. cat. (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983); and H. Wayne Morgan, *New Muses: Art in American Culture, 1865-1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978).

[12] For example, William H. Gerdts, "The American 'Discourses:' A Survey of Lectures and Writings on American Art, 1770-1858," *American Art Journal* 15 (Summer1983), pp. 61-79; William H. Gerdts, "American Landscape Painting; Critical Judgments, 1730-1845," *American Art Journal* 17 (Winter 1985), pp. 28-59; and William H. Gerdts, *American Impressionism* (New York: Abbevile Press, 1985). Helpful, as well, have been articles such as Barbara Novak O'Doherty, "Some American Words: Basic Aesthetic Guidelines, 1825-1870," *American Art Journal* 1 (Spring 1969), pp. 78-91. My most valuable opportunity for studying American art criticism came in a seminar on the topic taught by William H. Gerdts at City University of New York Graduate Center in the spring of 1985.

[13] Most useful have been: John P. Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth Century America," Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1952; Jo Ann W. Weiss, "Clarence Cook: The Critical Writings," Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 1976; Lois

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Dinnerstein, "Opulence and Ocular Delight, Splendor and Squalor: Critical Writings in Art and Architecture by Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979; Linda S. Ferber and William H. Gerdts, *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites*, exh. cat. (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1985); Janice Simon, "*The Crayon*, 1855-61: The Voice of Nature in Criticism, Poetry, and the Fine Arts," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990.

[14] Linda Jones Docherty, "A Search for Identity: American Art Criticism and the Concept of the 'Native School,' 1876-1893," Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1985. Saul Zalesch, "Ryder and Writers: Friendship and Patronage in the New York Art World, 1874-84," Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1992, covers a similar time period to this study, but Zalesch's approach has only a tangential relationship to mine. Although it is centered around the marketplace, Linda Henfield Skalet, "The Market for American Painting in New York, 1870-1915," Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1980, contains important factual information germane to this study.

[15] Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. 3: *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860-1920* (New York, 1930), and John Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, *American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979).

[16] Robert Scholnick, "Between Realism and Romanticism: The Curious Career of Eugene Benson," *American Literary Realism* 14 (1981), pp. 242-61; William John Thorn, "Montgomery Schuyler: The Newspaper Architectural Articles of a Protomodern Critic," Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1976; and Frank Fletcher, "The Critical Values of William Crary Brownell, Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1951.

[17] Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960*, 3d. ed. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1962), and Frank Luther Mott, *The History of American Magazines*, v.1-3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967). Of the older sources and specifically on art periodicals, the best resource is Helene Emylou Roberts, "American Art Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century," (master's thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 1961).

[18] As is explained below, a few Boston magazines have been included on account of their New York authors, other connections, and readership.

[19] No doubt private matters were played out in the public arena (see especially Chapters 5 and 6), but this study incorporates them only when there was public mention of them.

[20] Sarah Burns, "Modernizing Winslow Homer," *American Quarterly* 49 (September 1997), p. 625.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 1

The Art Press in New York Newspapers and Magazines: 1868-1881

Introduction

Journalist Charles F. Wingate wrote in 1875: "During the last twenty years journalism has become prominent, if not pre-eminent, as a profession. The press is to-day the most potent agency for good or evil...."[1] While Wingate was referring primarily to the press' role and power in politics, his words also apply to the role and power of the art press. While the art writers of the 1870s may not have been agents of good and evil, they were instrumental in constructing and articulating America's attitudes towards art. Due to the importance of the art press during this period, it is necessary to identify the publications, both newspapers and magazines, and the personalities that consistently reported and critically considered the New York art world. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the state of journalism immediately following the Civil War and then outlines the venues for art writing, the people engaged in it, and the emergence of corporate and individual aesthetic identities. This information suggests a framework in which the discussions on art occurred and an overview of the central ideas that reverberated through the period.

In 1868 there were ten daily newspapers in New York City that included art in their pages.[2] Over the course of the next thirteen years, significant changes occurred in newspapers, including a skyrocketing amount of attention given to the art world. The first years of this period experienced an important changing of the editorial guard in four of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the major dailies. Between 1869 and 1872, Henry Raymond of the *Times*, James Gordon Bennett, Sr., of the *Herald*, and Horace Greeley of the *Tribune* all died. William Cullen Bryant, longtime editor of the *Post*, increasingly slackened his editorial reins in the late 1860s and, in effect, was retired by 1874, even though he remained editor in name until his death in 1878. These men had shaped the world of New York journalism from the middle of the century, and their individual and collective departures from the newspaper scene eased the way for a new generation of newspaper editors and writers and new attitudes towards journalism. Among the more significant changes was that, particularly with Greeley's death, party journalism—that is, a newspaper's alignment with and function as a voice for a specific political party—effectively ended.[3] In the 1870s hard news reporting, greatly enhanced by the increased use of the telegraph, replaced newspapers' dependence on party bonds for their content.[4] Consequently, the position of newspaper reporter achieved a higher status and their numbers expanded.[5] This basic change in the composition of the newspapers' content and structure, coupled with a greater public interest in art, fostered the growth of the positions of arts editor and art writer/critic as formalized components of newspaper staffs.[6] These changes in the 1870s moved art writing significantly beyond simply the reporting of art news to encompassing a greater degree of criticism and commentary on art issues.

An overview of art writing in magazines in the 1870s is comparable to that of newspapers in that the amount and regular appearance of art coverage greatly grew in existing periodicals and art topics were often an important component of new ones. However, differing from the history of newspapers, magazines, by the late 1860s, had had a more

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

established role as the critical forum for the visual arts. The birth of American art criticism had taken place in such early general magazines as the *New York Mirror*, *Knickerbocker*, and *New York Magazine and Democratic Review*, none of which survived into the 1870s, and was furthered in pre-Civil War publications, such as *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Atlantic Monthly*, all of which continued into this period.[7] There was also a small group of earlier magazines dedicated to art, the most important of which were the short-lived *Crayon* (1856-61) and *New Path* (1863-65).[8] *Watson's Art Journal* first appeared in 1864 and lasted until 1875. Thus, magazine writing provided a more developed model for art criticism that served both newspapers and magazines.

Eight general magazines had an ongoing, if not always regular, commitment to the visual arts between 1868 and 1881.[9] Of these periodicals, five began publication in 1865 or later.[10] These magazines were primarily New York based, but a few out-of-town monthlies, such as the *Atlantic* from Boston, are significant because their coverage included New York and their readership and outlook was increasingly national (at least East Coast) rather than strictly local during this period.[11] The contributions on art in general magazines varied from occasional articles on specific topics to regular art columns and exhibition reviews. As with newspapers, some magazines had editors with art writing as their specific duties or had appointed art editors. Others used a stable of freelancers.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Art magazines developed as a new genre in periodical literature during the 1870s. The *Aldine*, *American Art Review*, *Art Amateur*, *Art Interchange*, and the New York edition of the *Art Journal* were all newcomers on this era's periodical scene, and, with the exception of the *Aldine*, appeared between 1875 and 1878. Although not exclusively devoted to the fine arts, *American Architect and Building News* should also be included in this list. Thus, it is truly only at the end of the decade that the solid foundation was laid for what became the art magazine as we know it today.

Shaping much of the art writing of this period—in newspapers and magazines—as well as our understanding of it was the convention of author anonymity.[12] Newspaper articles, reviews, and columns on art rarely had any identifying tag, and when they did, it often appeared as a pseudonym or initials. In magazines, individual articles on specific art topics may have been published with an author's by-line, but regular art columns and exhibition reviews were generally printed unsigned. The inability to ascribe authorship to a significant portion of the art writing under consideration has somewhat hampered the exploration of the topic. Tracking changes in personnel and opinion is difficult when the authorship of an article is unknown. However, understanding the reasons for anonymity illuminates the state of journalism in useful ways.

The reasons for anonymity and pseudonym use were varied. They included: continuing the practice established in English *belles lettres* in which pseudonyms reflected a prominent viewpoint or trait of a writer; being reluctant to admit that writing was a profession; avoiding the distraction that use of a personal name might create; and simply

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

guarding against attack.[13] Anonymity in the case of the *Nation*, for example, reflected the desire of editor E. L. Godkin that the magazine present a unified voice.[14] Godkin and a number of his peers, including Henry Raymond of the *Times* and Frederic Hudson of the *Herald*, were especially conscious of the growing power individual writers were acquiring.[15] With a policy of anonymity, they saw a means of keeping the reader focused on the substance of a writer's thoughts and avoiding the reader's being swayed by a reputation. As Henry Raymond noted: "We are inclined to think it will be a sad day for journalism when the names and reputation of individual writers become a matter of more interest than the principles they espouse or the opinions they express."[16] However, this view was not held by all editors. Some, like Henry Watterson of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, disagreed with the use of anonymity, especially for art reviews, for he felt the writer alone was responsible for the thoughts expressed.[17]

Further confusing issues of authorship and aesthetic identity is the fact that most newspaper and magazine art writers worked as freelancers and often for multiple periodicals simultaneously. Unfortunate, as well, is that few early corporate records of serials, especially of newspapers, survive. However, using a broad range of secondary and primary sources, one may suggest a reasonable construct of the art press.[18] Evidence shows the art press of the 1870s in a state of tremendous growth and change not unlike the world of the artists with which they were so closely interwoven. While there were important distinguishing aesthetic preferences among individual writers that illuminated the contending issues of the day, as a body, they underwent a collective awakening and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

shift in thought, which paralleled the upheaval in the art world on which they reported and critically debated.

The position and role of the art critic were in a defining moment in the 1870s, and the criteria and job descriptions were extremely fluid from serial to serial. The primary purpose of art writing was, however, basically clear to its practitioners: to educate the public. While questions such as who made the best critics and what the criteria or standards were or should be were hotly debated, there was general agreement that the duty of the art critic was to "instruct the ignorant in art, to interest the careless of art, and especially to guide the enquirer concerning art."[19] In their role as public educator, art critics served as a crucial mediator between the artist and the public, making their impact on artists in the 1870s increasingly significant.[20]

From 1868 to 1881 a number of particular concerns commanded the attention of the critics. Throughout this dissertation, it is the ones that were a component of the critical reactions to Winslow Homer's art or life that are to be considered. While there may be some issues that receive more or less proportionate attention than might be found in a broad study of late nineteenth-century art criticism, the focus here is on Winslow Homer because of his work's important intersection with the commentary on many of the most pressing issues. Broadly speaking, they include: the question of national art—what it is, what it should be, evidence of its progress, and its relationship to American history; the shifting definitions of the chief characteristics of American art; the effect of the increase of foreign art and training; the transition from an older generation of American artists to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

their successors; the rise of watercolor and drawing as artistic, exhibitable media in their own rights; the questions of appropriate subject matter and technique; the relationship between technique and subject; the concepts of finish and completeness in art; the role of the artist; originality; and the place of thought, truth, nature, and imagination in art. In some way, Homer's art generated commentary on all these topics. Before looking at how critics responded to Homer, it is useful to outline in broad strokes the situation of the American art press from 1868-81.

Newspapers, Their Writers, and Aesthetic Identities

Most art criticism found in 1870s newspapers appeared in the form of exhibition reviews. However, as the attention to art expanded through the period, increasing numbers of general or topical articles, inspired by the art news of the day, appeared. They included, but were not limited to, commentaries on both historical and contemporary artists, museums, private collections, and the National Academy of Design or other art organizations. A survey of these writings as well as our knowledge of individual writers' viewpoints aid us in beginning to ascribe aesthetic identities to the various papers.

Evening Post

Under the editorship of William Cullen Bryant since 1826, the *Post* had, perhaps, the longest history, among newspapers, of publishing art news.[21] Although Bryant withdrew considerably from the paper after 1865, his independence, forthrightness, and moral backbone continued to be reflected long after in most departments, including art.[22] Art note columns, stating the news of the art world (mainly New York City, but elsewhere as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

well), had been a mainstay in the *Post* for many years, and continued to appear frequently, as did detailed reviews of every National Academy of Design and American Watercolor Society annual exhibition between 1868 and 1881. George Sheldon (see Appendix) was the most consistent voice for art in the *Post* after his appointment as art editor in 1873.[23] Prior to Sheldon's tenure, it is unknown who, if any single individual, was responsible for the art writing, and it may have been a shared task, as it was for many papers. Although there is no known proof, Parke Godwin (see Appendix) may well have served as the most regular art writer before Sheldon. Godwin, Bryant's son-in-law and successor as editor-in-chief at the *Post* after Bryant's death in 1878, wrote on literature, art, and science throughout his many years at the paper.[24] Although between 1868 and 1870 Godwin was heavily engaged with *Putnam's*, he continued a strong enough relationship with the daily to be considered its controlling power.[25] Earl Shinn (see Appendix) arrived in New York from Philadelphia in December 1870, and wrote for the *Post* as well as the *Nation*.[26] A number of Shinn's articles for the *Post* in the early seventies were appended with the initials "E. S."[27] The use of initials raises the problem of whether the use of an identifier was consistent in a particular periodical. Might an author write signed articles with his initials or a pseudonym as well as write anonymously for a single publication over a period of time? This is likely true, and makes further speculation about specific authors for the *Post* between 1868 and 1872 unproductive without new evidence.

A descriptive approach ruled the *Post's* art writing through the seventies, as it had for at least the two previous decades. In 1869 the reviewer of the National Academy annual

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

exhibition stated an opinion on the purpose of exhibition reviews, which *Post* writers followed throughout the 1870s: to direct readers to the galleries and point out some of the prominent features.[28] The reviews were the work of well-informed writers and reflected throughout rather catholic taste, not overly drawn to either the older or younger generations or to specific genres other than to follow the presiding taste of the day—that is, descriptive landscape in the earlier portions of the period with increasing interest in more poetic evocations of the landscape as well as in the figure. Interest in subject matter and support for meaningful content over technical prowess guided much of the writing. Parke Godwin's views and general style, for one, mirrored this approach. When artist-writer Eugene Benson characterized Godwin in 1869, he described his style as "characterized by largeness, harmony and fluency... generously fed with the fruits of a ripe and large experience ...[but] moral rather than artistic.[29] From 1873, George Sheldon's style, too, followed the existing *Post* aesthetic identity. His writing was not highly opinionated, and he treated artists' works individually.[30] He looked for and commended technical excellence, but was most interested in how individual sentiment was reflected in a particular work of art.

As the decade moved on, the *Post* frequently carried notices and reviews that generally supported, without specifically championing, the younger, more progressive artists. In a similarly level-handed way, the paper's attitudes towards European art were not heavily pro or con, but reported its presence (which increased dramatically through this period) as a matter of fact, and had a carefully measured response for each individual case. For example, from early on the *Post* exhibited a decidedly cosmopolitan attitude in its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

enjoyment of the inclusion of European watercolors in the American Watercolor Society annuals. Conversely, while foreign contact was generally approved, there was the concern that too much association with foreign influences, especially French, would compromise an artist's originality and relationship with his native land.[31] Yet, the paper, as did Sheldon in other venues such as *Harper's New Monthly* and *Art Journal*, consistently approached the issue of European art in the context of its effect on the progress of a national art. With these viewpoints, the *Post* generally identified the important art issues of the day without asserting a strong or continuing bias.

New York Daily Tribune

The *Tribune* was considered among the four leading New York dailies in the 1870s.[32] Edited first by Horace Greeley, from 1841 until his death in 1872, and then by Whitelaw Reid into the early twentieth century, the paper had an unusually high literary quotient, both in the quality of the writing and in its attention to the humanities.[33] Its arts coverage in the seventies included thorough exhibition reviews as well as occasional topical articles. Whitelaw Reid was a conservative man who circulated in high society.[34] As an editor he deplored sensationalism and gimmicks. When Reid ascended to the *Tribune* editorship, he inherited Clarence Cook (see Appendix) as art critic. The two men regularly feuded over the decade of their *Tribune* years together.[35]

Clarence Cook is well known as one of the most sophisticated and irascible art critics of nineteenth-century America.[36] His views in the 1870s reflect some of the most forward thinking as well as prevalent contradictions of the period. Cook's taste and attitudes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

towards art changed considerably—perhaps most markedly of all the art writers in this time period. Having served as the first editor of the *New Path*, the organ of the American Pre-Raphaelites, from 1863 to 1864, Cook still held tightly, at the end of that decade, to the Ruskinian belief in the close study of nature as the means and end of art.[37] While Cook remained a devotee of the expression of truth as the ultimate goal for art, by the mid-seventies, he wedded it to a growing interest in the poetic and inner, or psychological, truths as legitimate themes for artistic expression.[38] His increasing insistence on beauty as an essential element in art shifted from having its basis in imitating factual reality to asserting the importance of the imagination. From this point of view grew his steadily increasing search for the unique characteristics of an artist. Such changes in thinking prompted Cook to reverse his opinion on certain artists, most notably John La Farge, whom he detested in the early sixties but could appreciate by the later seventies. Similarly, Cook's attitudes towards the relationship of European and American art changed significantly. Before the Civil War, Cook opposed European influence, but in the seventies he moved to a cosmopolitan outlook. He was always concerned with and supportive of the concept of a national art, yet his views on what it should be altered. His reliance on recognizably American narrative subjects as the key to defining an American art diminished and was replaced with a search for American characteristics in artistic treatment, which developed out of an artist's individual imagination informed by an American experience. From the late 1870s, Cook applied this kind of thinking as he developed his great interest in the decorative arts. It allowed him, for example, to commend the Colonial Revival for its imaginative reuse of American characteristics rather than for any mimetic presentation of factual reality. Throughout the period, Cook

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was critical of the National Academy as the institution responsible for fostering national art. From mid-decade, he was deeply involved with the founding of the Society of American Artists as well as serving as one of their greatest champions in. No matter what his topic, Cook's aesthetic preferences and views on art were often presented with a caustic wit. His writings are often distinguishable as the most barbed, venomous, and personally attacking art writing of his generation.

New York World

With the *Post* and *Tribune*, the *World* completed the trio of newspapers that most thoroughly and consistently covered the art world; it neglected only the 1876 National Academy of Design annual exhibition in its series of yearly reviews. In William Crary Brownell (see Appendix), the *World*, too, had a single voice for most of the period. After graduating from Amherst College in 1871, Brownell immediately began at the *World* as a reporter. He rose to city editor in 1872 and remained in that position until 1879. Throughout his time at the *World*, Brownell seems to have been responsible for the art writing.

Prior to Brownell's appointment, art writing at the *World* seems to have been a responsibility shared by William Hurlbert and Andrew Wheeler. Eugene Benson identified William Hurlbert as writing on art for the *World* in 1869.[39] Hurlbert (see Appendix) had a long association with the paper, beginning his career there in 1862 and serving from 1876 to 1883 as editor-in-chief. Hurlbert was known for a hot temper and was subject to sustained rages, and perhaps it was he who penned the 1870 National

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Academy annual reviews, which were mean-spirited enough to make Clarence Cook seem meek.[40] John Jones in *Harper's Weekly* identified the *World's* 1870 Academy annual exhibition reviewer as a fellow artist.[41] It's not known if Hurlbert was an artist, but his colleague Andrew C. Wheeler (see Appendix) was an amateur painter, and art articles appeared over his initials in 1872, including the Academy review.[42]

The absence of a writer dedicated to art coverage perhaps explains the limited scale and scope of art writing in the 1868 and 1869 *World*; what little appeared was primarily descriptive. In 1870, the writing became more profound and the writer(s) was particularly interested in the progress of American art and supported the stirrings of new blood that were apparent as early as 1870. At this time, too, the *World* outlined the artist's duty to work for truth and criticized the sensationalism and showiness it saw in the art of someone like Albert Bierstadt.[43] Prescient of one of William Crary Brownell's most fundamental guidelines later in the decade, the *World*, from early on, called for artistic treatment to match subject matter.

William Crary Brownell, a friend of many artists and particularly the residents of the Tenth Street Studio Building, exemplified the new, younger, more professional, and studied critic. Born in 1851, more than twenty years younger than Cook, and only twenty at the time of his appointment to the *World*, he allied himself strongly with the younger generation from the start. Identifying the differences between the old and new men was a leitmotif throughout Brownell's writings. He understood early on and very completely that it was the use of technique as a means of expression, rather than reliance on subject

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

matter, that fundamentally separated the old and new.[44] From 1875, when the wave of young, European-trained artists arrived in New York in full force, Brownell was among their greatest supporters. Fundamental to his consideration of them was the importance he placed on unity and completeness in art and their manifestation in the design and visual conception of the object as a whole.[45] With these concerns as his guiding interests, George Fuller in the late 1870s most closely fulfilled Brownell's requirements for art. While Brownell did not especially labor over the question of a national art, he was attuned to the differences among cultures and so sought out certain characteristics he could identify as particularly American.

New York Times

While today the *Times* fills the role as the preeminent American newspaper for art criticism, art writing did not really appear in the paper until the middle of the 1870s. Although earlier in the decade there were notices of every National Academy and American Watercolor Society annual exhibition, they were purely descriptive and often short. As late as 1875 there was hardly any writing that can be called criticism, and the most frequent art reports came from Europe, prefiguring the paper's later, very cosmopolitan stance. The lack of in-depth art coverage in the *Times* could have been due to the fact that the responsibilities of art writing were covered by the man who served as the managing editor as well as the reviewer of books, Samuel Stillman Conant (see Appendix).[46]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In 1876 the *Times* began its commitment to thorough coverage of the visual arts. In that year, Charles De Kay (see Appendix) joined the paper's staff, and over eighteen years served as literary editor, art editor, and editorial writer. DeKay was the consummate journalist-critic.[47] Working from the viewpoint that his audience was the general public, not just elite collectors, DeKay wrote readable, descriptive, and lively, if sometimes convoluted, accounts of the art and artists of the day. Although he surely must have been aware of prevalent theories on art, DeKay concentrated instead on stylistic descriptions of objects and reports of artists' personalities, with many of whom he was personally acquainted. His approach to artists through their styles rather than their subjects was novel in the mid-1870s and fed the rising acceptance of expression through artistic treatment instead of subject. DeKay's taste was wide-ranging, but, not surprisingly, as a member of the younger generation himself, he was supportive of the younger artists—especially those who used color as a primary vehicle for expression (i.e., those later to be called tonalists). Although he wrote most favorably about the artists connected to the Society of American Artists, with which he was closely involved, he was still bothered in the later seventies with the problems of unfinish and incompleteness.[48] On the issue of the need for a national art, DeKay increasingly sought to find particularly American characteristics in American art and supported those who chose to stay home. Nonetheless, he advocated a thorough knowledge of European art, and thus his writings meshed with the *Times'* stream of art articles from Europe. In the late 1870s, James Jackson Jarves (see Appendix) contributed regularly to the paper on such various and often hotly debated topics as James McNeill Whistler, the place of European art in relation to building an American school of art, and taxing imported art.[49] A complete cosmopolite grounded in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the belief of the supremacy of the European tradition, Jarves' writing helped the *Times* create a pro-Europe attitude towards art even as DeKay heartily supported native artists.

Evening Mail

Like the previously mentioned newspapers, the *Mail* had thorough art coverage. In fact, of all the New York papers during the 1870s, it often devoted the most column inches to art. However, it differed from the other papers in that it rarely had a singular art voice. Numerous sets of initials and pseudonyms as well as many unsigned articles appear throughout the *Mail*. The newest of the papers mentioned so far, the *Mail* was founded in 1867 by brothers Charles and Henry Sweetser along with Jonas Mills Bundy, who served as the paper's editor-in-chief until his death in 1891.[50] D. O'C. Townley (see Appendix), who died at the age of 41, held the post of art and drama editor at the *Mail* and likely was the paper's primary art writer from 1869 until his death in December 1872.[51] During these years, the *Mail* carefully measured the progress of American art by the forward strides it could see in a number of individual artists rather than in collective growth. It identified the ultimate goal of art as being fulfilled by the expression of sentiment over technical prowess and being based in truth as one sees it. Such a viewpoint allowed for the conservative Townley, who preferred the work of Samuel Colman, Seymour Guy, and David Huntington, to commend John La Farge for his honesty of vision, even if he disagreed with his subject choices or treatment.[52]

After Townley's death, it becomes much more difficult to determine the art writers for the *Mail*. The paper paid significant attention to art publications, suggesting that perhaps

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the art writing could have also been the province of the literary editor, a position held by Richard Rogers Bowker (see Appendix) from 1869-75.[53] At the end of 1874 the *Mail's* editorial staff was cut so that a single individual was responsible for more than one department.[54] At this time, the attention to art books became even more prominent, again suggesting the literary editor may have played a key role. The art responsibilities also might have been shouldered by editor-in-chief Bundy, who previously had been literary editor at the *Post* under Bryant in the 1860s. In 1875 and 1876, Mrs. Hannah McLaren Shepard wrote art articles under the pseudonym "Scotch Granite."[55] J. Watts de Peyster was the drama critic for the *Mail* in the later 1870s, but his pseudonym "Anchor" appears on art articles, as do those of the still unidentified "Sixela" (1872) and "FGI" (1878).[56] Although the original *Mail* publishers Henry and Charles Sweetser were both dead by early 1871, another Sweetser—Moses Forster—wrote on art.[57] With this diversity of writers, it is difficult to attach an overarching aesthetic identity to the *Mail*, but a conservative viewpoint generally held sway, and there was consistent support for American subject matter, even in the late seventies. These views did not appear at the expense of attention to Europe but rather in contrast to it.

New York Herald

The *New York Herald* was legendary for its focus on hard news, sensationalism, and heavy advertising during its years of ownership (1838-1918) by the James Gordon Bennetts (father and son). Its art writing during the 1870s followed the paper's fundamental attitude and appeared primarily as simply another kind of news reporting.[58] The art world was well covered and the exhibition reviews were sometimes lengthy, but a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

strictly objective and perfunctory approach was often taken. As art activities increased during the decade, so did the *Herald's* amount of coverage.

The *Herald* is also one of the few periodicals where we have no clue whatsoever as to who wrote any of the art items. Exhibition reviews, especially, expressed quite varied opinions from year to year. Early on, there was a fairly consistent predisposition towards traditional home genre artists like Enoch Wood Perry, yet the writer(s) also could express appreciation for the practitioners of the looser, less narrative styles that were beginning to appear. With that approbation, however, came the repeated concern that the new endeavors leaned too heavily on technical prowess. By the end of the decade, multiple viewpoints were expressed. At times, there was a sincere concern that the Society of American Artists' existence was detrimental to the cause of American art. Simultaneously, home artists were given the greatest attention and highest praise. In this context, a tonal aesthetic was preferred, particularly that of someone like Jervis McEntee, where the "truth to nature" dictum and drawing remained the artistic foundation from which his creativity sprang. Yet, there were occasional glimpses of more liberal thinking, in which, for example, Frank Duveneck's bold technique could be appreciated. Similarly, in considering watercolor late in the decade, the *Herald* reprimanded J. Frank Currier for pushing too far the boundaries of acceptable completeness, while recognizing the power of pure watercolor suggested by his work. Without a name or names to assign to such opinions, one must refer to the art writing in the *Herald* on a case by case basis, although it may typify, perhaps, a middle-of-the-road point of view regarding the major changes in the seventies.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Evening Telegram

The *Telegram* was a tabloid-style paper that was virtually the afternoon edition of the *Herald.*[59] The Bennetts started the paper in 1867, and it specialized in Wall Street news, cable dispatches, crime stories, and sensational features. The *Telegram's* art coverage was more spotty than in the *Herald*, although it did include major exhibition reviews and occasional reports of sales and auctions. The art items in the *Telegram* often mirrored that of its sister paper, but, like the morning paper, no writers for the *Telegram* have been positively identified. There are enough divergences between the two papers' art writing to prevent the assumption that the same person wrote for both journals. Like the *Herald*, however, the *Telegram* leaned toward description, and its moderately conservative outlook occasionally veered toward the more progressive. In the late sixties, the paper still adhered to the mid-century insistence on careful drawing from nature. Later in the decade—reflecting the general shift in thought—color was championed for its ability to suggest mood and artists like George Inness and Homer Dodge Martin received considerable praise. The *Telegram* gave considerable attention to watercolor. It often responded positively to the Roman-Spanish school of Fortuny from its first appearance in the early mid-1870s, a propensity that gave many of those reviews a forward-thinking, cosmopolitan outlook.

Evening Express

The *Express*, edited until 1877 by Erastus Brooks, printed fewer art articles than those papers already mentioned. It reviewed each of the major exhibitions except for the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

National Academy annual in 1878 and that of the Watercolor Society in 1879, but its coverage was often cursory. Ascribing authorship to the writing on art in the *Express* has proved difficult since a number of men, all capable of writing on art, had connections with the paper. In 1872 alone, Fletcher Harper, Jr., Samuel Conant, and George W. Hows were mentioned as employed by the *Express.*[60] Of the three, George Hows (see Appendix) seems the most likely candidate for primary art writer, due to the fact that he had the longest tenure with the paper and the greatest connections to art. He was identified as a critic by Francis Fairfield in 1873, and later in the decade Hows wrote on art for the paper both under his own initials as well as his pseudonym "Strix."[61] "Waterloo," who wrote on art in the *Express* during 1876-77, remains unidentified.

The appearance of different attitudes towards European art—sometimes more pro-German, at others more pro-French—suggests a stable of writers for the *Express*. Varied viewpoints, perhaps due to a rotating cast of writers, give a jumbled feel to the paper's art writings and preclude assigning it any single aesthetic identity. The only consistent viewpoint was a forthright support of home subjects and artists accompanied by a concern for how older artists were being affected by the rising, European-trained younger artists.

Commercial Advertiser

One of America's oldest newspapers, the *Commercial Advertiser* had its roots in the *American Minerva*, established in 1793.[62] Its focus by the 1860s was almost exclusively business, and so much of its art reporting in the 1870s dispatched the news of sales and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

auctions. Nonetheless, the reviews that did appear were thoughtful and thorough.[63] From 1868 until his premature death at age forty-six in January 1878, Theodore C. Grannis (see Appendix) was the designated art critic for the *Commercial Advertiser*.[64] Unlike most of his peers, Grannis was recognized as a practicing artist and reviewed exhibitions in which he had work.[65] Interestingly, he can be characterized as the most consistently conservative critic. From the beginning of his tenure at the *Commercial Advertiser*, Grannis expressed great reservations about the increasing evidence of "hastiness" in the appearance of younger artists' works. In 1875, when the artists studying in Munich made their first group appearance and captured the attention of most critics, Grannis instead focused on those artists who painted more tightly. Of those trained in Europe, he preferred those with French training or at least disposition, such as Frederick Bridgman and John Beaufain Irving.[66] Grannis' aesthetic viewpoint could never accommodate the work of William Merritt Chase or Frank Duveneck.

Whoever succeeded Grannis in the position of art critic for the *Commercial Advertiser* continued and even increased the conservative voice. An insistent call for American art based on American subjects without European influence pervaded the reviews of the paper after 1878 and disallowed any appreciation of the more radical practitioners of the younger generation like J. Frank Currier. For the *Commercial Advertiser*, artists like John George Brown and Alfred F. Bellows held the hope for American art.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Daily Graphic

Begun in 1873, the *Daily Graphic* was a heavily illustrated newspaper. Its early coverage of the art world was thorough, including studio notes with art world news and gossip and reports of public and private collections and sales. A full compendium of topical articles and exhibition reviews, some with illustrations of installations or individual pictures, rounded out the art coverage. David Goodman Croly (see Appendix) was the managing editor of the *Daily Graphic* from its inception until a disagreement with the paper's owners led to his resignation in 1878. After Croly's departure, the *Daily Graphic*'s interest in art waned, and by 1880 its fine arts coverage was a shadow of its former self.

Croly, a proponent of positivism and an independent thinker who disliked the obvious way of saying or doing things, may have been the author of some of the numerous unsigned art articles and reviews in the *Daily Graphic.*[67] There can be no doubt, however, that the paper employed other individuals to write on art as well. The unidentified "Candide" reviewed the National Academy of Design annual in 1873. Between 1873 and 1876 occasional articles are signed "Erastus South." South's identity remains elusive, but it is tempting to consider the name as an additional pseudonym for Earl Shinn. Shinn's primary *nom de plume*, Edward Strahan, also made use of his initials, and the *Daily Graphic* articles penned by Erastus South have some striking similarities to those by Shinn in the *Nation.*[68]

From its start, the *Daily Graphic* was attracted to the rising generation of artists. Its writers consistently approached art issues with a cosmopolitan attitude. A pervading

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

open-mindedness allowed positive responses to a wide range of artistic treatments. Even though accomplished drawing was considered necessary to any artistic presentation, the *Daily Graphic*, in general, exhibited a high tolerance for sketchiness. Thus, in a single 1877 review, the paper praised both Frank Duveneck and Seymour Joseph Guy, representing the untraditional and academic approaches, respectively.[69]

New York Sun

In 1868 Charles A. Dana purchased the *Sun*, and for three decades he oversaw a well written, albeit slightly sensational, paper with human interests at its center.[70] In the 1870s its news content was more plentiful than advertising (a rarity at the time), and the exposure of political corruption was a favorite topic, thus earning the *Sun* the reputation of the "newspaperman's paper."[71] Until the mid-1870s art coverage in the paper was meager. Full-fledged exhibition reviews did not appear until 1874. Significant attention to art matters only truly began when Dana hired William Mackay Laffan (see Appendix) in 1877. Dana was known for hiring young talent looking for their first regular employment, and Laffan fit that profile. At the time of his hiring as a general writer, he was recognized as valuable as an art critic because he was also an artist.[72]

Laffan, a connoisseur of Chinese ceramics and art advisor to the wealthy in his later years, was a true cosmopolite. He supported artists traveling to Europe for training because he believed exposure to European culture was important for the progress of American art. He was, like many of his peers, more comfortable with the academic traditions of Europe than with the cutting edge. For America he hoped for a national art

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rooted in home subjects, and he looked for individualized presentations of American qualities on her canvases. With these attitudes, Laffan found the free brushwork of artists such as Frank Duveneck and William Merritt Chase slovenly and crude, and he thought their works were empty of content. He preferred instead George Fuller and Arthur Quartley's more tightly constructed (if not always so painted) poetic canvases of American people and scenery.

The Independent

The weekly *Independent* was founded in 1848 as an organ of the Congregational Church and was known early on for its fervent anti-slavery position. It remained a mainly religious periodical until 1870 when Henry C. Bowen assumed the editorship from Theodore Tilton; henceforth, it became increasingly secular. Art writing was only an occasional contribution until 1875, but regular reviews of major exhibitions as well as art notes and topical art articles were features from that date. A cadre of contributors from Europe, most notably James Jackson Jarves, gave the paper an aesthetic viewpoint steeped in the European tradition.[73] It is not known who wrote the New York exhibition reviews, but whoever it was followed Jarves' basic dictum that American artists must be rooted in European art and thought. Nonetheless, there was the recognition that a national art was not only possible but imperative and that it would grow from artists picturing spiritual as well as material aspects of American life. For Jarves and the writers of the *Independent*, American landscape painting continued, as it had from the 1850s, to hold the hope of a successful American art. Landscapes were often the focus of the paper's exhibition reviews. The reviews suggested the dilemma that American art faced in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

second half of the 1870s: older artists were stagnated yet the younger ones were not meeting the promise as harbingers for a new and particularly American art. Flashy technique, and, especially, the rise of what was called "impressionism" at the end of the decade, did not impress the writers, who were more concerned with the expression of feeling and emotion that reflected the individuality of the artist and allowed for art to be both original and national.

General Magazines, Their Writers, and Aesthetic Identities

After the Civil War, a number of new magazines were founded that significantly increased the amount of high quality fiction, essays, poetry, and criticism available to the reading public. In many, attention to the visual arts was a key component. Common to many of the art writers for magazines, and separating them from most of their newspaper colleagues, was a more central connection to the literary life in America. As primary vehicles for publishing American literature and its criticism, magazines functioned as repositories and exponents of the various attitudes towards American writing, both fiction and nonfiction. In the 1870s the chief literary camps were divided into those who wanted a more truthful treatment of life and those who sought to continue the earlier romantic tradition and its dependence on idealism.[74] The shifting from a romantic base to a realist one also colored the concept of nationalism in literature and literary criticism. Thus, the definitions of a national literature and its relation to European traditions were debated as heavily as those for the visual arts were in the art criticism of this period.[75]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Nation

The *Nation* was founded in 1865 and was edited by E. L. Godkin from its inception until 1899. The magazine's stated purpose was to be an intellectual weekly; its subtitle read: "a weekly journal devoted to Politics, Literature, Science and Art." It was also a primary vehicle for late nineteenth-century liberal American political thought.[76] Central to the magazine's mission was to counteract what it regarded as the prevailing vices in journalism—inaccuracy and exaggeration.[77] The *Nation*'s reputation for consistency of tone and policy held true for its reporting and attitudes toward art. Art was a regular feature of the magazine and reviews of major exhibitions appeared on a timely basis throughout the period. From its beginning, the *Nation*'s principal objective for art criticism was to develop a higher standard of criticism beyond the "primeval newspaper notice."[78]

Despite the *Nation*'s strict policy of anonymity, the magazine's account books illuminate, to a large degree, and especially from 1873, who its contributors were.[79] It is a well-known fact that Charles Eliot Norton (see Appendix) served as art editor from the first until 1908. Most of his written contributions, however, were on poetry and literature.[80] The chief writer on art during the 1870s was Earl Shinn. He offered his work to the weekly as early as 1868, but it was between 1874 and 1879 that he contributed most consistently.[81] In 1879 William Crary Brownell became assistant editor of the *Nation*, and until Shinn's death in 1886, seems to have shared art writing duties with him from that time.[82] Russell Sturgis (see Appendix) also wrote occasional art articles beginning in 1865.[83]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Even though Norton only occasionally penned art articles in the *Nation*, his views on art generally dominated the magazine's art writing. He believed that a country's fine arts reflected its moral aspirations.[84] Thus, for Norton, the state of American creativity had national import and implications. Throughout the 1870s, a preoccupation with the issue of a national art is pervasive. In the later seventies, the magazine's interest in national art grew and it sought particular expressions of it, while still understanding the need for its development from a universal base.

Another issue that colored the *Nation's* aesthetic identity was its commitment to the necessity of good drawing and its concern that this practice was being lost. Early on, criticism of art that was too sketchy was a frequent and repeated refrain. The early call for accomplished drawing reflects, most probably, both Norton's and Sturgis' long devotion to Ruskinian thought and its attending requirement of the truthful delineation of nature. This attitude also was embraced by Shinn, although he came to it from a very different standpoint. His insistence on careful drawing was rooted in his experience as a student in the Parisian studio of Jean-Léon Gérôme, and Shinn remained committed to the virtues of French academic training, especially its emphasis on drawing. However, due to Shinn's cosmopolitan outlook, by the mid-seventies, the *Nation* showed more interest in technical issues and broader effects in oil were deemed acceptable. Still, a visual and conceptual degree of finish always remained an important criteria for Shinn, and his highest praise was often reserved for French-trained painters such as Frederick Bridgman, Edgar Ward, and Thomas Eakins.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A wide-ranging knowledge of art is recognizable in all of the *Nation's* art writing, and in the second half of the decade a real love for Japanese objects is discernible. This knowledge and appreciation were coupled with an openness to the decorative qualities of art, especially in watercolor. From 1877, the magazine took a more forward-thinking stance, calling the older academicians fogies and strongly supporting the younger artists. In oil, George Fuller was praised for his poetry and imagination, and Seymour Guy, representing the academicians, was considered an embarrassment. In watercolor, extreme sketchiness remained a thorny problem, and it was repeatedly pointed out that transparency alone did not make good watercolors. The arrangement of truthful ideas derived from the external world but processed through an artist's original thoughts was valued in all mediums.

Appleton's Journal

The existence of *Appleton's Journal* coincides almost exactly with the period under consideration in this dissertation, its first issue appearing in April 1869 and its demise coming at the end of 1881. For the first half of its run, it appeared weekly, and in the first year-and-a-half it included illustrations, a number of which were by Winslow Homer. From 1876 *Appleton's* appeared monthly, but its content remained constant until 1878 when, except for criticism, it began publishing only reprinted articles.[85] The New York scene dominated the discussions in *Appleton's* pages, and art was a significant and regular feature with reviews, monthly columns of reporting, and articles on a variety of topics.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Oliver Bell Bunce (see Appendix) was the primary editor for *Appleton's* throughout its existence.[86] Under Bunce's guidance, three phases of writers covered the art world. From 1869 through 1872, Eugene Benson (see Appendix) contributed some of the most thoughtful articles of the day on art and America.[87] Between 1871 and 1877, Susan Nichols Carter (see Appendix) provided most of the magazine's exhibition reviews, and in 1874 she was recognized as *Appleton's* regular art critic.[88] With Carter's departure from the pages of *Appleton's*, the art reviews and articles moved to the "Editor's Table," which was usually written by Bunce.[89]

Appleton's, looking to families for its readership, had as its broad mission to improve and educate, and took a moderate stance on most issues.[90] Its aesthetic identity rested mainly with the views of individual writers. In its first years, Eugene Benson took on the role of the outspoken critic.[91] He wrote on literature, manners, and social culture as well as art. Concern for the growing materialism of the age and a concerted interest in the implications of democracy's impact on culture guided Benson's writings. He argued for a democratic American art that reflected the people and daily life through both its internal and external characteristics. In painting, he looked for American subjects executed in a recognizably American language.[92] His models in art, however, came from France, particularly the work of Thomas Couture and Jean François Millet, and from those artists who had a commitment to moral and political ideals.[93]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Susan Nichols Carter was a painter as well as an art writer and from 1873-1896 served as the principal of the Women's Art School of the Cooper Union Institute.[94] The combination of artist, writer, and educator served her well in her critical efforts, and perhaps explains her extreme open-mindedness and catholic taste. In her earlier years with *Appleton's*, Carter praised both the best of the older guard as well as younger artists. In general, variety—in subject matter and in treatment—was to be lauded for its own sake, and this interest in different means of expression allowed her to commend in the same exhibition artists as diverse as those of the Spanish-Roman circle of Mariano Fortuny and those, such as Fidelia Bridges, with roots in the American Pre-Raphaelite movement.[95] Carter was cosmopolitan in her outlook and knowledge, often identifying foreign influence in an artist's work as part of her critical investigations. She generally supported the younger artists who began to return from Europe in 1875, but she also continued to praise such home artists as Seymour Joseph Guy. Her chief barometer for measuring the success of art was the appropriateness and excellence of treatment, especially the use of color and light, in relation to the subject to which they were applied.

From 1877 Carter's writings moved from D. Appleton and Company's general magazine to its New York edition of the London-based *Art Journal*. Carter's move to the *Art Journal* coincided with the beginning of the downturn of *Appleton's* success. Art reviews and commentary subsequently came under editor Bunce's domain. Much more conservative than Carter, he pleaded strongly for an American art defined by subject and devoid of European influence. Bunce had serious reservations about the emphasis on technique in the later 1870s, and he worried that technique would subordinate the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

importance of thought in art. His conservative stand on watercolor led him to question the legitimacy of the medium and the validity of sketches as exhibitable works of art through the end of the decade.

The Galaxy

The *Galaxy* was another periodical whose life span nearly mirrors that of this study. Begun in 1866 and appearing for a dozen years, it was co-edited by brothers William Conant Church and Francis Pharcellus Church.[96] The magazine's intent was to be a New York equivalent of the *Atlantic*, and the two magazines were competitors. The *Galaxy* featured literary figures outside of New England. It serialized the writings of Anthony Trollope, Rebecca Harding Davis, and Gen. George Custer, and, from its inception through March 1872, illustrations by well-regarded illustrators, including Winslow Homer, accompanied some of the stories. Overall, the *Galaxy* was known for its originality and directness, without being extreme. Fiction was always its largest component. Most famous, though short-lived, was Mark Twain's "Memoranda" column, which ran for eleven months. Drama, too, received more than passing attention.[97]

The fine arts played a subordinate yet noteworthy role in the *Galaxy*. It reviewed art exhibitions only occasionally, noticing the National Academy annuals of 1868, 1869, and 1875, and those of the Watercolor Society only in 1869 and 1875. The early reviews were penned by Samuel Conant and those in 1875 by Henry James. Conant's reviews of the 1868 and 1869 academy shows reflect the magazine's interest in Americanness and American characteristics.[98] His framework was conventionally constructed and thus he

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

preferred American genre subjects, such as those by Enoch Wood Perry and Seymour Joseph Guy, and was concerned about the detrimental effect a high level of French influence might have. Conant, however, occasionally exhibited a certain forward-thinking attitude, seen, for example, in his praise for Whistler's etchings.[99]

Other substantial art writing in the *Galaxy* appeared in isolated articles, such as those on Eastman Johnson and "Democratic Deities" by Eugene Benson or on museums by James Jackson Jarves.[100] George E. Pond (see Appendix) wrote the "Driftwood" columns under the pseudonym Philip Quilibet. Mainly political in content, his articles sometimes intersected with art issues. In discussions of native talent, art and politics, the centennial, and American taste, Pond searched for evidence of Americanness at every opportunity.[101]

Putnam's Magazine

The *Putnam's* publication that appeared between 1868 and 1870 was a revival of an earlier title that was published between 1853 and 1857.[102] In its later version, *Putnam's* was edited sequentially by Charles F. Briggs, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and finally Parke Godwin, and focused on current affairs and social questions. Many of *Putnam's* writers were newspapermen. According to Frank Luther Mott, Samuel Conant was in charge of the fine arts department in this second, short-lived incarnation of *Putnam's*. Conant and Benson both appeared as exhibition reviewers, and Benson also contributed a useful series on private collections, including those of August Belmont and William Blodgett.[103] In *Putnam's* both men's writings were consistent with their contributions in other forums, such as the *Galaxy* and *Appleton's*.[104]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine

Although *Harper's Monthly* did not print any exhibition reviews in the 1870s, it was a voice for art, especially late in the decade, through occasional articles on specific topics by such noted art writers as Samuel Stillman Conant, Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin (see Appendix), George Sheldon (see Appendix), and Moncure D. Conway, who contributed articles from France. [105] Conant, again, is said to have been the primary art critic for the magazine, but his precise duties, apart from contributing articles, are unknown.[106]

Under Henry Mills Alden's tenure as editor from 1869 to 1919, *Harper's* helped to shape American culture through its support of traditionally based, distinctly American values. *Harper's* focused its readers' attention on the questions of the current state and progress of American culture, especially through the lens of its relationship to the past and as part of a historical construction.[107] Alden's viewpoints were bolstered in the art articles, especially later in the decade, through S. G. W. Benjamin's series covering contemporary art in Europe, present tendencies in America, and his historical overview of the last fifty years of American art.[108] George Sheldon also investigated the new departures in American art.[109] Publishing these broad examinations of American art alongside assessments of the chief European schools furthered Alden's goals for the magazine. In the "Editor's Easy Chair" column, political editor George William Curtis offered occasional commentaries on art, but more frequently wrote on politics, social issues, drama, and literature. Curtis, a graduate of the Brook Farm experience and a friend of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Emerson and Thoreau, continued the moralizing tendencies of his transcendentalist roots into the seventies. His dedication to illuminating American progress was a consistent note in all his writings.[110]

Harper's Weekly

In addition to his work for the *Times*, *Galaxy*, *Putnam's*, and others, Samuel Stillman Conant also served as managing editor for *Harper's Weekly* from 1869 until his disappearance in 1885. His job there included obtaining literary material, descriptions, and miscellany, and selecting news subjects for illustration.[111] Art writing, per se, was only a minor topic in *Harper's Weekly* during the seventies, and it only occasionally included art articles and reviews. At both the beginning and the end of the decade, a conservative viewpoint consistent with that espoused by Conant may be discerned.[112] Artists such as Thomas Waterman Wood, John George Brown, and M. F. H. De Haas continued to be favored late in the decade. George William Curtis, who had written on art for the weekly in its early years, was, by the seventies, writing mainly on politics here as well as in *Harper's Monthly*. However, the few art reviews that did appear may have been written by him.

Scribner's Monthly Magazine

Scribner's, with Josiah Gilbert Holland as editor, was begun in 1870 in direct competition to *Harper's Monthly*.[113] Richard Watson Gilder (see Appendix), at first Holland's second in command, was handling most editorial duties by 1875 due to Holland's ill health. Gilder, formally named Holland's successor in 1878, not only wrote the "Old Cabinet"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

columns but also likely served as the primary art writer. Art received considerable attention in *Scribner's*, mainly in the form of exhibition reviews in the "Culture and Progress" columns. While the reviews of the National Academy and Watercolor Society exhibitions were fairly regular (although the Academy was ignored in 1870, 1876, and 1878), they were often short, especially in the magazines' first few years. *Scribner's* commentary on exhibitions often acted as a springboard for the discussion of overarching issues for art rather than surveying the works on view.

Throughout the period, *Scribner's* keenly supported American art, recognizing originality and individuality as especially American characteristics. This reflected the interests of Gilder who, with his wife, Helena DeKay, was a key player in the creation of the Society of American Artists. By mid-decade, older artists were criticized in *Scribner's* for being stagnant, and younger artists—both Munich- and Paris-trained, such as William Merritt Chase and Wyatt Eaton—were praised. *Scribner's* accepted the necessity of European training in order to acquire technical abilities that would enable the creation of a discernibly American art of the highest standard. While, at the end of the decade, Munich-trained artists were heartily praised, artistic independence was repeatedly called for as was art whose purpose extended beyond the canvas surface to engage the heart and mind. *Scribner's* found these qualities in the poetic canvases of such artists as Inness, Fuller, and Homer Dodge Martin, where an independent, American, and substantial expression were evoked. Gilder's writings, occasional art articles on topics like "Living American Artists," and William Crary Brownell's series on art schools and the younger

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

painters of America all supported *Scribner's* mission to encourage the growth of American art.[114]

Atlantic Monthly

Although Boston-based, the *Atlantic Monthly* has been nominally included in this study due to its close relationship with New York periodicals and its considerable coverage of the New York art world.[115] As the pre-eminent pre-Civil War literary periodical, the *Atlantic* served first as a model and then as stiff competition for its New York counterparts.[116] In the 1870s, under the editorship of William Dean Howells, the magazine shed much of its sectional bias and vied with *Harper's* and *Scribner's* for a broad-based American readership.[117] The *Atlantic's* art department was established in 1872; prior to that only occasional art articles had appeared. From 1872 through June of 1877, monthly art columns, though often Boston-connected, investigated a broad variety of topics, from commentary on old master painting to contemporary art and issues. The attention to New York art matters was significant, not simply because of New York's central position in the American art world, but also due to many New York artists, including Winslow Homer, having roots in and/or exhibiting in Boston. Art discussions continued, but less frequently after mid-1877, when they were primarily absorbed into the "Contributor's Club" column.

While the *Atlantic's* individual art articles are signed, the art columns are anonymous. William Dean Howells himself may have written some of the art columns, including the New York art reviews.[118] In 1875 George Lathrop joined the *Atlantic* staff as associate

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

editor and is known to have shared writing duties with Howells, especially in the "Contributor's Club" columns during 1877.[119] In the late seventies, William H. Bishop of New York was specifically engaged to write on New York art topics. Regardless of who was writing, Howells retained a firm grip on the opinions expressed, even pressing Bishop to amend a review of the National Academy to better reflect his own taste.[120]

The *Atlantic's* aesthetic identity asserted itself in two ways. The general art articles often focused on European art and are testament to the cosmopolitan attitude pervasive among Boston's elite. The *Atlantic's* New York authors, such as Eugene Benson and Samuel Benjamin, upheld such views. The art columns, too, often focused on European art, commenting on such diverse topics as Johann Winkelmann, Charles Eastlake, Jean-François Millet, and Viollet-le-Duc. Within this cosmopolitan context, however, emerged a prescription for American art similar to Howells' desires for American literature. Howells sought writing that would create a faithful vision of America's physical and emotional life through the observation of the external world; this vision, put forth in the writer's style and descriptive images, would, in turn, stir the reader's own imagination.[121] In painting, the mysterious and poetic canvases of Fuller and Inness, both artists with strong Boston connections, came closest to fulfilling Howells' realist construct. Howells also sought for literature a symbiotic relationship between technique and subject. In the later years of the decade, similar attitudes towards painting caused the *Atlantic* to praise lavishly the younger artists—especially those returning from Munich—whose paint application was understood to represent what they saw as they saw it.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Art Magazines, Their Writers, and Aesthetic Identities

As was noted earlier, art magazines saw exponential growth beginning in 1875. Between 1868 and 1881, the *Aldine*, *Art Journal*, *Art Interchange*, *Art Amateur*, and *American Art Review*, all new magazines exclusively devoted to the visual and decorative arts, began publication. In addition, *American Architect and Building News*, though primarily serving the architectural community, intersected considerably with the fine arts world through exhibition reviews and occasional art articles. With the exception of the *Aldine* and the *Art Journal*, these periodicals emerged at the very end of the period under discussion. Their appearance *en masse* reflects the burst of art interest by the public and in the press at this time. These magazines were instrumental in giving a voice to American art, especially to the younger generation, and to a growing cosmopolitan outlook.

Watson's Art Journal

Watson's Art Journal stands as a kind of bridge between the art press of this period and the one preceding it. It began publication in 1864 and lasted until its publisher/editor Henry Watson's death in 1875.[122] Watson was primarily a music critic (formerly of the *Tribune*), and his magazine was devoted as much to music as to the visual arts. In *Watson's*, the regular art features were mainly news notes or gossip. Exhibition reviews were sporadic. If an aesthetic identity can be associated with the magazine, it is one steeped in a reverential attitude towards the European tradition. In 1875 *Watson's* art component was absorbed by the *Art Journal* (see below).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Aldine

In 1868 the *Aldine* began as a trade magazine for the printing industry; its focus was typography. During its first two years of publication, it mainly reprinted useful articles from other journals, becoming a full-service art journal in 1870. Richard Henry Stoddard, having recently quit the *World* as literary editor, served as the *Aldine's* editor from 1871 to 1874.[123] The magazine continued to emphasize the graphic arts and was known especially for its engraved illustrations. With Stoddard's retirement by 1876, James Sutton, Jr., was named editor, and the number of images in each issue increased. By 1878, general art articles had virtually disappeared. Only brief commentary accompanied the illustrations its last two years before its demise in 1879.

The *Aldine* was arguably the best source for engravings of European academic art in periodicals of the mid-1870s, and, thus, the magazine's identity was based on them and on the accompanying short articles in which they were described. The remaining articles were also often European in subject or at least leaned towards the academic, conservative, and ideal tradition. The sporadic exhibition reviews followed this bent. Some of the most conservative newspapermen, such as D. O'C. Townley and Theodore Grannis, were contributors to the magazine. By 1876 the *Aldine* appeared very old-fashioned and backwards-looking, and in fact was the primary stronghold of earlier nineteenth-century art thought.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Art Journal

From 1875 until 1887, D. Appleton & Co. published an American, New York-based edition of the well established London *Art Journal*. Not surprisingly, and especially at first, it had a significantly British outlook provided by reprints of British articles and the use of British writers. A long series on Edwin Landseer and articles on artists such as George A. Storey and Frederick Hardy reflected the popular British taste for narrative and literary painting. Yet, at the same time, there was an ongoing series on American artists as well as articles on internationally renowned painters, such as Mariano Fortuny. A broad range of engraved illustrations accompanied all these articles. Thus, the magazine provided for American readers an influx of especially British images with which they were hitherto unfamiliar.

In addition to the reprinted British authors, such as James Dafforne and Charles Pascoe, a stable of American writers helped the magazine grapple with the changing attitudes towards American art at the end of the decade. Lucy Hooper (see Appendix), writing from Paris, contributed news and reviews of the contemporary art scene there. Susan Nichols Carter, especially from 1877 on, was the most regular reviewer of American art, although Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin also wrote for the magazine on occasion.[124] The *Art Journal* also engaged artists as occasional contributors, not only in the interview format but to discuss pressing topics.[125]

Susan Nichols Carter seems to have switched her primary writing venue from *Appleton's Journal* to its sister publication the *Art Journal* by 1877, and from that date, she was the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

one most responsible for conveying the new magazine's attitudes on American art. Her writings in the later 1870s continued the attitudes she expressed earlier in the decade. Her catholicity of taste continued and even broadened to embrace more radical artists. In 1881, for example, Carter's insistence that artistic treatment be appropriate for the subject allowed her to appreciate the watercolors of both the traditional Thomas Waterman Wood and the radical Robert Blum. Now writing specifically for an art periodical, Carter's reviews expanded her previous investigations. A voice for the younger generation, she focused heavily on technique—especially the use of color and the question of finish—and was particularly attuned to and interested in intersections with contemporary European art and training. An awareness of world art, including that of Japan and the decorative arts, further broadened her viewpoint. Within this context, Carter looked for and encouraged the development of an American art with recognizably American characteristics. She recognized, like Benjamin and others of her colleagues, that most American painting was, in the late 1870s, in a necessarily imitative stage, but that it would and should move beyond to a particularly American idiom. This idiom, for Carter, could include a synthesis of various art influences.

American Architect and Building News

Although it was primarily an architecture periodical, the Boston-based *American Architect and Building News* had a strong commitment to writing on the fine arts within two years of its first issue in 1876. That voice was almost exclusively articulated through the writings of Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer (see Appendix).[126] After having spent 1877 out of the country, van Rensselaer returned to a life enmeshed with the most

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cultured art circles of New York. Her return coincided with her soliciting writing assignments; *American Architect and Building News* as well as *Lippincott's* provided her first critical forums.[127]

Van Rensselaer had lived with her family in Germany from 1868-73, and thus was broadly educated and fully aware of European art and literature. As Lois Dinnerstein has pointed out, she considered her role as a critic carefully and was indebted to Matthew Arnold's view of it as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought throughout the world."[128] Believing that art should be a form of communication, van Rensselaer sought an imaginative, poetic, and individual artistic expression in painting. She valued elegance and refinement, but thought that excellence of technique should not be an end in itself but rather a means for the expression of character. Art that took the best from the past and reinvigorated it for the present, and that combined subject and technique into a unified whole, most completely satisfied van Rensselaer, as it did her colleague and friend William Crary Brownell. Thus, she generally supported the members of the Society of American Artists, with many of whom she was closely associated. Her view of the artist as interpreter meant that her greatest praise went to artists like William Morris Hunt and William Page, and, most especially, George Fuller.[129]

Art Interchange

Begun in 1878 with the subtitle "a household journal," *Art Interchange* was created to serve as a popular magazine specializing in the decorative arts.[130] Its very existence was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

an indication of the tremendous surge of interest in the decorative arts after the Centennial. Over time, the journal became increasingly important as a forum for the discussion of the fine arts in general; a certain emphasis on women's work pervaded its pages. The exhibition reviews, art columns on the fine arts, and most other articles are unsigned but among the better known contributors were Russell Sturgis and Metropolitan Museum of Art Director General Louis Palma di Cesnola.

Only the first three years of the magazine coincide with this study, but in that brief time it exhibited what would become a long-standing expression of a nationalist sentiment. The unsigned reviews of the National Academy of Design and Watercolor Society annuals are predominantly descriptive, yet there is an ongoing search for the beautiful as well as for specifically American characteristics in painting. Such concerns mirror the dual, if sometimes competing, interests in the decorative and in America's particular place in the world at this time. *Art Interchange* writers were predisposed towards a high degree of surface finish and completeness of thought, although broader brushstrokes were deemed acceptable to acquire those ends. The tonal palettes, soft-edged but descriptive brushstrokes, and American subjects, like those seen in the landscapes of Jervis McEntee, Arthur Quartley, Bruce Crane, and the figures of Fuller, were most admired. Though poetic expression was a high priority for the writers of *Art Interchange*, the importance of achieving a national identity in art allowed for the continued support of artists like John George Brown into the early 1880s.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Art Amateur

The fourth of the new art magazines to appear in the late 1870s was *Art Amateur*, the first number of which appeared in June 1879. Edited and primarily written, especially at first, by Montague Marks, the magazine was subtitled "a monthly journal devoted to the cultivation of art in the household." To fulfill its described mission, *Art Amateur* included significant sections on decoration and the decorative arts as well as supplements with designs for china painting, needlework, and even furniture and wood carving intended for use by its readers. While household decoration articles filled most of *Art Amateur's* pages, the fine arts were given significant attention through monographic articles on American and European artists as well as regular exhibition reviews and reporting on museums, private collections, art schools, and the like. The sum of these parts created a periodical that was informative on a wide range of art topics and that hoped to elevate taste in America.

The cast of writers who contributed to *Art Amateur* was impressive. Articles by Clarence Cook appeared regularly, but his writing here was focused almost exclusively on home decoration. Earl Shinn, using his pseudonym Edward Strahan, was responsible, in the first years of *Art Amateur*, for most of the exhibition reviews as well as other assorted articles related to painting. Still dedicated to the importance of drawing in the late 1870s, he had mixed reactions to the artists returning from Munich; he admired their technical prowess but found the work ultimately devoid of feeling. The ultimate art for Shinn combined observation and feeling, and he looked for a particularly American strain in her artists. Eakins (though not always unabashedly praised by Shinn), Thomas Hovenden,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and Fuller most nearly fit Shinn's prescription for American art. In them, he saw a technical excellence, especially of drawing, wedded with close observation to evoke an individual expression of subject and thought.

American Art Review

The short-lived *American Art Review*, published only from November 1879 through 1881, was the brainchild of Sylvester Rosa Koehler of Boston. Koehler, who worked for Louis Prang's chromolithography firm for the decade before the appearance of the *Art Review*, had a special love for print media, and etching was prominently featured on the *Art Review*'s pages. Yet, the topics covered in the magazine were wide-ranging; articles on painting, sculpture, architecture, the industrial arts, ancient archaeology, and European museum news could all be found in most issues. Despite these various features, the magazine was overwhelmingly American in content, and an overriding theme was connecting its contents to the present state and progress of American art.

The writing duties at the *American Art Review* were shared, and despite its Boston address, it had contributions from along the East Coast. Besides Koehler, younger writers, including William Mackay Laffan of the *Sun*, William Bishop, who also wrote from New York for the *Atlantic*, and Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin, all contributed, as did the older John Sartain of Philadelphia and Charles Eliot Norton of Boston. Together these writers created a publication especially concerned with a national expression in art, one that supported American artists and recognizably American art.[131]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The inclusion of European items in the magazine seems to have stemmed from a belief in their usefulness as educational tools in this mission.

Although Koehler and his colleagues generally recognized the need for European training and for knowledge of continental art, they hoped for and supported any evidence of American art that had an American center.[132] Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin, in his articles for *American Art Review*, *Harper's*, the *Art Journal*, and elsewhere, especially fostered the attitude espoused by Koehler. Benjamin was a painter himself, and his failures at painting led him to a successful career as a writer. Like many of his peers in the late seventies, Benjamin, inspired by the writings of Hippolyte Taine, saw art as a result of national culture and the development of a national school of art as an evolutionary process. Thus, at this point in America's history, it was recognized that European training gave certain advantages because American art was in a stage of its development where models of excellence were needed. Nevertheless, American artists painting American subjects that reflected the American spirit interested Benjamin most. For him and many of the other younger writers, such as Susan Nichols Carter, Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, and William Crary Brownell, artistic treatment—that is, design, use of color, light, line, arrangement of form— expressed American characteristics as much as did subject matter.

Conclusion

From this outline, the primary areas of concern for American art critics become evident. There is no doubt that the concept of a national art, above all others, preoccupied the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

critical body. It was how this national art might be created that fueled the debates over the period's three main issues for art—subject, technique, and American art's relation to Europe. It is in the 1870s that a greater number of possible artistic modes became acceptable as the attitudes towards these topics interlaced.

There was no tight, linear progression in the critical thinking of writers during this period. A close investigation of the criticism written between 1868 and 1881 reveals the multiple threads of thought and their intricate weave while making more understandable the complexity and turmoil of American art at this juncture. In this varied and shifting climate Winslow Homer produced his paintings, watercolors, illustrations, and drawings from 1868 to 1881. The consideration of the responses to Homer's works, about which so much was said and such strong feelings were elicited, offers a new window onto the art world of the 1870s.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to Chapter 1

[1] Charles F. Wingate, ed., *Views and Interviews on Journalism* (New York: F. B. Patterson, 1875), p. 7.

[2] The newspapers studied include: *Commercial Advertiser*, *Evening Express*, *Evening Mail*, *Evening Post*, *Evening Telegram*, *New York Daily Tribune*, *New York Herald*, *New York Times*, *New York World*, and *Sun*. Three of these papers had only begun publication after 1860. The *World* was established in 1861; the *Mail* and *Telegram* did not appear until 1867. The *Independent* was a weekly, and although it was published in 1868-69, it did not included art articles until 1870. The *Daily Graphic* joined the group at its founding in 1873. (Hereafter, the papers will be mentioned by their common short names such as the *Post*, *Times*, etc.) Papers such as the *New York Ledger* and *Daily News* had very minimal art coverage and so have been used only at those specific moments when they published art-related topics. The *New York Leader* ceased publication in 1871. Brooklyn papers have not been included except where they impart specific information related to Winslow Homer, since at this time Brooklyn and its press were yet a separate entity from that in Manhattan. On Brooklyn's separation from Manhattan, see Linda Ferber, "A Taste Awakened: The American Watercolor Movement in Brooklyn," in *Masters of Light and Color*, pp. 1-2.

[3] Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690-1872* (New York: Harper Bros., 1873), p. 778.

[4] Mott, *American Journalism*, p. 385.

[5] Ibid., p. 412.

[6] Although Clarence Cook had served in the continuous capacity as art critic for the *Tribune* since 1864, his role in the Civil War years was somewhat an anomaly, and it was not until the years between 1868 and 1873 that the *Post*, *World*, and *Commercial Advertiser* began to assign regular art reporting responsibilities to specific individuals. The *Sun* does not seem to have had a designated art writer/critic until 1877. In the case of the *Times*, while covering art may have been the purview of one individual on the staff before 1875, it was not until that year that art articles of substance appeared consistently.

[7] *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly* both appeared in 1850. *Atlantic Monthly* began in 1857.

[8] On the *Crayon*, see Simon, "*The Crayon.*" On the *New Path*, see Ferber and Gerdts, *The New Path.*

[9] The general magazines include: *Appleton's Journal*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Galaxy*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Nation*, *Putnam's Monthly*, and *Scribner's Monthly.*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[10] *Appleton's* first appeared in 1869, *Galaxy* in 1866, *Nation* in 1865, *Putnam's* in 1868 (but ceased in 1870), and *Scribner's* in 1870.

[11] Mott, *The History of American Magazines*, v. 2, pp. 506-7. Magazines that only contributed to the art literature in an ancillary way, with only episodic or singular articles, are not discussed as a whole but inserted where relevant. These include *Lippincott's Magazine*, *Old and New*, *North American Review*, and the *Albion*. Of these only the *Albion* was published in New York.

[12] To date, as the scholars in the field of journalism history have focused on the issues of politics, economics, and literature, the few investigations of anonymity have mainly pertained to these areas; see, for example, Welford D. Taylor, ed., *The Newsprint Mask: The Tradition of the Fictional Journalist in America* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991).

[13] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[14] *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v.79, "E. L. Godkin" entry; Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3, p. 331.

[15] Godkin quite bluntly gave his reason to Moses Coit Tyler in a letter, 25 May1867: "[O]ur present plan of the anonymous...is...the only plan by which a periodical can be kept up to a really high standard. The publication of names...by shifting the responsibility as to quality from the editor's shoulders makes him careless.... Moreover, it makes writers careless, too, because, 'names' have acquired such a potency, that in the existing state of culture in America, a good many men are enabled under cover of them to palm off trash on the reader...."; quoted in William M. Armstrong, ed., *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), p. 108.

[16] Wingate, *Views and Interviews*, p. 136.

[17] Ibid., p. 17.

[18] See the bibliography for a listing of the most useful sources.

[19] See, for example, "What Is Art Criticism?" *Nation* 2 (19 April 1866), pp. 504-6, and Christopher P. Cranch, "Art Criticism Reviewed," *Galaxy* 4 (May 1867), pp. 77-81.

[20] It is not the purview of this study to investigate the fascinating and important issues of critics as tastemakers or their impact on the commercial art market.

[21] For a history of the *Post*, see Allan Nevins, *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism* (1922; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1968); on its relationship with art, see p. 125.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[22] Bryant's attitudes and approach were the antithesis of the sensational tabloid that the *Post* would become in the mid-twentieth century. See *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 43, "William Cullen Bryant" entry.

[23] Sheldon took on many other art writing projects in the later 1870s, but was still noted as "Mr. Sheldon of the Post" as late as 1879 ("Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 26 March 1879, p. 1). Even during Sheldon's tenure there were at least occasional pinch-hitters for him. For example, while Sheldon resided in England in 1875, Susan Nichols Carter wrote the Academy reviews.

[24] Nevins, *Evening Post*, p. 420; see also *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 64, "Parke Godwin" entry. The temptation to assign Godwin art critic duties is especially tempting knowing that at some point Jervis McEntee wrote Whitelaw Reid of the *Tribune* that he thought Godwin would be widely read and "exert a great influence for good if he will think in your columns. Do please keep it in your mind and let us do something for all these people who really want to know what art means." Scrawled on the back of this sheet is: WR to PG/ "If you don't do this I will never forgive you." (Parke Godwin Correspondence, Bryant-Godwin Papers, New York Public Library) As this exchange is undated, we have no idea of its date, but clearly Godwin was considered by this leading artist as appropriate to serve as an art critic. However, McEntee might have written this as late as 1878 when Reid very unhappy with Clarence Cook (see note 36).

[25] Matthew Hale Smith, *Sunshine and Shadow in New York* (Hartford, Conn.: J. B. Burr and Co., 1869), p. 640.

[26] Shinn's arrival in New York is recorded in his Commonplace Book, Earl Shinn Papers, Archives of American Art, roll 3656, frame 1046. For information on his employment history see, for example, "Obituary," *Art Amateur* 9 (16 December 1886), p. 3.

[27] The first identifiable writing by Shinn in the *Post* was written as a letter to the editor but treated as an article with the title: "Landscape Painting in America," *Post*, 28 April 1871, p. 1. It is signed "E. S."

[28] "The Academy Design. The Forty-Fourth Exhibition," *Post*, 27 April 1869, p. 1.

[29] Eugene Benson, "New York Journalists. II. Parke Godwin, of the Evening Post," *Galaxy* 7 (February 1869), p. 231.

[30] Theoretical discourse did not appear in his writing until later in his career (after the years of this study). Roberts, "American Art Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century," Appendix, p. 18.

[31] On the dangers of too much French influence, see, for example, "National Academy of Design. First Notice," *Post*, 22 April 1868, p. 2. See also Docherty, "A Search for Identity," pp. 213-14.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[32] The other three were the *Times*, *World*, and *Herald*. James D. McCabe, Jr., *Light and Shadows of New York Life* (1872; reprint, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1970), p. 244.

[33] For a general overview of the paper, see Mott, *History of American Journalism*, p. 268 ff., and Royal Cortissoz, *The New York Tribune: Incidents and Personalities in Its History* (New York: New York Tribune Co., 1923).

[34] On Reid, see *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 23, "Whitelaw Reid" entry, and Royal Cortissoz, *The Life of Whitelaw Reid* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921).

[35] In 1878, for example, Reid complained to Jervis McEntee that he wanted to get rid of Cook. Jervis McEntee Diary, entry for 18 March 1878, Jervis McEntee Papers, Archives of American Art.

[36] The two main studies on Cook are Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth-Century America," and Weiss, "Clarence Cook."

[37] On Cook in the 1860s, see Weiss, "Clarence Cook," pp. 43-54, and Ferber and Gerdts, *The New Path*, passim.

[38] For a more in-depth discussion of Cook's changes in the 1870s, see Weiss, "Clarence Cook," pp. 100-114. See also Kirsten N. Swinth, "Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of a Professional Ideal in American Art, 1870-1920" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1995), pp. 238-39.

[39] Eugene Benson, "New York Journalists. W. H. Hurlbut," *Galaxy* 7 (January 1869), p. 30. Hurlbert's name is variously spelled Hurlbut or Hurlbert; see "William Henry Hurlbert Dead," *Times*, 7 September 1895, p. 5.

[40] William J. Thorn, "Montgomery Schuyler," pp. 111-13. I am grateful to William Thorn for sharing his in-depth knowledge of the *World* with me.

[41] John Jones, "The Exhibition at the National Academy," *Harper's Weekly* 14 (28 May 1870), p. 339

[42] See, for example, A. C. W. [Andrew C. Wheeler], "Gossip in a Gallery. A Visit to the Academy of Design, *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2; Wheeler was best known as a drama critic who used the pseudonym "Nym Crinkle." He is also identified as having held the post of art critic for the *World* in William B. Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms: A Dictionary of Literary Disguises* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1885), p. 589. William Thorn has suggested that the use of initials was editor Hurlbert's way of acknowledging his supporting cast at the *World*. William Thorn to the author, 4 February 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[43] "National Academy of Design. Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition," *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[44] Roberts, "American Art Periodicals," Appendix, pp. 21-23.

[45] Brownell most comprehensively outlines his vision of unity in art in William Crary Brownell, "Whistler in Painting and Etching," *Scribner's*, 18 (August 1879), pp. 481-95, and William Crary Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America. Second Paper," *Scribner's* 20 (July 1880), pp. 321-35, where he insists on harmony among all elements and calls for works to be pictorial ensembles. See also Docherty, "A Search for Identity," pp. 216-18.

[46] In 1869 Matthew Hale Smith wrote about Conant at the *Times*: "Besides making up the paper, he does art notices and writes the reviews of books." Smith, *Sunshine and Shadow*, p. 639. See also, for example, "Brooklyn Art Association," *Commercial Advertiser*, 18 March 1868, p. 2, where "Conant of the Times" was in attendance at the Brooklyn Art Association's annual opening. Conant, an elusive personality who "mysteriously disappeared" in 1885, not only provided his services for the *Times*, but also was the managing editor of *Harper's Weekly* from 1869-85, and early in this period wrote substantial articles for the *Galaxy* and seems to have possibly even worked for the *Evening Express*. *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*, v. 1, p. 703. Conant is identified as working for the *Express* in "The Lotos Reception," *Mail*, 8 April 1872, p. 2. However, the possibility of a mistake in this report must be considered.

[47] The most in-depth account of DeKay's career is Lisa N. Peters, "Charles DeKay: Art Critic for the People," unpublished paper, 1985; courtesy William H. Gerdts American Art Library.

[48] See, for example, "A Plea for Finish in Art," *Times*, 17 March 1878, p. 6.

[49] See, for example, James Jackson Jarves, "Art of the Whistler Sort," *Times*, 12 January 1879, p. 10. On the growth of an American school and the implications of taxing imports, see James Jackson Jarves, "The Values of Old Masters. How to Build Up a School of Art," *Times*, 20 July 1879, p. 5.

[50] On Charles and Henry Sweetser (occasionally spelled Sweetzer), see *Appleton's Cylopaedia of American Biography*, v.6, p. 8; "Charles Sweetser," *Times*, 5 January 1871; "Henry E. Sweetser," *Times*, 18 February 1870, p. 5. On Bundy, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 3, "Jonas Mills Bundy" entry.

[51] Townley's career is outlined in "Funeral of D. O'C. Townley," *Mail*, 31 December 1872, p. 2. Although in his obituary he is said to be "of late the manager of the Grand Opera House," he is mentioned as on the *Mail* staff as late as April 1872 (*Mail*, 8 April 1872, p. 2). He surely could have held the two jobs simultaneously. Further supporting

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Townley's role at the *Mail* is the fact that the Palette Club, where Townley was an active member, was a topic of continual mention (moreso than in any other paper).

[52] See, for example, "Art Gossip," *Mail*, 20 April 1870, p. 1.

[53] *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 2, "Richard Rogers Bowker" entry.

[54] Robert Johnston to Richard Rogers Bowker, 11 December 1874; Richard Bowker Rogers correspondence, Richard Rogers Bowker Papers, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

[55] Mrs. Shepard, born in 1830, is identified as 'Scotch Granite" and as a writer for periodicals in Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms*, p. 262.

[56] See, for example, Anchor (J. W. de P.), "Fine Arts," *Mail*, 3 March 1880, p. 1. On the identification of his pseudonym, see also William Abbatt, comp., *The Colloquial Who's Who* (Tarrytown, N. Y.: W. Abbatt, 1924-25), p. 9

[57] "Charles E. Sweetser," *New York Times,* 5 January 1871, p. 1; *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*, v. 6, "Henry Edward Sweetser" and "Moses Foster Sweetser" entries. Whether or not Moses was related to Charles and Henry is unclear, though their biographies do not lead to that conclusion. "Literature," *Evening Mail*, 3 December 1878, p. 1. Moses Sweetser is referred to in the *Mail* as "Mr. Sweetser," implying he was known in some capacity to readers. It is unknown, however, whether Moses Sweetser's familiarity came through an association with the *Mail* specifically or his writings at large.

[58] On the *Herald* in general, see Richard O'Connor, *The Scandalous Mr. Bennett* (New York: Doubleday, 1962); Richard Kluger, *The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune* (New York: Knopf, 1986); and James Crouthermel, *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1989); see also Mott, *American Journalism*, p. 400.

[59] *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 23, "James Gordon Bennett, Jr." entry.

[60] *Mail*, 8 April 1872, p. 2.

[61] Francis Gerry Fairfield, *The Clubs of New York* (New York: Henry Hinton, 1873), p. 24. Hows is identified as "Strix" in Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms*, p. 275.

[62] Mott, *American Journalism*, p. 448.

[63] The paper neglected the Academy annuals between 1870 and 1873 and did not review the Watercolor Society annuals at all until 1877.

[64] Grannis is named as the art critic for the *Commercial Advertiser* in "Art Matters," *Evening Express*, 2 December 1868, p. 2. Grannis' obituary in the *Commercial Advertiser*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

noted he had been "taking charge of the Art Department for the last two years." *Commercial Advertiser*, 26 January 1878, p. 1. Exactly how Grannis' duties at the paper changed in those two years is unknown, but they seem not to have affected his writing of criticism.

[65] Grannis showed one seashore piece in each of the National Academy annuals between 1868 and 1871. See *The National Academy of Design Record 1861-1900*, v. 1 (New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1973), p. 354.

[66] See, for example, "National Academy of Design. The Fiftieth Anniversary," *Commercial Advertiser*, 8 April 1875, p. 3.

[67] *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 4, "David Goodman Croly" entry.

[68] The assignment of Shinn's name to "Erastus South" still needs further investigation, but if comparison is made, for example, of the 1875 and 1876 Watercolor Society reviews in both publications, the artists praised and the aspects of their works focused on are remarkably similar. The differences could be simply the result of the different characters of the serials. Compare [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Watercolor Exhibition. II.," *Nation* 20 (18 February 1875), pp. 119-20, with Erastus South, "Fine Arts. The Water Colors at the Academy–The Lotus Club Monthly Art Reception," *Daily Graphic*, 2 February 1875, p. 672, and [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Ninth Exhibition of the Water-Color Society," *Nation* 22 (17 February 1876), pp. 119-20, with Erastus South, "The Water-Color Exhibition. A Glance at the Work of our Prominent Artists," *Daily Graphic*, 3 February 1876, p. 734. I am grateful to Lily Milroy, Wesleyan University, for her suggestions concerning the possible identification of South as Shinn.

[69] See, for example, the discussion of the *Daily Graphic's* reaction to the 1877 National Academy annual in Chapter 5.

[70] Mott, *American Journalism*, pp. 374-77.

[71] Ibid., p. 421.

[72] Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of the Sun* (1928; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 197.

[73] Jarves wrote in the *Independent* on a wide variety of topics, including Japanese art, expression in art, the writings of Hippolyte Taine, and American painting. Other writers who contributed from Europe were George P. Lathrop, William M. F. Round, and William C. Ward.

[74] See Clarence Arthur Brown, *The Achievement of American Criticism* (New York: Ronald Press, 1954), especially Part 3, "Realism and Aestheticism," pp. 371-411.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[75] Benjamin T. Spencer, *The Quest for Nationality* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1957), passim, especially p. 112ff. and 292ff. The interconnections between literary criticism and art criticism can only be mentioned here. It is a topic not much explored by scholars in literature or art history, but is one worth studying.

[76] See Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3, pp. 331-44, and Carey McWilliams, "One Hundred Years of the *Nation*," *Journalism Quarterly* 42 (1965), pp. 189-97.

[77] McWilliams, "One Hundred Years of the *Nation*," p. 193.

[78] These views were expounded in "Critics and Criticism," *Nation* 1 (6 July 1865), pp. 10-11, and [Russell Sturgis], "What Is Art Criticism," *Nation* 2 (19 April 1866), pp. 504-56.

[79] The existing information was compiled by Daniel C. Haskell in *The Nation: Index of Titles and Contributors* (New York: New York Public Library, 1953).

[80] See Haskell, *The Nation*, pp. 357-59. Norton's writings for the *Nation* are also listed in Kermit Vanderbilt, *Charles Eliot Norton: Apostle of Culture in a Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1959), pp. 246-48.

[81] Between 1874 and 1879, inclusive, Shinn wrote the reviews of the Watercolor Society and Academy annual exhibitions. His contributions are listed in Haskell, *The Nation*, pp. 444-45. On his first contact with the Nation, see Armstrong, *Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*, pp. 124-25.

[82] Brownell's writings for the *Nation* are listed in Haskell, *The Nation*, pp. 60-63. He wrote, for example, the 1880 Academy and 1881 Watercolor Society reviews.

[83] On Sturgis' involvement in the *Nation*, most of which pre- and post-dates this study's area of focus, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 18, "Russell Sturgis," entry, and William H. Gerdts, "Through a Glass Brightly: The American Pre-Raphaelites and Their Still Lifes and Nature Studies," in *The New Path*, pp. 64-65. Sturgis' contributions to the *Nation* are listed in Haskell, *The Nation*, pp. 467-71.

[84] Vanderbilt, *Charles Eliot Norton*, p. 124

[85] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3, pp. 417-20.

[86] Edward D. Youmans, the first appointed editor, lasted less than a year, and during that time most of the editorial work fell on Bunce's shoulders. Youmans was followed by Robert Carter, whose tenure, too, was short, with Bunce playing a similar role. The editorial reins passed to Bunce exclusively in 1872. On Bunce's employment history, see Sue Rainey, *Creating "Picturesque America"* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994), p. 46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[87] See, for example, Eugene Benson," Historical Art," *Appleton's Magazine* 1 (10 April 1869), pp. 45-46; Eugene Benson, "Childhood in Modern Literature," *Appleton's Magazine* 1 (24 April 1869), pp. 118-19; and Eugene Benson, "The Peasant-Painter, Jean-François Millet," *Appleton's Magazine* 8 (12 October 1972), pp. 404-5.

[88] "Fine Arts," *Appleton's Journal* 12 (4 July 1874), p. 27.

[89] On Bunce and his relationship with Appleton & Company as a whole, see Rainey, *Creating "Picturesque America,"* especially pp. 46-50.

[90] Ibid., p. 49.

[91] Robert Scholnick, "Between Realism and Romanticism: The Curious Career of Eugene Benson," *American Literary Realism* 14 (1981), pp. 242-50.

[92] Cikovsky, "School of War," NGA 1995, p. 30.

[93] Ibid., p. 30.

[94] I am grateful to Carol Salomon of the Cooper Union Library for her assistance in researching Carter.

[95] See the discussions of the 1874 and 1875 watercolor exhibitions in Chapter 4.

[96] William managed much of the business of the magazine, while Francis handled most of the editorial work. *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 79, "William Conant Church and Francis Pharcellus Church" entry.

[97] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3, pp. 361-81.

[98] The *Galaxy* featured articles on such topics as American character and paid considerable attention to women's rights in America. See, for example, J. H. Browne, "Types of American Beauty," *Galaxy* 11 (January 1871), pp. 108-16, and Jane Grey Swisshelm, "American Character," *Galaxy* 22 (November 1876), pp. 618-23.

[99] S. S. Conant, "Art and Artists," *Galaxy* 5 (June 1868), pp. 795-96.

[100] Eugene Benson, "Eastman Johnson," *Galaxy* 6 (July 1868), pp. 111-12; Eugene Benson, "Democratic Deities," *Galaxy* 6 (November 1868), pp. 661-65; and James Jackson Jarves, "Museums of Art," *Galaxy* 10 (July 1870), pp. 50-59.

[101] For example, Philip Quilibet, "Driftwood," *Galaxy* 8 (December 1869), pp. 851-54; 18 (September 1874), pp. 413-16; 21 (February 1876), pp. 271-72; and 23 (February 1877), pp. 267-68.

[102] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 2, pp. 419-31.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[103] Eugene Benson, "The Belmont and Blodgett Private Galleries," *Putnam's* 5 (May 1870), pp. 534-40.

[104] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 2, pp. 428-29.

[105] A review of the 1868 National Academy Annual appeared in "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 37 (July 1868), pp. 270-71, but it was the sole example of the magazine's reviews for this period.

[106] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3 p. 184

[107] *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 79, "Henry Mills Alden" entry.

[108] S. G. W. Benjamin, "Contemporary Art in England," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 54 (January 1877), pp. 161-79; S. G. W. Benjamin, "Contemporary Art in France," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 54 (March 1877), pp. 481-503; S. G. W. Benjamin, "Contemporary Art in Germany," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 54 (June 1877), pp. 1-22; S. G. W. Benjamin, "Present Tendencies in American Art," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 58 (March 1879), pp. 481-96; and S. G. W. Benjamin, "Fifty Years of American Art," parts 1-3, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 59 (July/September/October 1879), pp. 241-57; pp. 481-96; pp. 673-88.

[109] George W. Sheldon, "A New Departure in American Art," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 56 (April 1878), pp. 764-68.

[110] On Curtis, see Gordon Milne, *George William Curtis and the Genteel Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959) , especially pp. 171-73; and *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 43, "George William Curtis" entry.

[111] Wingate, *Views and Interviews*, pp. 103-4.

[112] The 1870 National Academy annual review was authored by "John Jones," who identified himself as an artist. Thus, in this case, it was probably not Conant himself writing, but someone with similar views. Whether or not "John Jones" is a pseudonym is unknown, but the possibility must be considered given the commonness of the name and the fact that, an artist-writer may have wanted to conceal his identity. Jones, *Harper's Weekly* 14 (May 28, 1870), p. 339.

[113] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3, pp. 457-58.

[114] For example, D. O'C. Townley, "Living American Artists," *Scribner's* 2 (May 1871), pp. 4-49; William Crary Brownell, "Art Schools of New York," *Scribner's* 16 (October 1878), pp. 761-81; William Crary Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America," *Scribner's* 20 (May/July 1880), pp. 1-15, 321-35.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[115] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 2, pp. 493-515.

[116] Ibid., p. 106.

[117] Ibid., pp. 506-7.

[118] On 11 September 1877, Howells wrote to William H. Bishop: "I wonder if I can explain to you a little project of mine? I have long wanted to find somebody in New York who could treat the aesthetic interests of that city in a monthly paper in the *Atlantic*." George Arms and Christoph K. Lohmann, eds., *William Dean Howells Selected Letters*, v. 2 (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), p. 174. This sentence suggests that someone from Boston had written the earlier commentaries on New York art.

[119] Edwin H. Cady, *The Road to Realism: The Early Years of William Dean Howells* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1956), p. 170. Precisely what Lathrop's role was is unclear. When he left the magazine late in 1877, he complained of simply being Howells' lackey. See Arms and Lohmann, *Howells Selected Letters*, v. 2, passim.

[120] William Howells to William Bishop, 12 April 1879 quoted in Arms and Lohmann, *Howells Selected Letters*, p. 223.

[121] Cady, *Road to Realism*, pp. 159-61.

[122] Mott, *History of American Magazines*, v. 3, p. 196.

[123] *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, v. 64, "Richard Henry Stoddard" entry; *Dictionary of American Biography*, v. 18, "Richard Henry Stoddard" entry.

[124] Benjamin, for instance, wrote the review for the 1880 American Watercolor Society annual, perhaps due to the fact that Carter was included in the exhibition.

[125] See, for example, "Mr. Inness on Art Matters," *Art Journal* 5 (December 1879), pp. 374-77; and John Moran, "Studio Life in New York," *Art Journal* 5 (November 1879), pp. 343-35, and 5 (December 1879), pp. 353-55.

[126] The seminal study on van Rensselaer is Lois Dinnerstein, "Critical Writings in Art and Architecture by Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer."

[127] Ibid., pp. 33, 45.

[128] Ibid., p. 65.

[129] Ibid., pp. 254-63.

[130] The magazine's first sponsor was the New York Society of Decorative Arts. I am grateful to Carol Lowery for sharing her knowledge of *Art Interchange*.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[131] Roberts, "American Art Periodicals," Appendix, pp. 10-12.

[132] Docherty, "A Search for Identity," pp. 206-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 2

1868-69: Getting Reestablished in New York

Winslow Homer departed for Europe in December 1866. He spent nearly a year there, mostly in Paris.[1] Like many of his peers, Homer had longed for the stimulus of the art capitals of Europe, and he had the added impetus to go abroad at this time since two of his paintings were to be included in the Exposition Universelle in Paris from April to October of 1867. While in France, the thirty-two-year-old artist chose not to enter an atelier, but rather to make his own course of study. After eight months, he was satisfied with his progress, writing to his friend Charles Vorhees that he was "working hard and have improved much."[2] Homer also hoped Vorhees would buy a picture from him so that he could extend his European adventure; this seems not to have transpired. In fact, Homer's financial situation seems to have been so dire in the fall of 1867 that his artist-friend Albert Kelsey had to pay his passage home.

By the end of the first week in November 1867, Homer had resettled in a studio at the University Building near Washington Square in New York City. Within a month's time he was reported to be working on a picture derived from sketches made in Paris.[3] For the next two years he concentrated on reestablishing himself in the New York art world, drawing illustrations for a variety of magazines, showing his paintings, and circulating among his peers. In New York, he exhibited his work in his studio, at the National Academy of Design and Brooklyn Art Association, and at the Century Club.[4] As Homer

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reentered the New York art world the critics took notice, and until his next sojourn abroad, in 1881, his presence made a significant and lasting mark.

Compared to the coverage he would receive in just a few short years, Homer's life and art went only minimally noticed in the press during 1868 and 1869. Yet the venues, kinds, and frequency of notice set the general pattern of the next twelve and a half years. The ebb and flow of art writings naturally followed the activities of the art season. Commentary and reports were heaviest from the late fall through the spring, the months when artists were preparing for and then showing their entries in annual exhibitions, chief among them that of the National Academy of Design. In 1868 the commencement of annual American Watercolor Society exhibitions injected the winter season with heightened activity and a full compendium of accompanying reviews. Club exhibitions, most notably at the monthly meetings of the Century, were only occasionally reviewed, most often by the *Post*.[5] Other commentaries during the year ranged from discursive articles on particular topics to reports of the news from the studios, auctions, galleries, and private collections. Although they were not critical notices per se, the many brief newspaper art columns provided much information of value. They are useful not only for the facts they impart (especially picture descriptions), but also because they indicate how widely and how often an artist received notice. Too, prevailing notions about an individual's work were often imbedded in them.

In 1868 Homer devoted much of his energy to creating illustrations for a variety of publications; at least 26 images were made for four magazines and four book projects.[6]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Illustrations provided Homer with much needed income, and they put images by his hand into public view.[7] In addition to exhibition reviews, Homer received a number of mentions in newspapers throughout 1868. They included descriptions of works shown in his studio and at auction sales, and reports of his summer travels.[8] Early in the year, works in progress from his French trip were noticed, and these reports reveal the first reactions to this new body of work. The *Commercial Advertiser*, *Express*, and *Post* all encouraged Homer in his endeavors, praising his interesting study of French character, his ability to make a charming picture through simple means, and his improved painting technique in comparison with *Prisoners from the Front* (fig. 1), which the *Post*, for one, had criticized in 1866 for the coarseness of its paint application.[9] It was exactly such issues as the successful characterization of a subject and the use of appropriate artistic treatment that were repeatedly assessed in the 1870s. These concerns, as well as the question of how Homer's current work measured against *Prisoners from the Front*, would be revisited in forums small and large throughout the decade.

Nearly simultaneous with Homer's return to New York was the return of the American pictures from the Paris Exposition Universelle and their exhibition at the National Academy of Design.[10] This coincidence was fortuitous for it reintroduced Homer and *Prisoners from the Front*, the canvas that single-handedly had catapulted him to fame in 1866, to the New York art world.[11] In 1868 the response to the pictures' return from Paris, including *Prisoners from the Front*, was much less widespread than for an annual exhibition or the first-time notices of the Exposition itself.[12] Those who did notice the pictures' return used the occasion to calibrate how American works fared against

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

European ones as well as to assess how they fared in European eyes. These considerations continued the questioning of American art's standing in the world—the chief preoccupation of the critics when the works were originally shown in France. By the late 1860s, America was credited with excelling in a number of fields on the international scene, but in culture she was considered lagging far behind.[13] From the outset, the American art display at the Paris Exposition was considered a failure.[14] When in Paris, the pictures had been condemned alternately for being either not native enough or not cosmopolitan enough.

The critics who, in 1868, commented most heavily on the returning pictures were those most consumed with confirming that a distinctive American art did indeed exist and that it was of respectable quality. Three different but interrelated viewpoints were expressed. Typical of much of the art writing of the day, they all asserted, but without much explanation, the validity of American painting and articulated its position at the moment. The *Mail* heartily endorsed the works as characteristically American and as showing good promise for the development of American art.[15] The *World* reminded readers that the show could have been a disgrace to America, and was far from it.[16] The *Post*, in one of the longer and more thoughtful reviews, pointed out that the selection of work, which included Frederic Church's *Niagara* (Corcoran Gallery of Art; Washington, D.C.) and Eastman Johnson's *Negro Life at the South* (New-York Historical Society), soundly rebuffed the criticism that American art was imitative of Europe's, noting that not only was it not imitative but that it also "claim[ed] the merit of originality; and, best of all, it has come in the order of our democratic institutions; it is the spontaneous outgrowth of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the love of the beautiful, self-taught and free from the fettering patronage of the government. Issuing from and sustained by the people, its foundation is deep and broad, its future promising and secure."[17] In such words were codified the elements that made American art American in 1868: a measure of originality, a lack of outside influence, and a visible connection through subject to America and her people and the institution of democracy. This definition of American art would be keenly debated over the next decade.

At its first showing at the academy in the spring of 1866, *Prisoners from the Front* was lauded especially for its ability to blend the requirements of history painting with contemporary American issues; the successful characterization of the figures as both types and individuals; and an artistic treatment that combined simplicity of design, fine draughtsmanship, and honesty of vision. Although faults were found in *Prisoners from the Front*, they did not detract from its overall success in fulfilling the requirements for great American art.[18] Now, in 1868, it was recognized as one of the first-rate canvases shown in Paris.[19] With Johnson's *Negro Life at the South*, it was hailed as the foremost figural piece and was noted especially for its American qualities.[20] *Prisoners from the Front*, in particular, was held up as proof that American art was not imitative of Europe's, for, as the *Mail* pointed out, it was "entirely characteristic of our national life." In large part, what defined it as characteristic of American life was its subject matter. The *Mail* pointed out, too, that its Americanness was further validated by French reactions to the painting. In contrast to most of the other American pictures, it had elicited positive

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

commentary from the French critics for its American qualities—again defined by subject matter—and the bright future it suggested for American art.[21]

Thus, as Homer was returning to the New York art scene, the showing of *Prisoners from the Front* at the Academy reestablished his position as being among the most promising, young American artists. From this situation, he presented his newest work at the National Academy annual of 1868, and a new phase of critical assessment of his art formally began. The reviews of the Academy annuals followed a general prescription that facilitated the discussion of exhibited works in relation to the most pressing issues of the day. Evaluating the present state of American art; assessing, to a lesser extent, the position of the National Academy as the corporate body in charge of mediating that state; and debating what elements contributed to creating a national art were overriding issues that formed the armature for the discussions of nearly every Academy annual exhibition. Closely linked to these issues were comparing younger artists to older ones and examining the relationship of American to European art—both qualitatively and with regard to influence.[22] With these issues setting the parameters of the reviews, critics critiqued individual works and artists.

Nearly every review of the National Academy annuals began with a comparison to the preceding year. In 1868 the *Nation* was most vocal in its displeasure with the exhibition. The magazine blamed the artists for not sending their best work, and saw this as both a symptom and a cause for the potential failure of the Academy.[23] *Putnam's* took a more philosophical stance, stating that even though it was not an exhibition of great pictures, it

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pleased most people; it was an average show for average people. The writer then said that this situation was symptomatic of the present state of American art and culture: "art in this country appears to be stationary," and until taste and culture became more highly developed not much more could be expected.[24] Facing, often with apologies, the youthfulness and immaturity of American culture was frequently a part of the critics' assessment of American art in general and of individual artists.

For other critics, the 1868 Academy exhibition was considered generally improved, although the reasons for this response varied from critic to critic and caveats often tempered the praise. Clarence Cook found the show a better one simply because he saw fewer terrible pictures than usual, while both the *Commercial Advertiser* and *Galaxy* were heartened by a higher quality of genre and figure pictures.[25] The strong appearance by younger artists and a greater variety of subject matter caused the *Herald* and *Mail* to praise the show.[26] This interest in the younger artists was, in part, a function of the concern, as expressed by the critic for *Putnam's*, that American art was stale and stagnant. Almost every review of the National Academy from the end of the Civil War through the 1870s touched on how the younger artists were faring, and the 1868 exhibition was no different.

A division between the older and younger artistic generations, which would become prominent by the mid-1870s, was already apparent by 1868. In fact, Clarence Cook, in his review of the 1868 Academy annual, suggested that the split already had been recognizable for several years: "The Exhibitions of the last five years have given

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

evidence that the Fine Arts in this country are in a state of revolution." The evidence Cook saw was the fact that the preeminent names of the previous decade, including Thomas Rossiter, Thomas Hicks, Asher B. Durand, David Huntington, and John Kensett, were no longer at the forefront of the discussions on art. Cook admitted he did not know the exact reason why this happened, but he felt it was connected to the greater presence of European art, art in which he found true artistic skill displayed.[27] On a separate occasion, the *World*, noticing differences between the rising generation of figure painters and their older peers, suggested that the divide along generational lines had to do with the younger artists' maturation during the Civil War.[28] Carol Troyen has suggested that wedge between artistic generations may have been driven deeper by the response to the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle. The perceived inferiority of the American section may have encouraged younger artists to pursue alternate types of training and artistic influences, particularly French.[29] Whatever the reasons, by 1868, the hope for American art was seen to lie in the "younger men." They were a loosely defined group. It was clearer who they were not than who they were. As the writer for the *Mail* pointed out:

> Church and Bierstadt and their fellow artists have done all for American art that they will do. Their genius has been felt, and its influence, good or bad, is at work. What they may yet do will only multiply their pictures, and with them multiply their merits and their faults. As to whether they die to-day or to-morrow, American art, as a profession has little interest.... It is to younger men, younger in artistic reputation, we mean, to whom we must look for future development and progress; and it is the ambition, the taste, the tendency, of this still "young" class of artists that give so much greater interest....[30]

Even the most conservative critic, Theodore Grannis, saw the greatest advance in the younger artists. However, his praise of them was qualified. He was considerably disturbed by "evidences of too hasty execution...rather than truth and earnestness," and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

he cautioned against following the "false theories" that led to such practices. For Grannis, the fidelity of Samuel Colman's pencil provided a positive example of correct treatment in contradistinction to the "painty feeling, decidedly unpleasant" of Homer Dodge Martin.[31]

Although the success of *Prisoners from the Front* elevated Homer's artistic reputation among the younger generation, he could only be gauged by two small canvases, *Picardie, France* (possibly fig. 2), and *The Studio* (fig. 3), at the 1868 Academy annual. Having been home only a few months, he would not have had time to prepare a more typical "exhibition" picture. Thus, only the critics of *Tribune*, *Nation*, and *Commercial Advertiser* commented on these modest works, a landscape and an interior, respectively. Nonetheless, they elicited strong responses from those who did notice them. As Clarence Cook stated, it was "impossible to be indifferent" to Homer's work. [32] Critics tended to be passionate about Homer's art, and their reactions in the 1870s were rarely lukewarm.

All three commentators who mentioned Homer in their reviews of the1868 annual made some reference to his position as an artist of promise. This pronouncement was one of the most consistently repeated observations about him through the first half of the seventies. The *Nation* ended its review with a reference to Homer: "Mr. Winslow Homer, one of the strongest of American figure painters...is much needed here. His slight contributions to this exhibition remind us that he is at home once more, and that good pictures may be expected from him."[33] Theodore Grannis, having noticed only one canvas from Homer's hand, wrote: "Winslow Homer sends but one example, and that a sketch, No. 71,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

'Picardie, France.' In it there is some fine color, but with not enough elaboration to even give an idea of what the artist was trying to do. We trust that Mr. Homer will give us, at the Fall exhibition, something worthy of himself, and equal in ability to his much admired work, 'Prisoners at the Front.'"[34] In his first, very brief remarks on the show, Cook of the *Tribune* singled out Homer, Eastman Johnson, and Sanford Gifford for their fine contributions. While Johnson and Gifford were noticed for the excellence of their present canvases, Homer was praised for "a study, that slight as it is, justifies the hopes we have ever expressed as to the promise of his future."[35] Homer was plagued throughout the 1870s by critics who used his current paintings as a vehicle to ponder his past and future efforts and who used *Prisoners from the Front* as a barometer of his success. Time and time again, his work was measured against *Prisoners from the Front* and assessed not for its own worth, but for what possibilities it suggested for future work.

The condemnation of Homer's work as unfinished is perhaps the most constant complaint about his art, criticism indicated by a variety of words including "slight," "unfinished," "sketchy," and "incomplete," among others. *The Brierwood Pipe* of 1864 (fig. 4) was the first work by Homer to receive the criticism of appearing unfinished, and, as the controversy over appropriate finish played out from the mid-1860s on, Homer's paintings were among those at the center of it.[36] While the issue of finish was raised in the brief mentions of Homer's 1868 works in the Academy, it was more thoroughly discussed in reference to the most noticed landscape paintings in the show. It is worthwhile to briefly outline this discussion here, for it gives a context in which to discuss Homer's later place in it. Sanford Gifford's *Shrewsbury River—Sandy Hook* (1867; unlocated) garnered the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

most effusive praise from the greatest number of critics.[37] Despite the fact that its subject was perceived as common, it was praised for its beauty, poetry, and imagination while remaining true to nature.[38] Gifford's kind of truth-to-nature was contrasted against the literal truth found in paintings like Thomas Farrer's *Bear 's Bath Fall* (unlocated), which depended on the mechanical and microscopic delineation of nature.[39] Gifford and Farrer exemplified the two camps of artistic thought in the late 1860s: one subjective and more French-based, and the other more literal and Ruskinian-based, respectively. The preference for Gifford over Farrer in 1868 reflects the growing anti-Ruskinian sentiment of the late 1860s. The definition of truth-to-nature as imitative truth, especially for American Pre-Raphaelites like Farrer, was in a phase of transition toward one more lenient in its acceptance of broader stylistic and expressive means. Thus, the concept of truth-to-nature and issues of finish were inextricably entwined.

For Clarence Cook, painting nature truthfully was at issue in his remarks on Homer's landscape of Picardie. The *Tribune* critic lamented: "Homer's PICARDIE, FRANCE, is naught, is naught. Nature is loyal to herself in Picardie as well as in New Jersey, Mr. Homer, and she couldn't make a landscape like this even if she were to try."[40] While it is difficult to pinpoint Cook's objections from just two sentences, his words suggest he was disgruntled with the canvas' lack of truthful identification of the particular locale and its dishonesty of artistic treatment. Cook's stance may be better understood through his advice to Henry Mosler in the same review, where he suggested that painting nature truthfully had a component beyond mere replication. With regard to color, he highly recommended "all students to the great teacher Nature." Added to this, he counseled: "If

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

he will wisely determine to call no man master, but to try earnestly whatever he paints...he will in the end find himself developing an individual system, which will contain the truth of nature as it appears to him."[41] The impetus for such remarks derives from Cook's distaste for American artists who imitated other artists, especially foreign, rather than depending on their own response to nature. Cook seems to have found Homer guilty of not following nature's lead, but of looking elsewhere for his artistic example.

Homer fared better with Cook in *The Studio*, which, although only mentioned in passing, was suggested to be the best figure picture in the show along with Seymour Joseph Guy's *Evening* (fig. 5). While Cook recognized that Guy's picture of a woman snug in a corner of a modest home surrounded by her most prized possessions was more appealing in subject and better drawn, he admitted "in essentially artistic qualities probably Mr. Homer bears the palm."[42] For now, subject matter was the strongest influence on a picture's success, but "artistic qualities" would become increasingly important to both Cook and Homer. Over the next decade, Cook, with words, and Homer, with paint, constantly quarreled with each other as to what those best qualities were.

For Homer, 1869 continued much as 1868. His financial situation was still under duress.[43] Illustration provided needed income and took up a considerable portion of his time.[44] Nonetheless, his output in oil increased fourfold over the previous year's.[45] Many of the 1869 canvases are related, and were developed out of Homer's summer travels to New Hampshire; Manchester, Massachusetts; Long Branch, New Jersey; and Lake George,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

New York in 1868 and 1869.[46] It was these out-of-town experiences—nearly all rural in location—that provided the basis for his work.

Homer's level of exhibiting in 1869 remained on par with that of the previous year. His most significant canvas from 1868, *Bridle Path, White Mountains* (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; Williamstown, Massachusetts), was shown at the Brooklyn Art Association in March. The New York City press did not review the show; a few papers merely mentioned its occurrence.[47] Homer also placed works in some of the monthly exhibitions at the Century Club, but again, as private venues, they received little publicity. Outside of exhibitions, Homer's name began to appear in other art contexts. It was noticed that examples of his work were included in the prestigious collections of A. M. Cozzens and John Taylor Johnston.[48] In addition, Homer, especially in the context of *Prisoners from the Front*, was mentioned once again as making good use of home subjects. The *Post* used Homer and his painting as excellent models for American art in a world where too much American figure painting was dependent on French and German examples.[49]

As one would expect, Homer received his greatest attention of the year at the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design. He exhibited *Manchester Coast*, a canvas likely derived from his summer 1868 visit to Massachusetts. The painting, which the *World* described as "a coast scene, with gulls lighting down upon a lonely beach," is probably the one known today as *Rocky Coast and Gulls* (fig. 6).[50] It appeared in an exhibition most noted for its lackluster quality. Although the critics felt the annual

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

showed a general improvement over the previous year, they also, as a group, remarked on the merely average merit of the pictures.[51] It was mainly the contributions of the younger artists that generated the positive comments about the show.[52] The tepid response to the exhibition accompanied a more passionate concern for the corporate body that would allow such a state of affairs to occur. The Academy structure was under attack from the inside as well as from the critics. By June, three reforms were enacted to improve the quality of the exhibitions and to make the Academy a more national organization and less a New York City club.[53]

The critics' tepid responses in 1869 were also due to the fact that there were no entries by a number of the most revered older artists, notably Frederic Church, Albert Bierstadt, and Jasper Cropsey.[54] However, the lack of monumental canvases by the old guard forced the press to look elsewhere for their commentary. Half of the critics reviewing the show took time to study and write about Homer's single entry, *Manchester Coast*. Unfortunately, only one of the comments can be considered positive. The *Nation* hailed the painting as "the most important [landscape] in the galleries...full of interest and of excellent qualities, and it repays careful examination." Yet, the praise came with no real explanation, and the writer used his brief remarks to criticize the relationship of the color to the light and shadows in the painting.[55]

The five critics who condemned the painting did so on the grounds of its unfinished quality. Their emphases of complaint and occasional praise are worth outlining, for they illuminate some important nuances of the controversy surrounding finish. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

conservative critic of the *Times* found the painting "not an agreeable picture. It has an unfinished appearance in color and details of drawing that vexes the eye." Instead, the writer preferred a work like Samuel Colman's *Fort Lafayette* (fig. 7) for its "picturesque and animated" general effect and carefully painted details. For their color, Asher B. Durand's *Mountain Forest* (unlocated) and *Trysting Tree* (fig. 8) were cherished for their "certain tone of refinement and repose," which contrasted markedly with the younger generation's "brilliant and startling effects."[56] The *Herald* found *Manchester Coast* "strong, but blotchy, as it must be by the system on which it is painted—a system which runs into superficial rendering." By contrast, William Trost Richards, represented by *In the Spring* (fig. 9), was praised for his exquisite rendering of foliage, which "has this advantage over the pre-Raphaelite, that he carries details as far as possible without losing aerial perspective."[57] Like the *Times* and the *Herald*, *Putnam's* was bothered by Homer's painting's unfinished appearance, the cause of which, this writer said, was sketchy drawing and "handling by no means masterly." Nonetheless, *Putnam's* could praise its "fine qualities of color."[58] However, Richards and especially Colman were preferred for their finish and tone. What differentiated Homer from artists like Durand, Richards, and Colman was his application of large areas of relatively unmodulated color and his defining a view in terms other than drawing. The system referred to and objected to by the *Herald* was likely the French methods of an artist like Boudin.[59] These critics, like Clarence Cook earlier, wished Homer to remain solely nature-inspired.

Although the focus of their complaints was similar, the writers about Homer in the *Commercial Advertiser* and *Tribune* differed from their peers in their mean-spirited tone.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The criticism of Theodore Grannis of the *Commercial Advertiser* is particularly interesting because he was linked to the exhibition not only as the regular critic of the *Commercial Advertiser* but also as an exhibiting artist.[60] While Grannis had been critical of Homer's lack of finish in 1868, he had tolerated it as a momentary lapse. Seeing it manifested again and, perhaps, to a greater degree, Grannis was incensed this year, and accordingly, added sarcasm to his remarks:

> ... we cannot refrain from calling attention to the lamentable example hanging in the East room, painted by Winslow Homer, and entitled "Manchester Coast." Mr. Homer has at times produced works of great merit, but of late, the inspiration which formerly guided his pencil, appears to have left him, and only the indications of his former strength appears. In the present work, the most noticeable points (sic) appears to be the dashing of the oceans spray above the rocks, but as indicated by Mr. Homer, it resembles the work of a boy who has dashed a "spitball" upon a newly papered wall. [61]

Grannis seems to have attached great importance to careful and detailed delineation and so preferred the "judicious labor" that created the "sparkling reality" of Alfred Thompson Bricher's *Indian's Summer Sunset* (fig. 10) and Maurice Frederick Hendrik De Haas' "admirably drawn" and "faultlessly worked up" *Moonrise at Sunset* (unlocated).[62] Undoubtedly, his own canvas must have been among his favorites. Although we do not know what it looked like, it was described in the *Express* as "delicately painted," indicating a carefulness of execution.[63] Grannis' snide remarks about Homer's carelessness were double-edged. They suggested that it not only caused the picture to be poorly executed, but also, because it lacked Homer's previous good qualities, indicated a perversion of his art. Such criticism of Homer's painting would not be uncommon over the next decade.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Clarence Cook's attack on Homer was personally pointed, and it illustrates the manner in which the *Tribune* critic would often vent his frustration when faced with Homer's work. In this case, he argued that not only was Homer's canvas a disappointment but also it was one "which the artist had no right to inflict upon that portion of the public that takes a strong interest in him, and would admire him if it could be permitted to do so with a safe conscience." Cook was insulted by the painting because he felt Homer knew he could do much better. Although he had to admit he saw good work in the canvas, he further complained:

> Not but what there is of it, is good, only, there is nothing of it but the mere first intention. We take it that Mr. Homer saw a great deal more than this in the spot he has painted; if he did not, he was not called upon to say anything to the public about it....If this be the coast of Massachusetts' Manchester, we know it intimately enough to know that it is much better worth painting than Mr. Homer would seem to allow it. But, the truth is, this sketch may be of any rocky sea-coast, and as true of one as of another. It is not a daub, because such lines as these are put on with deliberate intention, but, it is a sketch too slight to offer the public, a mere memorandum for the artist's portfolio. If Mr. Homer has adopted the notion that he can put down any [?]ane in nature, or in any passage of human life, all that is worth recording, in a half-dozen strokes of his brush, he makes a blunder that in some men would deserve to be called conceit, but is a blunder, pure and simple, in any one who adopts it as a practice....[64]

The problem of finish raised Cook's hackles. First of all, he expected the selection of the pictured landscape not only to resemble the actual place but also to depict its best features. As he had with *Picardie, France*, he demanded that the image be recognizably local. Second, he called for that selected view to be carefully articulated. While this requirement of local and technical specificity suggests Cook's continued reliance on Ruskinian definitions of truth-to-nature, his notice of James Hope's *Gem of the Forest* (unlocated) in this same show hints that his viewpoint accepted representations that went

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

beyond the mimetic as truthful. Cook had warm praise for Hope's detail and careful painting, yet he was critical of the canvas as solely "a map of a place—too matter-of-fact to be true, for, in art, only what is poetical is counted true." [65] Cook was beginning to seek a better balance between factual description and poetic expression of a locale. In this regard, the selection of the view was an important factor. It not only supported the identification of a location but also assured the representation of a deeper understanding of the landscape beyond the facts of its surface. According to Cook, Homer, in his loose painting and seemingly reductive depiction of the Manchester, Massachusetts, coastline, denied both. Homer's canvas simply must have appeared astoundingly radical in the context of this exhibition.

Further infuriating the *Tribune* critic was both the extremity of Homer's sketchiness and the realization that it was not caused by carelessness or incompetence, but rather by Homer's intentionally subordinating detail in favor of general effect. Thus, Homer suggested that a considerably lesser degree of finish was necessary for exhibited works than ever before. This question of what was an acceptable level of completeness for works in exhibitions was an important component of the sketch-versus-finish debate. It was often Homer's contributions to exhibitions that sparked the discussions. Finally, Cook concluded his comments by venting his ultimate frustration. He really did admire Homer, but he lamented "we cannot reconcile ourselves to having an artist of real ability—and we have very few men so able as Mr. Homer—snuff himself out with a theory in this way. We will hope that he is only suffering from an attack of whim."[66]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's failure to meet the critics' expectations repeatedly haunted assessments of his work.

Picardie, France and *Manchester Coast* were landscapes. Because, prior to his trip abroad, he had distinguished himself exclusively with genre subjects, Homer's decision to display landscapes among his first exhibited works upon his return is worth noting. Landscape, of course, had been the reigning subject in American art for more than thirty years and, perhaps, for that reason Homer felt landscape was a "safe" subject with which to reestablish himself. Perhaps, too, he hoped to capitalize on the fact that landscape had traditionally received the lion's share of the critics' attention. Yet, his interest in landscape may have had an additional source. In both of his landscape offerings, Homer experimented with a broad painting style associated with recent French painting. His year abroad had give him a concentrated exposure to it, and its influence may have been reflected in his choice of subjects. Homer repeatedly straddled the traditional and the new, the accepted and the radical, as he tried to come to terms with the changes taking place in art.

Key among those changes was the drop in landscape production and the rise of figure work. At the 1869 Academy annual the *Nation* noted that landscape "disappears year by year from our exhibitions" and that "painted stories are taking over in place of importance."[67] Reflecting this shift, genre work received a considerable amount of attention this year, and artists like Eastman Johnson and Enoch Wood Perry were among

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

those most noticed. It was these men who were Homer's closest peers and competitors, and Homer soon rejoined them in consistently exhibiting genre subjects.

The third Winter Annual Exhibition at the National Academy opened during the first week of November 1869.[68] Although it was intended to bolster the art season, the winter annual had neither the caché nor the broad selection of its spring sister; it included many American canvases that had already been shown as well as a selection of European works. It did not, therefore, get the kind of attention as did the spring show.[69] For those writers assigned to review it, it was considered a "lamentable failure."[70] The newly exhibited works tended to get the most notice; among those was Homer's *Low Tide* (fig. 11).

For those who noticed it, *Low Tide* had a real impact. From some writers, it received perhaps the harshest criticism Homer had ever experienced. In the *World*, it was listed with William M. Davis' *Woods in March* (unlocated) and N. A. Moore's *Lake George* (unlocated) as "unworthy of any collection of works of art, even that which is sometimes made by the second hand furniture dealer, and we feel sure these will attract the attention of everybody."[71] A landscape by Jervis McEntee was greatly preferred. While the writer for the *World* did not detail his objections to Homer's canvas, the *Mail*'s did:

> We would pass this by without a word of comment were it not evidently a picture which by its size and show of color challenges criticism, even as the impress of an unclean hand upon a newly painted wall does. How an artist of acknowledged worth in a certain field of art, could permit this horror to leave his studio is simply incomprehensible to us. Here we have three grand horizontal layers of color—like rock strata. The upper is of brownish gray and dirty white with a suggestion of vermilion now and then—like the marble of Brachificari. This is the sky. The next

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> lower level is of darkish green blue, like some coal layers we have seen. On this there are dashes of flake white here and there which remind us of the story of how the artist succeeded in getting the foam on the mouth of a mad dog he was painting—by throwing his dirty sponge in indignation at the canvas. This second layer is the sea. The third is a belt of brown of many shades, and this is the beach; and to do it justice it looks like a beach, but it is the only division of the picture which taken apart has any evidence of design in it. The rest suggests unhappy accident on canvas only. On the wet sand, and on the dry sand, and further out toward those mysterious white places, are children bathing or about to bathe.... But among these figures is one to whose presence we object. It is of a young lady.... We don't object to her presence because her back is towards us, but because of her height—she is seven feet tall .... On the strand are children's boots and things, and these and the strata make up a picture which covers some twelve square feet of canvas at the least.[72]

It was Homer's use of bands of color layered on top of each other as the foundation of the compositional structure that, first and foremost, was unacceptable to this writer. This strategy condensed perspectival space and flattened the picture plane considerably in a way that was radical for American art at this time. In addition to the design shortcomings, the palette was condemned for its unnatural appearance. The application of paint was abhorred for its combination of broad brushstrokes and dabbed-on accents of color. There is no doubt that Homer had trouble with the relative perspective in the picture, as the comment about the tall figure implies.[73] The critic was pained both by the picture itself and by the fact that it came from Homer's brush. There were clearly expectations of quality for his work, and Homer was criticized again for exhibiting a painting, and a large one at that, which seemed to defy his known ability.

What the *Mail* critic found most unconscionable—Homer's lack of conventionality in compositional structure—the writer for the *Express* offered as the reason for the work's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

great power despite its many problems. He gave the painting the longest notice of any single work he mentioned:

> Perhaps one of the most original pictures in the collection is No. 106, "Low Tide," by Winslow Homer. Mr. Homer has here flown in the face of all the accredited rules of art; his color is cold and crude and his drawing is bad .... Yet, with all this there is an irresistible something in the whole that rivets the beholder, when he might in all probability pass by a picture more carefully finished, but lacking in force. The great secrets of the work are its force and its originality. The water is expressed by almost black and white; a murky copperish tinge runs through the sky; the figures in the middle distance are merely spots of high light, while the sandy beach is one broad mass of color. The whole picture, in fact, is painted in the broadest manner imaginable, and herein, and in its total disregard of all conventionality lies the secret of its success. It is not a great, nor can it be justly termed a good picture, but it possesses, withal, such a vast amount of strength, of manly vigor, and of originality, that by those it commands attention, and wins for itself a notoriety altogether remarkable.[74]

This writer agreed with the *Mail*'s critic that, particularly in color and drawing, *Low Tide* failed. But he explained that its failure was in relation to traditional notions about painting. Its success, pinpointed by the *Express* as resulting from its color usage and paint application, came from its radical use of those very elements identified as problematic when considered from the mainstream viewpoint. The *Express* further explained that it was a combination of both the actual artistic treatment itself and the fact that it disregarded conventions that commanded attention. In just one short sentence, the *Evening Post* agreed: "We like this picture because it indicates power beyond that of such an odd and imperfect conception."[75] For these two critics, the overall effect of the extreme unconventionality of design, color, and paint application showed power, originality, strength, and vigor. These qualities took the picture to a level of success that offset nearly all its conventional technical faults. Originality in Homer's art played a seminal role in his success throughout the period. Always defined in relation to power and tied to notions

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of individuality, this quality held tremendous importance for both the artist and the ongoing definition of American art.

Although Clarence Cook, too, had objections to *Low Tide*, especially its handling of perspective, he could praise some aspects of the canvas. In it, Cook found "the merit of sincerity," which came from "an evident honesty of intention—a purpose to paint just what the eye saw, neither more, neither less...," and this saved the painting.[76] For Cook, *Low Tide* was truthful in a way that *Picardie, France* and *Manchester Coast* had not been. To the critic's eye, it reflected the artist's unadulterated response to nature herself with no taint of outside influence. In contrast to how harshly Cook had condemned Homer's earlier efforts, his praise here suggests how very important honesty of vision was for the *Tribune* writer. It, too, was a quality with which Homer would be increasingly associated, and is a prominent feature in the discussions on art. Ultimately, originality and honesty were two traits inextricably linked to the identity of America's national character. Their identification in Homer's work automatically attached to it an Americanness that was at the core of the definition of this nation's art. Therefore, their appearance in his paintings could exact positive responses despite harsh reactions to any shortcomings.

The exhibition of *Low Tide* marked Homer's return to the public showing of contemporary American genre subjects. It also reinserted him into the discussions surrounding originality in which he had figured prominently with his Civil War paintings, discussions that would continue through his entire career. The critical commentaries of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Low Tide and the other paintings Homer exhibited in 1868 and 1869 exemplify the patterns and types of criticism his work had, did, and would elicit. They also suggest the greatly varied responses particular qualities in his work could cause, and underscore the wide spectrum of viewpoints found among those remarking on art. Mixed reviews would become a hallmark of the critical response to Homer's art. He would receive more harsh criticism, but when he was successful and the critics understood what he was trying to accomplish, he received some of the heartiest praise of any artist during the period. In these first two years after his return from Europe, Homer, himself, seems to have been evaluating his place in American art. In 1870, he aggressively went out to claim it.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to Chapter 2

[1] Charles Brock, "Chronology," NGA 1995, pp. 393-94. Unless otherwise stated, biographical information on Homer is taken from this Chronology, pp. 391-406.

[2] Winslow Homer to Charles Vorhees, 26 August 1867; quoted in NGA 1995, p. 393.

[3] *Mail*, 6 December 1867; NGA 1995, p. 394.

[4] Homer's work also appeared in exhibitions as far afield as Cincinnati and Utica, New York. William H. Gerdts and James Yarnall, comps., *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986), p. 1782.

[5] In a time before dealers became the primary agents for an artist's work, the club setting provided Homer with the opportunity to sell his work. Clubs, however, were not venues that fostered extensive criticism in the press.

[6] The magazines were: *Harper's Weekly*, *Galaxy*, *Our Young Folks*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. The books to which Homer contributed illustrations in 1868 were: *Good Stories, Part III* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868); John Esten Cooke, *Mohun* (New York: F. J. Huntington and Co., 1869); Cousin Virginia [Virginia Wales Johnson], *The Christmas Stocking* (New York: William Rockwell, 1869); and William Barnes, *Rural Poems* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1869). For a listing of all Homer's book illustrations, see David Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book*, pp. 297-300.

[7] Only rarely, however, were illustrations remarked on in a critical forum, and so their consideration does not figure here except in passing.

[8] See, for example, "Saturday in the Studios," *Commercial Advertiser*, 21 January 1868, p. 2; "Fine Arts," *Herald*, 7 February 1868, p. 4; and "Art Notes," *Express*, 23 July 1868, p. 2.

[9] *Commercial Advertiser*, 21 January 1868, p. 2; "Art Matters," *Express*, 26 February 1868, p. 2; and "The Studios," *Post*, 4 February 1868, p. 2. For the criticism of *Prisoners From the Front*, see, for example, Sordello [Eugene Benson], "National Academy of Design. Forty-first Annual Exhibition. First Article, *Post*, 28 April 1866, p. 1.

[10] On the Paris Exposition, see Carol Troyen, "Innocents Abroad: American Painters at the 1867 Exposition Universelle, Paris," *American Art Journal* 16 (Autumn 1984), pp. 3-29.

[11] Much has been written on this painting. See, especially, Simpson, *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*; Giese, "Winslow Homer: Painter of the Civil War,"; and Patricia M. Burnham and Lucretia Hoover Giese, eds., *Redefining American History Painting* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[12] Those papers that did not have much art writing at this time, like the *Times* and the *Telegram*, ignored it; others, like the *Commercial Advertiser* and *Herald*, simply printed listings of what was in the show, as in "National Academy of Design," *Commercial Advertiser*, 9 January 1868, p. 2; and "Reception at the National Academy of Design," *Herald*, 9 January 1868, p. 4.

[13] The debate on America's cultural shortcoming grew increasingly after mid-century. See Ann Farmer Meservey, "The Role of Art in American Life: Critics Views on Native Art and Literature, 1830-65," *American Art Journal* 1 (May 1978), pp. 73-79.

[14] Troyen, "Innocents Abroad," p. 4.

[15] "Art Matters," *Mail*, 13 January 1868, p. 1.

[16] "The American Pictures from Paris," *World*, 10 January 1868, p. 4. A similar sentiment was essayed in "Fine Arts, American Pictures from the French Exhibition," *Tribune*, 14 January 1868, p. 2.

[17] "The Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Post*, 13 January 1868, p. 2.

[18] For the most comprehensive overview to the reaction to *Prisoners From the Front*, see Simpson, *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*, pp. 247-59.

[19] Frederic Church's *Rainy Day in the Tropics* (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) and Eastman Johnson's *Negro Life at the South* were the other two canvases most praised. Despite the front-and-center attention that Homer's *Prisoners From the Front* received, his other canvas in the exhibition, *Bright Side* (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco), received no such notice. Throughout this period, it is important to note that while some of Homer's works received extensive amounts of praise, others, shown simultaneously, were sometimes ignored entirely. In these cases, lack of response might be read as a kind of negative commentary, for it suggests the work did not even deserve mention.

[20] *Mail*, 13 January 1868, p. 1, and *Post*, 13 January 1868, p. 2.

[21] *Mail*, 13 January 1868, p. 2. This article summarized the French reactions as well as giving its own opinion.

[22] In the context of the 1868 Academy annual, the debate around European vs. American art focused on the superiority of European (especially French) figure painting and the best way for American art to absorb its technical excellencies without giving over to its perceived immorality or insubstantiality. This portion of the debate does not intersect with the critical reactions to Homer here but will become important later on. For the 1868 views see, for example, "The National Academy. The Reception," *Mail*, 15 April 1868, p. 3; "The National Academy of Design," *Tribune*, 4 May 1868, p. 2; and "National Academy of Design. Second Article." *Commercial Advertiser*, 28 April 1868, p. 1. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

larger issue was especially investigated by Eugene Benson in "Democratic Deities," *Galaxy* 2 (December 1868), pp. 661-65.

[23] "Fine Arts. Forty-Third Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. First Notice, " *Nation* 6 (30 April 1868), p. 356.

[24] "Fine Arts," *Putnam's* 1 (June 1868), pp. 771-72.

[25] "The Academy of Design. Private View of the Forty-Third Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 15 April 1868, p. 4; *Commercial Advertiser*, 28 April 1868, p. 1; and S. S. C. [Samuel Stillman Conant], "Literature and Art. Art and Artists. The Spring Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Galaxy* 5 (May 1868), pp. 652-58.

[26] "Notes on Art," *Herald*, 20 April 1868, p. 7, and *Mail*, 15 April 1868, p. 3.

[27] "The National Academy of Design. Forty-Third Annual Exhibition, " *Tribune*, 4 May 1868, p. 2.

[28] "Art in New York. Past and Present," *World*, 2 January 1868, p. 2.

[29] Troyen, "Innocents Abroad," pp. 13-22 passim.

[30] *Mail*, 15 April 1868, p. 3.

[31] "National Academy of Design," *Commercial Advertiser*, 18 May 1868, p. 1.

[32] *Tribune*, 4 May 1868, p. 2.

[33] "Fine Arts, Forty-Third Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Nation* 6 (7 May 1868), p. 377.

[34] "National Academy of Design. Fourth Article," *Commercial Advertiser*, 12 May 1868, p. 1.

[35] *Tribune*, 15 April 1868, p. 4.

[36] On the criticism of *The Brierwood Pipe*, see NGA 1995, pp. 42-43 and Simpson, *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*, pp. 171-72.

[37] Ila Weiss, *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987), p. 328, lists *Shrewsbury River—Sandy Hook* as having been in the collection of Josiah M. Fiske but is now unlocated.

[38] See, for example, "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 37 (July 1868), pp. 270-71; "National Academy of Design. First Notice," *Post*, 22 April 1868, p.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1; "Fine Arts, Academy of Design," *Albion*, 16 May 1868, pp. 237-38; and *Putnam's* 1 (June 1868), pp. 771-74.

[39] Negative reactions to Farrer are voiced strongly in "Art Matters. Forty-Third Annual Exhibition of the National Academy. First Article," *Express*, 22 April 1868, p. 1, and *Putnam's* 1 (June 1868), pp. 771-74.

[40] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design—Forty-Third Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 21 May 1868, p. 2.

[41] Ibid., p. 2.

[42] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fourth Article," *Tribune*, 18 June 1868, p. 2.

[43] For example, Homer could not pay rent on what was probably an ancillary studio space at the Mendelsohn Glee Club in March. He offered to draw a group portrait of the club members for the $57 he owed, but his offer was declined. Allan Robinson, *The Mendelsohn Glee Club* (New York: privately printed, 1930), unpaginated. John Davis, Smith College, kindly brought this incident to my attention and Abigail Gerdts is to be thanked for her suggestion that the room at the club was in addition to Homer's primary studio.

[44] He provided at least nineteen magazine illustrations for *Harper's Bazaar*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Appleton's* (new in 1869), and the *Galaxy*. Homer also drew an illustration for John Greenleaf Whittier's *Ballads of New England*. See Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book*, p. 299.

[45] Nineteen canvases are known to have been created in 1869 compared to just four known oils produced in 1868.The number of known Homer works by year are drawn from The Lloyd Goodrich and Edith Havens Goodrich Whitney Museum of American Art Record of Works by Winslow Homer.

[46] The identification of Homer's summer travels are drawn from newspaper reports, painting titles, and illustration titles. See, for example, "Art Matters," *Express*, 2 September 1868, p. 2.

[47] "Art in Brooklyn." *Mail*, 16 March 1869, p. 4; "Brooklyn Art Association – Spring Exhibition," *Post*, 16 March 1869, p. 2; and "Art Association," *Commercial Advertiser*, 16 March 1869, p. 3. *Bridle Path* received its full due when it was shown the next year at the Academy. See Chapter 3.

[48] "New Private Art Galleries," *Herald*, 17 January 1869, p. 3.

[49] "Fine Arts," *Post*, 17 May 1869, p. 2.

[50] "National Academy of Design," *World*, 14 April 1869, p .5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[51] Some form of praise for the exhibition exceeded blatant criticism by a 2:1 margin in the reviews. The mediocrity of the show was commented on especially in "The Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design Forty-Fourth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 13 May 1869, p. 2; "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *Times*, 19 April 1869, p. 5; and "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *Putnam's* 3 (June 1869), pp. 746-48.

[52] The success of the younger artists is mentioned specifically in "The Academy of Design. The Forty-Fourth Exhibition," *Post*, 27 April 1869, p. 1; "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *Albion*, 1 May 1869, pp. 243-44; and "National Academy of Design," *Commercial Advertiser*, 14 April 1869, p. 2.

[53] The reforms enacted were: 1) a limit of two successive terms for the office of president; 2) all American artists were made eligible for membership (not just New Yorkers; previously, non-New York residents could show, but not be members); and 3) the hanging committee was reduced from thirteen members to three. For examples of the discussion of these matters, see *Tribune*, 13 May 1869, p. 2; "On The Easel," *Commercial Advertiser*, 1 March 1869, p. 1; "Fine Arts. Sixth Notice of the Spring Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Mail*, 12 May 1869, p. 1; "Fine Arts. Changes In The National Academy of Design," *Times*, 11 June 1869, p. 4; "Reforms In The National Academy of Design," *Post*, 28 September 1869, p. 2; and "Fine Arts," *Putnam's* 4 (October 1869), pp. 507-10.

[54] The absence of these artists is especially noted in: "National Academy of Design," *Herald*, 14 April 1869, p. 9; "Fine Arts. The Forty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Mail*, 14 April, 1869, p. 1; *Commercial Advertiser*, 14 April 1869, p. 2; and *Post*, 27 April 1869, p. 1.

[55] "Fine Arts. Forty-Fifth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Nation* 8 (29 April 1869), p. 341.

[56] "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *Times*, 30 April 1869, p. 4.

[57] "Fine Arts. Forty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Herald*, 26 April 1869, p. 7.

[58] *Putnam's* 3 (June 1869), p. 748.

[59] Comparisons of Homer's work to French art in the late 1860s have often been made in passing. The topic has received its fullest consideration in Henry Adams, "Winslow Homer's 'Impressionism' and Its Relation to His Trip to France," *Studies in the History of Art* 26 (1990), pp. 61-89. Study of Homer's debts to French art is yet a rich, unmined topic deserving closer attention.

[60] Grannis' inclusion as an artist is mentioned in "Art Matters. National Academy of Design," *Express*, 22 May 1869, p. 2. His 1869 entry was *Rocks at Low Tide* (unlocated),

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

presumably a marine. He exhibited at the annuals of 1868-71, and his entries are listed in *The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1861-1900*, v. 1 (New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1973), p. 354. The topic of artist-critics is a fascinating one that this study only mentions.

[61] "National Academy of Design. Third Article," *Commercial Advertiser*, 12 May 1869, p. 1.

[62] Ibid.

[63] *Express*, 22 May 1869, p. 2.

[64] [Clarence Cook], "The Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design. Forty-Fourth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 22 May 1869, p. 1.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] *Nation* 8 (29 April 1869), pp. 340-41.

[68] "Art Matters. Third Winter Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Express*, 13 November 1869, p. 1.

[69] Only eight newspapers and two magazines covered this particular exhibition.

[70] For general commentary on the show, see "National Academy of Design. Annual Winter Exhibition," *Tribune*, 4 November 1869, p. 4; S. S. C. [Samuel Stillman Conant], "Literature and Art," *Galaxy* 8 (December 1869), pp. 858-59; and "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design," *Post*, 24 November 1869, p. 1. The inclusion of foreign canvases and the fact that many of the American works had been previously exhibited drew varied responses, but the overall assessment of the show was nearly unanimous.

[71] "National Academy of Design. Third Winter Exhibition," *World*, 6 November 1869, p. 12.

[72] "Fine Arts. The Winter Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Mail*, 6 November 1869; quoted in NGA 1995, p. 81.

[73] The original picture was destroyed within two years of its showing. The canvas subsequently was cut down to create several smaller works. On this course of events, see NGA 1995, pp. 81-83.

[74] "Art Matters. Third Winter Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. Second Article," *Express*, 24 November 1869, p. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[75] *Post*, 24 November 1869, p. 1.

[76] [Clarence Cook], "Fine Arts. Third Winter Exhibition At The Academy. Third Article," *Tribune*, 4 December 1869, p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 3

1870-73: Commanding Respect and Challenging Admiration

Having taken two years to reestablish himself in the New York City art world, Homer entered 1870 by dedicating himself to pursuing his career as a painter.[1] Over the next four years, he experimented with subject matter and artistic treatment with a vigor previously unknown in his work. Although he was painting in what appears to be a steady stream, he developed patterns of working and exhibiting that made his canvases available in waves. As he wrestled with his art, Homer would alternately fling himself into public arenas and then retreat. The peaks and valleys of his exhibiting pattern seem to reflect periods of intense artmaking alternated with periods of reflection. Homer's working mode included, too, the creation of groups of related, smaller-scaled works, where he investigated specific artistic problems. The more investigative excursions appeared in tandem with the painting of more traditional exhibition-sized canvases, in which his solutions to the problems were capitalized on and often synthesized.

When Homer's oeuvre is aligned with the commentary it received, a symbiotic relationship between the artist's working process and the press appears evident as both artist and press grappled with the changes occurring in painting and in Homer's art in particular. During this period, Homer received both high praise and harsh criticism. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, Homer received the highest praise when he seems to have taken into account the critics' reactions to the preceding work. The strongest criticism came for works which either were explorations of a problem not yet entirely

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

resolved or were resolutions that went counter to prevailing taste. During the early seventies, Homer was at the forefront of the changes in American art. The reactions to his work corroborate that fact and explain why.

The results of Homer's surge of painting between the 1869 and 1870 National Academy annuals appeared in the 1870 annual, when he exhibited eleven canvases.[2] These pictures constituted the single largest group of oils Homer would ever have hanging at the Academy. Even though eight of the works fell into the category of "sketches and studies," it was still a prodigious output. Both the exhibition and Homer were heavily noticed in the newspapers. Only the *Sun* and the *Commercial Advertiser* of the major dailies did not publish extensive reviews. In a day when magazines paid less attention to time-sensitive topics, only the *Nation*, and *Harper's Weekly*, both weeklies, and *Putnam's* covered the show.

Responses to the 1870 annual were mainly positive.[3] While a few writers simply gave the show an unqualified stamp of approval, others noted evidence of progress, the issue that was the magnetic pole around which the most laudatory comments were attracted.[4] Most effusive in its praise was the *Evening Mail*, which stated: "...that Academy exhibition is the best, to our mind, where the evidences of progress are most numerous.... At all past exhibitions of the Academy...poor pictures were the rule.... At this one the order of things...is reversed, and this we pronounce not a step forward merely but a stride."[5] The focus on progress, although an ongoing passion, may have been especially on the critics' minds this year due to the publication of James Jackson Jarves' *Art Thoughts* at the end

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of 1869. In his chapter "Art in America," Jarves had continued his decade-and-a-half general condemnation of American art, but, with it, he meted out a considerable measure of proof of and praise for its visible and implied promise. While Jarves felt that the American art sent to the Paris 1867 Exposition proved "our actual mediocrity," he also noted a handful of artists who exhibited an infusion of fresh life and the promise of the future.[6] Agreeing with Jarves' base-line attitude towards American art, nearly half of the critics of the 1870 annual who cast the show in a positive light did so with qualifications. As Jarves asserted for American art on the whole, reviewers of the 1870 annual found evidence of progress only in the canvases of individual artists, especially younger ones, and not in the show overall.[7] The purely negative remarks about the show also were based on assessments of progress. The writer for the *Telegram* simply saw no improvement, in any capacity, from the previous year.[8] Eugene Benson, writing in *Putnam's*, phrased his concern as seeing "no new hope," suggesting he, too, felt the stagnation that others had commented on in the previous two years.[9]

The 1870 annual also was criticized for certain faults found *en masse*. A lack of truthfulness bothered a number of critics. Although it was agreed that greater study was the remedy for this problem, both the problem itself and the proper solution were articulated in multiple ways.[10] On a philosophical level, the discussion was based on the role of truth in art; its practical correlative investigated how it could best be achieved in visual presentations. While critics had touched on this issue in the context of the unfinished appearance of Homer's 1868 and 1869 offerings, they expanded upon it in their reactions to the annual of 1870.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

One camp of critics believed literal representation served as the best foundation for art, and their reviews pleaded for verisimilitude. [11] These writers continued to cling to such Ruskinian-inspired statements as "the only test of Art is its truth to Nature," penned by Clarence Cook in 1864,[12] and they fretted over the lack of thorough study of the material object being pictured. For example, the *Telegram's* philosophical stance was reflected in its criticism of technique: "There does not appear...that careful study, without which no artist can hope to do himself justice. The greatest evident fault seems to lie in a proneness to overpaint.... Another fault seems to be a want of distinction--, or perhaps, we should say a sharpness of outline.... For instance, three daubs of a brush...will not make a figure."[13] Similarly, the *Herald* decried:

> ...[the] carelessness and growing disregard for truth which is evident in weak sentimentalism and false imaginativeness destructive of all vigor and true character in art. Only comparatively a small proportion of the pictures seem to have been studied at all.... We select this as being by far the most important element. To represent, one must first know and understand, and to know, one must learn. Hence, to study carefully and faithfully is the fundamental principle which underlies all art. There is nothing, even inspiration, which can take the place of this important work."[14]

Harper's Weekly agreed: "The chief defect...in the galleries is a want of thoroughness; a dash to grasp the prize of success without the preparation."[15] Common to these viewpoints is their insistence that the representation of truth have a material basis, and that it was only through studying, understanding, and duplicating the natural world that true understanding of the universe could be gained.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The opposing point of view was most fully developed by Jarves, and was rooted in the belief that art should be based in universal truths through which nature is interpreted. Jarves wrote in *Art Hints*:

> The failures...of Art generally arise chiefly from commencing at the wrong end. Instead of first studying the great principles of Nature, upon which all Art is founded, and working from them *outwardly*, artists too commonly are led by their blind impulses; and looking first to external expression, begin on the *outside* of Art, applying to it primarily the technical rules of material excellence; as it were, building their house before they knew what kind of spirit is to occupy it. This is working in the dark. The meaning of the work must first be considered.[16]

The *Nation*, agreeing with Jarves, felt that the chief aim of painting was "to give beautiful, exalted, and essentially true ideas of the external world."[17] The *Post*, echoing Jarves, believed the work of the artist to be that of "defining the true relationship between matter and spirit," and, thus, the paper suggested that a consideration aside from outward rendering of detail was needed: "there is too little study of the picturesque and too much indifference in the matter of ideas."[18] For these critics, truth was no less essential than for their matter-bound peers. However, for them, truth was to be found in the facts of nature rather than to be defined by them. In short, the two sides were divided over the material or spiritual basis for truth and art.

In 1870 these discussions were carried on particularly in the context of landscape painting, which predominated on the walls and in the reviews of the Academy and was considered the genre in which the best work was being accomplished.[19] The rivalry between Albert Bierstadt and Frederic Church, which, in large part, had shaped much of the discussions on landscape and truth in art in the 1860s, still served as the centerpiece

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for them. However, the landscape that commanded the greatest praise and from the widest range of critics was, as it had been in 1868, by Sanford Gifford; this year the subject was *San Giorgio* (1869-70; unlocated).[20] Looking at the critics' remarks on the works of Gifford, Bierstadt, and Church, one sees the struggle in the critical body to reconcile the competing interests of factual and poetic truth.

Bierstadt's *Sierra Nevada Mountains* (fig. 12) received mainly negative criticism for its artificiality, which was also described as "unnaturalness."[21] Even those who found some pleasing aspects in Bierstadt's canvas had to admit, like the *Times* writer: "Fine as it is...it is not nature."[22] The cumulative effect of finicky minuteness and over-magnification of natural phenomena ultimately rendered the canvas false and without poetry.[23] Similarly for the *Express*, the essence of nature's beauty in that spot was lost due to the overuse of petty details.[24] The *World* stated that Bierstadt's blunder was the result of his trying to infuse the image with poetic sentiment instead of relying on his usual mode of naturalistic portrayal. As an antidote to Bierstadt, the *World* suggested: "there is but one common and reliable supposition worth entertaining in aesthetics as in enterprise, and it is that honesty is the best policy."[25] The *Post* was most articulate in outlining the cause of Bierstadt's failure. Although the writer had never visited the location depicted, he doubted that the artist's rendering was faithful. He continued:

> Nothing is left, therefore, but the general sentiment of nature on which to base our remarks. In pictorial art the forms and appearances of nature like words and sentences in literature, mean something; they must, so to say, be orthographically and grammatically correct, and so arranged in sequence of idea as to express a logical conclusion. Sprinkle a page with terms taken from a dictionary or with haphazard quotations from a model author, and there would certainly be nonsense. Just such a page to our minds is this canvas....It is a kind of "frou-frou" of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> natural appearances and artificial reflections; instead of the poetry of nature we have a theatrical scene by daylight. This picture has not the merit of pure objective rendering, that simple accuracy of commonplace detail which, even when barren of poetic significance, pleases.[26]

Even if they disagreed on the necessity of the poetic, these writers generally agreed on the necessity of truthful rendering. They also shared the belief that truth did not come simply from masses of detailed delineation, but in the truthful arrangement as well.

The reactions to Frederic Church's *The After Glow* (fig. 13) were more mixed. It was the canvas' overall effect, caused by Church's attempt to suggest the particular phenomenon of sunset, which caused the greatest division among critics. Most critics approved of Church's use of detail, and those, such as the writers for the *Telegram*, *Times*, and *Mail*, who also liked the overall effect gave him the highest marks.[27] The writer for the *Post* criticized Church for his sensationalism. He condemned his extreme exaggeration of natural phenomena saying that it smacked of melodrama. The image was, most of all, wanting in poetry and, to achieve it, the *Post* writer advised: "nature being composed of infinite harmonies, all the artist has to do is make his selection and be true to it."[28] The critic for the *Herald* had mixed feelings about the canvas. Although he found the foreground details too distracting in *The After Glow*, he admired the painting most of all for what he thought Church was trying to achieve. He believed the artist strived to "rise above the beautiful detail and epic poetry for which he has become so prominent...and reach a still higher standard of thought and feeling," a standard realized through the "comprehension and rendering of effect." He further noted how difficult a task Church had set for himself.[29]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sanford Gifford's *San Giorgio* came closest to interweaving the accepted artistic means and philosophical goals outlined by the art critics and was, therefore, the most popular landscape in the exhibition.[30] It also suggested how fact and poetry might coexist in a single canvas. The critics who were most interested in the relationship of art to the poetic found the painting extraordinary. Called "a pictorial poem founded on fact" by the *Post*, the *World* summed it up this way:

> Perhaps no other picture in the exhibition conveys so fully an idea of completeness; that charm of totality perfected and intelligible by reason of its unity. The subject involves no technical difficulties; placid water and clear reflections of masonry are not in themselves to be reckoned among the few things in nature which forever elude the painter; but these materials have been transfused by the artist with a life of color, and he has shown rare sagacity in the use of his limited details. The consequence is that the "San Giorgio" burns like a shaft of southern sunshine in this cold marble hall.[31]

Gifford had blended the insistence on particular knowledge with the evocation of feeling through color, light, and design that satisfied the notion of completion for nearly every critic no matter where his opinion lay on the spectrum of defining truth in art. Gifford accomplished it through careful drawing, which satisfied the need for fidelity to locale, but he infused the scene with light and color to create an atmosphere that permeated the whole and did so truthfully. The result evoked both actual and universal truth and appealingly suggested sentiment without sensationalism.

It was in this context that the critics considered Homer's eleven works. The responses to this prodigious offering of work generated the most column inches for Homer since the showing of *Prisoners from the Front* in 1866.[32] There is the sense that most critics sought

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

out Homer's entries in the 1870 Academy exhibition. As in 1868 and 1869, but to a greater degree since he had more works on view, Homer's entries provoked the press. For most of them, there was no ignoring the work nor could they help acknowledging that it commanded attention. At the same time, they found much to condemn.

As a group, Homer's pictures elicited commentary on topics directly related to those raised in the discussions of Church, Bierstadt, and Gifford, and particularly with regard to the complex issue of truth in art. Rendering reality truthfully was a quality repeatedly discerned in them. Homer's truthfulness was derived, as Clarence Cook explained, from his "vivid presentation of things, as they appear to the naked eye." His "direct bold look into the face of things" convinced viewers that his primary aim was to obtain "the bare vivid reality.[33] *Harper's Weekly* noted similarly that Homer's truth conveyed the feeling that "you are very sure that the painter has really seen what he paints and really tries to represent it."[34] Eugene Benson offered the most expansive and sophisticated explanation of Homer's truth, noting its roots in the artist's attitudes towards observation. Benson suggested: "Homer is one of the few young men...to be in directly personal relations with nature....a man who goes direct to his object, sees it large and obvious relations, and works to express them, untroubled by the past and without thinking too curiously of the present.... He has yet to reach the beautiful and exquisite; he is now in the good and the true."[35] These critics all recognized that Homer's truthfulness depended on closely observing the material world but that it was not delineated through the detailed representation of material fact.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Critics noted Homer's unconventional means of conveying his observations as they had in their reactions to *Low Tide* in 1869. With his 1870 Academy pictures, Homer's unconventionality became a central point for discussion and was related to issues of intent, technique, and subject matter. It secured his position as original and independent, and caused him to be labeled defiant, reckless, and a breaker of the rules of art. His unconventionality garnered both praise and criticism, sometimes simultaneously from the same critic.

That Homer was trying new approaches was recognized by the *Tribune*: "What shall we say of Winslow Homer? His eleven pieces show industry; better than that they show earnestness, a defiance of conventionality, a disregard of fashionable precedent...that commands respect and challenges admiration.."[36] The *World* found the pictures "incomprehensible...indeed difficult to find the terms in which to speak of this artist's work."[37] This inadequacy on the critic's part did not deter him from discussing the work, and, in fact, he felt obliged to pay attention to the "gleams of strong defiant ability reckless of all art rules" because they had the suggestion of originality. "It is not the critic's duty to judge Mr. Homer at first sight. There is every reason why originality—even when put in this *outré* form—should be studied before it is condemned...."[38]

Originality was a complex notion that occupied the center of much thinking in American arts and letters during the nineteenth century. It was seen, especially in literature, as a crucial component in the creation of a distinct American idiom. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

defined the term in 1868: "And what is originality? It is being one's self and reporting accurately what we see and are."[39] Thus, it followed: if one were an American reporting on any aspect of America—people, life, place—an original statement would result if that statement were realized truthfully. Thomas W. Higginson, in a call for originality in literature, gave concrete examples of Emerson's statement: "originality is simply a fresh pair of eyes," and American successes in this vein, like Harriet Beecher Stowe, had come from "daring Americanism of subject...not of new tribes alone, but of the American spirit."[40] Originality, as an American characteristic, thus was ultimately related to freedom, democracy, and a national identity different from that of the Old World.[41]

Originality was especially valued in art in the early seventies due, in large part, to the deep rut in which American art was perceived to be. Clarence Cook noted: "The call now is for original work; not necessarily for great work, for that demands genius...but for fresh work, original in the sense of being independent." For example, he accused Church of only painting sunbeams and condemned John La Farge for putting a "Newport fog" in all his work, even the still lifes. Thus, Cook hailed: "the protest against monotony is a good protest," and it bode well for the future of American art.[42] Homer's work seemed to represent that protest and, for it, he was found to be "a reformer and a brave one."[43]

Contributing to Homer's being labeled as original was that he broke the traditional rules of art. In this regard, his choice of themes for his three canvases of traditional exhibition size caused considerable consternation.[44] *Bridle Path, White Mountains* (fig. 14), *Eagle Head, Manchester, Massachusetts* (commonly called *High Tide*; fig. 15), and *Manners*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and Customs at the Seaside (unlocated) were identified as suffering from extremely poor choices of subject and, furthermore, Homer was condemned for wasting his considerable talent on them. The *Post* exclaimed: "...what a pity to see such trifling subjects from a really clever hand."[45] Common to these three canvases was the fact that they all featured subjects of contemporary life with women engaged in outdoor activities. Recreational riding in rugged topography, as pictured in *Bridle Path*, and public sea-bathing, as seen in *Eagle Head, Massachusetts*, and *Manners and Custom by the Seaside*, were relatively recent undertakings for women. To picture these activities, especially bathing scenes, was to border on the inappropriate.[46] The response to the subject of *Bridle Path* was softened due to the more virulent reactions to the beach scenes. For example, the *Mail* acknowledged that *Bridle Path* did less "violence to good taste" than *Eagle Head*, yet it suggested the White Mountain scene was more appropriate for travel book illustration than for a work of art.[47]

The subjects of *Eagle Head* and *Manners and Customs by the Seaside* received the harshest criticism. Whatever reaction *Eagle Head* elicited, the young women in it were considered to be *en déshabillé* or slaves to fashion, and the questionable taste of the scene, especially the implied voyeurism, was commented on repeatedly. The *Post* described the canvas as "representing three females on a beach, attired in the customary bathing dresses of a seaside watering-place, and appearing as ludicrous as it is possible to make them. It is probably a satire on the fashionable eccentricities of Grecian beads and other modern dress addenda."[48] John Jones, in *Harper's Weekly*, cast his reservations mildly, finding the subject "not quite refined."[49] The *Mail* was more pointed in saying

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

what it found unsavory, noting "other puppies are presumed to be on the beach with opera glasses.... The subject is of questionable taste...."[50] The risqué aspect of the bathing subject was also found in *Manners and Customs by the Seaside*. The writer for the *Herald* wondered if such scenes of bold, bare-legged women were the unpleasant result of the "ballet and burlesque so recently popular." Whatever the cause, he hoped that such scenes were the exception rather than the rule at the better seaside resorts.[51] The seemingly relaxed morals of the women in *Manners and Customs* was most unsettling to the *Mail*. Noticing that the figures were "thinly and wetly clad," it further observed that "[there are] very inquisitive spectators of the fun...two 'swells' with parasols," and that, despite these circumstances, "there is an *abandon* about the ladies.... This may well be called very properly a *spicy* picture."[52] All these negative remarks responded, in some form, to Homer's unusually frank and unidealized portrayal of contemporary resort life.

Unlike his colleagues, Eugene Benson embraced rather than condemned the modernity of Homer's subjects. Rather than remarking on the possibly immoral behavior of the girls in *Eagle Head*, he focused on the want of beauty in the portrayal of the female figures. This lack bothered Benson because he endorsed the cardinal rule that the object of picturing female subjects was always to present the lovely and the beautiful. In his review of *Manners and Customs*, he complained about American prudishness and praised the subject as being "very real." Most of all, he celebrated *Bridle Path*'s modernity because its "contemporary nature, [was] something that will never become stale," further stating that this aspect contributed to its being an American and original picture. He added:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Here is no faded, trite, flavorless figure, as if from English illustrated magazines; but an American girl out-of-doors, by an American artist with American characteristics.... Mr. Homer is a positive, a real, a natural painter. His work is always good as far as it goes; and generally it falls below the standard of finish and detail which is within the reach of our most childish and mediocre painters, and which misleads many, and deceives painters with the thought that going from particular to particular, of itself, insures a fine result in art."[53]

That Benson had both a more positive reaction to and a vocabulary with which to express his appreciation of Homer was no coincidence. More than any other American critic to date, Benson was familiar with and championed the work of Gustave Courbet for its strength, power, modernity, and realism. In 1867, Benson had noted there were two lessons an artist could learn from Courbet: "free use of the brush," and "free choice of subject." He felt, too, that Courbet was "immense in his vigor and frankness, in spite of many canvases full of bad...drawing and the crudest brush work, he is a strong man; strong as a painter, and strong in his hold on reality."[54] Thus, as in Courbet, Benson could find in Homer a similar approach to subject and careful observation described not in details but in masses of light, shade, and color to make his works truthful, original, and American. For these reasons Benson considered Homer on the path to achieving the status of America's master figure painter.[55]

Homer's subject matter in *Bridle Path*, *Eagle Head*, and *Manners and Customs* set him apart from others in the show.[56] The other genre subjects by home artists commanding attention were Seymour Joseph Guy's *Little Stranger* (unlocated), which pictured a newborn being examined by his older sister; Enoch Wood Perry's *Huldy* (unlocated), based on the rustic character of that name in a James Russell Lowell poem; and Thomas

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Waterman Wood's *Return of the Flag* (fig. 16), a Civil War image.[57] Compared to these overtly narrative images, Homer's scenes were radically different. Homer's stories were not nearly so literary nor did they evoke the sentiment sought by each of these other artists. Likewise in artistic treatment, Homer's peers were generally praised for their careful attention to detail, even if, as was the case of Guy, it was sometimes criticized as too much.[58]

If Homer's subjects identified him as original, his methods defined him as unconventional. The latter were often roundly condemned even if, for a number of critics, the results of his means could be praised as powerful.[59] Cook in the *Tribune* suggested the double-edged response the paintings elicited: "[Homer's works] attract and rivet attention by their vivid presentation of things, as they appear to the naked eye. There is no flinching in his realism, however the uninitiated may flinch from it."[60] What contributed to that flinching, for the *Tribune*, was a "hardness" and "crudity," especially of color, as well as a habit of stopping short. It explained: "One thing he aims at—the bare vivid reality. He thrusts his scenes clear up against the eye, and then seems to forget they are unfinished. He indicates but does not describe." These shortcomings made his work seem angular and awkward.[61] The *Express*, like the *Tribune*, was bothered by certain defects in Homer's painting and fascinated by others. It noted: "Mr. Homer paints in the broadest style of the broad French school, and his effects are produced by strong contrasts of color and light and shade. His color is often muddy, and he is apt to run to theatrical exaggeration, but, for all this, there is force in his work. It may be the labor of a mind in a transition state, but it is also the labor of a mind that is strong and vigorous, and although

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

it may be groping somewhat now, one that is going to obtain good things in time."[62] Thus, he suggested that this was an acceptable phase in a maturing artist and one which gave hope for the future.

Bridle Path received its share of criticism for these kinds of artistic issues, particularly its palette. The *Mail* called its color "absurd."[63] The *World* described the canvas as "a woman on horseback looking resignedly at a bank of frozen oatmeal into which her horse is carrying her..., seeking to express itself in flakes and even in glacial bursts of pigment." Yet the same writer admired the force of the image and the successful rendering of the figure "forcibly uttered by the most direct means," which resulted in a remarkable tenderness and beauty. The combination of the broad paint application of the landscape elements in contrast to the highlighted and more descriptive rendering of the figure gave *Bridle Path* "a crude, perverse originality."[64] The *Post* criticized the monochromatic tone of the canvas. Rather than finding the diaphanous veil of light a positive aspect, the reviewer felt it made the horse and figure look like "phantoms." There was, however, strength in the painting; it came from the "true pictorial skill," or composition, that defined the incident.[65] Despite its problematic coloration, the *Post* felt that the design and forceful painting style saved the painting from complete failure. This kind of partial satisfaction with his canvases plagued Homer throughout these years.

Eagle Head, even more than *Bridle Path*, was denounced for its palette, especially the color of the girls' legs. The *Times*, even though it admired Homer's use of light and shade overall, wrote: "the brickdust color of the young lady bather's leg is not pleasant to look

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

upon."[66] The *World* reacted to *Eagle Head* as it had to *Bridle Path*. It had to admit the figures were well-drawn, but said the picture was "atrociously colored" with the sea "a pool of ice cream" and the girls' legs "exceedingly red."[67] The *Mail* had mixed feelings as well. It shared with the *World* a distaste for the execution of the landscape. The broadly modulated areas of color suggested to this writer: "The sky is as an atmosphere of mud; the distant 'Head' a daub of gloomy form; the sea, like that of the German toy clocks; the shore, of slime not sand; as for the painting of the figures it is done in reckless disregard of all truth—in defiance of all law." Yet, it credited Homer for infusing the canvas with a certain power. It noted: "there is a daring about the composition and vigor of treatment suggestive of power; but to our mind it is a power most sadly abused.... there is nothing left but that which disappoints us."[68] The writer for the *Post*, like his peers, did not totally approve of the work. While it was critical, it also suggested what provided the force: "Although executed in a kind of color wash, they show the powers of a draftsman capable of seizing the various points of a composition, and presenting his idea according to pictorial law."[69]

This opposition to the girls' leg color in *Eagle Head* may have been, in part, another reaction to Homer's frank depiction of the subject. The redness the critics refer to may have been due to his truthfully painting girls with sun-tanned skin. Given that tanning would not be considered fashionable until the twentieth century, the negative comments bridged subject and treatment issues. The objections to the landscape in *Eagle Head* were similar to those to *Bridle Path*. It seems that the dynamism of Homer's free brushstrokes and a composition grounded in a low viewpoint and Z-shaped progression into space

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were to be admired. However, again, the color and overall effect of his broad, painterly treatment ultimately caused the critics to consider the canvas a disappointment.

In addition to his three exhibition-size canvases, Homer appeared at the Academy with eight smaller works. They were all judged to be sketches and studies, and were counted among a larger group of paintings that caused the *Nation* to comment: "everybody has noticed how many studies and sketches there are included in this year's collection."[70] This show-within-the-show was relegated to the corridor—long considered the least desirable exhibition space at the Academy. Although somewhat tucked away, the collective hanging of the studies brought to the fore the question of the validity of the sketch/study as an acceptable and exhibitable work of art in its own right.[71] This unofficial group of works elicited responses from a number of critics as an entity, and within the group Homer's contributions were singled out more than any other artists', although he was not the only artist to have a numerically large selection.[72]

The *Nation* characterized the guiding principle for many of these sketchy works and anticipated the direction in which they would increasingly move: "scarcely a study on these Academy walls is a study of drawing. They do not pretend to be; they are all, or nearly all, alike, memoranda of effects of light and shade and hue."[73] The *Tribune* understood that in the corridor were "sketches that professed to be nothing more," and added that, as such, "the principal thought [they] suggest is that the finished work is not so much better than the sketches as it ought to be.... The finished paintings are smoother and prettier, but no ideas are added, and such as the original contained are often

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

weakened instead of strengthened."[74] The writer for the *Times* liked the studies precisely because "many of them are more vigorous and truer to nature in every way than are the finished pictures by the same artists."[75] The *World* found the best "have a sincerity in them that promises much for American art. They also have some glimmer of inner meaning of nature, which is translatable only by combination and not by verisimilitude.... In several of our smaller examples there are evidences of earnest work, which, above all else, is the one thing to be hailed with rejoicing." Such work was contrasted to the tiresome "accurate puddles, study of a toad-stool, view of a daffodilly," that is, those works that were guided by Ruskinian literalness. [76]

Positive reactions such as these generally came from those critics for whom truth to nature in art was less tightly tied to literal description through drawing, and for whom suggestions of its essence through light, color, and design were increasingly acceptable. Cook justified the need for such change in his critique of Charles Herbert Moore's Ruskinian-based nature studies: "this literal fidelity to the bare aspects of things had its merit as a protest against the sentimentalists who dressed up nature to suit their ideas of beauty. But it is time that they who entered the protest passed beyond it and proved their capacity to join beauty and truth together."[77] For Cook and a number of his peers, unadulterated literalness was fast losing its power as a mode of expression as they were looking for discernible ideas beyond statements of external facts. The opposing viewpoint, however, was also voiced strongly. The departure in study work away from a focus on drawing towards describing effects in broader terms led the *Herald*, which had complained about the want of carefulness in the exhibition as a whole, to condemn the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

studies and sketches as "rubbish." He found that "their chief characteristic seems to be a total disregard for nature and an utter absence of anything akin to study."[78]

As a group, the sketches also provoked negative responses from those critics who simply could not accept them as completed works. "A painter's memoranda and notebooks are essential to his pictures; but they are not pictures," stated *Harper's Weekly*.[79] These writers were guided by the notion that the sketch or study was valid only as a preparatory or preliminary excursion. Even for the more open-minded critics, there was significant discomfort with the exhibition of such works. In his first comments on the corridor, the writer for the *World* referred to the pictures hanging there as "omnibus panels and signboards," and criticized the artists for showing things that "have not yet attained the significance of pictures."[80] He explained in a later review that his serious reservations were due to the inclusion of so many unfinished or "hastily finished" canvases and so many "experiments" and "color lessons" in the exhibition.[81] It was the public showing of them, not the works themselves, that was offensive.[82] Cook, like his colleague at the *World* and despite his openness to the positive qualities these studies/sketches represented, was baffled by artists showing these sketchy works. He argued that since they certainly would not sell nor could they be admired as works of art, there was no point in exhibiting them.[83]

Among the artists exhibiting studies, Homer was singled out by a number of critics who agreed that he was the most extreme practitioner of the study/sketch. The *Nation* noted that some of Homer's offerings were his "sketchiest memoranda," suggesting that these

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

works were the least finished that he ever had shown in public.[84] The critic for the *World* found Homer's works in the corridor most shocking. He explained: "If there is any new revelation in art to be obtained by a man's shutting his eyes and rubbing all his pencils and pigments at once over a canvas in a conglomerate frenzy, Mr. Homer bids fair to revolutionize the pictorial business." Nonetheless, he admitted that they exuded a certain power. Although he pronounced Homer, along with William Hennessey, to have "an individuality which is grotesque," he could not deny "at least strong characters."[85] When the *World*'s reviewer looked at Homer's studies individually, he found it impossible to consider them pictures, saying that each was progressively horrid, even if they were original. He ranted: "[*Sawkill River* (unlocated)] is a lead-colored smear which appalls the eye, but it is simplicity itself to the picture called 'As You Like It' (unlocated),...and even this is tolerable in comparison with 'Lobster Cove' (fig. 17)...which represents nothing on or under the earth but a dirty doormat." In the end, the only explanation he could fathom for these sketches was that Homer was suffering from an "aberration of mind."[86] In contrast, the *World* said that studies by John Kensett, Asher B. Durand, and Jervis McEntee were acceptable as exhibitable sketches. They qualified as such not only because they were outgrowths of the mid-century recipe for preparatory work but also because they "put before us some truths which they worshipfully felt and have left us the aroma of the artist's love about their work."[87] These qualities were paramount for a critic who looked especially for the poetic in art. Eleanor Harvey has pointed out how Durand's studies, in particular, conjoined a small-scale with intimacy, immediacy, and a high level of surface finish to create objects more like small finished pictures rather than cursory sketches.[88] The known examples of Homer's studies shown in 1870—*Lobster Cove* and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

White Mountain Wagon (fig. 18)—can be used as a guide to suggest how radically his studies differed from those of the primary landscape painters. Eugene Benson recognized that Homer used color and light rather than line and detail to truthfully convey his subjects, and Benson, once again, was the single critic to wholeheartedly accept Homer's sketches for what they were. He did so because he found "each...is remarkable for the truth of local color and the striking rendering effect of light."[89] For Benson, color and light were acceptable purveyors of truth and subject, and thus these works could be accepted as exhibitable works of art.

The responses to Homer's 1870 Academy entries undoubtedly stirred the artist as his work had the critics. Their praise for his originality and for his capturing reality and nature, and their statements that he represented the promise for American art, must have been encouraging. However, he could not have ignored the criticism for his use of color, exhibition of sketches, and especially his choice of subject matter—the very issues with which he was clearly experimenting. Nor could he ignore the comments by some critics that none of his offerings met their expectations. The *Tribune*, in its criticism of his lack of finish, admonished that if he would follow his thoughts to a greater degree of completeness "he will justify the promise he once so flatteringly held out."[90] The *Post* recommended his comparing his present work with *Prisoners from the Front* and "'to leave all meaner things/to low ambition and the pride of'— artists on a level with fantastic caprice." It continued: "ability like his is too valuable to the figure department of our national school to be wasted."[91] The critics had high hopes for Homer to lead

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American art, and because they did, they often seemed to expect more from him than from other artists.

In contrast to the way Homer had boldly and publicly put himself forward in 1870, he was noticeably absent in 1871. He painted less, illustrated less, and exhibited in fewer public forums. Only five oils are known to survive from 1871; he created only seven new drawings for publication as illustrations; and he did not exhibit at the National Academy's 1871 annual exhibition.[92] However, Homer did not disengage himself from the art world, but rather he was active in different ways. The Century Club served as the primary venue for his new work, and he exhibited eight paintings at six of the eight monthly meetings.[93] He also contributed work to a new art society created to benefit artists themselves, to a benefit for the family of the artist James Cafferty, and to a number of auction sales.[94]

Although the Century Club exhibitions received only minimal notice, consideration of them in 1871 helps to continue the story of Homer's relationship with the press. In February Homer exhibited *Girl in the Surf* (unlocated) and *Camp at Yorktown* (*A Rainy Day in Camp*; fig. 19). *Girl in the Surf* must have been another seaside picture, and was likely related to *Eagle Head* or *Manners and Customs at the Seaside*. The *Mail* criticized it as a "silly trifle" and ugly.[95] *Camp at Yorktown* received a more mixed review, one that mirrored reactions to Homer's larger canvases at the Academy the spring before. The *Mail* noticed:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Here is a capital notion for a picture, but only that. Indeed, the color of it helps to mar not make its story. How pitiful is this waste of good intentions. From Mr. Homer we have originality often, and sometimes thoughts worth treasuring; but these, like the good things of the Court jester, are so bemuddled, so wrapped round about with palpable absurdities, that his follies make us laugh to the forgetting of his wisdom.[96]

Although the critics felt the subject of *Camp at Yorktown*—a scene showing the hardships of daily life during war—was an admirable one, its presentation failed. In contrast to *Prisoners from the Front*, where the exposition of the story was laid out forthrightly through the composition, *Camp at Yorktown*'s narrative was suppressed through its envelopment, even absorption, into the broader setting, one primarily composed of vast areas of gray and brown. This type of pictorial approach dissipated the subject across the canvas, both literally and figuratively. The use of atmosphere instead of direct narration for a genre subject and the application of paint in such broad areas of mottled color were unacceptable in 1871. Homer had taken an incontestably winning subject, the Civil War, and presented it objectionably.

In contrast, Eastman Johnson's *The Old Stage Coach* (fig. 20), shown at the Century in an unfinished state, met the very expectations Homer's work failed to, and was said to "mark an Art epoch with us; an epoch from which we shall date the commencement of our rivalry with the best of the modern schools of figure painting." The reasons for *The Old Stage Coach*'s success grew out of its American subject presented as a "story excellently told," one that exuded a vitality that "makes you feel the boy in you." The subject was complemented by fine color and a charming landscape.[97] Johnson garnered such praise by using an abandoned, disintegrating stagecoach as the centerpiece of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

imaginative play-acting by a group of children. The stagecoach no doubt represented the changes in transportation during the 1870s.[98] With the children, Johnson touched on the nostalgia felt for the simpler childhoods of earlier times, the identification of youth as the hope of the future, and current issues. At least one writer recognized the little girl in front, acting like a horse, as a child of mixed heritage, thus connecting the image to the racial issues to be faced by the upcoming generation. As a group, the children were understood to be emblematic of both past and future citizens, and to represent "Young America."[99] Such positive feelings towards Johnson's canvas came from every quarter, not only at the Century viewing, but the following week at the Union League Club and in the spring at the National Academy annual. The capitalization of the narrative; its expression of American themes, past, present, and future; the clarity of the drawing and the grace of the figures; and his use of color separated Johnson's work from Homer's.[100]

Despite steady appearances of his work at the Century Club, Homer stayed away from the 1871 Academy annual. While an authoritative statement cannot be made as to why he did not exhibit, it is likely that Homer had no major canvas finished in time for the opening of the show. His explosion on the art scene in 1870 followed by minimal public appearances in 1871 exemplifies the pattern of advance and retreat he followed during the 1870s. He continued to work unencumbered by public appearances through the summer of 1871, which he spent in the Catskill region.[101] The fruits of his concerted efforts appeared with force in 1872.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

During 1872 Homer was again engaged publicly with the New York art scene. He moved into a studio at the Tenth Street Studio Building, the premier New York studio location. Many of Homer's fellow tenants were academicians or associates as well as members of the most elite social clubs.[102] Best known as an unofficial headquarters of the second generation of Hudson River landscapists, the Tenth Street Studio Building also housed a number of the genre painters with whom Homer would be increasingly compared, including John George Brown, Seymour Joseph Guy, Enoch Wood Perry, and Thomas Waterman Wood. Residing here, too, were artists with whom Homer was known to be friendly, including John La Farge, John Lee Fitch, and Homer Dodge Martin.[103] Thus, Homer was surrounded by friends, peers, and competitors on a daily basis.

In his new residence Homer worked and reworked a group of paintings, several of which had their genesis in his previous summer's travels. These included *The Country School* (fig. 21), *Crossing the Pasture* (fig. 22), *The Country Store* (fig. 23) , and *The Mill* (*Morning Bell*; fig. 24).[104] When these four paintings, along with *Camp at Yorktown*, now renamed *A Rainy Day in Camp*, appeared at the National Academy in April 1872, some were already familiar to the members of the Century and Union League clubs.[105] Homer was among the many artists who regularly showed new or reworked canvases at the clubs as a means of receiving opinions about paintings in progress, after changes, or as previews for the Academy's annual spring exhibition.[106]

The volume of reviews covering the 1872 Academy annual exhibition was substantial, but neither for the show in general nor for Homer in particular were they as extensive as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in 1870.[107] Current events as well as changes in the complexion of the art world may have cut down on the number of lengthy reviews. On May 1, 1872, just two weeks after the exhibition opened, the party conventions for the 1872 presidential campaign started in earnest; the hotly contested race commanded many columns of newsprint.[108] More directly affecting the art press was the fact that the National Academy's activities were no longer the only significant art events in town in the spring season. The *Mail* remarked: "The season, already so prolific of really fine exhibitions of works of Art, promises to sustain its good character to the end."[109] There was no doubt that the Academy show was the centerpiece of the art season, yet competing with it were a show of European pictures contributed to support the victims of the Great Chicago Fire; the sale of the LeGrand Lockwood collection; the Vanderlip Collection sale; and important dealers' sales by Avery, Snedecor, and Leavitt.[110] Too, as will be discussed below, some artists chose to show their newest works in solo settings.

Although nearly all the reviews of the 1872 annual commented on the quality of the show, they were less preoccupied with it. The general opinion of the eleven newspapers and magazines that noticed the show was that it was slightly above average in its own right and in comparison with other recent shows.[111] While the *Times* generally disliked the exhibition,[112] the only truly dissenting voice was that of the *Post*. It criticized the show for its provincialness and plethora of foreign imitators, thus showing no sign of progress or of a national art.[113]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The critics who approved of the show attributed its success to noticeable progress, especially among the younger artists.[114] That the best works were by younger artists was cast in a particularly positive light by the *Express*, for it suggested to the writer the growth of a "love of art in the younger element," which could only bode well for the future.[115] Such progress was heartening for two reasons: the actual quality of art was perceived as improving and it "gave proof that out native school is rapidly developing a power which will give us a respectable place in the ranks of the art works of the world."[116] Although it was not so resoundingly articulated as in 1868, the concern for America's standing in the larger world remained real. In art, as in many other aspects, the youth of America continued to be her hope for success.[117]

Some writers noted that the show's excellence was restricted due to the absence of entries by important artists or their appearance with only minor work. Although some of the missing painters could be excused due to travel, the conflicts within the Academy were also acknowledged as contributing to their truancy.[118] Among those repeatedly cited in this list of absentees were Church, Bierstadt, William and James Hart, Samuel Colman, and Inness.[119] Church, in particular, was criticized for what appeared as snubbing the exhibition, since he chose to show his new magnum opus, *The Parthenon* (1871; Metropolitan Museum of Art), in a solo exhibition.[120] The other single painting that received considerable attention outside the Academy walls was Thomas Moran's *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* (1872; National Museum of American Art).[121] Nearly all the artists condemned for their absence were landscapists. Whatever their reasons for staying

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

away, their absence caused the proportion of landscapes in the annual exhibition to be smaller than usual.

The ratio of landscape to genre painting in 1872 reflected the increasing shift of subject matter in the Academy shows. The number of landscape subjects decreased and figure/genre subjects increased, each by ten percent, between 1867 and 1874.[122] Not surprisingly, this shift in the make-up of the exhibition caused figure, including genre, painters to be noticed more. This effected an increased number of column inches devoted to subject pictures and a more serious level of attention to them. Thus at the 1872 annual, Homer, Eastman Johnson, Seymour Guy, John Beaufain Irving, and Enoch Wood Perry were repeatedly discussed (not just mentioned) as individuals and as a cohesive group of genre artists.

Eight of the eleven newspapers and magazines that reviewed the 1872 exhibition paid substantial attention to Homer.[123] On the whole, he received high marks, and his works were mentioned among those getting the most notice on opening night.[124] Most effusive was the comment from the *Post* that, in a show full of faults, Homer came closest to redeeming it.[125] This acclaim was almost entirely due to his entry *The Country School*, the most noticed and praised genre painting in the entire Academy exhibition. It appeared with Eastman Johnson's *The Wounded Drummer Boy* (fig. 25); Seymour Joseph Guy's *Knot in the Skein* (fig. 26); John Beaufain Irving's *The End of the Game* (fig. 27); and Enoch Wood Perry's *Thanksgiving Time* (fig. 28) (often lumped together with his other entry, *Talking It Over* [unlocated]). Whereas each of Homer's peers received some

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

significant criticism for his work (and its emphasis varied depending on the critic), *The Country School* was unilaterally praised.

The Country School was, in effect, Homer's answer to the criticism he had received for his 1870 Academy offerings, and the model for his "improvements" may have been Eastman Johnson's *The Old Stage Coach. Country School* pictured a class in session in a rural, one-room schoolhouse. Descriptions of the canvas were featured in many reviews, and they included remarks on the setting—both in its particulars and generally—as well as detailed descriptions of the figures.[126] After the 1870 criticisms that his subjects were "trifling" and "vapid," Homer responded with his entry of *The Country School*, which the critics considered "thoroughly national."[127] How the painting communicated its national identity was articulated somewhat differently by various writers, suggesting the complexity of the requirements for national identity in art. Nonetheless, their various definitions were all satisfied in the canvas. While in large part it was the subject matter that won the critics' affection, the appropriateness of its artistic treatment for the subject added to their high praise and recognition of it as American.

The image of a one-room school in *The Country School* automatically identified it as specifically American, for the American system of public education was unique at this time.[128] With such a strong national association, the subject could be construed additionally as symbolic of the democratic system, another distinguishing characteristic of the United States. Furthermore, the painting was acclaimed as showing a "thorough acquaintance with our life as a people."[129] This evidence of familiarity with the general

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

population allowed the *Tribune* to acclaim that the painting was "good enough for anybody."[130] The *Telegram* saw confirmation that the image connected with the public due to the fact that "visitors, one and all, cultured and uncultured" delighted in the canvas.[131] This recognition of the theme as populist may have also further connected the picture to accepted assumptions about American culture and democracy.

Homer accomplished this image of and for the people by choosing a subject that bridged the past and present of American life. As had Eastman Johnson in *The Old Stage Coach*, Homer, in *The Country School*, simultaneously fed the nostalgia for happier past times while exploring contemporary issues.[132] Of *The Country School*, *Appleton's* noted that Homer's one-room schoolhouse was familiar to most viewers from their youth.[133] By the 1870s, the little red schoolhouse was increasingly rare and was becoming an American icon.[134] The *Aldine* wrote of the comprehensive recognition of the sentiment such a school elicited: "Every person from the country knows the powerful associations lingering around the old red schoolhouse...no spot is so full of histories and memories."[135]

The topic of education, particularly rural, was prominent throughout the 1870s, and Homer's rural schoolhouse could have suggested to its viewers contemporary issues at the same time that it tugged at their hearts. In 1872 the National Education Bill went before Congress. The legislation was structured to give federal monies received from the sale of public land to education, and this act was seen by those who supported it as a real boost to public education, especially in rural areas.[136] Homer's inclusion of a female

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

teacher also made the scene unmistakably contemporary; by 1870, American women teachers outnumbered their male counterparts by two to one.[137]

Homer embedded the multiple possible meanings for *The* Country *School* in an image that first and foremost told a story. For Andrew Wheeler of the *World*, it was a "humble, isolated incident" whose meaning was clear.[138] Interestingly, while nearly every reviewer identified the narrative as the key to the painting's success, they did not agree on its specifics. The aspect of the narrative that was most contested—the interaction between the little boy and girl seated to the teacher's left—was also the detail that heightened the appeal of the image. The interpretations varied from the belief that the two children were brother and sister to their identification as feuding members of the opposite sex.[139] While the specific roles of the two children may have been left to the viewers' imagination, there was no question as to the types the individual figures represented. As the *Telegram* noted: "When we come to the *personnel* of the school there is not an attitude, a suggestion, that we can say is out of place. There is the good boy who knows his lesson, the sulky boy who does not, the studious boy, with the hole in his knee, that we can fairly hear syllabing his lesson, after the manner of spasmodic students; and there is the little boy sniffing...."[140] Clarence Cook identified the teacher as a representative type, noting she was "an allegory of New England: prim, neat, brisk, a little angular and thoroughly aware of her authority."[141] Thus Homer told his story through combining a suggestive narrative with the delineation of the figures as character types. By leaving part of the narrative ambiguous, Homer encouraged viewer participation in construing the meaning of the painting. The multiplicity of possible narratives, together with the characterizations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of the figures, could stimulate the viewer's imagination while Homer retained control of the overall meaning, thus ensuring wide appeal and suggesting national concerns.

Homer's artistic treatment through which he conveyed the layers of the school subject thoroughly supported the subject in a way very satisfying to most of the critics. Its realism—overall, in part, and in spirit—was unanimously agreed upon. It was "a page from the book of nature," according to the *Express*.[142] The "book of nature" now referred not simply to the outdoors, as it had in the 1850s, but also to the everyday life of the people.[143] The realistic portrayal of the "book of Nature," according to the *Independent*, depended not just on factual rendering, but also on capturing the essential nature of the subject. It praised *The Country School*, then, for being "a genuine bit of Nature, painted from life, and brimming with the most exquisite feeling for character and individualization.... The artist has held the mirror to Nature and how happily he has caught the very spirit as well as the realism of the scene."[144] The *Telegram* detailed how, in its view, this was accomplished: "All the little phases of school life...all the little details are there in relation to the general idea."[145]

The freshness of Homer's observations was once again praised. As others had in 1870, the *Post* commended him for having the "power of looking at objects as if they have never been painted before" and seeing Nature in "breadths."[146] This time, however, the technical means by which he created this original vision was heartily praised rather than condemned. His techniques were lauded for their simplicity and directness; for the fact that groupings as well as individual figures contributed to the whole of the story; that the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

story was strongly told by drawing; and that the drawing itself was "full of strength and acuteness."[147] The most outstanding difference between the response to Homer's technique in *The Country School* and that of the works of the past few years was the reaction to its state of finish.[148] The *World*, for example, liked Homer's canvas better than Eastman Johnson's *The Wounded Drummer Boy* because it exuded more character, even though it was less finished. It had "the soul of suggestion" in its "veracious outlines."[149] Supporting his looser and broader paint application, others took more radical positions, suggesting that Homer's style was not only appropriate but also necessary to best treat the subject. "The style of the painting is sketchy and unelaborate, yet masterly," noted the *Independent*. "The very thinness of the execution harmonizes singularly with this bare, unadorned rustic life."[150] The *Telegram* went farthest in its approval of Homer's sketchiness: "Mr. Homer's subjects are such that elaborate finish would be out of place; but in treating them, while adhering strictly to truthfulness in rendering their plain matter-of-factness, they are lifted entirely out of the region of the commonplace and approach the idyllic."[151] In *The Country School*, Homer may have responded to previous criticisms—of *Eagle Head*, for instance—by adjusting the broadness of his brush and by choosing a narrative more acceptable to his critics. Although the interior and exterior setting of *The Country School* is broadly articulated through light and shade and some of the children's faces, figures, and clothing are only summarily defined, Homer's inclusion of some carefully delineated faces and costumes of selected figures, as well as the composition's more forthright exposition of a story, ameliorated, in most critics' eyes, his attempts of two year earlier. These changes allowed Homer to receive praise as well as to retain a certain amount of artistic freedom. Aiding him, too, as the *Independent*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

suggested, was the perhaps easier acceptance of a less elaborate style for a rural subject, than for those in which a certain refinement was expected.[152]

Not all critics, however, could embrace Homer's sketchy ways in 1872. It was likely Earl Shinn, one of the critics best acquainted with academic French methods, who was most bothered by Homer's sketchiness. He admitted:

> Homer has learned to see Nature in breadths; this faculty, admirable for a sketcher and for a colorist, he joins to a fair dramatic sense, and to an unusual balance and self-repression....his sense of character is so keen, that, without sense of beauty, he arrives at beauty merely by feeling for character.... These are the virtues of a sincere, direct style and an unsophisticated way of looking at things. But it is a pity to find Mr. Homer resting year after year in the state of *ébaucheur*, sending to exhibitions works which show all the ravellings and loose ends of execution, a hopeless mystery to any but the initiated, a mere etcher in colors, and less able to make up an agreeable picture than he was just after the war of the rebellion.[153]

For Shinn, Homer's work remained in the sketch state that preceded the finishing of a work in French academic tradition of artists such as Thomas Couture or his own teacher, Jean-Léon Gérôme.[154] Shinn longed for Homer to take the next step of completion in his treatment, and until he did, he could not find any considerable improvement in his work.

It was surely the subject and narrative in *The Country School* that gave it such a high standing with the critics. However, it should be recognized that the complementary or symbiotic relationship between content and execution was successful in ways that critics did not find in any other genre picture in the exhibition. Although a number of genre paintings were well received, they were not given nearly as much attention as Homer's. Their deficiencies of subject, technique, or presentation demoted them in the minds of the art press. Eastman Johnson should have been Homer's most serious competitor, but this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

year he was not, due to the fact that his *The Wounded Drummer Boy* was not considered a major canvas. The critics who commended the painting noted their approval without explaining their responses.[155] Those less pleased with it criticized it for its tired Civil War subject and unusual weaknesses in execution.[156] Seymour Guy's *Knot in the Skein* was acknowledged by the *Telegram* for its combination of thought and execution, but it achieved only moderate success, just escaping "the condemned region of the commonplace." *The Country School*, on the other hand, had risen to the idyllic for the same writer.[157] While the homely subject of Guy's painting was popular, it lacked the deeper resonances of Homer's school picture. In addition, Guy's emphasis on treatment, especially finish, hampered his success for a number of critics. *Appleton's* and the *Tribune* wrote that the remarkable lapidary surface of this canvas overshadowed the subject.[158] Similar comments befell the work of John Beaufain Irving. Irving's *End of the Game* exhibited that artist's admired trademark of exquisite detail, but, as the *Express* noted it was an "excellent specimen of marvelous details.... But here the excellence stops."[159] If Guy and Irving were mainly chastised for too much concentration on their artistry, Enoch Wood Perry was faulted for the mundane character of his subjects in *Thanksgiving Time*. As the *World* expressed succinctly: Perry's work suffered "want of emphasis on the idea."[160] The writer for the *Telegram* agreed, and gave an expanded explanation that included his frame of reference for judging a canvas: "A good painting should be so universal that the most ignorant will not mistake its purport, and so perfect in its execution that the most critical will be satisfied.... In painting, thought...claims precedence, and should suffer not the slightest diminution in the attainment of other and inferior excellence, desirable in themselves as they may be." From this viewpoint, it

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recognized that Perry's pictures were "as truthful as Winslow Homer['s], better finished and have many qualities that please the eye; but they are not in the least suggestive and are never lifted above the prosy circumstances which they represent." Best of all for this writer, Homer provided the superiority and power of thought in painting.[161] Homer seems to have accomplished this in part by adhering to an approach similar to that articulated by Jarves: that "the gist of art lies in going to Nature, not to imitate, but to study her methods, facts, laws, and principles, by help of which the artists should compose independent works by exercising an independent will, himself, a *creator*."[162]

The relationships among subject, imagination, the need for literal representation, and the importance of technique in painting were continually modulating in the arena of genre painting through the seventies. The 1872 Academy annual prompted several critics to voice the concern that technical interests would overshadow thought in painting. The *Telegram* stated its stance clearly: "In painting it is not only hand work but brain work we want."[163] Another angle on the same topic was suggested in the *Atlantic*: "It seems a great pity that a painter should ever reproduce a thing without suggesting its associations, its human uses...."[164] The struggle for finding the appropriate applications as well as means for technique escalated during the rest of the decade.

The Country School's subject and treatment led most critics to agree with the *Telegram* that the picture had "nothing left to be desired."[165] It was a picture "to be remembered" and "would vindicate its painter as holding a proud position in native art."[166] Even for that hardest to please critic Clarence Cook, it was "altogether admirable," recalling "those

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

clever pictures which caused his friends to hope so much of him five or six years ago."[167] With *The Country School*, Homer had again reached the heights of praise accorded him for *Prisoners from the Front*. As in 1866, he had again achieved it with a subject that touched the hearts and the minds of its viewers and was unquestionably American. With this strong foundation, he also was able to incorporate elements of unconventional artistic treatment without undue criticism. Homer seems to have realized that if he hooked his viewers through the subject matter, he might gain more latitude for his artistic treatment.

Despite the grand success of *The Country School*, Homer's four other entries to the Academy exhibition were virtually ignored. When they were noticed, they received the more typical reactions Homer had come to know in the previous few years. Interest in subject matter and the exposition of its narrative content continued to shape the direction of the commentary. Those paintings with the least clear stories were more likely to receive adverse criticism. From this standpoint, *The Mill* was considered by far the worst of the group. The figures were criticized because they suggested no motive for the painting and seemed to appear simply as an excuse to paint the background. In addition, the girls pictured were condemned for lack of grace.[168] Similarly, *Crossing the Pasture* was censured for having no narrative, and it was suggested that Homer included figures just to please the "human-interested public."[169] The canvas was also criticized for "disagreeable hardness" throughout.[170] *A Rainy Day in Camp* and *The Country Store* received slightly better receptions, since they depicted more compelling, contemporary subjects and provided discernible stories. Homer's truthfulness in telling those narratives garnered some measure of approval, although the critics could find nothing beyond

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transcriptural realism to praise.[171] While Homer must have been pleased with the reception of *The Country School*, the paucity of comment and unfavorable remarks about his other pictures must have tempered his joy.

Interest in *The Country School* continued as it reappeared in the public arena over the next year. In the spring of 1873 it was offered in the sale of John Sherwood's collection. Once again it was commended for its unmistakable Americanness. "It is American life done by an American artist in an American style," hailed the *World.*[172] Similar feelings were expressed for *The Country Store* when it appeared at Samuel Avery's gallery.[173] Clarence Cook praised the subject: "It is the interior of a 'country store' with three genuine American boys talking about the national store."[174] Again, it was the theme's ability to suggest larger issues from a scene of everyday life that endowed it with a special appeal and brought it such hearty endorsements.

In May of every year, the Academy elected its officers for the following year. In 1872, on the heels of the success of *The Country School*, Homer was elected to the next year's hanging committee, the group charged with choosing and installing the exhibitions each spring.[175] His election confirmed that he now held a certain place of esteem among his colleagues as well as with the press. In this atmosphere, Homer set out to create his next major work. Its development was carefully watched by the press; the art world clearly was interested in the successor to *The Country School*.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

That painting was *Snap the Whip* (fig. 29), another rural children/school subject. It pictured "school-boys playing on the village green," with the schoolhouse framed behind them.[176] Drawings for the canvas were in progress in New York City in early June 1872.[177] From at least early July until mid-October, Homer took his usual hiatus from the city and again visited the Catskills, where he resided at Hurley in Ulster County with fellow artist Enoch Wood Perry.[178] Although Homer clearly had *Snap the Whip* firmly in his mind and partly on canvas prior to his summer travels, the surroundings at Hurley surely played a role in the continued development of the painting.

Snap the Whip did not appear in an Academy exhibition, and thus it never received full treatment by the critics. Yet, between its initial notice in June 1872 and the sale in April 1873 of the version in the John Sherwood collection (Butler Institute of American Art), the picture was noticed by a number of the daily newspapers. From these scattered reports, a sense of how the image was received can be construed. Like *The Country School*, *Snap the Whip* was immediately recognized and praised as American and, like its companion (as *The Country School* was called), it achieved that goal, in part, through a subject that conjured a nostalgic view of the past as it connected to contemporary issues and reverberated with recognizably larger national themes and distinguishing characteristics.[179] Adult viewers were encouraged by the *Telegram* to draw upon their "childhood reminiscences" to remember the intensity of the game's action.[180] At the same time, the *Herald* noted:

> We know no works so thoroughly and distinctively American [as *Snap the Whip* and its related canvases], and whatever faults they may have are more than counterbalanced by the fresh and truthful delineation of contemporaneous life

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> they furnish. They will hand down to posterity pictures of Americans of the nineteenth century, possessing an individuality, and marked by the strong idiosyncrasies of our people, not to be found elsewhere in the whole range of art.[181]

The primary difference between the critical reactions to *The Country School* and *Snap the Whip* is that the latter work was perceived to have noticeable faults in its artistic treatment, faults that were considered quite compromising by some critics. Homer's use of color and "crudities and apparent carelessness of execution," again, were his downfall.[182] Nonetheless, although it did not measure up in artistic quality to *The Country School*, *Snap the Whip* was not considered a complete technical failure. Even those who criticized its carelessness remarked upon its fine drawing, particularly of the individual figures.[183]

In 1873, as he had in 1871, Homer remained active in New York art circles but generally out of view of the press. He did not exhibit at the National Academy but continued to show new work at the Century.[184] The group of new works that appeared in 1873 introduced an expanded investigation of images of women, one that would increase through the rest of the decade. At the Century, where he appeared in five out of the eight possible monthly exhibitions in 1873, a single female figure in contemplation was featured in multiple canvases. *Female Figure in Black Near a Window* (*Reverie*; fig. 30); *Girl Reading on a Porch* (fig. 31); and *Girl in a Hammock* (fig. 32) were shown in February, March, and April, respectively.[185] At sales, courting images, such as *Waiting for an Answer* (Baltimore Museum of Art), were related to this renewed interest.[186]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's increase in painting female figures mirrored a general trend in American painting; yet, as always, he would explore the topic on his own terms.[187]

Typical of works appearing in club exhibitions and sales, these paintings did not receive much notice in the press. When they were mentioned, the reports were generally brief but agreeably positive. If there was a distinguishing note to these scattered reviews of the Century Club and commercial venues, it was the recognition not of Homer's subjects, but of the prominent use of light. The *Post*, the only reviewer of the Century shows this year, remarked on this phenomenon in his oils. *Female Figure in Black Near a Window* and *Girl Reading on the Porch* were particularly recognized for "brilliant effects of light and shade."[188] Several of his works in the Somerville Sale in May were noticed for their brightness.[189] When he exhibited his first watercolors the following winter, Homer's use of light would be recognized as a distinguishing feature of his work.

Why Homer did not show in the 1873 National Academy annual exhibition remains a mystery. The decision to be absent may have been due to several factors. For one, he had no new major work to show. *Snap the Whip* would have been the logical choice, but, as was mentioned above, one version was included in the sale of the Sherwood collection during the same period. Perhaps also influencing his choice to withhold his work was the fact that he was a member of the hanging committee; he may have felt that a moral stance of impartiality was important.[190] Financial considerations may have determined his selection of venues for his work, for five canvases, which might have been at the Academy, were offered in a sale at the Somerville gallery held in early April.[191]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Even though Homer's art did not appear at the Academy, he received both direct and indirect commentary in its reviews; it was all critical. He was reprimanded directly for not showing.[192] As a member of the hanging committee, he was also censured. The show was considered a disaster, and even though most writers did not directly blame the hanging committee, Homer may have been stung by the strong negative reaction.[193] The review in the *Independent*, where the committee was directly blamed, must have raised the committee members' hackles. It wrote:

> ...we are sorry to say, [that the show] is one of the very worst we have ever seen...[100 of 323 works shown should not have been exhibited]...On what principle the council and hanging committee acted we are at a loss to conceive.... We fancy the three members of the hanging committee meeting in those rooms and smiling out of one corner of their mouth...like the augurs of old.... We are sorry that they have committed so fatal a mistake, for it seems like a symptom of decadence in an institution...which we hoped was in a state of progress and new life.... For the honor of the Academy...we trust such a torrent of mud will never inundate these walls again.[194]

Despite (or perhaps as retribution for) this skinning, Homer was elected to the Academy Council for the coming year.[195]

His experience on the hanging committee behind him, Homer may have particularly relished his departure from the city when the summer exodus began. By late June he was settled in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he may have remained until late August.[196] Homer also visited other parts of New England, and in the early fall he also traveled to the Catskills, this time with Thomas Waterman Wood. He did not return to the city until early November.[197]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The results of this summer's work were first seen in the pages of *Harper's Weekly*.[198] By the early winter of 1874, it was revealed just how important the summer sojourn to Gloucester had been. Between 1870 and 1873 Homer had grappled with subject and artistic issues with nearly equal intensity. His subject matter had the greatest success in finding favor with the critics. His artistic treatment and technique had caused considerable discussion and consternation. If in 1870 the critics had been appalled by the extreme sketchiness of Homer's eight studies at the Academy, by 1872 they accepted a greater measure of broad paint application in *Country School*. It seems plausible that Homer tempered his loose brush just as he had carefully chosen his subject as he created *Country School*. In the reactions to the canvas, it seems, too, that the critics now, perhaps because of Homer's earlier very sketchy excursions, were now more willing to accommodate freer styles in painting when it was appropriate for the subject and integrated into the overall artistic treatment. Over the next three years, such artistic issues commanded the attention of Homer and the art press to a much greater degree.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to Chapter 3

[1] The increase in Homer's output in oil had begun in the second half of 1869. Most of the nineteen oils dated 1869 were the result of that summer's travels and exhibited in 1870. Sixteen works dated 1870 are known. Illustration, however, still provided Homer his main source of income, and in 1870 he contributed fifteen magazine illustrations. One each was published in the *Galaxy* and *Appleton's*, two in *Harper's Bazaar*, five in *Every Saturday*, and six in *Harper's Weekly*.

[2] The works exhibited at the Academy in 1870 were: *Eagle Head, Manchester, Massachusetts* (*High Tide*; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); *The White Mountains* (*Bridle Path, White Mountains*; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass.); *Lobster Cove* (Cooper-Hewitt Museum); *White Mountain Wagon* (Cooper-Hewitt Museum); *Sawkill River, Pennsylvania* (private collection); *Manners and Customs at the Seaside*; *Sketch from Nature*; *Mount Adams*; *Sail Boat*; *Salem Harbor*; and *As You Like It*. The present locations of the latter six are unknown.

[3] The ratio of favorable versus negative responses was 3:1. The negative reviews appeared in the *Herald*, *Telegram*, and *Express*.

[4] "Fine Arts," *Times*, 17 April 1870, p. 3 simply praised the show in general. Those that focused on progress included "National Academy of Design. Reception and Private View—The Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition," *World*, 15 April 1870, p. 5; "The Spring Exhibition. Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the N.A.D.," *Mail*, 18 April 1870, p. 1; and "The Exhibition At The Academy Of Design," *Albion*, 21 May 1870, pp. 328-29.

[5] *Mail*, 18 April 1870, p. 1.

[6] Jarves especially liked George Inness, Elihu Vedder, and John La Farge, but he also found Eastman Johnson and Homer interesting. He was most critical of the landscape painters like Church and Bierstadt for being cold, untruthful, and soulless. James Jackson Jarves, *Art Thoughts* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869), pp. 291-99.

[7] See, for example, *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5; *Albion*, 21 May 1870, p. 328-29; and "Art Gossip," *Mail*, 29 April 1870, p. 1.

[8] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design—Critical Review of a Portion of the Pictures on Exhibition," *Telegram*, 23 April 1870, p. 2.

[9] Eugene Benson, "The Annual Exhibition of the Academy," *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870), p. 708.

[10] Only the *World* felt otherwise, suggesting more than usual care and thought could be seen in the show, especially in the landscapes. *World*, 15 April 1870, p. 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[11] Laura Meixner has outlined the different camps of critics circa 1865-70 in a similar way, but with regard to the response to French art, in *French Realist Painting and the Critique of American Society, 1865-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 142.

[12] "National Academy of Design," *Tribune*, 30 April 1864, p. 3, quoted in Weiss, "Clarence Cook," p. 44.

[13] *Telegram*, 23 April 1870, p. 2.

[14] "Art Notes. National Academy of Design," *Herald*, 24 April 1870, p. 10.

[15] John Jones, A. M., "The National Academy of Design," *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870), p. 307.

[16] James Jackson Jarves, *Art Hints* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855), p. 310.

[17] "Forty-Fifth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Nation* 10 (2 June 1870), p. 357.

[18] "Art Notes," *Post*, 13 October 1870, p. 2, and "National Academy of Design. Third Notice," *Post*, 10 June 1870, p. 1.

[19] On the high esteem in which landscape was held see, for example, *World*, 15 April 1870, p. 5; *Herald*, 24 April 1870, p. 10; and "Art Notes. The Academy of Design," *Albion*, 23 April 1870, p. 267.

[20] Weiss, *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford*, p. 328, lists *San Giorgio* as formerly in the collection of Richard Butler but now unlocated.

[21] Such complaints were aired in "Art Gossip," *Mail*, 20 April 1870, p. 1; "Art Notes. National Academy of Design," *Herald*, 8 May 1870, p. 3; and *Albion*, 23 April 1870, p. 267.

[22] *Times*, 17 April 1870, p. 3.

[23] Bierstadt's overwrought detailing was noticed as a result of his German training in *Albion*, 21 May 1870, p. 328-29, and *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[24] "Art Matters. National Academy of Design (Third Article)," *Express*, 7 May 1870, p. 2.

[25] "Academy of Design. Second Article," *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[26] "National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Post*, 9 May 1870, p. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[27] "Fine Arts. The Exhibition of Paintings at the National Academy of Design," *Telegram*, 28 April 1870, p. 2; *Times*, 17 April 1870, p. 2; "Fine Arts," *Times*, 24 April 1870, p. 3; and *Mail*, 18 April 1870, p. 1, were most laudatory. The *Albion* agreed that *The After Glow* was Church's best picture to date, but it considered the foreground too detailed. *Albion*, 23 April 1870, p. 267.

[28] "National Academy of Design. Third Notice," *Post*, 10 June 1870, p. 1. The *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5, presented a similar point of view.

[29] "Art Notes. National Academy of Design—South Room Continued," *Herald*, 18 May 1870, p. 4.

[30] Just a few critics found aspects to condemn. The *Mail* complained the painting was too showy, while the *Nation* confessed it liked the picture very much, but found the atmosphere too artificial. *Mail*, 20 April 1870, p. 1, and *Nation*, 10 (2 June 1870), p. 357.

[31] *World,* 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[32] Of the newspapers reviewing the exhibition, only the *Telegram* ignored him.

[33] "The Academy of Design," *Tribune,* 15 April 1870, p. 4, and *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

[34] Jones, *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870), p. 307.

[35] Benson, *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870), p. 702.

[36] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

[37] *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3. The problem of the critic not having the language to articulate his reaction suggests not only the radical nature of Homer's work but also the immaturity of American art criticism. In fact, as will become evident below, it was only from their reactions to Courbet, first formed in the late 1860s, that critics began to have a vocabulary with which to discuss Homer. On how American critics responded to Courbet, see Meixner, *French Realist Painting*, pp. 152-56.

[38] *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[39] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Quotation and Originality," *North American Review* 106 (April 1868), p. 555.

[40] Thomas W. Higginson, "Americanism in Literature," *Atlantic Monthly* 25 (January 1870), pp. 57, 63.

[41] On American literature's relationship with nationalism, see Benjamin T. Spencer, *The Quest for Nationality* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1957).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[42] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5

[43] Ibid.

[44] *Bridle Path* and *Eagle Head* measure 24 x 38 inches and 26 x 38 inches, respectively, and are of a size and format Homer often used for his oils shown in major exhibitions. Although *Manners and Customs* is unlocated, its treatment by the critics relative to the Clark and Metropolitan canvases suggests it was similarly scaled.

[45] "National Academy of Design. First Notice," *Post*, 27 April 1870, p. 1.

[46] On the subject of *Bridle Path*, see David Tatham, "Winslow Homer in the Mountains," *Appalachia*, 36 (15 June 1966), p. 73, and Catherine Campbell et al., *The White Mountains: Place and Perceptions*, exh. cat. (Hanover, N. H.: University Presses of New England, 1980), passim.

[47] "Art Gossip. The Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the N.A.D.," *Mail*, 4 May 1870, p. 1.

[48] *Post*, 27 April 1870, p. 1.

[49] Jones, *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870), p. 307.

[50] *Mail*, 4 May 1870, p. 1.

[51] *Herald*, 8 May 1870, p. 3.

[52] "Art Gossip. The Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the N.A.D," *Mail*, 27 June 1870, p. 1.

[53] Benson, *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870), pp. 702-3.

[54] Sordello [Eugene Benson], "The New Art-Life in France: Gustave Courbet and P. J. Prudhon," *Post* 14 August 1867, p. 1. Laura Meixner has noted in passing the similarity of Benson's reactions to Courbet and Homer in *French Realist Painting*, pp. 154 and 288, note 32. The friendship between Benson and Homer is outlined in Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., "The School of War," NGA 1995, pp. 28-34.

[55] Benson, *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870), p. 703.

[56] A comparable distinctiveness in Homer's Civil War paintings was noted in Cikovsky, "The School of War," NGA 1995, pp. 24-26.

[57] For descriptions of Guy's *Little Stranger* and Perry's *Huldy*, see Jones, *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870), p. 307, and *Herald*, 8 May 1870, p. 3, respectively.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[58] Perry's work received special praise for its subject, exquisite detail, drawing, overall conception, and beauty, from the conservative John Jones in *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870), p. 307, to the forward-thinking Eugene Benson in *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870), pp. 701, 706-8.

[59] Among those who characterized the pictures as powerful were: *Post*, 27 April 1870, p. 1; *Herald*, 8 May 1870, p. 3; "Art Matters. National Academy of Design-Second Article," *Express*, 30 April 1870, p. 2; and *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[60] *Tribune*, 15 April 1870, p. 4.

[61] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

[62] *Express*, 30 April 1870, p. 2.

[63] *Mail*, 4 May 1870, p. 1.

[64] *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[65] *Post*, 27 April 1870, p. 1.

[66] *Times*, 17 April 1870, p. 3.

[67] *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[68] *Mail*, 4 May 1870, p. 1.

[69] *Post*, 27 April 1870, p. 1.

[70] "Fine Arts. Forty-Fifth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Nation*, 10 (28 April 1870), p. 278. The group of sketches was also expressly noticed in *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5; *Herald*, 24 April 1870, p. 10; and *Post*, 10 June 1870, p. 1.

[71] Eleanor Jones Harvey has recently explored the issues surrounding the exhibited oil sketches of the premier landscape painters during the period 1830-80 in *The Painted Sketch: American Impressions From Nature, 1830-80*, exh. cat. (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1998), especially Chapter 3: "The Oil Sketch on Display," pp. 63-69.

[72] In this exhibition, Kruseman Van Elten and William Hart exhibited nine and ten works respectively, and contributions from each artist were noticed to be of the study/sketch variety. See, for example, *Times*, 24 April 70, p. 3, and *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[73] *Nation* 10 (28 April 1870), p. 278.

[74] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[75] *Times*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[76] *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[77] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

[78] *Herald*, 24 April 1870, p. 10.

[79] Jones, *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870), p. 307.

[80] *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[81] *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[82] Eleanor Harvey contends that a greater acceptance of sketches as exhibitable works of art at the Academy was in evidence from the late 1860s. (Harvey, *The Painted Sketch*, pp. 64-68.) This assertion holds true for the 1870s in general and was the case by 1870 for the group of artists she examined in particular. However, the specific example of the critical reactions to the sketches at the 1870 Academy annual, particularly Homer's, as outlined below, points out that, at this moment, there was a body of work on view that was not considered appropriate for public display, and suggests how still very unresolved the issue of the "exhibitable" sketch was in 1870.

[83] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 5.

[84] *Nation* 10 (28 April 1870), p. 278.

[85] *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[86] *World*, 24 April 1870, p. 3.

[87] *World*, 8 May 1870, p. 5.

[88] Harvey, *The Painted Sketch*, pp. 63-64.

[89] Benson, *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870), p. 703.

[90] *Tribune*, 30 April 1870, p. 4.

[91] *Post*, 27 April 1870, p. 1.

[92] Homer drew seven illustrations for *Every Saturday* in 1871, most of them related to his Adirondack and Long Branch sojourns of the previous summer. Although he had nine additional drawings published in two books of poetry, these drawing were actually contracted for and created in 1870. Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book*, p. 299.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[93] He exhibited seaside images in January and February; Civil War images in February and October; Adirondack images in April and May; and rural life images in November. The Century Club often served as the place where Homer could get informal and informed reactions in a friendly environment. It also cannot be ignored that the club was among the best venues for sales.

[94] "Art Notes," *Herald*, 20 February 1871, p. 3, and "Art Notes," *Herald*, 7 March 1871, p. 10. His paintings also appeared at the premier auctions houses. "Important Sale of American and Foreign Oil Paintings," *Post*, 9 May 1871, p. 4, and Eli Perkins, "Somerville Gallery," *Commercial Advertiser*, 13 December 1871, p. 1. Determining whether or not Homer was responsible for placing his works at auctions is often difficult and is not a component of this study. However, it is worthwhile to be aware that his work was available to be seen in these other venues.

[95] "The Century," *Mail*, 6 February 1871, p. 1.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] While in the 1870s stagecoaches still served as the most basic form of local mass transportation, they had been supplanted almost entirely by railroads for long-distance travel. Daniel E. Sutherland, *The Expansion of Everyday Life, 1860-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), pp. 178-80.

[99] John Jones, A. M., "The Academy Exhibition," *Harper's Weekly* 15 (27 May 1871), p. 475, and "Art Notes," *Herald*, 13 February 1871, p. 6.

[100] The positive responses to Johnson's work were numerous. See, for example, *Herald*, 13 February 1871, p. 6; "The Academy of Design," *World*, 23 April 1871, p. 2; "Fine Arts. Private View of the Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Tribune*, 14 April 1871, p. 4; and Susan Nichols Carter, "The Spring Exhibition At The Academy of Design," *Appleton's Journal* 5 (27 May 1871), pp. 619-20.

[101] "Art Notes," *Post*, 7 June 1871, p. 1.

[102] Annette Blaugrund, "The Tenth Street Studio Building," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987, is a comprehensive study of life at the studio building in the nineteenth century.

[103] All of these artists except Wood, who joined the building in 1874, were already in residence when Homer arrived. On the genre painters in the Tenth Street Studio Building, see Blaugrund, "Tenth Street Studio Building," pp. 122-99.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[104] *Camp at Yorktown* was also part of this group, but, as noted above, it is a Civil War image.

[105] *The Mill* and *Country School*, for example, both had been shown at the Century (November 1871) and the Union League Club (March 1872 and February 1872, respectively).

[106] The *Post* suggested the importance of the Century's exhibitions: "At these exhibitions the members have been favored with the first view of nearly all the important works which have been produced by our leading painters.... That these exhibitions...are of importance, is shown by the fact that the kindly criticism which the occasion evokes is always listened to with attention and its purport heeded." "Art at the Century," *Post*, 11 October 1871, p. 1. *Country Store* and *Rainy Day in Camp* have physical evidence of reworking. Conservation reports outlining the changes can been found in the curatorial files of the Hirshhorn and Metropolitan museums, respectively. Another, and surely important, result of Homer's exhibiting at the Century was the sale of pictures. Three out of these five paintings—*Rainy Day in Camp*; *Country Store*; and *Country School*—were already sold when they appeared at the Academy. Among the effects of what seems to have been improved sales, Homer's illustration work clearly was being pushed further into the background. In 1872, he only had three magazine illustrations—all in *Harper's Weekly*, and all appearing during his 1872 summer travels ("Making Hay" appeared 6 July 1872, p. 529; "On the Beach" appeared 17 August 1872, p. 642; "Under Catskill Falls" appeared 14 September 1872, p. 721). Although his illustrations for William Cullen Bryant's *Story of a Fountain* were published in 1872, they were drawn in 1871; the only illustrations for book projects created and published in 1872 were his silhouettes to accompany James Russell Lowell's *The Courtin'*. See Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book*, p. 300.

[107] For example, while the *World*, *Tribune*, and *Mail* printed a minimum of three reviews each, two or more of them were only short references rather than the extensive multiple reviews that had appeared in 1870.

[108] For a brief overview of this event, see Richard B. Morris, ed., *Encyclopedia of American History* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1953), pp. 250-51.

[109] "Art Gossip," *Mail*, 23 March 1872, p. 1.

[110] Mentions of these events were made in, among others, *Mail*, 23 March 1872, p. 1; "Fine Arts," *Times*, 14 April 1872, p. 1; and "Art Matters. LeGrand Lockwood Collection," *Express*, 13 April 1872, p. 2. How the commerce of art was conducted was rapidly changing in this era. This is a topic needing further, in-depth study. It has been covered generally in Skalet, "The Market for American Painting in New York, 1870-1915." A more recent overview of it can be found in Gerald D. Bolas, "The Early Years of the American Art Association," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1998, pp. 12-98 passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[111] Offering this viewpoint were, for example, "The Spring Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Herald*, 14 April 1872, p. 5; "The Realm of Art. Exhibition of Pictures at the Academy of Design," *Telegram*, 13 April 1872, p. 3; "Fine Arts," *Tribune*, 12 April 1872, p. 5; and "Art Reception," *Mail*, 12 April 1872, p. 2.

[112] "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Times*, 14 April 1872, p. 2.

[113] The *Post* was positive in its first review, "National Academy of Design. The Spring Exhibition," *Post*, 17 April 1872, p. 4, but this harsher criticism appeared in a later review, "Fine Arts. Close of the National Academy of Design," *Post*, 6 July 1872, p. 1. This contradictory response could have been the result of extended study or different writers.

[114] This was remarked on in "Art. The Galleries," *Independent*, 18 April 1872, p. 2; *Tribune*, 12 April 1872, p. 5; *Mail*, 12 April 1872, p. 2; and "Art Matters. The Academy Exhibition. First Article," *Express*, 13 April 1872, p. 2.

[115] *Express*, 13 April 1872, p. 2.

[116] This sentiment was put forth not only in *Express*, 13 April 1872, p. 2, but also in *Herald*, 14 April 1872, p. 5.

[117] Mary Lynn Stevens Heininger, *Century of Childhood*, exh. cat. (Rochester, N.Y.: Strong Museum, 1984), provides a succinct but well thought out outline of the attitudes towards youth in the nineteenth century.

[118] Those reviews that made reference to the Academy conflicts in this regard included *Tribune*, 12 April 1872, p. 3; *Herald*, 14 April 1872, p. 5; and "Gallery Gossip. The Academy of Design," *World*, 28 April 1872, p. 6.

[119] See, for example, *Herald*, 14 April 1872, p. 5; "The Academy Exhibition," *World*, 12 April 1872, p. 1; *Times*, 14 April 1872, p. 2; "The Spring Exhibition of the National Academy," *Appleton's Journal* 7 (25 May 1872), pp. 578-80; and *Mail*, 12 April 1872, p. 2.

[120] Clarence Cook severely criticized Church in *Tribune*, 12 April 1872, p. 5. Eleanor Harvey has noted that Church never exhibited his "Great Pictures" at the Academy. Harvey, *The Painted Sketch*, p. 67.

[121] Lengthy reviews of the Moran painting can be found in "On The Easel," *Mail*, 25 March 1872, p. 1; "Art. Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River," *Independent*, 23 May 1872, p. 2; "Culture and Progress," *Scribner's* 4 (June 1872), pp. 251-52; and "Art," *Atlantic* 30 (August 1872), pp. 246-48.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[122] Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., "Luminism in Context: A New View," in *American Light: The Luminist Movement, 1850-75*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1980), p. 215. Stebbins' estimate was based on titles and thus not authoritatively accurate, but the numbers give a reasonable idea of the shift. Why the shift occurred is a subject for its own study, yet scholars have touched on the significant reasons. As to the decrease in landscape art, Nicolai Cikovsky has suggested that the destruction of so much land during the Civil War damaged the concept of the landscape as the location for national beliefs. (Cikovsky, "School of War," NGA 1995, p. 72). On the side of genre, Sarah Burns has noted that genre became an increasingly appropriate vehicle for exploring the issues of the day. The increased interaction of populations fostered human interaction as a worthy subject. (Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, p. 6).

[123] The serials that reviewed the show included the *Herald, Post, Express, Telegram, World, Tribune, Appleton's Journal, Independent, Times, Scribner's Monthly,* and *Mail.* The last three ignored Homer. The *Mail* reviews seem to have been interrupted. Having had a long "First Article" on portraits and landscapes and suggesting more reviews would follow, it only continued with a short mention that the exhibition is on view and closing. This type of interruption in reviews is not entirely uncommon and could be the result of other demands on the writer's time or on the paper itself. In this case it is know that D. O'C. Townley died at the end of 1872. Having held a variety of positions, including opera house manager, near the end of his life, it raises the question of whether his tenure at the *Mail* was interrupted during the Academy run. On Townley, see Chapter 1 and Appendix.

[124] See, for example, *World*, 12 April 1872, p. 1, and *Herald*, 14 April 1872, p. 5.

[125] *Post*, 6 July 1872, p. 1.

[126] The descriptions were both purely factual as well as interpretive. Factual descriptions appeared in, for example, "Art Matters. The Academy Exhibition. Second Article," *Express*, 18 April 1872, p. 2, and James Jackson Jarves, "Art. Something About Art Training," *Independent*, 25 April 1872, p. 2. More interpretive descriptions were made in "The Realm of Art. Some Notes on the Academy Spring Exhibition," *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2; and "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6.

[127] *Express*, 18 April 1872, p. 2.

[128] The American education system is discussed in "Two Dangers of School," *The Nation* 15 (15 August 1872), pp. 103-4. See also Cikovsky, NGA 1995, p. 88.

[129] *Express*, 18 April 1872, p. 2.

[130] *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[131] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2. A similar sentiment was expressed in *Appleton's Journal* 7 (25 May 1872), p. 578.

[132] Nicolai Cikovsky has discussed the multiple issues found in the school images in "Winslow Homer's *School Time*," pp. 47-69. See also Cikovsky, NGA 1995, pp. 64, 88.

[133] *Appleton's Journal* 7 (25 May 1872), p. 578.

[134] Cikovsky, NGA 1995, p. 64.

[135] "School-Children," *The Aldine* 5 (October 1872), p. 198.

[136] "The National Education Bill," *Nation* 14 (29 February 1872), p. 133.

[137] Cikovsky, too, notes the teacher's modernity; Cikovsky, NGA 1995, pp. 64, 88. For the statistic, see Sutherland, *Expansion of Everyday Life*, p. 97.

[138] A. C. W. [Andrew C. Wheeler], "Gossip in a Gallery. A Visit to the Academy of Design," *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2.

[139] See, for example, "National Academy of Design," *Independent*, 25 April 1872, p. 2; *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2, and *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6.

[140] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2.

[141] *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6.

[142] "Art Intelligence. The Academy Exhibition," *Express*, 12 April 1872, p. 2.

[143] The concept of the book of nature in landscape painting in the mid-nineteenth century has been investigated in Francis Murphy, *The Book of Nature: American Painters and the Natural Sublime*, exh. cat. (Yonkers, N.Y.: Hudson River Museum, 1983).

[144] *Independent*, 25 April 1872, p. 2.

[145] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2.

[146] *Post*, 6 July 1872, p. 1

[147] *Express*, 18 April 1872, p. 2; *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6; and *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2.

[148] It is interesting to note that if the version of *The Country School* shown at the Academy is the same canvas (rather than its near twin [Addison Gallery of American Art]) exhibited at the Union League Club in February 1872, either Homer worked significantly on the painting or the critics substantially changed their opinions about it. At

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the club venue, *The Country School* was criticized for Homer's usual sin of unfinish. As the writer for the *Times* noted, it had problems that "by very little care, might have been avoided." "Fine Arts. Art Reception at the Union League Club," *Times*, 11 February 1872, p. 3. Similar complaints appeared in "Union League Club," *Mail*, 10 February 1872, p. 4.

[149] *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2.

[150] *Independent*, 25 April 1872, p. 2.

[151] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2.

[152] Cikovsky, in "Winslow Homer's *School Time*," pp. 64-67, relates the coarseness of Homer's style in the school pictures to a conscious construction of a "national artistic policy" appropriate for national subjects and similar to that being created in poetry by Walt Whitman. While this may have been true, at the time, the critics' understanding of it seems to have been only intuitive.

[153] *Post*, 6 July 1872, p. 1.

[154] The influence of Couture on Homer is another interesting topic for consideration, but not here. On Couture and his American students, see Albert Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 557-612.

[155] See, for example, *Telegram*, 13 April 1872, p. 3, and *Tribune*, 12 April 1872, p. 5.

[156] *Appleton's* 7 (25 May 1872), p. 579, and *Scribner's* 4 (June 1872), pp. 252-53.

[157] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2.

[158] *Appleton's* 7 (25 May 1872), p. 579, and *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6.

[159] *Express*, 18 April 1872, p. 2. Similar opinions were expressed in *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2, and *Tribune*, 17 April 1872, p. 6.

[160] *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2.

[161] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2.

[162] James Jackson Jarves, "Expression and Character," *Independent*, 1 February 1872, p. 4.

[163] "The Realm of Art. Landscape Paintings in the Spring Exhibition," *Telegram*, 4 May 1872, p. 2.

[164] "Art," *Atlantic* 29 (March 1872), pp. 372-74.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[165] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2.

[166] *Express*, 18 April 1872, p. 2.

[167] *Tribune*, 12 April 1872, p. 5.

[168] *Telegram*, 20 April 1872, p. 2, and *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2.

[169] *Post*, 6 July 1872, p. 1.

[170] *Telegram*, 4 May 1872, p. 2.

[171] "The Realm of Art. Some Notes on Genre Pictures and Beauties of the Academy Exhibition," *Telegram*, 27 April 1872, p. 2; *World*, 21 April 1872, p. 2; and James Jackson Jarves, "Art. The Needs of a Young Artist," *Independent*, 2 May 1872, p. 4.

[172] "Fine Arts. Mr. John H. Sherwood's Collection," *World*, 23 April 1873, p. 5. The *Tribune* remarked on its lasting quality thus: "[I]f it should last a thousand years, would be the most authentic page of the life today which now exists on canvas." "Fine Arts. The Sherwood Collection," *Tribune*, 23 April 1873, p. 4.

[173] Avery had already owned the painting when it was exhibited at the Academy in 1872. In appeared at Avery's in April 1873. See *Catalogue of Samuel P. Avery's Collection of Paintings* (New York: Privately Printed, 1873), #93.

[174] "Art and Music. Fine Arts," *Tribune*, 17 April 1873, p. 7.

[175] Worthington Whittredge and W. O. Stone were the other two elected to the committee. The election was noted in "The National Academy of Design," *Tribune*, 10 May 1872, p. 8; "The National Academy of Design," *Times*, 10 May 1872, p. 3; and "Art Notes," *Watson's Art Journal* 17 (1 June 1872), p. 55. Homer was mistakenly identified as "W. Howes" in the notice of the election in "Art Matters," *Herald*, 12 May 1872, p. 10. I am grateful to David Dearinger, Chief Curator of the National Academy Museum, for clarifying the role of the hanging committee.

[176] "Fine Arts," *Times*, 16 December 1872, p. 3. It should be noted that there are two versions of this painting and it is not conclusively known which picture is referred to here. While the Butler canvas (originally owned by John Sherwood) retains its mountain backdrop, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's canvas originally had one too, but when it was painted out is unknown. See NGA 1995, p. 90-91. On the Metropolitan's version, see Natalie Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), pp. 457-61.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[177] The story of Homer using city street children as models has been often told. The genesis of the story can be found in the description of Homer working on the painting in "Gossip Among the Brushes," *Telegram*, 8 June 1872, p. 2.

[178] The reports of Homer's travels and traveling companion can be found in "Art Notes," *Post*, 8 July 1872, p. 1, and "Art Notes," *Mail*, 18 October 1872, p. 2.

[179] Clarence Cook referred to *The Country School* as the companion to *Snap the Whip* in *Tribune*, 23 April 1873, p. 4

[180] *Telegram*, 8 June 1872, p. 2.

[181] "The Return of the Artists," *Herald*, 19 October 1872, p. 6.

[182] These shortcomings were mentioned by *Herald*, 19 October 1872, p. 6; "Art Notes," *Herald*, 27 November 1872, p. 4; "Art Matters," *Commercial Advertiser*, 10 December 1872, p. 1, and *Times*, 16 December 1872, p 3. While none of the commentators went into much detail about the faults of the color, the brightness of the outdoor light of *Snap the Whip* presented more accentuated contrasts of color and tone than in *The Country School*, and this might have affected the reactions.

[183] This was the case in the comments that appeared in "Art Matters. Recent Pictures," *World*, 17 November 1872, p. 6; "Art," *Mail*, 26 April 1873, p. 2; and *Times*, 16 December 1872, p. 3.

[184] A greater number of Homer's canvases could also be found at commercial sales. The sale venues in which Homer's work could be found included the Archibald Johnson Sale ("Art," *Mail*, 5 March 1873, p. 2); the Sherwood Sale (see above); the Avery Sale (see above); the Somerville Sale in May 1873 ("The Fine Arts," *Times*, 3 May 1873, p. 4); at the American and Foreign Art Agency ("Art Matters," *Herald*, 22 September 1873, p. 4); Thom's Gallery ("Art Notes," *World*, 29 September 1873, p. 5); and Snedecor's Gallery ("Fine Arts. What Snedecor Has to Show this Season," *Mail*, 31 December 1873, p. 1). Homer also opened his studio on at least two occasions, as was noted in "Art Reception," *World*, 24 January 1873, p. 5, and "Artists' Reception," *World*, 28 March 1873, p. 5.

[185] *Girl in a Hammock* might also have been *In the Hammock* (private collection) or *Summer Afternoon* (Cooper-Hewitt Museum), although in the latter canvas the girl leans against the hammock rather than being in it. Two other pictures known only as *Study*, shown in March and November, respectively, may have also been figure works. See NGA 1995, p. 408, and Gerdts and Yarnall, *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues*, p. 1782. The only work Homer exhibited at the Union League Club this year was described as a figure picture. See "Art at the Union League," *Post*, 14 February 1873, p. 2.

[186] At the Somerville Gallery, there was, in addition to *Waiting for an Answer*, another canvas by Homer called *Waiting for a Partner* (unlocated), which also may have been a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

courting image. "The Fine Arts. The American Collection in the Somerville Gallery," *Times*, 3 May 1873, p. 4.

[187] The rise of specifically ideal female subjects, one that Homer did not explore, would occur from the middle of the decade. See Leila Bailey Van Hook, "The Ideal Women in American Art, 1875-1910," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1988.

[188] "Art at the Century," *Post*, 3 February 1873, p. 2, and "Art at the Century," *Post*, 4 March 1873, p. 2.

[189] "Art Notes," *Daily Graphic*, 22 April 1873, p. 3, and "Art," *Mail*, 2 May 1873, p. 2. At Thom's Gallery, the light in *Waiting for an Answer* was also mentioned in the *Mail*.

[190] However, both Whittredge and Stone, Homer's fellow committee members, did exhibit. I am grateful to Abigail Gerdts and David Dearinger for sharing their thoughts with me on this matter.

[191] The paintings were *Apple Blossoms* (unlocated); *Coming Through the Rye* (private collection); *Crossing the Bridge* (probably Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, Mississippi); *Haying Time* (unlocated); *Siesta* (unlocated); and *Waiting for a Partner* (unlocated). Of these, *Haying Time* was said to be large. *Times*, 3 May 1873, p. 4.

[192] "National Academy of Design," *Post*, 15 May 1873, p. 1; "Art. Annual Exhibition of N. A. of Design," *Aldine* 6 (June 1873), p. 127; and "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition," *Nation* 16 (22 May 1873), pp. 358-59.

[193] For condemnation of the show, see, for example, "National Academy of Design," *Daily Graphic*, 21 April 1873, p. 2; "Art, Music and Drama. Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design—Forty-Eighth Annual Exhibition. Second Notice," *Tribune*, 25 April 1873, p. 5; *Aldine* 6 (June 1873), p. 127; Angelo, "Correspondence. The National Academy of Design," *Watson's Art Journal* 18 (26 April 1873), p. 309; and "Art," *Mail*, 15 April 1873, p. 1.

[194] "Art. The Spring Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Independent*, 1 May 1873, pp. 550-51.

[195] The election was noted in "Art," *Mail*, 15 May 1873, p. 2, and "New Officers of the Academy of Design," *World*, 15 May 1873, p. 5, among others.

[196] NGA 1995, p. 394

[197] While he had pictures on view at the Century in November, Homer was reported as still in the country on the evening of the monthly meeting. "Art at the Century," *Post*, 3 November 1873, p. 2. However, the *Mail* reported seeing Homer's new work in his studio the week before. "Fine Arts. A Visit to the Tenth Street Studio," *Mail*, 28 October,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1873, p. 1. A logical explanation for this course of events is that Homer came into town, dropped off his work, and then left again within a few days.

[198] The *Harper's* engravings from the summer were: "The Bathers," *Harper's Weekly* 17 (2 August 1873), pp. 668, 671; "The Nooning," *Harper's Weekly* 17 (16 August 1873), p. 725; "Sea-Side Sketches—A Clam-Bake," *Harper's Weekly* 17 (23 August 1873), pp. 740, 742; "Gloucester Harbor," *Harper's Weekly* 17 (27 September 1873), p. 844; "Ship-Building," *Harper's Weekly* 17 (11 October 1873), pp. 900, 902; and "Dad's Coming," *Harper's Weekly* 17 (1 November 1873), pp. 969-70.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 4

1874-76: "In the Midst of an Era of Revolution"

The mid-1870s were years of significant change for America, the art world, and Homer. The autumn of 1873 marked the beginning of the most serious financial crisis in American history, and its impact would be felt into the next decade.[1] In the spring of 1875, a cataclysmic upheaval occurred in the art world when a group of young, Munich-trained artists showed their work at the Academy for the first time. The press kept pace with the rapid growth and changes in art, and the volume of art coverage increased significantly. New magazines specifically devoted to art, such as the *Art Journal*, arrived on the scene, and general periodicals paid more attention to art matters. Critical debates diversified and intensified.

Homer reacted to these transformations in the world around him with his own alterations. Chief among these changes was that he ceased his work as an illustrator and began his long engagement with watercolor painting. More subtly, but no less important, he adopted new subjects and a more visible emphasis on light and design as core elements of his art. Homer's changes resulted in his art being central to the critical discussions and brought him both the ire and the applause of the art press.

Homer had his debut at the American Watercolor Society in January 1874, exhibiting *Leaves From a Sketchbook.* As only the seventh annual venture of the society, the exhibition was a comparatively new venue for a medium that, itself, was relatively recent

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

on the American art scene. It should be remembered that as late as 1860 America did not have one major painter working seriously in watercolor.[2] American interest in watercolor as a serious vehicle for artistic expression had only begun with the exhibition of British art that toured Boston, New York, and Philadelphia during 1857-58 and in which many examples of English watercolor were included.[3] Through the 1860s the predominant influence of English watercolor reflected the writings of John Ruskin and his call for the meticulous study of nature. Ruskin influenced most prominently the American Pre-Raphaelites, as the American devotees of Ruskin were known, including William Trost Richards, Henry and Thomas Farrer, Charles Moore, and John Henry and John William Hill.[4] In the mid-1860s, a parallel strain of English-influenced watercolorists, inspired by the picturesque tradition in English landscape art, developed in New York, influencing artists such as Alfred Bellows to begin to paint pastoral images in watercolor.[5] With the rise of Americans painting in watercolor, the American Watercolor Society was founded in 1866. While the group held its first annual exhibition in 1868, 1873 is acknowledged to be a watershed year for the importance of watercolor in America. That winter the entire suite of National Academy of Design galleries was filled with watercolors, including a large show of British works arranged by Henry Blackburn of London. This event stimulated interest in the medium and fostered a surge in the professional practice of watercolor.[6]

The critics' assessments of the Watercolor Society annuals were constructed similarly to their comments on the National Academy annuals and often contained comparisons with the previous year's exhibition. Leading up to the 1874 show, there was much discussion

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of whether or not Henry Blackburn could or should reprise his success of the year before. Ultimately Blackburn failed to present a show complementing the Watercolor Society's, due to difficulties with various authorities, but the idea of including significant examples of European work in the watercolor shows was absorbed, and in 1874, a considerable number of foreign works were hung. There were not only British examples but also French ones and, for the first time and especially noticed, the work of Mariano Fortuny and his Spanish-Roman followers.[7] In this context, questions of refinement of technique and the relationship of American to European art were keenly discussed.

In general the 1874 watercolor exhibition was praised both for its completeness and the advances discernible in the American work.[8] Clarence Cook remarked that "the rooms are full of hope."[9] At a time when oil painting and the institution of the National Academy of Design were causing considerable consternation due to their stagnant state, watercolor and the society of its practitioners were generally heralded as forums where American artists could distinguish themselves. Yet, despite the welcome it received, the watery medium was not considered to be on equal footing with oil, and certain prejudices, such as its being only viable as a sketching tool, prevailed.[10] In contrast to the reviews of the National Academy annuals, comparison with foreign works served as a springboard for many watercolor reviews. Most critics were glad for the inclusion of European art. The *Times* relished the European sheets for their array of techniques and, thereby, the useful comparisons they allowed.[11] Overall, the American work compared favorably with the foreign, and was considered to be strong enough both in numbers and quality to satisfy the desire that national character pervade the show. As the *Herald* noted: "the tone of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

exhibition is distinctly American, and the foreign element will be just large enough to suggest a contrast which may be converted into an advantage."[12] Among the Europeans, Edouard Detaille, Mariano Fortuny, and Attilio Simonetti were favored. The praise they received focused on the technical aspects of their work. Detaille was considered the master of detail; Fortuny of light and shade; and Simonetti for the transparency of his color.[13]

Homer's entries to the 1874 American Watercolor Society annual exhibition may have marked his first appearance at the society, but he was no stranger to the medium. He had probably learned watercolor from his mother, who was an accomplished amateur flower painter. Also, in his illustrative work, using wash was an integral part of both his aesthetic and technique.[14] His plunge into watercolor, however, did not occur until the summer of 1873. Perhaps like many of his peers, Homer was inspired by the 1873 watercolor exhibition to begin exploring the aqueous medium in depth. [15] With the fruits of that work, he felt confident to go public.[16]

Exactly what Homer sent to the 1874 Watercolor Society is not entirely clear; his entries were listed in the exhibition catalogue as simply *Leaves from a Sketchbook.*[17] If Homer, himself, intentionally titled the works to emphasize their connection to the sketch genre, he may have been hoping to capitalize on the fact that the most familiar use of watercolor was as a sketching tool.[18] Likewise, the society's and critics' acceptance of them as a group reflected, in part, a similar understanding. The concept of the sketch was accompanied by a greater acceptance of unfinish, and this may have been a feature to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which Homer wished to align his work to encourage a positive reaction to it. While the *Aldine* remarked that Homer's subjects were of "child life," only one review mentions a specific scene—boys with a kitten, which most likely is the watercolor owned by the Worcester Museum (fig. 33).[19] The *Mail* identified one entry as a scene with girls, and *Longing (Waiting for Dad)* (fig. 34) must also have been in the show, for in a National Academy review in the spring, Clarence Cook mentioned that the watercolor related to *Dad's Coming* had been seen in the Watercolor Society annual.[20]

As with his oils, originality and individuality were the labels critics most often used when writing about Homer's watercolors. The critics also noted and praised his distinctiveness. As the *Post* noticed: "They [Homer's works] are off-hand and dashing works, and are destined to attract attention."[21] Earl Shinn of the *Nation* found Homer the only artist to have works "on the side of originality" in a show full of "calm, unvitalized works."[22] The "life, vigor, and individuality" of Homer's watercolors were "surpassed by nothing," according to the *World*.[23] Compared to his peers, Homer's sheets must have appeared unique. What separated his works from others was both what he pictured and how he presented his subjects. Homer's watercolors, such as *Boys and Kitten*, stand in vivid contrast to the sheets of William Trost Richards, a perennial favorite of the early 1870s. Richards, by 1873, was moving out of his rigidly Ruskinian phase towards a more poetic expression, and works such as *A High Tide at Atlantic City* (fig. 35) were praised especially for their beauty and their expression of the serenity found in nature like that expressed in Bryant's poetry.[24] Homer's work also was markedly different from that of Alfred Bellows, who painted in the British picturesque tradition and was considered the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

head of the American watercolor school. "Delicate" was the word most often used to praise Bellows' work, and even in a climate where it was recognized that there were prejudices against watercolor, delicate execution was a trait acceptable to all.[25]

Beautiful and delicate were adjectives rarely attached to Homer's art at this time. Writers were more likely to use words like vigor, life, and strength.[26] The *Mail* wrote: "Mr. Homer is an artist whose perception of chiaroscuro is unsurpassed; he grabs nature and dabs her on his paper, and as you look at his work you feel the blow of the salt sea breezes and shade your eyes from the dazzling sun glare."[27] The *Nation* explained that Homer's foundation for capturing nature was the study of "natural effects and values."[28] In an examination of *Boy and Kitten*, the *World* suggested that artistic invention, as well, contributed to the success of the watercolor. It exclaimed: "That of the three boys seated on a boat holding a kitten, while a black cat sits in the background, with a tail so remarkable that it must be concluded it was not the object of the artist's brush studied from life, is so good an artistic tonic as the fresh salt air in which its scene is laid."[29] Clarence Cook, noting that a combination of factors was in operation, attributed Homer's success and difference from his peers to his love for truth and directness and his personal manner of expression, and noted that these qualities kept his work "free of anything shoppy." He continued: "Nor, though we believe he got much of his art-education in Paris, does he in the least recall the manner of any famous artist there. It is true he has a manner of his own...but the manner has sprung from the artist's individual way of looking at Nature, not from his way of looking at some other man's pictures."[30] Cook perceived Homer as so rooted in actual observation that he did not see (or ignored) any

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

specific artistic influences. These factors separated him from other artists and elicited praise for the originality of his work. When his works were compared with those of other artists, their works were seen not as influential but rather as related forms of expression. The *Mail*, no less complimentary than the *Tribune*, remarked: "Winslow Homer exhibits a set of sketches which are superb in strength, brilliancy, vigor and suggestiveness and entitle this artist to the rank as the Fortuny of America."[31]

In short, the critics found Homer's works decidedly refreshing. Even the most critical reviewers found him worthy of attention. Although the *Daily Graphic* found the watercolors "realistic to the utmost verge of realism [a fault in his view], and presenting the most violent contrasts of light and shadow," it had to admit they were remarkable.[32] Some who had complained vehemently in the past about the unfinished quality of Homer's work in oil now wrote that the watercolors were, as the *Tribune* suggested, "so pleasant to look at, we are almost content not to ask Mr. Homer for a finished piece."[33] The *Mail* nearly genuflected on paper, saying it could "worship the genius he shows in sketches like these."[34] Such unabashed praise, coming after almost two years of minimal critical attention, must have encouraged the artist to pursue his interest in watercolor as well as consider its further implications for his career. Critical acceptance of a lesser degree of surface finish for watercolor painting surely contributed to Homer's success with the critics. Yet, his own particular means of manipulating the medium especially captured their praise.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although Homer's watercolors made a noticeable splash at the 1874 Watercolor Society exhibition, his oils at the Academy annual that year fell flat.[35] Homer's choice of works, in light of the circumstances surrounding the exhibition and his relationship with it, is curious. A special effort was made by the Academy to ensure that the 1874 annual exhibition was of higher quality than in recent years. Academy president J. Q. A. Ward, along with the council and hanging committee, had encouraged artists during the winter to send their best work.[36] Homer was a member of the council this year, and he attended council meetings in the several weeks both preceding and following the opening of the show.[37] Yet, his own submissions, *School Time* (fig. 36), *Dad's Coming* (fig. 37), *Girl in a Hammock* (possibly fig. 32), and *Sunday Morning* (possibly private collection), were relatively small in scale.[38] Homer's reasons for sending these modest oils to the Academy instead of the larger *A Temperance Meeting* (fig. 38) can only be guessed, but the most logical explanation may be that the potential for financial gain at Leavitt's Art Rooms, where *A Temperance Meeting* was at sale in early March, outstripped, for Homer, the benefits of its appearing at the Academy.[39]

Despite Homer's minimal appearance, the Academy annual attracted considerable attention in 1874, and there was much praise for the Academy's effort to convince the public that it was a vital organization.[40] The *Herald* understood that this effort was not simply about redeeming the Academy as an institution but also about the position of American art as well. It reminded its readers that the discredit artists brought on the Academy by exhibiting substandard works brought American art in disfavor with the public.[41] Thus, despite the praise given to this exhibition, the concern for the position of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American art were raised by individual writers. Some debated whether the best artists, such as Church, William Page, and Inness, were sending their best work.[42] The most skeptical of papers, the *World*, remained unconvinced that artists were putting forth their strongest efforts.[43] In this light, the placement of a foreign canvas in the exhibition's place of honor caused particular controversy. The reactions to August Schenck's *Lost—Souvenir of Auvergne* (fig. 39)—both its quality and its being hung in the central spot in the most prominent gallery—were various.[44] The *Mail* simply considered Schenck's subject hackneyed and could not agree with its prominent placement.[45] Clarence Cook questioned the canvas' placement, not because he did not like the painting, but because he preferred some of the American pictures. He saw *Lost*'s prominence as the result of the hanging committee's fondness for tight technique, like that practiced by those with Düsseldorf training.[46] For the *Herald*, the central installation of *Lost* was praised because it did not pander to either the Academy's or public's opinion, and was hung there simply as the best picture in the most honored place regardless of its country of origin.[47] The strategic placement of Schenck's canvas seems to have implied a belief in a superiority of the academic European schools at a time when the National Academy and American art were fighting for their lives.

While highlighting Schenck's canvas perhaps sent the message from the hanging committee that American art was substandard to European, some writers noted that they saw something stirring both within the Academy and with the artists. The *Tribune* called the show a "new departure."[48] *Scribner's* suggested that "something has waked up the artists."[49] *Appleton's* perceived a change due to greater numbers of artists represented.[50]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The *Times* highly commended the show and explained that it "shows the importance of getting rid of old fogey notions and the revivifying power of an infusion of new blood."[51] Contributing to this notion of changes was a consensus that the younger artists were progressing and, therefore, responsible for the better quality of the show.[52] The championing, by even a handful of critics, of artists like John La Farge, Elihu Vedder, Charles C. Coleman, and James Whistler also suggests a changing tide.[53] Interwoven with these discussions was commentary on rejected pictures. The *Daily Graphic* wished that more canvases had been cut, but did not elaborate on which ones should have been omitted.[54] The *Herald* was glad for the rejections made.[55] Clarence Cook was disturbed by the rejection of all but one of La Farge's pictures.[56] Historical perspective gives us the vantage point from which to understand that the diversity of entries as well as the critical opinions of this exhibition signaled the beginning of significant changes to come.

Still, though, it was the dramatic canvases by Americans, such as Frederic Church's *Petra* (fig. 40), William Page's *Shakespeare Reading* (fig. 41), George Boughton's *The March of Miles Standish* (fig. 42), and Seymour Joseph Guy's *Going to the Opera (The Vanderbilt Family)* (fig. 43), that received most of the attention. Even though Church's *Petra* received less commentary than had his work in years past, it was still widely written about and generally praised. The critics who found it inspiring praised both its subject and technique. The *Herald* valued picturing the ruins of a past civilization to remind those of the present day of faded glory.[57] Those less enamored with the picture criticized its artistic treatment. The *World* found it lacking in pictorial interest, but its paint application, at least, was better than Bierstadt, who was roundly condemned for his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"big trees" by almost everyone.[58] The *Sun* criticized *Petra* for being "not overgood in treatment," preferring the meticulous execution of Schenck and John Beaufain Irving to Church's broader areas of paint in light and shadow.[59]

Of the subject pictures, Boughton's *Miles Standish* and Guy's *Going to the Opera* commanded most of the attention. Boughton's work had individual elements that satisfied a variety of viewpoints. Critics who favored the traditional hierarchy of painting admired its historical basis, and an American one at that.[60] Critics more interested in freer painting styles and their ability to express feeling praised its landscape elements.[61] For none of the critics, however, was *Miles Standish* a completely successful ensemble. The problem of ensemble, too, was the central one for Guy's *Going to the Opera*, which pictured fifteen members of the Vanderbilt family. It was portraiture; it was genre; it was a commission from a most prominent New Yorker. It commanded very diverse reactions. Most critics were sympathetic to the task presented to the artist.[62] The *Mail*, which had criticized Schenck's painting as hackneyed, praised Guy's canvas as the ultimate in novel conception and talent in execution.[63] However, Cook in the *Tribune* and Brownell in the *World* took Guy severely to task for the awkward groupings of the figures, the figures' lack of character, and problems of perspective; Brownell called it "a domestic dress parade of figures babbling."[64]

Within this show of multiple monumental canvases, Homer's modest-sized entries were virtually ignored.[65] Size and, perhaps, the placement of Homer's canvases may have contributed to their going unnoticed. *Watson's Art Journal*, for example, noted that it had

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nearly overlooked *Sunday Morning*.[66] No one discussed *School Time*. After the popularity of *The Country School* and, to a degree, *Snap the Whip*, Homer might have expected it to draw notice even though it was only half the size of the earlier pictures. Yet, *School Time*, although ostensibly reiterating the popular subject of children and education, differed from *Country School* and *Snap the Whip* in its lack of a focused narrative. Multiple vignettes spread the subject over the light-filled foreground and middle ground, possibly diluting the impact it may have had on a picture-filled wall at the Academy. *Dad's Coming*, which had a more prominent central figure group and narrative motif, was noticed at least by a few critics. The *Post*, reacting to the small canvas' carefully constructed ensemble of composition and story, praised it for being "well-composed" in support of its subject.[67] The *World*, generally disgruntled with the overstocking of sentimental platitudes in the show, appreciated *Dad's Coming* as "one of the artist's best and happiest dashes of character."[68] As mentioned above, Clarence Cook had preferred the watercolor sketch of this subject, praising especially the free-handed definition of the detritus on the sand. Unfortunately, Cook did not reveal here his reservations about the oil.[69] Yet, the *Tribune* critic, who had accepted, even liked, the freedom and sketchlike qualities of Homer's watercolors, condemned Homer for not sending "anything to the Academy up to the excellence that he himself has taught us to exact [sic? expect] of him. If we cannot thank him for anything first rate, however, we can at least praise his *Girl in a Hammock*, a sketch in oils..., which would be welcome as a finished picture."[70] The expectations for exhibitable watercolors and oils were markedly different.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

While Cook criticized *Girl in a Hammock*'s unfinished state, the *Times* was less bothered by it, noting "[it] is remarkable for fine drawing, purity of color and sweetness of conception."[71] However, the same paper had a less positive response to *Sunday Morning*, faulting it for a "poverty of color," while acknowledging it exhibited good drawing and "strength of expression"—all three qualities it regularly found in Homer's work.[72] In contrast, the *Nation* found a sauciness in *Sunday Morning*, remarking: "Homer's charming truant, who swings sketchily...in her hammock, with an enjoyment of staying away from church, which has just the element wanting to the Marchesa's ice cream story—that there is sin in it."[73] All of these comments were, however, just remarks made in passing.

By mid-May of 1874, Homer had already begun his summer travels. He visited his friend and patron Lawson Valentine at Walden, New York, probably on his way to the Adirondacks.[74] He arrived at Thomas Baker's farm in Essex County, New York, on the fourteenth; he stayed for about a month and was joined by his fellow artists John Lee Fitch and Eliphalet Terry.[75] Homer returned to the Adirondacks for September and October, staying at "Widow Beede's Cottage" near the village center of Keene Valley.[76] Among Homer's companions were the artists J. Francis Murphy, Kruseman Van Elten, and Roswell Shurtleff.[77] While the company was artistic, no known images by Homer exist from this second 1874 Adirondack trip. Fishing, Homer's favorite pastime and easily done in Keene Valley, may have been his primary activity that fall. In between his Adirondack excursions and by the third week in July, Homer, again with Terry but also with Enoch Wood Perry, was visiting East Hampton on Long Island.[78] Although the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

length of his stay at East Hampton is unknown, the *Post* reported he was "passing the summer" there.[79] Regardless of the time spent on Long Island, Homer's summer artistic activity seems to have been most intense there, for the *Express* considered the fruits of the season's labor to be of East Hampton subjects.[80]

When Homer returned to his studio around November 1, he began a period of intense painting and exhibiting. With 1875 came anticipation of the Centennial year and the upcoming commemorative exhibition in Philadelphia. This exciting time brought a reinvigorated concentration on the state of American affairs and a taking stock of America's progress and character, including her art. Neither Homer nor the critics were immune to assessing the country's changing state of affairs. As Nicolai Cikovsky has noted, by 1875 Homer recognized that the art world and its ideals had changed significantly since he began his painting career a dozen years earlier. The roller coaster ride of the middle years of Reconstruction—alternately wild successes and failures in the economic, political, and social arenas—conjoined with the changing artistic landscape, in which contemporary European subjects and styles were increasingly sought by patrons and as models for American art, to create an atmosphere of uncertainty for the generation that came to maturity during the Civil War. [81] In these changing, uncertain times, Homer made changes in his art-life. In 1875 he drew his last two illustrations for *Harper's Weekly*, effectively ending his career as a free-lance illustrator. The assignments of urban subjects, so antithetical to Homer's typical topics, and the necessary constraints of collaboration in commercial illustration probably contributed to Homer's decision.[82] It is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

clear, however, that the primary reason why Homer stopped creating illustrative work was his desire for more freedom to pursue his own artistic path. [83]

The intensity with which Homer pursued his new path is suggested by the number of his offerings to the Watercolor Society in 1875: thirty-four sheets were shown.[84] His output was matched by an equally increased volume of art writing; eight of the eleven newspapers that reviewed the exhibition published series of three or more articles.[85] The overall response to the show was extremely favorable. [86] A number of commentaries interpreted the appearance of greater numbers of practitioners and improved quality as evidence of progress in American watercolor.[87] Increased attendance and sales at the exhibition, too, were applauded as a step toward the wider acceptance of watercolor as a bona fide medium.[88] The *Times*, for one, announced: "The watercolor school is now fully recognized as an important one, and one that can no longer be ignored."[89] The *Express* concurred: "It [watercolor] is strong and powerful.... It has charmed, it has soothed, it has captured us; and by its gentleness, its sweetness, and its poetry it has made the world of art a disciple where it was heretofore a scoffer."[90] That the 1875 watercolor show may have signaled a turning point in establishing the medium as an integral part of the American art scene is suggested by the fact that, as late as the week preceding the opening of the show, the *Times* had noted that watercolor had not yet been given the appreciation it deserved.[91]

An increase in figure painting may have contributed to the show's success and watercolor's acceptance. The *Mail* stated this fact outright.[92] Others expressed a similar

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sentiment by recognizing and praising the influx of new men, many of whom were genre painters. Enoch Wood Perry, John Ehninger, and Julian Scott, among others, were mentioned as very welcome to the watercolor scene.[93] The increase of figure work in watercolor matched that which was already being noticed in oil painting. It was particularly significant in watercolor since the first wave of American watercolor practitioners had concentrated almost exclusively on studies from nature. A corollary viewpoint was articulated by the *Art Journal* in its commendation of the use of watercolor for "the production of pictures," not just for sketches.[94] The use of the medium for fully realized conceptions was, at least for this one writer, a welcome occurrence.

The European contributions to the exhibition commanded considerable attention and elicited a wide range of opinions. Discussions were framed by an overriding interest in two issues related to how American work compared with European. First, there was the question of whether European work should have been included in the exhibition at all. The *World* and the *Independent* opposed the inclusion of European work for they thought it distracted from both the importance of the society and the ability to ascertain the progress made by the Americans.[95] Others, including Clarence Cook and the critic for the *Art Journal*, found their inclusion useful for comparison's sake and to learn from.[96] Secondly there was the comparison of quality between foreign and native art. Many critics acknowledged the general superiority of European art, especially in figure work and the use of coloring.[97]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The consideration of technical issues often was constructed by many writers around the benefits of using gouache or transparent washes.[98] For many critics, the special appeal of watercolor came from its transparency, the brilliance of its color, and its ability to suggest transitory effects, especially that of reflected light.[99] It was the French, Spanish, and Italian peers and followers of Mariano Fortuny, known as the Roman School, and especially José Villegas, who were most often praised by the critics, who admired the extensive use of transparent color. [100]

In the examination of the Roman school, conflicting opinions were voiced about the purposes of art vis-à-vis watercolor, and Henry James and Clarence Cook represented the opposing camps—art for art's sake and art as a means for edification, respectively. James wrote of the Roman School's virtuoso technique that "the pose is so knowing, the composition so expressive, the lustre of the stuffs and the liquidity of the color so striking.... Nothing can be more charming, as mere vehicle, than water colors as these frivolous Romans handle them. In clearness, brightness, richness, fluidity, they leave nothing to be desired." James also championed the Roman school for its frankness of temperament, which rested on the understanding—one which James fully agreed with—that "a picture is...essentially a diversion." [101] Clarence Cook expressed the opposite viewpoint. Though Cook applauded the cosmopolitan aspect of the exhibition, he wrote:

> Artists are delighted, and more we think than they ought to be with the technical skill and glittering broken color of the Spanish artist's drawing. We have no wish to deny the talent of these painters—Fortuny, Villegas.... [but] It is a talent...employed on subjects that are not worth while. As our readers know well enough, the latest doctrine is 'Art for the sake of Art'.... We hear a good deal more of...this, that, and the other, technical trickery and *tour-de-force* than seems to us profitable; we are tempted...to wish people wouldn't confound Art and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Artifice as they do to our seeming.... [S]ince we are predestined to have the French...for masters, we might have the noblest French, the Millets, the Courbets, the Coutures, the Corots...every inch of them, with manly thoughts and feelings and experiences—with convictions in short and not mere craftsmen, however clever.[102]

For James, watercolor pictures were valid as diversions; that is, simply and only as objects of aesthetic pleasure. For Cook, a painting needed a subject of substance. Cook's definition of subject was not tied to narrative exposition, but in naming "thought, feeling, and experience" as necessary components of art, he required a connection to the human experience beyond what he saw offered by technique. William Crary Brownell shared Cook's view. He thought the transparent-versus-bodycolor controversy was inconsequential, and that it was more important that both American artists and critics recognize that art must be born of the "true and essential" to be dignified.[103] The *Atlantic* suggested that a conflation of commitments to conception and technique, drawing and effect, would be the best solution for watercolor and that from these combinations a particularly American idiom for the medium could develop. Nonetheless, it recognized that inadequate technique, especially the use of color, was American watercolor's primary failing, and that if something had to dominate, the aesthetic aspect was preferred. It confessed: "There is a prevailing weakness, not only in the conception, but in the work itself; and in the sense of color we are painfully wanting.... We admit we would rather have the effect without the drawing, than the drawing without the effect; in other words we would rather be French than German, but we wish the two foes might somehow be reconciled on American soil."[104] The hope that American art might assimilate the best of every culture to create art both aesthetically pleasing and morally sound followed Matthew Arnold's writings, which were becoming increasingly popular at this time.[105]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In this arena of divergent viewpoints, the voluminous reviews of the 1875 Watercolor Society annual focused on American artists, and with thirty-four entries, Winslow Homer was at the center of attention. His images depicted the sea, children, women, farm life, and men in the woods, drawn from the environs of Gloucester, Long Island, the Adirondacks, and probably the Catskills. The sheets displayed a range of technical applications, from basically colored drawings to the use of a considerable variety of transparent washes. Thus, they represented a diversity of both subject and technique and offered the critics much to write about.

A number of critics remarked on the large number of Homer's offerings. While the *Daily Graphic* and *World* found it sufficient simply to comment that he was represented in quantity, the *Herald* sensed that the high volume indicated a "sudden and desperate plunge," a characteristic of Homer's working style when he grappled with particular artistic issues.[106] Rather than seeing this intensity as having negative implications, the *Telegram* understood it as the result of a novice's enthusiasm for a newfound endeavor.[107] Perhaps because of the magnitude of Homer's entries, they were again treated by the critics more as a group than as individual works.[108] An interest in them as a whole more than as specific objects also appeared. The suggestion by the *Telegram* that the group of watercolors was an "experiment" seems particularly perceptive as does the comment by *Scribner's* that Homer seemed to be searching "for artistic material."[109] The critics' consideration of Homer's entries as a group differed from their approach to his fellow exhibitors, whose entries, even if multiple, were looked at individually. The result was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that the critics dealt more broadly with issues concerning Homer's art while focusing more narrowly on specific aspects of his peers' work. This, again, set Homer apart from other artists.

Individual responses to Homer's watercolors ranged from harshly critical to complimentary. The reservations, however, were significantly more plentiful. Clarence Cook was, again, among the most vocal of the discontented, but although he was critical, his commentary displays a real interest in Homer's art. Giving Homer's work the longest discussion in his review, he wrote:

> These twenty odd sketches of his are the slightest things Mr. Homer has as yet sent to any exhibition, and while they give a comfortable notion of his industry, and of both his acuteness of observation and his quickness in noting down what he sees—they are disappointing in not showing us anything that does justice to the known talent of the man. Indeed we do not like to think how long it is since Mr. Homer showed us finished pictures.... We need not say how clever they are—how American, how loyally true to the awkwardness and innocence of country childhood.... Looking over these sketches is getting the milk of country human kindness condensed.... So far as artistic qualities go, the best of them are every bit as good as Frère's work, and they are as true to American nature as Frère's drawing is to French nature.... Mr. Homer, on the other hand, a well-trained, able artist, with an uncommon skill in portraying human character in his world (and every artist has his own world which he illustrates), and with a delightful power of showing people really doing the things they pretend to be doing...with all these advantages on his side, we say Mr. Homer has never painted more than one important picture, the "Prisoners from the Front," and is only known by a cloud of sketches like these in the present exhibition. What is the reason that all this force, this cleverness, this ability to so see, almost never concentrates itself, or gets beyond the limits of a sketch, and a sketch of the slightest kind. However, even sketches such as these might go far to satisfy, and might carry a man well on the road to fame, but we suspect Mr. Homer is not all to blame. Their subjects must bear their share. The interest to be derived (outside the circle of his family) from the American country boy is no doubt great, looked at from the political and social statistic side, but artistically there is so little to be made by him that the effort is almost hopeless. There's nothing pathetic in him; he is too well fed even when he is worst fed, his rags are too much like good clothes, his dirty face and hands are merely dirty, not picturesque, and his hair is as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> prosaic when 'tis uncombed as when it is slicked for Sunday.... Frère deals with a material in his French peasant boys and girls that has in it some food for the heart, something to touch the soul and to stir pity, to move to sympathy with hardship and privation, and by showing us the patience and even the consent that dwell in these humble huts, teaches us lessons we all need to learn. In short, Frère paints the ideal with colors distilled from the real, while Homer shows us reality which remains sober prose, no matter how earnestly art may wrestle with it.[110]

Cook's criticism was fueled by the fact that he felt Homer fell short of the critic's high expectations. Cook first attacked Homer's lack of finish. Although he admired both his ability to see and articulate that vision and the fact that it exuded wonderful national characteristics on a par with the work of Edouard Frère, whom he held in high regard, Cook was frustrated by what he saw as Homer's cursory explication of his observations; they remained in a skeletal form. Cook similarly criticized Maria Oakey for also thinking that light, shade, and color could make a picture, yet, on the other hand, he faulted William Trost Richards for going beyond the point of good taste in finish. Ultimately he looked for balance in finish.

Annoyed as he was with Homer's technique, Cook found greater fault in his choice of themes. No matter what Homer did with them, American country children were not fit artistic subjects. In contrast to Frère's French peasant children, Homer's native rural youth were simply too ordinary and did not evoke the necessary sympathies or instruct the viewer in the way a proper subject should. It was, instead, Julian Scott's *New England Turkey Shoot* (fig. 44) that was "good in every way—good in color, good in drawing, true to human character, and true to the locality. It does not at all resemble Winslow Homer's 'Prisoners from the Front,' but it reminds us of that fine picture—one of the best works,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in spite of its absence of color, that has yet been produced in America...."[111] Scott's work pictured an old-fashioned turkey shoot and, by virtue of its subject, it was unabashedly American and, to use Cook's own words, "full of manly thoughts."[112] As Robert Titterton has described, the image was pure narrative illustration, but for Cook it successfully conjoined the moment and place with a larger expression of thought. [113]

The *World* also criticized Homer's subjects. Even though it credited Homer for accomplished drawing and capturing the truth of the forms he rendered, the praise was qualified because "his themes are not often worthy even of the easy pains he bestows upon them."[114] The *World* preferred works such as Matt Morgan's *Old Home Fading Away* (unlocated). An image of emigrants taking their last look at their homeland, it sent a message "genuine in sentiment," even though its methods were conventional.[115]

The *Mail*, too, disliked Homer's themes, framing its disappointment in terms of finding Homer lacking in imagination. It explained:

> Art is better defined as the imitative rendering of perfect nature. This is a short sentence which includes a broad scope of undermeaning and combines the three requisites of nature, perfection, and imitative rendering. There are few artists of the day whose works fulfill all of the above requirements, but there are some pictures exhibited...which evidence efforts in the right direction. First and foremost are the sketches of Winslow Homer, which fail for lack of judgment as much as for lack of elaboration. The artist chances on a passage of life, which strikes him as worthy of perpetuation, and his clever quick sketch is the result.... But.... [he] sees beauty in strange garments, and the phases of nature he depicts are not perfect. We question whether he himself thinks them so after consideration, but there can be no doubt that, if he relaxed his realism and indulged more in imagination, his pictures would attain a nobler plane of art.[116]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

While the *Mail* did not comment on the appropriateness of Homer's American rural subjects in and of themselves, it felt Homer's choices could benefit from either manipulation or improved selection, both achieved through the use of imagination, in order to acquire a necessary higher meaning akin to that outlined by Cook.

While Cook and his peers at the *Mail* and *World* gave as much consideration to Homer's subjects as to his treatment, most critics concentrated on the visual results and technique of the watercolors. What little wholehearted praise there was of Homer's means came from those writers for whom specificity of subject or finish were not important issues. The critics who most highly commended the Roman school (and European contributions on the whole) were especially attracted to Homer's ability to render light and air, renderings that, in turn, expressed vigor and truth in the works, and gave rise to praise for their "freshness" and "airiness" as well as recognition of individuality and originality in Homer's work. The *Express* wrote: "All of these are representations of rustic life and character, and have a snap and sparkle to them that is altogether interesting and attractive. There is a peculiar swing and freshness in Mr. Homer's water-color painting that is wonderfully breezy and redolent of a strong and vigorous individuality."[117] These qualities were recognized in both Homer's sketchiest and more finished contributions. Henry James wrote that Homer fit comfortably into his aesthetically driven requirements for art. He noted: "the best pictures...were the simplest—those which attempted least.... Mr. Homer was in force; and in his raw aquarelles,.... [w]e found perhaps, among the American performances, our best entertainment."[118] The *Sun* concurred that Homer's success was tied to an economy of means. It explained: "His style, however, demands

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

less time than more careful work, and yet his effects are admirable. His sketch in black and white, No. 500, seems to be completely successful in producing the most effect with the least material, while several other more finished works are marked with vigor and spirit. The charm of this artist is his unvarying truthfulness to nature and absence of mannerism."[119] The writer for *Appleton's*, probably Susan Nichols Carter, found vigor and spirit in some of the more finished works. For Carter, it was the application of color, both opaque and transparent, as seen in such sheets as *The Sick Chicken* (fig. 45) and *Basket of Clams* (fig. 46), that made the works come alive. She described:

> Another American painter whose pictures please without a break, are the sparkling, broad sketches by Winslow Homer. Whether they represent Adirondack guides; "Lazy Days," when, with boat upturned on the beach, old fishermen and young ones spin yarns, squatted among the rocks, and peering out to sea; "Sick Chickens [sic],"; "Basket of Clams," or what not, they are bold and free and alive with spirit. Mr. Homer is not naturally a colorist, but his pictures of late are acquiring a positive and full tone, such as his thin washed sketches of sea-shores in former days never possessed.[120]

Similar positive comments appeared in the *Times* and *Daily Graphic* from writers who also called Alfred T. Bricher's *Halifax Harbor* (unlocated) bold, dashing, and original. They also lauded William Trost Richards' ability to capture air and freedom, and combine accuracy with transparency, as seen in work similar to *Lake Winnispesaukee at Weir's Landing, Nocturne* (fig. 47).[121] Common to all these works was the dependency on color as much or more than line to create the image.

Despite these positive remarks, the watercolors were sometimes faulted for their ignoring the required degree of finish necessary for exhibited works. The *Times*, rather than being critical, simply favored the more carefully drawn and opaquely painted sheets, such as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Riding at Anchor (fig. 48) and *How Many Eggs* (fig. 49).[122] Others reiterated the complaint that they felt Homer stopped short in his efforts, even when they found other aspects of the work pleasing. While the surface qualities and truthfulness were appealing, they said his lack of finish, most notably modeling in a traditional way, seriously hampered the work. Earl Shinn of the *Nation* explained: "The pleasure with which we recognize truth evident in every study of Mr. Homer's is, however, marred by a really poignant feeling of regret. Seven or eight years ago this artist seemed to be preparing to paint pictures, and not mere effects; at present his highest exercise is to lay silhouettes of pasteboard on a ground of pasteboard differently tinted, and with these admirably-cut jumping-jacks to go through the various evolutions of life as given 'in the flat.'"[123] The objection here was that he modeled with flat areas of color, light, and shadow and did not model or use line in the traditional way. Yet, Shinn wrote that compared to the "upholstery figures" of Alfred Bellows, "there is immense relish in the most capricious sketches of Mr. Homer."[124] The *Atlantic*, too, limited its praise due to its feeling that Homer stopped short. It vacillated: "Winslow Homer is a good American we suppose, yet his work, so far as it goes, is strong and racy, and satisfies."[125] The *Independent*, in a review focused on the European work, singled out Homer as the one American worthy of commentary, but, again, not without criticizing his works for remaining sketches. It noted: "Mr. Homer's contributions are numerous; but they are all sketches,.... They are very satisfactory as sketches but how vastly more satisfactory it would be if Mr. Homer would give us but one su[perb?] finished little figure...." [126] The *Art Journal* echoed the *Independent*: "Mr. Winslow Homer, who rarely carries his works beyond the finish of sketches, sent several subjects broad enough in treatment, being mere indications of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

objects and effects, to please his most enthusiastic admirer.... Mr. Homer's style is wonderfully vigorous and original; with a few dashes of the brush, he suggests a picture, but a mere suggestion only, and it is a mistaken eccentricity which prevents its finish."[127]

The issue of Homer's unfinished qualities was compounded by the varying degrees of finish that he presented in the exhibition. As *Scribner's* pointed out, such a large number of works suggested not only that the artist was in a searching mode but also that such volume caused him to exhibit an uneven selection:

> His search for artistic material seems to be typified in his sketch of "A Farm Wagon" laboring up a hill behind two struggling horses, for it is just at such instants as this that he seizes the brush—instants when the commonplace passes under some chance gleam of pictorial possibility, and when it does not seem certain whether Mr. Homer will triumphantly get up-hill with it, before it has time to become merely commonplace again, or ignominiously slide down to the bottom. "Why Don' the Suckers Bite?" and "Fly-Fishing" illustrate this uncertainty; the former being a good effect quite vulgarized by insufficient labor, and the latter a splendid bit of painting, which falls little short of becoming idyllic. Many others among his sketches achieve a considerable success.... In some cases, nothing but a hint of fun carries off his technical failure, and, in others, there is not even plausibility; but we are made constantly and admiringly aware, in examining his work, of an honest, impetuous, artistic temper, and of a retina that openly delights in the most *outré* effects of our landscape, and commands many of its opportunities.[128]

The *Mail* suggested that some of the pictures were "copies" of sketches and found this possibility quite distasteful:

> Nor are we satisfied with the examples of Winslow Homer. Last year he startled the artistic world with a few suggestive sketches of extraordinary merit, and this year he follows up the same line of industry by contributing a legion of like nature. But we do not find in all of his present contributions the same spirit and inspiration which distinguished his work last season. We may wrong Mr. Homer when we say so, but we fear that this year he has sent in copies after sketches, and not the original drawings themselves. This would fully account for the falling off

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> in quality that we notice, and we fear that in some instances at least our conjecture is correct.[129]

Unfortunately, the critic did not mention any specific sheets, but he may have been distinguishing between Homer's plein air studies and studio creations in which he often revisited or reworked images. The writer for the *Mail* also especially liked the brilliancy and transparency particular to watercolor, and so may have been less satisfied with the more opaquely painted sheets.

Homer's watercolors and drawings at the 1875 Watercolor Society annual, indeed, presented examples of the many permutations that works on paper could take. These sheets and the various reactions they elicited point out the complex web of diverse approaches and attitudes towards subject and style at this time. The need remained for a subject that had meaning beyond the picturing of a captured moment and that did not serve merely as a vehicle for technical expression. Critics allowed for more technical freedom in watercolor, but not to the degree that Homer took it and not in combination with the prosaic subjects he employed. Yet, many of the critics could not deny their appreciation of Homer's watercolors, even when they did not fit their definition of appropriate representation of themes.[130] It was hard, too, for critics to deny the visual interest of his style despite its pushing beyond the limits of acceptable practice. This realignment of subject and style placed both Homer and the critics in a state of flux. They were all forced to consider such issues more deeply at the 1875 National Academy of Design annual exhibition.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The National Academy of Design's 1875 annual exhibition celebrated the institution's fiftieth anniversary. The import of this milestone was reflected in the voluminous assessments of the show.[131] As usual, comparisons with the previous year's exhibition served as the starting point for much of the commentary. In the main, writers noted progress, but only five of the seventeen publications reviewing the show were forthrightly positive in their assessments. The reasons given for the show's success, according to those who praised it unequivocally, fell into very general categories. They applauded, for example, that more pictures were smaller in scale; that a greater variety (mainly of subjects) was displayed; and that technical efforts showed improvement.[132] Few critics disagreed that these elements were worthy of praise, but a number felt these qualities alone did not warrant giving the show high marks. The *Times* was the only paper truly dissatisfied with the entire show.[133] Some writers, like those for *Appleton's* and *Old and New*, chose to remain noncommittal, and instead focused their remarks on individual artists or aspects of the exhibition.[134]

Some critics, too, found that a new rule that forbade the exhibition from including any previously shown work severely compromised the selection of canvases. It was said that a number of artists, including Sanford Gifford and Frederic Church, did not show at all or appeared with only minor pictures due to this restriction. Some complained that the rule was not evenly applied.[135] The *World* was especially critical of this statute, suggesting that if it remained, a supplementary show like the Salon des Refusées should be instigated. Entries like Homer's, which he vehemently disliked, helped give rise to such

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

feelings. "In such an exhibition," the *World* wrote, "our clever and prolific Mr. Homer, for example, would pretty surely be better represented than he is in the Academy exhibition."[136] Clarence Cook thought the rule further deepened the rut into which the Academy was sinking.[137] Only the *Sun* saw a positive effect of the requirement, crediting it with creating a "freshness" in the exhibition.[138]

While the Academy's anniversary and the implementation of the "no previous show" rule were topics written about repeatedly, the appearance of a large number of paintings by young Americans studying abroad, especially in Munich, created a visible change in the character of the exhibition and elicited much commentary by the reviewers. So marked was the effect of these works that Clarence Cook proclaimed: "we are in the midst of an era of revolution."[139] The revolution would formally be declared with the formation of the Society of American Artists and its first exhibition in 1878, but the 1875 annual stands as the first time the younger generation of European-trained artists—including William Merritt Chase, David Neal, Toby Rosenthal, Frederick Bridgman, Wyatt Eaton, and Edgar Ward—was visible as a new coalition. Their strength, in numbers and images, forced them into the forefront of most critics' articles. Remarks on them were featured in many reviews and their appearance colored the response to the entire exhibition.

The appearance in force of the younger men added new dimensions to the already complex task of reviewing an Academy show, and the reaction to the work this year outlines the issues that would receive increasing attention to the end of the decade. With the 1875 annual, various directions appearing in American art were fully apparent. As

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Henry James asserted: "In the Palace of Art, there are many mansions."[140] With this variety came a multiplicity of interests among the critics. Their reviews reflected more fragmented viewpoints in the discussion of a topic and an increasing variety of approaches in the assessment of a single object. The questions fostered by foreign training became paramount and included: its general value; the relative virtues and vices of German and French art and the implications of their influence; and the desirability of home or foreign subjects. In this context, discussions of the merits of differing technical applications arose as did ones surrounding subject matter and its relationship to style. Heated debates quickly ensued with increased frequency and fervor. Homer, in fact, was singled out by the *Daily Graphic* as an example of how critics treated artists of reputation unfairly. The incident to which it referred was the cruel treatment he received from the critic of the *World*, but it was used as indicative of a larger issue—the lack of critical standards for art, which the *Daily Graphic* saw as the underlying cause of such inappropriate behavior.[141]

Not surprisingly, the spectrum of reactions to the younger artists was wide. A number of writers acclaimed the younger artists as showing the best work.[142] One form of support was to condemn the older generation for wallowing in stagnation.[143] In this vein, the *Express* lamented: "[The] established remain in their old places."[144] The *World* complained that most artists (though referring mainly to landscapists) still painted as if it were 1855.[145] Only *Appleton's* pointed out the need to respect the older artists, reminding its readers that the older generation should not be spoken of lightly and that they deserved gratitude for their accomplishments.[146] With the fiftieth annual exhibition of the National

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Academy, the split between old and new men became even more marked than in recent years.

The impact of foreign influence was addressed both generally and specifically on issues such as technique, subject, schools, and individual artists. Because these topics are related, the discussions of them were often intertwined. The critics generally approved of foreign training. In an atmosphere of frequent complaints that the technical flaws of American painting were due to lack of training and the absence of a full-service art school, foreign influence provided the much sought after "look of training," as Earl Shinn suggested.[147] Complicating the matter was the fact that critics had to consider the influence of a number of foreign cultures, primarily those of Germany and France. Susan Nichols Carter, writing here for the *Post*, was interested in the Munich-based artists' work, but she said they were somewhat unsettling because she was not used to an old Dutch or Flemish look in American art.[148] Henry James liked the directness and reality of the Munich-trained artists, but, as he would with Homer's entries, he found their subjects ugly.[149] Clarence Cook, like James, had mixed reactions to the work. Like Shinn and James, he had to acknowledge the earnestness and evidence of careful training in the foreign-schooled artists' pictures, and he admitted that the best work came from foreign-trained hands. Further, he was relieved that they were not part of the "millinery" or "good anecdote" schools, that is, the group of artists who painted decorative interiors or sentimental narrative.[150] Cook was, however, "not much pleased" with most of the Munich men because they imitated the German style to the point of being copyists.[151] The *Tribune* critic, believing that American art should represent national cultural

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

accomplishment, was bothered that those trained abroad were noticed to the exclusion of home artists.[152]

Looking at critical reactions to individual members of the younger generation, we can see what qualities the writers found compelling in their work. The attraction to the work of William Merritt Chase, as seen in his 1875 entry *The Dowager* (fig. 50), which exemplified Munich training and received the most notice of the younger men, was summarized by Susan Nichols Carter: "The touch of the painter is immensely interesting. Paint under his hand has lost its paint-like qualities and it is spread in flesh, skin, bone, and clothing with the nicest feeling to represent qualities and different textures."[153] The *Express* and the *Herald* likewise lauded David Neal, who exhibited *Study—Head* (unlocated), for the firmness of his modeling and the vigorous application of his paint, which gave lifelike qualities to his materials and instilled beauty and dignity in his work.[154] Toby Rosenthal's entry *Study—Head, Munich, 1871* (unlocated) was praised for color, honesty, and feeling by a number of writers.[155] In sum, it was the manner in which these artists used the physical properties of paint—its color, thickness of application, and length of brushstroke—to suggest palpable, living flesh that separated the Munich-trained artists from their American peers.[156] As has been noted, not all critics favored the Munich school. The opposing viewpoint was most vehemently expressed by the *Art Journal*: "The masters of the Munich school appear to have studied the dingy faces of the German peasantry so thoroughly, that they have become impressed with the idea that dirt is an indispensable in connection with the complexion of the woman's face; hence their flesh

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

tints are muddy and repelling rather than pleasing to the American eye...This is not Art in a true sense, and we have faith to believe that it will not be tolerated in America."[157]

Although not commented upon as widely as that of Munich, the effect of French influence was not ignored. It was most evident in the works of Frederick Bridgman, Wyatt Eaton, and Edgar Ward. Bridgman, a student of Jean-Léon Gérôme, gave someone like the critic of the *Art Journal* a good reason to support foreign training. In Bridgman's *The American Circus in Brittany* (fig. 51), the writer for the *Art Journal* saw evidence of Gérôme's positive influence without abject imitation. The canvas' superb finish evoked praise, but more importantly, it had the "one great essential of pictorial art.... [It] tells its own story in a clear and decisive way." Bridgman's work was contrasted to someone like J. G. Brown's *Gathering Autumn Leaves* (fig. 52), which, although narrative and carefully finished, had no great sentiment or feeling underneath.[158] Bridgman was similarly praised by writers in the *Nation*, *Daily Graphic*, and *Times*.[159] Edgar Ward's *Washing Day* (unlocated), an image of Brittany peasants, presented another avenue of French influence, that of Jules Breton. A number of critics found favor with Ward's solid figures and use of reflected light to model forms. "Natural" and "simple" were adjectives used to describe his figures, qualities believed to express the "nobility found in the unspoiled peasant."[160] Ward's work was also praised for its honesty, not in the sense of the Munich men's honesty of technique through brash paint application, but because, according to the *Art Journal*, "the artist has simply painted what he saw and has introduced no sensational feature to secure momentary applause."[161] Henry James offered another reason to consider *Washing Day* a success. It was, in his view, to be praised for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

being "nakedly pictorial."[162] Thus, Ward's approbation was due to a variety of elements that suggested visual and artistic honesty and that illuminated the essential meaning of his well-chosen subject matter. Clarence Cook was so pleased with the work that he encouraged Ward to come home and paint similarly with American subjects.[163]

French influence, like that of Munich, was not embraced by all. While the *Express* saw the most progress and interesting work from the younger artists, it sounded a warning to them using the example of Charles Miller, whose work had once shown promise but who, after his return from France, displayed "a painful muddiness and uncertainty of color, and is a curious combination of the German and French schools that is far from harmonious." Even more worrisome was the strong French influence he saw in Homer. "Winslow Homer, whose "Prisoners from the Front" and "Bright Side" were distinctively American in all their characteristics, has gone over to it bag and baggage." He continued:

> and although his subjects are American, yet the method in which they are treated is pre-eminently French.... It is not altogether satisfactory to find our young painters running in this groove. Probably the life and the landscape of no country in the world afford a better opportunity than our own for the cultivation of original ideas and, indeed they are so original in themselves it is impossible to truthfully portray them through the methods of foreign schools, with which they are entirely anomalous.... Indeed, if some of the younger men do not soon come to a realization of the folly of imitation the outlook for American art is not particularly flattering.[164]

Clearly there was fear that American art would be contaminated by European influences.

Within this large constellation of change, the critics also had to grapple with new developments in Homer's own entries, which were: *Milking Time* (fig. 53), *Landscape*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(fig. 54), *The Course of True Love* (unlocated), and *Uncle Ned at Home* (fig. 55).[165] These works brought Homer the first thorough notice of his oil painting since the 1872 showing of *The Country School.* Twelve of the sixteen reviewing serials commented on his work. The most glaring omission, and perhaps the most devastating criticism, was the lack of a single utterance from the *Tribune.*[166]

For all the critics, Homer's work was increasingly difficult to fit into existing niches. Thus, like the reviews of his watercolors earlier in the year and those of the young European-trained artists appearing at the Academy now, the remarks on Homer's oils stood apart. Again, the distinctiveness of his work was noted. Both *Appleton's* and the *Galaxy* liked Homer's entries; they found them making "more impression than any others" and "most striking."[167] The *Nation* called its readers' attention to "a very different talent," as it began to discuss Homer's works.[168] *Scribner's* separated Homer out of the pack of artists identified as "older," including William Trost Richards, Albert Bierstadt, Jasper Cropsey, and John George Brown. What distinguished Homer's work was that "real feeling" was joined by "a consequent introduction of technical methods which have something of originality and appropriateness about them."[169]

If the general effect of Homer's work had an air of difference about it, his subjects were all similar and rooted in the familiar. All four of Homer's entries had common and daily farm life as their subjects, aligning them to a recognizably American theme. *Landscape* was described as: "[a]nother farmyard scene, with green grass, a haystack and horse, and boys on the grass with sunlight lying about them."[170] *Uncle Ned* depicts "a dove cote

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scene," with an African American man and boy tending to farmyard chores as three white children investigate a barnyard shed.[171] *Milking Time* pictures a woman and boy at a pasture fence watching the cows being driven home at the end of the day. *The Course of True Love* featured a young man and woman husking corn, she chewing straw as they engaged in some kind of quarrel.[172] While the subjects of the canvases were related, they examined a variety of incidents found on a farm—childhood, everyday chores, the interrelations of blacks and whites, and romance. The treatment of Homer's subjects also varied considerably. The differences among the four works gave rise to a wide range of comments on many issues and created scattered and sometimes contradictory responses.

It was the subject of *The Course of True Love* that first attracted the critics' attention. While the canvas is now lost, the painting seems to have been constructed around a narrative as captivating as that found in *The Country School.* Descriptions of the painting abounded. *Appleton's* detailed the narrative most comprehensively:

> [O]n the edge of a cornfield, a New England farmer and a country-girl are sitting shaded by the tall grain. Ears of corn are scattered on the ground, and the woman, a true type of New England, is chewing, in country fashion, on a bit of straw she holds in her hand, and at the same time, apparently, she is chewing the end of disagreeable thoughts. Her lover, a manly looking fellow, is twisted about, embarrassment peeping from every feature and even from the toes of his cow-hide boots.[173]

The subject of a troubled romance, a theme with which most adults could empathize, likely contributed to *The Course of True Love*'s popularity. Also, marriage as an American institution was a topic of contemporary discussion.[174] Thus, the canvas' emotional appeal grew out of its use of a basic human sentiment (love) in a setting (a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

New England farm) that resonated richly among Homer's post-Civil War public and patrons.[175]

As with *The Country School*, descriptions of the subject were injected with varying degrees of humor and romance, depending on the writer.[176] Despite the fact that different interpretations were assigned to the painting, *The Course of True Love* was recognized as depicting a specific narrative that combined romance, humor, and the characters and characteristics of rural New England; that is, the traditional elements of popular genre painting, like those found in works by Eastman Johnson, Enoch Wood Perry, and John Ehninger.[177] In the face of such a large representation of European-influenced works elsewhere in the 1875 exhibition, the subject of *The Course of True Love*, like the subject of *The Country School*, was a winning one. The *Times*, who also praised the storytelling in works by Perry and Johnson, called the canvas simply "the best" of Homer's four offerings.[178] The *Mail* applauded it as "American genre unsurpassed."[179] The recognition of the subject as incontestably American pleased the many writers who agreed on the necessity of American subjects for American art, as did the writer for the *Express* above and the one for *Scribner's* who, later in the year, insisted: "Nature, as she speaks in America to those who listen with their own ears, and report with their own ingenuities; life as it is embodied in our political, social, and religious institutions; life as it is lived upon our own soil, and in our own homes—these are the basis of an American school of art."[180] Even for Susan Nichols Carter, a critic more interested in artistic issues, the importance of American subject matter was an inherent assumption and was seen as the gateway to successful American art. She suggested: "It is in representing the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

characteristic faces, furniture, and awkwardness or beauty of American life that our painters get the spirit that comes from an appreciative rendering of the scenes before them."[181] Like Perry's *Heart's Ease* (unlocated) and *Old Story* (fig. 56), also in this exhibition, *The Course of True Love* was praised for its familiarity to all viewers and for its presentation of aspects of American life worth preserving.[182] While all of these writers were part of the long tradition of praising recognizably American subjects, their comments combine in such force as to suggest a special reaction caused by the European-inspired works, most of which were of European models and subjects and which created a visual contrast with the home work.

Henry James was the only writer to criticize the subject of *The Course of True Love*. James felt strongly about Homer's subjects:

> We frankly confess that we detest his subjects—his barren plank fences, his glaring, bald blue skies, his big dreary, vacant lots of meadows, his freckled, straight-haired Yankee urchins, his flat-breasted maidens, suggestive of a dish or rural doughnuts and pie, his calico sun-bonnets, his flannel shirts, his cowhide boots. He has chosen the least pictorial features of the least pictorial range of scenery and civilization...[and in *The Course of True Love*]...it is damnably ugly.[183]

James insisted that subject matter be chosen according to its possibilities for pictorial presentation. Subjects were, in James' mind, to be selected for their inherent beauty or aesthetic possibilities.[184] In 1872 James had noted his wish that painting have "a motive—an imaginative or reflective germ—that we ourselves like to find in a picture—a lingering relish for something in objects over and above their literal facts."[185] James could not see any vestige of the imaginative or beautiful in Homer's choice of subject.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

If, other than James, most writers praised the subject of *The Course of True Love*, its artistic treatment received mixed responses. Both the *Daily Graphic* and *Appleton's* acclaimed its treatment.[186] Earl Shinn in the *Nation*, who had recently been critical of Homer's lack of finish, could happily report: "The finish is for once carried to an expressive and satisfactory point, and nothing can be more plainly set down than Mr. Homer's idyll of ill-temper, wherein we can see the acme of endurance accurately reached, and almost hear the rough Hosea-Bigelow (sic) patois as these immobile domestic Memnons clasp their knees in the sunshine."[187] For Shinn, satisfactory finish was defined here in terms of the completeness of the overall expression and allowed for description in ways other than rendered detailed. Shinn explained in a companion review: "Mr. Homer's brush may insult his model with a great deal of neglect and the most cavalier treatment, but it always leaves her unimpaired in elegance, purity, simplicity, and a distinguished pose."[188] However, a number of critics disagreed with Shinn on the figure's success. While *Scribner's* thought the sentiment expressed in the painting was good and the "rendering honest, the figures quite fail to convince us of their reality; they want modeling."[189] Harsher in its criticism was the *World*, which considered both this canvas and *Milking Time* "simply exasperating." The *World* declared *The Course of True Love* to be "crass and inconsiderate" due to the "harsh and vehement background of grain" and its crudely painted figures. The reviewer preferred instead the fine draftsmanship—read careful, precise delineation—of the figure in Magrath's *Kathleen Mavoureen* (unlocated).[190]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

While *The Course of True Love* received only a modicum of criticism for its artistic aspects, *Milking Time* elicited strong and contradictory reactions. Its subject was familiar, but *Milking Time* was Homer's most daring composition in oil to date. A three-board plank fence stretches across the entire width of the canvas and stridently serves as the main compositional element. With the positioning and prominence of the fence Homer forced the critics to consider the issue of compositional design in his work. Placing the fence right across the front of the picture plane pushed the suggestion of perspectival space into the background. It divided the canvas into two realms and created a dramatic play between the actual physical flatness of the canvas and the three-dimensional space suggested in the image.

The *World* proclaimed the painting to be a disaster: the "the triple gray [of *Milking Time* gives]... the whole composition the 'tender grace of a gridiron....'"[191] The *Times*, which had praised *The Course of True Love*, also found serious flaws in the composition: "It is impossible, however, for his most ardent admirers to admit that he has shown taste in the treatment of his subject. The eye cannot be but offended by the straight lines supposed to represent rails occupying the most important point in the composition."[192] Whereas the picturesque canvases of Magrath were most pleasing to the *World*, the *Times* held up John Beaufain Irving's *Cardinal Wolsey* (unlocated) as the best example of figure groupings and composition. For both these artists, the desire to create an illusionistic three-dimensional space guided their designs. The *Sun* lodged a different sort of complaint. It saw nothing dramatic or pictorial in *Milking Time*: "[It] is literal enough to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

have been painted on the spot and in a single sitting. A work so void of sentiment and so coarsely executed affords a disagreeable example of realistic art and nothing more." It preferred a landscape by John Bristol (unlocated) for its carefulness and poetic expression achieved through the careful delineation of actual nature. [193] Whereas in 1870 Homer's contemporary themes had been too real, now his artistic treatment was condemned as too realistic. The *Sun* faulted *Milking Time* because it appeared to be literal transcription—not in its detail but in its recounting of a particular observation—and because it lacked the required emotional content. The issues of the literalness of Homer's realism and its reconciliation with his artistic treatment were continually thorny ones for critics.

Although the *Sun*, *World*, and *Times* were critical of the composition and realism of *Milking Time*, others found it interesting, even as they recognized it as radically different from the rest of the paintings in the exhibition. In fact, Homer's difference, as it had before, was in itself seen as a positive quality in this context and was related to his status as original. The *Nation*, for example, focusing on the composition, remarked: "Another artist, for instance, would hardly think of making a motive out of the horizontal stripes of a fence, relieved against a ground of very slightly differing value, so as to make the group at the fence appear like a decoration wrought upon a barred ribbon; yet that is the problem very effectively wrought out in his milking-picture."[194] Shinn recognized that Homer's interests here were forthrightly pictorial and that he was trying to incorporate specific design issues in the context of a familiar and popular subject. For this reason as well as for Homer's ability to replicate on canvas his way of seeing, Henry James, too,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

could be laudatory. What the *World* and *Sun* had found unacceptable, James could praise. While James had criticized Homer for his unpictorial subjects, he admitted:

> Mr. Homer goes in, as the phrase is, for perfect realism, and cares not one jot for such fantastic hairsplitting as the distinction between beauty and ugliness. He is a genuine painter; that is, to see, and to reproduce what he sees, is his only care; to think, to imagine, to select, to refine, to compose, to drop into any of the intellectual tricks with which other people sometimes try to eke out the dull pictorial vision --- all this Mr. Homer triumphantly avoids. 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 there is nevertheless something one likes about him.[195]

While James ignored the fact that Homer's canvas was the result of conscious decisions driven by a "pictorial vision," he liked the fact that the results were pictorial in spite of both the flawed subject and the artist's refusing to incorporate the expected artistic tricks in his treatment of it. He continued that despite Homer's ugly subjects, he "resolutely treated them as if they were pictorial, as if they were every inch as good as Capri or Tangiers; and, to reward his audacity he has incontestably succeeded." Painting in this way, according to James, insured that "you will at least have a stamp of your own." Furthermore, James noted an important contributing factor to what made Homer's realism so palatable: "Homer has the great merit, moreover, that he naturally sees everything at one with its envelope of light and air. He sees not in lines, but in masses, in gross, broad masses. Things come already modeled to his eye." Thus, Homer created a dilemma for James by making an artistic statement with a subject and means he considered baldly inartistic. James offered advice for Homer's improvement: "If his masses were only sometimes a trifle more broken, and his brush a good deal richer—if it had a good many more secrets and mysteries and coquetries, he would be, with his vigorous way of looking

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and seeing, even if fancy in the matter remained the same dead blank, an almost distinguished painter."[196] James wanted a greater role for the paint itself.

In addition to liking the composition of *Milking Time*, James liked the way Homer integrated the various aspects of it through artistic means. Both the *Nation* and James applauded a synthetic artistic treatment with the different object masses connected through form, color, and light.[197] Reality came not from detailed delineation replicating facts of the actual world but through a combination of artistic strategies —light, color, form, and paint application, to name a few—which suggested the essence of a person, place or moment. These comments on Homer mirror those about Edgar Ward, whom Shinn and James especially liked and who, in his French subject, was recognizably the heir to Jules Breton's influence.[198] It is likely also that it was this same kind of massing and connecting that alarmed the writer for the *Express* and caused him to exclaim that Homer had gone over to the French method "bag and baggage."[199]

Perhaps because the critics focused on the composition of *Milking Time*, they commented less on its use of light, color, drawing, and finish—the usual topics for remarks on Homer's work. However, these elements were not entirely ignored and here, as usual, they received mixed marks. The lighting of the scene drew particular attention. When the *Mail* saw *Milking Time* in Homer's studio in the fall of 1874, it noticed most of all that it pictured: "that gray quiet of eventime when the air is lit up with reflected rays from the clouds above. Mr. Homer had reproduced this atmospheric condition with startling effect."[200] *Appleton's*, although it preferred *The Course of True Love*, was also captivated

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by *Milking Time*'s light and its suggestion of atmosphere: " [*Milking Time* is] another of these fresh, racy paintings, and the afterglow of twilight is reflected back from the country folks, the rail-fence, the silent cattle, lighting up a key of paint which is not soft or sweet, but which has a sort of peculiar harmony of its own: resembling, though in a different way, the mixture of aromatic, salt, and earthy odors of the New-England country air—air which, too, has its whiffs of pleasant clover scents and fragrance of orchards."[201] For *Appleton's*, at least, the light scheme successfully brought together the whole constellation of smells of a farm, suggesting reality through a visceral response.[202] It seems to have been the painting's tonal qualities to which these writers responded.

Brownell in the *World* continued to be the most cross with Homer. Differing from Henry James he complained:

> And Mr. Homer, with all his unquestionable cleverness as a draughtsman, a cleverness, to be sure, which would scarcely attract attention in France, but which is a rare and notable thing among our own painters, is in very imminent danger of becoming one of the most tedious and repulsive of painters. He is compounding whims with fancies in the conception, and strokes of chromatic legerdemain with brilliancy in the execution of his pictures. It is deplorable that an artist who might do so much if he would but do less should persist in spluttering his talents away; content apparently if, like Hodge's razors, his hasty and thoughtless pictures do but sell.[203]

Although he did not outline how these faults were specifically manifested in *Milking Time*, it seems he saw Homer's use of composition, spatial relationships, and color as deceptive tricks rather than as fresh and truthful means of presenting a familiar subject. Added to the *World's* irritation was that it thought Homer was pandering to the market. The *Times*, too, took issue with Homer's color, simply calling it "crude."[204] Yet,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appleton's reacted oppositely: "Many persons object to Mr. Winslow's [sic] paintings on account of their color; we do not want him to change it, for we believe it suits his subjects as truly as the smack of checkerberry-leaves or birch bark agrees with those hardy growths of northern woods."[205] That is, in the same way that Homer's use of light and suggestion of air gave a true sense of the place, the color also supported the subject, even if it was not applied in traditional ways. *Scribner's*, too, addressed these issues in Homer's works as a group and contrasted them with the productions of the older artists:

> But there is a class above this [the older men], in which we come at once to real feeling, and a consequent introduction of technical methods which have something of originality and appropriateness about them. In this we should rank Winslow Homer and Mr. McEntee. Mr. Homer sends two fair-sized canvases, which are really only enlarged sketches, but full of his healthy coloring, and frank, fresh way of looking at things.... Homer and McEntee, however, though uneven, have an abundant individuality that makes their assistance at exhibitions always valuable.[206]

The issue of finish, often considered Homer's downfall, was connected directly to many of the already mentioned remarks. James, in his call for freer brushwork and breaking up of masses, was the least concerned with traditional surface finish. The *Daily Graphic*, as had *Scribner's* above, simply acknowledged that these paintings had characteristics that qualified them as belonging to the realm of sketches.[207] The *Art Journal* was clearly bothered by what it perceived as the unfinished quality of *Milking Time*:

> [It] is one of the rude and homely conceits for which his pencil is famous; a work of great spirit and very little finish, but perhaps enough to please his eccentric fancy and amuse the visitors to the Academy. The subject gives a line of fence running straight across the foreground, with the figure of a country girl, carrying a milk pail, standing beside it, while a boy is climbing to the topmost rail. The girl's face is in profile, but enough of her features is shown to tell us that she is no beauty. She is a plain, homely girl, and her companion is shaped in the same mould. Through the bars are seen the cows and bits of the green pasture, which is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> very agreeable and gives relief to the figures. The work is strongly painted but it lacks the finish of an academic picture.[208]

As the most staunch advocate for academic finish, the *Art Journal* preferred Frederic Bridgman's *The American Circus in Brittany*. The *Sun* compared Homer with earlier canvases: "Mr. Homer's pictures, though abounding in humor and illustrating with fidelity certain quaint aspects of rural life, show no technical improvement upon his earlier works. Provided the main idea is clearly expressed he seems wholly indifferent to details." This writer felt the same about *Uncle Ned*, calling its painting "slovenly" and accessories "careless." Yet, in this latter case, the painting's subject and Homer's success "as a delineator of negro character and physiognomy" allowed the *Sun* to call it "a homely idyll, in which sentiment, nature, and character are equally combined."[209]

Homer explored painting narrative in *The Course of True Love* and investigated the power of composition in *Milking Time*. *Uncle Ned* represents the exploration of other artistic problems. Although the painting was not widely discussed, critics noticed, most of all, its broken light and color. Recently rediscovered and cleaned, the painting reveals how Homer dabbed bits of color and white across the canvas, giving it a stippled, sunlit effect, quite opposite from the overall glow found in *Milking Time*. The *Post*, when it saw the painting at the Century Club in January 1874, noted: "The subject is broadly treated and fairly sparkles in its effect of sunlight and color."[210] Shinn, in the *Nation*, focused solely on Homer's artistic treatment in *Uncle Ned* and was less complimentary of the canvas: "[It]...shows Mr. Homer with all his originality and all his vices: it seems to be the memorandum of some effect wherein the artistic eye was caught with the sunnyflash

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of pigeons and other white creatures studded about a farm-shed; but the silvery patches have attained a distressing regularity, and the picture, dismissed at the point of the very rudest sketching, seems to have been hung with some satirical intention precisely where it is most compromising and conspicuous."[211] For Shinn, *Uncle Ned* combined the faults of sketchiness, for which he had earlier condemned Homer, with a patterning of light he found distracting. He also stated that it lacked the compositional structure that had made *Milking Time* so interesting.

Working within the boundaries of acceptable subject matter, Homer's entries to the Academy's 1875 annual suggested the variety of artistic interests that were commanding his attention. With *The Course of True Love* he seems to have taken the most traditional approach, grounding the effect of the canvas in a narrative meaningful for the broad public. For this reason, it received praise from the more conservative writers even though they criticized it for its crudeness of style. *Milking Time*, with its daring composition, challenged current assumptions about compositional treatment. *Uncle Ned* explored alternative applications of paint, especially of color, and though it was small in size, made an impact on the overall effect of Homer's contributions. By consciously blending a variety of influences and approaches that he had absorbed and internalized in these three canvases, Homer presented his reactions to the complicated issues at hand.[212] He was aware of many different possibilities of presentation as he was trying to define for himself the best way to create a painting.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The critics' responses uniformly reflect contradictory or uncertain feelings about Homer's painting because he did not follow any single set of art rules. This resulted in his being considered the best or most interesting painter even by those writers who also found his work ugly and uneven. Those who were most critical generally preferred either the older generation of American painters or a more traditional academic European approach. The praise came from those who endorsed new ways of seeing and of presenting that vision. Homer, having chosen to experiment with different combinations of technique and approach, illuminated the quandaries that all serious American artists were facing. Ten years after the close of the Civil War, nothing was simple or clear in art, as in life.

As in past years, Homer left New York City during the summer months of 1875. His travels followed his usual pattern of making several stops and visiting a single locale more than once. A significant portion of the summer was devoted to a trip home to Massachusetts for his brother Arthur's wedding and two stays in the Catskills. But most importantly for Homer's future, he visited Prout's Neck, Maine.[213] On his return home, Homer set to work. Soon after, a writer for *Appleton's* saw about twenty "important studies" which came from his summer travels; eight were said to be large oils and many were noted as using the same half-dozen models.[214] While a number of canvases of young women were noted, there was particular interest in two other pictures—one of a black youth pulling a calf, probably *Unruly Calf* (fig. 57) and *Foraging* (unlocated), both of which would be seen in the next Academy annual.[215] They would receive thorough examination in the reviews of that show, but initial reactions focused on the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Americanness of Homer's subject choices, an African-American boy and a Zouave, respectively.[216]

Homer's continued exploration of forthrightly American subjects continued through the Centennial year, a time in which America focused on her present state as a reflection and summation of the progress of the last hundred years. It was clear that taste in art was undergoing a period of rapid change. The rise of the new men was startling and the simultaneous influx of and interest in foreign canvases both increased and shifted. The *Independent* noted in the first week of 1876: "There is a fashion in art, and just now it is the fashion to buy the pictures of Meissonnier and Gérôme, as it was a few years ago to become possessed of a painting by Edouard Frère or Rosa Bonheur, who are now neglected. Church and Bierstadt were paid what might be well characterized as 'fabulous prices' ten years ago for pictures that would not now sell for a tenth of their former market value."[217] While this remark is explicit about the market, it also reflects the changes occurring in criticism. Within this state of affairs, Homer continued to search for both a subject matter and a style that were satisfying to him and satisfactory to the critics. With the Centennial exhibition in Philadelphia and the ancillary loan shows it spawned, in addition to the usual annuals of the Watercolor Society and the National Academy, he had opportunities to get assessments of works past and present, and for the different media in which he worked. In essence, Homer received a summary assessment of his work as American art did in general.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Watercolor Society exhibition was, as usual, the first major art event of the winter. Its ninth annual opened at the end of January 1876, and while there was considerable interest in the show, the number of reviews was considerably less than in the last two years. While ten newspapers did write on the exhibition, papers that usually had multiple reviews, such as the *Times* and *World*, condensed their coverage from three or four installments to only one or two. The cause for the drop in coverage may have been due to the impeachment trial of Secretary of War William W. Belknap. The proceedings leading up to his impeachment on March 2, 1876, garnered heavy attention, especially during February, when the watercolor show was on view.[218] Magazines, which were not tethered to daily news, gave the exhibition their regular coverage. Dropping out of the picture, however, was the *Galaxy*, which did not cover art at all in 1876 and ceased publication in 1877.

Although the reviews may have been smaller in number, the watercolor show was universally commended. There was not a dissenting voice among the overall assessments. Praise was showered on the success and progress of both the watercolor medium and of the Watercolor Society, the camaraderie of which was seen as in distinct contrast to the fighting within (and without) the ranks of the National Academy.[219] The amount of and comparisons with foreign artists were still topics of interest, but the subject appeared with much less intensity. For one reason, there were significantly fewer foreign works on view—only about one hundred out of six hundred sheets. More importantly, there was a greater confidence in American watercolor, which led to a higher comfort level when making comparisons, and a growing appreciation for the foreign works, especially as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stimuli for learning.[220] Similarly, the discussion of opaque versus transparent color occurred only in passing. When it was raised, it was most often within the context of discussing a specific artist. There was now clearly a wider spectrum of acceptable techniques for watercolor, and with this came a greater approval of the Spanish-Roman school. Notable for its dissent on this topic was *Scribner's*, which found Fortuny and his followers too imitative of each other and suffering from a "secret sterility of the imagination."[221]

Interest in new subject matter was evident in the criticism. There were challenges to some of the most enduring themes. Both the *Times* and *Express* called for images of life in the West and South as material that would make excellent subjects. The *Times* pleaded:

> May we not hope next year, instead of eternal bits of "The Housatonic," "Glimpses of the Hudson," "Recollections of Lake George"...to see some studies from the plain and river life of the West and South?.... [suggests going to Kansas and Colorado].... Landscapes have their place, but paintings from such scenes as we have mentioned would possess a hundred times their interest. And here let us say that the time when an artist could make a name by painting little bits of landscape or marine pieces is, we believe, almost gone by. Some few of our painters have begun to appreciate this fact, and are turning their attention, as we know, in other directions.[222]

Immediately after these comments, the *Times* named Homer as one of those artists turning in other directions. Homer and Thomas Waterman Wood were applauded for their African American subjects. Also encouraged were Native American and cowboy images like that depicted in James Smillie's highly acclaimed *Scrub Races on the Plains* (unlocated). Reconstruction and the exploration of the West were two of the most

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

discussed topics of the day, and thus the critics were asking for explicitly contemporary subjects.[223]

There was also the feeling that a number of artists were consciously exerting a special effort this year. In addition to growing competition with foreign artists, the effect of the Centennial was noted as a cause for the heightened exertion. The *Telegram* explained: "Probably some of the painters at present represented on the walls of the Academy do feel that now or never is the time to justify the wishes and expectations that have been formed for them."[224] Though no artists were specifically named in this context, Homer could easily fit the profile of such an artist. He turned forty years old during the course of the watercolor exhibition, on February 24, 1876. The combination of that milestone, the Centennial, repeated criticism that he had not painted anything really substantive since *Prisoners from the Front*, and the mixed reviews he had received over the past several years may well have made him feel that he was at a defining moment in his career.

Homer exhibited fourteen watercolors and drawings at the 1876 watercolor show.[225] According to the *Mail*, *Study*, *Fiction* (fig. 58), *Too Thoughtful for Her Years*, *Furling the Jib* (fig. 59), and *A Fish Story* were pencil-tinted studies; the first three were noted as "remarkable for finish and strength," while the latter were called "two of the most suggestive sketches we have seen for a long time."[226] Of the other works exhibited, *Busy Bee* (fig. 60), *Contraband* (fig. 61), and *Sunflower for Teacher* (fig. 62) were fully-colored and pictured African American boys, a new subject in watercolor for Homer. *Gardener's Daughter*, *Too Thoughtful for Her Years*, and *Fiction* were images of women.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Furling the Jib was a marine subject, as possibly was *A Fish Story. A Glimpse From a Railroad Train* showed boys bathing.[227] Once again, Homer displayed diverse subjects and styles.

The number and length of the reviews of Homer's watercolors paralleled the smaller number of overall reviews.[228] Nonetheless, they commanded significant attention and there were some thorough considerations of his work. As in the past, the sheer numbers and visual distinctiveness of Homer's works set them somewhat apart in the reviews; they were, once again, dealt with primarily as a group. Continuing to complicate the critics' assessment of the work was the ongoing problem that Homer's watercolors covered a wide range of subject matter and did not single-mindedly follow any one aesthetic convention; this multiplicity confounded the critics as they tried to make definitive statements about the work.

The issue of finish was of prime consideration in the 1876 watercolor annual, and Homer's lack of it dogged him in a way unprecedented for his watercolors. A reason for the critics' heightened concern with finish may have been that as watercolor became more acceptable as a "serious" medium, they had less tolerance for works that appeared sketchy or incomplete, unless they were specifically identified as studies from nature. The *Tribune* noted that watercolors were appearing in much larger scale and scope than ever imaginable ten years earlier.[229] Whether subjects were architectural, native genre, military, or land- or seascapes, the critics praised those with visual completion. Of the Europeans, Jean Vibert, Detaille, and especially Killingworth Johnson were named as the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

best. The elaborate subject and careful finish of works like Samuel Colman's *Mosque* (unlocated) was remarked on repeatedly and often favorably. Edwin Austin Abbey was new on the watercolor scene and made a significant impact with his *Stage Office* (unlocated). Alfred Bellows and William Magrath continued to be popular for their picturesque scenes, while James Craig Nicoll and Alfred T. Bricher received positive notice for their marines—all works with a considerable degree of surface finish.[230]

In this context, Homer's small-scale sheets appeared decidedly unfinished.[231] But they were also the ones found most interesting and were often considered the best. Earl Shinn, in the *Nation*, was most articulate about the conflict this created:

> Mr. Homer sends in the usual budget. It is hard to say whether irritation or pleasure prevails in contemplating the present works of this artist, they go so humbly up to a certain point and stop so definitively within the goal. It may, perhaps, be acknowledged that his pictures are the only figure-pictures of an American exhibitor which are grasped with the real dramatic force. Each one is perfect in telling its story: character of hero, pertinence of surroundings, degree of expression, type, age, atmosphere, time of day, strength or reticence of color—every study is a rounded sonnet sufficient to itself. But each is shouted out of breath so hastily and rawly that the prevailing impression perhaps is a sense that we are defrauded of a suggested delight. The delicacy in the conception of the two negro Cupids...is most enjoyable; no bronze from Herculaneum expresses more by simple posture. But the charm of competent finish is wanting. Would finish have spoiled the charm? If so, the shortcoming of Mr. Homer's art is confessed.

After describing the narratives of several works, Shinn continued: "It is such a beautiful thing to tell these healthful stories with all the simplicity, all that confinement to the idea, which we find in Japanese art, that we can only mourn the loss of the fine painter Mr. Homer would be if he could give us the developed painting instead of the sketchy impression."[232] Shinn spent the bulk of his article on Homer, and he clearly thought his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

work the best, but he thought the lack of finish caused a grave deficit that seriously compromised the work. Shinn, a former student of Gérôme, remarked elsewhere in the review that "the patient pursuit of detail cannot be too highly commended," and praised as examples of appropriate finish both Detaille's entry and Thomas Eakins' sheets, which were sadly noted as absent. The broad washes with only highlights of line that Homer used to define character, setting, and clothing in works such as *Busy Bee* and *Sunflower for Teacher* were antithetical to Shinn's desire for clarity of modeling and drawing with line as well as light and color. Shinn may have had in mind as his model a work such as Eakins' *Whistling For Plover* (fig. 63), in which line and dimensional modeling define the figure. In comparison, Homer's figures were decidedly flattened as were the backgrounds. It was only in the soldier of *Contraband* that Shinn found an analogous idiom of finish that fit the conventions he required. [233]

Although the writer for the *Times* liked *Busy Bee* best of Homer's offerings, he was troubled by Homer's carelessness of finish, crude color, and "that sketchy indefinite style of painting adopted by some of the foreign school, which, if the specimen be by a great master, is called a tour de force, and if by a small one, by another name, not quite so complimentary." [234] He also criticized Alfred Bellows, whose foliage he characterized as "woolly," preferring instead the detailed drawing of Thomas Waterman Wood and Killingworth Johnson.[235] The *Times* critic praised William Magrath for the more carefully "or perhaps one should say more successfully finished" *Nora* (unlocated).[236] The distinction between careful and successful was intentional. Finish was no longer defined

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as only acute detail but also implied a sense of completion, both visual and of thought, which could be accomplished by transparent washes, bodycolor, or a combination of the two. Thus, Erastus South in the *Daily Graphic* praised Magrath especially for achieving the truly pastoral and a solidity of effect in his *On a Hillside* (unlocated), which combined transparent washes with highlights of bodycolor. Homer's group almost, but not quite, met South's requirements: "[*Busy Bee*, *Sunflower*, and *A Glimpse from a Railroad Train*] are perfect gems as sketches but need the last grace of adequate finish as an act of respect to their makers and purchasers." He suggested that Homer might have better success if he would concentrate on one single figure and finish that one satisfactorily.[237] The *Art Journal* also wanted more than sketches from Homer's hand and noted that "the ordinary observer needs more than a few wild strokes to command admiration or attention." Like William Morris Hunt, Homer was faulted for giving "only suggestions of something which may have at some idle moment appeared to the artist's mind, but which he failed to seize so as to make the idea capable of comprehension to others.... Like Mr. Hunt, however, he forgets, at times, that the visitors to public exhibitions are not all artists, and are unwilling to accept crude suggestions in lieu of pictures." Implied in these words, again, is the notion that completion of both thought and outward image were necessary to warrant public showing. Despite this perceived shortcoming, he found Homer's watercolors charming.[238]

In the *Tribune*, Clarence Cook took a somewhat different position on Homer's finish from that of his colleagues. He found Homer's entries "not as conspicuously sketchy as they were on the last occasion."[239] In fact, Cook admitted: "Mr. Homer is easily the first

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

man we have in figure subjects...." Incensed with the critic from the *Mail*, who had suggested Homer could learn something from newcomer Edwin Austin Abbey, Cook continued:

> Mr. Abbey is a young beginner, who, though promising enough, we no doubt, will modestly acknowledge that he would be glad to have a tithe of what Mr. Homer could teach him. We shall always regret that Mr. Homer will not give us more finished drawings, or at any rate sketches, if he pleases, of more interesting and important subjects. But, for what he does we are very grateful; he is rarely stupid and never dull; he loves his work and communicates his own interest to us. Let him keep his drawings away from our exhibitions and we should soon find out what we had lost.[240]

The *Mail*'s complaint, to which Cook referred, was that Homer had lost the freshness of his first exhibited watercolors, a complaint it had also made the previous year. The problem for the *Mail* was not just that Homer was sketchy, but that he continued to tread over similar territory in order to have public success:

> Winslow Homer is very clever, but having acquired a trick of turning out clever trash, he should be ashamed to go on without doing any better. Two years ago he sent in some very fresh sketches, executed in broad, full touches, which were full of life, action, and sunlight. They were snatched up at once, and the public cried for more. Of course Winslow Homer could not deny the modest request of the public, and consequently he went extensively into the manufacture of this line of artistic goods. But it is a curious fact that while sketches from nature are nearly always replete with "snap," this same quality is apt to vanish when *replica* are made of those same sketches.[241]

The writer then used the example of J. G. Brown as one who made wonderful studies that lost their vitality in the painted composition. He continued: "So in a measure it would seem to be with Winslow Homer. As yet we have not seen a great many of his pictures this season, but those we have looked at appear careless and tame. Now Winslow Homer is one of our very best men, if he would only make the best of his abilities. He struck out a new style of work two years ago, but he should not confine himself to it. Let him look

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

at Mr. Abbey's picture...." The writer for the *Mail* looked closely at Abbey's *Stage Office* and found it most striking: "We study it again and again, discovering new excellences of handiwork, but those are merely subsidiaries to the picture. It is like some of the poetry of the present day—beautiful with a sad truth. It is the work of a man who thinks as well as labors, and whose hand is able to interpret the thoughts of his brain."[242] While the *Mail* ostensibly complained that Homer's technique (especially his mixing of oil strategies with those of watercolor, but also his carelessness) was the reason his sheets were "not entitled to the rank of pictures," what was perhaps most bothersome was Homer's focus on technique without a substantive subject. Elsewhere in its review of the exhibition the *Mail* remarked: "There are too many purposeless pictures, which have no meaning, no intention to them," and praised Charles Green's *The Brick Field* (unlocated), an image of workers taking a midday break: "This is a picture which one lingers over, as an oasis in the world of barren art where senseless picture-making wearies and mocks him who seeks for thoughts and teachings."[243]

Although Clarence Cook would have never chosen Abbey's sentimental narrative as his example of a work replete with thought—in fact, in all his reviews, there is not one subject Cook wholeheartedly praises—he and the critic from the *Mail* shared a devotion to the importance of thoughtful subject matter and a concern that it was being overshadowed by technical achievements. Cook found Homer's subjects appalling:

> There is a tendency we hope this clever artist will not cultivate too much to choose "quasi" funny or fantastic subjects—his "Glimpse from a Train," No. 502, boys bathing, their bodies in shadow seen between us and the fading daylight; "A Flower for the Teacher," No. 235, a monkeyish little darky-boy with a huge sunflower; and "The Busy Bee," No. 144, another darky-boy, or the same,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> fighting off the bees with his straw hat. It is true that Mr. Homer's subjects are rarely anything in themselves, 'tis all in the way he treats them, but no treatment, no matter how ever clever or broad, can make such subjects as these permanently interesting.[244]

Cook saw these subjects as only commonplace, though possibly humorous. As such, they lacked the poetry and emotional and intellectual content Cook continually sought in art.[245] In the rest of his reviews, Cook limited his commentary on subject matter, but he did criticize the native genre images of Enoch Wood Perry and the "pot and pans" of Tiffany's Swiss scene. Killingworth Johnson's *The Intruders* (unlocated) was also lamented for having no "great point or meaning," but Cook could appreciate it for being simply beautiful.

Cook and the *Mail* were not typical in their feelings about Homer's subjects. *Contraband*, *Busy Bee*, and *Sunflower for Teacher* were the three contributions by Homer that received the most attention, and a number of critics singled them out as especially worthy of celebration because of their African American subjects.[246] Their popularity stemmed in part from their meeting the call for images of the people and activities of the South. Even though these watercolors were most likely based on New York experiences, they addressed current racial issues such as education and labor for freed blacks, which were distinctively American concerns with special associations for the South.[247] *Appleton's* noted in these works "a fine sense of the susceptibility of the colored race for artistic delineation."[248] Homer's African American subjects were welcomed by this and other critics for their combination of topicality, humor, and pathos, which surpassed any technical deficiencies identified in the criticism. For the *Art Journal* and *Appleton's*,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

humor made the images especially successful. The *Art Journal* thought *Busy Bee* was Homer's best entry, taking delight in the "decidedly humorous" expression of the boy's discomfort. Similarly T. W. Wood's character studies of a black man and an Irishman, each set into a context that highlighted the figures' distinctive characteristics through attributes and narrative, were also recognized as full of humor.[249] *Appleton's* found *Sunflower* "one of the funniest pictures Mr. Homer has ever painted, and with its sub-flavor of wit, not too broad, and its half-concealed pathos as well, it is one of the happiest efforts of the artist, under a very modest form." The writer, who also liked the sentiment expressed in the works of Magrath and Abbey, appreciated, as Clarence Cook could not, that Homer's images were not strictly parody or caricature but had heart in them as well.[250] Likewise, Earl Shinn, it will be remembered, had concluded that each of the three sheets was "a rounded sonnet sufficient to itself" and that they were "healthful stories" despite their want of finish.[251] The acknowledgment and approbation of the serious undercurrent of Homer's African American images was most obvious in *Contraband.* The *Independent* pointedly connected this watercolor to *Prisoners from the Front*, reminding its readers that that was the canvas that had made Homer's reputation, a fact Homer was unlikely to have forgotten.[252]

With the rising acceptance of watercolor as a medium equal to oil, the criticism of Homer's watercolors followed a similar pattern to that of his oils. His lack of finish was, for most writers, the feature that kept him from being of the highest rank. In the main, his subjects were not only liked but could be held up as excellent examples for American

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pictures. Yet, as with his oils, Homer's watercolor sheets fell short for the critics searching for the elevated or beautiful in art.

The National Academy of Design annual exhibition for 1876 opened about a month after the watercolor show closed. Like the watercolor exhibition, the Academy show suffered from somewhat fewer reviews, particularly among the less art-oriented papers, such as the *Telegram* and the *Herald.* The most noticeable absence was any review from the *World.* That paper's art coverage was less frequent than usual in the spring of 1876, and what did appear was frequently from correspondents outside of New York.[253] The *Mail*, often a thorough reviewer, interrupted its articles on the Academy. A likely cause was the opening of the Centennial Exhibition in early May, which shifted the focus away from the Academy and towards the art exhibition in Philadelphia.

Reactions to the 1876 annual were varied. The *Times* decried it as inferior while Clarence Cook of the *Tribune* was very favorably impressed. The *Times* was especially bothered by the absences of both Frederic Church and Albert Bierstadt as well as the generally lackluster contributions by the older generation.[254] In contrast, a number of other critics, noticing the lower profile of the older artists, found their disappearance not only not a loss, but rather a positive step.[255] Accompanying this reaction was the view shared by the *Times* that the younger artists had made considerable progress. Cook was the most excited by what he saw:

> The present exhibition of the Academy...is not only much above the exhibitions of late years in general excellence, but it will make itself remembered, we are inclined to think, as one in which for the first time the influence of the new

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> generation of painters had made itself distinctly felt...[and despite reflecting much foreign influence]...there is so much independence and feeling shown as to justify the hope that the tide has turned and that we shall soon be no more bound in the flats and shallows of the last ten years.[256]

Whereas in 1875, the younger men had provided "the shock of the new," they were now embraced as offering the possibility of salvation for American art not unlike the way children were viewed as the redeemers for American life in the post-Civil War era.[257] From this viewpoint, commentary often focused on the promise that American artists were showing in moving towards achieving parity with their European counterparts, rather than on what they were actually painting at this moment.[258] The political situation at the Academy was also folded into this discussion. Cook's bright outlook, along with a similar opinion in the *Atlantic*, was due to seeing improved treatment of the younger artists.[259] The *Express*, on the other hand, saw evidence of jealousies in the hanging of the show. Although it considered the show an improvement overall, it felt it did not represent American or metropolitan art and called for the Academy to "wake up."[260]

Eight out of the ten serials that gave extended attention to the exhibition mentioned the positive impact of the new men.[261] Whereas in 1875 the sobriquet of "new men" was virtually synonymous with those studying in Munich, in 1876 its definition had been broadened to include more of the art students in Paris as well as younger artists working at home. The names repeatedly mentioned in this context included Edward Moran, Charles H. Miller, Daniel Ridgway Knight, Thomas Hovenden, Enoch Wood Perry, Maria Oakey, A. T. Bricher, William Magrath, and Homer.[262] Munich-trained artists were, in fact, somewhat in the background as their numbers were fewer this year.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although the younger artists were praised as a group, there was great variety of opinion as to which were the best pictures, subjects, and styles. In some cases, praise for the works came almost by default. The *Art Journal* suggested that the show was commendable not because of great pictures but because of a low number of horrible ones.[263] The *Commercial Advertiser* responded similarly, but with a more positive cast to its remarks. It suggested that the collection was not so good as to be distinguished, but that one could find many works that either pleased or instructed.[264] Some writers felt the show's primary problem was the lack of individual great pictures.[265] Others, however, found the better qualities of the show in specific canvases. *Appleton's* listed eight works that it believed redeemed the show, either because they were excellent examples of the older modes or they gave "so much indication of the new paths." The pictures were Eastman Johnson's *Husking Bee* (fig. 64), William Page's portrait of Charles William Eliot (1875; Harvard University), John La Farge's *New England Pasture Land* (fig. 65), J. Lieck's *Cupid* (unlocated), Maria Oakey's *Woman Serving* (unlocated), Jennie Brownscombe's *Grandmother's Treasure* (unlocated), and John Sartain's *Italian Head* (unlocated). To this group the writer was willing to consider including Lemuel Wilmarth's two works, *"There is music in all things if men had ears"* (unlocated) and *Practical Joke on the Pioneer. An Incident on the Morning of a Target Excursion* (unlocated) and Homer's *A Fair Wind.*[266] Out of this group, Johnson's and La Farge's canvases received the greatest and most positive attention. The critics' reactions to them are best discussed within the context of their comments on Homer.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer exhibited five paintings at the Academy in 1876: *A Fair Wind* (commonly called *Breezing Up*; fig. 66); *Over the Hills* (fig. 67); *Cattle Piece* (fig. 57); *Foraging*; and *Old Boat* (unlocated).[267] The writers who thoroughly reviewed the show carefully studied Homer's paintings, and it is clear his contributions attracted special notice.[268] In the *Sun* Homer's works were the first listed among those cited as attracting attention.[269] *A Fair Wind* received the lion's share of that attention. It received high marks overall, but overwhelming success was compromised by reservations—nearly equally divided—about its subject or technique. On one hand, it was held up as his best picture since *Prisoners from the Front* and almost as important.[270] For critics like the one for the *Mail*, who was suspicious of Americans painting French subjects and for whom home subjects were imperative, Homer proved that there was no lack of appropriate material to be found in the United States and, in fact, "the secret of his success" was in his American themes.[271] But for most critics, it was *A Fair Wind*'s combination of subject and execution, riding in a wonderful symbiotic balance, that made it extraordinary. Clarence Cook, who had been so critical in previous months about Homer's subjects, was finally pleased. He found in this canvas that Homer "at last painted a picture, a marine subject, that will delight and surprise those who have feared we were never to have anything from his hand but sketches."[272] Cook elaborated in the next installment of his reviews:

> No eye that delights in salt water, and in the sight at least of a sail-boat bounding over it; and no eye that can take pleasure in seeing the human body painted with a master hand, with absolute truth of motion, with energetic restraint of muscle, with freedom of life to move or not to move, and all as if in play, but must admit that there is no picture in this exhibition, nor can we remember when there has been a picture in any exhibition, that can be named alongside of this.... [H]is gift of painting from the first intention is a precious one when it results as it not always, and not often, does in a work like this, of which we dare affirm that there is not anywhere—at home, in France, or even in England—a painter capable of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> its mate. It has always been reckoned a difficult task to paint people in a boat...yet here we see it done to perfection, and the people, with all the difficulties of their attitudes, placed with such ease and yet such certainty that we make one with them and cut the foam as glad as they.[273]

Cook thought Homer's ability to find a subject to which nearly every viewer could feel an emotional connection (and here what was captured was the zest of life) was a large part of the canvas' power. But it was Homer's artistic solutions—especially the poses and modeling of the figures—that ensured the subject's success. By "painting from the first intention," Cook reasoned, the image was injected with the all-important vitality, and thus Cook found the artist's customary coarseness appropriate here rather than detrimental.

Vitality in painting was of paramount importance to Cook and in this exhibition he compared Homer to Enoch Wood Perry to substantiate his viewpoint. Cook appreciated Perry's work, such as *A Quilting Party* (fig. 68) also in this exhibition, for its carefulness and its attention to American subjects, but he noted that his people seemed dead in contrast to Homer's, and that this single fact made all the difference. Cook explained:

> If he [Perry] does not choose his subjects so entirely from the present time and from the world immediately about him, as it is Mr. Homer's habit of doing, he is as much bent on being true to the phase of American life in which he takes especial pleasure. And so long as he is true to what has attracted him, it ought in fact to be of little importance that his models are in general the men and women who were old people forty or fifty years ago.... Yet Mr. Homer's work is run after with avidity, and his slightest sketches meet with friendly glances, the sole difference being, in our opinion, that Mr. Homer's people are alive and Mr. Perry's are not.... [H]ow many defects in the technics of a picture are held excusable if they have only the one virtue of being alive....[W]e insist that the best thing a work of art can do is to be so strenuously alive that it can impart of its superfluous life to us who look at it.... [W]hat we go about hungry to seek is the work of some man...who shall make us think, or feel, or strongly enjoy.... A goodly portion of this life and energy is in Mr. Homer's pictures, and by reason of it they draw the public to them....[274]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cook's desire that a sense of vitality emanate from a painting's style and technique as well as its subjects seems connected to the larger concern that American art be vital itself, especially in the Centennial year.[275] Cook's call, ultimately, was for art that stirred the human heart and the eyes.

Cook's demand that art be alive even allowed him to admire two of Homer's other entries, *Cattle Piece* and *Foraging*, both of whose subjects he could not tolerate. In them, Cook found Homer had nothing to say, and was sure that they would only be interesting to other artists who wanted to see "how to do it"; that is, to learn lessons in laying down paint. Despite this attitude towards the two canvases, he admitted: " Even such pictures as those in which recalcitrant calves are resisting the efforts of man to do good, we cannot pass them by with indifference although we know well enough that the artist is wasting his time and ours in painting them. We must look at them a few minutes each time we find ourselves in the North Room, if only for the pleasure of seeing action represented with spirit, the effort of two animals to restrain the effort of two other animals to resist restraint."[276]

Similar to Cook, *Appleton's* praise focused on the power of the motion in *A Fair Wind* and on its subject, which it also found exhilarating and familiar to almost everyone. It noted that it was the "easy elastic motion of the figures of the party in the sailboat" to which anyone who had been similarly situated would respond, and in which Homer, himself, delighted.[277] The *Sun* found the painting's expression of life in the sense of motion it conveyed and that its power overcame the deficiencies of Homer's technique.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The writer for the *Sun* was, on the whole, tired of the conventional treatment found in most American art, especially landscape painting. He called, instead, for artists to follow Hippolyte Taine's directive to "experience original sensation in confronting objects...[to] receive strong peculiar impressions." This, according to Taine and the *Sun*, would prevent imitation and ensure originality.[278] The *Sun* ranked *A Fair Wind* as one of the best pictures in the show and consonant with Taine's theories: "[*A Fair Wind*]...is perhaps the best sea piece he has ever contributed to an Academy exhibition. It is painted in his customary coarse and negligé style, but suggests with unmistakable force the life and motion of a breezy summer day off the coast. The fishing boat, bending to the wind, seems actually to cleave to the waters. There is no truer or heartier work in the exhibition."[279]

The remarks by Cook and the *Sun* suggest the complexities of determining what made a work worthy of praise. Increasingly, it was not simply issues of subject or style, but the manner in which they supported or were appropriate to each other that was important. But as both these writers also pointed out, the most important issue for most critics was what constituted proper finish. The *Nation* and the *Times* had strong voices in this discussion. Earl Shinn exclaimed that, although he thought the hanging of Homer's work was unfortunate, "Mr. Homer gives us this spring the most admirable sketch he has made since the period of his war-pictures. The exulting freedom with which his brush ripples over the canvas...is for Mr. Homer a revelation. He has never told a story so well, nor has his pithy economy of expression in telling a story ever become him more." Shinn then identified the clean outlines of the figures, the sense of motion, and the alternating areas

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of light and shade as the primary factors in the canvas' success, making it a "thorough-built marine" despite the fact that it could only be considered a sketch rather than a full-blown painting.[280] For the *Times*, too, Homer's combination of economic paint application, the suggestion of motion, use of color, and fine drawing made *A Fair Wind* his highest accomplishment to date. Yet, in recognizing Homer's tremendous ability to paint, it also noted the potential downfalls of such talent. It remarked: "the painting is free from those abominable lazinesses and hurryings which formerly disfigured some of his best productions.... It is a bold and free picture, excellent in composition, original in conception, admirable in drawing, fair in manipulation, and more than fair in coloring. The great trouble with this gentleman is that he has an admirable facility which tempts him to half do things. When he conquers this, he will take and hold a very high place."[281] Similarly, Shinn complained in the *Nation* that if Homer could paint as well as he had in *A Fair Wind*, why did he not do it all the time. He lamented: "It is impossible to treat ungratefully the artist who has given us [*A Fair Wind*], but we cannot but think it extraordinary that a person to whom ideas come so abundantly and graciously should frequently throw up the image of some slight sketch-book page upon a screen large enough to furnish a lecture room."[282] While these criticisms appeared in the context of very high praise for the picture, the *Art Journal* could not move beyond its repulsion for Homer's treatment even though it liked his subject very much. The *Art Journal* condemned *A Fair Wind* and *Cattle Piece* for the same reasons: "...the workmanship is rude. Mr. Homer is always perplexing. There are so much truth and vigour in his compositions that one can but admire them; and yet half-expressed thoughts, strange eccentricities of drawing, rude handling of material, seriously offset the charm of his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

undeniably fresh and usually truthful themes. It is impossible to deny Homer's genius; it is equally impossible to be always satisfied with what he puts on canvas."[283] The *Art Journal* remained grounded in the belief that careful drawing and finish were requirements for painting.

Comparing *A Fair Wind* with *Milking Time* of the previous year, it seems likely that with the 1876 painting, Homer was responding to some of the criticism of the earlier picture. Proving with complete assurance that Homer intentionally constructed his painting in response to critical commentary is impossible. However, the situation of *A Fair Wind* is similar to a number of occurrences where, after having received strongly negative responses to work, Homer seems to have adjusted his subject matter and/or artistic treatment to better agree with the critics' viewpoints. As was suggested earlier, this may have been the case with *Country School* in 1872. Here, in *A Fair Wind* he capitalized on the positive response he had garnered with subjects immediately identifiable as American and ones to which people could relate. Yet, understanding the importance vitality held for nearly all critics and that it was the quality which saved him from even his most strident detractors, he found a subject in which action was central for the display of American characteristics and experience. The compositional design of *A Fair Wind*—most notably, placement of the boat on an acute diagonal— created an image of a three-dimensional reality against a flattened background to charge the subject with energy. It is a composition exactly reversing the spatial relationships of *Milking Time*. The features of the figures in *A Fair Wind*—much more carefully delineated in the sailors than in *Milking Time*'s farmers—were another criticism of the earlier work Homer seems to have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

addressed. Yet, even Homer's success with *A Fair Wind* raised complaints about his art generally as it gained for him some of his greatest acclaim to date.

Homer's other entries in the 1876 Academy annual did not fare nearly as well as *A Fair Wind.* They received less notice—in itself a kind of negative criticism—and when they were noticed, the response was much more mixed, with the balance decidedly towards the negative. Some writers who had considerably discussed *A Fair Wind*, dispensed with his other works in a single phrase or sentence, and often unflatteringly. Homer's works were "not all equally excellent," suggested *Appleton's*.[284] After its remarks on *A Fair Wind*, the *Sun* noted: "His remaining pictures are scarcely up to his usual standard."[285] Subject matter, which had been universally admired in *A Fair Wind*, was considerably criticized, especially in *Cattle Piece* and *Foraging*. Cook, it has been noted earlier, found them uninteresting. The *Atlantic* had a stronger reaction to them, and its reviewer attacked Homer's subjects rather than his technique.

> Winslow Homer's contributions, however full of life they may be, leave the spectator always unsatisfied. The most prominent fault of his pictures has always been their baldness. In the examples before us this quality is less evident than usual in the execution, but his subjects are still without interest. If we except one, *A Fair Wind*,...the pictures compel a query as to the reasons for the choice of a subject. If there is anything worth illustrating in a Zouave struggling with a frisky calf, Mr. Homer has found it out and put it on canvas. With his positive touch and truth of opposition he has done more with such a bald subject than any one we could name, but with the same skill more wisely employed better results might follow.

The *Atlantic* wrote further that Homer was not the only artist who had failed in his subject matter: "Thus far there has been no one of eminence in the profession who has been inspired by the picturesqueness found here to immortalize types and scenes in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

same way that Millet, Breton, Israels, and other men have been called to perpetuate certain characteristics of their countrymen."[286] The *Atlantic* writer was looking for an artist who painted recognizably American subjects but, as Sarah Burns has pointed out, within the framework of the older agrarian ideal, which was constructed around a peaceful atmosphere, was in harmony with nature, and had a spiritual dimension akin to that which informed the peasant subjects of Europe, especially those of Jean-François Millet.[287] In this exhibition, the *Atlantic*'s greatest praise was for John La Farge's *New England Pasture Land* because it had been painted with an almost "religious zeal that emanates from simplicity itself."[288]

Unlike other publications, the *Atlantic* gave more attention to the treatment of Homer's other paintings than it did to *A Fair Wind.* Vitality again saved Homer in *Cattle Piece.* Although the subject had been criticized by Clarence Cook, it had been noticed for its spirit, narrative action, and design energy when it had been seen in Homer's studio the previous winter.[289] However, the *Art Journal*, which had been vehement about its distaste for *A Fair Wind*, was equally displeased with *Cattle Piece.* It preferred, instead, the more careful finish of Seymour Joseph Guy, Enoch Wood Perry, and Eastman Johnson. The *Art Journal* writer was clearly attracted to more detail and surface finish but did not feel that a polished, lapidary quality was entirely necessary. It praised Johnson's *Husking Bee* because its breadth of handling suggested the atmosphere of the outdoors.[290] The definition of finish continued to broaden to an expanded concept of completeness beyond tight rendering that imitated reality. Nonetheless, the visual evidence to support completeness of conception needed to be evident.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's *Over the Hills* was also virtually neglected, but those who did mention it pulled its design qualities into their larger discussions of other canvases. Earl Shinn liked the "handsome hardness" of the figures and the atmosphere of

> dustless air [yet]...it must be confessed the painter had gone to considerable expense to get it. His breadth of view has become breadth of flatness; and the present picture, highly characteristic of a large class of Mr. Homer's work, suggests that if he could represent his hill on a Japanese box in two lacquers, upon which the women should be inlaid, their dresses corresponding in value with one of the colors, and their heads just cutting across the hypotenuse, his secret ideal would be satisfied.

By contrast, it was, again, Johnson's *Husking Bee* that Shinn and many of the other critics preferred. He continued: "Another artist who has dared to put his completeness in to his plan and not into his penciling is Mr. Eastman Johnson, whose 'Husking Bee' (285) is more vital than anything he has given us since 'Stage Coach,' and perhaps a little in advance of that...the sentiment of the scenery is what is paramount. The figures, very properly, are viewed as we view figures in a landscape, as parts of the general effect."[291] Shinn thought that Johnson's design successfully integrated idea, proper relation of figures, compositional design, and light, but that in Homer's canvas, the flatness of the design overpowered the subject's conception. Most interestingly, Shinn praised La Farge's *New England Pasture*. Its "bald" features made it American and he praised the high horizon for the unusual viewpoint it presented.[292] Although a similar feature seems to have bothered Shinn in *Over the Hills*, in the case of La Farge's work, the fact that the image is a landscape subject devoid of narrative seems to have allowed him to enjoy the visual impact of the design without reservation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The objection to Homer's two-dimensional flatness (rightly recognized by Shinn as derived from Japanese examples) was more strongly voiced by Clarence Cook in his criticism of *Over the Hills*: "...[T]wo girls stuck bolt upright in the middle of a barren canvas can be interesting to nobody, neither painter nor laymen; it is Mr. Homer when he has nothing to say and persists in taking a big canvas to say it in."[293] Cook, like Shinn, preferred La Farge's work to Homer's, and likely for the same reasons. La Farge succeeded, in Cook's eyes, by presenting nature at her tranquil best, where the beautiful and truthful are one and the same. He admitted that it was hard to say how La Farge conveyed the truth since it was not through the usual delineation of specific incidents but in the final, whole result. Cook declared that the picture was important as a Wordsworthian study of nature, where poetry and truthfulness were fused into one to present a landscape image that allowed feeling to deepen as nature became better known. Furthermore, Cook saw no evidence of La Farge's French training and could state with authority: "It is an American landscape in which all the elements are our own and in which no borrowed imagery, no alien sentiment is to be found.... nothing but one trait, the absence of exaggeration and display, the confident resting in a few facts easily represented and easily understood, the love of unity and repose. These are qualities that only a true artist can command and only that true lovers of art can enjoy...."[294] *A Fair Wind* was seen to have physical and emotional vitality; *New England Pasture Land* exuded soul. Clarence Cook and Earl Shinn thought that both canvases had individual elements combined into a well-integrated whole, thus meeting their varied requirements for American art. Although there were certain constants in their requirements, such as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

adequate completeness of thought and finish, both critics recognized that different subjects required different treatments.

The *Times* was the only paper to give *Over the Hills* any real praise. It called the canvas "an excellent production," and especially praised the figures for their admirable drawing. Although the writer criticized the lowered tone of Homer's colors, he commended him for the careful delineation of shadows in the figures of the girls: "[I]t is delightful to see the great improvement in handling of this artist. Formerly with him a dash stroke down a girl's arm represented shadow, but now the shadows are most carefully and delicately wrought, and fully preserve their color-tones." Nonetheless, the picture had serious faults in the "hasty and imperfect painting" of the foreground clover and background hill, and, in the end, "[t]his does something to take away from the very great merit of the two figures, which reveal such power of handling as no one dreamed Winslow Homer possessed. He is on the path of progress and will mount much higher yet."[295] Homer, once again, could get it only partially right, but even so his work still offered hope for the future.

In assessing responses to Homer in the 1876 annual, it must be noted that several papers ignored him completely. The *Daily Graphic* reviewed the show at some length, but oddly did not mention Homer.[296] The illustrated paper was generally favorable to younger men and broader styles. Although the reviews seem to have been interrupted by the opening of the Centennial exhibition, there were two articles that considered the landscapes and marines at the Academy, and one would expect *A Fair Wind* to have been included in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these remarks. It did take the opportunity to highly praise Johnson's *Husking Bee* as a landscape with figures. The *Independent* printed a shorter consideration of the exhibition and commented on both Johnson and Enoch Wood Perry, the two artists with whom Homer was most often compared, especially with regard to American subjects and their use (or lack of) local truths. But again there was no mention of Homer. The omission is noticeable, and one wonders if it was an intentional, negative commentary.

The various criticisms of Homer's 1876 Academy pictures illuminated the attitudes towards subject and technical issues more clearly than previously. Yet, while critics were more consistently favoring certain subjects or techniques, they did not coalesce along any definable party lines, especially on the issue of finish. For example, a critic's love of native genre subjects did not always go hand-in-hand with a love of tight technique. The press recognized that the rapidly changing face of American art was blurring many of the positions and also that personal politics played a significant role in creating an emotionally charged atmosphere in the art writing.[297] In this arena of critical uncertainty, Homer received some important praise, but rarely without qualifiers. Despite the criticisms, the reviewers seem to have understood what he was doing and the sources of his inspiration. He had also hit upon individual subjects, like that of *A Fair Wind*, that, for most critics, were not only acceptable but also praiseworthy. He was still considered a "younger man," and, for a number of writers, he was not yet meeting their expectations. There is no doubt that the range of Homer's work presented contrasts and contradictions. If John La Farge and Enoch Wood Perry represented the opposing ends of the artistic spectrum, we can see Homer playing into and out of both camps in a variety of ways. He

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

continued to seek an artistic vocabulary and subjects that suited him aesthetically and intellectually, but it also seems that, at times, such as with *A Fair Wind*, he consciously worked hard to please the critics and public.

With the opening of the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia in early May 1876, another layer of commentary about American art was added to the body of criticism. The Centennial Exposition had been anticipated for several years, and the opening of its doors offered a multitude of opportunities. The exposition, of which the art exhibition was only a small though important portion, presented an overview of one hundred years of American productivity.[298] The assessment of American creation and invention took place within this wide array of goods. Among the considerations were not simply inherent quality, but how these objects reflected American culture or national character and how they compared to their European counterparts.

The art exhibition at the Centennial fair included the works of twenty nations, and it allowed, as the *New York Times* pointed out: "the first great opportunity...to the whole American people to see much of the very best Europe has to show."[299] The quality of the foreign contributions was considered quite varied.[300] Although the French contributions were probably the most eagerly awaited by artists and critics, it was also the most disappointing.[301] The British showing received the most universal praise for overall quality.[302] The American exhibition included 760 paintings and 162 sculptures.[303] The collection, gathered primarily from private sources, was nominally a historical survey of American art and included few new works. It had been selected by a committee headed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by John Sartain, and the process of choosing and hanging the American entries was contentious throughout. The mechanics of the selection process and the issue of including American artists working abroad were among the most politicized issues.[304]

The press coverage of the entire exposition was extensive. Of the art notices, the European contributions and media other than painting, especially the decorative arts, garnered much of the attention. The group of American paintings and sculpture received only a modicum of notice and it was mixed in its assessment. At one end of the spectrum was Clarence Cook, who was not only "disappointed," but so "mortified" by the American canvases that he "hesitated to speak of them."[305] Susan Nichols Carter offered the opposite viewpoint, believing that this was the best selection of American art ever seen.[306] The *American Architect and Building News* fell somewhere in the middle, characterizing the American art section as similar to the Paris Salon with the best pictures missing.[307] Titus M. Coan, acknowledging the survey format of the American art presentation, suggested that one could only make broad statements about it since the group of works, itself, was such a generalized showing.[308] Many critics wrote about their attitudes toward the entire showing (including how they felt about the pre-exhibition politics) rather than about their responses to individual pictures. Thus, reviews tended to be sweeping overviews rather than the in-depth examinations written for the annuals of the National Academy or Watercolor Society.[309] If there was a single picture that received a majority of attention, it was Peter Rothermel's *Battle of Gettysburg* (1870; Pennsylvania State Capitol, Harrisburg), which was almost unanimously condemned as bad painting and in bad taste to be shown in this forum. Critics disliked the subject,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which they assumed would raise the specter of the sectional rifts that the Centennial celebrations worked hard to erase. They attacked Rothermel's style as well. The selection committee was lambasted for allowing the work to be shown.[310]

What is useful in the criticisms of the American art at the Centennial is that particular attitudes towards art in general and the state of American art were summarized and suggestions were given for what American artists should strive towards. In concert with these summations came some definitions for American art with Homer's work used as an example. Foremost among the considerations was the question of national characteristics—both of their possibility and what, if accepted as a possibility, they might be. Of course, the idea of and concern for a national art in America had been in evidence from the early Federal period.[311] Through the mid-1870s the issue was increasingly codified as the philosophy of Hippolyte Taine gained acceptance. Taine's factors for determining national character are best described through his famous phrase "race, milieu, and moment." As Martha Wolfenstein has noted, what Taine valued as great in art was its ability to represent "the mode of being of a whole nation," and both its success and its failure "revolved around the problem of the relation of history to values," that is, how the concept of a universal standard for art could be reconciled with historical variations of art.[312] Up to 1875, the critics wrestled with the notion of what made universally great art versus what made American art, but with the greater influx of the European-trained artists beginning in 1875, the rise of a more cosmopolitan outlook further complicated the issue for artists and critics alike. As Linda Docherty has pointed out, the dilemma was increasingly constructed around the question of how American art

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

could remain distinctive but be the aesthetic equal of the great artistic traditions of Europe.[313] In the context of the American art at Philadelphia, "Alexis" in the *Mail*, for example, questioned whether there could even be national characteristics in art since the world was becoming smaller due to better transportation, communication, and the like. For him, the art of the United States was a "potpourri," with the only national aspect being home subjects.[314] As a result, the implications of the absorption of European technique continued to be central in the minds of many critics, and opinions were divided as to its acceptability. While most critics agreed that the acquisition of European methods was a necessity to achieve technical skill, they continually worried that Americans would hold on to them too tightly and not move on to their own distinct idiom.[315]

During the Centennial, as some critics used their reviews as a platform to define what constituted art, notions about the role of the artist came to the fore. Susan Nichols Carter complained of the present tendencies and she suggested a remedy: "Many of the best landscapes appear like pictures seen in the camera, and entirely lack the quality which Emerson so pertinently applies to good delineation, as 'Nature passed through the alembic of man'.... [I]t is the realistic facts of nature dominated by some strong mood of man that give them their importance."[316] While she focused on landscape painting here, the idea that distillation must occur in concert with the artist's own reaction to his subject was central to Carter's argument. Using the English exhibition as an example, the *American Architect and Building News* presented its own standards of excellence for art. It outlined, among other things: "First of all...it is pure and high minded and always full of sentiment...a notable predominance of the aesthetic over the material element...a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

distinguished aptness for the selection of subjects, a direct and comprehensive way of telling a story, and a power of expression that is much deeper and better grounded than appears at first sight."[317] Although a subject connected to elevated thought ranked highest on this list of guidelines, the artist's manipulation of it was crucial. Earl Shinn, in his *Masterpiece of the International Exposition*, wrote the most in-depth study of the art contributions. In it, he characterized the predominant approaches to art, stating his clear preference: "A true artist has three chief concerns, the coloring of his picture, the lighting of his picture and its plastic difficulties or difficulties of drawing. A literary man astray in the craft thinks first of his narrative. If his expressions are telling and his incident lively and readable, he believes he has made a good picture—and the world, little occupied with such distinctions, is easily induced to think so too."[318] Shinn, agreeing with his colleagues and most articulately stating their shared position, then pointed out the importance of an artist's personal insight:

> In art, there is no glory in making conventional beauty; without there is something of real piercing insight in our copies from nature, they had better not be published. Unless the painter can get at some seldom-observed and essential characteristic of his model—something that strikes the trained critic as he is struck by some sudden touch, straight from the heart, in a drama—there is nothing gained.... But let him once express, with insight and authority, a subtle natural fact; let him indicate the pearly reflection and blood-fed quality of human flesh in light or shadow, let him remind us of the value of natural lights and darks in objects seen against the sky; let him touch us with the reminiscence of his own personal discoveries in the aspects of nature, and we recognize him immediately, and forgive a deal of puerility or haste.[319]

Shinn's comments convey the eerie feeling that he had Homer specifically in mind as he described the artist's struggle to balance the narrative and aesthetic aspects in a personalized expression of visual and emotional experience. For Shinn and these other

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

writers, there was a growing emphasis on the importance of the maker and his individuality of imagination, inspiration, and manner.

In the reviews of the Centennial exhibition, Homer's name most frequently appeared in those which identified American characteristics in works on display. It was most obviously Homer's home subjects, along with those of Eastman Johnson and John George Brown, that served as examples of quintessential and representative American art. *Snap the Whip* was singled out as particularly American on account of its subject of American boys engaged in an American game. That activity was pointed out by the *Mail* as national in essence because "foreign boys don't play as our boys play."[320] Whereas subject matter was the usual element that defined American art, "Gar" in the *Times* suggested that the American school was asserting itself in other ways: "The prevailing idea of this school is an exuberant sense of sunshine and sympathy with nature." *Snap the Whip* and Johnson's *Old Stage Coach* were cited as excellent examples of such an expression.[321] "Gar's" comment suggests not only that the places and scenes depicted in these canvases were recognizably American, but that the use of bright, outdoor light as an integral element of a pictures' subject and artistic construction was a distinguishing national characteristic.

Individual discussions of Homer were minimal in the Centennial reviews, although he was often listed as represented. When he was mentioned, the writers often rehashed or reconfirmed their usual commentary about his work. Homer's unconventionality, freshness of subject and treatment, free and bold handling, and genuine motives were all

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mentioned positively. The negative comments all focused on his technical deficiencies as, usual.[322] In one case, however, *Snap the Whip* was listed as one of the works that made "our older artists famous."[323] This was the first time Homer was named as an "older" artist; as recently as the 1876 National Academy annual reviews, he had been considered a "younger man." Thus, this moment marks the first indication of change in Homer's status as an artist—from younger to older and from front-runner to a less-prominent position—since his rise to the top of the young, home artists in 1866 with *Prisoners from the Front.*

After the closing of the 1876 Academy annual, what was called the "Centennial Loan" exhibition was held jointly at the National Academy and at the barely six-year-old Metropolitan Museum of Art. This adjunct of the Centennial celebration was created to showcase the best private collections in New York City and to suggest the great strides that had been made by American collectors. European art predominated, and those writing about the show primarily engaged in giving the collectors hearty pats on the back for their endeavors.[324] With John Taylor Johnston's collection included in the Metropolitan's installation, Homer was in view all summer long with *Prisoners from the Front.* Although the American pictures, both collectively and individually, were little discussed, a few writers singled out Homer's *chef d'oeuvre.* Clarence Cook, once again, took the opportunity to praise the canvas for its importance as an *American* painting. It stood high on his list of best American works both for its "merit" as a picture and as "one of the few real contributions made by Art to the history of the war."[325] The *World,* although it used the showing of *Prisoners from the Front* as the springboard for its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

comments, focused instead on Homer's more recent creations shown at the Academy. His newer work was compared favorably to that of the writer Bret Harte. What Homer had accomplished in paint in his depictions of the American boy was likened to what Harte had accomplished in words for the pioneer.[326] Conversely it was noticed Eastman Johnson received extensive praise, but in his case, it was suggested the commendations were due less to the quality of his works than to the fact that so many others were so bad.[327]

Whether or not Homer visited the Centennial exposition is unknown. "All the artists are running down to Philadelphia," quipped the *Herald*, and given Philadelphia's proximity to New York, Homer easily could have been among those who went.[328] In the height of the summer, however, he returned to the Catskills and was reported to be visiting both Leeds and Hurley in July and August.[329] In the fall of 1876, Homer made his first documented visit to Houghton Farm, Lawson Valentine's new country property at Mountainville, near West Point, New York.[330] This locale would play an important role in Homer's development over the next several years.

Homer remained out of the city until November this year.[331] The main art event of the early winter season was the John Taylor Johnston Sale, held 19-20 December. Although most reports of the sale focused on the market aspect, *Prisoners from the Front* was again recognized as Homer's first important and still best painting. The *Telegram* reiterated what had been repeated so many times over the past decade: "Winslow Homer's *Prisoners from the Front*, though one of the first works which earned a good reputation for an artist who is still a young man, remains his best picture, in spite of its bad drawing,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and we think it is the best picture which has yet been occasioned by our civil war."[332] Even with the acclaim *A Fair Wind* had received barely six months earlier, *Prisoners from the Front* still stood as Homer's crowning achievement and perpetuated his identification as a developing painter.

Despite the feelings of national pride generated by the Centennial Exposition, 1876 was a hard year for America. As the Centennial celebration focused on the accomplishments of the last hundred years, the reality of another possible financial panic loomed large. The economic situation and its effect on the art world were liberally discussed in the press.[333] Homer was among those affected. Clarence Cook, after a visit to Homer's studio, noted that the artist had commented on his disappointment that: "not only was there a dull market for pictures, but what was of still more consequence, people seemed to have lost interest in the progress of artists in New York."[334] Homer's concerns went beyond financial realities. His words made clear that there was more than money at stake as his personal experience in 1876 testified. This very year he had gotten the highest praise for an oil painting in a number of years, yet his watercolors had been criticized as never before. His position as young or old (and respectively innovative or more conventional) was in flux; and a painting ten years old was still considered his best. Responses to Homer's art were a mix of praise and condemnation and related to wide-ranging issues, all of which suggest the considerable changes and the array of ideas swirling in the New York art world. In the coming year, as a number of things came to a head (most notably the formation of the Society of American Artists), Homer, American art, and its critics would embark on a new chapter.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to Chapter 4

[1] The Panic of 1873 was set off by the failure of Jay Cooke's powerful banking firm after a period of unbridled railroad speculation. The collapse of the securities market and rampant unemployment followed. On the impact of the depression see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-77* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), pp. 511-59. The radical nature of the vast changes in New York is suggested even in Homer's work for magazines. While the number of Homer's illustrations remained constant in 1874, his assignments included urban subjects touching on problems of the day. Subjects such as "Station-House Lodgers" (*Harper's Weekly* 18 [7 February 1874], p. 132) and "The Chinese in New York—Scene in a Baxter Street Club House" (*Harper's Weekly* 18 [7 March 1874], p. 212) illustrated the growing problems of crime, immigration, and drug abuse in New York City.

[2] The main text on the watercolor movement in America, to whom anyone working on watercolor in this period is indebted, is Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement." A recent addition to the literature on the American Watercolor Society and its effect on exhibition watercolors is: Barbara Dayer Gallati, "The Exhibition Watercolor in America," in *Masters of Color and Light*, pp. 41-68.

[3] On the response to this exhibition, see Susan P. Casteras, "The 1857-58 Exhibition of English Art in America: Critical Responses to Pre-Raphaelitism," in *The New Path*, pp. 109-133.

[4] On the watercolors of the American Pre-Raphaelites, see Kathleen A. Foster, "The Pre-Raphaelite Medium: Ruskin, Turner, and American Watercolor," in *The New Path*, pp. 79-108.

[5] Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," p. 21.

[6] Ibid., p. 30, 54.

[7] For an overview of Fortuny's influence on America, see Edward J. Sullivan, "Fortuny in America: His Collectors and Disciples," in *Fortuny: 1838-1874*, exh. cat. (Barcelona: Fundació Caixa de Pensions, 1989), pp. 102-116.

[8] See, for example, "The Water-Color Exhibition. The Progress of the Society. Second Article," *Post*, 17 February 1874, p. 1, and "Fine Arts. The Exhibition of the Society of Water-Color Painters," *Mail*, 29 January 1874, p. 1.

[9] "The Fine Arts. The American Society of Painters in Water-Colors–Seventh Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 29 January 1874, p. 4.

[10] See, for example, "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Times*, 29 January 1874, p. 8, and "Art Matters. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Express*, 29 January 1874, p. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[11] *Times*, 29 January 1874, p. 8.

[12] "Art Matters. The Water Color Exhibition," *Herald*, 28 January 1874, p. 4. Similar thoughts were expressed in "The Water Color Exhibition," *World*, 5 February 1874, pp. 4-5.

[13] The three artists were praised at the expense of others in *Tribune*, 29 January 1874, p. 4; "Art Matters. American Society of Painters in Water Colors–Seventh Annual Exhibition," *Herald*, 29 January 1874, p. 7; "The Water-Color Exhibition. Last Evening at the Academy of Design," *Daily Graphic*, 29 January 1874, p. 600; and "Culture and Progress. American Water Colors," *Scribner's* 7 (April 1874), pp. 760-61.

[14] Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," p. 48

[15] Homer's primary interest in watercolor was artistic. See Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," pp. 49-53. While financial gains from watercolors came later, in 1875, when he stopped illustrating, he had not yet made substantial sums from his watercolors. As a writer noted that year: "even now water-color pictures are far from being appreciated as they deserve." ("The Fine Arts. Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Times*, 31 January 1875, p. 7). More recently, Jana Colacino has suggested Homer's interest in watercolor was directly related to his interest in the color theories of M. E. Chevreul. See Jana Colacino, "Winslow Homer's Watercolors and the Color Theories of M. E. Chevreul" (master's thesis, Syracuse University, 1994), pp. 26-27.

[16] Homer had shown a watercolor of a garden scene with a figure at the Century in November 1873. Perhaps positive responses in that forum encouraged him to bring the work to a larger audience. "Art at the Century," *Post*, 3 November 1873, p. 2.

[17] *Catalogue of the Seventh Annual Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors*, exh. cat. (New York: privately printed, 1874), no. 34. Listed as a single entry in the catalogue, there is no indication of how many "leaves" were shown.

[18] It is impossible to know who assigned the title to the sheets since there are no records to indicate their title prior to the printed version of the catalogue.

[19] "Art. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Aldine* 7 (May 1874), p. 107, and "The Watercolor Exhibition," *World*, 5 February 1874, pp. 4-5.

[20] "Fine Arts. Why the Exhibition of Water-Colors is Succeeding," *Mail*, 18 February 1874, p. 1, and "Fine Arts and Music. National Academy of Design–The Forty-Ninth Annual Exhibition. Third Article," *Tribune*, 13 April 1874, p. 7.

[21] *Post*, 28 January 1874, p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[22] [Earl Shinn], "Notes," *Nation* 18 (12 March 1874), p. 172.

[23] *World*, 5 February 1874, pp. 4-5. Clarence Cook also remarked positively on Homer's originality in "Fine Arts. The Water Color Exhibition," *Tribune*, 14 February 1874, p. 7.

[24] Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," pp. 118-26. The comparisons to Bryant were made, this year, in "Art. The Water-Color Collection. Second Article," *Appleton's* 11 (28 February 1874), pp. 283-84, and "Fine Arts – Drama – Music. Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Tribune*, 23 February 1874, p. 7. There were four Atlantic City marine subjects by Richards in the exhibition, all owned by George Whitney. Although its provenance is not known with absolute certainty, *A High Tide at Atlantic City* may well have been one of those sheets.

[25] For typical reactions to Bellows work, see "Fine Arts," *Post*, 17 February 1874, p. 1, and *Mail*, 18 February 1874, p. 1. On the acceptance of delicateness in art, see "Art," *Atlantic* 32 (April 1874), pp. 502-9.

[26] Such words were used, for example, in [Shinn], *Nation* 18 (12 March 1874), p. 172; *World*, 5 February 1874, p. 4-5; and *Mail*, 29 January 1874, p. 1. The use of adjectives associated with masculinity was pervasive in the responses to Homer's art in the seventies, as in other periods of his oeuvre.

[27] *Mail*, 18 February 1874, p. 1.

[28] [Shinn], *Nation* 18 (12 March 1874), p. 172.

[29] *World*, 5 February 1874, p. 5.

[30] *Tribune*, 14 February 1874, p. 7.

[31] *Mail*, 18 February 1874, p. 1.

[32] *Daily Graphic*, 7 February 1874, p. 663.

[33] *Tribune*, 14 February 1874, p. 7.

[34] *Mail*, 18 February 1874, p. 1.

[35] The energy and time that the work in watercolor must have taken between the summer of 1873 and early 1874 surely affected Homer's activity in oil. In some years, such as 1874, 1878, and 1879, concerted efforts in watercolor seems to have been responsible for a decrease in oils. For example, he had created twenty-nine canvases in 1873, but only nineteen came from his hand in 1874.

[36] See "Fine Arts. American Art–The Palette Club Exhibition," *Times*, 9 April 1874, p. 4; "Fine Arts-Music-Drama. Fine Arts. National Academy of Design—Private View—

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Forty-Ninth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 9 April 1874, p. 4; and "The Spring Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Herald*, 7 April 1874, p. 8.

[37] Homer's attendance at the meetings of March 23, March 30, April 6, April 20, and April 27 is recorded in the Minutes of the National Academy of Design Council, National Academy of Design Archives.

[38] *School Time* measures 13 x 19 ¼ inches. *Dad's Coming* measures 9 x 13 ¾ inches. *Girl in a Hammock*, described in "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition," *Times*, 6 April 1874, p. 2, as "a girl in leafy summertime reading in a hammock swung among the trees" is most likely the Cooper-Hewitt's canvas entitled *Sunlight and Shadow*, which measures 15 ¾ x 22 ½ inches and is therefore the largest of the three works. It is harder to precisely identify *Sunday Morning*. It could be the painting known today as *In the Hammock* (private collection), which measures 13 ¼ x 19 ¾ inches.

[39] *A Temperance Meeting*, which measures 20 x 30 inches, was significantly larger than the works Homer sent to the Academy. The collection at Leavitt's was the inventory of dealer Rufus Moore. "City Intelligence. Leavitt Art Rooms. Paintings by American Artists," *Post*, 6 March 1874, p. 1.

[40] The exhibition was covered by at least ten newspapers and six magazines. It is not known if the *Express* reviewed the show, since microfilm reels available lacked the months during which the exhibition was held. For reviews of the positive notice, see, for example, "City Intelligence. Schenck's Art Gallery. Exhibition of Fine Paintings," *Post*, 8 April 1874, p. 2; "Art at the Academy," *Telegram*, 11 April 1874, p. 1; "The Academy Exhibition," *World*, 9 April 1874, p. 4; and *Times*, 6 April 1874, p. 2. In no review was there a truly dissenting voice.

[41] *Herald*, 7 April 1874, p. 8. The *Herald* and "National Academy of Design," *Post*, 25 April 1874, p. 1, noted, too, that adverse influences on American art, including the influx of foreign art and the 1873 depression, needed to be held at bay.

[42] In the case of Church's *Petra*, the *Post* praised it for its "rare force and beauty," while the *World* criticized it as unworthy of the artist's brush because it was neither pictorial nor interesting. "National Academy of Design," *Post*, 8 April 1874, p. 2, and "National Academy of Design. First Article," *World*, 19 April 1874, p. 2. "The New Departure at the National Academy," *Mail*, 9 April 1874, p. 2, and *Telegram*, 11 April 1874, p. 1, agreed with the *Post*, while "Fine Arts. The Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Sun*, 15 April 1874, p. 2, and [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. II," *Nation* 18 (14 May 1874), pp. 320-21 concurred with the *World*.

[43] *World*, 19 April 1874, p. 2.

[44] The painting was described as "a woman—presumably a shepherd girl—clinging to a wayside cross in the midst of a terrible snow storm. In the foreground are crowded

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

together a flock of sheep wild with terror. On the left, two dogs crouch together, blinded and frightened by the violence of the tempest." *Sun*, 15 April 1874, p. 2.

[45] "Fine Arts. The Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Mail*, 25 April 1874, p. 1. The *Mail* was the only paper that truly disliked the painting, though others were critical of particular aspects.

[46] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Forty-Ninth Annual Exhibition. Second Article," *Tribune*, 11 April 1874, p. 7. The hanging committee members were John Beaufain Irving, David Johnson, and Carl Brandt, all artists for whom careful drawing and execution in paint were important aspects of their own work.

[47] "The Academy of Design. Some Gems of the Present Exhibition," *Herald*, 20 April 1874, p. 3.

[48] "Fine Arts," *Tribune*, 9 April 1874, p. 4.

[49] "Culture and Progress. The Academy Exhibition," *Scribner's* 8 (June 1874), p. 245.

[50] "Art. The Academy Exhibition," *Appleton's* 11 (25 April 1874), p. 540.

[51] "The Academy of Design. The Private View—List of Pictures Sold," *Times*, 9 April 1874, p. 4.

[52] "Fine Arts. Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Daily Graphic*, 9 April 1874, p. 290; *Times*, 9 April 1874, p. 4; and *Mail*, 9 April 1874, p. 2.

[53] See, for example, "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design—Forty-Ninth Annual Exhibition. Fifth Article," *Tribune*, 24 April 1874, p. 5; "Art. Composition Pictures at the Academy," *Appleton's* 11 (16 May 1874), p. 636; and "National Academy of Design," *Post*, 4 May 1874, p. 1.

[54] The writer did not outrightly condemn particular works but found elements to criticize in the pictures of artists as diverse as Frederick Bridgman, George Inness, and Enoch Wood Perry. *Daily Graphic*, 9 April 1874, p. 290.

[55] "Art Matters. The Spring Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Herald*, 9 April 1874, p. 6.

[56] *Tribune*, 11 April 1874, p. 7

[57] *Herald*, 20 April 1874, p. 3. See also, "Fine Arts. The Academy of Design," *Times*, 13 April 1874, p. 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[58] "National Academy of Design. Second Article," *World*, 27 April 1874, p. 5. The critic for the *World* did not really praise anyone's work, but his preferences ran towards the younger artists, such as Vedder and Coleman.

[59] *Sun*, 15 April 1874, p. 2.

[60] See "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. Second Notice—the East, West, and North Rooms," *Times*, 19 April 1874, p. 4, and *Sun*, 15 April 1874, p. 2.

[61] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. I," *Nation* 18 (7 May 1874), p. 304, and *Tribune*, 24 April 1874, p. 5.

[62] "City Intelligence," *Post*, 4 May 1874, p. 4; "Fine Arts-Music-Drama. Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Forty-Ninth Annual Exhibition. Fourth Article," *Tribune*, 18 April 1874, p. 6; *Times*, 19 April 1874, p. 4; and "Fine Arts. The Exhibition at the National Academy," *Mail*, 17 April 1874, p. 1.

[63] "The Exhibition. Some of the Notable Pictures," *Mail*, 10 April 1874, p. 1, and *Mail*, 17 April 1874, p. 1.

[64] *Tribune*, 18 April 1874, p. 6, and *World*, 19 April 1874, p. 2.

[65] Eastman Johnson also exhibited what were considered less significant works, but his *Prisoner of State* (unlocated), *Bo-Peep* (private collection), and *Tea Party* (Vance Jordan Gallery) received considerably more attention that did Homer's work.

[66] "Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. IV," *Watson's Art Journal* (13 June 1874), p. 1.

[67] *Post*, 4 May 1874, p. 1.

[68] *World*, 19 April 1874, p. 2.

[69] *Tribune*, 13 April 1874, p. 7.

[70] Ibid.

[71] *Times*, 6 April 1874, p. 2.

[72] *Times*, 19 April 1874, p. 4. The differences in reactions here could have been the result of the differences between the two paintings or because the reviews were penned by different authors.

[73] [Shinn], *Nation* 18 (7 May 1874), pp. 304-5. The subject of a young woman alone and at ease in *Girl in a Hammock* and *Sunday Morning* generally pleased those who noticed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

it, as opposed to the negative reactions in 1870 elicited by the images of more active women in *Bridle Path* and *Eagle Head.*

[74] Linda Ayres, "Lawson Valentine, Houghton Farm, and Winslow Homer," in *Winslow Homer in the 1870s*, p. 19.

[75] Homer was reported back from the Adirondacks in "Art Notes," *Daily Graphic*, 19 June 1874, p. 835. See also Tatham, *Winslow Homer in the Adirondacks*, p. 49. Homer's watercolor *The Painter Eliphalet Terry Fishing from a Boat* (1874; Century Association) was painted on the earlier summer trip. See Margaret C. Conrads, *American Paintings and Sculpture in the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute* (New York: Hudson Hills, 1990), pp. 70-72.

[76] Tatham, *Winslow Homer in the Adirondacks*, p. 60.

[77] An October 1874 photograph pictures all four men, along with others. See Ibid.

[78] The reports of Homer's stay on Long Island can be found in "Art Notes," *Post*, 25 July 1874, p. 2, and "Movements of Artists," *Watson's Art Journal* (1 August 1874), p. 142.

[79] *Post*, 25 July 1874, p. 2.

[80] "Art Matters. Studio Gossip," *Express*, 31 October 1874, p. 1.

[81] Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., "Reconstruction," NGA 1995, p. 98. On the upheavals as Reconstruction policies shifted from hopeful solutions to actual disasters, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, especially chapters 8-11, pp. 346-559.

[82] See Cikovsky, "Reconstruction," NGA 1995, pp. 97-98.

[83] John Ferguson Weir recollected that Homer, when employed by *Harper's Weekly*, "struggled to get out of it to take up more important work." Theodore Sizer, ed., *The Recollections of John Ferguson Weir* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 46. Over the next decade Homer would create works to be published as illustrations, but they were only occasional excursions. See Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book*, pp. 300-301.

[84] The works shown included entries titled: *A Pot Fisherman*; *A Fisherman's Daughter*; *On the Fence* (possibly Williams College Museum of Art); *Fly Fishing; A Clam Bake* (Cleveland Museum of Art); *Why Don't the Suckers Bite?* (Addison Gallery of American Art); *Pull Him In!; Cow Boys; The Bazaar Book of Decorum; Good Morning; A Farm Team; Green Apples; On the Sands; Riding at Anchor* (possibly *Boy with Anchor*; Cleveland Museum of Art); *What Is It?* (private collection); *The Changing Basket; Another Girl; The Thaddeus of Warsaw; Skirting the Wheat; A Lazy Day; The City of Gloucester; An Oil Prince; Adirondack Guides; In Charge of Baby* (private collection); *A*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Basket of Clams (private collection); *How Many Eggs* (private collection); *A Sick Chicken* (National Gallery of Art); *Idle Hours*; and seven sheets, each titled *Sketch—In Black and White.* The whereabouts of those listed without locations are unknown.

[85] Only the *Commercial Advertiser* of the major dailies did not cover the show. The *Mail* had the most extensive coverage with six articles. The *Post* followed in volume with five. Even magazines, notably the *Nation* and *Appleton's*, had multiple reviews. New on the art periodical scene this year was the New York edition of the *Art Journal.* Its appearance brought not only another voice to the exhibition reviews, but an influx of art articles, many monographic and well illustrated, of American and European artists.

[86] The single dissenting voice came from the *World.* Brownell's criticism of the show centered on the fact that it was an exhibit not strictly of the members of the Watercolor Society, and that artist-members had contributed only a small percentage of the works. He was angry also because works from private collections and, especially, foreign works were included. Brownell noted that he was sounding his alarm for the benefit of those who were the hard workers in watercolor. His concerns seem to arise from his sympathy with those trying to survive as artists in New York City, many of whom were his friends. His complaints about the show are peppered throughout the series of reviews. See "The Water-Color Exhibition. First Notice," *World*, 8 February 1875, p. 5; "The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Notice," *World*, 15 February 1875, p. 5; and "A Last Word With The Water-Colorists," *World*, 27 February 1875, pp. 5-6.

[87] See, for example, "The Water-Color Exhibition. Progress of the Society—Some of the Pictures. Second Article," *Post*, 10 February 1875, p. 1; "American Water Colors," *Times*, 21 February 1875, p. 6; and "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 4 February 1875, p. 6.

[88] These factors were mentioned in "Art and Artists. The Progress Made in Painting in Water Color," *Telegram*, 1 February 1875, p. 4; "Fine Arts. Close of the Exhibition of the American Water Color Society," *Tribune*, 1 March 1875, p. 4; and "Water Color Exhibitions," *Herald*, 14 February 1875, p. 8.

[89] "The Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition–Concluding Notice," *Times*, 14 February 1875, p. 5.

[90] "Art Matters. The Water-Color Exhibition. First Article," *Express*, 6 February 1875, p. 1.

[91] "The Fine Arts. Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Times*, 31 January 1875, p. 7.

[92] "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Mail*, 16 February 1875, p. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[93] See, for example, *Post*, 10 February 1875, p. 1; "The Fine Arts. American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Times*, 7 February 1875, p. 9; and "The Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Appleton's* 13 (13 February 1875), p. 216.

[94] "American Society of Painter in Water-Colours," *Art Journal* 1 (March 1875), pp. 91-92.

[95] *World*, 8 February 1875, p. 5, and "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 11 February 1875, pp. 6-7.

[96] "Fine Arts. American Society of Painters in Water Colors—Eighth Annual Exhibition—Private View," *Tribune*, 1 February 1875, p. 7; *Art Journal* 1 (March 1875), pp. 91-92; "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Post*, 23 February 1875, p. 1; and "Painters in Water-Colors," *Express*, 1 February 1875, p. 4.

[97] *Post*, 10 February 1875, p. 1; "The Water Color Exhibition," *Herald*, 10 February 1875, p. 6; and "The Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Paper," *Appleton's* 13 (20 February 1875), pp. 247-48. Only the group of American landscapes were seen as good enough to compete with or surpass the Europeans. "Culture and Progress. Eighth Exhibition of the Water-Color Society," *Scribner's* 9 (April 1875), pp. 762-64, saw the American landscapes as the best work overall; [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition – Loan Exhibition of the Union League," *Nation* 20 (4 February 1875), p. 84; *Art Journal* 1 (March 1875), pp. 91-92; and *Post*, 10 February 1875, p. 1, picked out the landscape work as the strongest competition for the European.

[98] Gouache, most often called bodycolor in the nineteenth century, mixed pigment with white as well as water, making the medium opaque. Transparency in watercolor is achieved by adding only water to pure pigments. Linda and Peter Murray, *A Dictionary of Art and Artists* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 50, 437-38.

[99] A positive reaction to these qualities was remarked on in "Fine Arts. The Opening of the Water-Color Exhibition," *Mail*, 30 January 1875, p. 1; *Telegram*, 1 February 1875, p. 4; *Herald*, 10 February 1875, p. 6; and *Times*, 31 January 1875, p. 7.

[100] Such qualities were admired by, among others, *Express*, 1 February 1875, p. 4; *Telegram*, 1 February 1875, p. 4; and *Appleton's* 13 (20 February 1875), pp. 247-48. In a number of cases, the preference for transparency was expressed as the condemnation of bodycolor or praise for its absence. Such was the case in *Herald*, 10 February 1875, p. 6; "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Sun*, 10 February 1875, p. 2; and *Mail*, 30 January 1875, p. 1. This loosely-defined group received its name from the fact that, although the members hailed from a number of nations, they generally congregated to paint in Italy, most often Rome. Fortuny, for example, was Spanish as was Villegas. Of others often associated with the Roman School, Simonetti was Italian and Jehan Georges Vibert was French. See "W. R. Johnson, "Fortuny and His Circle," *Walters Art Gallery Bulletin*, supplement no. 2 (April 1970), n. p.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[101] Henry James, "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), pp. 91-92. The watercolors of the Spanish-Italian artists James used as his reference point were not only those in the Watercolor Society show, but also ones that were on view simultaneously at Goupil's.

[102] "Fine Arts. The American Society of Painters in Water Colors – Eighth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 22 February 1875, p. 5.

[103] *World*, 15 February 1875, p. 5, and *World*, 27 February 1875, pp. 5-6.

[104] "Art," *Atlantic* 35 (April 1875), pp. 508-9.

[105] On Matthew Arnold in America, see John Henry Raleigh, *Matthew Arnold and American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957). For succinct statements of Arnold's philosophy, see especially pp. 23 and 31. Influencing, too, the *Atlantic's* viewpoint may have been the desire in the 1870s for assimilation on multiple fronts in American culture and society. See John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955), pp. 19-21.

[106] Erastus South, "Fine Arts. The Water Colors at the Academy – The Lotus Club Monthly Art Reception," *Daily Graphic*, 2 February 1875, p. 672; *World*, 15 February 1875, p. 5; and "Art Notes," *Herald*, 15 February 1875, p. 5.

[107] *Telegram*, 1 February 1875, p. 4.

[108] Only four of the reviews discuss specific watercolors. Discussing the work as a group simply may have been a mechanism used by critics to deal with such a large contribution from a single artist.

[109] *Scribner's* 9 (April 1875), p. 764.

[110] *Tribune*, 22 February 1875, p. 5.

[111] Ibid. The watercolor is described quite fully in *Post*, 10 February 1875, and it matches in reverse Scott's illustration in *Harper's Weekly* (see fig. 44).

[112] *Tribune*, 22 February 1875, p. 5.

[113] The watercolor is so described in Robert J. Titterton, *Julian Scott: Artist of the Civil War and Native America* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co.,1997), p. 121. It seems to have resembled a colored drawing and did not make use of transparent washes as the vehicle of description.

[114] *World*, 15 February 1875, p. 5. It was even more critical of someone like Walter Satterlee, the artist most closely identified with Fortuny's influence.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[115] Ibid. *Scribner's* agreed with *World's* assessments of both Morgan and Satterlee; *Scribner's* 9 (April 1875), pp. 762-64.

[116] "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Mail*, 22 February 1875, p. 1.

[117] *Express*, 6 February 1875, p. 1.

[118] James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), p. 91.

[119] *Sun*, 10 February 1875, p. 2.

[120] *Appleton's* 13 (13 February 1875), p. 216.

[121] *Times*, 7 February 1875, p. 9; South, *Daily Graphic*, 2 February 1875, p. 672; "Art Matters. The Water Color Exhibition. Second Article," *Express*, 13 February 1875, p. 1; and *Appleton's* 13 (13 February 1875), p. 216.

[122] These are works that also have more easily constructed narratives. *Times*, 7 February 1875, p. 9, and *Times*, 14 February 1875, p. 5.

[123] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society's Exhibition. II," *Nation* 20 (18 February 1875), p. 119. It is worthwhile noting that Lucy Hooper, later in the year, commented similarly about the work of Edouard Manet in the Paris Salon. She noted that his figures looked "cut out of sheet-tin." Lucy Hooper, "Fine Arts," *Appleton's* 11 (20 June 1874), p. 796.

[124] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society's Exhibition. III," *Nation* 20 (4 March 1875), p. 156.

[125] *Atlantic* 35 (April 1875), p. 508.

[126] *Independent*, 11 February 1875, pp. 6-7.

[127] *Art Journal* 1 (March 1875), pp. 91-92.

[128] *Scribner's* 9 (April 1875), p. 764.

[129] "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Mail*, 10 February 1875, p. 1.

[130] As Lesley Wright has pointed out, the positive reactions the works elicited were, in part, likely due to the warm sentiment images of simple extractions of child-life conjured for artists, patrons, and critics alike. Wright has discussed how such images were tied to a construct of beliefs and values shared by those most likely to come in contact with Homer's work. Wright, "Men Making Meaning," pp. 17-18 and passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[131] Eleven newspapers and six magazines covered the exhibition in depth. The *Sun* especially marked the silver anniversary by beginning its review with an overview of the history of American art. ("The National Academy of Design. A Half Century of American Painting," *Sun*, 21 April 1875, p. 2.) Conversely, the *Commercial Advertiser* only noted the fact of its opening. (*Commercial Advertiser*, 8 April 1875, p. 3.) The *Mail* also had unusually brief coverage, perhaps reflecting the decrease in staff the previous year. (See Chapter 1).

[132] Such reasons for praise were offered, for example, in "National Academy of Design. Opening of the Fiftieth Annual Exhibition," *Post*, 7 April 1875, p. 2; "The Academy Exhibition," *Daily Graphic*, 10 April 1875, p. 303; [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. Fiftieth Annual Exhibition of the Academy of Design. I," *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), pp. 264-65; and "The National Academy of Design," *Art Journal* 1 (May 1875), pp. 155-58.

[133] "The Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Times*, 10 April 1875, p. 3.

[134] "The Arts," *Appleton's* 13 (24 April 1875), pp. 534-36; C. L. N., "Fine Art. The National Academy at New York," *Old and New* 11 (May 1875), pp. 617-19.

[135] "Art Matters. Academy of Design–The Fiftieth Annual Exhibition," *Express*, 8 April 1875, p. 2; "Academy of Design. Opening of the Fiftieth Annual Exhibition," *Herald*, 8 April 1875, p. 12; and "The Fine Arts. The Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Times*, 17 April 1875, p. 3. Homer's entry, *Uncle Ned*, in fact, had been exhibited previously at the Century in January 1874. A listing of some of the works already shown appeared in "The Academy and the Clubs," *Tribune*, 10 April 1875, p. 2.

[136] "The National Academy of Design. Second Article," *World*, 15 May 1875, pp. 4-5.

[137] "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design–Fiftieth Annual Exhibition–Private View," *Tribune*, 9 April 1875, p. 7. Cook was clear that it was the Academy that was in the rut and not the whole of American art, which he felt was not adequately represented, due, in part, to the rule.

[138] *Sun*, 21 April 1875, p. 2.

[139] "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design. Fiftieth Annual Exhibition. Third Notice," *Tribune*, 29 April 1875, p. 7.

[140] James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), p. 94.

[141] "Fine Arts. A Word for the Painters," *Daily Graphic*, 15 May 1875, p. 571.

[142] The younger men were praised as a group in "The Spring Exhibition. Varnishing Day at the Academy of Design," *World*, 7 April 1875, p. 2; *Herald*, 8 April 1875, p. 12; [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. Fiftieth Exhibition of the Academy of Design. II," *Nation* 20 (22

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

April 1875), pp. 281-82; and "Culture and Progress. The Academy of Design," *Scribner's* 10 (June 1875), pp. 251-52.

[143] *Tribune*, 9 April 1875, p. 7, and *Scribner's* 10 (June 1875), pp. 251-52.

[144] "The National Academy of Design," *Express*, 28 May 1875, p. 1.

[145] *World*, 15 May 1875, pp. 4-5.

[146] *Appleton's* 13 (24 April 1875), pp. 534-35.

[147] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (22 April 1875), pp. 281-82. Among those concurring were *Herald*, 8 April 1875, p. 12, and "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 29 April 1875, p. 6.

[148] S. N. C. [Susan Nichols Carter], "The Academy Exhibition. I. The Portraits and Fancy Heads," *Post*, 17 April 1875, p. 1.

[149] James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), pp. 94-95.

[150] Cook did not name specific artists of the "millinery" or "good anecdote" schools, but it seems likely he was referring to Fortuny and his followers in the first case and possibly the British narrative painters such as Luke Fildes in the latter.

[151] *Tribune*, 29 April 1875, p. 7. It was the fine draftsmanship of the French-trained Frederick Bridgman and Wyatt Eaton that inspired Cook's praise for foreign-trained artists, although he admired Munich-trained David Neal.

[152] *Tribune*, 9 April 1874, p. 7.

[153] S. N. C., *Post*, 17 April 1875, p. 1.

[154] *Express*, 8 April 1875, p. 2, and *Herald*, 8 April 1875, p. 12.

[155] S. N. C., *Post*, 17 April 1875, p. 1; *World*, 15 May 1875, pp. 4-5; and "The Fine Arts. New Pictures and Where They May Be Seen," *Times*, 25 April 1875, p. 10.

[156] On Americans in Munich, see Michael Quick and Eberhard Ruhmer, *Munich and American Realism in the Nineteenth Century*, exh. cat. (Sacramento, Calif.: E. B. Crocker Art Gallery, 1978).

[157] *Art Journal* 1 (May 1875), p. 158.

[158] Ibid., p. 157.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[159] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (22 April 1875), pp. 281-82; "Fine Arts. A Glimpse of the Pictures at the Academy of Design. Second Article," *Daily Graphic*, 16 April 1875, p. 347; and *Times*, 10 April 1875, p. 3.

[160] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (22 April 1875), p. 282. Similar remarks were made in *Times*, 10 April 1875, p. 3, and *Daily Graphic,* 16 April 1875, p. 347.

[161] *Art Journal* 1 (May 1875), p. 156.

[162] James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), pp. 90-91.

[163] *Tribune*, 29 April 1875, p. 7.

[164] *Express*, 28 May 1875, p. 1.

[165] *Landscape* was offered for sale and is likely *Haystacks and Children*, 15 ½ x 22 ½ inches (Cooper-Hewitt); *Milking Time* measures 24 x 38 inches and was for sale; *The Course of True Love* does not exist today and the dimensions are unknown. At the time of the 1875 Academy show it was owned by John H. Sherman. *Uncle Ned at Home* measures 14 x 22 inches and was listed for sale.

[166] While there is no evidence to suggest otherwise, the unsigned articles and lack of other documents prevent definitive proof that Clarence Cook was the author of the *Tribune* reviews. There also is the possibility that I am missing a review in which Homer is discussed, but there are four sequential reviews that cover the show quite thoroughly and include most of the important home and genre painters. See *Tribune*, 9 April 1875, p. 7; "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fiftieth Annual Exhibition. Second Notice," *Tribune*, 26 April 1875, p. 7; *Tribune*, 29 April 1875, p. 7; and "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design—Fiftieth Annual Exhibition. Fourth Notice," *Tribune*, 1 May 1875, p. 2.

[167] "The Arts," *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), p. 599, and James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), p. 90.

[168] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), p. 265.

[169] *Scribner's* 10 (June 1875), p. 251. The same was also said about Jervis McEntee's work.

[170] "Studio Notes," *World*, 22 March 1875, p. 5.

[171] *Post*, 7 April 1875, p. 2.

[172] The most complete description of the painting is found in *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), pp. 599-600. *Daily Graphic*, 16 April 1875, p. 347, described the woman in *The Course of True Love* as the same one in *Milking Time*.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[173] *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), p. 599.

[174] The *Galaxy* was particularly focused on marriage and women' issues. See, for example, Albert Rhodes, "The Coming Marriage," *Galaxy* 16 (September 1873), pp. 293-304, which included all kinds of American marriage statistics and the effects of marriage on American life, and Albert Rhodes, "The Marriage Question," *Galaxy* 20 (December 1875), pp. 756-67. Over several years, Junius Henri Browne had a series about women, exploring their qualities, rights, and place in American society. Perhaps most germane to *The Course of True Love* was "Women as Tacticians," *Galaxy* 16 (November 1873), pp. 662-70.

[175] Lesley Wright has investigated how such subjects, which created "paragraph pictures" and conjoined nostalgia, contemporary life issues, and basic human sentiment, connected to their viewers. See Wright, "Men Making Meaning," pp. 8, 78, 110-28.

[176] See, for example, *Sun*, 21 April 1875, p. 2, and [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), p. 265.

[177] On this topic in general, see Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, pp. 216-22 and passim.

[178] *Times*, 10 April 1875, p. 3, and *Times*, 25 April 1875, p. 10.

[179] "Art Notes," *Mail*, 5 November 1874, p. 1. This remark was made upon seeing the painting in Homer's studio. The *Nation* and *Appleton's* articulated similar sentiments and also suggested that the recognizably New England characters were key to its success. [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), p. 265, and *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), pp. 599.

[180] "Topics of the Time. About an American School of Art," *Scribner's* 10 (July 1875), p. 380.

[181] S. N. C. [Susan Nichols Carter], "The Academy Exhibition. III. Genre and Fancy Pictures," *Post*, 1 May 1875, p. 1.

[182] *Tribune*, 29 April 1875, p. 7, for example, concurred with S. N. C., *Post*, 1 May 1875, p. 1, in this regard.

[183] James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), pp. 93-94.

[184] See Viola Hopkins Winner, *Henry James and the Visual Arts* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970), pp. 22-30

[185] H. James, "Art," *Atlantic* 29, (March 1872), p. 372. Presently, a similar aim for art was outlined by the *Independent*: "It is the special aim of all art to excite the passions, rather than to convince the reason. Art is emotional not logical. Its chief aim is to fasten upon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the human sympathies by a direct appeal to the senses, and not to fetter or captivate the reason by an argument." "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 13 May 1875, p. 5.

[186] *Daily Graphic*, 10 April 1875, p. 303, and *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), p. 599.

[187] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), p. 265. Shinn saw in Homer's figures characterizations akin to James Russell Lowell's young rustic, Hosea Biglow, of *The Biglow Papers*, a representative of "homely common sense" and driven by his conscience. On Hosea Biglow, see Richmond Croom Beatty, *James Russell Lowell* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1942), pp. 75-76.

[188] [Shinn], "Fine Arts. Fiftieth Exhibition of the Academy of Design. IV," *Nation* 20 (20 May 1875), p. 352.

[189] This critic also criticized Eastman Johnson for his female figure in the *Toilet* (*The Earring*; Corcoran Gallery of Art) for seeming "stuck on the wall." *Scribner's* 10 (June 1875), p. 252.

[190] *World*, 15 May 1875, pp. 4-5.

[191] Ibid.

[192] *Times*, 25 April 1875, p. 10.

[193] *Sun*, 21 April 1875, p. 2.

[194] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), p. 265.

[195] James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), pp. 93-94.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Shinn also saw similar elements at work in George Inness' *Perugia*. [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875), p. 265.

[198] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (22 April 1875), p. 282, and James, *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), pp. 90-91. Similar remarks were made in *Times*, 10 April 1875, p. 3, and *Daily Graphic*, 16 April 1875, p. 347. The influence Breton may have had on Homer is another topic deserving investigation.

[199] *Express*, 28 May 1875, p. 1.

[200] *Mail*, 5 November 1874, p. 1.

[201] *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), p. 599. The use of the word "racy," here, refers to Homer's artistic treatment and its definition as piquant or strong-flavored.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[202] *Milking Time* has experienced a variety of conservation treatments over the years, some of which have compromised the surface of the painting. Thus, it is difficult today to fully assess the original visual impact of the sky and light

[203] *World*, 15 May 1875, pp. 4-5.

[204] *Times*, 25 April 1875, p. 10.

[205] *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875), p. 599.

[206] *Scribner's* 10 (June 1875), p. 252.

[207] *Daily Graphic*, 16 April 1875, p. 347.

[208] *Art Journal* 1 (May 1875), pp. 155-58.

[209] *Sun*, 21 April 1875, p. 2.

[210] "The Century Club," *Post*, 12 January 1874, p. 4.

[211] [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (April 1875), p. 265. Shinn did not comment on the painting's subject at all.

[212] It is important to note that *Landscape* was not discussed beyond a cursory mention of its existence. The only qualitative remark came from the *Daily Graphic*, which noted it had few of the "excellencies" usually found in Homer's painting. *Daily Graphic*, 16 April 1875, p. 347.

[213] These trips were noted in "Art Notes," *Post*, 28 July 1875, p. 1; "Studio Notes," *World*, 30 August 1875, p. 5; "Art Notes," *Post*, 1 October 1875, p. 1; and *Boston Transcript*, June 22, 1875 (see NGA 1995, p. 394). On the visit to Prout's Neck, see NGA 1995, p. 395.

[214] "The Arts," *Appleton's* 14 (6 November 1875), pp. 602-3.

[215] Notices appeared in Ibid.; "Art Notes," *World*, 25 October 1875, p. 5; and "Art Notes. Gossip Among the Studios," *Herald*, 6 November 1875, p. 5.

[216] See, for example, *Herald*, 6 November 1875, p. 5, and *Appleton's* 14 (6 November 1875), pp. 602-3.

[217] "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 6 January 1876, p. 8.

[218] Morris, *Encyclopedia of American History*, p. 252

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[219] See, for example, "The Fine Arts. Private View of the Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Times*, 30 January 1876, p. 6; "Fine Arts. Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Water-Color Society – Private View," *Tribune*, 31 January 1876, p. 5; and Waterloo, "Art Notes. The Ninth Annual Exhibition of the American Society in Water Colors at the Academy of Design," *Express*, 31 January 1876, p. 1.

[220] This viewpoint was especially apparent in "A Glance into the Water Color Exhibition," *Mail*, 31 January 1876, p. 2; *Times*, 30 January 1876, p. 6; "Art Matters. The American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Express*, 3 February 1876, p. 3; and "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Tribune*, 19 February 1876, p. 7. Only the *Independent*, which, like its peers, praised the progress of American watercolor, found the comparison of foreign to American work coming down on the side of the Europeans: "We are constrained to confess that the comparison does not reflect greatly to the benefit of our own artists.... The test of all artistic ability is the delineation of the human figure and the embodiment of human feelings, and submitting the works of our artists to this experiment, they fall miserably below the foreign pictures in the exhibition." "Fine Arts. Exhibition of Paintings in Water Colors," *Independent*, 10 February 1876, p. 7.

[221] "Culture and Progress. Ninth Exhibition of the Water Color Society," *Scribner's* 11 (April 1876), p. 902.

[222] "The Fine Arts. Exhibition of Water Colors. Second Notice of the Collection at the Academy of Design," *Times*, 13 February 1876, p. 10. See also "Art Notes. The American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Express*, 17 February 1876, p. 1.

[223] On Reconstruction, especially its failure in 1877, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, esp. chapters 3,4,8,10-12, and epilogue.

[224] "Art Matters. The American Society of Painters in Watercolor," *Telegram*, 3 February 1876, p. 3.

[225] They were: *After the Bath*; *A Chimney Corner*; *The Busy Bee* (private collection); *A Penny for Your Thoughts*; *The Gardener's Daughter*; *A Flower for Teacher* (Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia); *Contraband* (Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery); *Furling the Jib* (private collection); *Poor Luck*; *Fiction* (Detroit Institute of Arts); *A Glimpse From a Railroad Train*; *A Fish Story*; *Study*; and *Too Thoughtful for Her Years*. The whereabouts of those listed without locations are unknown.

[226] "Fine Arts. The Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Mail*, 24 February 1876, p. 1.

[227] Today, the subjects of *After the Bath*, *A Chimney Corner*, *A Penny for Your Thoughts*, *Study*, and *Poor Luck* are unknown.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[228] Some of the watercolors in this show had garnered notice as soon as Homer had returned from his 1875 summer travels. The *Herald* noted on a studio visit in early November that Homer had made many watercolor studies and described *Sunflower for Teacher*, as well as one of a "young lady standing in a grove." (*Herald*, 6 November 1875, p. 5.) In other advance notices, *Gardener's Daughter* was especially singled out as an important work. "Studio Notes," *World*, 18 January 1876, p. 5, and "Art Matters. Studio News and Gossip," *Express*, 24 January 1876, p. 1.

[229] "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Tribune*, 12 February 1876, pp. 6-7.

[230] For example, see "The Fine Arts. Exhibition of Water Colors," *Times*, 6 February 1876, p. 10; "The Water-Colour Exhibition, New York," *The Art Journal* 2 (March 1876), pp. 92-93; "Fine Arts. The Exhibition of Water Colors. Third Notice," *Mail*, 11 February 1876, p. 1; and "The American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Post*, 29 January 1876, p. 4.

[231] *Fiction*, with its largest dimension just under eleven inches, is the largest of Homer's entries that we know today.

[232] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. Ninth Exhibition of the Water-Color Society," *Nation* 22 (17 February 1876), p. 120.

[233] Ibid.

[234] *Times*, 13 February 1876, p. 10.

[235] *Times*, 6 February 1876, p. 10.

[236] *Times*, 13 February 1876, p. 10.

[237] Erastus South, "The Water-Color Exhibition. A Glance at the Work of our Prominent Artists," *Daily Graphic*, 3 February 1876, p. 734.

[238] *Art Journal* 2 (March 1876), pp. 92-93.

[239] *Tribune*, 31 January 1876, p. 5.

[240] *Tribune*, 19 February 1876, p. 7.

[241] "Fine Art. The Ninth Exhibition of the Water Color Society," *Mail*, 7 February 1876, p. 1.

[242] Ibid.

[243] *Mail*, 11 February 1876, p. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[244] *Tribune*, 19 February 1876, p. 7.

[245] Weiss, "Clarence Cook," p. 104, touches on this issue.

[246] Among those praising his choice of African American subject were [Shinn], *Nation* 22 (17 February 1876), p. 120; "The Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Notice," *Appleton's* 15 (19 February 1876), p. 251; South, *Daily Graphic*, 3 February 1876, p. 734; and *Times*, 13 February 1876, p. 10.

[247] While it has been suggested, a trip to the South by Homer in 1875 has never been proven. For an overview of the scholarly treatment of this question, see Karen Dalton and Peter Wood, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, exh. cat. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), pp. 66-67, 119. Homer's subjects were likely found in the Catskills or Long Island, where he had spent parts of the previous two summers. Both Mary Ann Calo and Abigail Booth Gerdts have outlined the possibilities of location for these works in Mary Ann Calo, "Winslow Homer's Visits to Virginia During Reconstruction," *American Art Journal* 12 (Winter 1980), especially pp. 10-20 and [Abigail Gerdts], entry for *Uncle Ned at Home* in *Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Christies, 26 May 1993.

[248] *Appleton's* 15 (19 February 1876), p. 251.

[249] *Art Journal* 2 (March 1876), p. 93.

[250] *Appleton's Journal* 15 (19 February 1876), pp. 250-52. Peter Wood and Karen Dalton have outlined the serious issues at large in all these watercolors of African American youth. See Dalton and Wood, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, pp. 72-82.

[251] [Shinn], *Nation* 22 (17 February 1876), p. 120.

[252] *Independent*, 10 February 1876, p. 7.

[253] It is not known if William C. Brownell was absent from New York or not writing for some other reason (such as illness), but the lack of art articles and the appearance of articles not by his hand suggests this could have been the case.

[254] "Academy of Design. The Fifty-First Annual Exhibition—Private View and Reception," *Times*, 28 March 1876, p. 8.

[255] See, for example, "The National Academy of Design. First Notice," *Art Journal* 2 (May 1876), p. 157; "Fine Arts. The Fifty-First Academy Exhibition," *Mail*, 30 March 1876, p. 2; and "The Art Exhibition. The Annual Display of the National Academy," *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1876, p. 229.

[256] "Fine Arts-Music-The Drama. Fine Arts. Fifty-First Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Tribune*, 28 March 1876, p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[257] On the role of children, see Heininger, *Century of Childhood.*

[258] Docherty, "A Search for Identity," p. 67

[259] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-First Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 1 April 1876, p. 7, and "Art," *Atlantic* 37 (June 1876), p. 758.

[260] "Art Matters. A Hasty Glance at the Academy Exhibition," *Express*, 6 May 1876, p. 1.

[261] Among the dissenting opinions was the *Art Journal*. Its primary worry was that the exhibition pointed to no distinctive American school but rather "the germs of a dozen foreign schools." *Art Journal* 2 (May 1876), p. 158.

[262] See, for example, "Academy of Design. The Fifty-First Annual Exhibition – Private View and Reception," *Times*, 28 March 1876, p. 8; "The Arts. Representative Pictures at the Academy," *Appleton's* 15 (15 April 1876), pp. 508-10; and "Fifty-First Exhibition of the National Academy," *Sun*, 28 March 1876, p. 2.

[263] *Art Journal* 2 (May 1876), p. 158.

[264] "National Academy of Design. Views of a Visitor," *Commercial Advertiser*, 13 April 1876, p. 3.

[265] *Times*, 28 March 1876, p. 8; *Art Journal* 2 (May 1876), pp. 157-58; and *Sun*, 28 March 1876, p. 2.

[266] *Appleton's* 15 (15 April 1876), p. 508.

[267] *Cattle Piece* is probably *Unruly Calf.* It was described in the *Tribune* as "a calf leading a negro boy by a string," and in *Appleton's* as "a negro boy is pulled by a calf." *Tribune*, 1 April 1876, p. 7, and *Appleton's* 15 (22 April 1876), p. 539.

[268] The *Herald* and the *World*, which did not review the show, had even noticed these works in process. See, for example, *Herald*, 6 November 1875, p. 5, and *World*, 25 October 1875, p. 5.

[269] *Sun*, 28 March 1876, p. 2. Similar prominent attention was given to Homer in *Mail*, 30 March 1876, p. 1.

[270] For example, such feelings are articulated in "Art Matters. A Hasty Glance at the Academy Exhibition," *Express*, 20 April 1876, p. 4, and [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. II," *Nation* 22 (20 April 1876), p. 268.

[271] *Mail*, 30 March 1876, p. 1.

[272] *Tribune*, 28 March 1876, p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[273] *Tribune*, 1 April 1876, p. 7.

[274] "Academy of Design. Fifty-First Annual Exhibition. Second Notice," *Tribune*, 8 April 1876, p. 2.

[275] Nicolai Cikovsky has suggested that the painting was "a symbolic embodiment" of Centennial year hope and encouragement for the future" in NGA 1995, p. 144.

[276] *Tribune*, 8 April 1876, p. 2.

[277] "The Arts. The Academy Exhibition," *Appleton's* 15 (22 April 1876), p. 539.

[278] "The National Academy of Design," *Sun*, 30 April 1876, p. 2.

[279] Ibid.

[280] [Shinn], *Nation* 22 (20 April 1876), p. 268.

[281] "The Fine Arts. Exhibition of the National Academy (Third Article)," *Times*, 8 April 1876, p. 6.

[282] [Shinn], *Nation* 22 (20 April 1876), p. 268.

[283] "The National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Art Journal* 2 (June 1876), p. 190.

[284] *Appleton's* 15 (22 April 1876), p. 539.

[285] *Sun*, 30 April 1876, p. 2.

[286] *Atlantic* 37 (June 1876), p. 760.

[287] Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, p. 224

[288] *Atlantic* 37 (June 1876), p. 760.

[289] It was noticed in this way in *Herald*, 6 November 1875, p. 5; *Appleton's* 14 (6 November 1875), p. 602-3; and "Fine Arts," *Post*, 5 January 1876, p. 1. That it did not receive such support at the Academy could have been the result of the differences between viewing the work in process in the studio, as opposed to as a completed canvas in the formal Academy setting.

[290] *Art Journal* 2 (June 1876), p. 190.

[291] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Nation* 22 (6 April 1876), p. 234. Among those who also praised Johnson's canvas in this way were *Art Journal* 2 (May 1876), p.159; *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1876, p. 229; and *Appleton's* 15 (15 April 1876), pp. 508-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[292] His only criticism of the painting was that its "treatment bespeaks of Europe." [Shinn], *Nation* 22 (20 April 1876), p. 268.

[293] *Tribune*, 1 April 1876, p. 7. The compositions of both *Over the Hills* and *Milking Time* rely on such Japanese print design conventions as strategic cropping and high viewpoints. The impact of Japanese art, especially prints, on Homer is briefly mentioned in Cikovsky, NGA 1995, pp. 99, 143-44. A broader investigation is found in Alfred Ten Eyck Gardner, *Winslow Homer* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1961), especially pp. 106-118.

[294] Ibid.

[295] *Times*, 8 April 1876, pp. 6-7.

[296] *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1876, p. 229; "The National Academy Exhibition. Some Landscapes," *Daily Graphic*, 1 April 1876, p. 263; and "National Academy Exhibition. Some Landscapes and Marines," *Daily Graphic*, 10 April 1876, p. 325.

[297] "Artistic Criticism," *American Architect and Building News* 1 (22 April 1876), pp. 130-31, outlined the situation, as did "Art," *Atlantic* 38 (December 1876), pp. 754-59.

[298] On the Centennial in general, see John Maass, *That Glorious Enterprise* (Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1973).

[299] "Art in America," *Times*, 22 November 1875, p. 2.

[300] Maass, *Glorious Enterprise*, pp. 72-75.

[301] Susan Hobbs, *American Art at the Centennial*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Collection of Fine Arts, 1976), p. 9.

[302] With the Centennial, the interest in British art rose significantly through the end of the decade. It is worthy to note this fact in light of Homer's choice of England as his European destination in 1881. Among those who praised the British contributions, see "The Fine Arts at the Centennial. II," *American Architect and Building News* 1 (8 July 1876), p. 221; S. N. C. [Susan Nichols Carter], "Paintings at the Centennial Exhibition," *Art Journal* 2 (September 1876), pp. 283-85; Wm. M. F. Round, "Art at the Exhibition," *Independent*, 8 June 1876, p. 12; and "The Century – Its Fruits and Its Festivals. X – Art," *Lippincott's Magazine* 18 (October 1876), pp. 393-414.

[303] Hobbs, *American Art at the Centennial*, p. 8

[304] Sartain was the Chief of the Bureau of Art, and he worked with the advisory, selection, and arrangement committees. Maass, *Glorious Enterprise*, p. 72

[305] "The New World's Fair. Department of Fine Arts" *Tribune*, 10 May 1876, p. 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[306] S. N. C. [Susan Nichols Carter], "Art at the Exhibition," *Appleton's Journal* 15 (3 June 1876), p. 726.

[307] "The Fine Arts at the Centennial. VIII. The American Pictures," *American Architect and Building News* 1 (19 August 1876), p. 269.

[308] Titus Munson Coan, "People and Pictures at the Fair," *Galaxy* 22 (December 1876), pp. 761-69.

[309] The fact that the majority of the pictures had been seen previously and thoroughly commented upon at the time of their showings, in contrast to the European works being seen afresh, surely contributed to the approach taken in the reviews. Too, the huge size of the show lent itself to generalized commentary.

[310] For negative responses to the painting, see, for example, Gar, "The Art of America. Its Position at Philadelphia," *Times*, 9 June 1876, p. 1; "Studio Notes," *Herald*, 18 June 1876, p. 4; and E. A. C., "Fine Arts at the Centennial. III," *Mail*, 10 August 1876, p. 1. The one dissenting voice was that of Charles Briggs, who felt that the painting should not be judged simply by its subject. Charles F. Briggs, "Centennial Paintings. The American Department," *Independent*, 13 July 1876, p. 3.

[311] On nationalism in America in general, see Higham, *Strangers in the Land.*

[312] Taine first used this terminology in his *History of English Literature*, published in 1864. For Taine, *race* pertained to the biological inheritance of a nation; *milieu* was defined as the physical environment and prevailing social institutions; and *moment* referred to the acquired momentum of social institutions carried over from the past. Taine was not always clear in his definitions of these terms nor was he consistent in their use, but they served as a framework for assessing the national character of art. See Martha Wolfenstein, "The Social Background of Taine's Philosophy of Art," in *Essays on the History of Aesthetics* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1992), pp. 332, 340, and Thomas H. Goetz, *Taine and the Fine Arts* (Madrid: Playor, 1973), p. 70.

[313] Docherty, "A Search For Identity," pp. 59-69 passim.

[314] Alexis did admit that countries had local styles. Alexis, "Art at the Centennial. II," *Mail*, 23 June 1876, p. 1.

[315] See, for example, *American Architect and Building News* 1 (19 August 1876), pp. 269-70, and *Mail*, 10 August 1876, p. 1.

[316] S. N. C. [Susan Nichols Carter], *Art Journal* 2 (September 1876), pp. 284-85.

[317] The author then praised London as place to study art. It was considered not the place to begin training nor to learn drawing, but as the environment in which to conclude

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

studies, when an artist is at the picture-making stage, because London offered great classes, good models, and great art to look at—both ancient and modern. *American Architect and Building News* 1 (8 July 1876), p. 221.

[318] Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], *Masterpieces of the International Exposition*, v. 1 (1876; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), p. 193.

[319] Ibid., p. 272.

[320] *Mail*, 10 August 1876, p. 1.

[321] Gar, "The Art of America. Some Paintings to be Proud Of," *Times*, 11 June 1876, p. 1.

[322] Ibid.; S. N. C., *Art Journal* 2 (September 1876), pp. 283-85; and John Weir, "Painting and Sculpture at the Centennial. VI," *American Architect and Building News* 3 (6 April 1878), pp. 121-22.

[323] "Fine Arts," *Herald*, 19 June 1876, p. 9.

[324] See, for example, "The Loan Exhibition," *Aldine* 8 (August 1876), p. 241.

[325] "Fine Arts. New York Centennial Loan Exhibition," *Tribune*, 23 June 1876, pp. 3-4.

[326] Harte had achieved fame in this regard in the late 1860s, and so such a comparison can be considered extremely high praise. "The Loan Collections. II," *World*, 31 July 1876, p. 5. Although no specific titles by Homer were mentioned, it was most likely *A Fair Wind* that generated the comment.

[327] Ibid.

[328] *Herald*, 18 June 1876, p. 4.

[329] "Fine Arts," *Post*, 20 July 1876, p. 1, and *Boston Transcript*, 30 July 1876; courtesy William H. Gerdts American Art Library.

[330] Ayres, *Winslow Homer in the 1870s*, pp. 21-22.

[331] He was noted as one of the latest arrivals in "Fine Arts," *Post*, 14 November 1876, p. 1.

[332] "The Johnston Picture Sale," *Telegram*, 18 December 1876, p. 2.

[333] See, for example, "Painters and Buyers," *Times*, 30 September 1876, p. 4, and "Fine Arts," *Mail*, 13 November 1876, p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[334] "A Ramble Among the Studios," *Tribune*, 25 November 1876, p. 2. Critics' visits to Homer's studio occurred with some regularity during the 1870s. New works were often first seen in Homer's studio. See, for example, the discussions of *Snap the Whip* in Chapter 3, *Milking Time* in this chapter, and *A Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia* in Chapter 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 5

1877-79: Facing the "New Departure"

Between 1877 and 1879 American art changed drastically. Throughout these three years, Homer continually measured the effect and import of those changes on his work. He engaged in a series of plunges into and retreats from his art, continuing sometimes at a more frantic pace than ever before to expand, experiment, and reinvestigate his subjects and techniques. In his response to outside influences, he, at times, became chameleonlike, embodying artistic influences in his art in an unprecedented way. At other times, he seemed to be at his most individualistic and, to some critics, his most antagonistic. His relationship with the press varied both with regard to the pictures and, it appears, personally. In these last years of the Centennial decade, Homer was an artist in an agitated state.

The sense that 1877 was a watershed marking the post-Centennial era was profound. The artist James Fairman wrote a letter to the editor of the *Tribune* in January remarking: "The question what shall we do for art? seems to come from an almost universal instinct since the late Philadelphia Exhibition."[1] The Centennial Exhibition had offered unprecedented exposure to European art, which, in turn, presented a broader range of European art available for comparison. Most notable was the larger presence of British art along side that of Germany and France. In this atmosphere, as artists and critics grappled with what they should do for art, the debates about the visible influence of European art on American productions continued with increased vigor. The lines dividing

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

opinions were increasingly clearly drawn according to whether European influence was viewed as 1) good in itself; 2) a necessary step in order to achieve technical skill; or 3) an evil in any form and because it was "un-American." A *Herald* editorial outlined the primary opposing positions. It condemned the "nativists," defined as those individuals wanting either no contact with Europe or a return to the schools of Copley and Stuart (which, even though they were European in base, stood as the first American school). This writer, instead, called for the necessity of European training. He saw it as the means for achieving a "thorough mastery of technique" as well as for creating a generation of teachers to train those at home. "When these course of events occur," admonished the *Herald*, "the individuality of men will assert itself and the foundations of a native school will be laid," a school that is universal in its methods and principles and American in its local color.[2]

In the face of this debate, it was generally agreed that the international exposition had created "newly awakened energies."[3] A new chapter in art was beginning, and it appeared in various forms. A "new departure" in art was a constant topic of discussion.[4] A wave of foreign-trained artists, who not only exhibited their work in New York, but were returning home to settle, was responsible in large part for the changes in the artistic climate. At the same time, and also significant, an enormous interest in the decorative arts and the concept of "the decorative" arose. The impulse here, too, came from the Centennial Exposition, where the large international displays of goods captured the attention of broad segments of the population. Whistler's "Peacock Room" and John La Farge's decorations for Trinity Church in Boston garnered high interest, and, as a writer

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for the *Independent* noted: 'The art of decorating...is now classed among the fine arts, and the decorator is no longer regarded as an upholsterer, but as an artist."[5] The premium placed on the decorative was variously embraced. Its positive effects included bringing beauty into everyday life. On the negative side, it raised the concern—one which would heighten in the 1880s—that the compulsion towards decoration connoted excessive materialism and moral decay.

With this variety of art issues to consider, discussions intensified as to what constituted good art and whether or not there was an American school (there was no doubt there should be one), and, if so, what made it, and, if not, what prevented it. These questions aroused infighting among the press that would last for several years. A greater concern for the profession of critics and the nature of criticism occurred as the issues surrounding art became increasingly complex. The question of whether or not critics needed to be artists provided a focus for discussions of who made the best critics.[6]

Homer threw himself with vigor into 1877. He almost doubled his creative production of 1876—twenty-seven works as compared to fifteen in the previous year. He explored, in equal amounts, painting in oil and watercolor as well as drawing. More significant than the numbers of his output is the variety of subjects with which Homer experimented: farm life; men (and women) in the wilderness of the Adirondacks; African Americans; middle-class women at leisure; and some truly unusual subjects for him, such as *The Arrival of the French Ambassador in Madrid* (unlocated) and *The Old Cavalier* (unlocated).[7] Homer approached his subjects with more diversity, a manner recognized by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the critics. He experimented with methods of modeling and paint applications associated with Europe, compositional approaches associated with both Europe and Japan, and decorative schemes related to the rising aesthetic interests, in addition to pushing further his already established bold techniques and designs. As a result, in 1877 Homer was, on the one hand, one of the most "contemporary" artists in his subjects and styles, but at the same time, the fractured nature of his creativity may have indicated anxieties that the vast possibilities of themes and modes seemed to cause for him as he tried to please everyone—the public, the critics, and, especially, himself.

While the Watercolor Society and Academy annuals were, as usual, Homer's primary public venues in 1877, his work was available in a number of other forums, from the Century and Union League clubs to monthly meetings of the Art Students League.[8] Homer's entries to the Century Club contained a high percentage of important pictures, and they were recognized as such.[9] *The Cotton Pickers* (fig. 69) was the most notable example.[10] The 1876 canvas continued Homer's picturing the plight of blacks seen in his 1875-76 watercolors, for which he had received considerable praise. The figures in *The Cotton Pickers* were understood to be slaves and were seen as expressing emotions appropriate for indentured persons. In a stand-alone article focused exclusively on the canvas, one figure is described as "unhappy, disheartened," while the other is "defiant, and full of hatred." The writer continued:

> The story is one not only worth telling, but one that can be told better by the artist than by the historian. Its deep meaning stares you in the face, as it should do to be worth anything. The composition is simple, unpretentious, natural, and the technical execution is brilliant and complete. The scene was painted outdoors, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> it looks outdoors. Like most good things, also, the picture is finely original and alluring, and when across the sea will do honor to the land that made it.[11]

These five sentences, probably penned by George Sheldon, provide a recipe for American art with which many critics would have agreed.[12] The subject was the best type of home theme because it reflected a particularly American situation with historical import (even if not its happiest phase). The deep meaning was accessible but not sentimental. Finally, its artistic aspects included simplicity, naturalness, and originality—qualities associated with Americanness—as well as dazzling and thorough execution—universal requirements for outdoor sunlit images. Thus, it was not only a good painting but one that would resonate with American characteristics in England, where it would reside for nearly a century.

The topic of specifically American traits in art appeared frequently. Even in the usually little-noticed arena of sales, the Americanness of certain auctions and of specific works therein was noted by several critics. The Kurtz sale held March 2, 1877, received more coverage than usual. It was noted as a wholly American sale, with no foreign works included. "Waterloo" used the sale as an example to prove there was an American school of art. He defined the evidence of Americanness through style as well as subject matter. He wrote that each artist represented possessed "a style, decided and of much originality and individuality and yet thoroughly representing American taste and feeling and American character and scenes." He credited American artists' greater sympathy with nature as a trait distinguishing them from their European counterparts.[13] Key among the works exemplifying such a definition of American art was *A Fair Wind*, one of the stellar

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lots of the sale. It was once again highly praised. The *World* reprised its commendations of the 1876 Academy annual, calling the canvas "entirely characteristic... fresh, breezy and natural...an open air look of the whole picture." What made it so was especially the way in which Homer positioned and painted the figures: "[T]here is more complete unconsciousness of observation and more complete naturalness of attitude and action than about most figures painted here, and they are treated in a broad and apparently bold manner...that makes them part of the picture and the effect of the whole simple and single."[14] What made a picture American was increasingly tied to the perception of especially American qualities such as originality, individuality, honesty, vitality, and naturalness, and they were now being discerned in artistic strategies such as simplicity, careful and insightful but not detailed observation of nature, and the evocation of fresh air and outdoor light. When these strategies were wedded to a home subject, they almost always brought the picture the highest praise.[15]

1877 marked the tenth anniversary of the American Watercolor Society. Despite this important milestone, there was a paucity of substantial criticism. All the New York papers except the *Sun* mentioned the exhibition, but the coverage was briefer than usual.[16] The primary reason for the scant reviews was likely due to the disputed 1876 election between Samuel J. Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes, which commanded much of the news and editorial writing in January and February 1877. The election was not resolved until March 2, 1877, when Hayes was formally declared the winner; the watercolor show closed two days later.[17] The art writing in 1877 appears less vigorous in its depth and intensity, perhaps due to the coverage of political and economic issues and the instability

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that ensued. It should be recognized, too, that the number of art events continued to increase in New York and they drew the interest of the press. For example, a group of foreign watercolors on view at the Kurtz Gallery in late January was noticed by both the *Herald* and the *Tribune*, both papers whose watercolor reviews were shorter than usual.[18]

Dampened spirits notwithstanding, the Watercolor Society's annual received commendations on its tenth anniversary, and the exhibition was generally praised, except for the curt statement from the *Nation*, which focused on the show's mediocrity, and a more lengthy discussion in the *Post* of the uninteresting character of the exhibition.[19] The issues discussed were familiar ones. The question of including foreign works was discussed but caused much less anxiety. The commentary on this issue was almost complacent, as if foreign sheets were an accepted facet of the exhibition. One contingent continued to feel that the appearance of foreign works was good for contrast and learning opportunities, even as they wished their inclusion were unnecessary.[20] Others simply compared foreign and domestic works in stride. The *Independent* and *Aldine*, always conservative and pro-European, found the European work the strongest, but they preferred not to see it in the context of an American society's event.[21] Both the *Tribune* and *Harper's Weekly*, ever boosters of American art, saw the American work as holding its own against the European.[22]

The validity of watercolor as an artistic medium was also discussed, again with the corollary topic of what was watercolor's best use.[23] The responses to these issues as well as to individual artists suggest that attitudes towards the aqueous medium continued to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

shift in the same direction as they did toward oil. Watercolor, even more than in 1876, was considered appropriate for "more serious" work.[24] The *Post*, in fact, preferred larger and more elaborate watercolors and was heartened by the greater number of sheets in the exhibition that went beyond what it called the usual frivolity associated with watercolor.[25] It was attracted to Jervis McEntee's *October* (unlocated), in which it saw expressed an idea full of sentiment, and to the figures in William Magrath's *Crochet Workers* (unlocated), which expressed a truthfulness beyond outward appearance. The writer for the *Post* criticized Colman's cathedral and Venetian views as poorly selected for being too much like real life, while praising the atmosphere and light of the works by James Craig Nicoll and Killingworth Johnson.[26] Other critics shared this viewpoint. For example, artists associated with carefully delineated, factual images of nature, such as Albert T. Bricher, Alfred Bellows, and James Smillie, who had all previously been praised for their truthful marine pictures, were now considered to be conventional and in a rut of "sameness."[27] In contrast, William Trost Richards, who showed a sketch in a new, more gestural style on rough, textured paper (fig. 70), was appreciated for exhibiting a radical change and the sheet was praised for its power, even if it was not considered beautiful. Critics as diverse as cosmopolite Susan Nichols Carter in the *Art Journal* and conservative Theodore Grannis in the *Commercial Advertiser* recognized a strength or vitality in Richards' new approach.[28] However, divergent opinions were plentiful. The *Times* was tired of the "stage peasants" of Magrath and the hackneyed orientalist scenes of Louis Comfort Tiffany and R. S. Gifford. Instead, it preferred the delicate touches of Alfred Kappes and "dashing" of Villegas.[29] In the *Nation*, Shinn called for "more serious and inventive studies" in watercolor. For Shinn, watercolor was a medium for studies, but

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

he also wanted them to "astonish" and "arouse" rather than be coarse and boring, as he saw on the walls around him in the examples by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Edwin Austin Abbey.[30] Although different critics responded variously to individual artists' works, they had in common a growing interest in work that evoked emotion and flaunted the unique artistic qualities of the watercolor medium. While the critics varied in their mandates for appropriate subjects or techniques, it was clear that they felt that the literal representation of nature was no longer an effective subject or means for watercolor. The visual impact of an artist's methods and his application of them were increasingly important.

Eclipsing all these issues was the fact that the critics saw the domestic sheets at the Watercolor Society exhibiting a higher percentage of American qualities. As the *Commercial Advertiser* quipped: "the American element is decidedly in the ascendant."[31] The Americans' styles, methods, and subjects were proudly asserted to include visible freedom from foreign influence and "individuality."[32] Homer was chief among the artists called "individual." In this exhibition he showed five works: *Rattlesnake* (unlocated), *Lemon* (fig. 71), *Book* (fig. 72), *Backgammon* (fig. 73), and *Blackboard* (fig. 74). This number was modest compared to the previous two years when he showed thirty-four and fifteen sheets, respectively. Although represented by fewer numbers, Homer was well noticed in both the brief and more in-depth reviews of the exhibition.[33] Half of the reviewing publications made substantial remarks on Homer specifically; one was overwhelmingly positive; one negative; and, as he had become accustomed, the majority were mixed. In all these discussions, the single most important characteristic attributed to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's work, the one that commanded the highest praise, redeemed his faults, and identified him as quintessentially American, was his "individuality." This quality made his works "unmistakable," "distinctive," and showed him simply "being himself."[34] The *Post* did not like the work, but had to give the artist credit for his individuality. He recognized that: "Mr. Winslow Homer...is nothing if not Mr. Winslow Homer....[the works are] disfigured by the provincial mannerisms which indeed give a piece of work a distinctive character, but never a distinctive charm. But distinction of any sort is always better than commonplace."[35] For *Scribner's*, too, Homer's work was redeemed by his uniqueness. Although that writer found *Rattlesnake* "beyond redemption," he could find something worthwhile in the other four sheets despite their poor quality. *Backgammon* might have no background and several of the girls might be pictured with green cheeks ("a poor joke"), but Homer, in these, and especially in *Book* and *Blackboard*, "is himself again—one of the few American painters of originality and force."[36] Further accentuating Homer's individuality was that discussions of his work continued to be contextually separate from and made with little reference to the work of his peers.

Individuality and originality were increasingly important ingredients for art in the late 1870s.[37] These terms, however, had multiple definitions and import in the different critical camps. On the one hand, individuality was an important component of the definition of American art and for the identification of a national school, for it implied distinct differences from other nations and, thus, was a characteristic in which America could take pride. For those unaccepting of European influence, individuality had the added benefit of implying freedom from that canon. Yet, for the more cosmopolitan

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reviewers, individuality had other yet equally positive connotations. The *Times* noted: "a painter's individuality, whether cultivated or inherited, must tell his pictures."[38] The belief in the importance of an artist's individual identity would intensify through the 1880s.[39] Homer's watercolors satisfied these various definitions.

For the critics who advocated that national characteristics in art were of paramount importance, Homer's subjects remained key to their assessment of him as distinctly American. His subjects elicited praise from the *Commercial Advertiser* for "fine American pictures" despite their technical shortcomings.[40] Elsewhere, Homer's figure types were identified as especially American. The *Art Journal* described the girl in *Lemon*: "a typical American country-girl in a common 'blouse' waist, a buff stuff skirt, and a Yankee face."[41] It seemed implicit that the schoolteacher in *Blackboard* was both contemporary and particularly American.[42] The *Times*, for example, called her "so stiff and individual, so true," i.e., so American.[43] Its unquestionably American quality may have been why *Blackboard* was the *Times*' favorite entry by Homer, although it gave no explicit explanation.[44] That Homer's subjects were automatically interpreted as American may account for the fewer mentions of them as such. Reviewers began with that premise.

In 1877 the elements that were more compelling in Homer's watercolors than their being distinctly American, and the ones that secured the appellation of individual for Homer, were his aesthetic approach and technical applications. Homer's ability to present quintessentially American subjects in a variety of forms, including new and recognizably international modes, separated his from his peers, and earned him both positive and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

negative remarks. Following the pattern of previous years, when his methods were approved, he was often considered "bold"; when he was disliked, he was "coarse"; and when he confounded a critic, he was simply eccentric.[45] This year, the visual impact of Homer's images of women was considerable. Their most striking aspects were their coloration and their being set against bare, or spare, and noticeably flat backgrounds. The effects were for better or for worse, depending on the critic.

Homer's smaller number of entries and the more finished quality of his figures seem to reflect the specific suggestions made by critics in 1876 that he do less and concentrate on finishing fewer pictures well.[46] Homer's use of color caused the most controversy. Some critics were unsure of their reaction to the intense oranges, yellows, reds, and especially the green skin tones found in the pictures. When positively predisposed towards the work, they named his color usage "bold" and noted its being a characteristic of Homer's individuality.[47] The *Post*, however, was clear in its distaste for Homer's color: "[W]e notice that the hands and feet are enormous and coarse, and that three of the faces display large, sickly, dirty, faint green patches.... we never saw the like of them on canvas or on epidermis..."[48] The writer for *Scribner's* concurred.[49] It was Susan Nichols Carter, alone, who attributed Homer's color as the reason for the great success of these works. Of all the sheets, *Lemon* was her favorite. She liked its American subject, so codified by the costume of the figure, but, most of all, she liked the color, which was so striking that she thought "some new artist had dawned upon the French or Roman world [and]...was in entire accord with the best of the foreign aquarellists." She applauded Homer for "exhausting his palette with every tint" to create "the most vigorous treatment of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

human form." She recognized that Homer had achieved expressive action in canvases such as *Snap the Whip*, but here his achievement came not through the devices of the subject, pose, composition, or details, but through "a scale of refined color and tone" that articulated the pull of the subject's skirt around her figure in the most marvelous way imaginable.[50]

Carter's response reflected her acceptance of a cosmopolitan spirit in Homer's work. The female figures of *Backgammon*, *Lemon*, *Book*, and *Blackboard* were members of the growing body of images of genteel women against flattened backgrounds, like those in the works of such European artists as Alfred Stevens and Albert Moore, as well as the Fortuny circle implied by Carter.[51] Carter and the *Times* also noticed Homer experimenting with elements associated with the nascent Aesthetic Movement, the *Times* favorably noting that the color of the girl's dress matched her hair in *Book*.[52] Just appearing on the scene in America, aestheticism, primarily a product of British artistic reform movements, had at its center the necessity of the beautiful, harmoniously expressed through color, pattern, form, and design.[53] These critics sympathetically understood Homer's sources and did not accuse him of undue foreign influence. His subjects secured his status as American and individual and deflected negative accusations of foreign influence.

Other critics noted Homer's aesthetic tendencies but reacted to them unsympathetically. The blank backgrounds, especially in *Backgammon*, were singled out as most disturbing. The lack of any suggestion of background space was the reason *Scribner's* found

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Backgammon odd, and one wonders if the empty backgrounds were among the *Nation's* reasons for calling all of Homer's entries "capricious" and "trying".[54] The *Times* perceptively recognized Japanese art as an influence for Homer's use of bare backgrounds, but, like the *Express*, the *Times* condemned them nonetheless for lacking ostensibly defined space and criticized the Japanese flatness of the figures, even while praising the harmonized colors.[55] Adding to *Backgammon*'s peculiarity was the inclusion of a sofa with only two legs. Such an image was perceived as willful inaccuracy—not as artistic license—and was proof of Homer's eccentricity, a not entirely negative trait because of its ties to individuality, originality, and, ultimately, Americanness.[56] The *Times* summed up its feelings about Homer's 1877 watercolors by saying that the reason one always remembers Homer's work is because "he always has something to say, and...because he tells the truth as far as in him lies to see it, without hesitation or remorse."[57] With these watercolors, Homer appears to have been trying to tell the truth and to fit determinedly into the more cosmopolitan camp of artistic thinking while continuing to satisfy the call for Americanness in American art.

Homer's blending of American subjects with an awareness of contemporary European art continued in *Answering the Horn* (fig. 75) and *Landscape* (fig. 76), the two oil paintings of American farm scenes that he submitted to the 1877 National Academy of Design annual. The uproar caused by this annual is well known, and the climate it created affected responses to Homer's pictures and helped to shift American art deeper into its new phase.[58] Among the works that created the stir were the Turkish page subjects by William Merritt Chase and Frank Duveneck (fig. 77) as well as Walter Shirlaw's *Sheep*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Shearing in the Bavarian Highlands (fig. 78), all of which represented the Munich-trained faction. The compositions by French-trained artists, which added to the discussion, included Wyatt Eaton's *Harvesters at Rest* (fig. 79), Daniel Ridgway Knight's *Harvest Scene* (unlocated); Edgar Ward's *Sabot Maker* (unlocated), and Will Low's *Reverie* (unlocated). The inclusion of a large number of European-trained younger artists and the installation of many of their works "on the line" and on other coveted wall spaces were the most notable features of the exhibition. Critics considered the contents of the exhibition to be among or even the finest ever, but they considered the installation by hanging committeemen Charles H. Miller, Thomas LeClear, and Wordsworth Thompson to be controversial and the worst ever.[59]

The perception of a "new departure" in American art was what was most notable in the 1877 Academy exhibition.[60] The desire for a "new departure" and indications of its arrival had been evident since the first public exhibition of pictures from Munich-trained artists in 1875.[61] The Centennial Exposition had further accelerated both the call for change and its manifestation. It appeared in full swing with the 1877 annual and was much remarked on. Variety of theme and treatment were the defining features of the new departure. The new departure also accentuated the division between "old" and "young" men. Whether an artist was considered old or young no longer simply depended on the individual factors of birthdate, place of training, current address, what subjects he portrayed, or what methods he used, but on his whole approach to art. The definition of the split was described by the *World*:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> All men who care for art at all, and who think about it at all divide roughly into two classes. Consciously or unconsciously they care for what we call imitation (in its narrower and conventional sense) or for what we call ideality, for logic or for feeling, for truth (also in its narrower sense) or for beauty, for reason or for poetry, for exactness or for freedom, for reproduction or for production, for the tangible thing or for the suggestive thing, for representation or for illusion.... [R]oughly speaking, it is fair to divide persons who care about painting into a class which leans towards correctness and a class which leans towards beauty.... Hitherto it has been—broadly speaking—the delight of American painters to imitate nature. The delight of the new painters is to express feeling—broadly speaking again. Hitherto...our admiration...[of the American school of painting]...has resulted from our supposition that they were "lifelike." It has not occurred to us...to ask if they were living. The distinction has obviously been made for us by these young men.... And the other distinction...[that has been made is]...between feeling and logic, between life and lifelikeness.[62]

The *World* said that the old school was to be understood as grounded in imitation, factual truth, reason, exactness, and the correct reproduction of tangible things. The new departure was based on capturing the suggestion of things to express feeling, beauty, and poetry. In reality the division was never so neat and tidy.

Most critics embraced this new departure as a positive stimulus despite the notably varied responses to individual artists and works. As the *World* commented: "...people's minds are occupied with thinking about aesthetic things, and the more they do think about them in such a country so conditioned as ours is, the better we think it will be for the country as a country."[63] As they had earlier in the year, the progress of American art and the appropriateness of European influence continued as topics not only in the reviews but also in editorials and separate articles.[64] Many reviewers gave their recipe for what would make an American school to be proud of, and reiterated frequently that the ingredient of European training was essential. The *Sun* wrote: "We believe that the American school of painting must receive a strong infusion of the spirit which animates those of the old

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

world, if it is to aspire to excellence as a national organization."[65] The *Nation*, which recognized the benefits of foreign training for acquiring skill, again suggested the necessity of a step beyond foreign training: "[w]hen strength drawn from other theories is replaced with strength in forming personal theories, we shall have an American school."[66] That European training was best used as a tool to create an American art of home subjects was repeatedly mentioned as it had been in the watercolor reviews.[67]

Some critics heartily praised the younger artists and the promise and fresh life they represented for the future of American art and a national school. Clarence Cook enthusiastically wrote: "Whoever is broadly interested in Art as a high and necessary form of national development, will find this year's exhibition full of quickening suggestions."[68] His peer at the *Mail* also was heartened, writing that "some of the pictures exhibited, give great satisfaction to those who hope yet to see American art rank among the highest."[69] There were those, however, who were more cautious in their optimism and there were those who derided change.[70] The reviewer for the *Commercial Advertiser* did not approve of the foreign tone of the exhibition. For a man whose favorite canvases were by Eastman Johnson, Perry, and Guy in genre, and David Johnson in landscape, this exhibition did not display any progress in American art.[71] The *Independent* was frustrated by both the older and the younger artists. It charged that the older artists copied themselves and the younger imitated their foreign teachers. The result was a show with some attractive pictures, but one of "commonplace character" and no originality.[72]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Many reviewers of the 1877 Academy annual treated the younger, European-trained artists separately and often first. The *Times* remarked: "it has not been without reason. Since Europe is the place where the best masters, the best models, and perhaps the only 'art atmosphere' can be got, we must look to Americans who have studied in Europe for a new departure in art. There is plenty of originality and inventiveness among Americans; what they chiefly need is thorough instruction and such associations as shall awaken the right kind of originality."[73] While there was nearly unanimous agreement on the importance of European training, there were disagreements as to which of the European schools provided the best models. The *World* was among the most enthusiastic voices for the Munich-trained artists.[74] The *Times* found much of interest in them, but wondered if the theory behind their work—to keep "the spirit of first intentions"—could always be borne out.[75] The *Tribune* continued to prefer the more carefully drawn efforts of French-trained artists, and rejected the Munich men, especially Duveneck, as ugly and imitative.[76] Similarly repulsed by the German-trained artists was the *Commercial Advertiser*.[77] The critics' responses ran the gamut, with many finding some good and some bad in each of the entries.

Amidst all this talk about Europe, home artists made their own impact on the show. Homer's *Answering the Horn*, along with Inness' *Autumn* (fig. 80), Eastman Johnson's several offerings, but especially the *Tramp* (Flower Memorial Library, Watertown, N.Y.), and landscapes by W. T. Richards, received repeated attention. In the complex, European-focused atmosphere, Homer's *Answering the Horn* and, to a lesser extent, *Landscape*, gave the critics considerable food for thought about what made American art American.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The attention these canvases received was considerable and it was again Homer's Americanness and his individuality that were the common denominators of the reviews and articles. *Answering the Horn* was received as wonderfully American despite, as will be explained, its European resonances.

Answering the Horn pictures a young man and woman walking forward in a field. The man, holding a scythe under one arm, looks beyond and to the right of the viewer as he gestures with his free hand as if answering the horn of the title. The young woman, positioned directly head-on to the viewer, covers her mouth as she gazes straight ahead, seemingly trying to avert anyone's glance. A low viewpoint and a horizon line nearly waist-high on both figures considerably flattens the farm landscape setting. While the location of the scene is clearly readable, the spatial foreshortening makes the landscape seem more a screenlike backdrop than the illusion of a specified place. As the perception of space shimmies between two and three dimensions, the narrative of the image likewise vibrates with uncertainties. A number of critics found the narrative inscrutable, as had been the case with *Country School* in 1872.[78] "We do not quite understand," the *Tribune* wondered, "how the young farmer answers the horn by throwing his hand aloft, nor why the girl walking beside him should cover her mouth with her fingers."[79] The *Mail* questioned the entire scenario: "Why he answers the horn by a motion of his arm, and why his face wears such a cross, almost sinister expression, and why the maiden seems desirous of getting behind him, and why she holds her fingers over her mouth—these things we do not profess to understand."[80]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Despite the uncertain story being told, Homer's farmer and farm girl (she was never called a woman) appeared so faithfully American that the fact that the narrative remained impenetrable did not interfere with some high praise for the painting. Both the man and the girl achieved the essence of Americanness through qualities the writers perceived in their physical bearing. Even though Clarence Cook had been puzzled about the meaning of the figures' poses, he had to admit: "[W]e must be content so long as Mr. Homer gives us such fine, free figures." The fineness of these figures, for Cook, lay not in the account they explained or the excellence of their painting but in the type of people they portrayed. He continued: "The man is a good typical American, with both '76 and '61 in his blood, lord (or ought to be) of the acre he treads and hungrily glad as the failing twilight deepens over the harvest field. The girl, in her sunbonnet and plain country dress, frank yet half-shy in her simple purity...."[81] The suggestion here is that a good typical American man is of deep-rooted stock, that is, with forebears reaching to the Revolutionary era, owner of his land, and a hard worker.[82] The prototypical American girl is defined by her costume and, according to Cook, has a nature that is frank, somewhat reserved, and pure. Other writers concurred with Cook's assessments, describing the man as: "tall, stalwart, vigorous...not far from handsome;" "upright in form and bearing...with a strong, manly face."[83] Descriptions of the girl were also similar. She was called "slight,...retiring... picturesque in her plain dress and homely sunbonnet," and "'a simple maiden in her flower,' dressed severely in her muslin, wearing a sunbonnet."[84] Homer had, in fact, followed the accepted definition as given in an article like that by Mrs. Launt Thompson on "What is an American?" in which the American was described as tall, straight, slender

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

yet muscular in form, large deep eyes with sweeping lashes, clear complexion, splendid teeth, and a calm and serious mien.[85]

Answering the Horn's Americanness was greatly commended not only for its national characteristics, but also because it showed that American subjects could compare favorably with European ones.[86] Even though it had found the narrative murky, the *Mail* singled out Homer and Eastman Johnson as deserving mention:

> because of conscientious endeavors in a right direction, because of efforts impelled by a desire to render picturesque, not only the natural features, but also the life of our country, by portraying its incidents and their surroundings. These artists prove to us by the pictures which they have sent to this year's exhibition better than many others, perhaps, that such scenes are capable of being rendered equally interesting with scenes from German, French, Italian or Spanish life.... We are glad to see his [Homer's] pictures dealing with a subject which best expresses this originality, for we like him most when he devotes his talent to georgic scenes—episodes and incidents from agricultural life. We like to see his rustic personages performing some of the farmer's duties.... These he can paint well and to them he ought to confine his genius."[87]

Clarence Cook concluded his own remarks similarly, noting that the female figure "is as picturesque as any Breton peasant or Italian contadina; and we do not see why she should not have the same value in art."[88]

Homer achieved his depiction of the American man and girl not only through accessories and delineation of physical characteristics but also through artistic means, which again reflected his individuality. Brownell of the *World* tied Homer's individuality to his perception of vitality in the canvas. He defined how Homer created his vitality: "[N]ature looks differently to different men.... Within certain limits Mr. Homer sees about as far

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

into the heart of one kind of outdoor nature—the kind in which there are both fields and figures, and in which the interval is more than two-thirds human—as any painter that we happen now to recall anywhere.... [W]e do not mean that it is the subtlety and sweetness of fields with figures that Mr. Homer pays attention to, but the freshness and buoyancy rather."[89]

That Homer had a specific way of seeing nature was commented on by a number of writers, and it often led to notices of his uniqueness. In one way or another all ten commentaries on *Answering the Horn* mentioned its essential "Homerness," singling out either its individuality, originality, or characteristic aspects. Even the *World*, which generally found American genre painting "more stupid" than its foreign counterparts, especially praised Homer's canvas. According to the *World*, there was nothing else in American painting like it, and Homer's efforts deserved to be applauded for their sheer distinctiveness.[90] The *Post* agreed that Homer's pictures could not be done by anyone else.[91]

How Homer observed the world was seen as unique and as the driving force behind his personal style, which included crudeness, honesty, and even peculiarity. The *Post* wrote that he was "so honest, so abhorrent of 'clap-trap,'" while the *Daily Graphic*, which considered *Answering the Horn* "in many respects a good picture," also found it "striking" and "full of his peculiar manner."[92] The *World* raised the question of whether Homer's crudeness was intentional and was part of a conscious construction of an expression of individuality and originality, or was due to mere ineptness, as others had

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

suggested over the years. "Looking back at his crudest days," Brownell reminisced, "we are half inclined to think that even then what we mistook for crudity was partly—not altogether certainly—a youthful disregard for conventionality rather duly emphasized, a rather forcible as well as frank assertion of individuality. But even then he saw what other painters did not see, what we who are only poor pupils of pictures certainly did not see, what some persons did not even recognize that Mr. Homer saw."[93] In his own way, Brownell admitted his own earlier misunderstanding of the work and apologized for his peers as well.

Implicit in some critics' remarks on Homer's uniqueness was the continued belief in his freedom from foreign influences. The *Nation* noted that Homer's two entries, along with those of William Trost Richards, Robert Swain Gifford, Eastman Johnson, and William Page, were "without evident marks of foreign hammers and anvils."[94] The *Art Journal* took this a step further, suggesting that Homer's work developed without references to any sources whatsoever: "Winslow Homer paints with an apparent unconsciousness of all schools of Art, and of every method other than his own. No reputation, however authoritative, ever seems to reflect a tint upon his canvas, and no influence, however powerful, is seen to alter the sweep of his brush by a hair's-breadth. Without the least presumption he is always rigidly faithful to his own perceptions. He paints the life that he sees as he sees it;.... He is wholly in sympathy with the rude and uncouth conditions of American life...."[95] Despite these comments, Homer's work clearly drew on European influences, as Susan Nichols Carter had recognized in commenting upon his entries in the 1877 watercolor show. *Answering the Horn*, Sarah Burns has rightfully pointed out, has

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

many commonalties with contemporary French peasant pictures and Kathleen Pyne correctly connected the subject of Homer's painting to Jules Breton's *The Recall of the Gleaners* (fig. 81).[96] But the direct quotations from European art, especially subject matter, in the works of artists like Duveneck, Shirlaw, and Eaton, heightened the sense that Homer's approach was independent. Like Homer, Inness was praised as being original and for thinking for himself even though his connections to European study were fully acknowledged.[97] What separated Homer and Inness and made them original was that they synthesized a variety of approaches, including some European, within the parameters of unmistakably American subjects. What separated Homer even further from his peers was that his genre themes took his subjects to a level of "Americanness" that was unsurpassed.

Adding further to *Answering the Horn*'s positive reception was the manner in which Homer painted the figures. They were considered "well and freely drawn," and many reviewers felt they had been painted with more care than usual.[98] The *World* and *Tribune*, both critical of Homer's lack of finish in the past, were now of the opinion that Homer had tempered his previous coarseness. Cook saw *Answering the Horn* as evidence of Homer's "returning from his many experimental trips in the land of grotesque reality or coarse imagination." He preferred Homer's work to Duveneck's, which he found not only ugly and repulsive, as mentioned above, but which also exemplified the ills happening to art:

> But is this [Duveneck's *Turkish Page*] a high or even an admirable form of Art? We are getting *blasé* to the representation of texture since we find that so many are able to learn the trick; we shall soon be surfeited with objects thrown together

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> for the sole purpose of color-effects; and after that, what is left us in such pictures! If Art is meant to express the subtle harmonies of Nature, especially to discover or suggest the element of beauty, we require something more than color and realistic imitation.[99]

These words illustrate Cook's change from his Ruskinian days as they delineate his discomfort with the extreme end of the "art-for-art's sake" doctrine. Homer's depiction of the American farmer in *Answering the Horn* surpassed factual realism and pedantic narrative and entered into the realm of the poetic and symbolic, satisfying those like Cook and Brownell for whom it was a necessity for true art. In his greater carefulness, the *World* also saw the signs of a maturing artist:

> [T]he essence of this individuality and this artistic faculty of generalization he has never lost; the first has lost its crudity, its undue emphasis, its too horrible assertion, has become mellowed by maturity, and the second has steadily and certainly become more and more artistic in its quality without ever losing its unconventional charm. His pictures have indeed become as careful as they always have been unconventional; we know of no painter of similar ability who has made so great and so consistent improvement."[100]

Compared to what the Munich-trained artists displayed at the Academy, Homer's work now had the look of finish. Only the *Commercial Advertiser* criticized the figures, saying that the odd proportion of the man made him seem "ten cubits high."[101]

Homer's use of color was the one element repeatedly criticized in *Answering the Horn.* As it had been with his watercolors this same year, the coloring of the faces particularly drew complaints. "The science of his flesh tints we never yet could fathom," cried the *Post*, suggesting that the critics understood that the application of color theory was at work.[102] Others were also puzzled by Homer's color. The *Art Journal* worried that "His

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

faces are always like Joseph's coat, of many colors," and the *Mail* found too much iron and rust in not only in the faces but in the fields as well.[103]

Homer's *Landscape* received only half the notice of *Answering the Horn*, and the writers' reactions to it were much more divided.[104] Because the painting has no ostensible narrative element, the design of the canvas commands attention. The combination of the low viewpoint, mid-canvas horizon, and massing of forms in the groups of trees creates a striking visual effect. Although different from *Milking Time*, the impact of *Landscape*'s compositional design was equally strong. The *World* reacted positively to the painting. As one for whom pictorial unity was an increasingly important feature of good painting, Brownell wrote: "It is one of the best landscapes we have seen from Mr. Homer's hand." He then favorably compared its simplicity and broad treatment with the work of Inness, not suggesting an influence, but rather noting that they aspired to and reached similar artistic goals.[105] The effect of the shadows, mirroring the dark massing of the trees was especially praised by the *Times*, while *Scribner's* briefly named it among the "freshest and strongest" landscapes.[106] Common to all who praised *Landscape* was a positive attitude towards the work of the new men and an interest in strong pictorial design.

By contrast, Clarence Cook called *Landscape* "a willfully mannered study...which is not a picture." Instead he preferred William Trost Richards' *Gull Rock* (unlocated), not for detailed study, which he had admired in Richards' work in the past, but rather for his catching the poetry of a fleeting moment. Cook desired the "imaginative understanding of nature" which he found in Richards and Inness. [107] Perhaps it was Homer's assertion of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the flat picture plane, made prominent by the banding of sky, land, and reflection, and the lack of the illusion of perspectival space and palpable atmosphere, so pungent in the other artists' examples, that drew his ire. Another biting criticism came from the *Sun*. It called Homer's landscape "as slovenly a bit of painting as an artist of reputation would choose to put his name to." [108] That he would have such a reaction to Homer's broad areas of color, fit together like puzzle pieces, is perfectly in character for someone who loathed Duveneck and held up the careful landscape of John Bristol as the exemplar of truthfulness. This same critic also liked the careful treatments of the French-trained Eaton and Low, as well as the Dutch-inspired Hovenden. The *Sun* writer longed for the day when careful, French-like drawing and treatment might be applied to home subjects.[109]

The combined subject and treatment of *Answering the Horn*, if not *Landscape*, provided for many critics an example of what might constitute the new post-Centennial American art. For all, the subject, simultaneously contemporary and emblematic of America, fulfilled the requirement for home subjects of meaningful content. Homer's appropriation of European, specifically French, approaches to composition, figure centrality, and suppression of narrative were better understood and now embraced by the critics who supported European models. In light of the productions coming from the hands of the Munich-trained artists, they considered Homer to be no longer radical but still positively individual and original—all characteristics that contributed to his designation as American. At this critical juncture in American art, Homer continued to negotiate the competing desires for American art: relevant home subjects and artistic treatment, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

methods that equaled but did not imitate those of Europe. In 1877 he sat squarely between the old and the new.

Homer departed New York in the middle of the 1877 Academy annual's venue.[110] He spent the month of May in Virginia.[111] Homer's return to the South was likely inspired by the winning reception (and sale) of *The Cotton Pickers* as well as the repeated requests for fresh home subjects. His summer travels also included a visit to the Adirondacks. While the precise itinerary and extent of his Adirondack stay are unknown, pictures related to this trip suggest that he stopped at both Keene Valley and the Beaver Mountain area.[112] Homer was back in his studio by the end of September, and the experiences gathered during his two summer trips would feed his art for the next year.[113]

Homer retreated into his studio in the winter of 1877-78. In January and February he did not participate in any of the club shows nor, more importantly, in the American Watercolor Society annual exhibition. In fact, Homer's work appeared in fewer venues in 1878 than it had in a number of years.[114] The 1878 Academy annual and the Paris Exposition Universelle were his only two significant exhibition appearances, and the work in oil, which formed his contributions to these shows was likely time-consuming. However, Homer was not ignored by the press. There were many mentions of his work and activities through the year, and Homer's participation in the Tile Club is probably the best-known example of his engagement with his peers.[115]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Despite the fact that his work was less in view, two sets of new paintings received considerable notice in early 1878. *Autumn* (fig. 82) and *Summer* (*Butterfly Girl*; fig. 83), oils of fashionable women presented as metaphors for the seasons, were noticed both in progress in his studio and when they appeared at Leavitt's Art Rooms in a sale at the end of January. Nicolai Cikovsky has rightly noted that these two paintings show Homer working in the stylish mode of his European peers Alfred Stevens (fig. 84), James Tissot, and Giovanni Boldini.[116] Writers in both the *Daily Graphic* and the *Post* noticed two attributes in these paintings that had rarely been seen in Homer's work and were characteristic of the European canvases: physically beautiful women and an overt art-for-art's-sake aestheticism. Over the years, Homer's women had been remarkable most often for their plainness (a quality often underscoring their Americanness), but now the writer noted: "Unlike many of his productions, they introduce us to women of some physical beauty."[117] The *Daily Graphic* detailed its understanding of what was intended in the canvas: "The pictures do not profess to tell any story, for which true art has no necessity, and the adjuncts are simply used to intensify the attitude and beauty of the figures, which possess a strong vitality and interest."[118] The focus on beauty for its own sake was increasingly being discussed in artistic circles. It was apparent not only in remarks like those concerning Homer's work, but in such bold statements as George Sheldon's in *Harper's New Monthly*, which affirmed "the sole end of art is the expression of beauty."[119] Homer's works, the statements about them, and the definition of the aim of art as expressed by Sheldon are concrete examples of just how much many attitudes towards art had changed from ten years before, when Homer had just arrived back from Europe and every picture was expected to tell a story or teach a lesson.[120]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

If Homer's beautiful figures attracted attention in early 1878, his African-American subjects, which would be sent to the Exposition Universelle in Paris in the spring, also received considerable attention in the artist's studio. Glimpses of *Sunday Morning in Virginia* (fig. 85) raised the expectation of a number of writers for an excellent production.[121] The *Post* was most impressed with the canvas and, in an extended commentary, detailed many of the components at work in this picture and in *A Visit From the Old Mistress* (fig. 86) as well as how the public might react to them:

> Mr. Winslow Homer is giving the finishing touches to two pictorial representations of negro life in Virginia which he expects to send to the Paris exhibition. In one of the canvases he introduces us to the interior of a shanty where a sable girl of twelve summers or so is reading from a large Bible to a group of her kinswomen of various ages and sizes. It is Sunday morning, and what pieces of gaudy ribbon and other adornment were available have been brought into use on the persons whose swarthy faces enhance the effect by contrast. The other canvas shows us a similar interior, where not dissimilar company are receiving a visit from an elderly, kindly disposed gentlewoman once their owner and mistress. Mr. Homer has treated these simple themes with fidelity and freshness. His negroes are real negroes, children of the southern soil, and will not fail to interest Europeans who expended so much sympathy upon them in earlier days. The figures possess remarkable roundness and relief, and the facial expressions are distinct studies for the spectator. In subject, conception and execution these works are most refreshingly original."[122]

A combination of factors contributed to the high praise for Homer's originality of subjects, conception, and execution in these canvases. In his 1877-78 images of blacks, Homer attended to the serious side of his subjects in a way unprecedented by his peers. They were especially meaningful during the final failures of Reconstruction's programs.[123] The majority of African-American images at this time appeared in the popular magazines of the day, and in that venue humor was the primary intent.[124]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's artistic treatment of African-American subjects further differentiated his work from others as he continued to move away from the traditions of narrative genre. Among those who painted African Americans in rural interiors, Homer's approach to subject and presentation is distinct. For example, compared to Thomas Waterman Wood, whose interiors and figures, as in *Sunday Morning* (fig. 87), were noted for their descriptive character, Homer, in *Visit From the Old Mistress* especially, subdued the definition of the interior setting and focused on the figures, especially their faces. Noticed for their "remarkable roundness and relief" by the *Post* critic, the figures provided a monumentality and individuality of character that set them apart from other images of similar subjects. *Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia* received further notice later in 1878 at the Paris Exposition and again in 1880 at the National Academy, and they will be further examined in the context of those exhibitions below.

While Homer received supportive notice for his new paintings in early 1878, his absence at the American Watercolor Society caused something of a stir, much more so than in 1873 when his absence from the Academy annual was only summarily noted. Now, five years later, his absence drew significant attention and raised a number of issues about Homer himself as well as about the state of American art in general. The expectations for Homer and his art had grown considerably.

The 1878 watercolor show was generally criticized overall, and Homer was one of a number of the more beloved watercolorists who showed only minor works or stayed away altogether.[125] While the reason for these absences was not explained, what is clear

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is how highly regarded Homer was a watercolorist.[126] He was often the first artist mentioned by those writers who enumerated the names of the missing, and he was generally praised for his watercolor productions. [127] The *Post* lauded him as "a most genuine and original painter in watercolors."[128] The *World* called him "by far the best and most logical water-color painter in America to our mind."[129] The *Times* noted that Homer's artistic interests and treatment were extremely well suited to the medium, "showing a just appreciation of the scope of watercolors."[130]

The *Post* as well as the *Nation* raised other issues that pointed out Homer's central position in American watercolor and suggested that the artist may have been experiencing some discomfort with it. The *Post* quipped: "Mr. Winslow Homer ... has not cared to trouble himself to put in an appearance. His health may be supposed to be satisfactory, for he has been doing much fine work of late in oils; and his pictures in last year's exhibition, in spite of a certain unhappy mannerism, were widely appreciated and praised."[131] The *Post* rightly recognized that Homer's energies were focused on his oil painting. While his painting fewer watercolors may have been influenced by their mixed reception in 1877, it may have also been due to Homer's usual habit of working intensely on particular issues or subjects and in a single medium to the exclusion of others. From the end of the summer of 1877, Homer was working on at least seven oils of considerable size: *Dressing for the Carnival* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, *Visit From the Old Mistress*, *Autumn*, *Summer*, *Camp Fire* (fig. 88), and *Two Guides* (fig. 89). In these canvases, Homer was responding to new trends in art that only

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

now he may have felt he was ready to try or that he felt only could be investigated in the serious medium of oil.

Earl Shinn of the *Nation* offered an expanded view of the situation:

> Perhaps no contributions have had quite so much éclat this year as the absence of certain contributions. The always-unexpected Mr. Homer, so certain to do something that nobody could have anticipated and that no inferior artist could do, this season does nothing. He produced last year some powerful effects of the blotchy order, some abrupt eulogisms of Japanese fan-painting, some cries of irreconcilable color, that excited the liveliest attention of the public. We believe that none of those who so readily celebrated the originality of these striking works expressed their gratitude by acquisition, and the leader of the invading school has withdrawn into his tent to ponder on the bad faith of the champions of bric-a-brac. Certain foreign contributors, however, have planted the standards and the disturbed colors of the orientalists, and the Exhibition does not quite lack the peculiar and stimulating accent which it was the wont of Mr. Homer to confer on the yearly display.[132]

Shinn's statement provides important insights to Homer's situation at the moment. He noted that lack of patronage of his 1877 watercolors may have contributed to Homer's truancy from this watercolor show. In referring to Homer as the "leader of the invading school," he locates the artist squarely within and at the head of the changes in American art. Yet he also noticed that by 1878 there were substantial enough changes in American watercolor practice, most notably in the form of the orientalists' work, that the exhibition was no longer depended solely on Homer's sheets to provide the cutting-edge work. The contradictions and tension suggested by recognizing Homer as a leader in the new departure on the one hand, but no longer completely distinctive by virtue of the appearance of European-inspired sheets by other artists, articulates the larger struggle that would come to a head in a year's time.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although they had somewhat differing opinions of the quality of Homer's watercolors, both these writers' comments outline the artist's situation. The *Post* suggested that Homer's absence from the Watercolor Society reflected the fact that he could not be bothered to further aid the progress of American art. That Homer always worked according to his own personal agenda was as true as it had always been. The *Nation*'s statement that Homer led American watercolor artists and the suggestion that he was sulking due to poor patronage underscores the complexities of Homer's situation. The art world was in upheaval at this moment and Homer was feeling its effects.

On the heels of the Watercolor Society show and before the Academy annual opened, the Society of American Artists presented its first exhibition.[133] As Jennifer Bienenstock has pointed out, the Society of American Artists played a pivotal role in shifting American artistic identity away from one defined by subject matter, especially landscape and inventive individualism, to an acceptance of a more universal concept of art that shared in the history of western civilization.[134] Although the formation of the Society had its beginnings as early as 1875, its coming to a visible fruition in 1878 points out the intensity of the changes in art at the time. In this whirlwind of activity, the critics were increasingly coming under attack for their bad behavior. An editorial in the *Telegram* noted that "opinions in art matters are worth less than nothing," for critics were either ignorant or "pompous windbags." The writer then called for impartiality as well as broader knowledge to leaven the field.[135] Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer framed the issue more sympathetically, stating it in terms of the challenges facing the critics. She

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

said their duty was to balance in a review both the relative quality of the works as well as to measure them against the highest standards of art.[136] The critics, too, were finding their way as to how to come to terms with individual, national, and universal artistic achievements, and their responses often reflected their own conflicts and contradictions. Finally, it must be remembered that these events occurred in the midst of a significant economic depression.[137]

Key among the effects of change was that the National Academy annual found itself in a new position in 1878, having the direct competition of the Society of American Artists' showing. In addition, there was the anticipation of the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle, which would open in early summer. Due to this constellation of events, the Academy show had a somewhat different cast to it than in the last two years. Munich-trained artists had less impact than the previous year, although Shirlaw, Chase, and Neal all appeared. More Paris-trained artists, including Wyatt Eaton, Abbott Thayer, Julian Alden Weir, Thomas Eakins, and Mary Cassatt, were in evidence. Paintings concerned with the poetic and imagination, such as the canvases by La Farge, Inness, Homer Martin, and George Fuller, captured a greater share of the attention. The well-known academicians, including Homer, Guy, Eastman Johnson, Brown, Robert Swain Gifford, and Thomas Waterman Wood, also appeared in the exhibition.

As a result, the number and types of reviews of the 1878 Academy exhibition were varied as critics' interests were diversifying. Some periodicals lost interest in the Academy. *Atlantic* and *Scribner's* did not report on it at all, choosing instead to focus on the Paris

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Exposition. The *Commercial Advertiser* reviewed the exhibition, but rather in the form of addressing larger topics and ignoring individual artists and works.[138] Those papers and magazines most committed to covering the fine arts, most notably the *World*, *Tribune*, *Times*, *Nation*, and *Art Journal*, gave the show their full attention. Although some critics wrote with passion on certain topics, the overall tenor of the reviews was a sense of exhaustion.

Having just completed critiquing the Society of American Artists exhibition, the critics found the Academy to be simply less exciting than in the past. There were no heated discussions of either its excellence or inferiority. Responses ran along the center line, some slightly more complimentary, others more critical. Faint praise was meted out in proportion to mild disappointment. Those who praised the exhibition generally wrote for the periodicals that had more cursory or reportorial coverage of the show; thus, favorable impressions were little explained and simply suggested an openness to a variety of approaches.[139] The *Independent* was more specific about what it found pleasing. It ranked the portraits first, the best of which were by either Munich- or Paris-trained artists.[140] It then ranked the works that expressed poetry and imagination, such as those by La Farge and Fuller, saying they were worth a close look.[141] Many writers agreed with the *Independent*.

Of writers who had less than positive reactions to the exhibition, many noted that it would have been difficult to create a show matching the previous year's. Thus, they characterized the 1878 exhibition as "mediocre." The *World*, noting the conservative

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

hanging committee of Aaron Draper Shattuck, John Casilear, and Henry Augustus Loop, as well as the "8 foot rule," which secured space on the line for Academicians, saw the show as a reaction against that of 1877. It signaled a "return of the natives," and the result was much less interesting. Clarence Cook, too, found the show tame compared to the previous year's, although he gave the members of the Academy credit for trying hard. Nonetheless, he had to confess, he liked the Society of American Artists show better.[142] Others also felt the show was lacking but attributed this to varying causes. The lack of a notable work like Duveneck's *Turkish Page* was cited as a decided weakness in the show, as were the figurework overall and the seemingly less ambitious effort by older and younger artists alike.[143]

As he had over the past three years, Homer continued to jockey for a comfortable position vis-à-vis the great changes at hand. His contributions to the 1878 National Academy of Design annual and the responses they evoked suggest how his position in the art world was changing as he continued his search for viable subjects and artistic treatment. He exhibited five paintings and one tile. They varied in subject and style and included several canvases more than a year old. Of the paintings, *Watermelon Boys* (fig. 90), of rural prankster-children, including two African-American youths, had first been show at the Brooklyn Academy in December 1876. It appeared now in a possibly altered form.[144] *Shall I Tell Your Fortune* (fig. 92), first shown at the Century Club in January 1877, pictured an exotic looking female figure. *In the Field* (fig. 93) had been shown previously as *Song of the Lark* at both the Century and Union League Club in February 1877.[145] *Two Guides* and *Fresh Morning* (unlocated) were both Adirondack subjects and were the only

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

works from his previous summer's excursions to be shown here. *Morning* (unlocated) was the title given to the tile exhibited. Out of this broad range of subjects, one infers that Homer may have been hedging his bets, thinking that one of these themes would hit the right chord with the critics or that different ones would please different critics (and patrons, too). Images of African Americans were especially timely. Farm subjects had been perennially successful. *Answering the Horn* had proved their continued popularity in 1877, and *In the Field* was a related composition. Homer's fortune teller suited the interest in alluring, exotic images of women, while the Adirondack themes were increasingly appealing to men as outdoor wilderness experiences became an increasingly favored leisure-time activity.[146] The farm and Adirondack subjects gave Homer the opportunity to further investigate his growing interest in depicting different types of light, its effect on color, and its ability to suggest atmosphere. His entry of a tile placed Homer firmly within the decorative movement and asserted his interest in being positioned among the most fashionably artistic.[147]

With this wide variety of offerings, only six out of the thirteen writers who mentioned Homer paid concerted attention to his work; the other seven made only brief remarks.[148] Homer's position in these reviews was more peripheral than usual. The decentralized position of the response to Homer was caused or enhanced by the fact that four out of his five canvases hung in the corridor—"an unusual place for an academician to occupy," noted the *Sun*.[149] The effect was that Homer's entries commanded significantly less ink in this exhibition as the issues and number of artists had become more widespread. The effects of foreign training were still a topic of conversation, but there was a deepening

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

focus in the general press as well as in reviews on examining the purpose of art. Discussion of proper subject matter and technique now occurred in the context of discerning the intent of the artist's work as either the expression of individual creativity and/or emotional states or of art-for-art's-sake with an emphasis on sheer beauty.

In this context, Homer appeared as an outsider (for better or worse, depending on the critic) and was responded to as he intersected (or not) with these rising concerns as well as with the issues with which he, often alone, was identified. Of the six in-depth reviews, two were very positive, one was cruelly negative, and three found both good and bad elements in the work. Four of the six brief notes—in the *Post*, *Daily Graphic*, *Times*, and *Herald*—were laudatory.[150] Of the others, the *Mail* had mixed feelings while Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer in the *American Architect and Building News* was overtly negative.[151] Thus, the reactions were mixed. Again, as in the past, the reviews often discuss Homer in general terms as much as they address specific pictures. The *Nation* shed some light on this:

> We may begin with those artists, such as Homer and La Farge, whose works the connoisseur does not regard, but rather the works expected of them. It is a somewhat notable fact, for instance, that those who praise Mr. La Farge do not praise the paintings he shows them, but always the next one he is going to paint....Winslow Homer, again, is an artist who interests us unfailingly, but in the presence of whose paintings we are infallibly thinking of something else.[152]

For Shinn in the *Nation*, that "something else" towards which Homer's art made him turn was the hope for a national art. While Homer's entries in this exhibition did not provide much help to that end due to what Shinn saw as their individual technical defects, their sheer presence caused him to deliver an eloquent essay on Homer and national art:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> We always think of Mr. Homer when we feel hopeful of the uprising of a national expression in art. It is true that our century, with its spread of education that levels everything, is entirely unfavorable to the individuality of nations, and that America, born without a past, and a mere recipient of impartial influences from all the world, is rather more hapless in this respect than others amongst the civilizations. Still, in art, we do notice, although all schools must be based alike on the Italians and on the Greeks, that an individual or a group will generally arise whose studies have taken a bent so particular, and so much in harmony with race-character, as to get accepted as typical.... America has not yet contributed, but whenever we forget for a moment how very difficult it will be for her to do so, and cast about for the coming man who will represent her, we are as apt to think of Mr. Homer as of any one else. He selects purely national subjects and he paints them with a style quite his own, a style that has never felt the style of foreign teachers to a controlling point.[153]

Shinn's viewpoint, which blended his cosmopolitan openness; his embracing of Hippolyte Taine's notions that national characteristics rise out of race, milieu, and moment; his agreement with Matthew Arnold that the highest art draws upon the best of all civilizations through time; and his great desire for a recognizably American art elaborated the challenges and cures for a national school. Shinn thought that Homer's work had the necessary ingredients to fulfill his hopes by virtue of his subject matter as well as a style that, although it might make use of foreign elements, retained its individuality. The *Sun* felt the same. It criticized the particular works on view for their "more sketchy and slovenly style than usual," but only after first praising Homer along with Eastman Johnson as the best painters of American home subjects.[154]

As did the *Nation* and *Sun*, a number of other publications did not think that Homer's 1878 Academy entries were his best efforts. It was their technical applications that drew most of the negative comments. Criticism for crudity, hardness, and disagreeable color was handed out in considerable measure for *Shall I Tell Your Fortune* and *Watermelon*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Boys. The *Independent* felt its eyes had been "lashed" by the former.[155] Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer felt that the same canvas was the most unpleasant of the whole, awful group due to its hardness.[156] While the *Sun* enjoyed the humor of *Watermelon Boys*, its disagreeable color and "miserably slurred" details kept the painting from being a success.[157] Clarence Cook was the most terse and critical of all, dispensing with Homer's technique overall with the word "vapid."[158]

The one true booster for Homer's technique and its effects was Susan Nichols Carter, who again championed Homer:

> Winslow Homer is well represented by four or five paintings full of life and vigor. We have always believed that a really free and forcible style was the result of an early course of severe study of Nature where each detail of character and expression was imitated closely by the painter. Winslow Homer affords an excellent illustration of the force of our belief. And this year, more than in any previous exhibition, his paintings have acquired such freedom as almost to warrant them in being called "impressionist" pictures. In the one in the corridor, of some boys sucking away at strips of watermelon, the whole question of the technique is lost in the vivacity of the figures; and, at the same time, half a glance reveals to the visitor that it possesses great merits of style both in drawing and color.[159]

Carter's definition of Impressionism and the freedom she associated with it was in its formative stages and predated the later, now accepted one of color-laden, broken brushwork, dissolving form in light. Carter's Impressionism was rather the use of looser, boldly and broadly applied strokes to define a subject.[160] The Munich men of the 1877 Academy exhibition were considered Impressionist, and having their example again visible on the exhibition's walls caused a real concern this year that technique would become an overriding principle of art. With scores of American artists returning home from Munich and Paris, it was clear that Americans could learn the technical means to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

paint. It was the goals towards which that technique should be applied that would become more hotly debated. Even Carter, a lover of the freer styles, admitted: "if a person really desires to create a picture, it must be under the influence of an impassioned impression, and not with a simple manufacturing of skill."[161] As the looser painting styles and the attending changes in subject interests moved farther away from the narrative, there was a nearly unanimous voice among the critics that treatment must be tied to conception. Thus, in *Watermelon Boy*, the living moment that Carter discerned grew out of a successful conjoining of this combination.

If underlying ideas were a necessity for successful art, then the quality or substance of the ideas became an important issue. The *Sun* noted:

> The mediocrity in the display of genre pictures...is particularly noticeable in the works of home-bred painters, but is no means confined to them.... We look for invention, for original ideas, humorous or otherwise, and fail to find them. Pictures, as a rule, do not tell a story or even suggest an incidence of importance, and as this defect is not redeemed by superior drawing, coloring, or composition, the result is particularly dissatisfying.

The writer continued saying that this problem was not endemic just among the Americans, but with the French as well.[162] A lack of ideas (also called motive or conception) was found in artists young and old, foreign and home-trained. In this Academy showing, the *Daily Graphic* said that the works attracted viewers "by many prettinesses and pleasing characteristics, by admirable combinations of color and good decorative effect," but that there were few canvases with "any abiding art value, [due to] the slimness of idea underlying the vast majority."[163] James Jackson Jarves wrote in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Independent later in the year that the worthwhile idea went beyond factual truth and included the use of the artist's imagination:

> The average intellect holds that imitation is the chief end and aim of painting, truth of Nature being its Axiom; overlooking the fact that Nature is a most expansive word and that the measure of one man's eyes and understanding is not necessarily the limit of his neighbor's.... Fine art, indeed, includes Nature's truth; but something more. Its highest qualities imply the existence of independent "creative" forces of the human mind, capable of fashioning Nature's forms to its own meaning and reshaping them to its own concrete ends. This alone is high art.[164]

In the *Independent*'s review of the Academy, Homer fell short because the writer saw only factual truth in the work. He mourned: "we fear that Mr. Homer is 'ower auld to larn,' and will never realize that his work has truth to Nature in spite of, and not on account of its atmospheric hardness and utter absence of beauty. He does not tell the whole truth, even if he tells nothing but the truth."[165]

The belief that it was necessary for art to connect with human emotions—both its maker's and viewer's—had been rising steadily over the past several years and in 1878 both artists and critics were focused on it. The call for the human element in art included *Appleton's* insistence that "there should be in every painting some connection with man's doings, or else the work loses its pictorial interest.... The true and lasting value of a painting must be its power to suggest, to awaken, to touch the imagination or the sympathies, to link itself closely to the heart of the spectator."[166] In essence, it was a clarion call for the poetic in art. For the *Nation*, this was obtained through the presentation of a subject that suggested a poetic narrative. In this exhibition it thought the works of Fuller represented the highest attainment, but those of Eastman Johnson and J. G. Brown were

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

commendable for their sincerity of character within their narrative structures.[167] For the *World*, the poetic was now a function of artistic treatment, and La Farge, Inness, and Fuller were the most successful at achieving a completeness of thought that touched the soul through pictorial means.[168]

With notions of the poetic dominating the 1878 Academy, Homer's *In the Field* received his most positive reviews. A farm scene related to *Answering the Horn*, it included only a single figure, however, thus simplifying the narrative. The image stirred critics' feelings. Earl Shinn said that the painting's real merit was "the young farmer, striding through the dew of dawn and impulsively taking off his hat to the Te Deum of the birds." Although he couched it in narrative terms, Shinn responded to the poetic emotion of the moment suggested by the image, also noting that the canvas had energy and insight put forth in "a personal and unborrowed" manner.[169] Even the otherwise cruel Clarence Cook gave his one positive word to *In the Field.* He said it achieved a "pleasant sentiment, making it the only one of Homer's entries worthy of his reputation."[170] Again, the praise resulted from the feeling it stirred in the viewer. The *World* was also most pleased with *In the Field*'s poetry. It called the canvas one of Homer's "freshest pictures," with a clearness and brightness that gave it a poetic feeling unsurpassed in his other entries.[171] The *World* also commended both of Homer's Adirondack scenes for appearing just "plucked" out of nature. In both painting, but especially *Two Guides*, it commented: "[I]t is interesting to note how different an impression the North Woods make upon Mr. Homer from that which they leave upon most of our artists who go a-sketching there. From no one else has a report of their breeziness, their freshness, and their openness anything like this of Mr.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's hitherto come."[172] Freshness and breeziness were qualities inherent in these outdoor subjects but they were also aligned with the technique Homer used to depict the sun and flickering light. The *Independent* similarly welcomed the freshness and breeziness of *In the Field.*[173]

As the power of the poetic took hold, Homer's subject matter, especially its Americanness, was discussed less than in previous years. Yet it surely contributed to the warm response to *In the Fields*, as it was the reason for the few positive comments for *Watermelon Boys*. The *Nation* had commended Homer for his generally national subjects. The *Sun*, too, had recognized Homer and Eastman Johnson as positive examples of how to properly paint American subjects, despite the fact that they were always less picturesque than foreign ones.[174] Clarence Cook, however, outrightly condemned Homer's subjects as well as those of many other canvases hung alongside his in the corridor. To Cook's eye, they were dreary and too many were of childish, schoolboy/schoolgirl images. He complained: "There is a raw, up-country uncultivated look about the most of them, a look that comes as much from the subjects chosen as from the way in which the subjects are treated."[175] Although Cook whined most bitterly about still life and "bric-a-brac" interior subjects, he had Homer in mind. After praising the sentiment in *In the Field*, he lamented of the whole group: "The subject of some of these are mean; those of all of them are uninteresting."[176] He similarly lambasted J. G. Brown's *Pull for the Shore* (fig. 94), noting that although his figures were very well painted, they held no interest other than being well painted human beings because they were "just every day people."[177] Over the last few years, Cook had become increasingly opposed to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

narrative subjects of daily life. His preference now was for the ideal and poetic. In Homer's subjects of rural life and similar ones by his peers, which pictured American daily experience, Cook could not find the historical interest or poetic sentiment he now demanded for art. Cook had a hard time finding his poetic ideal in this exhibition, and he especially criticized La Farge, the artist most identified with the poetic, for "trifling with his reputation." In La Farge, Cook saw the "grotesque" where others saw imagination.[178] Cook thought Inness, the other artist frequently associated with the poetic, was "disorderly" and "reckless."[179] The methods of both La Farge and Inness disturbed Cook. He now preferred Chase, Shirlaw, and Neal for their technical merits, but their emphasis on technique put their works on the verge of having no purpose, and thus they, too, ultimately failed as art.[180] He considered Thomas Eakins' *Chess Players* (fig. 95) to be one of the few really good pictures in the exhibition. Although its color was faulty, "in drawing, in truth of action, and in the depicting of character in the heads," he found it "exceedingly clever."[181] The influence of French academic training was most often the key to technical success in Cook's eye.

Cook's unpleasant words about Homer's subjects contained an extremely harsh personal attack on the artist. He claimed:

> For an artist who has done such clever things as Mr. Homer, and who has always found the public more than ready to welcome him, it looks like trifling both with himself and his friends when he sends such things as are hung .... It may be that the public does not deserve respectful treatment, but it is not in the interest of art for artists to deal with the public on that theory. We have no intention to intrude our advice upon the artists, but we may at least be allowed to speak in self defense. Mr. Winslow Homer was recognized on his first appearance before the public, as an artist of uncommon merit. He furnished a good illustration of the quickness with which our public spies out merit. The critics had nothing to do

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> with finding out his worth; in his case, as always, they simply seconded the public's motion. What has come over this artist of late years that he sulks in his tent, and seems to take pleasure in painting as badly as he can! His bad painting, it must be confessed, is very bad. But the reason why it is so bad is because we see plainly how good it might have been had the artist chosen to put himself into his work, and not played at chuck-farthing with his talent. The "In the Field'...is saved from condemnation by the bright morning sky sown with cirrus cloud, and there is some pleasant sentiment in this picture which we are glad to welcome. A few years ago, however, we should not have had to thank Mr. Homer for such a scrap of cold comfort as this.[182]

Cook vented the frustration he had experienced with Homer's recent work. He still acknowledged Homer's potential, but as the artist did not follow what the critic felt would be his best course, Cook not only did not like the work, but felt betrayed. Although he framed his protest on behalf of the public and the whole body of critics, a personal anger prevails, the cause of which is unknown today.[183]

There is one final aspect of the response to Homer within the assessment of the 1878 Academy show to be considered. While the response to his work dovetailed with the prevalent issues of the day, Homer was placed in the circle of the older generation by a number of critics. There was the indisputable fact that he was an Academician and not a member of the Society of American Artists. As such, Cook placed him in the older camp.[184] Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, too, lumped him with the other Academicians, whom she saw as not only older but doing the worst work.[185] The *Times* agreed that Homer was a member of the older guard, who now seemed less ambitious, and it viewed works like *Watermelon Boys* as serving a public taste that wanted pictures to amuse, thrill, and instruct with a story.[186]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In sum, Homer at the 1878 Academy exhibition intersected with the plurality of concerns for art, but in many cases, his position was marginalized as his works were physically distanced from the main exhibition rooms. As an Academician, he was now considered part of the older generation. Depending on the critic, his important role in the formation of a national art tied him to either the backward- or forward-looking. It was generally agreed that he had no direct connection to European training or influence, but his artistic treatment was recognized as sharing certain of its characteristics. The poetic strain found by some critics in some of his canvases had a remarkably contemporary flavor. Finally, his showing a tile was proof of his "high decorative" and fashionable sense.[187] George William Sheldon, investigating the reasons for the founding of the Society of American Artists, understood the position of certain academicians, including Homer, Inness, Richards, John Quincy Adams Ward, and others. He noted that these artists were creating enduring work and that, even though they "are not found in the 'new departure' of which we have been speaking,...they have all of them, perhaps more than once, taken new departures of their own; and whatever things are true and honest and lovely in the present new departure are, we may be assured, neither strange nor unwelcome to them."[188] This was true for Homer more than for almost any other artist Sheldon listed.

If Homer seemed on the cusp of being thrown into the camp of old fogies at the Academy, his other activities during the annual exhibition's run countered such an image. In the first week of May, Homer hosted the Tile Club's last meeting of the season with a dinner at his studio. A few days later, a year's worth of the club's production were on view, including three sets of three tiles each (picturing sea monsters and ladies on the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

beach) by Homer.[189] Homer's excursion into the decorative was acknowledged in an article that noted that a number of artists had added decoration to "their regular work" in the past season. It was pointed out that the artists were not simply ladies painting pottery, but included some "like Mr. Homer, who are no neophytes in the mysteries of design, are applying their knowledge and experience in practical production."[190] In addition to his involvement in the Tile Club, Homer also contributed some watercolors to the May reception of the Art Students League, a recognized center of the newer trends. And Homer's work was included in the first black-and-white exhibition of the Salmagundi Club, a new venture devoted to supporting drawing as an art form in and of itself.[191] Concurrently with these engagements with the cutting edge, Homer continued his nominal support of the Academy as an organization. He attended the annual meeting on May 8, where it was noted that his peers Eastman Johnson, John La Farge, and Albert Bierstadt were noticeably absent.[192] Homer may have attended in order to support the nomination of William O'Donovan, also a member of the Tile Club and who had sculpted a bust of Homer, but whatever the reason, his attendance was noteworthy.[193]

While Cook had accused Homer of "sulking in his tent," other writers wrote of the artist's activities. The writer for the *Mail* was intimate enough with him to report: "Mr. Winslow Homer, feeling a little under the weather, will go into the country on a fishing excursion of a week or two."[194] Reports of illness were usually reserved for life-threatening situations (as when Kensett caught pneumonia or Sanford Gifford's health declined quickly). One wonders, here, if there were some kind of inside joke in process since the report comes on the day between the Tile Club events and the Academy's annual

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meeting, and right in the thick of all the reviews of the annual. Whatever the cause for the report, the critic knew Homer well enough and took time to include the information in his art notes, further suggesting that Homer was an active member of the artistic inner circle.

We do not know if Homer took that fishing trip in May, but he must have been occupied with getting work sent off to Boston, where at C. F. Libbie's auction rooms there was a sale of his works on paper at the end of the month. The Boston *Evening Transcript* reported: "There are eighty-four in pencil, crayon, charcoal and watercolor, embracing bits of army life, and life (especially child-life) at the sea-shore and in the country, all as American, as Yankee in character as the 'stars and stripes,' but without a particle of vulgar forcing of that idea."[195] From the variety of subject matter mentioned—Civil War scenes, children at the shore, and rural settings—it appears that Homer was cleaning out his studio. Artists' auctions were a way to make money (if the sale was successful) and were often held preparatory to travels or a move.[196] We know of no plans by Homer for extensive travel in 1878, but it is possible he considered returning to Paris on the occasion of the Exposition Universelle as he had visited the 1867 fair, or Homer may have simply wanted to bolster his financial situation. Whatever the reasons for the sale, Homer began a period of increased restlessness in 1878 that included retreats and great spurts of public and artistic activity.

The Exposition Universelle, on view in Paris during the summer, attracted many artists during 1878. Not since the 1867 exposition had a large selection of American works traveled to Europe, and, as Jennifer Bienenstock has pointed out, the American showing

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was understood to present the "opportunity for the first international and large-scale display of America's alignment of its artistic goals with those of Europe."[197] The reviews of the Exposition, however, were not as voluminous as one might expect. Practical considerations of overseas travel prevented many New York critics from seeing the installation. Reports, especially in the newspapers, came instead from foreign correspondents or were quotations from the foreign press.

Although the Exposition did not open until June, discussions of the contents of the American section began in earnest in mid-March, when the final selection was announced. Eighty pictures, including twelve watercolors, were to be sent, and many came from private collections and artists' studios.[198] For some writers, the absence of certain names, especially from the older generation, made the selection incomplete. In their opinion, adding to the imbalance was the fact that there were other artists represented by three or more examples, artists including Homer, Samuel Colman, Robert Swain Gifford, Guy, Tiffany, and Wood. [199] Homer's contributions, *Snap the Whip*, *A Country School*, *Bright Side* (*Army Teamsters*; Virginia Museum of Fine Art), *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, and *A Visit From the Old Mistress*, were singled out.[200] In the eyes of the conservative *Commercial Advertiser*, the problem stemmed from "too many pictures painted by certain favorites who are inferior artists, and by sending none of the examples of our very best men. For instance, four [sic] examples by Winslow Homer are selected, one or two of which are old-fashioned, unimportant pictures which we have seen offered and hawked about for sale for several years past, but Albert Bierstadt, our great artist,...has...no picture going.... David Johnson is left out in the cold."[201] The gaps in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the selection were not only lamentable in themselves but also prevented the American section from being representative. The *Times* pointed out that the selection committee had sought out the best in American art.[202] The *Times* critic noted that while this approach to selection did not follow the democratic process, the results were acceptable even though not representative; in his opinion, most American art was bad anyway.[203]

The overriding complaint about the American showing in Paris was its lack of national characteristics. The *Post* reprinted the comments of the critic from the London *Academy*, which outlined the problem: "In the American section we find that nearly every work of above average merit has been executed in a French *atelier*.... As a rule the subjects of the works exhibited...are furnished by Europe, but if by any chance the manners and customs of the United States are dealt with, there is no trace of anything like special national characteristics in their treatment."[204] Philadelphian Lucy Hooper, the Paris correspondent for the *Art Journal*, complained similarly: "[T]he greatest defect of our Art exhibit does not lie in its meagreness, but rather in its lack of national characterisation.... [W]e had the right to expect that at least American artists would paint American subjects.... The blood in our painters' veins may be American, but the visions that throng their brains are European."[205] The *Daily Graphic* repeated the sentiment that the nationality of the American works was not obvious: "The American section tells us little of the United States and includes few works the physiognomy of which is original."[206] The *Atlantic* agreed: "[F]rom the walls you wouldn't know where you are."[207] There was the additional criticism not only that the selection was not American enough but that the representations of national characteristics were bad. William James Stillman, writing for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the *Nation*, opined: "The work that smells of the soil and could not be mistaken for anything but American is not abundant and is mostly very bad."[208]

Maitland Armstrong, writing semi-anonymously as "A Painter" for *Scribner's*, offered a different viewpoint.[209] Because he was on the selection committee, it is not surprising that he found individuality and originality in the American work as compared to that of other nations, and noted a greater variety in the American section as compared with other countries.[210] Russell Sturges, also writing for the *Nation*, agreed, but he also suggested that there was no necessity to be so overwrought about evidence of "the national" in our art:

> The only fault which, as it is urged, sounds formidable, is that the pictures chosen are not "national," not American enough.... What pictures except the British are free, or even more free than ours, from this overmastering French influence?... It is not important that our painters should seek to be national or that they should seek to resist foreign influences. It is the important thing that they should seek to be skillful in work and simple in design; nationalism will come as imagination, as invention, as power, as "genius" will come, of itself, in its own good time.[211]

Homer's contributions were seen as among the most quintessentially American. The European critics' responses followed what had been the long-time litany of Homer's Americanness: his American subjects, spirit of originality, simple-heartedness, honesty (though considered gauche by some), truth of sentiment and treatment, and strong local character.[212] The critic from the *London Atheneum*, whose writings were reprinted in the *Herald*, simply stated: "In Winslow Homer's work we come on American ground."[213] The European writers were particularly attracted to his recent African-American images for their peculiarly American subjects and Homer's treatment of them. The earlier *Bright*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Side was only mentioned in listings. Paul LeFort, whose *Gazette des Beaux Arts* reviews were reprinted in the *Tribune*, noticed that there was a group of Americans "who already give evidence of the possession of more originality and independence, whether in the choice and composition of their subject or in the character and sentiment of their design and coloring. Of these Mr. Winslow Homer is one. His negro subjects, *A Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, are small pictures, a little sad and provincial in appearance, but expressive, simple-hearted, and with a true native savor."[214]

The Americans' responses to Homer reiterated the familiar issues about his work, and as usual, their comments were mixed. Some considered the group of Homer's contributions a disappointment. The *Aldine* lamented: "Another of those 'buds of promise' (occupying the 'line'), fallen like autumn leaves with the first frost, is Winslow Homer. What excuse can a painter offer for sending, and our judge and jury for accepting, under the head of Fine Arts, such nondescripts as those which bear Mr. Homer's name?"[215] The inclusion of *Snap the Whip* was criticized by William James Stillman since it was a six-year-old canvas and appeared old fashioned and lacking the proper ingredients for art: "'Cracking the whip' is, in its way, clever and kindly...; but it is not in any great sense of the word art.... [O]ur art education is not begun until we understand that this kind of realization is not art, and that art is distinctly something which nature is *not*."[216] Stillman, in his earlier years a most dedicated Ruskinian, no longer thought that the concretized "truth to nature" dictum was an appropriate foundation for art.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In addition to the issue of Americanness in the Paris showing, split opinions on the issue of finish were also particularly evident. Lucy Hooper was among those who felt Homer's work was hurt by his sloppy paint application: "Mr. Winslow Homer's pictures of negro life are exceedingly faithful and characteristic, but err by too great a hastiness and thinness of execution. Mr. Homer would probably have received a gold medal, I am told, had he sent more carefully finished examples of his very real and decided talent."[217] She felt that his faulty artistic treatment compromised the quality of his work and suggested that in painting as he did, he let his country down. The opposing viewpoint was offered by the European correspondent "Gar" in the *Times*: "[T]his artist's careless breadth is much more artistic and more valuable than the sham finish and pretense at texture of many French and Belgian pictures greatly admired in America, and of Beaufain Irving, who has adopted their style."[218] The *Daily Graphic* found Homer's methods particularly apt for his African-American images: "We have a weakness for Mr. Homer's *Sunday Morning in Virginia*.... The truthful sentiment and the perfect sincerity of treatment render the ugliness pleasing."[219] These words reiterate previous commentaries that found Homer's style fitting his subjects. Whereas Homer never fit squarely in one or the other camp of the finish controversy, the other two most "American" artists—Eastman Johnson and John George Brown—represented, respectively, the polar ends of the sketch-versus-finish debate. Their pictures in the Paris exhibition—notably *Corn Husking* by Johnson and *The Passing Show* (fig. 96) by Brown—exemplified the two approaches. Following in line with their assessments of Homer's work, the *Times* liked the freedom of Johnson's work best of all in the American section whereas the *Art Journal* praised Brown for his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

combination of characterization and finish, making his children "thoroughly American."[220]

While they occurred only in passing here, these remarks reflect the pervasiveness of the finish/unfinish controversy during this summer. In an article in *Appleton's* titled "About Finish in Pictures," the writer noted how much recent commentary there had been on the subject of incomplete pictures. Trying to educate readers, he pointed out that it was ignorant to think that finish meant smooth and polished. While denouncing this kind of thinking, he cautioned about accepting slap-dash work. Instead, he suggested that a certain kind of finish, the same kind found in the Old Masters such as Rubens and Titian, should be expected in every work. Old Master paintings, the writer continued, were finished because "they are vital; they are rich in texture and color, definite as to form, satisfying as to drawing; they take possession of us fully; they leave nothing to be wished for." Accepting this idea of finish, the writer questioned:

> What new dogma is this, then, that so long as color is heaped on in a vigorous manner, a picture must be accepted as complete, however crude and raw it may seem, however absolute is the evidence that the artist stopped before he had done? It is an imperative truth that no work of art should attract attention to its processes, should impose upon a spectator its methods, should do anything but assert results. No one is so crude to dislike a sketch because it is only a sketch; but everyone has just ground for complaint when his admiration is demanded for a painting as a painting which is only a sketch—that is, is the beginning of a painting.[221]

In the coming season, opposing sides would be taken on this issue and heated discussions would ensue in which Homer figured prominently.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

While his paintings were in Paris for the summer, Homer visited his friend and patron Lawson Valentine at his new country property, Houghton Farm.[222] The pictures resulting from this trip were immediately noticed and found to be interesting and appealing. On Homer's return home, the work was seen in his studio, at the Century Club in November, and at reception of the Art Students League in December. In less than four weeks time, five art writers took special notice of them. Briefly, the *Post* noted: "They are impressive now, and give promise of exceedingly successful pictures."[223] Admittedly, these pictures were seen in process, but Homer's work continued to be measured not only for itself but also for what it might become. The *Sun*, reporting on the Homer's "watercolor drawings" of children, sheep, and pure landscapes at the Art Students League in December, outlined why they were so captivating:

> These comprise some of the best work Mr. Homer has yet done. They are full of refined and delicate telling; they convey a very touching and pleasing sentiment; and what is both unusual and unexpected, they are distinctly American in their quality. There has been heretofore much to admire in this artist's rustic studies, but not at any time has his world shown so much seriousness or such a depth of motive and completeness of expression.[224]

Qualities that critics felt had been lacking in Homer's art were now appearing here: greater attention to beauty (refinement and delicate telling), emotional impact, the poetic, seriousness of intent, and completeness of thought through the artistic treatment conjoined with Homer's signature characteristic: a distinctive Americanness. The result was that, according to the *Herald*, "the little drawings are extremely *chic*," and the eye of the *Art Interchange* writer "could not but linger" on them.[225] Homer continued to work on these sheets through the fall and winter, and they would serve as the basis for his 1879

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

offerings to the American Watercolor Society, where they would elicit much commentary.

In 1878, while Homer was still away for the summer, the most comprehensive article on Homer to date appeared. He was featured in the August installment of George Sheldon's series in the *Art Journal* on contemporary artists. In keeping with the format of the series, some direct quotes from the artist were included along with his biography. Illustrations of *Watermelon Boys* and *In the Fields*, most recently exhibited at the Academy annual, were included. The article ended with a commentary by Sheldon that both praised and gave a cogent assessment of Homer's current work. He wrote:

> Homer is not wholly master of *technique*, but he understands the nature and the aims of Art; he can see and lay hold of the essentials of character, and he paints his own thoughts—not other people's.... They reveal on the part of the artist an ability to grasp dominant characteristics and to reproduce specific expressions of scenes and sitters; and for this reason it is that no two of Mr. Homer's pictures look alike. Every canvas with his name attached bears the reflex of a distinct artistic impression. His style is large and free, realistic and straight-forward, broad and bold; and many of his finished works have somewhat of the charm of open-air sketches—were, indeed, painted out-doors in the sunlight, in the immediate presence of Nature; while in the best of them may be recognized a certain noble simplicity, quietude, and sobriety, that one feels grateful for in an age of gilded-age spread-eagleism, together with an abundance of free touches made in inspired unconsciousness of rules, and sometimes fine enough almost to atone for insufficiency of textures and feebleness of relation of colour to sentiment. His negro studies recently brought from Virginia, are in several respects—in their total freedom from conventionalism and mannerism, in their strong look of life, and in their sensitive feeling for character—the most successful things of the kind that this country has yet produced.[226]

Homer was placed squarely in terms of the most current interests and ideas in an article written by one of the leading critics of the day. He was praised for his expression, individuality, breadth of style, and interest in light as a defining characteristic. He was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

also praised for a sobriety that counteracted the perceived rising materialism of the day so that, despite the technical deficiencies of the work (especially the color), Homer satisfied this critic's requirements necessary for good art. At the same time, Sheldon noted in Homer's work the happy agreement of previously considered contradictory elements. For example, he described his style as both "large and free" as well as "realistic and straight forward," two previously incompatible artistic modes.

In the end, 1878 was a charged year for art and for Homer, too. Throughout the year he had been both criticized and championed. His placement in the constellation of artists had shifted somewhat, out of the younger towards the older camp. Yet his work was recognized as striding into new territories. And still, as always, he held most firmly his place as the most "American" of artists.

During the fall and winter of 1878-79, Homer was busily producing art, and both he and his work were less visible in local venues until the Watercolor Society annual exhibition.[227] He spent most of the coming year creating works on paper, especially drawings.[228] This burst in drawing coincided with a growing interest in the medium as an art form in and of itself. *Scribner's* noted on the occasion of the Salmagundi Club's black-and-white exhibition in February 1879 that such a showing dedicated to works executed in black-and-white—many of them sketches—had particular importance as it indicated "a new impulse in art."[229] Homer exhibited at the Salmagundi "a frame of pencil memoranda," which was considered "clever" and, according to the *Mail*, indicated "a decided leaning towards impressionism."[230] There was no doubt that here Homer was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

on the side of the "sketch" aesthetic in the sketch-versus-finish debate. With his only showing at the Union League Club in May, the *Mail* rightly suggested that the artist was in an "experimental mood."[231]

The 1879 American Watercolor Society annual was widely reviewed. Twenty newspapers and magazines noticed the exhibition, the *Express* being the only major daily failing to acknowledge it. The critics were nearly unanimous in agreeing that the show was of higher quality than in past years and that its fineness could be attributed to a higher quality of work in general rather than to a few outstanding pieces. The critics perceived a greater variety of both method and subject. This variety made the show appealing to many as well as furnishing acceptable work to critics of different persuasions—pro-European-trained or home-bred, liberal or conservative in attitude towards technique and theme.[232] Thus the overall quality of the show was something that both the open-minded Charles DeKay of the *Times* and the conservative writer for the *Aldine* could agree on despite their divergent opinions of what was good in the show. DeKay, for example, championed the higher visibility of the disciples of Fortuny and of Munich, while the *Aldine* praised the examples by those often affiliated with the native and traditional school, such as J. G. Brown, Samuel Colman, James Smillie, Thomas Waterman Wood, and James Nicoll, which told their stories well.[233] More than one critic discovered originality on the exhibition's walls, and its appearance was welcomed as evidence of thinking, individuality, and Americanness even in the face of considerable European imitation.[234] The *Post* was lukewarm in its assessment, feeling that while the show indicated the artists were trying hard, there was not great evidence of progress.[235]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conversely, the *Daily Graphic* saw progress, but worried that there was so little "deep thought" and "seriousness of intention and earnest endeavor towards a higher standard of artistic excellence."[236]

The general remarks on this exhibition make it apparent that writers allowed for a wide range of approaches to art in watercolor. As with the oils shown at the Academy in 1878, the writers cared more for what was being expressed than the methods of execution. The *Daily Graphic*'s call for deep thought suggested such a viewpoint. The *World* offered a similar opinion: "[T]he important thing after all [is] not how anything is done, but what it is and how completely it is expressed."[237] Clarence Cook, expressing his own strong feelings on the topic, outlined the breadth of the issue:

> The question is not...how does one say it, but does one say, and does his way of saying it prevent or help our understanding him. If he says something worth hearing and in a way to leave no doubt as to his meaning, we ought to be satisfied.... [W]hat is wanted is as much variety and individuality as we can get. We can never have enough, but we do not get half as much as we should if artists and writers would throw themselves more earnestly and persistently on themselves. Much of the rudeness and boisterousness that trouble quiet and conventional people in the work of many artists of our time come from the poetic conviction which is penetrating our studios, that the detail of nature cannot be given with any fullness, that the impression of light, air, space, the sentiment of the scene, is the thing to be seized and that, for this, certain instantaneousness of method is to be sought for and acquired at any cost. They see, and even the ruminating public begins to see, that by work like that of Mr. Bellows...we are not set in the presence of Nature, that her doings are merely catalogued.[238]

By this time, Cook had relinquished his 1860s requirement of truth to nature based on imitative rendering. The interest now was less on the mode in and of itself and more on how it supported the thought being rendered. Most important was that the thing being said be worth saying. There was no longer a single correct means of artistic treatment.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Variety and individuality were advocated for their own right. These outlooks reflect the most conspicuous change of the last several years: the conviction that subjective, poetic expression through the visual impression of external nature was becoming an accepted end for art.

Impressionism was the main catalyst for the discussions of the 1879 watercolor show, and the questions it raised included: What is it? Is it valid means of expression? And how is it represented? Corollary discussions related to the topic of Impressionism included commentaries on the validity of the sketch, the question of what was appropriate for exhibition, and the definition of completeness. These issues surfaced in nearly every periodical that covered the exhibition. At the root of many of the discussions was how Impressionism should be defined. The *Post*, for one, noted that it was not an entirely useful term because it had such broad applications. It was understood to include any artist "neglecting details for sentiment," and it acknowledged that such a result could be accomplished in many different ways.[239] Despite a blurred definition of Impressionism, there was no doubt in any writer's mind that the most aggressively Impressionist aesthetic was to be seen in the group of sheets J. Frank Currier sent from Munich.

Currier, a Boston native, had gone to Munich in 1870 to study at the Royal Academy; he remained in Germany until 1898.[240] The images he sent to the Watercolor Society annual were landscapes, but the most radical appeared to most viewers as diffuse, amebic forms and layers of color.[241] To 1870s eyes, they were virtually abstract. Created primarily by applying wet paint to wet paper, the sheets elicited such comments as: "Somebody said at

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the American Watercolor Society the other day that Currier's motto should be, 'Trust to luck and keep your paper wet.'"[242] Currier's sheets were the most technically radical work ever to come into the American public exhibition arena during this era. They were soundly denounced by many, and the few positive commentaries all included qualifications.[243]

The criticism of Currier's entries, which may have included works like *Polling bei Weilheim, Bayern* (fig. 97), focused on their seeming lack of comprehensible subject, composition, or design as well as on his extreme methods of handling. In the eyes of William Laffan of the *Sun*, Currier's contributions appeared as "arbitrary blots of color rudely splashed with no direct or intelligible reference to any outline or design or arrangement of form." He continued that the watercolors went beyond the outer extreme of anything ever created by Whistler, the most radical American artist of the day, and, in their technical and intellectual incompleteness, he compared them to a stack of building materials, distinct from a completed edifice.[244] Shinn in the *Nation* also made the comparison to Whistler, remarking that Currier's "vibrating chords of color...made Whistler seem rather sane and commonplace."[245]

The critics generally agreed that viewed at close range Currier's images were completely indecipherable. What happened when they were seen at a distance was debatable. Some art writers felt that at a distant vantage point they resolved themselves into varying degrees of landscape imagery. For example, Charles DeKay, although bothered by what he believed to be affectation and undue European influence in the work, could not deny

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the power of the images when viewed at a distance: the "strange blendings of apparently meaningless color resolve themselves into landscapes...of no mean excellence." DeKay understood that Currier sought methods that allowed him to suggest the transient effects of light and air on the landscape. This, the critic thought, he had achieved, even finding his methods meritorious, and that "brilliant as a whole," the work presented the landscape strikingly.[246] The *Herald* was less kind, noting that "if you stand off thirty feet, half close your eyes and try to think hard what he means you may get a glimmer, if your tastes are of the madly impressionist stamp." Yet, he gave Currier credit for them as "valuable memoranda, full of suggestion to himself and others" even as he felt "they are not the sort of material he should send to public exhibition."[247] Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer called Currier "an Impressionist of the deepest dye," and also had mixed feelings about the sheets. Up close, the work reminded her of a "smeared pallette," but at a far distance—"not only across the room, but on the other side of the staircase"—she found "the intended effect...[sometimes] of much interest and beauty."[248]

The majority of the writers enumerated Currier's faults. The *Commercial Advertiser* was exasperated by his watercolors; they were unacceptable "nightmares."[249] The *Post* raised the question of artistic completeness, both technical and intellectual. To make its point, it compared Currier to Inness and Alexander Wyant. While with the latter two, he argued, one received a distinct "artistic impression" at a distance, with Currier it was wholly lacking. He explained that with Currier, "the objective force is not sufficient to transmit the sentiment.... the works themselves become obscure."[250] For this writer, Currier's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sheets were just paint on paper, and because they did not suggest an emotion—be it the beautiful, the poetic, or the pathetic—they were not works of art.

Among those who did not like Currier's works, several critics recognized some interesting aspects in them. The division between works serving as interesting studies and works being appropriate for exhibition, an issue raised by the *Herald*, was seconded by others. Currier's watercolors were best appreciated as studies. Earl Shinn offered that, though Currier's watercolors were not successful, they pointed to success in their boldness of aim and method.[251] The *Daily Graphic*, too, could appreciate what Currier was doing, but his sheets could not be counted as completed works of art:

> Finished pictures they certainly are not, but if they are accepted as studies of a bold masterly hand—the work of one who dares to paint nature as he sees and feels regardless of the sneers of ignorant critics or an unsympathetic public, who has aimed at certain broad effects of light and precious qualities of color, and is willing to sacrifice everything else to secure these—we will not find these works wanting in beauty and truth. As vigorous manly endeavors to render the depth and intensity of certain phases of landscape, they have no equals in the present exhibition.[252]

For the critic who could accept the articulation of the transitory features of nature through the broad suggestion of its physical characteristics as a valid artistic endeavor, Currier's sheets were worthwhile.

In contrast to Currier were the works by Homer. Trying to articulate its difficulties with Currier, the *Herald* suggested "nothing could point to our moral better that the landscapes by Winslow Homer."[253] There were many selections by Homer for the critics to consider. He exhibited twenty-nine sheets—watercolors, drawings, and mixtures of the two

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

media.[254] Homer's work received significantly more attention than Currier's, but the impact of the Munich resident's sheets was often felt, either directly or indirectly, in the commentary. As suggested above by the *Herald*, it was now Homer who was often held up as the proper antidote to what was wrong in Currier and in the extreme Impressionist mode. Homer was considered by many to be worthy of the top honors.[255]

As was mentioned above, Homer's offerings to the Watercolor Society had been noticed from their first appearances in his studio, at the Century Club, and at the Art Students League during the previous fall. When the artist sent a portfolio of work from which the watercolor show's hanging committee was to make a small selection, it was reported that "so pleased were they with the contents that they resolved to hang all."[256] It should be remembered that Homer had skipped the Watercolor Society annual in 1878, and it had been suggested that his absence was the result of his annoyance with critics and patrons. Now, in 1879, it was suggested that his entries were the artistic outcome of Homer's pique. The *Times* remarked: "Mr. Winslow Homer, who condones his absence from the water-color exhibition last year by an unusual profusion of pictures. If it be true that his non-appearance was in consequence of harsh criticism passed upon his work at the exhibition second before the present, that only serves to show the good that criticism does.... If Mr. Homer really was angry, he got into a temper with the best of results."[257] Earl Shinn proposed, rather, that the work was the result of intense concentration in seclusion: "Mr. Homer's contributions were simply his budget of summer sketches made in the interior of the State, the glimpses of a hermit living in complete solitude, and summary and penetrating glances of a recluse who is not of the world he

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contemplates."[258] While we know that Homer was surrounded by the Valentine family while at Houghton Farm and was not a true recluse, Shinn alluded to the fact that Homer was removed from the art world at large in a way that was different from when his summer travels had been in the company of fellow artists.[259]

The images on view at the Watercolor Society annual, mostly the result of his 1878 summer at Houghton Farm, included subjects of children, often in the guise of shepherds and shepherdesses, or simply shown enjoying the outdoor life of summer in the country.[260] These pictures reflect the growing influence of the Colonial Revival, which developed out of strong nationalist sentiment and nostalgia for a simpler, pre-industrial past.[261] At the same time, they exhibited a decidedly European flavor because the image of the shepherd/shepherdess was long associated with Rococo painting of the eighteenth century. While most of the sheets pictured children, they were quite various in their method. They ranged from the graphically articulate and transparent washes of *Fresh Air* (fig. 98) to the full-bodied and opaque gouaches of *Apple Picking* (fig. 99). As Jana Colacino has pointed out, it seems Homer was exploring three quite different technical approaches: one based on transparent washes, one where an overriding interest in light drove the rendering of figures in atmospheric conditions, and one where he experimented with arranging colors according to Chevreul's color theory.[262] Whichever technique Homer employed, he combined it with a noticeably sophisticated sense of compositional design, of which a Japanese-inspired flattened perspective was often a component. This is true of the sheets with a high-horizon such as *Weary* (fig. 100) or the ones that are composed of layered horizontal bands of color, such as *On the Stile* (fig. 101).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's contributions to the 1879 Watercolor Society annual were met with great favor. Fifteen of the twenty reports on his work were complimentary and nearly half of the positive reports were extremely laudatory. Only Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer was outrightly critical:

> Mr. Winslow Homer exhibited no less than twenty-nine numbers, in which the various yet cognate eccentricities of his brush were fully represented. His scale of colors varies exceedingly.... He turns in preference to the most unbeautiful figures of wooden outline and glaring diversity of tint. The most painstaking attempt to discover his standpoint, to see nature as he saw her, and to enter into the spirit of his translation, utterly fails to explain much of Mr. Homer's work.... Mr. Homer must have some idea of the indistinct crudeness of his own work both in outline and color, or he would not carefully label his pictures "Girl"; "Sheep and Basket"; "Girl on a Garden Seat"; "Girl, Boat and Boy"; "Girl with a Half Rake" [sic] (fig. 102); and so on.[263]

A lack of beauty and grace, a palette using a wide spectrum of bright colors as well as an inability to find the necessary connection with nature made Homer's sheets seem eccentric and useless to her. Van Rensselaer preferred, instead, the European ways of Shirlaw, but, as explained earlier, not exactly of Currier.[264] Although she did not discuss the positive qualities she found in Shirlaw, she may have liked the sense of volume in his figures and perspective of his scenery consistently found in his work, which was quite different from Homer's figures constructed out of flat areas of color and the flattened perspective of his views.

Clarence Cook gave Homer a rather backhanded compliment in his remarks: "Mr. Winslow Homer is welcome back again, and we greet his bits of drawings, poking their heads up everywhere like dandelions in a Spring meadow. Nothing here to make Mr.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer known, if we did not know him; but plenty to remind us of the days when we first knew him. Every one of these drawings is good for something."[265] Like van Rensselaer, Cook chose not to elaborate on his feelings about Homer but one imagines his frustrations remained similar to those in the recent past, especially with regard to inconsequential subject matter, but the *Tribune* critic's earlier anger seems to have subsided for the moment. In his remarks on other contributors to the show, Cook praised Thomas Waterman Wood for the truth of his character sketch and John La Farge for almost achieving the poetic.[266]

The critics varied considerably in what they admired in Homer's work. Yet they shared an appreciation of Homer's watercolors as an expression of a direct communion with nature. Many writers called this quality "naturalness," and tied it to Homer's individuality, his Americanness of subject and style, and his use of light and color. Forward-thinking critics also saw it as a manifestation of Impressionism that improved on Currier's version of it. In this context, Homer's work held an important position in the discussion of acceptable levels of sketchiness and the appropriateness of exhibiting sketches. Intersecting with the crucial issues for American art at this moment, Homer's watercolors this year seem to have served as a catalyst for critics to coalesce their thinking on these issues. Thus it seems worthwhile to quote at length a variety of the viewpoints of the critics who came to the shared conclusion that Homer's 1879 watercolor entries were worthy American art.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

First and often foremost, Homer's Houghton Farm images appeared to many critics as wonderfully American due to their subject matter and their freedom from outside influences. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, always a champion of things American, found in the watercolor medium and native subjects all that was needed to create a truly American art. *Leslie's* felt that watercolor allowed for a greater "display of originality and a fairer chance for our American artists to show their individual strength and force than in oil" because the American landscape had "a peculiar lightness, brightness and clearness in our skies, a vivacious play of color and an intensity in our autumnal tints and sunset hues which lend themselves admirably to the purposes of the water-colorist," and the life of her people "offer very distinct and original subjects of inspiration." For these reasons, the newspaper felt watercolor might be the medium in which could be established that "American 'school' so much despaired of," and Homer's sheets were the perfect embodiment of these ideas. His Impressionism was the perfect antidote to Currier's European-infected mode:

> When an "Impressionist" is as honest and truthful as Winslow Homer to show himself to be in every stroke of his brush, one's faith in that particular school needs no bolstering of argument or initiation into its subtle beauties. Such pictures as his are genuine works of art, the excellence and beauty of which require no technical knowledge of art mysteries as a preparation for their enjoyment. But when it comes to the extravagant affectation, to the extraordinary effects of color and the incomprehensible composition of Mr. Currier's contributions, an Impressionist seems to stand for a man who believes an impression rises in art value as it is vague and undefined."[267]

Thus watercolor and Homer were the bases for the hope of an American school of art based on the American qualities of honesty, originality, individuality, and democracy. Even for *Art Interchange*, which found much of interest in Currier and his European-trained peers Frederick Blum, Henry Muhrman, and Alfred Kappes as the "harmonists of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the future," Homer held a special and particularly American place: "Winslow Homer, whose individuality and peculiarly charming merits place him in a distinct niche of honor, has a display...[which] must be acknowledged to be very captivating delineations of out-door life. Mr. Homer has studied and practised faithfully at home, therefore, as Americans, we may be well proud to own him, in the best sense of the expression, and to lavish due praise on his modest and beautiful pictures."[268]

Charles DeKay of the *Times*, who was open to the Impressionist aesthetic and a seeker of a particularly American idiom for art, also felt that Homer provided the perfect model. DeKay felt:

> Impressionists are here from Rome and Munich, but there is one impressionist who is entirely homemade and to American soil, indigenous. This is Mr. Winslow Homer,....[who] paint[s] water-colors in a style all his own, and with a vigor and individual accent...they stand by themselves, and wear the name of the artist written in every stroke of the brush. In fine, they have a style. That Mr. Homer has a grand style it is not necessary to insist. In watercolors one does not look for the grand style. But his pictures have a vivid, fresh originality that has on one side a childlike directness and naïveté. He is not a versatile artist nor one of very wide scope—and that is part of the secret of his charm. He seems to be seldom or never bothers with the consideration of side issues, but hits straight at the mark and leaves the unimportant in a picture to take care of itself. This is being an Impressionist in the true and broad sense, not as limited by the exact forms of procedure used by certain artists in France....[269]

DeKay understood that each of Homer's works was investigating a particular artistic problem and that the energy of seeking the solution to that problem pervaded the image. The *Times* critic continued his remarks by comparing Homer's shepherdesses with a sheet (unlocated) by the Irish Michael Brennan, a Fortuny disciple:

> Both are Impressionists, but the one has become so through independent search and by carrying out, uninfluenced, his natural tendencies, while the other has subjected himself to a school of painting.... In contradistinction to these foreign

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> bred Impressionists, Winslow Homer's little shepherdess standing on a winding hill is a very wholesome home-bred article. She stands rather awkwardly with her toes together, and is plainly a thorough rustic—tan, freckles, shabby clothes, and all. She is as natural as Brennan's women are artificial and as carelessly in earnest as they are elaborately smiling.[270]

For DeKay, Homer's American characteristics were based on the physical types, dress, and poses of his figures and the fact that he did not prettify or idealize his figures according to European tradition, all attributes that made him unabashedly American. On the technical side, whereas van Rensselaer and others were bothered by Homer's sketchiness or unfinish, DeKay was charmed by what was left out. He found it not only appropriate for the watercolor medium but also a defining characteristic of an American brand of Impressionism. Whereas DeKay found it unimaginable that Currier actually saw what he put down on paper, he thought Homer captured his "impression" freshly and purely. Unlike his watercolor entries in 1877, where decorative women were the key feature, these sheets successfully blended subject matter and individuality of style; they rang true as American, while their compositional design, color, and light satisfied the more cosmopolitan and poetic turn that had taken hold in American art in the late 1870s. As William Crary Brownell would write later in the year in an interesting comparison of Whistler and Homer: "[Winslow Homer is an excellent example of artists who] devote themselves to what they reverently and unaffectedly believe to be the imitation of nature, with the result that their work is often more pleasing because of their own unconsciousness of its generalization, its selection, its modification, in a word, of its art."[271] How conscious Homer was of his selection and modification is debatable, but it is clear that whereas Currier's extreme mode appeared to most as only technical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pyrotechnics, Homer found a middle ground that satisfied the desire for a recognizably America expression and was also poetic, artistic, and cosmopolitan.[272]

While neither *Leslie's*, *Art Interchange*, nor the *Times* acknowledged foreign models as part of Homer's artistic construct, Shinn asserted in the *Nation* Homer's debt to the European traditions and to newer decorative interests: "Mr. Homer has a number of bergeries this year; he applies his frank, direct way of transcribing the immediate impression of nature to a set of themes that used to be embroidered on satin—Bo-Peep and her sheep Perrette."[273] Laffan of the *Sun* (and a fellow Tile Club member) concurred, and in his lengthy homage to Homer outlined how both the European and decorative modes operated in the work. He declared that Homer was unique: "As to the twenty-nine pictures that Mr. Winslow Homer has sent in, they should be considered apart and by themselves, just as they themselves stand in American art."[274] Thus he, as a number of other critics, treated Homer quite separately from the rest of the show and found:

> Mr. Winslow Homer spent last summer among fields and lanes that were particularly congenial in the themes they afforded, and where he was inspired to such work as he never did before. It is rather surprising that an American artist should come home to his studio at the approach of winter with a portfolio full of 'Little Bopeeps'...shepherdesses not only as real as sheep and crooks could make them, but possessed of all the daintiness of the true and original porcelain distinctive in their own way as the shepherdesses of Watteau were in theirs.... To Mr. Homer belongs the distinction of having discovered the American shepherdess and introduced her to the public in the studies that are more essentially and distinctively pastoral than anything that any American artist has yet attempted.... Nearly all are of the most charming and unaffected simplicity...they have an air of happy naturalness and premeditated strength.... The impressions of those children...convey the idea of wholesome, hearty and artless youngsters.... It is impossible not to feel that they are children alive to the influences of the sunshine, the trees, fields, and flowers...yet full of that sense of dawning responsibility and amenableness to reason that make the seriousness of childhood so wholly inscrutable. There is nothing that so evades an artist as this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> expression, the transition from which to self-consciousness or the kind of sentimentality that is so ridiculous in pictures is fatally easy.... All these...[are] full of strong individuality of treatment, and pervaded by a sentiment and feeling of rusticity and pastoral simplicity that are entirely fascinating.[275]

Laffan noted that while one could detect European antecedents in these sheets and that they even added some positive qualities to the work, the watercolors were most pleasing because Homer absorbed rather than imitated. He was seen as incorporating elements of outside influence for his own use and particular expression. What the *Sun* critic saw as "happy naturalness" and "artlessness" gave the children the best characteristics to represent the qualities of American childhood that had been pictured in genre painting since mid-century. Yet, here, instead of using a narrative format to present images of American childhood, light, color, and the free feeling of transparent washes—that is, all technical means—gave the images their currents of feeling. Such an approach was seen by the *Sun* as diametrically opposed to that of someone like Alfred F. Bellows, whose *Little Thistledown* (unlocated) used the older convention of descriptive narrative and brush and was considered to resonate with an air of sentimentality.[276]

Homer's powers of observation, his nontraditional application of them, and his technical ability to grasp the essential truth of nature was also the focus of the *World*'s praise of him. Brownell thought highly of the sheets and noted: "where one of them appears, it atones for much that is cheap and stupid around it." He continued: "And some of the best drawings here, such as Mr. Winslow Homer's are pricked out with body-color, the very mention of which is sufficient to shock a logical water-color painter. But the point we wish to indicate is that the general technique of the art necessitates a rapid, photographic,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

untrammeled and unsophisticated expression." This gave the work a crispness, freshness, and buoyancy that Brownell found natural to watercolor, qualities that were lost in too meticulously detailed work.[277] As an example, he contrasted Samuel Colman's *Market Day* (unlocated) with Homer's group, noting that Colman's opaque color robbed it of freshness and clearness whereas "The best of Mr. Winslow Homer's many pictures—and they present a surprising variety...an array which [is] in itself enough to make attractive an otherwise tedious exhibition—the best of these are 'caeteris paribus,' those in which least reliance is placed on any afterthought of technique."[278] Having always found the bodycolor versus transparent color controversy tedious, Brownell again asserted that Homer's watercolors demonstrated that it was not labored techniques that led to success. He appreciated Homer's facility for spontaneity and momentary effects allowed by the medium.

Susan Nichols Carter in the *Art Journal* again lauded Homer for his technical applications, especially his use of color and light. She understood his technique was the result of choices made in order to achieve the representation of specific natural effects and expressions of feeling that resulted from his direct experience of nature. She devoted a large portion of her watercolor review to Homer and explained that his sheets were not simply artistic experiments: "Were these studies the result of 'dash' of trying to get impressions by trick, or if they were brilliant effects of chiaroscuro for its own sake, we should even then say that they are strong and clever. But to people who have watched Winslow Homer's work year by year, this brilliant result will be recognised as a legitimate growth of the artist's study." Carter purposefully separated Homer from the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

art-for-art's-sake practitioners. She recognized that intentional artistic choices had long played an important role in charging Homer's art with feeling, and his success this year was equally dependent on it. She continued: " Mr. Homer has gone into the country, and year by year has placed his models...just in the positions in which he desired to paint them, for effects of light and shade, for the action of their figures.... Never before has such a collection of his works been so beautiful in sentiment and evinced such a feeling of truth as this year." In *Fresh Air*, Carter particularly admired the animation of life suggested by the wind, indicated through the treatment of the leaves and the folds of the figure's clothing. In others, most notably *Watching Sheep* (unlocated), *Girl on a Garden-Seat* (unlocated), and *In an Orchard* (*Apple Picking*), she noted:

> We have rarely seen anything more pure and gentle than the little American girl in the first of these sketches, half hidden away under the dark shade of the trees, with her sheep at her side. The picture, too, is delightful in chiaroscuro. But it takes an artist as well informed as Mr. Homer to dare to contrast such a dark, clear shadow with the brilliant dash of sunshine which isolates the little shepherdess from the spectator, and throws her woody retreat into a poetical remoteness.... Mr. Homer charms us by the naturalness of his model and her dress, the action of her figure, and the vigorous color of the sketch.

Carter saw Homer's treatment supporting, even creating, the Americanness and inherent poetry of his image by its simplicity and use of shadow. Knowing that Homer's color caused reservation among some of her peers, she added:

> It is thought by some that Mr. Homer's colour is harsh, and, to those who care for melting golden or purple tones, there may be something not altogether attractive in it. But, running one's eye along the line of pictures in this exhibition, the impression received from his color is of its being the result of a robust and healthy eye and taste. With a little of the flavor to the mental palate of the pickle or perhaps of olives, one may require time to relish it, but when once likes it is heartily enjoyed.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Carter allowed that Homer's use of opaque color to denote lights and shades was unusual, but to her eye the dappled effects it created rang both true and beautiful. Summarizing her reaction to the show, she added at the end of her comments: "Pictures, unfortunately, have too often the look of having been made either to satisfy popular taste or to work out an artistic theory—it may be of colour or form—without being made to depict the subject from any regard for it in itself."[279] Despite Carter's emphasis on technique, subject matter remained, for her, the foundation of art, and Homer achieved the blend of subject and style she required for successful art.

Earl Shinn of the *Nation* reacted variously to Homer's diverse techniques. Particularly attracted to the black-and-white section of the exhibition, Shinn was pleased by Homer's more monochromatic figure drawings, heightened with gouache, for their austerity, conciseness, and naturalness of pose.[280] "The details he brushes away seem as if it [sic] would be an impertinence." Shinn pointed out that for him, as for DeKay, this reduction of the image was the defining characteristic of Homer's brand of Impressionism.[281] Shinn preferred Homer's manner in contradistinction to Currier's, which he felt included false added effects. If Homer pared nature down to her essential character, Currier overdressed her. Shinn also appreciated a number of Homer's more colored sheets, described as "his circle of little rustic girl-studies, set in...hot dewy morning scenes." They drew the critic's attention for their "splendor and luminousness of frank daylight." These works "rather crushed and flattened" a watercolor by Detaille hanging nearby. *In the Orchard (Apple Picking)*, with its combination of opaque color and speckles of yellows sparkling across the sheet, may have inspired such a comment. However, with the more fully

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

colored sheets, Shinn, always a lover of line and academic drawing, noted wistfully that only in a few of the works did Homer show himself "conspicuously the draughtsman."[282]

In the face of all these positive reactions to Homer's color-laden and free brush, the issue of finish in his work continued to haunt some critics. William Round of the *Independent* had reserved praise for Homer:

> His pictures are worthy of his great reputation and give promise of even greater fame in the future. Mr. Homer's fidelity to Nature is something almost chivalric. He seems to stand, hat in hand, before the good, sweet dame, saying: 'Here I am. Bid me write out your moods. I cannot write otherwise than you dictate.' I never saw a scrap of Mr. Homer's work that had not in it an eloquent assurance that he had learned first hand of Nature. If, sometimes, he would only go a little further than he does in the finish of his pictures, they would gain in refinement and lose nothing in suggestiveness. There is always in Mr. Homer's work an evidence of reserved power; and when he goes to the end of his best work he leaves little to be desired. [283]

Round had remarkably catholic taste, liking such divergent styles as the picturesque images of A. F. Bellows and harmonious poetics of John La Farge. Common to the works he praised was a sense of completeness—both visual and of thought—which eluded him in Homer's sheets. Homer's treatment, devoid of realistic specificity and often suggesting the transient, kept his work in a state of unfinish for this critic.[284] The distaste for Homer's lack of finish here, however, was significantly more tempered than it had been in the mid-1870s. The combination of a growing acceptance of broadness in general, Homer's American subjects conjoined with certain acceptable European traits, and the placement of Currier's more radical work hanging nearby, made Homer's entries look less extreme in their handling.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The *Mail* was disappointed that some of Homer's offerings appeared crude: "In some of these Mr. Homer has not done himself justice and they are imperfect and hastily done. But in the majority of his pictures one cannot fail to observe the free and precise handling conspicuous in his works in former years, the delicate contrasts and subtle hues, which are so full of charm. The figures, too, are vigorously treated and have a vitality, which is more apparent the longer one lingers over them."[285] The *Mail* asserted its charges of sloppiness separately from its praise of the appearance of controlled broadness of stroke. Freedom of handling was no longer automatically considered sloppy or unfinished. However, for the *Mail*, Homer still crossed over the boundary lines of acceptability in some works. Unfortunately, the *Mail* did not devote any more space to this issue, and left its readers hanging as to the specific works with which it found fault.

Coarseness in Homer's watercolors was also an issue for George Sheldon of the *Post*. Although he warmly approved of his insistence on painting nature forthrightly and appreciated his "style of a lusty and independent American," arising from his freedom from outside influences and from his technical proficiency, he felt Homer fell into the trap of self-consciousness that the *Sun* thought he successfully avoided. For the *Post* critic, therefore, an air of artificiality pervaded the images. To avoid this unpleasant effect, he suggested Homer study examples by other artists: "[H]is work is full of artifice and one always feels...that a more extensive acquaintance with the purposes and results of other masters would have toned it, precisely as any strong personality is toned by the graces of a liberal education, would have made even his artifices less artificial and less apparent and would have prevented or at least diminished crudeness and coarseness.... At

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

least one feels so when regarding them as pictures."[286] With this last sentence, the writer raised the question of whether studies were also to be considered pictures and in which class Homer's work should fall. For Sheldon, studies and pictures were two different forms of art and thus different rules applied to their consideration. As pictures—that is, as completed artistic statements—Homer's group suffered due to their self-conscious insistence on optical truth without idealization of any type. "But if, on the contrary," he continued, "they are only intended to be studies in the strictly studio sense of the term, mere memorandums of natural effects, which the artist jotted down for future use in finished pictures, then their excellence can be taken singly and independently; and this, perhaps, after all, is the way that Mr. Homer proposed and expected them to be taken when he sent his portfolio to the academy."[287] Sheldon was willing to give high praise to them if they were intended only as intermediary work towards finished conceptions, but the fact that they were exhibited and for sale left him doubtful that this was Homer's intention. The critic had not yet made the leap that Homer seems to have: that studies were acceptable in and of themselves as exhibitable and complete works of art.

Pondering these issues, Sheldon compared Homer and Currier. He found common ground in their business and artistic practice: "[B]oth he and Mr. Currier are willing to sell their contributions; but artists, as a rule, don't like to sell their studies...the best studies being usually quite destitute of unity of pictorial effect. It is just here that Mr. Currier and Mr. Homer's contributions conspicuously miss the mark. They lack unity of pictorial effect." This was the case with *In the Orchard* (*Apple Picking)*, his favorite of Homer's work. He complained: "The moment you get near enough to see well Mr. Homer's two charming

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

girls 'In the Orchard,' your attention is diverted by his fantastic treatment of the dresses they wear and the trees in the background." The "fantastic treatment" here was the sameness of tint found in those two areas and the seeming lack of effect of the light on them: "Shall the colors of a scene be treated independently of the purity and truth of the lights?"[288] What Susan Carter had highly regarded in Homer's treatment of picturing certain daylight conditions, this writer abhorred. An essential requirement for Sheldon was pictorial unity, the sense of a whole conception of design and thought which he did not see in Homer's or Currier's work. Both artists' images of momentary effects lacked the emotional content that Sheldon found and admired in George Inness' sheets. Sheldon thought Inness created an artistic impression that transmitted sentiment; Homer and Currier simply put paint on paper.

Homer's 1879 watercolor entries placed him in a new position. With the sheets of Frank Currier nearby, Homer was no longer the most radical practitioner of the aqueous medium. Instead, he now provided for most of the critics an American brand of Impressionism that offered a wonderful balance between the old and the new, the national and the cosmopolitan; that expressed physical reality and emotion through the suggestion of the ephemeral; and that combined the honest depiction of nature, individual self-expression, and emotional force in a unique and American way. Homer's special facility with the watercolor medium imbued these works with not only a naturalness but a grace that appealed to nearly all. While the critics tended to lump the entries as a group, it must be remembered there was a wide variety of technical and artistic investigation in the twenty-nine sheets. In some, Homer was more extreme in his experiments, exemplified in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

works like *Warm Afternoon* (fig. 103); in others, like *Fresh Air*, he consolidated earlier efforts in combination with new modes.[289] Now that the definitions of finish and appropriate levels of completion were changing away from the physical to the psychological or intellectual, Homer's watercolors were seen as some of his most pleasing work to date.

Although Homer had devoted significant energy to watercolor and drawing in the second half of 1878, he did not neglect his work in oil entirely. He had three new paintings to show—*Sundown* (unlocated), *Upland Cotton* (fig. 104), and *The Shepherdess of Houghton Farm* (fig. 105)—at the Academy's 1879 annual exhibition, which, if it did not generate the excitement it had in 1877, overcame the malaise of that of 1878. Even though the Society of American Artists exhibition diluted the power of the Academy show, it was thoroughly reviewed.[290] In the main, the exhibition was considered to be a success. A number of writers perceived a higher quality in general, and found that the good productions came from the hands of both the older and younger artists.[291] The attitudes towards the younger artists were more various this year. Some critics felt they were not following up on the promise they had shown two years earlier. The *Independent* remarked: "[T]he impulse of fresh blood, which promised so much two years ago...has not quickened its pulse one jot."[292] The *Post* agreed that there were "no new bravura passages in the new schools' display like those...two years ago."[293] On the other hand, there were those writers who felt the young men continued to have a positive effect, one of which was stimulating the older artists to better work.[294] Whatever critics felt about the younger men (and now more women) on the whole, it was clear that the younger

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

generation's contributions created a contest among the European-trained, especially pitting Munich against Paris influences. Shirlaw, Chase, and Duveneck were frequently compared with James Carroll Beckwith, Alden Weir, Wyatt Eaton, Edgar Ward, and the newcomer John Singer Sargent, who exhibited *Neopolitan Boys Bathing* (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute).[295]

More than foreign training, the issue discussed most prominently was the continued anxiety that American art needed more thought and completeness of ideas in its painting. The *Sun* was alone in seeing a "deeper apprehension of motive," "broader artistic grasp," and "more honest independence and originality" than ever before.[296] *Appleton's*, the *Tribune*, the *Times*, and *American Architect and Building News* offered the opposite and majority opinion, all asserting that this element of substantial meaning was lacking and that it was one of, if not the most, critical element in art. Although *Appleton's* found a fairly high proportion of noteworthy pictures in the show, it noted: "none are absolutely great; a few have national character, but none of them exert absolute power over the sympathies of the people.... [Although many have beauty], very little if anything...that 'stirs the heart,' takes possession of the imagination or which can be permanently installed in the affections."[297] DeKay of the *Times* generally agreed when he asked for the expression of the connection between man and nature.[298] Clarence Cook articulated his viewpoint, as he had over the years, in terms of vitality, the expression of which was tightly connected to the necessity of salient meaning: "The thing we cannot do without in a work of art is life; and, if we have life, and life abundantly, drawing and color will take their place, subordinate though still noble, whose ministry it is to make the revelation of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

life more graceful and splendid."[299] For Cook, art needed to be constructed through technique in the service of ideas derived from the human condition.

An overemphasis on technical excellence, especially since the return of the students from Munich, drove Cook and others to plea for deeper thought in art. Cook blamed the concentration on technique on America's bent towards the scientific and exacting.[300] No one questioned the importance of good technique and methods, or even that, perhaps, they were best learned in a European, academic setting; but some worried that their usefulness—as the means to an end: that is, to enable the presentation of a completed thought—had been lost sight of. This concern was at the heart of Susan Nichols Carter's comments on the exhibition as a whole. In the case of the "new men," she found: "The difficulty with many of the new men, as they are called, is not that they do not know how to use color, that they are deficient, in the technical requirements of Art, but they rest their efforts there... we see no character, no force, beyond the cleverness of the *technique*." She found a similar lack of deep conception among the home and older artists. She felt that "simple subjects...simply treated" had been the ambition of home artists for some time, and that this focus had suppressed imagination "and the mere subject stated all there was to tell."[301] Whether from the brushes of foreign-trained or home-bred artists, American art lacked concerted intellectual or emotional foundations. Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer felt similarly and tied her remarks directly to the sketch-versus-finish debate:

> [I]t is not sketchiness I blame.... A dozen outline strokes may be sufficient unto themselves.... But a picture which starts to be a definite rendering and stops half-way cannot be more satisfactory than a half-written book, no matter how clever or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> a block-out statue, though genius held the mallet. The divergences of method are great.... But method of whatever sort should be consistent with itself, should accomplish all it aims at. Finish for the sake of finish is not desirable, but neither is incompleteness for the sake of supposed vigor.[302]

The question was not which methods were best but to what purpose they were put. For van Rensselaer, the method needed not only to suit the subject but also to take its explication to a meaningful conclusion. *Appleton's* blamed the Munich men as a group for causing this artistic state of affairs. It did not fault the foreign-trained students for trying to be unconventional, but it did not want unconventionality to take hold at the expense of "taste and sanity" nor interfere with the real aim of art—that is, truth. In the end, *Appleton's* opined: "American art must hold a sorry place in our civilization if it is to consist solely of exhibits of technical skill, if we are to see nothing but the way paint is laid on, and feel nothing but pleasure for dexterous handicraft."[303] For *Appleton's*, art for art's sake was a frightening concept.

In the context of these general reactions to the exhibition, the critics' responses to artists other than Homer are quite telling. Although critics both praised and condemned the Munich-trained artists—mainly Shirlaw, Chase and Duveneck—along the lines of the past two years, they more consistently praised the French-trained artists, especially James Beckwith, John Singer Sargent, and Wyatt Eaton. Earl Shinn (writing as Edward Strahan) concisely outlined the reasons why. He explained that the Munich students were more showy and popular as a result of their technical flair, but he was not sure they were as good as or better than the French-trained artists. He admitted that the Munich-inspired canvases were clever and those on the Academy walls were attractive, but to his mind and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

eye, they paid attention to the wrong qualities and ultimately were superficial. He found their portraits, for example, wooden. They lacked the understanding to produce the look of firm flesh, and therefore the portraits had little vitality. In contrast, he said the French system was "austere, thorough, and honorable...[an] ideal is to be planted on anatomical accuracy."[304] For Shinn as well as a number of his peers, the influence of Munich created an art of the surface—both of paint and thought—whereas he found the French methods deeper in artistic construction and ideas.

In this atmosphere, the artist who received the broadest praise was George Fuller, for his two entries, *The Romany Girl* (unlocated) and especially *And She Was a Witch* (fig. 106). Charles DeKay noted that Fuller's work blended both what the public liked—a story—and what artists liked—a singular key of color.[305] Fuller's work fulfilled DeKay's requirements of national art: to show the beautiful, picturesque, or peculiar traits of a place and people. DeKay accepted that American images would not all be startlingly beautiful or picturesque since American modern life was not generally so.[306] A number of other critics also praised Fuller along similar lines, appreciating the Americanness of his subjects, rendered with sympathy, drama, imagination, subjectivity, and a literary quality.[307] Fuller satisfied the requirements of both the most cosmopolitan and nationalistic critics, even more than did Eastman Johnson, for example, who was still much admired. As Sarah Burns has suggested, Fuller's success came from his combining the local character so admired in Homer's art with the poetry found in the canvases of William Morris Hunt, a combination that pleased almost everyone.[308] Fuller, with his limited palette, veiled and misty atmosphere, and poetic qualities—"half-realistic" and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"half-poetical" as Susan Nichols Carter described—fairly won the day.[309] The *Herald* explained: "[W]e do not tire of them [Fuller's pictures]...because while telling their main story directly, they still abound in suggestiveness. At a recurring view of them we discover something fresh to admire, something so subordinated to the general effect that it is only after the latter is thoroughly well impressed upon us that we see it."[310]

Although Fuller received the widest approval, Homer's three entries garnered the most thoughtful consideration.[311] Homer himself must have thought well of the canvases, for at $1,500 per painting, he was asking his highest prices to date.[312] While some critics made blanket statements concerning Homer's painting, his three offerings were treated separately in recognition that they were three different excursions in paint, investigating diverse subjects and methods. The *World* recognized the variety of the work as it praised Homer's selections in this show. It noted:

> Mention of Mr. Homer reminds us that in this exhibition he appears in greater strength than he has ever done. His three pictures are all of them works of importance and seriousness which many admirers of Mr. Homer who have not appreciated his range must be pleasantly surprised to notice. More than any one painter possibly he tends this year to elevate the general character of the exhibition. The pictures are very different in motive, and besides indicating a higher average of thought and expression than many of Mr. Homer's pictures have done, show a marked versatility upon this higher level.[313]

Homer's subjects were both similar and diverse. All three featured women. *Upland Cotton* featured African-American women in the fields and was related to the earlier *Cotton Pickers*. *Shepherdess at Houghton Farm* was derived from one of the pastoral watercolors shown in the winter. *Sundown* pictured a fashionable woman by the sea. Common also to the canvases were interests in color, design, light, and paint application,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

but in each Homer experimented with different approaches and emphases of concern. For these divergent endeavors, he received various responses, from high marks for *Upland Cotton* to a nearly unanimous condemnation of *Sundown*.

Upland Cotton was greeted with great enthusiasm.[314] The sky was the only element in the painting that was criticized at all. What the *Telegram* could describe only as its not being as perfect as the rest of the painting, the *Herald* could pinpoint as the sky being "out of harmony."[315] The *Times* concurred to a degree, but it recognized the challenge Homer faced in that a "finer relation of tones in the painting would possibly have lent it a severer character." DeKay understood that a variety of artistic elements had to be carefully balanced for the success of the completed canvas, and that a shift in the key of color in *Upland Cotton* might have had an even greater adverse impact. Yet he felt Homer could have accomplished more by blending marvelous design with the harmony and feeling like that found in the work of Homer Dodge Martin.[316] DeKay's suggestion seems to express the desire, felt also by many other critics, that Homer's color needed to lose its acidic edge.

The simple reason for *Upland Cotton*'s success was its combination of an especially American subject, which offered an avenue to thinking about serious issues, and a modern decorativeness, which reflected the newer emphasis on beauty. While in subject and composition the image is directly related to Homer's 1876 *The Cotton Pickers*, *Upland Cotton*'s strongly vertical format, lower viewpoint and higher horizon, more pronounced foreground, and patterning of cotton pods transformed the earlier canvas

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

from a landscape with figures into a painting with a much more decorative image. The strong decorative element, resonant with the newer influences in American art, was heartily praised by both conservative and forward-thinking critics alike, reflecting how strong now was the acceptance of the decorative impulse.[317]

As had *The Cotton Pickers*, *Upland Cotton*'s subject blended political and social issues. But now in 1879, with the failure of Reconstruction, it was potentially more charged while remaining thoroughly national and contemporary.[318] The continued worthiness of the African-American subject matter was suggested by Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, who commented not on *Upland Cotton* but on *A Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia* when they were shown at the Boston Art Club, coincident with the Academy show. Even though she was not a particular fan of these paintings, she noted: "It is the fashion to admire the artist's studies of American life. So do we from a certain point of view. They will always be interesting, just as old prints, descriptive...of the epoch, are interesting.... Mr. Homer relies on a sagacious choice of incident, and therein lies the secret of his success."[319] For a critic like the one for *Appleton's*, a writer who championed native productions above all and believed truth to be the aim of art, Homer's pictures represented the best of the present and signaled the promise of the future. After condemning the seemingly overwhelming emphasis on technique in the exhibition, he was relieved to note:

> Fortunately, all our painters are not of one way of thinking. Mr. Winslow Homer is wholly "en rapport" with American life. He cares nothing for schools of painting; he is utterly free from foreign influences; and, being penetrated through and through with the spirit of the present, with the things and ideas that surround us, his work reflects them exclusively. But Mr. Homer has always seemed for the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> most part to be only playing on the edge of his art. In three pictures this year there are more reach and fullness of purpose than in his recent works, and they indicate unmistakably, we think, that, when the conditions unite favorably, Mr. Homer will produce a truly great American painting.

The writer accepted that a particular artistic notion—that of the decorative in *Upland Cotton*—was being explored:

> "Upland Cotton," being almost without perspective, and painted nearly flat, must be recognized by the spectator as purely a decorative picture if he is to understand it. It represents two negro women in a field gathering cotton. Nothing could be more delicate and perfect than the painting of the cotton-pods in this picture—nothing more truly expressive within the design of the artist than the whole composition, which is brilliant and unique, and, viewed with a knowledge of the limitations of its purpose, is excellent.[320]

Couching his artistic interests in a uniquely American subject, Homer made some of his most cosmopolitan designs palatable to even the most native-based critics. This combination caused *Upland Cotton* to received more praise than had any of his other oils in two years.

The blend of Americanness and modernity in *Upland Cotton* was noted repeatedly. Even though it criticized the painting of the sky, the *Herald* applauded the canvas: "His scene of negro women picking cotton is both fresh and modern as well as national in subject."[321] The *Daily Graphic* phrased its praise in terms of Homer's joining the best of his established ways with new elements: "While Mr. Winslow Homer's hand has lost nothing of its old time vigor and individuality, his pictures have certainly gained in finish and artistic completeness. In the cotton pickers we see a composition extremely decorative in coloring and arrangement that reveals a phase of American life which some of our artists are just beginning to discover contains an unsuspected wealth of pictorial possibilities."[322]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This writer liked Homer's individuality, Americanness, and added decorative elements, which spoke to the contemporary interest in the pictorial. Recognizing perhaps that Homer's artistic treatment might arouse debate, the *Telegram* emphasized: "The theme has evidently been deeply studied and reproduced with a nice fidelity that is indeed rare. Against him the complaint cannot be urged that he does not choose modern and American subjects."[323] Not only had Homer chosen a national and contemporary subject of significant import, but he had combined it with an acceptable level of technical completion. These qualities may have softened opposition to what may have seemed to some as more radical explorations into the decorative.

For the critics who thoroughly embraced the cult of the decorative, *Upland Cotton* was perfection in paint. Earl Shinn in the *Nation* called it: "a beauty and an original, with figures seen through the lattice of wayward plants, where the pods and flowers occur in the finest possible decorative arrangements."[324] Susan Nichols Carter stated most clearly the origins of Homer's decorative influence and how it was interwoven with the thoroughly American subject:

> "Upland Cotton," a scene on a Southern plantation, is a remarkable penetration of Japanese thought into American expression. The cotton plants are straggling across a footpath, in which are two Negro women, with their heavy, Oriental figures clad in strong, rich colors. One woman stands upright, with her turbaned head swung back, outlined against a thin, hot sky. The other woman is stooping over and gathering the cotton-pods, and her rounded back seems to bear the burden of all the toil of her race. Down close into the foreground of the canvas the cotton plant is painted, and for crispness and delicacy of drawing and in the various developed cotton-pods, from where the wool hangs out of the dry pod, to the half-opened and still unclosed buds, each pod is painted as if doing it was all the artist had ever cared for. The picture is a superb piece of decoration, with its deep, queer colors like the Japanese dull greens, dim reds, and strange neutral-blues and pinks.... [I]ts [Japanese art's] peculiar and artistic subtlety has been

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> assimilated precisely by Mr. Homer. This picture seems to us original and important as an example of new thought.[325]

Japonisme was increasingly strong in America in general in the late seventies, but Homer's contextualizing of it in a purely American idiom separated his use of the influence from his peers. Because of the implications of the race-based subject, the painting was imbued with an importance of meaning to which the decorative added another dimension.

The overwhelming approval of *Upland Cotton* was offset by the severe criticism of *Sundown*. That the painting no longer exists is, perhaps, evidence of Homer's sensitivity to the criticism. The canvas is known to have been an image of a single female figure, seated on the beach and holding a shell near her face, off which sunset light was reflected. The marine background was punctuated only by a schooner sailing on the far horizon.[326] That Homer had difficulty with this canvas up to the moment of the Academy exhibition's opening was suggested by DeKay recounting of "Varnishing Day" in the *Times*. He reported that while most artists left their work alone once it was hung, there were conspicuous exceptions

> such as in the case of Mr. Winslow Homer, who finds that his young girl sitting on the sea-beach before a wall of surf, and holding up a shell, is quite out of harmony with everything about it.... Mr. Homer varnishes down his large canvas, and certainly improved it very much; but whether it can ever be improved up to a point worthy of his skill and reputation is quite another matter. To call the line of breakers a wall is perfectly correct. It is as hard as porcelain, and the spots where the edge has crumbled into foam looks like napkins hung upon this wall. The picture is out of tune, in spite of that air of individuality which all Mr. Homer's work possesses and which raises him so far out of the crowd of mediocrities.[327]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

DeKay's response to *Sundown* was among the kindest. Some writers were biting and sarcastic in their remarks. A rigidity in the presentation of the water and the coloration, especially in the painting of reflected light, were the primary targets of the barbs. Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer called the painting "comical," while the *Independent* said "the joke is a poor one."[328] Earl Shinn, in the *Nation*, was unusually sarcastic, saying that Homer's *Sundown* was "a painful paint-problem of vivisection, not pursued out of any sympathy with the heroine, but to show how the hot rays of sunset are cutting into the sclerotic coats of her eyes."[329] Whatever this painting looked like, it appears Homer went beyond the pale here in exhibiting color experiments. The *Daily Graphic* placed its tongue deeply into its cheek to condemn both the color and subject: "'Sundown.' Young lady in yellowish dress suggestive of mandarin's robe, reclining on a brown beach and back against a very blue ocean and clouds; crest of waves, inclined to be cream color, with a suspicion of red tinge. Young lady holds in her hand a mother of pearl, or abalone shell, found in great numbers in tropical latitudes.... Chinese make soup of them." The writer continued with a digressive passage on the soup, shell, and the history of abalone as well as Chinese and British/American relations before concluding: "Can't see where this young woman found one of those shells on a sand beach. Always found on rocky beaches in the low latitudes."[330]

Not all writers resorted to poking fun at the canvas. It was treated seriously by some who endeavored to point out the cause of its problems. Interestingly, Earl Shinn, posing as Edward Strahan in *Art Amateur*, considered the painting with an earnestness missing

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

from his sarcastic comments in the *Nation*.[331] In his more serious consideration of the painting, Shinn focused on Homer's particular brand of realism:

> Mr. Winslow Homer is a realist of the realists, with a kind of haughty and half-grudged poetry breaking out from him against his will. He is never commonplace, and is never insincere. That he despises composition, and never idealizes anything is his peculiar form of artistic virtue. In 'Sundown' (347) we have a sea-beach;... and a girl sitting on it holding up a pearly shell to reflect the last red ray. The light catches on the gleaming enamel of her eyes as she smiles at the play of colors.... Full of serious study and careful to apply the supposed conditions of the light to every part of the composition, it is yet so abrupt in its massive forms, the silhouette of the figure is so inlaid against the porphyry wave which stands motionless in act to devour the beach, that we think rather of mosaic-work than of painting—mosaic-work where the stony nature of the vehicle has got into the pictorial effect.[332]

Shinn saw that Homer was trying to precisely record the visual, even optical, effects of reflected light under particular sunset conditions. He saw the design of the canvas (or lack thereof) as reflecting Homer's insistence on basing his artistic program in visual reality without idealization. In acknowledging Homer's unadulterated realism and in disputing his interest in composition, Shinn sounded remarkably like Henry James in 1875 writing about *Milking Time*, yet Shinn found only massive, stony forms and little of a pictorial quality here.

However, the color of *Sundown* was not the only obstacle to its success. The problems of the palette were joined with an awkward figure, poorly rendered water, and an uninteresting subject. The *Telegram* enumerated the painting's faults and the repercussion they would cause Homer: "Homer's 'Sundown' will, in our opinion, do him more harm than he can undo until a singularly favorable hour of redemption arrives.... Neither the girl's face nor form is comely, the attitude is not graceful, nor is the contrast of color

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

harmonies. Why Mr. Homer should choose such a subject for a picture intended to be at least partially representative of his powers is more than we can explain."[333] Clarence Cook was, once again, the most frustrated by *Sundown*, and his temper flared again because he felt that Homer had flirted with a potentially successful picture. Comparing Homer's canvas with *An Indian Summer's Day on Claverack Creek* (fig. 107), equally bad, by Sanford Gifford, Cook spewed:

> But what to say of the audacity of Mr. Winslow Homer, who sends his picture "Sundown" into an assembly such as this is supposed to be; and what to say of the Academy that gives it a conspicuous place upon the line in the best room!.... Mr. Gifford has more humor than we give him credit for...some malicious person might think he meant us to take these dolls for real people. There can, however, be no doubt about the reality of Mr. Homer's young woman. How, on a beach, that evidently, like all other beaches, slopes down to the water, this uncommonly heavy being can sit with her back to the breakers;...It is so unnatural, so ugly, so wanting in taste, in sentiment, in meaning of any sort, and—here's the rub—it might have been so pretty, or beautiful, or grand, according to the artist's mood or capacity, that we have no patience to discuss it.[334]

Homer seems to have been attempting to conjoin the decorative and more aestheticized images of women, such as he had explored in *Autumn* of 1877, or the 1878 watercolors with their representation of certain transient effects of color and light. But the combination of *Sundown*'s lightweight subject and overpowering statement of the optical truth of color and light at a particular moment ruined the picture for Cook. Lacking any feeling, beauty, poetry, or worthwhile artistic treatment, it was devoid of the *Tribune* critic's requirements for good art. Cook was so exasperated by *Sundown* that he ignored Homer's other two entries; one wonders what he thought of *Upland Cotton*.

Where *Upland Cotton* had succeeded, especially in subject as well as in design, figures, and, to a lesser degree, color, *Sundown* seems to have failed. As usual, Susan Nichols

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Carter came to Homer's defense. She noted that viewers would be struck by the "very great range in scale of color and light and shade" and the "violent effect of the sunset." Rather than finding it disfiguring as did her peers, she found it transfiguring, the light catching elements of the composition in the foreground and background, giving them life. She concluded: "This sudden and fierce glow has the splendor of the stage effect under calcium light, but it is, nevertheless, a true effect of one of the phases of nature. Such a moment as this is that which Mr. Homer has caught and fixed upon his canvas."[335] For Carter, picturing momentary effects was a valid, even worthwhile, artistic pursuit, and as Homer stayed true to nature in feeling or in fact his work deserved credit.

Standing apart from the other reviews of *Sundown*, the *Herald* gave the painting its only outright commendation. It called the canvas "one of the striking pictures of the display," found the colored reflections, so otherwise condemned, "sparkling," and the suggestion of the seascape commendable. The critic also found the overall sunset tone "admirable," the effect of sunlight "very real," and the rolling wave "very true."[336] The *Herald* critic embraced, even to a greater degree than Susan Nichols Carter, the concept that capturing by fixing in paint the transitory effects of nature was a valid artistic endeavor. He also unwaveringly supported any work that had color, particularly tonal values, at the center of its artistic program. For these qualities, the *Herald* praised *Sundown* and Jervis McEntee's *Clouds* (unlocated), Fuller's *Romany Girl*, Alexander Wyant's *Mount Mansfield* (unlocated), and Robert Minor's *Sundown* (unlocated).[337]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Less noticed and receiving more mixed reviews than his two other canvases was Homer's *Shepherdess of Houghton Farm*. Those who remembered the watercolor from which it was derived found the oil to be the lesser work. The *Herald* asserted: "We agree with the Hanging Committee in their estimate of Winslow Homer's 'The Shepherdess of Houghton Farm,' which they have hung high. It seems a thin enlargement in oil of a watercolor study. The pose of the extremely robust figure is good, but the painting lacks solidity."[338] The solidity mentioned may have implied not only artistic matters, but subject ones as well. The *Herald's* comment suggests that perhaps oil painting deserved more serious topics and that simply translating a pleasant and pleasing watercolor into oil was not appropriate. The *Daily Graphic* agreed: "His shepherdess seems like an unsuccessful effort to elaborate one of the pastoral ideas in the watercolor collection.... The sentiment and refinement which is displayed in the landscape and sheep seems totally wanting in the figure of the girl, which is crude in color and wanting in pose."[339] In trying to translate one of his rococcoesque figures into oil, Homer had particular difficulty. Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer said it was the color of the girl's skin that was most abhorrent and blamed Homer for failing intentionally: "Mr. Winslow Homer abandons more and more entirely his better manner. The color in his 'Shepherdess of Houghton Farm' is not bad by accident, it would seem, but by deliberate design. Especially may this be said of the raspberry-colored flesh."[340] The *Atlantic* simply called the girl "frigid."[341] The *Independent* thoroughly criticized the entire artistic treatment: "He contributes elsewhere what he is pleased to call 'The Shepherdess of Houghton Farm,' which is only not so bad as his 'Sundown,' for the simple reason that nothing else could be so bad; but which is incorrect in drawing, absurd in arrangement, and detestable

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in color."[342] Both the *Atlantic* and the *Independent* sought truth, beauty, and feeling like that found in works of Fuller and La Farge as well as certain of Inness' canvases, where the poetry of nature was expressed.[343]

Not all the commentary on the shepherdess was negative. In a discussion of various approaches to art, the *Post* suggested that between that in which a moral influence was the chief driving force for art and that in which technical bravura was the core, "there is a third class [of artists] that paint a subject merely and only 'because they loved it and found it so,' without reference to the particular lesson that it teaches or the special technique it illustrates. To this class belong preeminently Mr. Winslow Homer and Mr. Worthington Whittredge...the former, most of all in these later days, [attracted] by buxom Orange County shepherdesses on breezy hilltops."[344] For this writer, the image itself was sufficient. No moral nor artistic wizardry was necessary. The *World* and *Appleton's* suggested why: because in and of itself it was a charming image abounding in pictorial unity and sentiment. The *World* wrote: "[N]othing is as charming in the union of blithe freshness and simple idyllic sweetness as the 'Shepherdess.'"[345] *Appleton's* concurred: "His 'Shepherdess of Houghton Farm' in the present exhibition is a charming idyll—a sort of modern Watteau—in which there is a fullness of sentiment and tenderness that he has not been accustomed to exhibit. The landscape is treated, moreover, in a manner that has a most delicate and subtle relation to the sentiment of the story."[346] As it had been able to accept the decorative impulse of *Upland Cotton*, *Appleton's* saw a loveliness in the shepherdess that was acceptable in its own right as long as it connected to some glimmer of a story.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the end, the response to Homer's three entries in the 1879 Academy exhibition was splayed out along the spectrum between good and bad. These reactions came as Homer seems to have been consciously trying out some of the more recent international trends appearing on the American art scene. In a sense, he was continuing the experimentation evident at the 1879 watercolor show, but now in oil, on a larger scale and with a wider variety of subjects. He seemed to be taking to the higher level of the Academy, and the more serious art of oil painting, the elements of the artistic investigations that interested him most. Though some of the commentary was contradictory, the criticism that the three Academy pictures elicited gave him clear directions as to what was or was not successful. Interestingly, while Homer seems to have taken to heart the approval of his thoughtful American subjects, he fairly turned his back on the praise for particular artistic elements. He never again painted another image of African Americans nor did he create as decorative a canvas on as large a scale as *Upland Cotton*, and he discontinued the shepherdess theme in his art. He tried only once more something like *Sundown* in *Promenade on the Beach* (fig. 108). Thus, with the 1879 academy entries, it was as if Homer were trying out the most contemporary trends but, as always, in his own way, in order to determine if they might enrich his artistic vision.

After the Academy exhibition, the usual mentions in the press of Homer's activities and movements declined. Thus, we know little about his comings and goings in the summer of 1879, although it is believed he went both to Massachusetts and Houghton Farm.[347] Wherever he went, it was not public knowledge. In May *Art Interchange* reported:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Winslow Homer does not as yet care to tell his summer resort."[348] *Art Amateur*, for one, resented not knowing Homer's plans. It quipped: "Mr. Winslow Homer's movements in summertime no person however intimate is ever supposed to have the secret, and the present season is not made an exception."[349] Yet Homer's return to the city was reported as usual in the *World*, which noted he had been "all around" during the summer.[350] Diverging from the pattern of years past, however, there were no fall studio visit reports elaborating the fruits of his summer's work.

In addition to the expected exhibition reviews of 1879, another layer of art writing, which included Homer, appeared. An interest in creating a history of American art, in evidence since 1876, was strongly felt this year.[351] Chief among these discussions was a series of articles by S. G. W. Benjamin in *Harper's New Monthly*, which, in assessing the present situation and reviewing the whole story of American art, provided an understanding of Homer's place in American art to date. In his discussion of the "present tendencies" of American art, Benjamin wrote a perceptive assessment of Homer's situation some dozen years after his return from his first European sojourn:

> Mr. Winslow Homer may be mentioned...as one of the truest and most original artists we have produced among those who work in what is called the realistic style. Combining landscape with figure, and choosing his subjects entirely from the simple every day scenes of American life, we have no artist who in the department of the figure has produced better work, which at the same time can be pronounced good in quality and indigenous to the soil. He seems to have had especially in view the rendering of the values or relations of things, and understands how to balance a composition. There is sometimes a certain hardness and stiffness in his figures which suggest the model too much, and a lack of animation in the expression of the faces, but at his best, Mr. Homer has many of the qualities of Jules Breton. It is, however, in dealing with the lighter, sunnier moods of existence that he has achieved his success. The deeper emotions of life and nature do not suggest themselves even in his best works. In him we find

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> another proof of the innate capacity of the country to produce a new and good school of art.[352]

Benjamin categorized the elements of Homer's art that had succeeded and failed. Based on his originality, subject choices, and design abilities, his status as the proof and hope of an American art was unquestioned. Furthermore, the flattering comparison with one of the French artists most highly regarded in the United States, but without the suggestion of influence, gave Homer high ranking. Yet Benjamin noted that what the critics and perhaps Homer, too, wanted most—depth of thought or feeling—eluded him. In the larger scheme of things, Homer figured in Benjamin's historical overview only in passing, with the mention of *Prisoners from the Front* as one of the few truly historical works ever produced in contemporary times.[353] While Benjamin may have felt Homer had been treated sufficiently in the earlier article, it is interesting to note that in surveys from this time forth, the whole of Homer's art from 1861 until his return from Cullercoats in 1882 began to be condensed to references to the single Civil War canvas.

Homer's work fared reasonably well with the critics in 1879, the panning of *Sundown* being his only real critical disaster. Yet there is the feeling that Homer was groping to find subjects and methods that were right for him and publicly acceptable. With praise for his more consciously decorative work and criticism for his experiments with color and light, he entered into his next decade of work, not entirely sure which direction his work should take.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to Chapter 5

[1] James Fairman, "Art Education in America," *Tribune*, 13 January 1877, p. 3.

[2] "American Art Progress," *Herald*, 7 May 1877, p. 6.

[3] The exact phrase appeared in "New York Interest in Art Academy," *American Architect and Building News* 2 (29 September 1877), p. 310.

[4] Most notable of the published commentaries is, perhaps, G. W. Sheldon, "A New Departure in American Art," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 56 (April 1878), pp. 764-68.

[5] "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 5 April 1877, p. 7.

[6] See, for example, a series of letters to the editor and the responses in "Art and Art Critics," *Tribune*, 10 March 1877, p. 3; "Artists and Art Critics," *Tribune*, 10 March 1877, p. 6; "Letters From the People," *Tribune*, 12 March 1877, p. 5; and "Art and Art Critics," *Tribune*, 13 March 1877, p. 5. See also J. F. Weir, "Relations and Points of Contact Between the Arts," *American Architect and Building News* 2 (10 March 1877), pp. 76-78.

[7] The former work was a new production, described as a "middle age cavalcade" ("Mr. Schenck's Art Gallery," *Commercial Advertiser*, 6 February 1877, p. 4). The latter canvas could have been an older work ("More Pictures for St. Louis," *Herald*, 27 August 1877, p. 3).

[8] Homer exhibited at the Century and Union League in January, and additionally at the Century in February, March, June, October, November, and December. (NGA 1995, p. 409). His Art Students League activity is mentioned in "Art Matters. Monthly Reunion of the Art Students League – Notes of Exhibitions," *Daily Graphic*, 10 January 1877, p. 479, and "City and Suburban News – New York," *Times*, 5 December 1877, p. 8. He attended the April Art Students League meeting as well. "The Art Students League. A Creditable Display of Work at Last Evening's Reception," *Daily Graphic*, 12 April 1877, p. 298. While the club meetings were not public, Homer's activity in them suggests he was a regular member of the art world society. Reports of his contributing to an album of art to benefit St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church and his attending the opening reception of the Artists Fund Society are other indications of how he participated in the art world. "Art Notes. Album of Art," *Express*, 17 March 1877, p. 2, and "The Artist's Fund Reception," *World*, 17 January 1877, p. 5.

[9] Over the year and as a group, they also reflect the wide range of subject matter with which Homer was engaged. His Century Club contributions included the exotic female figure of *Fortune Telling* (*Shall I Tell Your Fortune?*; 1876; Birmingham Museum of Art); the familiar farm scene of *Song of the Lark* (Chrysler Museum); the African-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American subjects of *The Cotton Pickers*, *Dressing for the Carnival* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), *A Visit From the Old Mistress* (National Museum of American Art), and *Sunday Morning in Virginia* (Cincinnati Art Museum); the fashionable young women of *Backgammon* (The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) and *Reading* (*The New Novel*; Museum of Fine Art, Springfield, Massachusetts); the Adirondacks in *Night in Camp* (*Camp Fire*; Metropolitan Museum of Art); and the historical *Reception of the French Ambassador* (unlocated).

[10] The painting sold out of the Century showing; it never appeared in another New York exhibition in Homer's lifetime.

[11] "Winslow Homer's Cotton Pickers," *Post*, 30 March 1877, p. 2.

[12] On account of the fact that *The Cotton Pickers* was exhibited only at the Century there was not widespread commentary on it specifically, although it would be mentioned in later contexts, such as the 1879 showing of *Upland Cotton* at the National Academy.

[13] Waterloo, "Art Matters. American Paintings," *Express*, 1 March 1877, p. 2.

[14] "Fine Arts. American Pictures on Exhibition," *World*, 1 March 1877, p. 5.

[15] Docherty, "A Search for Identity," p. 88, points out the importance of style as a means of defining American art at this time.

[16] In particular, the *World*, *Tribune, Herald*, and *Mail* had substantially less coverage. The *Commercial Advertiser's* coverage was exceptional; it published a series of six articles devoted to the exhibition. Even magazines, such as the *Nation*, curtailed their reviews.

[17] For a brief overview of the Tilden-Hayes election, see Morris, *Encyclopedia of American History*, pp. 252-53.

[18] "Art Matters. Goupil's Water-Color Collection," *Herald*, 30 January 1877, p. 3, and "Water-Colors at the Kurtz Gallery," *Tribune*, 3 February 1877, p. 7.

[19] For an example of a short commendation, see "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Tribune*, 20 January 1877, p. 4. For a long one, see Sidney Grey, "Paintings in Water Colors," *Aldine* 8 (March 1877), p. 327. [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts," *Nation* 24 (15 February 1877), p. 108; "The Painters in Water Colors. The Tenth Annual Exhibition of the American Society – The Pictures by Foreign Artists. First Paper," *Post*, 3 February 1877, p. 1; and "The Painters in Water Colors. Pictures by American Artists in the Exhibition. Second Paper," *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1.

[20] See, for example, *Post*, 3 February 1877, p. 1; "Pictures at the Academy. The Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors," *Daily Graphic*, 22

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

January 1877, p. 3; and "Tenth Exhibition of the Water-Color Society," *Tribune*, 22 January 1877, p. 4.

[21] "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 1 March 1877, p. 6, and Grey, *Aldine* 8 (March 1877), p. 327.

[22] *Tribune*, 22 January 1877, p. 4, and "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Harper's Weekly* 21 (24 February 1877), p. 150.

[23] An offshoot of the question surrounding the validity of watercolor was the recognition and concern that watercolor was a marketable commodity. *Harper's Weekly* noted: "It pays to paint in watercolor, and that, it must be allowed, is a powerful incentive even to the most idealistic of artists." (*Harper's Weekly* 21 [24 February 1877], p. 150.) In this context, the *Independent* suggested the better oil men were painting in watercolor simply to be fashionable or to experiment. (*Independent*, 1 March 1877, p. 6.) Worse, in the eyes of some critics, was that certain artists were creating watercolors in quantity specifically for the market. (Grey, *Aldine*, 8 [March 1877], p. 327.) Tiffany and Colman were specifically criticized in this regard in "The Fine Arts. Exhibition of Water-Color," *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5.

[24] The *Independent* and *Times* presented dissenting opinions. The former still believed watercolor a truly "lesser" medium, and felt that if an artist was successful in oil, he/she should not stoop to working in watercolor. (*Independent*, 1 March 1877, p. 6.) The *Times* was less harsh in its position but still felt watercolor was a modest medium and that the qualities of watercolor were best "adapted to happy thoughts...not quite worth the gravity of oils." "Display of Water-Colors at the Academy of Design. A Look into the West and the Northwest Rooms," *Times*, 28 January 1877, p. 7, and "Water Colors. Tenth Exhibition of the American Society," *Times*, 21 January 1877, p. 7.

[25] *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1.

[26] *Post*, 3 February 1877, p. 1; *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1; and *Post*, 27 February 1877, p. 1.

[27] S. N. C. [Susan Nichols Carter], "The Tenth New York Water-Colour Exhibition," *Art Journal* 3 (March 1877), pp. 95-96; *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1; and *Daily Graphic*, 22 January 1877, p. 3.

[28] S. N. C., *Art Journal* 3 (March 1877), pp. 95-96, and "Water Colors. The Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Commercial Advertiser*, 1 February 1877, p. 1.

[29] *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5.

[30] [Shinn], *Nation* 24 (15 February 1877), p. 108.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[31] "Our Water Color Painters. The Tenth Annual Exhibition of the American Society," *Commercial Advertiser*, 20 January 1877, p. 3.

[32] *Tribune*, 20 January 1877, p. 4; *Harper's Weekly* 21 (24 February 1877), p. 150; and *Daily Graphic*, 22 January 1877, p. 3, specifically defined them as such.

[33] Eleven out of the fourteen publications that discussed works included specific remarks on Homer.

[34] Such qualities were attributed to his work in *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1; *Daily Graphic*, 22 January 1877, p. 3; *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 1; and "The Old Cabinet," *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877), p. 866.

[35] *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1.

[36] *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877), p. 866.

[37] See Docherty, "A Search For Identity," pp. 72-76.

[38] *Times*, 28 January 1877, p. 3.

[39] Docherty, "A Search For Identity," p. 66. David Huntington has discussed the rising importance of the artist as individual maker in "A Quest For Unity: American Art Between the World's Fairs, 1876-1893," in *Quest For Unity*, pp. 20-21.

[40] *Commercial Advertiser*, 20 January 1877, p. 3.

[41] S. N. C., *Art Journal* 3 (March 1877), pp. 95-96.

[42] The subject of a schoolteacher with a drawing lesson on the board was of particular currency at this time because its appearance coincided with the withdrawal of drawing in common schools. On the issue of drawing in schools, see "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 4 January 1877, p. 6. On *Blackboard's* modernity, see Cikovsky, "Winslow Homer's *School Time*," pp. 46-49.

[43] *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5.

[44] This was the case also with the praise given the watercolor in *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1, and *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877), p. 866.

[45] For examples of each kind of reaction, see *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1; *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5; "Water Colors. Success of the Exhibition – Review of Some of the Pictures," *Commercial Advertiser*, 21 February 1877, p. 1; and *Daily Graphic*, 22 January 1877, p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[46] See, for example, *Daily Graphic*, 3 February 1876, p. 734. This year only the *Nation* complained of Homer's being careless.[Shinn], *Nation* 24 (15 February 1877), p. 108.

[47] This is the case in *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5; "Art Matters. The Water Color Exhibition," *Express*, 22 January 1877, p. 1; and *Daily Graphic*, 22 January 1877, p. 3.

[48] *Post*, 13 February 1877, p. 1. The appearance of the objectionable green tints can possibly be tied to Homer's experimentation with the theories of M. E. Chevreul. See Colacino, "Winslow Homer's Watercolors," p. 47-51.

[49] *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877), p. 866.

[50] S. N. C., *Art Journal* 3 (March 1877), pp. 95-96.

[51] Comparisons of these works with those by the European painters have been made in Cooper, *Winslow Homer's Watercolors*, p. 116; Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," p. 78; and NGA 1995, p. 100.

[52] *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5.

[53] Its principle tenets this year were most completely embodied in Whistler's Peacock Room. On the Peacock Room, see "Editor's Table," *Appleton's* 2 (May 1877), p. 473, and *Independent*, 5 April 1877, p. 7. On the roots and context of the Aesthetic Movement in America, see Roger Stein, "Artifact as Ideology: The Aesthetic Movement in Its American Cultural Context," in *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement*, pp. 23-51.

[54] *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877), pp. 866-67; and [Shinn], *Nation* 24 (15 February 1877), p. 108.

[55] "Art Matters. The Water Color Exhibition," *Express*, 22 January 1877, p. 1, and *Times*, 28 January 1877, p. 7.

[56] *Commercial Advertiser*, 21 February 1877, p. 1; *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877), p. 866; and *Express*, 22 January 1877, p. 1.

[57] *Times*, 22 January 1877, p. 5.

[58] For an in-depth description of the events surrounding this show, see Jennifer A. Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists, 1877-1884," pp. 1-57.

[59] That was the feeling, for example, in "The Academy Exhibition. I," *World*, 10 April 1877, p. 4; "The Academy of Design. The Pictures and Sculpture in the Fifty-Second Annual Exhibition. First Paper," *Post*, 10 April 1877, p. 1; and "Pictures in the Spring

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Exhibition. The Present Attractions of the Academy of Design – Works by Representative Artists," *Daily Graphic*, 6 April 1877, p. 225.

[60] The phrase "new departure" was specifically used by *World*, 10 April 1877, p. 4, and "American Art. The Academy of Design. A Second View of the Exhibition – Landscapes by the Younger Artists," *Times*, 8 April 1877, p. 4, and articulated by description or suggestion in "At the Academy. II. Figure Pictures and Portraits," *Tribune*, 7 April 1877, p. 5; "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. I," *Mail*, 16 April 1877, p. 1; "The Academy Exhibition," *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), p. 157; and "Culture and Progress. The National Academy Exhibition," *Scribner's* 14 (June 1877), p. 263.

[61] The *Art Journal* noticed that what some saw as a suddenness of change was just a reaction to surface differences, but, in fact, had been in progress for some time. *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), p. 157. Clarence Cook, it will be remembered, had remarked in 1875 that an art revolution was already ongoing.

[62] *World*, 10 April 1877, p. 4.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Editorials on the topic included *Herald*, 7 May 1877, p. 6, and "Protection in Art," *Times*, 17 June 1877, p. 6. There were articles, such as "The Progress of Painting in America," *North American Review* 124 (May 1877), pp. 451-64, and "Art Progress in America," *Daily Graphic*, 23 August 1877, p. 1, which focused on American art progress.

[65] "National Academy of Design. The Fifty-Second Exhibition," *Sun*, 15 April 1877, p. 3.

[66] [Earl Shinn], "Fifty-Second Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Nation* 24 (5 April 1877), pp. 207-8.

[67] This point was central to "National Academy of Design. The Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 3 April 1877, p. 4; *Sun*, 15 April 1877, p. 3; and "Home Subjects for American Art," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Magazine*, 4 August 1877, p. 2.

[68] *Tribune*, 3 April 1877, p. 4.

[69] *Mail*, 16 April 1877, p. 1.

[70] The former warning was sounded in "Editor's Table," *Appleton's* 2 (June 1877), pp. 569-70; *Times*, 8 April 1877, p. 4; and *Scribner's* 14 (June 1877), pp. 263-64.

[71] "Paintings. The Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. Character of the Display," *Commercial Advertiser*, 2 April 1877, p. 3, and "National Academy of Design. Proposed Amendment to the By-Laws – Some of the Pictures in the Exhibition. Second Article," *Commercial Advertiser*, 19 April 1877, p. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[72] "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 29 March 1877, p. 6, and "Fine Arts," *Independent*, 12 April 1877, p. 7.

[73] *Times*, 8 April 1877, p. 4.

[74] "The Academy Exhibition. II," *World*, 14 April 1877, pp. 4-5.

[75] "The Academy of Design. Fifty-Second Annual Exhibition – A First View," *Times*, 3 April 1877, p. 5.

[76] *Tribune*, 7 April 1877, p. 5.

[77] *Commercial Advertiser*, 2 April 1877, p. 3.

[78] This was the case in "Academy of Design," *Times*, 15 April 1877, p. 6; "Academy of Design. III. Genre Pictures," *Tribune*, 16 April 1877, p. 5; and "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. II," *Mail*, 23 April 1877, p. 1.

[79] *Tribune*, 16 April 1877, p. 5.

[80] *Mail*, 23 April 1877, p. 1.

[81] *Tribune*, 16 April 1877, p. 5.

[82] This definition of the American man has been tied to feelings about immigration, agrarian ideals, nostalgia for pre-Civil War simplicity, and anxiety over increased industrialization. See Wright, "Men Making Meaning," and Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, pp. 37-88 passim. Burns' interpretation of *Answering the Horn* is problematic in one aspect. She believed the painting was criticized because it was not "peasant enough" according to French canons. Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, p. 216.

[83] *Mail*, 23 April 1877, p. 1, and *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), pp. 157-60.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Mrs. Launt Thompson, "What is An American?" *Atlantic* 35 (May 1877), pp. 561-67.

[86] Not all critics thought this was possible. For the *Sun* critic, American life and scenery were simply not as picturesque as her European counterparts. He believed this situation would cause a problem for the younger artists after they returned home because he wanted them to paint home subjects. The crux of the problem was "how to do so truthfully and effectively, and with due regard to local surroundings." *Sun*, 15 April 1877, p. 3.

[87] *Mail*, 23 April 1877, p. 1. Both Johnson and Enoch Wood Perry were noticed as having cast off or subdued their European training in their Academy entries and references were

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

made to their national subjects and, in the case of Perry, truthfulness. See, for example, "The Academy Exhibition. IV, *World*, 23 April 1877, p. 5; *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), pp. 157-60; *Commercial Advertiser*, 19 April 1877, p. 1; and "The Academy of Design. Fifth Paper," *Post*, 12 May 1877, p. 1. Perry's *Sower* was even noticed by Cook as being in "the Winslow-Homeric school," as it was recognized as referencing Corot's *Sower*. (*Tribune*, 16 April 1877, p. 5, and *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), pp. 157-60.) Yet, though they were each praised variously for subject or treatment in one or more of their paintings (Johnson was particularly praised), neither artist was held up as original, individual, or American the way Homer was.

[88] *Tribune*, 16 April 1877, p. 5.

[89] *World*, 23 April 1877, p. 4.

[90] Ibid., p. 5.

[91] "The Academy of Design. Genre Painting in the Fifty-Second Annual Exhibition," *Post*, 12 May 1877, p. 1.

[92] *Post*, 12 May 1877, p. 1, and *Daily Graphic*, 6 April 1877, p. 255.

[93] *World*, 23 April 1877, p. 4.

[94] [Shinn], *Nation* 24 (5 April 1877), pp. 207-8. That Shinn would include Johnson and, especially, Page (two artists whose artistic methods depended considerably on French ones) as free from foreign influences suggests that he was looking for specific quotations rather than the absorption of foreign styles.

[95] *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), p. 159.

[96] Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, p. 216, and Kathleen Pyne in *Quest for Unity*, pp. 55-56.

[97] "The Academy of Design. Some Landscapes in the Fifty-Second Annual Exhibition," *Post*, 21 April 1877, p. 1.

[98] *World*, 23 April 1877, p. 5; *Mail*, 23 April 1877, p. 1; *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), pp. 157-60; and "The Academy of Design," *Times*, 15 April 1877, p. 6.

[99] *Tribune*, 16 April 1877, p. 5, and *Tribune*, 7 April 1877, p. 5.

[100] *World*, 23 April 1877, p. 5.

[101] *Commercial Advertiser*, 2 April 1877, p. 3.

[102] *Post*, 12 May 1877, p. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[103] *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877), p. 159, and *Mail*, 23 April 1877, p. 1. The *Daily Graphic* simply complained about his colors generally. *Daily Graphic*, 6 April 1877, p. 255.

[104] It must be noted that this canvas has been cut down. Illustrated in the annual's catalogue, it shows the painting to have been originally more horizontal in format. The width dimension of the canvas listed in the catalogue is ten inches wider than today. (Curatorial File, American Art Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) When the painting was cut down is unknown, but the squarer format we see today accentuates the two-dimensionality of the picture plane. The original, more horizontal format may have emphasized the mirror-image element of the design.

[105] "The Academy Exhibition. VI.," *World*, 7 May 1877, pp. 4-5.

[106] *Times*, 8 April 1877, p. 4, and *Scribner's* 14 (June 1877), pp. 263-64.

[107] "Academy of Design. IV. Landscapes," *Tribune*, 21 April 1877, p. 7.

[108] *Sun*, 15 April 1877, p. 3.

[109] Ibid.

[110] The dates of the 1877 Annual were April 3 through June 2.

[111] "Art Announcements," *Post*, 31 May 1877, p. 2.

[112] David Tatham, *Winslow Homer in the Adirondacks*, pp. 65-80.

[113] Homer's return home is noted in "Studio Notes," *Herald*, 24 September 1877, p. 3. Homer had switched the location of his studio in the Tenth Street Studio Building after returning from Virginia. It was noted that in June he had taken the space left vacant by the death of John Beaufain Irving. "Personal," *Post*, 19 June 1877, p. 2.

[114] Homer exhibited at the Century only in March, April, June, and November in 1878; his June contribution was a single tile. His work that appeared in sales ranged from one to ten years old, and in many cases private collectors or dealers would have been the consignors.

[115] There is at least one mention of him every month of the year except July, when he and most artists were out of town. See, for example, note 216.

[116] Cikovsky, NGA 1995, p. 159.

[117] "The Annual Sale of American Paintings. A Brilliant Display in the Leavitt Art Rooms," *Post*, 25 January 1878, p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[118] "Gossip of Local Art Circles. Something About the Associations in New York," *Daily Graphic*, 10 January 1878, p. 458.

[119] G. W. Sheldon, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 56 (April 1878), p. 767.

[120] Huntington, "Quest for Unity," p. 13, discusses this change in the broader context.

[121] For example, such expectations were raised in "Fine Arts. Studio Jottings," *Herald*, 3 February 1878, p. 6, and "Art Notes," *Daily Graphic*, 8 February 1878, p. 658.

[122] "Pictures for the Paris Exhibition," *Post*, 26 January 1878, p. 2.

[123] On the serious issues Homer's images raised and the timeliness of their appearance, see Dalton and Wood, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, pp. 84-95, and Elizabeth O'Leary, *At Beck and Call: The Representation of Domestic Servants in Nineteenth-Century American Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), pp. 156-61. On the state of America in 1877, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 565-85.

[124] Sol Eytinge's "Blackville Sketches," for example, was a popular series built on the humor found in placing the members of an African-American family in situations previously reserved for whites only. The series began in "Blackville Sketches," *Harper's Weekly* 22 (12 January 1878), p. 32.

[125] Those artists noted as missing included Homer, J. G. Brown, Enoch Wood Perry, William Hart, and Homer Dodge Martin. See, for example, "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society. I," *Independent*, 14 February 1878, p. 7, and "The Water-Color Exhibition. The Notable Pictures to be Seen – Prominent Artists Who Are Not Represented," *Times*, 10 February 1878, p. 6.

[126] The question of why a number of artists were absent was not answered directly, but an obvious reason may have been that oil painters, such as Homer, were preparing their contributions to the Paris Exposition.

[127] This was the case in "American Art in Water Colors. The Eleventh Annual Exhibition of the Water-Color Society in the Rooms of the Academy of Design," *Post*, 20 February 1878, p. 1; "The Water-Color Exhibition," *World*, 11 February 1878, p. 4; *Times*, 10 February 1878, p. 6; and [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. Eleventh Exhibition of the American Water-Color Society. I," *Nation* 26 (14 February 1878), pp. 120-21. These writers, in the main, were among the more open-minded.

[128] *Post*, 20 February 1878, p. 1.

[129] *World*, 11 February 1878, p. 4. A typesetting error identified him as "Mrs." Winslow Homer!

[130] *Times*, 10 February 1878, p. 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[131] *Post*, 20 February 1878, p. 1.

[132] [Shinn], *Nation* 26 (14 February 1878), p. 120.

[133] Homer neither exhibited with nor was a member of the group, although he was sometimes mistakenly identified as both; the confusion was likely caused by Homer Martin's connections with the Society. See, for example, "The Society of American Artists," *Daily Graphic*, 5 March 1878, p. 27.

[134] Bienenstock, "Society of American Artists," pp. 1-8.

[135] "Pictures and Critics," *Telegram*, 9 April 1878, p. 2.

[136] M. G. v. R. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer], "National Academy of Design, New York. Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition," *American Architect and Building News* 3 (27 April 1878), p. 149.

[137] This factor was often recognized in the press. See, for example, "Hard Times and Art Culture," *Mail*, 13 February 1878, p. 2, for positive and negative effects the depression was considered to be having.

[138] See "Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 2 April 1878, p. 1; "Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 5 April 1878, p. 1; and "Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 20 April 1878, p. 1.

[139] The *Daily Graphic* and *Evening Mail* praised the show as an advance and favorable in comparison to past efforts, but their notices of individual work remained brief. The *Daily Graphic* liked artists as varied as Enoch Wood Perry and William M. Chase. "The National Academy of Design," *Daily Graphic*, 1 April 1878, p. 218. The *Mail*, after praising the show in general, was mainly critical of individual works. "National Academy of Design," *Mail*, 4 April 1878, p. 3.

[140] "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. The Portraits," *Independent*, 11 April 1878, p. 7.

[141] "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. II," *Independent*, 18 April 1878, p. 9.

[142] Considering Cook's pivotal role in the formation and support of the group, it would have been strange for him not to have such a response. "Art at the Academy. The Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 2 April 1878, p. 5.

[143] "Fine Arts. The Fifty-Third Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Nation* 26 (18 April 1878), pp. 265-66; "The Academy of Design. Opening of the Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition," *Post*, 30 March 1878, p. 4; "The Academy Exhibition. Portraits," *Times*, 7 April 1878, pp. 6-7; and "The National Academy of Design. I," *Sun*, 7 April 1878, p. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[144] A farmer that may have originally stood at the fence in the background would have to have been eradicated, if ever extant, sometime between February and the opening of the annual. The description of the painting when shown in Brooklyn suggests that a farmer was pictured: "No. 204 The Farmer's Seed Melon, by Winslow Homer, is not as good a painting by that artist as usual. Three boys, one white and two black ones, lie on the grass in the foreground and in shadow discussing the choice fruit they have evidently removed from the neighboring melon-patch on the little hill to the left and in the background where the old farmer stands looking over the fence. The white lad, whose features are decidedly Southern, is intent on his section of watermelon, while the colored boy, less audacious, rises on his knees and looks back as if to see 'what's wanted,' and possibly divert the farmer's attention from the others. The drawing is excellent, but his coloring is not so pleasing." ("Brooklyn Art Association," *Brooklyn Union*, 5 December 1876, p. 3). That the farmer was gone by the time of the Academy show seems fairly certain since the *Nation's* description identifies the farmer as only a suggested scenario. "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. Final Notice," *Nation* 26 (30 May 1878), pp. 363-64. The farmer does appear in the illustration of the painting in G. W. Sheldon, "American Painters – Winslow Homer and F. A. Bridgman," *Art Journal* 4 (August 1878), pp. 226, but that image (fig. 91) was drawn on the block in February. See "Art Notes," *Post*, 14 February 1878, p. 2. Dalton and Wood, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, pp. 83-84, assert the farmer was never in the painting.

[145] The sky in this painting has been significantly reworked, but it is not known when this occurred.

[146] On the growing popularity of wilderness excursions, see Tatham, *Winslow Homer in the Adirondacks*.

[147] On the rise of the decorative movement and the production of artistic tiles, see Doreen Bolger Burke, "Painters and Sculptors in a Decorative Age," in *In Pursuit of Beauty*, pp. 295-97.

[148] The *World*, *Tribune*, *Nation*, *Art Journal*, *Independent*, and *Sun* spent the most time with Homer's contributions.

[149] "The National Academy of Design. II," *Sun*, 14 April 1878, p. 4. The *Tribune* also remarked on the unusual placement of the works, but rather thought Homer's selections deserved the sideline treatment. *Tribune*, 2 April 1878, p. 5.

[150] George William Sheldon was in London during this period, and who was writing for the *Post* is unknown. *Post*, 30 March 1878, p. 4; "National Academy of Design. Some of the More Notable of the Paintings Exhibited," *Daily Graphic*, 3 April 1878, p. 234; "The Academy Exhibition. Critics on the Fence," *Times*, 10 April 1878, p. 2; and "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design – Seventh and Concluding Notice – The Corridor and Sculpture Room," *Herald*, 6 May 1878, p. 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[151] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design," *Mail*, 1 April 1878, p. 4, and M. G. v. R. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer], *American Architect and Building News* 3 (27 April 1878), p. 149.

[152] [Shinn], *Nation* 26 (30 May 1878), p. 363.

[153] Ibid.

[154] *Sun*, 14 April 1878, p. 3.

[155] *Independent*, 18 April 1878, p. 9. The writer felt similarly about *Fresh Morning.*

[156] M. G. v. R., *American Architect and Building News* 3 (27 April 1878), p. 149.

[157] *Sun*, 14 April 1878, p. 3.

[158] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. V," *Tribune*, 11 May 1878, p. 6.

[159] S. N. Carter, "The Academy Exhibition," *Art Journal* 4 (May 1878), p. 159.

[160] The definition of Impressionism went through some sizable changes from the 1878 to the early 1880s. On this topic, see William H. Gerdts, *American Impressionism* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), pp. 31-32.

[161] Carter, *Art Journal* 4 (May 1878), p. 158.

[162] *Sun*, 14 April 1878, p. 3.

[163] "National Academy of Design. A Glance at the Paintings Included in the Present Exhibition," *Daily Graphic*, 10 April 1878, p. 287.

[164] James Jackson Jarves, "Fine Arts. The American School of Painting. Elihu Vedder and John La Farge," *Independent*, 3 October 1878, p. 7.

[165] *Independent*, 18 April 1878, p. 9.

[166] "Editor's Table," *Appleton's Journal* 4 (February 1878), p. 193.

[167] [Shinn], "Notes," *Nation*, 26 (4 April 1878), p. 229, and [Shinn], *Nation* 26 (18 April 1878), pp. 265-66.

[168] "The Academy Exhibition. I," *World*, 14 April 1878, p. 3; "The Academy Exhibition. II," *World*, 7 May 1878, p. 6; and "The Academy Exhibition. IV," *World*, 19 May 1878, p. 4.

[169] [Shinn], *Nation* 26 (30 May 1878), p. 363.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[170] *Tribune*, 11 May 1878, p. 6.

[171] "The Academy Exhibition. III," *World*, 18 May 1878, p. 6.

[172] Ibid.

[173] *Independent*, 18 April 1878, p. 9.

[174] *Sun*, 14 April 1878, p. 3.

[175] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition. III," *Tribune*, 19 April 1878, p. 5.

[176] *Tribune*, 11 May 1878, p. 6.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

[179] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition. VI," *Tribune*, 27 May 1878, p. 5. In this instance, Cook was speaking of Inness' offerings in general. His three contributions to the Academy in 1878 were: *The Rainbow* (Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery, New York); *The After Glow* (unlocated); and *The Morning Sun* (unlocated). See LeRoy Ireland, *The Works of George Inness* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), pp. 215, 220.

[180] *Tribune*, 2 April 1878, p. 5, and *Tribune*, 11 May 1878, p. 6.

[181] *Tribune*, 11 May 1878, p. 6.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Cook feuded with other artists in this same period in addition to the difficulties he was having with his editor Whitelaw Reid (see Chapter 1). There was an exchange with George Inness, part of which appeared in the *Tribune*. See, for example, "Decorative Art," *Tribune*, 11 April 1878, p. 5.

[184] *Tribune*, 2 April 1878, p. 5.

[185] M. G .v. R., *American Architect and Building News*, 27 April 1878, p. 149.

[186] "The Coming Exhibition. Academy of Design Paintings," *Times*, 1 April 1878, p. 5, and *Times*, 7 April 1878, pp. 6-7.

[187] *Daily Graphic*, 3 April 1878, p. 234.

[188] G. W. Sheldon, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 56 (April 1878), p. 767.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[189] "Fine Arts. The Tile Club," *Herald*, 1 May 1878, p. 6, and *Herald*, 6 May 1878, p. 5.

[190] "Brush and Pencil. Notes from the Studios," *Tribune*, 22 June 1878, p. 5.

[191] "The Salmagundi Exhibition," *World*, 4 May 1878, p. 5, only briefly mentions the show and Homer as included in it. The *Herald* printed a typically descriptive report-review but Homer is not mentioned. "Fine Arts. First Exhibition of the Salmagundi Sketch Club," *Herald*, 21 May 1878, p. 10. What Homer exhibited at the Salmagundi is unknown.

[192] "Book and Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 9 May 1878, p. 1, and "Academy of Design Meeting," *Mail*, 9 May 1878, p. 4.

[193] "The New Academicians and Associates," *Post*, 10 May 1878, p. 2. O'Donovan was, in fact, elected an Associate Academician.

[194] "Art and Artists," *Mail*, 7 May 1878, p. 4.

[195] *Boston Daily Eve Transcript*, 28 May 1878, quoted in NGA 1995, p. 395.

[196] At the end of 1878 John La Farge would have a similar sale in Boston before leaving for Europe. See, for example, the report in "Fine Arts. Studio and Other Art Notes," *Herald*, 15 December 1878, p. 12.

[197] Bienenstock, "Society of American Artists," p. 91.

[198] The selection of works was divided between two committees named in New York and Paris. In New York, an advisory committee of ten prominent individuals (E. D. Morgan, J. W. Pinchot, Parke Godwin, J. T. Johnston, H. Q. Marchand, Robert, G. Dun, Robert Gordon, John Sherwood, N. M. Beckwith, and Charles S. Smith) selected work from their own collections as well as solicited works from artists. They also solicited other private galleries for loans. The selection process is outlined in United States Secretary of State, *Reports of the Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), v. 1, pp. 10-11. I am grateful to Gerald Bolas for sharing his extensive research on the 1878 Paris Exposition.

[199] Jasper Cropsey, William Hart, David Johnson, and Albert Bierstadt were four names often noticed as missing from the selection. See, for example, "Pictures for Paris. List of American Artists To Be Represented," *Telegram*, 16 March 1878, p. 3, and "Our Art at Paris," *Herald*, 16 March 1878, p. 6.

[200] *Sunday Morning in Virginia* and *A Visit From the Old Mistress* came from Homer's studio; the other paintings came from the collection of committee-member John Sherwood.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[201] "Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 16 March 1878, p. 1.

[202] In Paris, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, D. Maitland Armstrong, and Christian Detmold were charged with making the selection of works from the artists working abroad. On how the Paris committee operated, see D. M. Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday* (New York: Scribner's, 1920), p. 268.

[203] "American Art at the Exposition," *Times*, 16 June 1878, p. 6.

[204] "Fine Arts," *Post*, 23 July 1878, p. 2.

[205] Among the subjects Hooper expected to see were American girlhood, American daily life, the Civil War, and illustrations of history or literature. Lucy H. Hooper, "The Pictures at the Paris Exhibition. IV. The American Pictures," *Art Journal* 4 (November 1878), p. 348-49.

[206] Kate Field, "Kate Field in Switzerland," *Daily Graphic*, 31 August 1878, p. 422.

[207] "Pictures at the Exposition," *Atlantic* 42 (December 1878), p. 716.

[208] W. J. S. [William James Stillman], "The Paris Exposition – IX. American Painting," *Nation* 26 (3 October 1878), p. 211.

[209] D. M. A. [David Mailtand Armstrong], "Art at the Paris Exposition," *Scribner's* 17 (December 1878), p. 281. Maitland's initials appeared only in the table of contents, whereas on the article itself it is authored by "A Painter."

[210] Ibid.

[211] R. S. [Russell Sturgis], "The Paris Exposition – XV. The United States Fine Art Exhibit," *Nation* 26 (28 November 1878), p. 332.

[212] The primary European responses that appeared in the American press include: [Paul Lefort], "American Artists at Paris. A Foreign Critics Opinion," *Tribune*, 25 December 1878, p. 2; [Charles Tardieu], "Some Foreign Notions About the Fine Arts in America," *Sun*, 25 December 1878, p. 2; "Fine Arts. Among the Studios," *Herald*, 23 December 1878, p. 9; "The Paris Exposition. English Opinion of American Pictures and Artists," *Herald*, 3 June 1878, p. 4; and [Victor Cherbuliez], "Cherbuliez on American Painting," *World*, 28 August 1878, pp. 4-5.

[213] *Herald*, 3 June 1878, p. 4.

[214] *Tribune*, 25 December 1878, p. 2.

[215] Outremer, "Art Talks from Abroad," *Aldine* 9 (1878), p. 201. It is unclear whether "Outremer" was distinguishing between the works which Homer sent himself and those

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which came from Sherwood's collection. With no other comments on this topic from this critic, it seems Homer may have been being condemned for at least some circumstances beyond his control.

[216] W. J. S., *Nation* 26 (3 October 1878), p. 211.

[217] Hooper, *Art Journal* 4 (November 1878), p. 349.

[218] Gar, "American Genre Painters. Eastman Johnson, Winslow Homer, and the Rest," *Times*, 25 August 1878, p. 10.

[219] [Field], *Daily Graphic*, 31 August 1878, p. 422. It must be noted that the writer here borrowed her last sentence directly from Chebuliez's comments, which appeared in the *World*, 28 August 1878, p. 4, and which she may have seen earlier in the French press.

[220] *Times*, 25 August 1878, p. 10, and Hooper, *Art Journal* 4 (November 1878), p. 349.

[221] "Editor's Table. About Finish In Pictures," *Appleton's* 5 (August 1878), p. 185.

[222] Homer had left the city by June 24 ("Fine Arts. Among the Studios," *Herald*, 24 June 1878, p. 4) and was back by October 31 ("Fine Arts," *Herald*, 31 October 1878, p. 7). Probably due to his departure for Houghton Farm, it was reported that Homer was unable to join the Tile Club on their Long Island sketching sojourn ("Long Island Sketches," *Post*, 28 June 1878, p. 2).

[223] "Art Notes," *Post*, 11 November 1878, p. 2.

[224] "The Brooklyn Art Association and the Art Students League," *Sun*, 8 December 1878, p. 3.

[225] "Fine Arts. New Pictures in the Galleries," *Herald*, 11 November 1878, p. 5, and "Studio," *Art Interchange*, 11 December 1878, p. 51.

[226] Sheldon, *Art Journal* 4 (August 1878), p. 227.

[227] Homer exhibited at the Century this year only in January, November, and December, rather than his usual six to eight times. His work was also much less available at sale, with only six instances known. See, for example, "Rooms for the Exhibition and Sale of American Pictures," *Post*, 6 May 1879, p. 3; "Art Notes. Paintings at No. 817 Broadway (the Leavitt Gallery), The Barker and Matthew's Galleries," *Commercial Advertiser*, 14 May 1879, p. 1; and "Picture Sale," *Express*, 22 December 1879, p. 3.

[228] While the number of his oils remained stable, at thirteen, from the previous year, and his watercolor production dropped from sixty-two (a high due to the Houghton Farm trip) to twenty-two, his drawing production skyrocketed from thirty to seventy examples.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[229] "Culture and Progress," *Scribner's* 18 (June 1879), p. 311.

[230] "Fine Arts. The Black and White Exhibition at the Kurtz Gallery," *Daily Graphic*, 13 February 1879, p. 707; "Fine Arts. The Black and White Exhibition of the Salmagundi Sketch Club – First Notice," *Herald*, 12 February 1879, p. 6; and "Fine Arts. The Salmangundi Exhibition," *Mail*, 14 February 1879, p. 4.

[231] "Fine Arts. Water Colors at the Union League," *Mail*, 10 May 1879, p. 4.

[232] This quality of the show was especially pointed out in "The Water-Color Society Exhibition," *Sun*, 1 February 1879, p. 2; "Editor's Table. Water-Colors," *Appleton's* 6 (March 1879), p. 281, and "Fine Arts. Twelfth Annual Exhibition of the Water Color Society – Private View Last Evening – Notes on the Principal Pictures," *Herald*, 1 February 1879, p. 6. The *World* suggested otherwise, giving credit to a few rather than many names. "The Water-Color Exhibition. I," *World*, 5 February 1879, p. 4.

[233] "The Water-Color Society. A Brilliant Show at the Twelfth Exhibition," *Times*, 1 February 1879, p. 5, and "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Aldine* 9, no. 8 (1879), pp. 269-70.

[234] *Sun*, 1 February 1879, p. 2, and "The Water-Color Exhibition," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 22 February 1879, pp. 1-2.

[235] "American Art in Water-Colors. The Twelfth Annual Exhibition of the Water Color Society at the National Academy of Design. I," *Post*, 11 February 1879, p. 1.

[236] "The Water Color Exhibition," *Daily Graphic*, 7 February 1879, p. 663.

[237] "The Water-Color Exhibition. II," *World*, 10 February 1879, p. 4.

[238] C. C. [Clarence Cook], "The Water Color Society. Twelfth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 15 February 1879, p. 5.

[239] *Post*, 11 February 1879, p. 1.

[240] *J. Frank Currier*, exh. cat. (New York: Babcock Galleries, 1994), chronology.

[241] As William Gerdts has noted, it is nearly impossible to positively identify Currier's nine entries which bore the titles: *Pines*; *Brook Scene*; *Willows and Water*; *Beech-wood: Interior*; *Trees*; *Sunset* (2); *Sunset Among the Willows*; and *Road-Side Scene*. William H. Gerdts, "The Overlooked Artist: J. Frank Currier," unpublished manuscript, pp. 21-26; courtesy of William H. Gerdts. A shortened version of this insightful essay appeared in "Der vergessene Künstler," *ViceVersa*, exh. cat. (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1996), pp. 114-126, see especially pp. 118-120.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[242] "Fine Arts. Society of American Artists – How Some Men Will Be Represented," *Herald*, 3 March 1879, p. 8.

[243] Six critics wrote negatively of Currier's work, four made no comment, and three found some good in it. As an example of the negative, see "The Water Color Exhibition," *Sun*, 23 February 1879, p. 2. The *World*, *Appleton's*, *Telegram*, and *Harper's Weekly* made no reference to Currier at all. For a positive remark, see *Daily Graphic*, 7 February 1879, p. 663.

[244] "The Water Color Exhibition," *Sun*, 2 February 1879, p. 3.

[245] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Growing School of American Water-Color Art," *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879), p. 172.

[246] *Times*, 1 February 1879, p. 5.

[247] *Herald*, 1 February 1879, p. 6, and "Fine Arts. Water Color Exhibition – Fifth and Concluding Notice – The Corridor and Black and White Room," *Herald*, 24 February 1879, p. 5.

[248] M. G. van Rensselaer, "Recent Pictures in New York," *American Architect and Building News* 5 (22 March 1879), p. 94.

[249] "The Water Color Society. The Reception Last Night at the National Academy of Design," *Commercial Advertiser*, 1 February 1879, p. 1.

[250] *Post*, 11 February 1879, p. 1.

[251] [Shinn], *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879), p. 172. Shinn was particularly bothered by the works' quotations of Fortuny's and Munich styles, which he felt made Currier unfaithful to his own inspiration.

[252] *Daily Graphic*, 7 February 1879, p. 663.

[253] *Herald*, 24 February 1879, p. 5.

[254] He exhibited *Husking; Fresh Air* (1878; Brooklyn Museum); *Oak Trees with Girl; Chestnut Tree; Sketch; Girl in a Wind; Watching Sheep; Sketch from Nature; Girl on a Garden Seat; The Strawberry Field; Girl and Boy; Old House; A Rainy Day; October; Oak Trees; Corn; Girl, Sheep, and Basket; Girl and Boat; Willows; Girl, Boat, and Boy; Black and White; Black and White; The School Girl; Sketch; Girl on a Bank; Girl with Half a Rake* (*Girl with Hay Rake*; 1878; National Gallery of Art); *In the Orchard* (*Apple Picking*; 1878; Terra Museum); *On the Fence* (1878; National Gallery of Art); *On the Hill* (*The Green Hill*; 1878; National Gallery of Art). Trying to precisely identify the watercolors with generic titles without exact descriptions is difficult. The whereabouts of those works listed without locations are unknown.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[255] See, for example, *Times*, 1 February 1879, p. 5, and *Scribner's* 18 (June 1879), p. 310.

[256] *Post*, 11 February 1879, p. 1. This story was corroborated in [Shinn], *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879), p. 171.

[257] *Times*, 1 February 1879, p. 5.

[258] [Shinn], *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879), p. 171.

[259] This is not to suggest that the atmosphere at Houghton Farm was less than stimulating, but rather that it was one different than that of being with his artist-peers. Homer's time at the Valentine farm also allowed for the artist to receive immediate response to his artistic endeavors from an important patron.

[260] Clarence Cook suggested that some of the entries were the result of a trip to Long Island with other artists (he may have thought Homer had joined the Tile Club the previous June), but the images known today from the 1879 showing all seem to be from Houghton Farm. Cook's remarks appear in "The Water-Color Society. Twelfth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 1 March 1879, p. 5.

[261] Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," pp. 87-88. On the Colonial Revival, see Alex Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985).

[262] Colacino, "Winslow Homer's Watercolors," p. 62

[263] van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* (22 March 1879), pp. 93-94.

[264] Aside from Shirlaw, there was not another artist she particularly liked; she was highly critical of many. Ibid.

[265] C. C. [Clarence Cook], "The American Water Color Society. Twelfth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 1 February 1879, p. 5.

[266] *Tribune*, 1 March 1879, p. 5.

[267] *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 22 February 1879, pp. 1-2.

[268] "The Studio. Water Color Exhibition," *Art Interchange* 3 (19 February 1879), p. 26.

[269] *Times*, 1 February 1879, p. 5.

[270] Ibid.

[271] [William Crary Brownell], "Whistler in Painting and Etching," *Scribner's* 18 (August 1879), p. 487.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[272] Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," p. 90.

[273] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The American Water-Color Society's Exhibition," *Nation* 28 (6 February 1879), p. 107.

[274] *Sun*, 2 February 1879, p. 3.

[275] "The Water Color Exhibition," *Sun*, 16 February 1879, p. 3.

[276] Ibid.

[277] *World*, 5 February 1879, p. 4.

[278] *World*, 10 February 1879, p. 4.

[279] S. N. C., *Art Journal* 5 (March 1879), pp. 93-95.

[280] [Shinn], *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879), p. 171.

[281] [Shinn], *Nation* 28 (6 February 1879), p. 107.

[282] [Shinn] *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879), pp. 171.

[283] Wm. M. F. Round, "Fine Arts. The Water Color Society," *Independent*, 6 March 1879, p. 9.

[284] Ibid.

[285] "Water Color Exhibition. Extent and Importance of the Collection," *Mail*, 1 February 1879, p. 1.

[286] *Post*, 11 February 1879, p. 1.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid.

[289] See Colacino, "Winslow Homer's Watercolors," p. 61, and Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," p. 87-89.

[290] Twenty-one magazine and newspapers covered the show. Of them, the *Times* and the *Herald* devoted the greatest number of articles to it—eight each, although not all were long. In addition to these two papers, the *Tribune*, *World*, *Telegram*, and *Sun*, as well as the *Art Journal*, *Appleton's*, *Art Amateur* (new on the scene), and the *Nation* gave it especially full attention.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[291] *Scribner's* 18 (June 1879), pp. 312-13; "The Academy Exhibition. A Creditable Display of the Work of American Artists," *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1879, p. 207; and "The Academy Exhibition," *Mail*, 1 April 1879, p. 4.

[292] "Fine Arts. National Academy," *Independent*, 10 April 1879, p. 12.

[293] "The Academy Exhibition. First Impression and a Hasty Tour of the Galleries," *Post*, 30 March 1879, p. 4.

[294] This viewpoint was expressed in "Art Matters. The Academy Exhibition. First Article," *Express*, 9 April 1879, p. 3; "Fine Arts. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Academy of Design – Important Pictures – First Notice," *Herald*, 30 March 1879, p. 8; *Scribner's* 18 (June 1879), pp. 312-13; and "The Studio. The Spring Exhibition – National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Art Interchange* 3 (16 April 1879), p. 58.

[295] An especially cogent discussion outlining the differences can be found in Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], "The Art Gallery. The National Academy of Design. First Notice," *Art Amateur* 1 (June 1879), pp. 4-5.

[296] Nonetheless *Sun* critic Laffan still called for more "home work" for he felt "we shall never attain much that is of real or permanent value until we rely on ourselves." "The National Academy," *Sun*, 6 April 1879, p. 3.

[297]"Editor's Table. The Academy Exhibition," *Appleton's* 6 (May 1879), p. 471.

[298] "America in Pictures," *Times*, 16 April 1879, p. 4.

[299] "Academy of Design. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition. Fourth Article," *Tribune*, 26 April 1879, p. 5.

[300] Ibid.

[301] Susan Nichols Carter, "The Academy Exhibition," *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879), p. 158.

[302] M. G. van Rensselaer, "The Spring Exhibition in New York. The National Academy of Design – The Society of American Artists, Etc.," *American Architect and Building News* 5 (10 May 1879), p. 148.
[303] *Appleton's* 6 (May 1879), pp. 470-71.

[304] Strahan, *Art Amateur* 1 (June 1879), pp. 26-29.

[305] "Preparing the Pictures. The Artist's Varnishing Day," *Times*, 30 March 1879, p. 6.

[306] *Times*, 16 April 1879, p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[307] Praise for Fuller appeared in *Tribune*, 26 April 1879, p. 5; "The Academy Exhibition. III," *World*, 27 April 1879, p. 3; *Post*, 30 March 1879, p. 4; "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design. II," *Nation* 28 (22 May 1879), p. 359; *Scribner's* 18 (June 1879), p. 313; "The National Academy," *Sun*, 20 April 1879, p. 2; Carter, *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879), p. 158; and *Art Interchange* 3 (16 April 1879), p. 58.

[308] Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, p. 222

[309] Carter, *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879), p. 158.

[310] "Fine Arts. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design – Fourth Notice – The South Gallery," *Herald*, 7 April 1879, p. 8. Only *Appleton's* disagreed with its peers. It found Fuller too heavily dependent on execution and too derivative of the old masters. *Appleton's* 6 (May 1879), p. 470.

[311] Eighteen of the twenty-one reviewing publications discussed Homer's work. Of the three abstaining serials, the *Commercial Advertiser* did not discuss individual artists and *Harper's Weekly* mentioned only a small number of artists, mainly landscapists and those conservative in practice. Why the *Express* ignored Homer is hard to discern, since it had positive reactions to a wide variety of home artists from J. G. Brown to George Inness. "Art Notes. The Coming Exhibition at the Academy," *Commercial Advertiser*, 25 March 1879, p. 1; "Art Notes. The Exhibition of Paintings at the National Academy Last Night – A Noteworthy Display," *Commercial Advertiser*, 1 April 1879, p. 1; "Art Notes," *Commercial Advertiser*, 4 April 1879, p. 1; "The National Academy," *Harper's Weekly* 23 (19 April 1879), pp. 312-13; "The Academy," *Harper's Weekly* 23 (3 May 1879), p. 353; "The Academy," *Harper's Weekly* 23 (10 May 1879), p. 364; and *Express*, 9 April 1879, p. 3.

[312] Homer's asking prices for these paintings are listed in *The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1861-1900*, p. 452.

[313] *World*, 27 April 1879, p. 3.

[314] The painting as we know it today is the result of significant alterations Homer made in the 1890s.

[315] "The Academy Paintings. A Better Display Than Has Been Seen for Years," *Telegram*, 31 March 1879, p. 1, and *Herald*, 30 March 1879, p. 8.

[316] *Times*, 30 March 1879, p. 6.

[317] On the growth of the decorative arts, see M. G. van Rensselaer, "Decorative Art and Its Dogmas. Two Papers – I," *Lippincott's Magazine* 25 (February 1880), pp. 215-20.

[318] Dalton and Wood, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, pp. 97-98.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[319] [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer], "The Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Boston. II., *American Architect and Building News* 5 (17 May 1879), p. 157.

[320] *Appleton's* 6 (May 1879), p. 471.

[321] *Herald*, 30 March 1879, p. 6.

[322] *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1879, pp. 207-9.

[323] *Telegram*, 31 March 1879, p. 1.

[324] [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts. The Fifty-Fourth Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Nation* 28 (15 May 1879), p. 341.

[325] Carter, *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879), p. 158.

[326] *Sundown* seems to have had a certain resemblance to *Promenade on the Beach* (1880; Springfield Museum). The paintings appear to have shared an overall singular tone of color; the image of a fashionable woman; the exploration of the effects of particular kinds of light; water presented in a stripe of color; and a boat on the horizon. The Springfield painting is derived from an earlier drawing, and perhaps that was the case for *Sundown*. On the origins of *Promenade*, see NGA 1995, pp. 195-96. See also Abigail Booth Gerdts, *Winslow Homer in Monochrome*, exh. cat. (New York: M. Knoedler and Co., 1987), p. 38 and Hendricks, *The Life and Work of Winslow Homer*, pp. 128, 131, 139.

[327] *Times*, 30 March 1879, p. 6.

[328] van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News*, 5 (10 May 1879), p. 149, and *Independent*, 10 April 1879, p. 13.

[329] [Shinn], *Nation* 28 (15 May 1879), p. 341.

[330] "An Amateur in the Academy," *Daily Graphic*, 3 May 1879, p. 451.

[331] Shinn has been identified as the writer of the *Nation* review in Haskell, *The Nation*, p. 445.

[332] Strahan, *Art Amateur* 1 (June 1879), p. 4.

[333] "The Academy Pictures. Further View of More Prominent Works," *Telegram*, 22 April 1879, p. 3.

[334] *Tribune*, 26 April 1879, p. 5. *Mail*, 1 April 1879, p. 4, felt similarly, especially about the figure's heaviness.

[335] Carter, *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879), p. 159.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[336] *Herald* 30 March 1879, p. 8. *Art Interchange* found the figure well drawn, but the "cold blue of the wave" ruined the painting. "The Spring Exhibition. National Academy of Design. First Notice," *Art Interchange* 3 (2 April 1879), p. 50.

[337] *Herald*, 30 March 1879, p. 8, and *Herald*, 7 April 1879, p. 8.

[338] "Fine Arts. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design – Seventh Notice – The West and Northwest Galleries," *Herald*, 28 April 1879, p. 5.

[339] *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1879, p. 207.

[340] van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 5 (10 April 1879), p. 149.

[341] "The Two New York Exhibitions," *Atlantic* 43 (June 1879), pp. 782-87.

[342] *Independent*, 10 April 1879, p. 13.

[343] *Atlantic* 43 (June 1879), pp. 782-87; *Independent*, 10 April 1879, pp. 12-13; and "Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition – The Landscapes," *Independent*, 8 May 1879, p. 6.

[344] "The Academy Painters. Features of the Annual Exhibition at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-Third Street," *Post*, 24 May 1879, p. 1.

[345] *World*, 27 April 1879, p. 3.

[346] *Appleton's* 6 (May 1879), p. 471.

[347] NGA 1995, p. 395

[348] Homer was not the only artist to remain silent about his plans. It should be noted that Lemuel Wilmarth and William Beard were also mentioned as artists not revealing their impending travels. "Studio Notes. Tenth Street Studio," *Art Interchange* 2 (14 May 1879), p. 79.

[349] "Summer Haunts of Artists," *Art Amateur* 1 (August 1879), p. 50. While the falsity of the first part of this statement has been well documented, it does raise the question of why it was made.

[350] "Bits of Art Gossip About Artists," *World*, 9 October 1879, p. 5.

[351] Art writing in general had felt a particularly strong boost this year with the appearance of such art magazines as *Art Interchange* and *Art Amateur*.

[352] S. G. W. B. [Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin], "Present Tendencies of American Art," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 58 (March 1879), pp. 491-92.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[353] S. G. W. B. [Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin], "Fifty Years of American Art, 1828-1878. III," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 59 (October 1879), p. 684.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 6

1880-81: Moving On

The year 1880 was a period of consolidation and preparation for Homer, who was to leave for England in March 1881. He consolidated his art inventory through a concerted plan of sales and exhibition opportunities. In his painting, he brought a sense of closure to certain investigations, while he pushed others to greater experimentation. Homer's activities in 1880 began much as any other year; he exhibited new pictures at the Century Club and offered works at sale.[1] In oil, Homer continued his interest in the decorative and sought means to interweave it with his interest in outdoor light and color in *Peach Blossoms* (fig. 109). The canvas was noticed both in his studio and shortly thereafter at Mathews Gallery. With a pastel palette of pink, light blue, and green, *Peach Blossom* was celebrated by both the *Post* and *Tribune* for its aesthetic qualities. The girl was considered "a peach blossom herself" by the *Post*, suggesting that Homer successfully created a happy coincidence of man-made and nature's beauty.[2] Clarence Cook, who had been critical of *Sundown* at the 1879 Academy, described the canvas approvingly: "'Peach Blossoms.' A gray stone fence runs across the front of the canvas, upon which is sitting a maiden of sixteen or so, draped in white, and herself in bloom of the springtime of womanhood. A field beyond and the gray sky assist to set her off to advantage. Near by her, a peach tree in blossom shows its flower-laden branches above the fence."[3] In this light-filled scene, a figure, well-modeled by light, color, and drawing, is set against a landscape background defined by bands of color indicating the fence, grass, and sky. Dots of pink punctuate the left side of the canvas to create a lovely springtime image with a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sophisticated design that vibrates between the suggestion of the depth of the landscape and an abstract patterning of light and color. A modest-sized image, it fairly fulfilled Cook's prescription for art where beauty, life, and poetic truth to nature conjoined. At the same time that *Peach Blossoms* appeared, older canvases, such as *A Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, resurfaced at the Union League Club, perhaps with the hope that they would sell.[4] While exhibiting these paintings, Homer remained visible in the art community, attending club meetings and other art functions.[5]

Chief among Homer's activities during the winter was likely his preparations for a sale of his works on paper at the Mathews Gallery to be held March 4. With this event impending, Homer did not take part in the Watercolor Society annual, and his absence was noted. His name was mentioned regarding two aspects frequently noticed about the exhibition. The greater use of transparent color was widely commented on and commended in the reviews as the decline in the use of bodycolor continued to be applauded. In this discussion of watercolor technique, the *World* used Homer's works as examples of the proper use of the opaque medium, which it believed created no negative effect. Thus, it was suggested bodycolor should not be condemned in and of itself. Reiterating its position of 1879, the *World* noted: "When Mr. Winslow Homer paints his crisp and fresh water-colors, for example, and standing a few yards away it is impossible to deny that they are done exclusively with transparent color, it is certainly a very trivial objection to make to them to object that on close inspection they disclose the unhappy truth that a highlight here and there is picked out in gouache." He contrasted Homer's use of gouache with that of Arthur Quartley, who applied it thickly, as impasto, and to poor

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

results.[6] For the *World*, if the appropriate effect was achieved, Homer's unorthodox treatment was acceptable.

Homer's name was more often invoked with regard to his truancy from the watercolor annual. While the show was considered to be of high quality, it was suggested that it would have been improved if a number of artists had contributed. The *Herald* held hope for the next year when "we hope not to miss, as we do now, the work of Mssrs. Magrath, Winslow Homer, Tiffany, Abbey, Boughton, and Hennessey. These artists have duties as members of the society which we hope they will not again neglect."[7] Homer was especially missed not only because of the exceptional quality of his work and his duty as a society member, but also because of his having been so prominent in 1879. The *Times* quipped: "Mr. Winslow Homer, who made a sensation last year by sending studies in great profusion, makes this year a sensation by not appearing at all."[8] *Scribner's* also noted the pronounced nature of Homer's absence: "For example, Mr. Winslow Homer, who is always surprising his admirers, chose to stay away from the exhibition altogether, although he showed last year a greater number of pictures than any other painter. Instead of hazarding again his reputation as a water-colorist after the success of last year, he had the inspiration to doubt the fickle public and prefer a sale of his own, in which it is said good prices were obtained."[9] The tone of these two remarks suggests an annoyance at the artist for shunning traditional exhibition practice and, in the case of *Scribner's*, for doing so in favor of a commercial outlet.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The choice of having a sale instead of exhibiting at the Watercolor Society was surely inspired by financial considerations, and is an indication that Homer was preparing for a substantial change in his life. Since sales were business endeavors more than exhibition venues, there was not much press coverage of Homer's March 4 sale. This is unfortunate, since the works in the sale represented an overview of Homer's output on paper from the beginning of his career to his latest sheets. However, there were two substantial commentaries that provided a summation of attitudes towards Homer's watercolor and drawings to date.

The *Post* recognized the importance of seeing this broad range of seventy-two watercolors and drawings in black and white because Homer "is one of the most vigorous and admirable draughtsman in this country.... The pleasure given by these pictures is large and wholesome, like their art." Homer's ability with line, which had made his first reputation, was still to be commended as was the American character of his output, here defined as robust and healthy in scale and feeling. In its extended remarks, Sheldon of the *Post* focused on the more recent sheets and, as he had when they were shown in 1879, he lauded the images of shepherdesses as being particularly American. He continued:

> Here are the American shepherdesses which only Mr. Homer paints—self-possessed, serious, independent; not French peasants who till the soil; not Swiss slaves who watch cows, knitting stockings meanwhile with eyes downcast; not German frauen, who are drawers of water and shapeless, but free-born American women on free-soil farms, who have had a free-school education, who read newspapers, who have the sense of ownership, and whose bodies are symmetrically and generously proportioned.... Mr. Homer, who evidently has himself fallen in love with the American shepherdess here sings her praises; and the lyric is most spirited, most comprehensive and most truthful poetry of the subject yet produced by art. This is Mr. Homer's triumph.[10]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

What made these images so American was that the figures, especially the girls, were recognized as typically and particularly American. As Sheldon pointed out, their Americanness derived not only from their "symmetrically and generously proportioned bodies," but also from to their physical attitudes, the activities depicted, their costuming, and the settings of open air and light in which they were depicted.[11] Homer may have drawn on the European canon, but it was clothed in so American an idiom that it could satisfy cosmopolitan interests and still resonate as truly American. This combination gave the work its "truthful poetry," the quality most being sought in art of the day.

Sheldon emphasized the Americanness of Homer's work; the *World* championed the group's originality. While Homer's individuality and originality had been tied repeatedly to defining his Americanness, they were now regarded as important qualities in and of themselves in assessing the artist.[12] The *World* was especially impressed with the endurance of Homer's originality:

> The catalogue numbers seventy-two drawings in all, and it is safe to say that the exhibition of so many pictures by almost any other of our painters would fail to be a display presenting so much variety at once and yet so distinct an individuality. Mr. Homer is, to be sure, nothing if not individual—'original,' indeed is the first epithet commonly applied to him. He is as distinctly himself in the slightest crayon sketch here to be found as he is in his most ambitious and elaborate composition.[13]

Homer's superiority in the medium was astounding, and his achievement, in large part, was due to his individuality. The writer continued: "Few American painters, certainly, paint either landscape or figures of large importance with more technical skill, more thorough training and more happy aesthetic results aside from excellence of technique; but on the other hand, they are even fewer still who stamp themselves so indelibly upon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the most (comparatively) trivial of their drawings."[14] Homer not only had the technical skill which was now de rigeur, but he used it to distinctive ends. As many critics had pointed out in the last five years, the mechanics of art could be mastered by many. The defining characteristic of an artist was what was done with that knowledge. The *World* recognized that Homer merged poetry and visual realism, such as seen in *Girl Swinging* (possibly fig. 110), where "the charm is distinctly poetic...the color is as bright and buoyant as the action of the figure."[15]

Homer's watercolors, however, did not escape negative criticism. According to the *World*, which still believed watercolor was inferior to oil, the problems were inherent in the medium. Its limitations were magnified in subjects of larger thought, and this critic used Homer's *October* (unlocated) as an example of the shortcomings of the aqueous medium: "We do not mean to say that it is not the best in saying that some of its companions please us more, but only that it is so large a subject and treated in so large a way that the necessary shortcomings of the medium in which it is painted jar a trifle and that we should much prefer an 'October' from Mr. Homer in which the depth and richness of the month's color should be interpreted in oil." This particular sheet, however, was redeemed as "a fine thing" for "its freshness and breeziness, and indeed all its merits as a transcript of a stirring thing in nature are unmistakable."[16] While the subject in watercolor offered a marvelous transcriptual study, the writer longed for a more complete explication of the season, which he felt could be captured only through the more weighty medium of oil. Yet even a watercolor in which the writer found the subject unsuitable,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

such as *Watching the Flock* (unlocated) (though he does not articulate why), could not be truly criticized because it was:

> too poetic and too sympathetically rendered to be quarreled with on any score.... Picturesque, it should, by this time, be needless to say, everything here is.... We were speaking just now of Mr. Homer's poetry, but we are reminded that, though unmistakably poetry, its character is first and always picturesque. It is the picturesqueness in nature that strikes him so forcibly and that he depicts so cleverly, and so sympathetically. To attempt to idealize it in any way, to soften its crudity—to round out the thin calves of a rustic damsel for example—to add of his own motion an idyllic charm to the fresh and wholesome subject of which he sees so many and other painters so few, would seem to him, we may be sure, either idle or profane. We cannot help thinking this his limitation, at the same time that we reflect upon his strength within his limits. And both points are admirably illustrated in this exhibition. [17]

The *World* critic, as did so many others, continued to wrestle with Homer's refusal to idealize in a conventional way. His refusal brought him praise, but with reservations. Criticism aside, the sale was named a success, realizing $1,037.[18]

The Mathews sale was certainly an attempt by Homer to divest himself of his artistic property, and the appearance of *Upland Cotton* at the Union League Club the following week may have been as well. As usual the club showing met with little press coverage, but a remark in the *Times* offers an example of the contradictions Homer sometimes faced. Having given the painting a favorable review when it was seen in the Academy, the *Times* now regarded it with a certain disapproval. It noted that the painting had "its fine places and its crude" and that the figures were "ungraceful." The writer's biggest complaint was that the image lacked design:

> Art is supposed to exhibit the quintessence of design; but these women show no design.... The fact that the painting is an able one does not suffice to protect it from criticism on this side; on the contrary, its very excellence forces one to demand of the painter that he shall move a step further than the mere placing of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the two dark-skinned women in juxtaposition with certain cotton plants and devote this large canvas to the telling of some story...having a meaning of a finer quality and one to be perceived only by those who devote time and thought to pictures. No one has a better foundation for such a progress in his art than Mr. Homer, for no one unites just his proportion of experience, industry, and originality.[19]

Just a year before, the painting had been called "a graceful tribute to the plant which has made so many fortunes" in the same newspaper.[20] For the writer in 1880, the subject seemed subordinated to the decorative, and this circumstance hampered the work; idea was required. Homer was yet again seen as the man appropriate for the task but not achieving the expectations of his maturity, hard-working nature, and individuality. This new criticism of *Upland Cotton* suggests the anti-materialist leitmotif that would rise through the 1880s and which Homer would more thoroughly embrace after his departure for England. That a painting, which previously had been so praised for its decorative charm and thoughtful subject, now elicited such remarks may very well have added to Homer's quandary of determining the best direction for his art.

After the sale at Mathews and the showing of *Upland Cotton*, Homer was discussed in the context of a loan exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The paintings on view, both European and American, were borrowed from private collections. *Prisoners from the Front* appeared again, as did *Bright Side* and *A Fair Wind*.[21] While there was a dearth of commentary on the American canvases, *Prisoners from the Front* continued to be receive acclaim. Earl Shinn (as Edward Strahan) wrote: "Homer's 'Confederate Prisoners' is gaining in beauty year by year, and is richer in color, tone and air than any European out-of-doors group present."[22] Even Mariana Griswold van Rennselaer, who

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lately had been extremely critical of Homer, offered that with this picture the public could judge him by his very best, "which he has never excelled, and perhaps, never matched for strength combined with pictorial effect."[23] While Homer must have been pleased with the continued recognition of the 1866 canvas, he must also have been chilled to think that in fourteen years he was not considered to have matched its success.

The National Academy of Design Annual Exhibition in 1880 was Homer's most prominent venue of the year. While the show was thoroughly covered in newspapers and magazines, it no longer held the prominence it had in the past.[24] That the Academy exhibition was neither the only important nor the most interesting show of the year was noted by a number of critics. Comparisons of the Academy with the Society of American Artists, both as organizations and as representatives of opposite camps of American art, became more frequent. The *Independent* noted specifically that the Academy had been harmed by the success of other venues; it named the Society of American Artists as competition and said that the Watercolor Society and the Salmagundi Club shows were among the most interesting venues in town.[25] The Academy as an institution was seen as ineffectual in generating excitement, displaying the vitality of art, and suggesting a sense of progress, and the academicians were seen as failing as artists along with it. Brownell, now writing for the *Nation*, said the 1880 exhibition demonstrated this fact; he saw a show divided clearly into two camps—the academicians and the younger artists—with the younger artists offering the only hope of progress.[26] *Art Amateur* also suggested that the show was divided into two sectors, with each sector eliciting its own reaction. It wrote that the exhibition "though clogged with dead material, encloses a group of healthy and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

vital works where life still beats."[27] *Appleton's*, while noting that the Academy and the Society of American Artists represented hostile camps, suggested that an important symbiotic relationship existed between the two. It found a healthy representation of the current tendencies between the two groups, with the Academy generally exemplifying the conservative principles of the establishment and the Society of American Artists showcasing the most recent trends, and each illuminating the strengths (and pitfalls) of the different aspects of art. *Appleton's* critic credited the Academy for recognizing the necessity of beauty in art, while it commended the new men for showing careful study in their works and not displaying artificiality.[28] With the exception of contrasting the Academy and the Society of American Artists, and the older and younger generations, the writers found no intense issues generated by the 1880 Academy exhibition as there had been in the past. One thing, however, was clear: no matter how one felt about the older or younger artists, the art world had changed. As William Crary Brownell noted in his seminal article "The Younger Painters of America," by 1880 the younger artists were no longer a sensation. They were a generally accepted part of the fabric of American art.[29]

The 1880 Academy exhibition was deemed mediocre at best by most of the critics. Many agreed with Charles DeKay, who determined that, while great work was lacking, there was, at least, only a little that was ridiculous. While such a showing saved embarrassment, it allowed for no great admiration of American art.[30] George Hows, writing as "Strix" in the *Express*, was more generous with his praise. Not only did he appreciate the nonacademic and less conventional artistic expressions, but he saw cosmopolitan attitudes and strength of thought among the older as well as younger artists.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

He felt the academicians were "bestirred," and their blend of native enthusiasm with foreign technique spoke well for American art.[31] Hows recognized that the split between the native and cosmopolitan contingents was not always clean, and that a number of artists made use of the variety of artistic modes and attitudes available. Similarly enthusiastic as Hows and in contrast to DeKay, Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin philosophized about the exhibition and said the show indicated that American art was in a healthy state. His assessment was based on his belief, derived from the theories of Hippolyte Taine, that among the important duties of art was the interpretation of "certain national traits, and a school of art is genuinely original exactly in proportion as it expresses the emotional life and thought of a great people at important stages of its existence." Thus Benjamin felt it was unfair to compare American art with that of other nation's, and as representing the "outcome of native influences," the Academy exhibition was praiseworthy."[32]

Compromising the show for many critics was the absence of a number of key younger artists, especially the Munich-trained trio of Chase, Shirlaw, and Currier, as well as important older contributors, including Inness and Church. With the diminished representation of Society of American Artist members and no examples of Inness or Church to either laud or condemn, the field of competition had fewer extremes than in the recent past. The *Times* noted that it was easiest and most fruitful to discuss artists individually, and that was how most critics approached the show.[33] Certain canvases appeared at the top of nearly every critic's list, most notably Eastman Johnson's *Cranberry Pickers* (fig. 111) as well as George Fuller's *Quadroon Girl* (fig. 112) and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Portrait of a Boy (unlocated), Arthur Quartley's group of marines, and the tone-infused landscapes of Charles Miller and J. Francis Murphy.

Johnson's cranberrying image was nearly unanimously considered the best of the older artists' work, and it was the painting that received the most consistent praise. Even though there were disagreements about the cohesiveness of the composition and the merits of the figure groupings, the light and color were pronounced exquisite and were the elements that secured the picture's praise. That Johnson showcased light and color and used them as the primary vehicles to express outdoor nature gave rise to the comment that the distinguishing attribute of his success was that "he has been for so many long years a young man," even though he did not have the individuality of Homer.[34] William Brownell agreed, in a backhanded manner, that Johnson deserved his success. He considered *Cranberry Pickers* among the very best in the show, yet "Mr. Johnson's position in American genre-painting is relatively a high one; his success in avoiding the effects of many of his rivals has always been marked; he is neither sentimental nor sensational, nor stupid. Indeed, there are all sorts of things which he is not; what precisely he is it is rather difficult to discover, and accordingly it has been a popular custom for many years to enter judgment in his favor by default, as it were."[35] Johnson's canvas pictured, under glittering light and color, a sunny moment of everyday life on Nantucket. At the same time, the hand-harvesting image resonated with the memories of a simpler past.[36] It had elements that satisfied both those who needed the comfort of the older genre tradition and those who preferred accomplished technique influenced by European-inspired methods.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's other long-time peers, John George Brown and Enoch Wood Perry, also worked to adjust to the changing times. Both artists had recently traveled to Europe, and Perry, according to the *Times*, particularly had embraced French subjects as well as a desired polish.[37] Brownell, however, found such detailing neither clever nor elegant, only careful and therefore depressing in its excellence. What was lacking in Perry as well as in Johnson, according to Brownell, was a unity of thought and expression that could embrace both the beautiful and the real. [38] Brown's *Longshoremen's Noon* (fig. 113) elicited varied responses. While Charles DeKay found him a philistine, Brownell was pleased to see progress in Brown's shifting away from the sentimental and attempting to achieve a realism by "painting the thing."[39] By producing a canvas that was still tight but not as lapidary in finish, and by defining the feature of his figures through the articulation of light and shadow, Brown could receive credit from Brownell, who appreciated Brown's use of paint application and the lighting of surfaces to describe an object's external reality. Yet, as always, Brown most pleased the critics, like the writer for the *Commercial Advertiser*, who still favored the older academicians.[40]

The expression of external nature through dazzling light and color elicited the rave reviews for Johnson's canvas, while poetic sentiment and a tonal palette continued their rise in acceptance and praise. For these qualities, Fuller's *Quadroon Girl* received high marks for its combination of beauty and artistic harmony.[41] Among the more poetic canvases, Thomas Dewing's *Morning* (fig. 114) received the widest range of responses. Of those who were critical of it, George Hows, who preferred the dimensional modeling

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and higher finish of Paris-trained artists, could only name it a nightmare.[42] *Art Amateur* agreed, calling it "nonsensical, mannered taste that we hope will never be planted on this soil."[43] However, for those critics, including van Rennselaer, for whom color and formal arrangement were sufficient means of expression, the painting had grace and poetry and was especially pleasing in color and sense of atmosphere.[44]

To this selection of paintings, where tonal images replete with poetry and sentiment hung next to visual investigations of outdoor light and color, Homer sent *Sunday Morning in Virginia* (fig. 85), *Visit From the Old Mistress* (fig. 86), *Camp Fire* (fig. 88), and *Summer* (unlocated). The first two canvases, four and three years old, respectively, were well known and had been shown repeatedly. As with the exhibition of *Upland Cotton* at the Union League Club, the inclusion of these works may have been to encourage their sale. *Camp Fire*, although dated 1880, was also several years old, having been substantially painted in 1877.[45] *Summer* may have been the most recent painting of the group. These paintings did not bring Homer as much attention as usual. Only six periodicals earnestly commented on him, although he was mentioned in passing in some half dozen more.

There were likely many causes for this inattention. It was noted by some writers that *Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia* were so well known that they did not need further review.[46] Showing older paintings certainly contributed to the press' disregard of Homer, but their slight attention to him may have also been due to the fact that none of his offerings fit precisely into the unofficial divisions of the exhibition nor were they so striking as to command a category of their own as they had in the past. For

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

example, there was no obvious place for the consideration of him in the reviews of the *Sun* and the *American Architect and Building News*, which were so focused on the younger generation that their comments on older artists were reserved for condemning the very worst.[47] More surprising, perhaps, is the lack of notice by the *Commercial Advertiser*, which thoroughly discussed both the older and genre artists, and the *Tribune*, which in praising Eastman Johnson, J. G. Brown, and Thomas Anschutz, seemed to have willfully ignored Homer.[48] Johnson's *Cranberry Pickers*, a new work capturing attention through its light and color, eclipsed Homer's entries.

In the commentary that was devoted to Homer, it was the older canvases, *Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, that garnered much of the attention. When they had been shown at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1878, they had evoked interest because of their conveyance of Americanness. Now, two years later and on home turf, they were measured more against the requirement for poetic sentiment. *Appleton's* succinctly stated one road to artistic success: "Artists cannot flourish except by their hold on human sympathies and susceptibilities by their power to move their public's heart."[49] The sympathetic relationship between external nature and interior feelings was key to this power. Whereas in the past Homer's African-American subjects had been praised for telling forthright and unexaggerated narratives, the emotional content of their storytelling was now being assessed.

Judged by these new standards, Homer remained successful for his genuineness, truthfulness, and sympathy. Samuel Benjamin cogently recognized Homer's affinity with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

poetic sentiment and how he achieved it. Comparing him to George Fuller, Benjamin noted that while Homer and Fuller dealt with similar themes, Homer's focus and access to them were through external rather than Fuller's more suggestive avenues. Homer's particular and realistic depiction of narrative subjects opened the door to sentiment, which was further supported through his artistic treatment. In works like *Visit From the Old Mistress*, he found Homer "sometimes...strikes a minor key.... Homely as it is in subject, the row of slave women rising to receive the stately lady of the plantation are rendered with a subtle felicity of position and expression that invests this composition with unusual importance."[50] *Art Amateur*, though somewhat disappointed that Homer was exhibiting old work, also found them appealing for the power of the figures' dispositions. What struck the writer in *Visit From the Old Mistress* was "the contrast of lofty-toned Virginia respectability with the crushed, rudimentary nature of the slaves, defined in awkward gestures and a curious waiting and expectant pose of attitude, as if attending the dawn of civilization." He found a similar exposition through pose in *Sunday Morning in Virginia*: "[T]his abeyance of enlightenment is revealed again in the picture when the black girls in starched Sunday aprons sit in a rigid row waiting for the church-bell to summon them to worship, alongside of the centenarian negress whose whole attitude expresses a lifetime of waiting, and who reveals the history of a race in her look of patience and acceptance." He continued to explain that what made these images so compelling and descriptive of a time and place was the combination of a particular selection of external nature to represent internal realities:

> In all these negro pictures, Mr. Homer shows an involuntary depth of observation and philosophy, making his canvases so many authentic documents; he has occasional felicities of pose, a roll of the eyeball, a sweeping or animal-like

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> gesture, which define race distinctions as at a stroke, and constitute him the most valuable reporter we have ever had of the tropical manners implanted in our midst. The reason is, that he observed these manners with the enthusiasm of a historian and man of imagination.[51]

The issue of finish was never raised in the discussions of *Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia* as it had in their earlier showings. Completeness of expression had eclipsed the concern for surface finish.

The other writers who paid attention to these two canvases generally agreed with the *American Art Review* and *Art Amateur*. The combination of Homer's powers of observation and imagination placed him within the most modern camp of artists, who William Crary Brownell outlined as sweeping American artistic culture:

> In painting, as well as in literature, one of the changes, wrought by what is so widely known and perhaps so little understood as "modern realism," consists in stimulating the imagination instead of satisfying the sensibility. The main idea has ceased to be as obviously accentuated and its natural surroundings are given their natural place; there is less expression and more suggestion; the artist's effort is expended rather upon perfecting the ensemble, noting relations, taking in a larger circle; a complexity of moral elements has taken the place of the old simplicity whose multifariousness was almost wholly pictorial. This, at all events, seems the direction which the artistic tendency of the time has taken.[52]

Brownell especially appreciated Homer's African-American subjects. Noting that the theme had been too much neglected in American art, he found Homer's exploration of it "very real, very clear, and very sympathetic." As one who sought unity of thought and composition, he was particularly satisfied with how Homer's own artistic picturesqueness integrated remarkably well with the "almost aggressive picturesqueness of negro traits and aspect." Brownell found an exotic quality in the former slaves, which Homer's approach supported at the same time that it told the story of their plight.[53]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hows, in the *Express*, concurred with Brownell on the strength of character depicted in Homer's black women. He noted that, unlike most depictions of African Americans, Homer's were painted without exaggeration or caricature and were revealed as "genuine...each figure tells its story."[54] Now looking for substance of thought in painting, critics focused on the deeper story Homer suggested through his figural depictions. Hows and Brownell both noted an awkwardness in the white woman's presentation, which was described as shallow in characterization compared to the others.[55] Whether Homer intentionally made the old mistress more wooden in pose to support the content of the painting is unknown, but these two writers found her stance artistically compromising.

Charles DeKay, although he found much to like in the two paintings, played the devil's advocate in his remarks, suggesting that Homer did not go far enough in his artistic exposition of the subject. Similar to the way in which Clarence Cook formerly dogged Homer, DeKay alternately praised and damned the artist in a long consideration that took up most of his article. In his eyes, Homer fairly saved the exhibition: "Two or three pictures by Winslow Homer go far toward compensating for the ruck of indifferent and inane canvases that crowd every room." DeKay, who more and more sought a discernible American art through style as well as subject, championed the use of African-American subjects, even if only for "no higher art than genre painting." From Homer, however, he expected greater things:

> Mr. Homer is one of the few artists who have the boldness and originality to make something out of the negro for artistic purposes.... [However] he has merely ventured a little way, and if the results are remarkable, that cannot be fairly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> ascribed to the intrinsic richness of his out-turn, so much as to the apathy and ignorance of his brother artists.... The pictures of negresses here are of less extent of surface, but by no means less important [than *Cotton Pickers* and *Upland Cotton*].

In comparison to his peers, Homer ranked high, but in *Visit From the Old Mistress*, DeKay thought the formal presentation of the subject was wanting. He complained:

> There is nothing dramatic in the scene, unless the naturally awkward position of the former slaves may be supposed to indicate a sense of the change which has taken place in their condition since the war. The negresses are better figures than the mistress, since the latter shows uncertainty in the treatment of the face; she is neither glad nor contemptuous, nor kindly, nor, indeed, much of anything beyond a presentable old lady of refined appearance. Is it unreasonable to ask that a painter of Mr. Homer's ability should have made a little more of this interesting situation between former mistress and former chattels?[56]

There were no works in the exhibition DeKay truly acclaimed, but in his criticism of Homer and others, he held up the example of the drama of William Morris Hunt's emotional painting style as the one to strive for. The external path that Homer used to achieve an expression of internal feeling remained too close to narrative genre for DeKay.

Along with *Visit From the Old Mistress* and *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, DeKay also found "two more pictures here, which, as usual form little oases in the desert of mediocrity." The first was *Summer*, "a painting of a real and freckled country girl in an orchard. The shadows over her face are pleasantly managed, and the scene reminds one of the watercolors for which Mr. Homer received so much praise two years ago."[57] If the canvases picturing African-American women were serious in subject content, *Summer* seems to have concentrated on artistic concerns, especially the capturing of light and color in relation to a figure out of doors. Those who looked for substantial expression of thought ignored the picture. The few, like DeKay, who paid attention to the canvas, were

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

impressed with its depiction of the outdoors and especially its simplicity. Seeing the painting in progress in Homer's studio prior to the opening of the exhibition, the *Post* suggested it that it exemplified William Morris Hunt's dictum: "There's going to be painting that's perfectly simple—the simple expression of simple forms. To do this a man must be tremendously strong."[58] The difficulty in creating such an image was outlined by Samuel Benjamin, who thoroughly enjoyed the canvas:

> "Summer" is a capital example of the extreme naturalness which characterizes the out of door combinations of landscape and figure in which he excels. A young girl is seen descending a rapid slope. If one reflects a moment he shall realize that the action of such a figure must be very difficult to seize. But in Mr. Homer's picture this is so well represented that we actually see the motion. He reaches his effects with a simplicity and suppression of details that almost makes them seem like trickery.[59]

Like the best of the Houghton Farm watercolors, from which it seems to have been derived, *Summer* depicted a momentary impression of light, color, and action, which was achieved through paring down observations to essential elements. While Homer's interior images elsewhere in the exhibition were built upon character observation, *Summer* depended primarily, it seems, on the observation of nature. Together Homer's paintings at the 1880 Academy annual expressed a number of the popular artistic issues of the day.

It was just at this moment that Homer was quoted in the *Art Journal* about his attitudes towards painting outdoors. To achieve the naturalness of figure and landscape that Benjamin praised, Homer explained that painting outdoors was imperative in order to understand and express accurately the light that allowed for the representation of such images. With regard to *Camp Fire*, George Sheldon quoted the artist:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> "I prefer every time," he says, "a picture composed and painted out-doors.... This making studies and then taking them home to use them is only half right. You get the composition, but you lose the freshness; you miss the subtle and, to the artist, the finer characteristics of the scene itself.... Out-doors you have the sky overhead giving one light; then the reflected light from whatever reflects; then the direct light of the sun: so that, in the blending and suffusing of these several luminations, there is no such thing as a line to be seen anywhere."

Homer continued describing the difficulty of trying to do outdoor pictures indoors: "I shouldn't know where the colours came from nor how to reproduce them. I couldn't possibly do it."[60] Whereas this quotation has repeatedly been cited to prove that Homer replicated in paint exactly what he saw in nature, a careful reading of it reveals that his preoccupation was with studying and capturing effects of light and color out of doors, not with extracting singular scenes for duplication.

Camp Fire provides a good example of a logical interpretation of Homer's words. Sheldon explained that the main components of the scene existed and were painted outdoors. However, the large tree on the left, which was needed as an important balance in the overall design scheme, was not on the site. To provide for its accurate insertion in the setting, Sheldon noted that Homer "found it elsewhere, built a fire in front of it, observed the effect, and transferred it to the canvas." Sheldon rightly understood that "no painter in this country, probably, has a profounder respect for such outdoor work, a more lively apprehension of its value, or a sincerer and more serious aversion to manufactured and conventional studio-pictures."[61] Homer studied nature more closely than many other artists, and its usefulness for him was its possibilities for selection and imaginative application. *Camp Fire* was a study in the effects of a very particular kind of light—

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

firelight at night. For Sheldon, Homer's result was the epitome of truth, sincerity, honesty, and, as such, beauty.[62]

Charles De Kay wrote that *Camp Fire* was not only marvelously "natural" but also artistic, and the *Times* critic was favorably impressed by it:

> One of his bold flights is "Camp-fire"...a realistic view of a log and leaf hut in the woods before which two Adirondack guides have kindled a fire. The wall of darkness behind the fire is skillfully indicated, not a little of the skill depending on the way in which the boughs and briars lean forward and jut out into the light from the fire. Especially good is a flower on a briar to the left of the hut, which has been most admirably brought out. The two men are in very natural attitudes, although they have not been studied for beauty in the pose. What is most striking about the picture...is the treatment of the sparks from the camp-fire. With a boldness that emulates Japanese draughtsmen, (who sometimes make lightning running at acute angles to each other), Mr. Homer follows the airy trail of the sparks from his campfire, and gives at length and in full, against the dark background, what the eye only sees for a moment and in motion.[63]

While the subject lacked the seriousness of his African-American themes, Homer's depiction of this striking natural phenomenon gave DeKay the kind of drama he sought. Over the past three years, Homer had been increasingly concerned with the variety of ways in which light might be used as a vehicle of expression. While Homer's quotations in the *Art Journal* have often been employed as indicating his reliance on an 1860s-type of truth-to-nature that selects nothing or rejects nothing, these critics understood that Homer's desire to capture natural phenomena, although always based on the very concerted study of the actual outdoors, was always funneled through his sharp eyes and imagination, always selecting, rejecting, arranging, and changing what he saw to fit his aesthetic intentions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The crossroads Homer faced at this juncture in his career were exemplified in the four canvases he exhibited at the 1880 Academy annual exhibition. The variety of the images suggests that one challenge for him was how to reconcile what interested him with the plurality of aesthetic modes competing in the arena of the American art world. The African-American themes represented his commitment to a serious, contemplative American subject matter, a commitment that had been a central feature of his oil paintings since his first excursions into the medium. In them he interwove a constellation of elements that drew on both his roots in the mid-nineteenth century genre tradition of picturing daily life and his interest in the newer modes of poetic expression that explored the human condition. *Camp Fire* and *Summer*, as well as many recent watercolors, reflected Homer's increased interest in capturing natural phenomena in visual terms. Homer's task for himself seems to have been to find artistic solutions that would blend telling the story of American life, the investigation of fundamental issues and emotions, and the artistic expression of visual phenomenon and compelling design—in effect, how to balance the differing modalities of what is today called Tonalism and Impressionism.

By the spring of 1880, Homer seems to have known he needed to remove himself from New York to resolve these issues. At the end of March, he made it known he was leaving the Tenth Street Studio Building.[64] By mid-June, Gilbert Gaul had taken over Homer's former rooms.[65] While Homer's desire may have been to work in private, he did not entirely neglect the social aspect of his art-life. That Homer still cared about the Academy as an organization, despite its apparent lack of energy and power, is indicated by his attendance at its 1880 annual meeting in mid-May. His presence in the face of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

absence of many other important academicians was noted, making his attendance that much more noteworthy.[66] At the beginning of the summer season, Homer left for Gloucester, embarking on his second extended stay at the seaside town. His departure for Massachusetts caused his absence from a sketching trip on the Erie Canal attended by many of his friends. It was noted in the *Post* that Homer was especially missed on account of his known love of sketching outdoors.[67]

Homer lived an outdoors life at Gloucester. He chose to reside on Ten Pound Island, which, although in close vicinity to the mainland town, mandated that he row ashore for food and companionship.[68] While his isolation on an island has been used to indicate Homer's growing hermetic tendencies, it must be remembered that he desired to work in private, and his intention for the summer seems to have been to work. On Ten Pound Island, he could immerse himself in the light, color, and air that he indicated in the *Art Journal* article were central to his current artistic interests. The locale and climate, where the range of weather allowed for infinite possibilities of natural light and color, gave Homer a perfect spot to continue his visual investigations.

After his summer at Gloucester, Homer stopped at Boston and New York before he returned to Houghton Farm, spending most of September and October there. In both Boston and New York Homer's arrivals were noted, and the fruits of his summer's labor were declared to be a success.[69] Whereas Homer may have needed to sequester himself to accomplish his summer's work, he did not lose time in showing it as soon as he returned to the artistic community. The first formal showing of the work came at the November

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Century Club meeting, where he showed some forty-five new watercolors. They were described as "vigorously washed effects of various aspects of nature" in the *American Art Review*, and the *Post* said that they had "real artistic quality and fine originality of conception and execution."[70] These comments in passing were just the beginning of a floodtide of responses to these numerous new sheets.

Homer chose Boston as the venue for the first full-scale showing of his 1880 summer watercolors. For the month of December about 125 sheets were on view at the Doll and Richards Gallery. The New York press, understandably, little noticed the occasion, although one Gotham critic commented on the show and expressed regret that Homer had selected his native city rather than his adopted hometown for the showing. Having seen a preview of the works (presumably at the Century or possibly at Homer's current rooms), he noted: "From a technical point of view, without reference to the designs, these pictures are the most skillful ever produced by this artist, and as for the designs, these testify anew to the freshness and vigor of his intellectual methods. It is to be regretted that Mr. Homer is not to address himself to the larger audiences of the metropolis. New York would appreciate this collection of watercolors."[71] The *Times* was the only other paper to notice the Boston exhibition. It recognized the event through reprinting the review from the Boston *Advertiser*, which reported (and with which some editor of the *Times* may have agreed):

> These pictures...present many vivid reminiscences of nature, and some of them indicate new experiments,...shows some change from his usual choice...making way for a more purely landscape interest. There is not a single finished picture in it, but we are introduced instead to a view of the painter's frank and hasty impressions of striking effects. Some singular records of color in sky and sea just

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> after sunset, contrasting bloody red with decided ultramarine, purple or violet are among the least successful of the studies.... [W]e are led to believe that Mr. Homer has made a fatal error in trying to match exactly the pronounced hues of unusual effects. He thereby loses the graduated scale of art, which at best must remain relative and much lower than the scale of nature, and produces harsh and displeasing combinations.[72]

The contrast between the *Post* and *Advertiser* remarks introduces the debate the watercolors subsequently fostered when they were later shown in New York. To some, these sheets, most of which captured particular, transitory, and often spectacular natural occurrences, appeared to demonstrate superb skill, original thought, and fresh design, making them remarkable productions. Yet for others, who may have recognized them as truthful records of nature, they were not works of art. The succeesses and failures of Homer's 1880 watercolors were to be hotly argued in the reviews of the 1881 American Watercolor Society annual exhibition.

The 1881 watercolor exhibition was the largest yet, with some eight hundred entries. The show was distinguished not only by its size, but also by the facts that there was little foreign work and none in black and white.[73] The exhibition was reviewed by numerous publications, with twenty-two serials commenting on it. The great mass of the show, admitted the *Times*, made it hard to review in a cohesive way.[74] The large number of sheets presented such a wide variety of subjects and styles that most critics found things they liked as well as disliked. Earl Shinn described the range of offerings: "The drawings range from the old-fashioned highly-finished, carefully stippled anecdote pictures of earlier schools to the most daring 'impressionism' of Munich, Italy, and Spain."[75] Shinn,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in effect, described the alpha and omega of watercolor practice in America. Clarence Cook also noted the diversity of the watercolors, and saw in that diversity a significant gulf between old and new such as that found in English literature between Wordsworth and Keats, one in which there was little in common and the new sprang from sources other than home ones.[76] The wide variety in the sheets was matched by critics' opinions towards them.

Half the critics hailed the show as a real success, while the other half found it only vaguely satisfactory. *Art Interchange* had been prepared to be disappointed in the show, but on viewing it found much to like.[77] Most everyone continued to agree that variety and the disappearance of bodycolor were the most welcome aspects of the exhibition.[78] Central to and informing all these remarks was the reaction to Impressionism. The press now implied that the definition of Impressionism included the Spanish-Roman school influenced by Fortuny, the French school, and even Whistler, in addition to the Munich School and its chief practitioner, Currier. The *Tribune* not only recognized the multifarious influences that could be connected to Impressionism, but also found improvements over the first Munich examples. Cook gave credit to Munich, which had "opened the door," but, for him, the best works in the show exhibited the influences of Fortuny, Whistlerian, or French Impressionism.[79] For Cook and others, these contributions gave considerable hope for American art. In the examples of Robert Blum and William Merritt Chase, he found much that was "pleasant, healthy, and true" and "signs of growth, spirited searchings in fresh fields and many indications that people are coming to use their own eyes."[80]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Interwoven with the critics' reactions to Impressionism were their assessments of technical achievement and their attitudes towards the ends for which transparent color should be used. Critics also had differing beliefs about the proper uses of watercolor and oil. The reviewers for the *World* and the *Nation* especially applauded the transparency they saw, noting it as the key to successful watercolor art.[81] "Let it be remembered by all aquarellists that purity, brilliancy, and transparency are the great things in watercolor," opined the *World.*[82] The *Nation*, which clearly believed that watercolor had different uses than oil, noted that American artists were "learning how to deal with transparent color.... [T]he ideal watercolor is indeed the genius of technique."[83] The *Post* framed its positive reaction to the show in the context of the history of watercolor art in America, noting that its two enduring, positive characteristics—going directly to nature to record "original impressions" and using transparent color—reigned supreme in this show.[84] Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, writing for the *Atlantic*, felt similarly. Her specific reasons for approval here were that she saw "local life and local ideas" distinctly visible and that their expression came in "simple and direct ways that gave no opportunity for fault-finding."[85] These positive remarks shared an appreciation of transparency and directness and a desire to have nature suggested through simple but artistic expression, rather than through a mimetic recording of its outward physical appearance.

George Hows in the *Express*, though not totally opposed to the Impressionist aesthetic, was irritated by the blatant expressions of it. As a result, he declared the show a "great disappointment" due to the "vague and distorted theories" worked out on paper. He was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

most bothered by the artists' exclusive adoption of particular influences: "Trouble in the present art status is that some of the painters, while they feel art, make no special effort to understand it, but link themselves to one school or another, and by it stand or fall.... In no other professional branch is eclecticism more needed than in that of pictorial art." Hows encouraged American artists to look at all schools of art, including the German and French, and to extract and blend the best of each in the manner suggested by Matthew Arnold's theories. He criticized Americans who studied abroad simply to achieve surface perfection and imitation of the masters. Whatever the technique employed, he hoped to see it applied to home subjects.[86] Of all the critics, only the *Independent* shunned the Impressionist aesthetic completely.[87]

With so many sheets to survey, some reviewers resorted to brief descriptions of individual objects in a kind of grocery-list form.[88] While the younger artists garnered the lion's share of notice, the older artists were not ignored. Among the younger artists' work, Robert Blum's *Venetian Bead Stringers* (unlocated) was the most celebrated individual sheet. Of the more established artists, Thomas Waterman Wood, as president of the association, and Samuel Colman frequently captured the critics' attention. The reactions varied according to the critic's stance. In both cursory and in-depth reviews, Homer and Currier received the most consistent attention. Even so, a number of papers inexplicably ignored them, including the *Daily Graphic*, *World*, *Commercial Advertiser*, and *Mail*.[89]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A visitor to the watercolor exhibition, however, might have missed Homer's entries, even though they were, once again, numerous. Twenty-three of his sheets adorned the walls of the Academy, but a number of critics complained they were not easy to see.[90] The *Tribune* explained that the problem was not that the hanging committee intentionally placed Homer's works in remote areas, but that the pictures arrived so late they were hung where they could fit.[91] Their somewhat hidden placement did not prevent some writers from commenting on the ampleness of Homer's offerings, especially in light of the fact that he had been wholly absent the previous year.[92] Others suggested that such quantity displayed an unsavory immodesty.[93] The *Critic* was of the opinion that the small size of his sheets contributed to their being so many, that the small format compromised the work, and that the critics were to blame for it.[94] *The Critic* noted unhappily:

> The critics of the daily press have been mainly instrumental in these changes [painting on a smaller scale and using solely transparent color]. But with due deference to their opinion, we would suggest that they have gone too far in condemnation...of large pictures.... Too much following of the advice they give concerning the size of pictures leads a painter to do what Mr. Winslow Homer appears to have done—paint a score of small sketches for the most part ill, instead of concentrating his vigor upon half a dozen.[95]

Homer had heard such criticism before, but now the critical body could be called to task for encouraging such productions. The comment in the *Critic* further suggests that Homer was sensitive to and responded to critical remarks.

Homer's group of works was truly diverse, though threads of continuity appeared within the heterogeneity. The *Post* noted: "Mr. Winslow Homer appears in two aspects, one more conservative than usual, the other distinctly radical."[96] In subject, although they were primarily the result of his visit to Gloucester and vicinity (with a few of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Connecticut), they pictured interior genre scenes (*Winding the Clock* [unlocated]); solitary women at leisure, some on the beach and some in boats; boys on the shore and on the water; anchored boats in the harbor; and pure marine subjects. Within this variety of subject, a high percentage featured water not only as subject but as a crucial design element. Homer's marine focus dovetailed well with the growing popularity of marine art noted in the *Independent*:

> A few years ago nobody dared to paint the sea, except in a dead calm; and now we have the ocean in all its moods.... Is the ocean a better sitter for its portrait than of old; or are our painters better trained to catch its varying moods; or has the popular fancy turned in the way of marine views? We know that the ocean is the same; but art has grown to a higher capacity of expression and popular fancy is better educated, so the difficulties of marine painting are more fully appreciated. Artists paint better marine views, and they sell better; and that accounts for the number in this exhibition and in all recent exhibitions.[97]

The ocean (specifically Gloucester) was the subject of Homer's first extended experiments in watercolor, and now again, he explored it in a multitude of ways. Apart from subject, the watercolors varied in other aspects. Sunset images like *Gloucester Sunset* (fig. 115) covered entire sheets in watery washes of bold contrasting colors. Others, such as *Eastern Point Light* (fig. 116), were monochromatic. Some included the Gloucester waterfront as did *Gloucester Schooners and Sloop* (fig. 117). The sheets also varied in their use of graphite and in their use of high or low horizons. What is consistent in all these outdoor sheets is their interest in capturing prevailing light effects and a frequently repeated interplay between two and three dimensions, between the suggestion of depth of space and the compression of it. [98]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

When Edward Hale had seen the watercolors in Boston, he had remarked: "Winslow Homer has some wildly impressionistic pictures at Doll's...how queer and how unexpected."[99] When the pictures were seen in New York, the critics there were also surprised, resulting often in their concentrating on the most astonishing sheets. Responses varied from high regard to absolute horror. They reflected the individual critic's attitudes towards Impressionism and Frank Currier, but there was not a standard reaction to Homer even when a critic liked Impressionism or Currier. The relationships among the three were complex and perceived variously by individual critics. These last critical responses that Homer received before embarking for England gave him much to ponder as he considered his next campaign of work.

Three critics were unabashedly negative in their response to Homer's watercolors. The focus of their disapproval was his figural images, but two of the three did not like his seascapes any better. George Hows asked caustically: "'Something Good About This': The average spectator will be tempted to inquire, 'Where?' The picture represents an impossible woman, sitting on an equally impossible bank and looking out upon some equally impossible water, where some very chalky boats, with chalkier sails are to be seen. Remembering Mr. Homer's 'Prisoners from the Front' and 'The Sunny Side,' it seems almost impossible to believe he could have been guilty of this strange pictorial conundrum."[100] Hows continued in a subsequent article:

> Now we come to a curiosity which might lead the traveled spectator to believe that Mme. Tussaud's gallery has been dropped into the academy. It is entitiled 'Girl'...and the artist is Winslow Homer.... The inexperienced mind will be inclined to ask 'Is she?' Perhaps Mr. Homer intends the title to be generic. There is so much girl here that were it to arise from a sitting position...here would be a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> giant.... So long are the lower limbs of this peculiarity in black that were she to arise she would go clear out of the frame and pass through the muddy firmament Mr. Homer has painted above her. And to think there are no less than twenty-three similar caricatures by this artist in the present exhibition![101]

Hows' remarks revived the intermittent questioning of Homer's ability to depict the female figure in proper proportions. The critic preferred Thomas Waterman Wood's ability to picture the woman in *The Cup That Cheers*' (fig. 118) correct anatomy and expression of sentiment. Such a fault in Homer's figures, though visible in only a minority of the work, predisposed Hows to dislike any of Homer's other sheets; they were fairly lumped together in his mind. The awkward figure pieces and his general dislike of the preponderance of Impressionism in the show made him equally detest the sunset images. He noted:

> No. 578 by Winslow Homer is called in the catalogue 'Sunset.' It is well to be told what things are, for as Capt. Corcoran parenthetically puts it, 'things are seldom what they seem.' This curious combination of red and black certainly looks as little like a sunset as Roscoe Conkling resembles the Apollo Belvedere. But as Roscoe probably believes he resembles the latter, on the same hypothesis Mr. Homer may be led to believe that this scene-painter's frenzy looks like a sunset.[102]

In his comparison of Homer to Roscoe Conkling, the controversial and soon-to-be-deposed head of the Republican political machine in New York, Hows suggests not only that Homer was defrauding the public and headed down a very wrong path, but also that actual (and imperfect) reality needed an idealizing force to be true art.[103] Not surprisingly, Hows also found Currier's *Beech Tree* (private collection) "a sort of nightmare in color," which never existed in nature and which must have been the result of an hallucination.[104] In fact, according to Hows, Currier's landscapes, not Homer's, were the worst in the exhibition. They were "perhaps the crowning atrocity of impressionism...[with a]...wild

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

chaos of mud and bedraggled colors drawn across the paper as though the painter had dropped his palette upon it."[105] The soft, suggestive tones used by J. Francis Murphy were as close to the Impressionist aesthetic as Hows could appreciate. He found Murphy weird but poetic in his suggested impression of a place. George Smillie, in whose *Oaks Near Portland, Maine* (fig. 119) he found an eclecticism that mixed the vigor of Munich and the poetry and sentiment of the United States, was Hows' choice for the most successful landscapist.[106] He believed that delineating the facts of nature and a certain reliance on academic drawing were the foundations of art, and thus he condemned Homer for the aspects of his works—bad figure drawing and poor design and composition—for which, over the years, he had been criticized. Hows also added to Homer's faults the sin of not being true to nature, a rare criticism of the artist, but one which was raised in the discussions of the Impressionist aesthetic and Homer's more radical sheets on view in 1881. To add insult to injury, Hows, as so many had over the past dozen years, resurrected *Prisoners from the Front* as the last real expression of Homer's talent.

Charles DeKay of the *Times* treated Homer's figures with a harshness equal to Hows'. He, too, complained about the poor drawing:

> Mr. Winslow Homer does not shine this year with his figures.... [T]he sketches in which a certain young New England woman appears are seriously marred by the presence of that damsel. It is not so much that she is a very plain young person as that Mr. Homer has modeled her so ill. The girl reading is particularly poor and spiritless—weak in drawing, too, especially about the legs and feet. There is not the slightest indication that she has the ordinary human compliments of lower limbs. The Corridor has this young woman to show, sitting on a grassy hillock, against a background of foliage. In this case, she receives more kindly treatment as to her own person, and the scene is treated with Mr. Homer's old vigor, or with a flash of it. The "values" are good, and at the same time not commonplace.[107]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer's marines fared better with DeKay, who liked Impressionism and Currier. He appreciated the boldness of Homer's seascapes, and again noticed some of the artist's "old raciness and vigor" in them. While he did not expound on the qualities beyond noting a generic boldness that made these works compelling, it is worthwhile to note that this boldness was connected to aspects previously found in his work. Thus, he suggests that it was the core elements of strength and individuality inherent in Homer's many experiments that made the work interesting. DeKay acknowledged Homer's recognizable foundation on which his work was built, but he preferred Currier's "astounding breadth," saying that he supplanted Homer as the artist who had "not yet met expectations."[108]

Of all the papers covering the 1881 Watercolor Society annual, the *Telegram* paid the most attention to figure work. Generally unhappy with what he saw, the paper's writer complained that American artists failed to understand how to group or draw figures, contrast colors, manage light, and interpret textures. He suggested they study the Spanish-Roman school of Fortuny.[109] From this point of view, he found nothing redeeming in Homer's work. He complained about the figure images: "Mr. Winslow Homer, we regret to see, had an affected picture to which he has given the equally affected title of 'Girl.' It represents a young girl, very unattractively attired, seated amid some green paint, which is intended to suggest the idea of grass." The lack of the display of fashionable taste and material beauty, so prevalent in the Fortuny circle, made these works a failure for this writer. He was also disturbed by the landscapes, but for other reasons: "Again, what can Mr. Homer mean by contributing so tawdry and wretched a piece as 'Sunset?' This is not art. It is not even audacity; for when a painter, who can do excellent things, deliberately

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

chooses to represent himself by scratching in parallel lines of blue and red to tell the story of a sunset, his behavior is either stupid or culpably careless. It is a shame to see good power wasted like this."[110] Again, measured against his past endeavors, this new work was seen as a failure. Interestingly, this critic criticized the show in general for being too conventional. He lamented that the landscapes looked as if the artists never went out into nature, but stayed in their studios. He was "fatigued" by the repetitive gentle landscapes, which had a singular cast to them. However, he was attracted to the tonal palettes of Charles Dewey and Francis Silva as well as to Bruce Crane, whom he praised for his departure from ordinary treatment to capture, through dots of color to suggest flower blossoms, the essence of a spring day.[111] While this critic did not articulate his viewpoint directly, he intimated that imagination must be used when interpreting nature in order to evoke the poetic. He also implied that Homer's sunset watercolor was not grounded enough in physical reality. Thus, while acknowledging that Homer went to nature, he faulted him for what he did (or did not do) with it.

More gentle in their censure of Homer's contributions were S. G. W. Benjamin in the *American Art Review* and William Laffan of the *Sun*. Both writers expressed a sympathy for what the artist was trying to accomplish. Noticing only his most radical experiments, they seem to have understood that he was working through artistic problems, and that these sheets were the result of that process. Nonetheless, they found his contributions disappointing. Benjamin noted: "Mr. Winslow Homer has a number of coast scenes in this Exhibition, in that style which is peculiarly his own. It properly allies him with the impressionists, but impressionism in his hands is sometimes highly effective. This year,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

however, Mr. Homer seems less successful than usual: the ideas he has grappled with are poetic and artistic, but they have apparently overpowered him." By contrast he accepted Currier's work as "only splashes of color...spilled at random over the paper," which, if seen at a sufficient distance, "resolve themselves into a certain method that really suggests nature with considerable power."[112] While Currier's sheets like *Landscape* (fig. 120) may have been easier to read than Homer's *Sunset*, it seems that Benjamin held Homer and Currier to slightly different standards. While Currier's work had its limitations, it was acceptable for what it was. Benjamin expected something deeper from Homer, and he did not find it.

William Laffan, on the other hand, missed in Homer's 1880 sheets the marvelous expression of Americanness he had applauded in the 1878-79 watercolors, and his disillusionment went beyond the work to the man. He regretted:

> Mr. Winslow Homer has spent two or three years, perhaps more, in securing to himself the affectionate interest of every lover of the genuine out-of-door work of our American landscape painters. The breezy freshness and wholesomeness of his shepherdesses, his country lasses and his bright-eyed children of the fields and hillsides have made the deepest impression. Ensuing as they did after many years of different performance, and being distinctly natural, unaffected and original, they excited no little expectation of what was to come. This expectation Mr. Homer has gratified by retiring wholly within himself and refusing, from that grim and misanthroppical seclusion to afford any explanation. The contributions that he sends to this exhibition are almost as eccentric as those of Mr. Currier.... It is a disappointment, but he [Homer] is worth the waiting for.[113]

The new watercolors were disappointing for their radical difference from Homer's admired shepherdesses. Although he did not discuss Currier's work at length and his words for the Munich disciple were mainly spent on complaining how badly his entries were hung, Laffan did mention that he appreciated the chemicalization Currier and his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

peers were causing, and called his work "a tonic of great virtue." Yet the *Sun* critic reserved his real praise for Blum and Thomas Hovenden (fig. 121), finding in them both an artistic completeness, especially in effect and design, that displayed an imaginative approach.[114] However, he looked to Homer for an expansion of, or at least a reprise of his 1879 offerings, perhaps not necessarily of similar subjects, but genuine representations of the outdoors, expressed in originality, naturalness, and unaffectedness—all key aspects of Laffan's definition of Americanness. He also favored visual completeness, which Homer's sheets lacked in his eyes. Although Laffan was befuddled by both Homer's work and his behavior, he acknowledged that the artist's best work was the result of accumulated experience and, thus, he was willing to wait for his next set of endeavors. Homer's present offerings led Benjamin and Laffan, as had others, to muse on the artist's past and on his position as the representative for hope for the future of American art.

If Benjamin and Laffan were temperate in expressing their conflicted feelings about Homer's sheets in the exhibition and their expectations of him, Clarence Cook and Mariana van Rennselaer wrestled quite fervently and at length with the artist and his watercolors. Cook, as he had for more than two decades, developed his remarks out of his understanding of truth as an essential imperative for art. Such an approach served as the fulcrum for his discussion of both the show in general and of Homer in particular. For example, such a line of thinking allowed Cook to praise Thomas Waterman Wood for his careful study and appreciate him as an important survivor of the old school. It also brought him to condemn Samuel Colman's Venetian scene (fig. 122), for, despite its accomplished technique, it did not, in Cook's eyes, depict the Venice of memory or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

imagination to anyone familiar with the locale.[115] Cook further contended that the reason why Impressionism was flourishing had to do with the current demand that an artist paint things in which he was really interested and that he "paint the thing as he himself really sees it, and not as he has been taught to see it and to paint it."[116] Ignoring Currier, Cook used William Merritt Chase as a desirable model. While not liking his portrait study on view, Cook applauded the vitality that he usually found in his work due to its "truth of expression...attitude and gesture."[117] In Chase's work, truth and life were depicted primarily through the sitter's pose.

In his examination of this show, Cook's interest in truth took him directly to Homer, both to damn and to praise him, as had long been his practice. In his first review, he noticed that "Winslow Homer, from not exhibiting at all, has taken to exhibiting very odd things in which nothing of himself, as we know him, remains."[118] Cook had never adjusted easily to the first appearances of major shifts in Homer's work, and the great visual differences in these sheets sent Cook on a roller-coaster-like tirade that alternated between attacking and grudgingly complimenting the artist. Cook continued in a subsequent review to articulate his feelings about Homer:

> In fact it surprises to see how far a little truth will go, and how much can be accomplished by truth-telling, even by an artist of no very great capacity. We do not suppose it will be claimed by Mr. Winslow Homer that he is a man of great capacity. He seems to live, if we may judge by his works, in a narrow range of ideas, to have little to say. But he has gained an important position in our art world only by saying very little. He has always looked at things about him with his own eyes and told what he has seen in his own language, clearly and truthfully. [119]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cook's exasperation with the artist was harnessed by his recognition that truthfulness to his subject matter and to his own artistic vision was always discernible in Homer's images. His primary complaint in these general remarks, one shared by other critics, was that the truths that Homer presented were inconsequential and devoid of substantial meaning. Cook, ever the proponent of truth to nature, had to admit that Homer fully satisfied the call of truthfully rendering what he had seen. Yet Cook demanded that art also express significant ideas, and he did not find them in Homer's truthful depiction of moments in nature. Homer's work had truth, but it was not significant in meaning or feeling.

When Cook reviewed Homer's work at hand in the watercolor show, he first bluffed: "We say nothing about his pictures in the present exhibition. They are very disappointing, but then they are badly framed and worse hung, and we do not pretend to have seen them. Still, it is now some time since Mr. Homer did anything worthy of his early reputation, and we are not surprised to find this year repeating the disappointment of years lately gone by." Though Cook posed as if he had not studied the works, he knew enough of them to lodge his familiar complaint about Homer's not fulfilling expectations as he outlined the dilemma he felt in being confronted with Homer as an artist. Despite his frustrations, Cook reiterated his recognition of the power of Homer's truthful statements: "[E]ven the most trivial of the twenty-four drawings sent by Mr. Homer to the present exhibition has something in it that distinguishes it from the general run. Almost all these drawings are landscapes, and there is not one of them which does not illustrate Mr. Homer's loyalty to truth of observation, and his habit of saying what he has to say in his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

own language." Despite the success of Homer's truthful treatments, Cook wanted more: "Of course other elements must come in to make a good picture, even with such principles. There must be taste. There must be the 'pictorial' or 'picture-making' faculty, and in this Mr. Homer is notoriously deficient; when he hits upon a good subject, it seems by accident and out of twenty drawings there may not be three that deserve a place outside the collector's portfolio." Whereas, on the one hand, Cook had condemned Homer's truthful utterances as lightweight, he also reprimanded him for a lack of artistry in his designs. Cook chose the sheet in which Homer most closely revisited the earlier genre tradition as the example to condemn:

> Mr. Homer's principal drawing here, no. 74, "Winding the Clock" is an illustration of the want of taste we have complained of as well as of the want of the picture-making faculty. The girl is in difficulties...and even if it were a prettier face, why take a subject that obliges the owner of the drawing to look at something disagreeable, when nothing is to be gained by it! As for the want of picture-making faculty displayed in this drawing we suppose it hardly needs to be pointed out. An uncommonly tall girl standing on a chair beside a tall, old-fashioned eight-day clock, is a subject that would tax anybody's skill to make into a picture.[120]

Cook knew he was picking on an oddity among Homer's contributions, and he admitted: "A drawing like this is however an exception to Mr. Homer's practice. He is, or seems to us to be, strongly interested in effects of light, and in several of the landscapes here, there are evidences enough of his close study and his skill in recording his impressions.... And no doubt if these drawings were properly framed and hung where they could be seen...they would be found to repay a good deal of study. As it is the knowing ones have found them out, and bought them nearly all."[121] After such vacillating, Cook finally came to the works he had seemingly been avoiding: Homer's seascapes. As had been the case in the last dozen years, Cook declared that the inherent truth and handling of light that the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

most radical marine sheets conveyed were worthy of his approval. The seascapes best answered Cook's call for truthful observation in an individual artistic language.

Mariana Griswold van Rennselaer also struggled in her assessment of Homer. Her watercolor review was almost entirely focused on Currier and Homer. The dilemma for van Rennselaer was that she had to admit Homer's works were powerful and original, but she found them completely devoid of the pleasure that she felt viewing works of art must provide. She explained:

> In spite of the fact that I gave intellectual assent, so to speak, to the statement that Mr. Winslow Homer's drawings were this year perhaps the strongest things in the collection, they remained, as ever, repellent to my eye.... No effort could put me in sympathy with the artist's outlook upon nature, though it was evident at a glance that it was genuine and most decided. It was artistic, too, in its own way, else it could have never found expression in so consistent a form of artistic speech. But the longer I looked the more it seemed to me that Mr. Homer had traveled reality while neglecting all ideal charm. I could not see with the artist; I could not even see how the artist himself had seen. Yet each picture clamored for attention, and each left the same impression of intense conviction on Mr. Homer's part. All were tremendously strong—so strong, indeed, as I heard some one say as to be "artistic brutality."[122]

Van Rennselaer was torn between finding Homer's images visually and emotionally compelling and finding them completely opposed to her definition of art, which required a combination of truth and beauty. Intuitively, the works struck her as genuine, but she could not quite fathom the visual leap she thought he must have taken in them. She had difficulty connecting Homer's images to actual nature. Idealization was the missing element that both prevented access to the images and made them devoid of the requisite charm.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Van Rennselaer recognized that some of Homer's works were more radical than others. She discussed a sheet by Homer and one by Currier:

> Perhaps the most striking thing in the whole building was a large sunset sea-view, with a black sail against a black sky streaked with heavy crimson bars that was repeated in the black and crimson water below. It was powerful, diabolical, almost, in its effect; I could imagine how Mr. Homer might have seen something that to him looked thus. But of some of the other drawings, notably of one with a full moon shining over a black sea, I could not say so much.... There are some to whom he speaks most acceptably, while they find Mr. Currier "clever but hideous." To me Mr. Currier's work was delightful. I could find pleasure and excitement in the windy sweep of his skies and the splendor of his sunsets; but the glowering, inky tints of Mr. Homer and his inexplicable way of seeing things were, first as last, repellent.[123]

The comparison here to Currier is instructive. Both men were understood to be presenting impressions of nature.[124] Currier's nature was, however, comprehensible, benign, based on its charming aspects, and presented with lyricism. Describing *Sunset Fires* (fig. 123), van Rennselaer chastised Homer for presenting a viewpoint she did not understand, although she admired his suggestion of the intensity and awesome power of nature that appeared in certain sheets in visually beautiful phases.

Despite her reservations, van Rennselaer had now considerably revised her opinion of 1879, when she could not abide Homer's display at the Watercolor Society annual. In this very different set of sheets, which were antithetical to the charming shepherdesses, she could understand what Homer was trying to do and acknowledge the importance and strength of his expression of nature. At the end of the summer, the *Atlantic* printed van Rensselaer's final thoughts on the exhibition: "The three men who were most conspicuous for excellence were Messrs. Winslow Homer, Currier, and Blum. Mr. Homer's work is too well known to need detailed notice here. He was at his very best,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and when at that best must always be recognized as strong, and individual, and intensely local. Whether or no one personally likes his kind of strength and his sort of individuality is another matter."[125] Van Rensselaer's approval of the Gloucester marines increased over the next two years. The sunset image she had approached cautiously in 1881 was praised in 1883 for its boldly pared-down image and deeply keyed colors "insisting and emphasizing a theme which another artist would have already thought too pronounced and emphatic for artistic use. That he could do this and keep the balance of his work is a patent proof of his artistic power."[126] Van Rennselaer now understood the source of Homer's images, his vision, and that idealization was not always a necessary ingredient for art; thus, she could now find these sheets pictorial.

Despite reservations by a number of critics, Homer's 1880 watercolors did receive some whole-hearted praise. Interestingly, it came from quite various points along the critical spectrum with regard to Impressionism. The *Independent* could not tolerate Currier's art nor the art of those who ascribed to similar notions of Impressionism. However, it found the proper expression of it in the work of Homer. The writer explained:

> Those peculiar people called "impressionists," for want of a better name, are out in fuller force than last year, led by Frank Currier.... [His] "Old Beech Tree"...[is a] wild mixture of colors out of which beech trees might have evolved; but the colors look as if they had been mixed up separately, thrown onto the paper simultaneously and allowed to settle there as they pleased. The minds of the "impressionists" must be in a very bad condition, if Nature touches them as they here declare it does.... What the "impressionists" try to do and fail Winslow Homer and Henry Muhrman, and some half score of lesser men, try to do and succeed.... Winslow Homer is always true to himself; and in being true to himself, he is always true to art, since he has the truest instincts of an artist—a deep love of Nature and a clear vision to see her aright in her varying moods of expression.[127]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Several elements combined in this writer's mind to make Currier a failure and Homer a success. Evidence of careful observation was a critical component for art to this reviewer, who also liked the works of the more conservative artists such as Roswell M. Shurtleff (fig. 124) and Henry Farrer. Yet he did not require that evidence to manifest itself in detail, but through an individual—that is, personal—means of expression that conveyed that observation in a comprehensible way. Clarity of color was another requirement. Demanding purity of color was a corollary to the call for transparency of color, thus making Currier's mixing of tints as reprehensible as Homer's laying pure color side-by-side was acceptable. The *Independent* shared with other critics the praise of truth, and observed a sufficiency of subject and design that others like Cook had found lacking.

Scribner's also applauded Homer for his individuality of expression. In asserting that good art went beyond technical prowess, it announced that the all-important feature of a watercolor, as in an oil painting, was the artist's personal statement: "[W]hat tells is his own taste, his own sense of beauty, his own view of nature and power of presenting that view, his own intellectual force."[128] From this viewpoint, the reviewer was attracted to numerous works in various rooms that had:

> the air of being born from the same sketchbook. Direct, simple, crude, sometimes—never "pretty"—they caught the eye by an unmistakable look of nature. They were Mr. Winslow Homer's contributions,--virile, and frank, as everything that comes from this artist is.... Such drawings as these are a judgment upon the easily discerned tendencies of some other artists—toward the sentimental, the gorgeous and the inanely pretty. There is strength and beauty in Mr. Currier's drawings; but putting aside any discussion of ultra-impressional tendencies, this present showing strikes one as monotonous, and too much sought out in its prodigality of pigments; in other words, if Mr. Currier should continue long in this line, his sincerity might be doubted.[129]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

With yet another critic, Homer's honesty and marvelous ability to capture nature without artifice was admired again.

Coming from different perspectives than those of the *Independent* and *Scribner's* were the favorable opinions of Homer's watercolors held by William Crary Brownell and Earl Shinn. While there were variations in their emphases, these two men represented the leading edge in art criticism, and their reasons for commending Homer's offerings outlined future trends in American art. Homer's watercolors were, for Brownell, the only reason to visit the exhibition. While he was pleased with the indications of progress in the show, he found that the majority of works fell short due to their "essential aimlessness" in the use of the medium. His position was embedded in his belief that the capabilities of watercolor and oil were very different. What he looked for in watercolor was "a quick impression, a really genuine effect," but its appearance was "as rare as the memorandum-like treatment which a true water-color subject demands."[130] Brownell said that Blum, though somewhat too imitative of the Fortuny school, achieved this quality enough to be called "clever," which Brownell also noted was an essential ingredient for watercolor painting. Currier, too, was clever, but he was also "ugly" and his works were unchanged from last year's.[131] For Brownell, it was Homer who accomplished the capturing of impressions perfectly:

> [I]n twenty-three contributions, which make the strength of the exhibition, Mr. Winslow Homer goes as far as any one has ever done in demonstrating the value of water-colors as a serious means of expressing dignified artistic impressions, and does it wholly in his own way.... They are almost altogether marine sketches—memoranda, reminiscences, what not; row-boats, catboats, schooners, lying lazily upon or scudding through the rarely-troubled waters along the southern New England coast. In each some transient landscape effect is distinctly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the object of the drawing.... [They] show a remarkable evenness of interest and variety of scheme and effect.[132]

In subject and execution, Homer fulfilled Brownell's dictum that watercolor capture the momentary in a personal and pictorial manner. In contradistinction to Cook's requirement that all art, including that created in the medium of watercolor, express large ideas, Brownell said that perfectly picturing the small effect was not narrow or limiting but could be considered dignified and serious. Currier, for Brownell, had only the veneer of truth in his memoranda rather than the deep-seated honesty he found in Homer.

There was one aspect of Homer's sheets, however, which created some ambivalence on Brownell's part. He observed:

> If we were to suggest blemishes we should say that, as a rule, the defect of their treatment consisted in the sturdy disregard of elegance, characteristic of the robust genius of the artist. But this is plainly hazardous. How much of Mr. Homer's strong individuality is due to this very neglect of elegance may be a question with those who are not careful to avoid conventions absolutely and recognize that Mr. Homer's qualities are nothing if not positive. Taken together, the drawings emphasize the fact, already perhaps sufficiently acknowledged, that, notwithstanding his considerable performance it is what he will do hereafter, rather than what he has hitherto done, that one thinks of in connection with Mr. Homer's work."[133]

Brownell raised again, as he had in 1877, the likelihood of Homer's intentionally rejecting current standards of beauty and the place of beauty in art. Brownell shared with Cook and van Rennselaer a reservation about the tastefulness of Homer's watercolors, but Brownell was more forgiving than his peers because he accepted Homer's overall vision. While Brownell realized that lack of elegance gave Homer's work much of its strength and originality, its absence, nonetheless, bothered him, and he seems to have wondered how this shortcoming might be reconciled without compromising the strength of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

work. Such questioning, as it had for Cook, Laffan, and Benjamin, led Brownell to look ahead to what might come next in Homer's oeuvre. In the meantime, Brownell, in accepting the depiction of momentary atmospheric effects as proper for exhibitable works of art, remained one of America's most forward-thinking critics and one of the greatest champions of Homer's watercolors.

Earl Shinn shared with Brownell the status of vanguard critic. Different from his colleague at the *Nation*, however, Shinn greatly appreciated the examples of both Currier and Homer, and his review in *Art Amateur* was one of the few to compare the two men carefully. He began with Currier, and then discussed Homer in direct relation to the Munich resident. He began:

> The enigmatic pictures by Currier form the key-note of audacity for the whole exhibition, for good or ill.... By expressing the full passion and delight of a color impression derived straight from Nature, with no time allowed for the cooling off of the sentiment into definition and calculation, these drawings, warm and loyal as strains of music, tell their story as musical notes do, in vibrations and sympathies, not in words and outlines.... [They] are rather understood than expressed;...might mean almost anything; which might be hung sideways or inverted..., and which whether taken for what it is or for a rock study or a sea study would still carry the same kind of decorative beauty of gray tenderness, making its softness emphatic in the midst of loud assertion.... The whole fluttering covey of sheets from Mr. Currier's revolutionary studio is well worth having. The rudest of them forms a splendid decorative example...but it must be objected to Mr. Currier and his kind that Nature has nicety of drawing too, which she includes within her color-effects without torment but with perfect serenity; and that art is not perfectly equipped until she can show these luxuries of color on a basis of well-considered, easy, practised, scholarly design.[134]

Shinn's acceptance of color as a valid vehicle of expression in and of itself, due to its emotive quality akin to that found in music, is an early articulation of what in the later 1880s would develop into Symbolism and eventually would lead Kandinsky to color

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

abstractions. Shinn's viewpoint allowed him, in a way not available to Brownell who yet required something recognizable in pictures, to imagine appreciating Currier's sheets regardless of their directional orientation. Shinn came very close to saying that identifiable subject matter could be extraneous if a beautiful, decorative, and poetic expression of nature could yet be regarded in a painting. Nonetheless, his admiration for Currier had a caveat: he faulted him for not making drawing the foundation of his art's design.

After his remarks on Currier, Shinn turned directly to Homer:

> As luck would have it, Mr. Winslow Homer was ready, in New York, to cap verses with Mr. Currier in Munich, having spent much of the last season in preparing a set of pure impressions, many of them made by imperfect light after sunset, and largely in the nature of guesses, but invaluable for sincerity and directness.... One of them...—a sky banded with twilight and interrupted by square gray ghost-like sails, while underneath, the water, strongly rippled with tide, catches the fiery light of an opening in the sunset, and flutters with quick flames of fire amid network and ribbons of reflected darkness. A larger one by Homer in the corridor repeats this motive of quickly moving water, sails, and fiery sky: the whole breadth of the running tide is interlaced and lashed with snaky lines of blackness alternating with strong color, conveying in marvelous degree the feeling of luminous moving water tortured with whips of advancing night.[135]

Homer fared even better than Currier in Shinn's eyes, because the pervading spirit of his image was expressed not only by color but by line, the articulation of light, and especially through overall design. In the works Shinn describes, Homer had depicted an impression of nature that rang true and complete. It was truth that had been at the core of Homer's acceptance and that had elicited the highest praise for his art since the beginning of his career. The acceptable means for its expression now had multiple forms, and critics with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as various viewpoints as Earl Shinn and the writer for the *Independent* could find truth in this work.

Homer must have found the 1881 watercolor reviews interesting and instructive. A number of critics, even if they did not ultimately find the marines acceptable as art, recognized that true natural phenomena were being portrayed and that this was what gave the images their power. The truth in these sheets came from Homer's ability to picture the color, light, atmosphere, and action of the sea in terms of visual and sensory experience. Thus, his work was most successful to those critics, like Shinn, who accepted the suggestion of unadulterated visual reality through color, light, and line as viable artistic expression. By contrast, Currier's sheets were grounded not in the depiction of visual experience, but in the evocation of the human response to landscape. The reactions to Homer's and Currier's newest experiments in watercolors outlined the multiplicity of attitudes that were functioning in the critical body, especially towards landscape. They were the signs of the realignment in art that would become the split between Tonalism and Impressionism in the 1890s, but both aesthetics were in their very early stages of definition with the former centered on poetic feeling and the latter on the physical world. Color and light were critical elements of each artistic mode, and their reflection of the transient and temporal informed their connection to the soul or external reality, respectively.

As Homer encountered the clashing reactions to his newest watercolors, he likely had already chosen to travel to England. His choice coincided with an increased surge of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American interest in British art, which started after the Centennial Exposition. In the spring and early summer of 1880, the *Times* featured a number of articles on English art and published a series on art in London.[136] Reviews of new British art publications appeared as well. [137] In the *Independent*, William C. Ward authored several articles on contemporary English art, including the disciples of the Pre-Raphaelites and the exhibitions at the Royal Academy and the Grovesnor Gallery.[138] The American presence in London was also significant and so noted in the press. Among the Americans showing in London at this time were George Boughton, William Hennessey, Jervis McEntee, J. G. Brown, and Arthur Parton.[139] In addition, Edwin Austin Abbey had been in residence there since 1878, and William Trost Richards had lived on the coast of England from August 1878 to September of 1880.[140] It is also to be remembered that British watercolor had been and still was held in the highest esteem, and that Turner's watercolors were yet held up as the standard to be met.[141] *Scribner's*, for example, used the occasion of watercolor exhibitions in London as a platform to praise the thought, technique, and ideals of British aquarelles, and to point out how such creativity and accomplishment in the watery medium was not yet in evidence in America.[142] Concurrent with such reports on the British art scene were notices like one in the *Mail*, which found it newsworthy to mention: "Twenty artists are expected to sail for Europe from New York in the month of June."[143] Thus, it was logical that Homer might turn his thoughts to Europe and specifically to England, where many of his artist-friends had connections and where watercolor was held in the highest regard, as he sought a meaningful and useful locale to work out his next artistic step. However, as always, Homer pursued an independent path, selecting not London, but the more remote Cullercoats as that locale.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Homer relentlessly pursued his own personal artistic journey in the 1870s, but to the end he never divorced himself entirely from the art world. The last published notices of Homer at the time of his sailing abroad were of his serving on a committee of artists giving a reception for Frederick Bridgman prior to his return to Europe.[144] While it is unlikely that Homer did more than lend his name to this cause, his helping to celebrate one of the fastest rising new men was a symbolic gesture. Even as he was on the way to a period of physical isolation, he remained engaged with the contemporary American art world.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to Chapter 6

[1] For example, in January Homer exhibited *The Shepherdess* at the Century. NGA 1995, p. 409. A picture called *On the Beach*, possibly the Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, painting, was offered at Mathews as well. "Book and Art Sales," *Post*, 14 January 1880, p. 3.

[2] "Fine Arts," *Post*, 26 January 1880, p. 2.

[3] "Brush and Pencil," *Tribune*, 26 January 1880, p. 5.

[4] "The Union League Club," *Post*, 9 January 1880, p. 2; "Fine Arts. Pictures at the Union League," *Herald*, 9 January 1880, p. 2; and "Fine Arts. Art Reception at the Union League," *Mail*, 9 January 1880, p. 4.

[5] For example, he attended Tile Club dinner at Chase's studio to honor the publishers of the *Atlantic. Post*, 26 January 1880, p. 4.

[6] "The Water-Color Exhibition," *World*, 7 February 1880, p. 4.

[7] "Fine Arts. Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society – Fourth Article," *Herald*, 16 February 1880, p. 8. For similar remarks, see also M. G. van Rensselaer, "The Water-Color Exhibition, New York," *American Architect and Building News* 7 (28 February 1880), pp. 80-82.

[8] "The Water-Colors Again. A Wonderful Catalogue," *Times*, 1 February 1880, p. 2.

[9] "The Water-Colors," *Scribner's* 20 (June 1880), p. 313.

[10] "Fine Arts," *Post*, 3 March 1880, p. 2.

[11] That the American girl was a distinctive type is corroborated in an article titled "The American Girl," by William Crary Brownell, who, though discussing her in the context of the American novel, defines the American girl as the *Post* and Homer did. Among her most distinctive qualities, according to Brownell, was that she was the product of personal independence and education, "two of the things we prize most." Self-consciousness was also one of her attributes, as was good sense and integrity. See [William Crary Brownell], "The American Girl," *Nation* 30 (8 April 1880), pp. 265-66. Brownell is identified as the author of the article in Haskell, *The Nation*, p. 61.

[12] The notion of the artist as individual maker or "genius" surfacing here would be expanded in the 1880s and 1890s to be the distinguishing mark of an artist at the turn of the century. Docherty, "A Search for Identity," p. 66

[13] "Water-Colors by Winslow Homer," *World*, 4 March 1880, p. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid. Exactly which image of a girl swinging was shown is unknown since there are a number of similar works. Abigail Gerdts to the author, December 9, 1998.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] "Art In The Cities," *Art Journal* (May 1880), p. 159. It is interesting to note that the *Art Journal* named the sale a success since it resulted in just a little more than $10 a picture. The sale results were also reported in "Winslow Homer's Water-Colors," *Times*, 5 March 1880, p. 8, and "Exhibitions and Sales," *American Art Review* 1 (1880), p. 269.

[19] "The Union League Club," *Times*, 12 March 1880, p. 5.

[20] *Times*, 30 March 1879, p. 6. While the differences between the first and second reviews may reflect a change of opinion, this discrepancy of responses in the same paper may be due to the fact that they belong to two different writers.

[21] "Fine Arts. Metropolitan Museum of Art – Some of the Pictures for the Loan Collection – Details of the Approaching Opening," *Herald*, 23 March 1880, p. 13, and "New York's Art Museum," *Herald*, 29 March 1880, p. 3.

[22] Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], "The Art Gallery. The Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Art Amateur* 2 (May 1880), p. 116.

[23] [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer], "The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Loan Collections. I," *American Architect and Building News* 8 (17 July 1880), p. 27.

[24] In the newspapers, especially, there were fewer extended series of reviews. Most papers had one or two reviews of the show. Only the *Express* and *Herald* published extensive reviews; they each printed seven installments. One must also take into account the fact that this year political conventions took place in early June, and thus, as the run of the Academy show continued, political writing took up more and more of the papers' columns. At the same time the power of art writing in magazines was rising, due not only to the greater number of art magazines but also to the fact that the most sophisticated critics wrote more often for magazines. The most obvious example of this was William Crary Brownell's departure from the staff of the *World* in 1879 to write primarily for magazines, especially the *Nation*. See Appendix.

[25] "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition," *Independent*, 8 April 1880, p. 6.

[26] [William Crary Brownell], "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design – Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition – I," *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880), p. 295. Similar feelings were

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

expressed in the "National Academy of Design. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition," Tribune, 27 March 1880, p. 5, and M. G. van Rensselaer, "Spring Exhibition and Picture Sales In New York. I," *American Architect and Building News* 7 (1 May 1880), p. 190.

[27] "Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Art Amateur* 2 (May 1880), p. 112.

[28] "Editor's Table. The Spring Exhibition," *Appleton's* 8 (May 1880), pp. 471-72.

[29] William Crary Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America. First Paper," *Scribner's* 20 (May 1880), p. 3

[30] "The Academy Exhibition. The Press View of the Spring Collection," *Times*, 27 March 1880, p. 5. Among those who concurred was "The National Academy," *Sun*, 28 March 1880, p. 5, which pronounced the showing "dull." Along the same lines, see "Fine Arts. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design – Private View – First Article," *Herald*, 27 March 1880, p. 5; "Art At The Academy. Private View of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition," *Telegram*, 27 March 1880, p. 2; "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design," *Mail*, 27 March 1880, p. 1; and "National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Art Interchange* 8 (14 April 1880), p. 63.

[31] Strix [George Hows], "Our Feuilleton. Thirty Minutes at the Academy," *Express*, 27 March 1880, p. 1, and Strix [George Hows], "Our Feuilleton. The Academy Exhibition. First Article," *Express*, 3 April 1880, p. 1. The *Commercial Advertiser* also found the show of greater quality than in years past, applauding the more conservative artists as was its habit, but also now more accepting of French influence, especially for the use of color. "National Academy of Design. Private Press View of the Spring Collection," *Commercial Advertiser*, 27 March 1880, p. 1.

[32] S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions. V – National Academy of Design. Fifty-Fifth Exhibition. First Notice," *American Art Review* 1 (May 1880), p. 307.

[33] *Times*, 27 March 1880, p. 5.

[34] Strahan, *Art Amateur* 2 (May 1880), p. 112. Similar sentiments were expressed in Benjamin, *American Art Review* 1 (May 1880), p. 309; Strix [George Hows], "Our Feuilleton. The Academy Exhibition. Fourth Article," *Express*, 8 May 1880, p. 1; *Telegram*, 27 March 1880, p. 2; and *Herald*, 27 March 1880, p. 5.

[35] Brownell noted that Johnson, as a member of the older generation, must be recognized in contrast to someone like Bierstadt, whose errors in art were much graver than Johnson's, and whose work "recalls a vogue once very great, but now becomes little more than a memory." [William Crary Brownell], *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880), p. 296.

[36] Sarah Burns has made this point with other harvesting images. Burns, *Pastoral Inventions*, pp. 36-38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[37] *Times*, 27 March 1880, p. 5.

[38] *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880), pp. 295-96.

[39] *Times*, 27 March 1880, p. 5, and *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880), p. 295.

[40] *Commercial Advertiser*, 27 March 1880, p. 1.

[41] Benjamin, *American Art Review* 1 (May 1880), p. 308; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions. V—National Academy of Design. Fifty-Fifth Exhibition. Second Notice," *American Art Review* 1(June 1880), p. 348; "The New York Spring Exhibitions. The National Academy Exhibition," *Art Journal* 6 (May 1880), p. 153; Strix [George Hows], "Our Feuilleton. The Academy Exhibition. Concluding Article," *Express*, 15 May 1880, p. 1; and Brownell, *Scribner's* 20 (May 1880), p. 15.

[42] Strix, *Express*, 8 May 1880, p. 1.

[43] "The National Academy Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 2 (June 1880), p. 2.

[44] "Fine Arts. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy – Opening Reception – Second Notice," *Herald*, 30 March 1880, p. 12; and M. G. van Rensselaer, "Spring Exhibitions and Pictures – Sales in New York. II," *American Architect and Building News* 7 (8 May 1880), p. 202.

[45] *Camp Fire* was noted in the press as if a completed or nearly completed work in "Fine Arts. Studio Jottings," *Herald*, 1 October 1877, p. 5, and "Reopening the Studios. New Pictures," *Tribune*, 13 October 1877, p. 2. See Chapter 5.

[46] See, for example, *Mail*, 27 March 1880, p. 1, and "Fine Arts. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design–Fifth Notice," *Herald*, 27 April 1880, p. 6.

[47] *Sun*, 28 March 1880, p. 5; van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 7 (1 May 1880), pp. 190-91; and van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 7 (8 May 1880), pp. 201-2.

[48] *Commercial* Advertiser, 27 March 1880, p. 1; Tribune, 27 March 1880, p. 5; and "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition. Second Article," *Tribune*, 4 April 1880, p. 7.

[49] *Appleton's* 8 (May 1880), p. 471.

[50] Benjamin, *American Art Review* 1 (May 1880), pp. 308-9.

[51] *Art Amateur* 2 (May 1880), p. 112.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[52] William Crary Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America. Second Paper," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* 20 (July 1880), pp. 321-35.

[53] [Brownell], *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880), p. 295.

[54] Strix [George Hows], "Our Feuilleton. The Academy Exhibition. Third Article," *Express*, 24 April 1880, p. 1.

[55] Ibid., and [Brownell], *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880), p. 295.

[56] "Artists And Their Work. Pictures in the Academy," *Times*, 9 April 1880, p. 5.

[57] Ibid.

[58] *Post*, 26 January 1880, p. 2.

[59] Benjamin, *American Art Review* 1 (May 1880), p. 309.

[60] G. W. S. [George William Sheldon], "Sketches and Studies. II. From the Portfolios of A. H. Thayer, William M. Chase, Winslow Homer, and Peter Moran," *Art Journal* 6 (April 1880), pp. 107.

[61] Ibid., pp. 108-9.

[62] Ibid.

[63]*Times*, 9 April 1880, p. 5.

[64] "Winslow Homer designs relinquishing his studio at a date not far distant, and continuing his work in private," reported *Andrew's American Queen* on March 20, 1880. Quoted in NGA 1995, p. 395.

[65] "Artist's Calendar," *Post*, 15 June 1880, p. 2.

[66] "Fine Arts. Annual Meeting of the National Academy of Design," *Herald*, 13 May 1880, p. 4.

[67] Among the members of the party were Maitland Armstrong, J. G. Brown, Alfred Bricher, Jasper Cropsey, Seymour Guy, Eastman Johnson, Daniel Huntington, Thomas Hicks, Powell Platt Ryder, Henry Loop, and George McCord. It was also noted that the trip was sponsored by the Artists Fund Society. "The Artist's Canal Trip," *Post*, 19 June 1880, p. 4.

[68] Eastman Chase, "Some Recollections of Winslow Homer," *Harper's Weekly* 54 (22 October 1910), p. 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[69] "Fine Arts. New Pictures in the Dealer's Galleries," *Herald*, 6 September 1880, p. 6, and Greta, "Boston Correspondence," *Art Amateur* 2 (October 1880), p. 95.

[70] "Exhibitions and Sales," *American Art Review* 2 (December 1880), p. 84, and "Fine Arts," *Post*, 11 November 1880, p. 2.

[71] "Fine Arts," *Post*, 4 November 1880, p. 3.

[72] "Artists And Their Work," *Times*, 13 December 1880, p. 2. Homer's indignation about the cutting words from Boston was suggested in the *Art Interchange*'s last issue of the year. Commenting on Homer's drawing *Bossy*, the writer condemned the image's design and he reprimanded Homer for recent behavior. The writer snipped: "[H]e is 'posé' in the extreme, and affects eccentricities of manner that border upon gross rudeness. To visit him in his studio, is literally bearding a lion in his den; for Mr. Homer's strength as an artist is only equaled by his roughness when he does not happen to be just in the humor of being approached." "The Studio. Art Interchange Artists," *Art Interchange* 5 (22 December 1880), p. 130.

[73] The exclusion of work in black-and-white was a result of the success of the Salmagundi Black-and-White exhibitions, which had begun in 1879.

[74] "Among the Water-Colors. Notable Pictures in the Current Exhibition," *Times,* 14 February 1881, p. 5.

[75] Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], "Exhibition of the American Water-Color Society," *Art Amateur* 4 (February 1881), p. 48.

[76] "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition," *Tribune*, 22 January 1881, p. 5.

[77] "Water-Colors at the Academy," *Art Interchange* 6 (3 February 1881), p. 25.

[78] "Fine Arts. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society–Private View Last Evening–First Notice of the Collection," *Herald*, 22 January 1881, p. 7; "Art Notes. The American Water-Color Society," *Art Journal* 7 (March 1881), p. 95; and "The American Water-Color Society," *Sun*, 23 January 1881, p. 3.

[79] *Tribune*, 22 January 1881, p. 5.

[80] Ibid.

[81] While it is known that William Crary Brownell was writing for the *Nation* at this time, it is not known whether he continued in any capacity at the *World* after his relinquishing his art critic's position in 1879. See Chapter 1.

[82] "The Water-Color Exhibition," *World*, 4 February 1881, p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[83] "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition," *Nation* 32 (3 February 1881), pp. 80-81. *Scribner's* stated an opposing position. It felt, once the technical challenges of watercolor had been overcome, the essential interests of the artist were the same as in oil. "Culture and Progress. Winter Picture Exhibitions," *Scribner's* 21 (April 1881), p. 955.

[84] "The Water Color Exhibition," *Post*, 22 January 1881, p. 6.

[85] M. G. van Rensselaer, "The New York Art Season," *Atlantic* 48 (August 1881), p. 193.

[86] G. W. H. [George W. Hows], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Third Article," *Express*, 2 February 1881, p. 3.

[87] "Fine Arts. The American Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Exhibition," *Independent*, 3 February 1881, p. 8.

[88] This was true of the series of reviews in the *Mail* and the *Herald.*

[89] See, for example, *World*, 4 February 1881, p. 4; "Water-Color Exhibition," *World*, 13 February 1881, p. 4; "The Water Color Exhibition. A Brilliant Display by the American Society of Painters," *Daily Graphic*, 26 January 1881, p. 637; and "Art Notes. The Great Success of the American Society of Water Colors," *Commercial Advertiser*, 24 January 1881, p. 1.

[90] They were: *Eastern Point Light* (Princeton University Art Museum); *Gloucester, Mass.; Winding the Clock; Something Good About This!; Girl Reading; Clover; Girl; Sunset* (*Sunset Fires;* Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, Pennsylvania)*; Coasters at Anchor; July Morning; Gloucester Boys; A Lively Time; On the Housatonic River; Early Morning; Sunset; Schooners at Anchor; Ozone; Field Point, Greenwich, Conn.; Three Boys; The Yacht Hope; Fishing Boats at Anchor;* and two simply called *Water Color.* The exact identity of many of these Gloucester watercolors is difficult due to their generic titles. On their placement, see, for example, *Sun*, 23 January 1881, p. 3, and "Fine Arts. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society – Sixth and Concluding Notice," *Herald*, 21 February 1881, p. 6.

[91] "Fine Arts. American Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition. Second Article," *Tribune*, 29 January 1881, p. 6.

[92] See, for example, *Sun*, 23 January 1881, p. 3, and "The Water-Color Society. Art and Artists in the Present Exhibition," *Times*, 6 February 1881, p. 5.

[93] "Fine Arts. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society–Third Notice," *Herald*, 31 January 1881, p. 6, and G. W. H. [George W. Hows], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Fourth Article," *Express*, 8 February 1881, p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[94] Of the ones identified today, we know that the sizes of the sheets varied from 8 x 12 inches to 13 x 19 inches. Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," pp. 66-67, outlined how the press encouraged artists to create watercolors that were modest in scale.

[95] "The Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition (Second Notice)," *Critic* 1 (12 February 1881), p. 39.

[96] *Post*, 22 January 1881, p. 6. It is interesting to consider how Currier's watercolors shown in the winter of 1879 may have had a bearing on Homer's most radical sheets of 1880.

[97] *Independent*, 3 February 1881, p. 8.

[98] This had been long noted by modern scholars, most recently in Scott Atkinson, "Winslow Homer in Gloucester 1880," in *Winslow Homer in Gloucester*, exh. cat. (Chicago: Terra Museum of American Art, 1990), p. 54, and NGA 1995, pp. 197-99.

[99] Edward Hale to "Margaret," 2 December 1880, quoted in NGA 1995, p. 197.

[100] G. W. H. [George W. Hows], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. First Article," *Express*, 25 January 1881, p. 3. *Art Interchange* had a dramatically opposite reaction, liking this sheet best for the "young girl's keen delight in the water, the clear air and summer sky." *Art Interchange* 6 (3 February 1881), p. 25.

[101] [George W. Hows], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Concluding Article," *Express*, 12 February 1881, p. 3.

[102] Ibid.

[103] On Conkling, see *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 5th ed., "Roscoe Conkling" entry.

[104] G. W. H. [George W. Hows], "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Article," *Express*, 29 January 1881, p. 3.

[105] *Express*, 12 February 1881, p. 3.

[106] G. W. H., *Express*, 25 January 1881, p. 3; G. W. H., *Express*, 29 January 1881, p. 3; and [George Hows], *Express*, 12 February 1881, p. 3.

[107] "Painters in Water-Color. The Exhibition at the Academy of Design," *Times*, 22 January 1881, p. 2.

[108] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[109] "More Water Colors. Points Where Most American Artists Fail," *Telegram*, 3 February 1881, p. 2.

[110] "Pictures Here and There," *Telegram*, 12 February 1881, p. 2.

[111] *Telegram*, 3 February 1881, p. 2.

[112] S. G. W. B. [Samuel Green Wheeler Benjamin], "The Exhibitions. V – Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society," *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 196.

[113] *Sun*, 23 January 1881, p. 3.

[114] Ibid.

[115] "Fine Arts. The American Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition. Third Notice," *Tribune*, 14 February 1881, p. 5.

[116] *Tribune*, 29 January 1881, p. 6.

[117] *Tribune*, 14 February 1881, p. 5. Cook only mentioned Currier in passing.

[118] *Tribune*, 22 January 1881, p. 5.

[119] *Tribune*, 29 January 1881, p. 6.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

[122] M. G. van Rensselaer, "The Water Color Exhibition, New York," *American Architect and Building News* 9 (19 March 1881), p. 135.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Within a few weeks of van Rensselaer's review in *American Architect and Building News*, she succinctly stated in *Lippincott's*: "Frank 'impressionism,' indeed is characteristic now of many of our cleverest men. Mr. Winslow Homer led the list this year, perhaps, and his rivals were Mr. Blum and Mr. Currier, who are both impressionists, though of very different kinds." M. G. v. R. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer], "Our Monthly Gossip. Art Matters. The New York Water-Color Exhibition," *Lippincott's* 27 (April 1881), p. 417.

[125] van Rensselaer, *Atlantic* 48 (August 1881), p. 193.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[126] M. G. v. R. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer], "An American Artist in England," *Century Magazine* 28 (November 1883), p. 15.

[127] "Fine Arts. Art and Artists in New York. Second Paper," *Independent*, 3 March 1881, p. 8.

[128] *Scribner's* 21 (April 1881), p. 955.

[129] Ibid., pp. 955-56.

[130] [Brownell], *Nation* 32 (3 February 1881), p. 80.

[131] Ibid. Currier did not show in the 1880 Watercolor Society annual, and so Brownell must be referring to his works that appeared in 1879.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Strahan, *Art Amateur* 4 (February 1881), p. 48.

[135] Ibid.

[136] See "A Rare Collection Rare Pictures," *Times*, 28 March 1880, p. 7; "English Art and Artists," *Times*, 24 May 1880, p. 5; "London's Art Galleries," *Times*, 31 May 1880, p. 5; "At the Royal Academy," *Times*, 3 June 1880, p. 5, and "London Art Galleries," *Times*, 5 June 1880, p. 3.

[137] See, for example, "New Publications. British Painters. New York: D. Appleton & Co.," *Times*, 23 December 1880, p. 6.

[138] William C. Ward, "Fine Arts. Contemporary Art in England," *Independent*, 24 June 1880, pp. 6-7, and William C. Ward, "Fine Arts. Contemporary Art in England," *Independent*, 29 July 1880, p. 9.

[139] "The Art Gallery. American Pictures at Paris and London," *Art Amateur* 3 (July 1880), pp. 26-27. It is worthwhile to note how a number of the American artists with English connections were men with whom Homer had artistic or personal ties. For example, Hennessey had been a good friend early in the decade and Brown was not only a fellow resident of the Tenth Street Studio Building, but, as has been mentioned throughout this study, a competitor in the field of genre painting .

[140] Foster, "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement," p. 280, and Linda Ferber, "The Power of Patronage: William Trost Richards and the American Watercolor Movement," in *Masters of Light and Color*, p. 85. Abbey and Richards were two other artists with whom Homer's career had closely intersected over the last decade.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[141] Ferber, "The Power of Patronage," in *Masters of Light and Color*, p. 86.

[142] "Topics of the Time. Pettiness in Art," *Scribner's* 20 (May 1880), p. 146.

[143] "Studio Notes," *Mail*, 31 May 1880, p. 1.

[144] "Fine Arts. The Bridgman," *Herald*, 13 March 1881, p. 16, and "Fine Arts," *Post*, 16 March 1881, p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conclusion

When Homer exited New York for England, his departure was accepted as a matter of fact and was viewed as typical of American artists' experience. In the *Post*, for example, his being in Europe was simply reported along with the listings of other artists' travels.[1] When Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer wrote in 1883 about Homer's English trip, she noted that his recent travels and the changes in his art were part of the changes breeding generally in American art, especially its more cosmopolitan outlook.[2] Other writers in the following half century, too, noticed that Homer's 1880 trip to Gloucester and the one to England the following year marked a shift in Homer's lifestyle and art, but they understood them to be a continuation of his peripatetic ways of the 1870s as he searched for material for his art.[3]

After the varied artistic campaigns in subject and technique Homer made during the 1870s, the challenge he seemed to have set for himself was to make meaningful images out of the world around him. Homer likely agreed with Samuel Benjamin, who wrote in 1881 that "Art...its purpose is, through the material eye, to interpret the great truths of life and nature; not merely to please the optic nerve, but to elevate the soul."[4] In short, Homer searched for subject matter and formal expression that provided a seriousness comparable to that provided earlier by the Civil War. The 1880 Gloucester seascapes were neither a tangent nor an end for Homer, but offered the possibility of an expanded approach that used his keen eye and grew out of his unflagging independence and his desire to depict a deeper reflection of the human condition in his art. The Gloucester

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

watercolors were a radical but logical conclusion to Homer's art of the 1870s, and served as a progressive step that led him to Cullercoats and ultimately to his images of the sea and the woods in the 1890s.

The critical reactions to Homer's art between 1868 and 1881 outline his search for the appropriate subjects, methods, and expression for his art as he approached the midpoint of his career. The writings on Homer delineate the multitude of combinations of subject and style with which he experimented and the greater or lesser success they brought him. They illuminate, too, how tightly interwoven his art was with the pressing artistic issues of the day and how Homer's art played an important role in the development of the New York City art press as it forced art writers to grapple with the leading issues in a comprehensive fashion.

As Homer constantly negotiated his artistic vision in the face of the tremendous changes that occurred in American art in the 1870s, he absorbed or rejected the prevailing artistic modes of the period. As the acceptable approaches to art multiplied, Homer experimented with the great variety of possibilities. He took part in each of the elements that changed the shape of American art of this period. He was at the forefront of the rise of watercolor and its elevation in status from a preparatory tool to its recognition as a medium in its own right and worthy of exhibition. Related to developments in watercolor as well as oil painting, Homer's art activated as well as responded to the changing ideas about finish in art. As the concept of completeness moved away from being defined as detailed explications of the physical world and high surface finish to the expression of a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

completeness of idea through formal means, Homer's technique and subjects jockeyed among its various permutations. The same is true for Homer's interaction with the changing attitudes towards subject matter as they shifted from a narrative or local base to more subjective ones. Recognizing the seminal role of subject matter for creating successful art, Homer often used familiar and/or timely subjects, such as children or African Americans, to leverage his experiments of artistic treatment. After 1875, when the influence of European art shook the foundations of American art, Homer's art engaged with a great variety of elements that were affecting the art world at large. He tried out different facets of the most prominent influences, including French peasant painting, the Aesthetic Movement, and the more radical strains of Paris and Munich, to name a few.

Homer's art commanded attention in the discussions of the most significant issues. The intersection of his work with the compelling concern for America to have a national art exemplifies his central role. Homer began the period as the young artist who presented real possibilities for a successful American art. From this position as the artist of promise, his art was continually examined. His designation as American and a hope for the future remained constant, but it did not deter, and perhaps even caused, the criticism of his art. The recognition of his unique ability to observe the world around him and his original means of depicting it was the foundation for the continual praise he received and the primary reason for the ongoing pronouncement of his art as American. The means by which he presented his vision, both in subject and methods, also brought the harshest criticism. As the *Art Journal* stated in 1876: "It is impossible to deny Homer's genius; it

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is equally impossible to be always satisfied with what he puts on canvas."[5] The critics' inability to be satisfied with what Homer put down on canvas or paper was due to the fact that, in nearly every work, he repeatedly broke the ranks of traditional art practice in some form as he remained rooted in acceptable modes in others.

As Homer pursued his artistic path, the critical reactions diversified, creating a varied menu of responses that sparked debates and resulted in contradictions. Both the praise and criticism of his subjects were due to their contemporaneity and the perception of their displaying (or not displaying) meaningful ideas. The disparate reactions to his varying levels of finish reflect the wide range of outcomes seen in Homer's painting, and also the relationship of his art to the expanded interest in technique and to artists with more extreme technical practices. Once the Munich-trained artists appeared on the New York art scene, Homer's place as the most careless and sketchy painter was eclipsed. The frequent negative reactions to his color reflect the fact that it was with color that Homer was his most unorthodox and least understood. As Homer tried on the mantles of different artistic movements and influences, the reactions to his art varied. They depended on the outlook of the critic in concert with his other reaction to the other elements of his art, such as its display of American characteristics.

What, then, can we say about Winslow Homer and his critics in the 1870s? There is no doubt he was a continual presence in the critical thinking. The discussions of Homer outline the broad strokes and nuances of the complexities and multiple viewpoints that existed during the period. Throughout the course of the 1870s, as Homer explored the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

significant issues for art, his practice often formed an intricate weave with the critical reactions. Amid the critical controversies, Homer's art frequently tugged at the hearts and minds of many critics, thus fulfilling a primary requirement for art. Yet, aspects of his technique and style—though different ones at different moments—caused even his most ardent admirers to stumble in their appreciation of him. Homer's unorthodox means of pursuing his personal vision antagonized the press as they grappled with their own shifting definitions of art. Homer's originality was repeatedly both his downfall and saving grace.

Throughout the 1870s, nearly every bit of high praise for Homer's art was offset by a stinging jab. One the one hand, Homer was celebrated as the best and most American artist of the day. However, since he rarely produced what was expected of him, what was the best was also often the worst. As the 1870s came to a close, Homer had achieved a prominence reserved for few artists, but he also found himself increasingly baffling the critics as he faced an important crossroad in his art. American art had changed significantly between 1870 and 1880 as it came into a more comprehensive international context. Homer and the critics struggled to come to terms with these changes and the critical reactions of the New York City art press illuminate this complicated and complex struggle.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Endnotes to the Conclusion

[1] "Gossip About New York Artists," *Post*, 3 June 1881, p. 4.

[2] M. G. van Rensselaer, "An American Artist in England," *Century Magazine* 27 (November 1883), pp. 13-21.

[3] Homer's behavior also again was recognized as comparable to that of many American artists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For example, such a viewpoint is given in Christian Brinton, "Winslow Homer," *Scribner's Magazine* 49 (January 1911), p. 18; J. Walker McSpadden, "Winslow Homer," in *Famous Painters of America* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1916), p. 183; and Theodore Bolton, "The Art of Winslow Homer: An Estimate of 1932," *The Fine Arts* 18 (February 1932), pp. 23-8.

[4] S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions. VII – National Academy of Design. Fifty-Sixth Exhibition," *American Art Review* 2 (May 1881), p. 23.

[5] "The National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Art Journal* 2 (June 1876), p. 190.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix

Biographical Information on Primary Art Writers and Editors

The purpose of this appendix is to provide information on the little-known or unknown art writers and editors, and to give capsule biographies of the better-known figures. The biographies focus on the period 1868-81. References appearing in short form here can be found as complete citations in Chapter 1.

Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin: 1837-1914; painter, writer, and critic; son of a missionary father, grew up in Greece; 1859: graduates Williams College; 1870: in Boston studying as a marine painter; 1876-1880s: writes for *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *Art Journal*, and *American Art Review*, and authors a number of books on European and American art; 1878-82: exhibits marine paintings at the National Academy of Design; 1883-85: serves as first American minister to Persia.

Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin, *The Life and Adventures of A Free Lance* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press, Co., 1914); *National Academy of Design Record*; *Dictionary of American Biography.*

Eugene Benson: 1839-1908; used pseudonyms "Proteus" and "Sordello"; painter, critic, and writer; born in Hyde Park, N.Y.; 1856: studies at National Academy of Design; 1861-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

66, 1869-71, 1874, 1877-78: exhibits at the National Academy of Design; 1862: elected associate of the National Academy of Design; mid-1860s: writes for *Post*; 1868-73: in New Haven; writes for *Appleton's*, *Galaxy*, *Atlantic*, and *Putnam's*; by 1873: ex-patriates to Europe, mainly Italy, and resumes life primarily as a painter and writer.

H. W. French, *Art and Artists in Connecticut* (1879; reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1970); *National Academy of Design Record*; Scholnick, *American Literary Realism* 14 (1981), pp. 242-50; Meixner, *French Realist Painting and the Critique of American Society*; *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Richard Rogers Bowker: 1848-1933; editor and publisher; born in Salem, Massachusetts; 1868: graduates Free Academy (City College of New York); 1869-75: first literary editor of *Mail*; 1875: literary editor of *Tribune*; 1879 to death: owner-editor of *Publisher's Weekly*.

Wingate, *Views and Interviews*; *Dictionary of American Biography*; Richard Rogers Bowker Papers, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

William Crary Brownell: 1851-1928; critic; born in New York City; 1871: graduates Amherst College; 1871-79: on staff of *World*; 1871: as reporter; 1872-79: as city editor;

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1878-80: writes for *Scribner's*; 1879-81: writes for *Nation*; from 1881: best known as literary critic; 1881-84: in Europe.

Haskell, *The Nation*; Russell Sturgis, "William Crary Brownell as Critic on Fine Art," *International Monthly* 5 (April 1903), pp. 448-67; Gertrude Hall Brownell, *William Crary Brownell, An Anthology of His Writings* (New York: Scribner's, 1923); Edith Wharton, "William C. Brownell," *Scribner's* 84 (November 1928), pp. 596-602; Frank Fletcher, "The Critical Values of William Crary Brownell"; Frank Fletcher, "Bibliography of William Crary Brownell," *Bulletin of Bibliography* 20 (1953), pp. 242-44; *Dictionary of Literary Biography*; *Dictionary of American Biography*; William Crary Brownell Papers, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts.

Oliver Bell Bunce: 1828-90; editor and writer; 1872-81: editor of *Appleton's*; writes "Editor's Table"; plays prominent role in New York publishing world; famous for Sunday evening salons, attended by artists and writers, including Winslow Homer; instrumental in publication of *Picturesque America* and related volumes.

Obituary, *New York Times*, May 16, 1900, p. 5; William H. Rideling, *Many Celebrities and A Few Others* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1912); Rainey, *Creating Picturesque America*; *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Susan Nichols Carter: painter, critic, writer, and art teacher-administrator; 1871-77: primary art writer for *Appleton's*; 1873-1896: head of the Women's Art School of Cooper Union Institute; 1875-76, 1878, 1885-87, 1889: exhibits at National Academy of Design; from 1877: writes for *Art Journal*; ?-1879: married to Robert Carter, editor of *Appleton's*.

National Academy of Design Record; *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 1877, "Robert Carter" entry; Archives, Library of the Cooper Union Institute for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York.

Samuel Stillman Conant: 1831-1885?; writer and editor; born in Waterville, Maine; 1858-60: studies abroad after attending college at Hamilton, New York; from 1869: various posts with a number of periodicals, including *Times*, *Express*, *Galaxy*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*; 1885: disappears.

Mail, 8 April 1872, p. 2; Smith, *Sunshine and Shadow*; *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 1887; Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms*.

Clarence Cook: 1828-1900; critic, editor, and publisher; grew up in Boston and New York; 1849: graduates Harvard College; 1853-63: writes poetry, magazine and newspaper articles, and teaches; 1863: a founder of Society for the Advancement of Truth in Art;

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1863-64: editor of *The New Path*; 1864-82: art critic for *Tribune*; 1868: writes for *Galaxy*; 1872-75: writes for *Atlantic*; 1875-81: writes for *Scribner's*; 1881-84: writes for *Art Amateur*; 1884-93: publisher of *The Studio*.

Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth-Century America"; Weiss, "Clarence Cook: His Critical Writings"; Ferber and Gerdts, *The New Path*.

David Goodman Croly: 1829-1889; writer and editor; best known as husband of the journalist Jane "Jennie June" Croly and father of progressive reformer Herbert Croly; Irish born, but came to the United States as a young boy; grew up in New York City; 1855-73: various posts with a number of New York newspapers, including *Post*, *Herald*, and *World*; 1873-78: editor of *Daily Graphic*; very active in reform issues.

Wingate, *Views and Interviews*; *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Charles De Kay: 1848-1935; used pseudonym "Henry Eckford" late in life; poet, critic, and editor; born in Washington, D.C.; brother of artist Helena De Kay; educated in Dresden, Germany, and Newburgh, N.Y.; 1868: graduates Yale University; 1868-70: in Europe; 1876-94: art and literary critic for *Times*; 1894-97: serves as United States Consul-General at Berlin; 1892: a founder of National Sculpture Society; 1898: a founder of National Arts Club; 1907: art editor of *Post*; 1915-17: editor of *Art World*.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Obituary, *Times*, 24 May 1935, p. 21; Peters, "Charles De Kay."

Richard Watson Gilder: 1844-1909; editor and writer; 1872: marries artist Helena De Kay; 1870-81: editor of *Scribner's*; 1870-78: writes "Old Cabinet" column; 1879-1880: in Europe; 1881-1909: editor of *Century*.

Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms*; Rosamund Gilder, ed., *The Letters of Richard Watson Gilder* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936); Arthur John, *The Best Years of the "Century"* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); *Dictionary of American Biography*; Richard Watson Gilder Papers, Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library; Century Magazine Papers, Manuscripts Division, Columbia University.

Parke Godwin: 1816-1904; writer, critic, and editor; wrote on art, science, and literature; 1853-57 and 1868-70: editor of *Putnam's*; 1860-81: editor and partial owner of *Post*; 1878: assumes position of editor-in-chief at *Post* after father-in-law William Cullen Bryant's death; 1881-1900: editor of *Commercial Advertiser*.

Benson, *Galaxy* 7 (February 1869), pp. 230-36; Smith, *Sunshine and Shadow*; Wingate, *Views and Interviews*; "Parke Godwin Dead," *Times*, 8 January 1904, p. 7; Nevins,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Evening Post; *Dictionary of Literary Biography*; Parke Godwin Papers, Princeton University; Bryant-Godwin Papers, Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

Theodore C. Grannis: 1831-1878; painter and critic; born in Schenectady, N.Y.; Brooklyn resident during years as artist and art critic; prior to artist-critic career: works as a tradesman; 1868-78: art critic for *Commercial Advertiser*; occasional contributor to *Art Journal*, *Aldine*, and *Brooklyn Eagle*, and possibly *Post*; member of the Palette Club and Brooklyn Art Association; 1868-71: exhibits at the National Academy of Design.

Express, 2 December 1868, p. 2; obituary, *Commercial Advertiser*, 26 January 1878, p. 1; obituary, *Times*, 27 January 1878, p. 6; obituary, *Aldine* 9, no. 4 (1878?), pp. 141-42; *National Academy of Design Record.*

Lucy Hamilton Hooper: 1835-1893; poet and critic; born in Philadelphia; 1868: on editorial staff of *Lippincott's*; 1874-93: to Paris; continues as foreign correspondent to *Lippincott's* and *Art Journal*, as well as to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and St. Louis newspapers.

Dictionary of American Biography.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

George W. Hows: used pseudonym "Strix"; writer for *Express*.

Evening Mail, 8 April 1872, p. 2; Fairfield, *The Clubs of New York* ; Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms*.

William Hurlbert: 1827-1895; critic, writer, and editor; born in Charleston, S.C.; 1847: graduates Harvard College; 1849: graduates Harvard Divinity School; 1849-51: in Europe; 1855: on staff of *Putnam's*; drama critic for *Albion*; 1857-62: on staff of *Times*; 1862-83: on staff of *World*, and from 1876 was editor-in-chief; after 1883: mainly in Europe.

Benson, *Galaxy* 7 (January 1869), pp. 30-34; *Times*, 7 September 1895, p. 5; George T. McJimsey, *Gentle Partisan: Manton Marble* (Ames: Iowa University Press, 1971); Thorn, "Montgomery Schuyler"; *Dictionary of American Biography*.

James Jackson Jarves: 1818-1888; critic, writer, and collector; born in Boston; 1837: to Hawaii for health; 1851: to Europe; from 1852: settles in Florence; forms collection of Italian art; 1855: publishes *Art Hints*, first of many books on art, and begins contributions to numerous papers and magazines; 1871 and 1884: sales of Jarves Collection.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Francis Steegmuller, *The Two Lives of James Jackson Jarves* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1951); *Dictionary of American Biography.*

Sylvester Rosa Koehler: 1837-1900; writer, editor, and curator; born in Germany; 1868: to Boston; 1868-78: technical manager for Louis Prang's lithographic company; 1879-81: editor and writer for *American Art Review*; c.1881-1900: graphic arts curator, first in Washington and then at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Dictionary of American Biography.

William Mackay Laffan: 1848-1909; critic, editor, publisher, and art advisor; born in Dublin; educated at Trinity College, Dublin; to the United States after medical studies in Ireland; on newspaper staffs in San Francisco and then in Baltimore; interlude working for railroads; 1877-81: on staff of *Sun*; 1881-84: art editor for Harper Brothers publishers and London agent for them; 1884: returns to *Sun* and named publisher; owner after 1900; also advisor on Chinese ceramics; trustee of Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Obituary, *Times*, 20 November 1909, p. 11; O'Brien, *The Story of the Sun.*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Charles Eliot Norton: 1827-1908; writer, editor, professor; born in Boston; 1846: graduates Harvard College; 1855-57: in Europe; 1857: begins association with a variety of magazines, especially the *Atlantic* and *North American Review*; 1865-1908: founder and editor-writer for *Nation*; 1868-73: in Europe; 1875-97: teaches art history at Harvard.

Haskell, *The Nation*; Vanderbilt, *Charles Eliot Norton*; *Dictionary of American Biography*; *Dictionary of Literary Biography*.

George E. Pond: 1837-1899; used pseudonym "Philip Quilibet"; writer and editor; born in Boston; 1858: graduates Harvard College; 1862-64: serves in Civil War; 1864-68: associate editor of *Army and Navy Journal*; 1868-70: on editorial staff of *Times*; 1868-78: writes "Drift-Wood" column for *Galaxy*; 1870-77: in Philadelphia; editor-in-chief of Philadelphia *Record*; 1877-c.1880: resumes connection with *Army and Navy Journal*; 1880-99: on editorial staff of *Sun*.

Obituary, *Times*, 23 September 1899, p. 7; Obituary, *Sun*, 23 September 1899, p. 7; *Dictionary of American Biography*.

George W. Sheldon: 1843-1914; critic; born in South Carolina; 1863 and 1866: graduates with B.A. and M.A. from Princeton University; 1865-73: teaches at Princeton

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and at Union Theological Seminary; c.1873-at least 1879: art critic for *Post*; from 1875: contributes to *Art Journal*, *Harper's New Monthly*, and authors a number of volumes on American art; 1890-1900: literary advisor to D. Appleton & Co., London.

Commercial Advertiser, 26 March 1879, p. 1; *Who Was Who In America.*

Earl Shinn: 1838-1886; used pseudonyms "Edward Strahan," " Sigma," "L'Enfant Perdu"; painter and critic; born in Philadelphia; 1859-64: studies at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; 1866-67: in France; studies at Ecole des Beaux-Arts under Jean-Léon Gérôme; 1868-70: on staff of Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*; 1870: to New York; 1870-81: writes for *Nation*, primary art critic from 1874-79; occasional writer for *Post*; 1872: writes for *Lippincott's*; 1879: writes for *Scribner's*; 1879-81: writes for *Art Amateur*.

Obituary, *Art Amateur*, 16 (16 December 1886), p. 3; William Walton, *Earl Shinn, A Sketch* (Philadelphia: George Barrie, [1887]), courtesy William H. Gerdts American Art Library; Haskell, *Nation*; Armstrong, ed., *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin*; David Sellin, *Americans in Brittany and Normandy*, exh. cat. (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1982); Earl Shinn Papers, Archives of American Art, roll 3850.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Russell Sturgis: 1836-1909; architect and critic; born in Baltimore; raised in New York; 1856: graduates Free Academy (City College of New York); 1863-68: practices architecture with Peter Wight; 1868-c.1880: in private practice; 1863: a founder of Society for the Advancement of Truth in Art; 1863-65: writes for *The New Path*; from 1865: contributes to *Nation*; 1897-1909: writes "Field of Art" column in *Scribner's*; author and coauthor of numerous books on art and architecture.

Obituary, *Times*, 12 February 1909, p. 11; Haskell, *Nation*; Ferber and Gerdts, *The New Path*; *Dictionary of American Biography*.

D. O'C. Townley: 1831-1872; used pseudonym "Alderman Rooney"; editor, writer, and critic; born in Dublin; briefly studied painting in Dublin; 1869: to United States; 1869-72: city editor and art critic for *Mail*; active in Palette Club; writes occasionally for magazines, including *Aldine*, *Scribner's*, and *Old and New*; 1872: manager at Grand Opera House, New York City.

Mail, 8 April 1872, p. 2; *Mail*, 31 December 1872, p. 2; *Times*, 29 December 1872, p. 5.

Mariana Griswold van Rennselaer: 1851-1934; poet and critic; born in New York City; 1868-73: to Germany with family; 1873: marries Schuyler van Rennselaer; resides in New Brunswick, N.J. until husband's death in 1884; 1876: begins publishing poems;

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1877: to Europe for most of the year; on return, begins soliciting writing assignments; first writings appear in *Lippincott's*, *American Architect and Building News*, and *American Art Review*; 1884-1934: resides in New York.

Dinnerstein, "Mariana Griswold van Rennselaer"; *Dictionary of American Biography.*

Andrew C. Wheeler: 1835-1903; used pseudonyms "Trinculo," "Nym Crinkle," "J. P. M.," and "J. P. Mowbray"; writer and critic; born in New York City; 1857: joins staff of *Times*; 1858-c.1862: in West and Midwest including Milwaukee and Chicago; c.1863/64: returns to New York; drama critic for *New York Leader*; 1870-c.1897: drama and sometimes art writer for *World* and *Sun.*

Obituary, *Times*, 11 March 1903; Cushing, *Initials and Pseudonyms*; McJimsey, *Gentle Partisan*; Thorn, "Montgomery Schuyler"; *Dictionary of American Biography.*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

WINSLOW HOMER AND HIS CRITICS IN THE 1870s

by

Margaret C. Conrads

Volume II

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1999

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

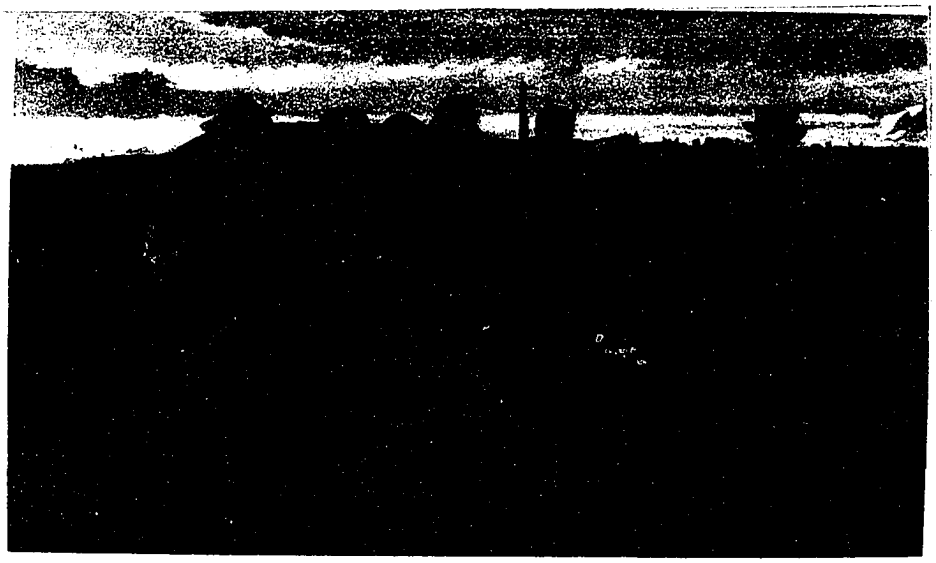


Figure 1: Winslow Homer, *Prisoners from the Front*, 1866, oil on canvas, 24 x 38, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Frank B. Porter, 1922



Figure 2: Winslow Homer, *Cernay la Ville—French Farm*, 1867, oil on panel, 10 9/16 x 18 1/16, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

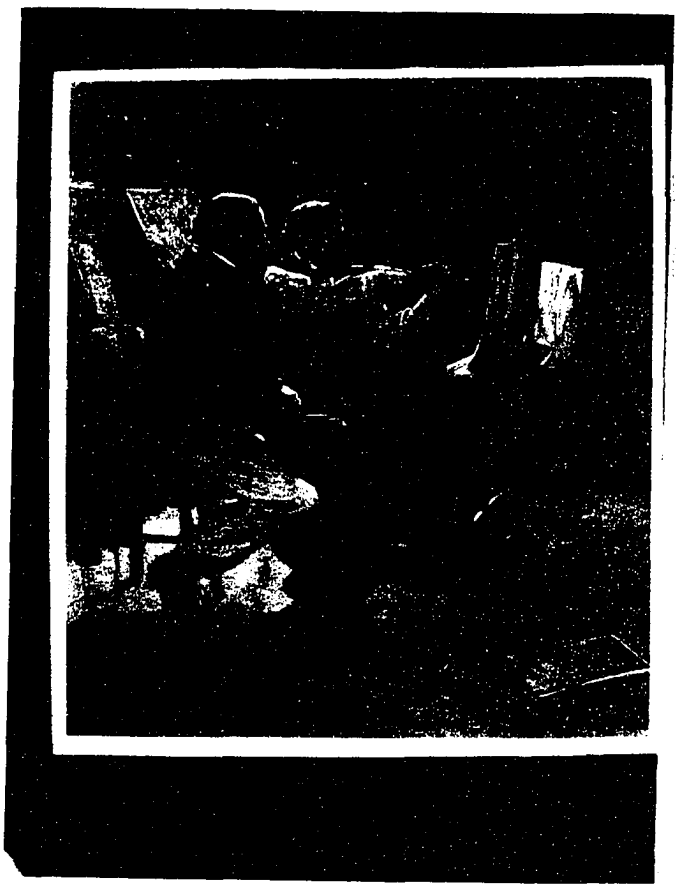


Figure 3: Winslow Homer, *The Studio*, 1867, oil on canvas, 18 x 15, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1939

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 4: Winslow Homer, *The Brierwood Pipe*, 1864, oil on canvas, 16 7/8 x 14 ¾, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

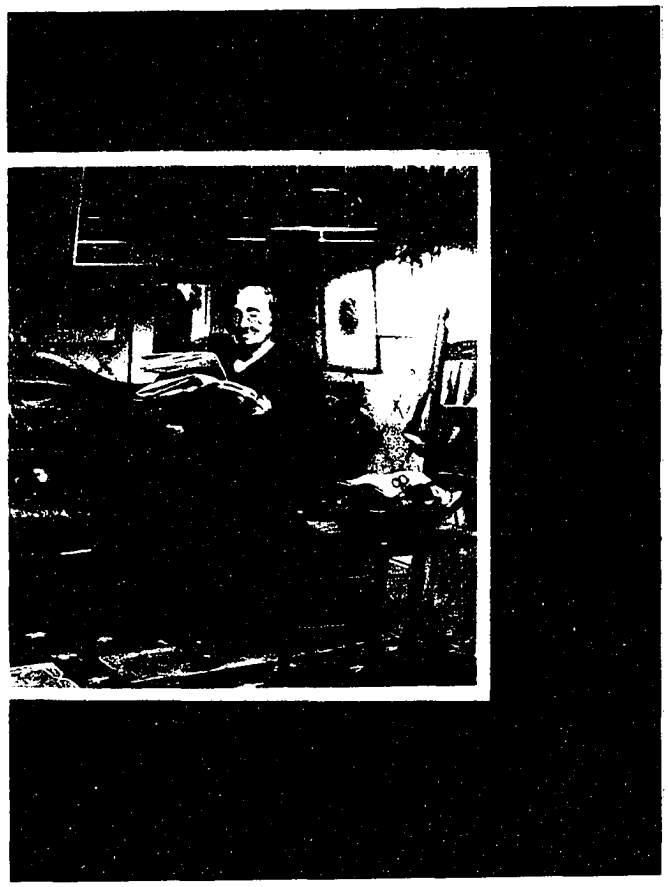


Figure 5: Seymour Joseph Guy, *Evening*, 1867, oil on canvas, 14 ½ x 12 5/8, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, Stoddard Acquisition Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

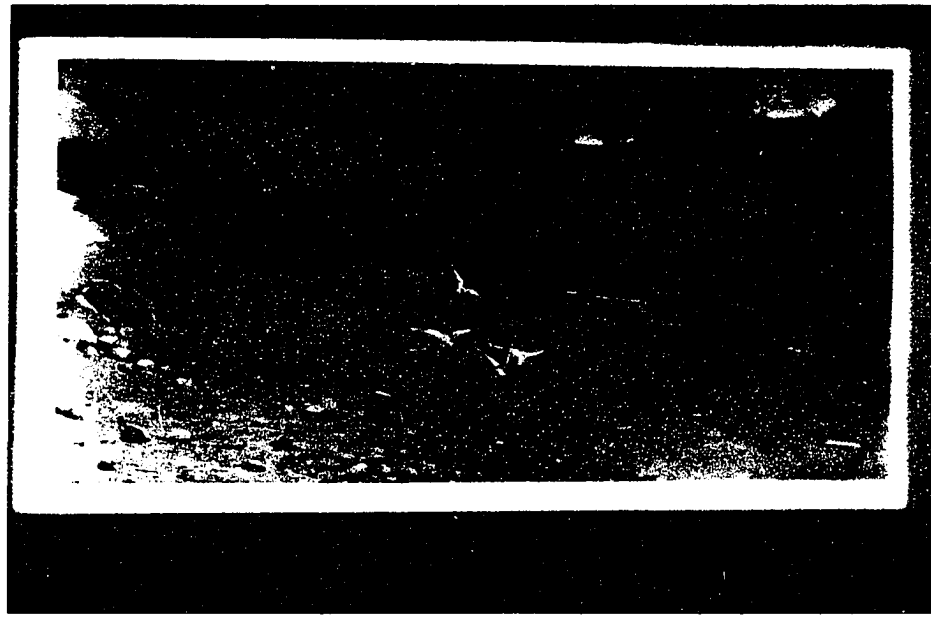


Figure 6: Winslow Homer, *Manchester Coast* (*Rocky Coast and Gulls*), 1868, oil on canvas, 16 x 28, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of Grenville H. Norcross



Figure 7: Samuel Colman, *The Narrows and Ft. Lafayette, Ships Coming into Port*, c. 1868, oil on canvas, 30 x 60, New-York Historical Society, Watson Fund, 1976

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 8: Asher B. Durand, *Trysting Tree*, 1868, oil on canvas, 27 ¼ x 42, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

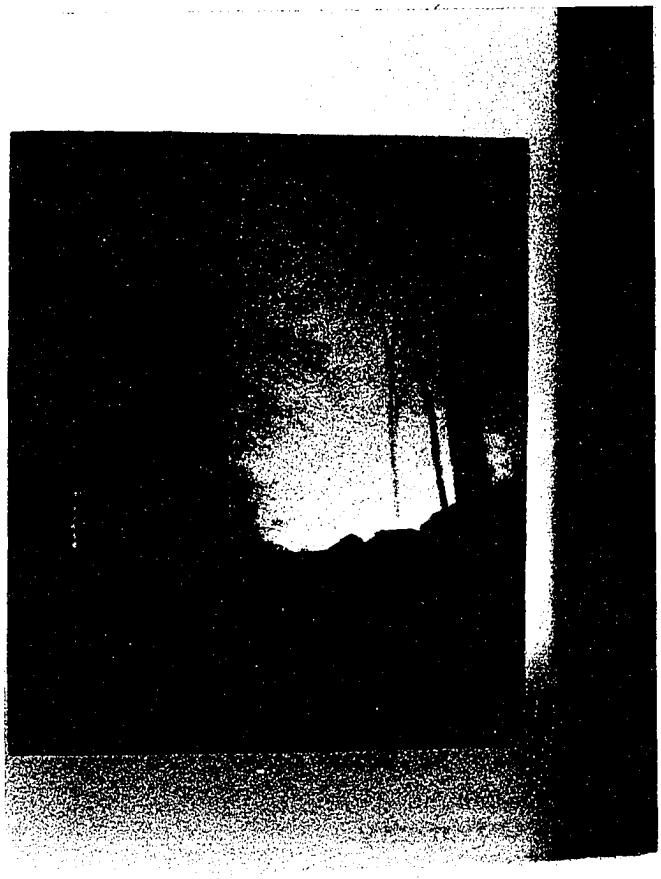


Figure 9: William Trost Richards, *In the Spring*, 1867, oil on canvas, 14 x 18, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

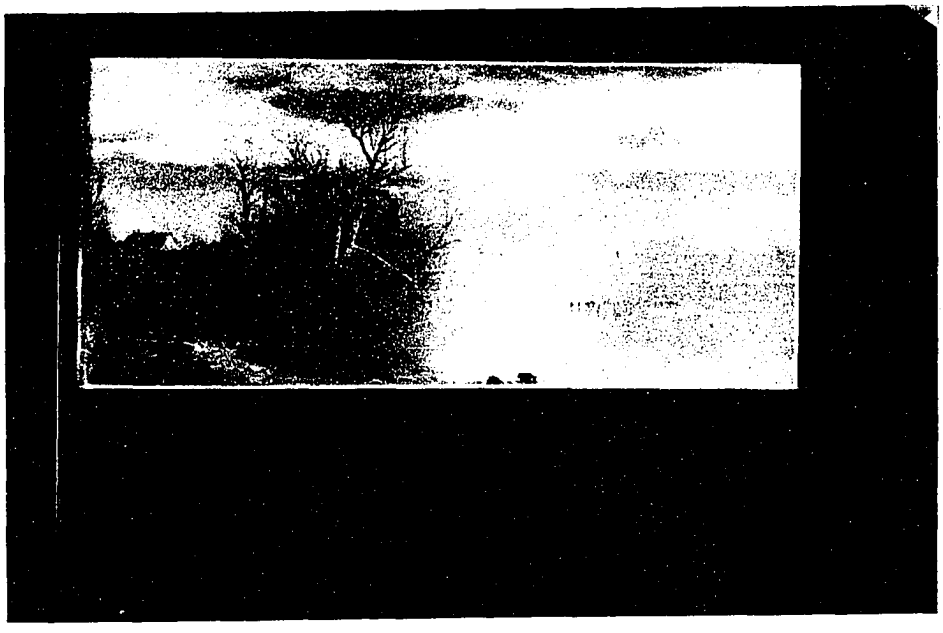


Figure 10: Alfred T. Bricher, *Indian's Summer Sunset,* 1869, oil on canvas, 9 x 18, private collection

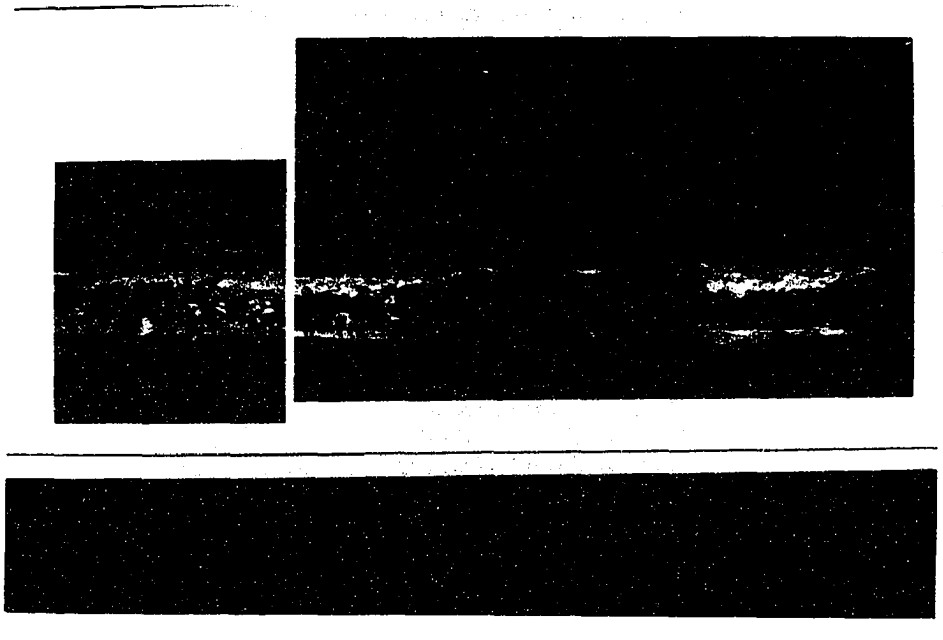


Figure 11: possible partial reconstruction of Winslow Homer, *Low Tide*, oil on canvas; photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

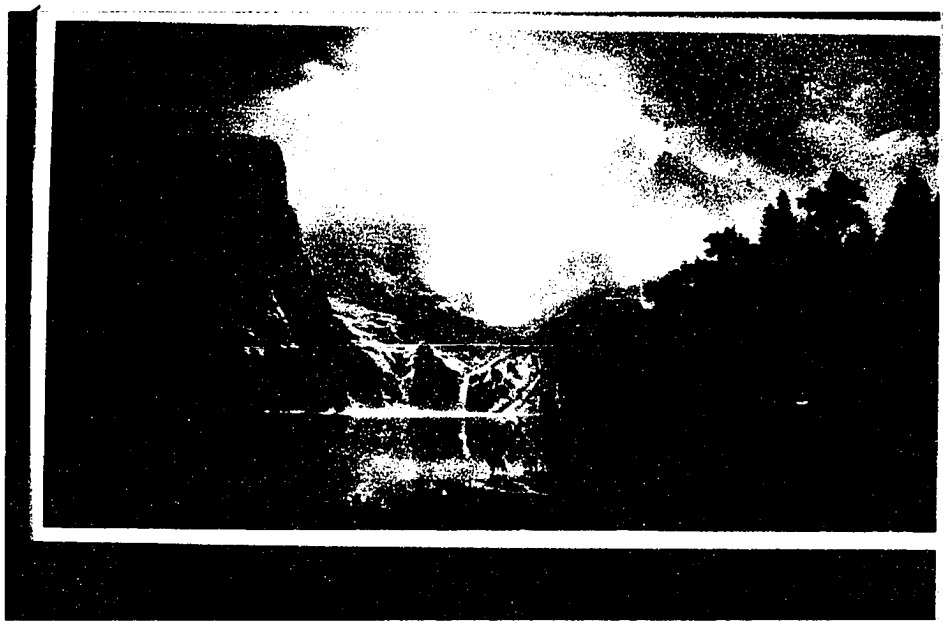


Figure 12: Albert Bierstadt, *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains*, 1868, oil on canvas, 72 x 120, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Bequest of Helen Huntington Hull



Figure 13: Frederic Church, *The After Glow*, 1867, oil on canvas, 31 ¼ x 48 ¾, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

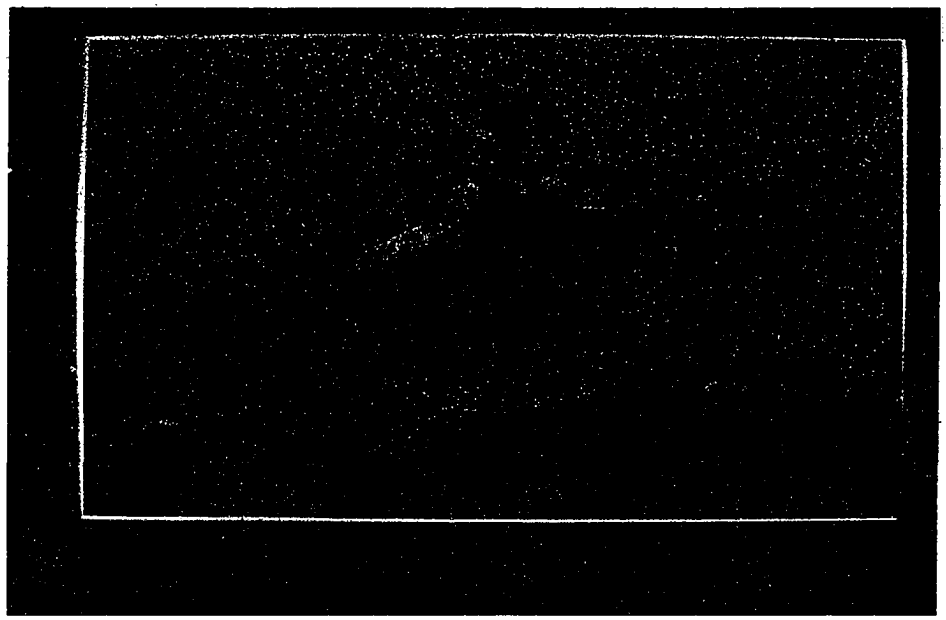


Figure 14: Winslow Homer, *Bridle Path, White Mountains*, 1868, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

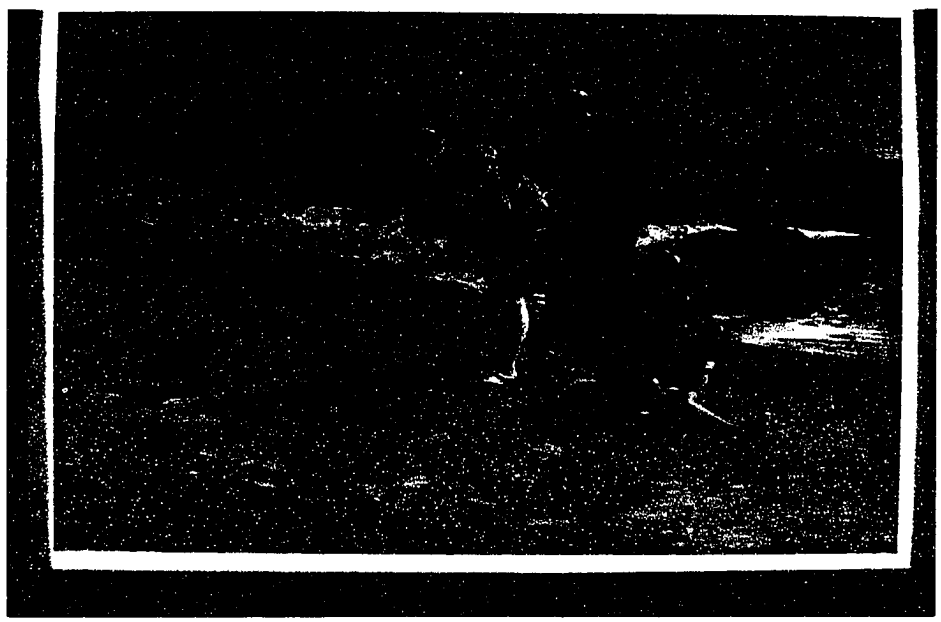


Figure 15: Winslow Homer, *Eagle Head, Manchester, Massachusetts* (*High Tide*), 1870, oil on canvas, 26 x 38, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William F. Milton, 1923

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

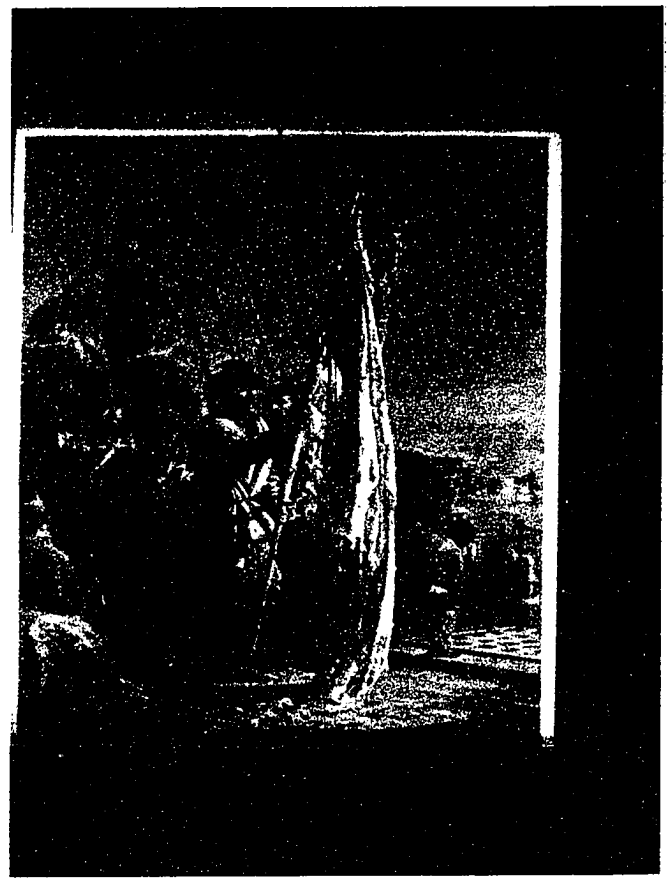


Figure 16: Thomas Waterman Wood, *Return of the Flag*, 1869, oil on canvas, 36 x 29, West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 17: Winslow Homer, *Lobster Cove* (*Fishermen at Sundown*), 1869, oil on panel, 12 ½ x 21 ¼, Cooper-Hewitt Museum



Figure 18: Winslow Homer, *White Mountain Wagon*, c. 1869, oil on panel, 11 ¾ x 15 ¾, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

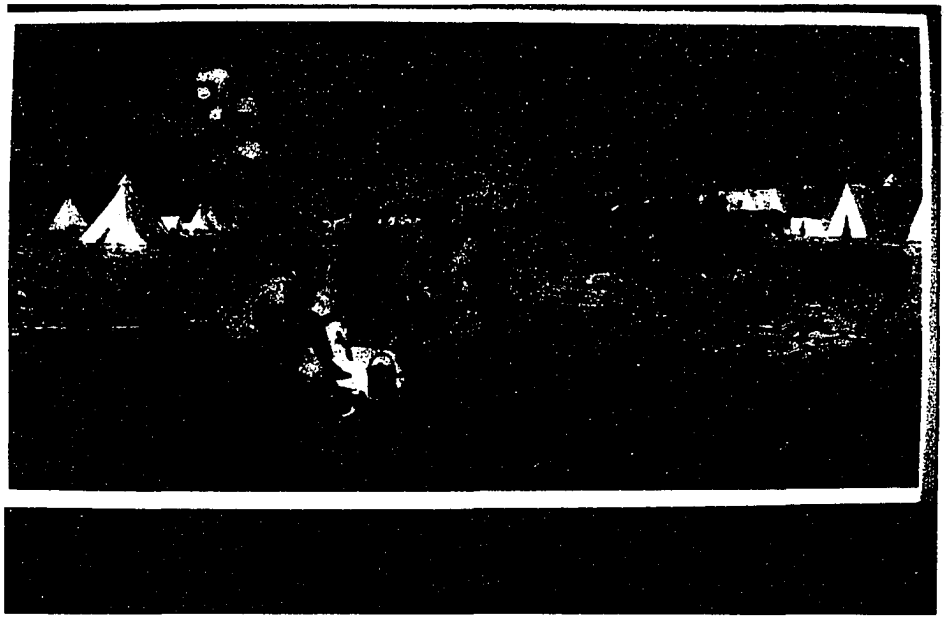


Figure 19: Winslow Homer, *A Rainy Day in Camp* (*Camp near Yorktown*), 1871, oil on canvas, 20 x 36, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William F. Milton, 1923

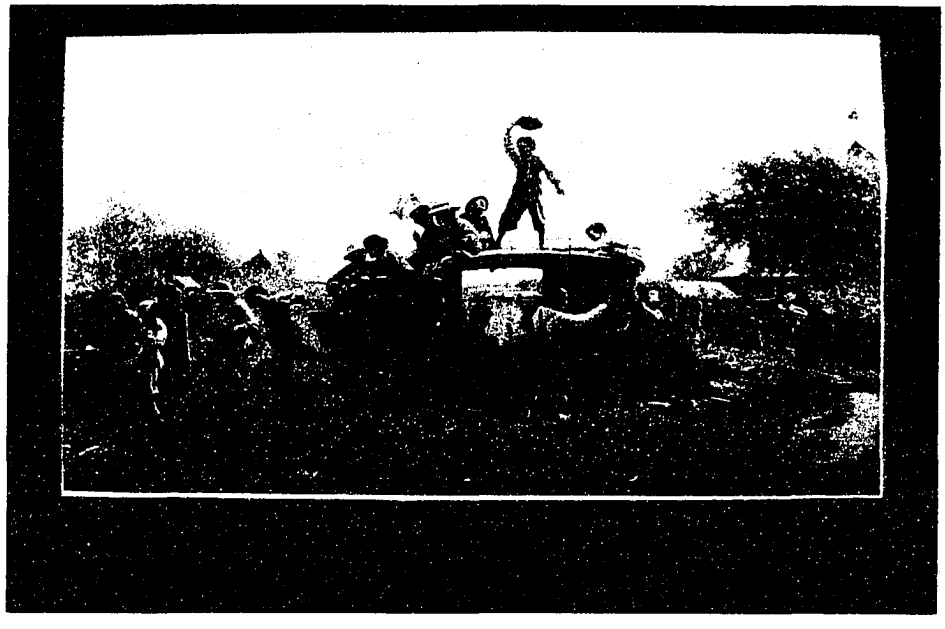


Figure 20: Eastman Johnson, *The Old Stage Coach*, 1871, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 60 1/8, Milwaukee Art Museum

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

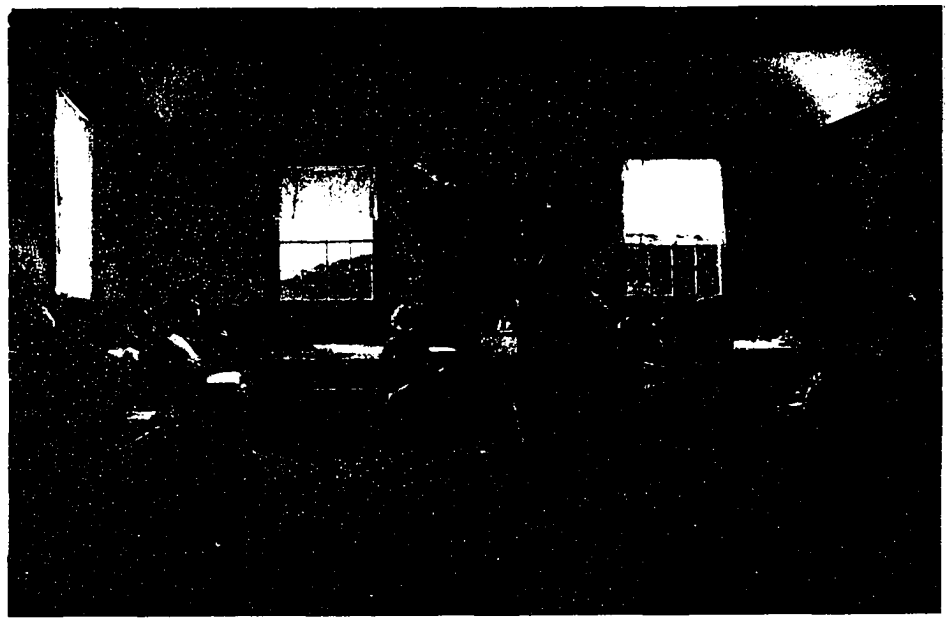


Figure 21: Winslow Homer, *The Country School*, 1871, oil on canvas, 21 3/8 x 38 3/8, The Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum Purchase



Figure 22: Winslow Homer, *Crossing the Pasture*, 1872, oil on canvas, 26 ¼ x 38 1/8, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

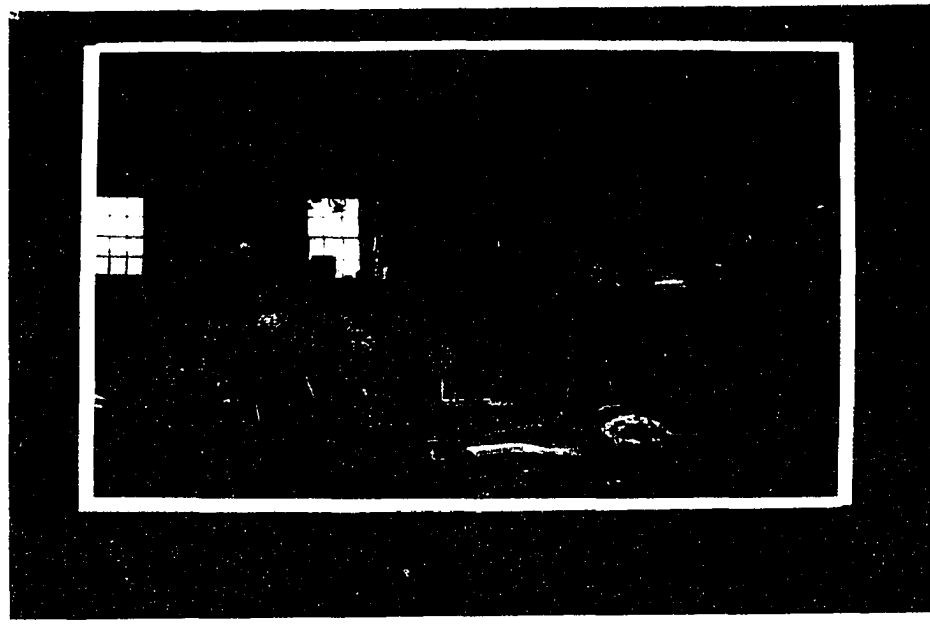


Figure 23: Winslow Homer, *The Country Store (A Rainy Day in the Country),* 1872, oil on wood, 11 7/8 x 18 1/8, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966



Figure 24: Winslow Homer, *The Morning Bell* (*The Mill*), 1871, oil on canvas, 24 x 38 ¼, Yale University Art Gallery, Bequest of Stephan Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 25: Eastman Johnson, *The Wounded Drummer Boy*, 1871, oil on canvas, 47 ¾ x 38 ½, The Union League Club, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 26: Seymour Joseph Guy, *A Knot in the Skein*, 1870, oil on canvas, 30 x 24, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 27: engraving published by George Barrie after John Beaufain Irving, *End of the Game*, location unknown; photograph courtesy of National Museum of American Art Library



Figure 28: Enoch Wood Perry, *Preparing for Thanksgiving* (*Thanksgiving Time*), c. 1871, oil on canvas, 28 x 36, location unknown; illustrated in *Old Print Shop Portfolio*, 12 (November 1952), p. 72

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

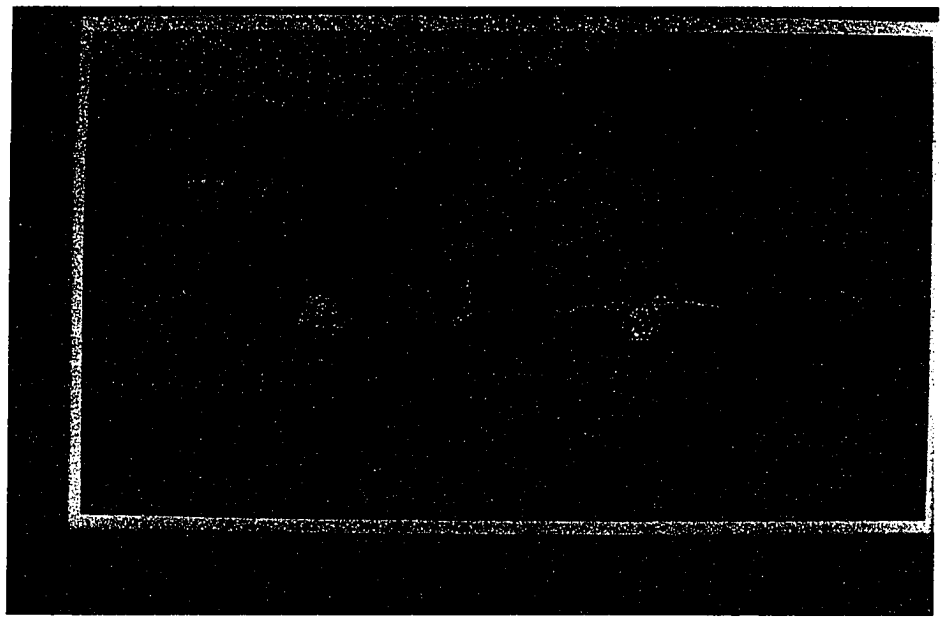


Figure 29: Winslow Homer, *Snap the Whip*, 1872, oil on canvas, 22 x 36, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

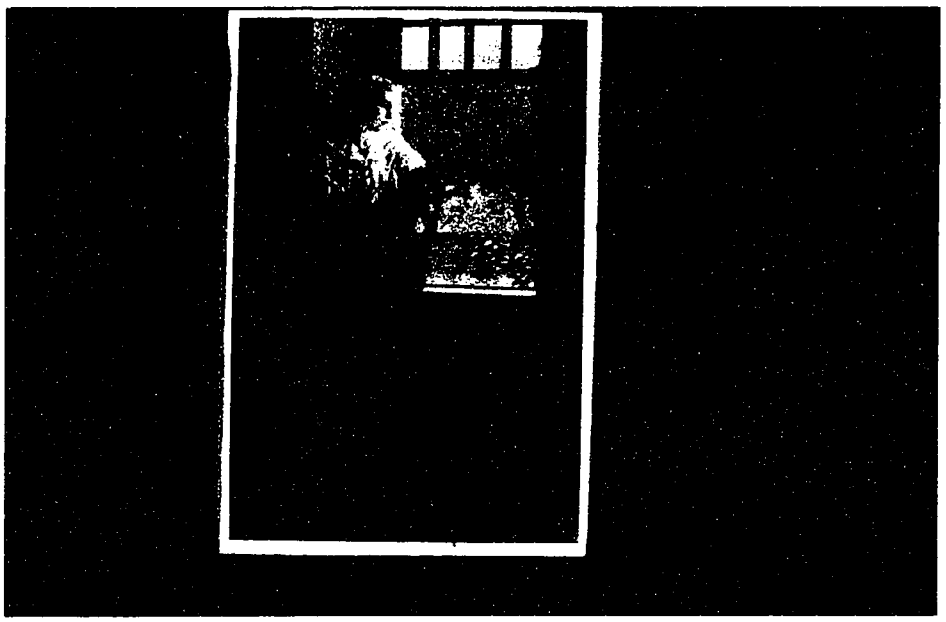


Figure 30: Winslow Homer, *Reverie* (*Female Figure in Black Near a Window*), 1872, oil on canvas, 22 x 13 ½, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

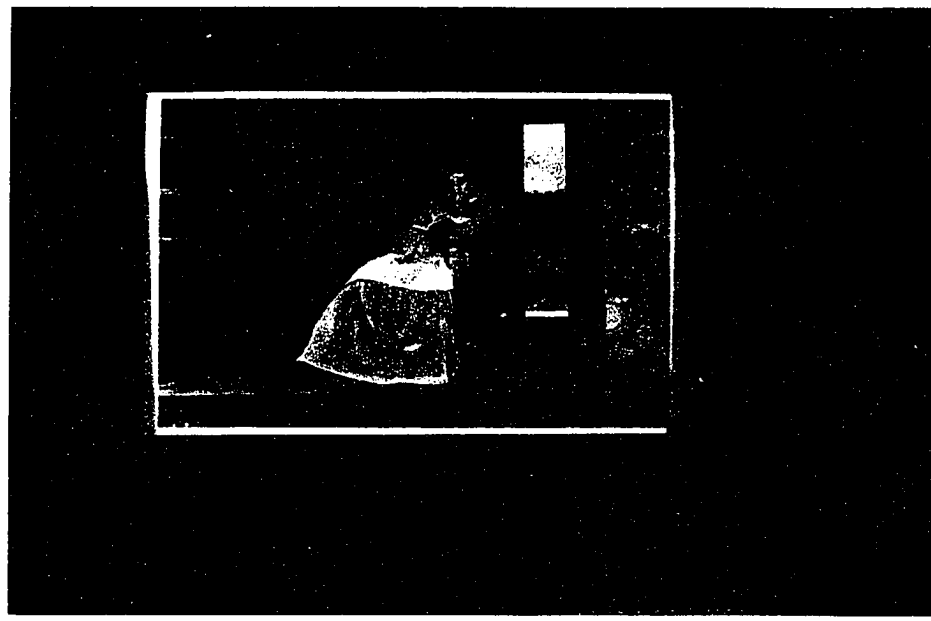


Figure 31: Winslow Homer, *Girl Reading on a Porch*, 1872, oil on panel, 6 x 8 ¼, private collection

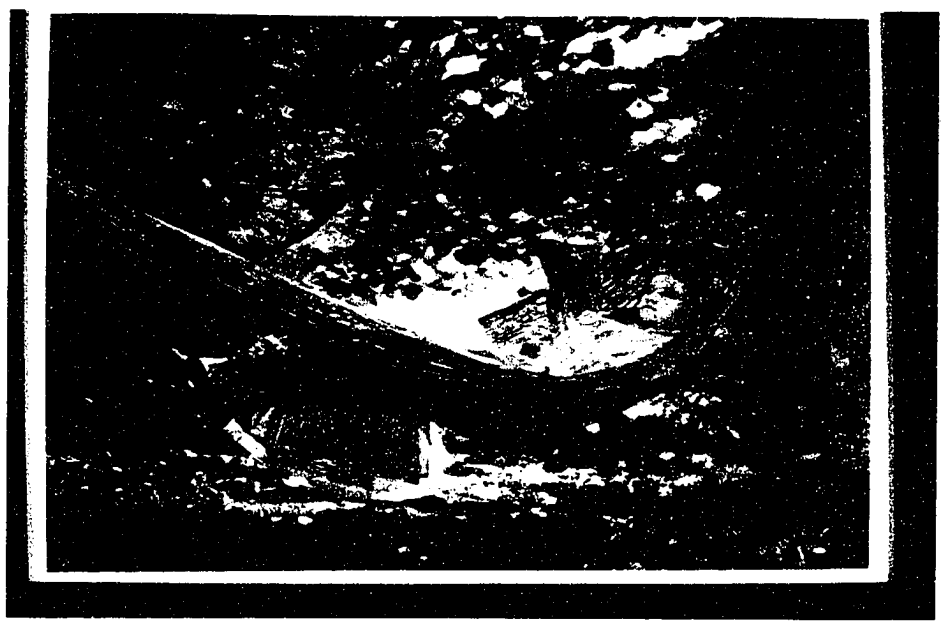


Figure 32: Winslow Homer, *Sunlight and* Shadow (*Girl in Hammock*), c. 1872, oil on canvas, 15 ¾ x 22 ½, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

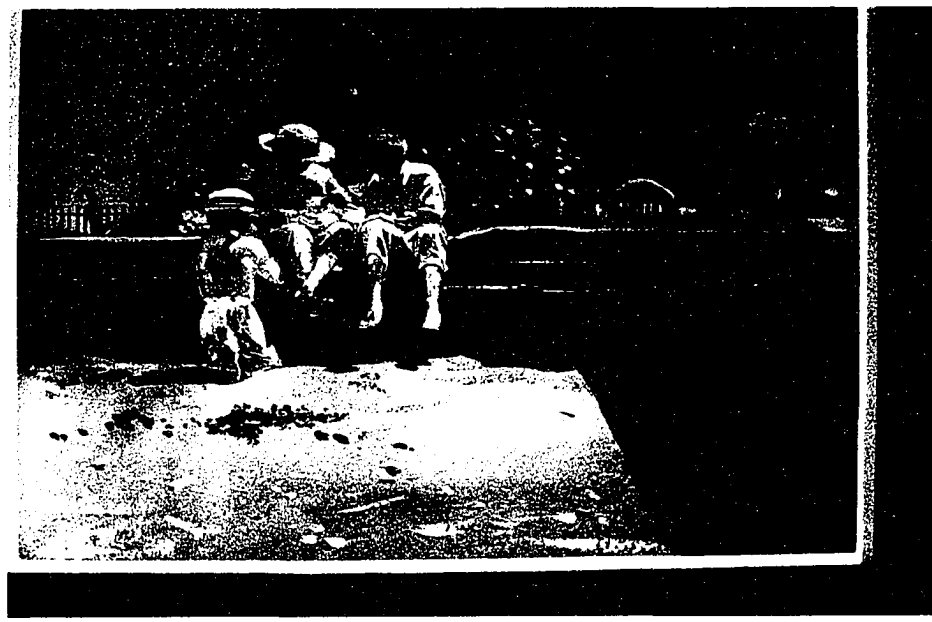


Figure 33: Winslow Homer, *Boys and Kitten*, 1873, watercolor on paper, 9 5/8 x 13 5/8, Worcester Art Museum



Figure 34: Winslow Homer, *Longing (Waiting for Dad)*, 1873, watercolor and gouache on paper, 9 ¾ x 13 5/8, Mills College Collection, Gift of Jane C. Tolman

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

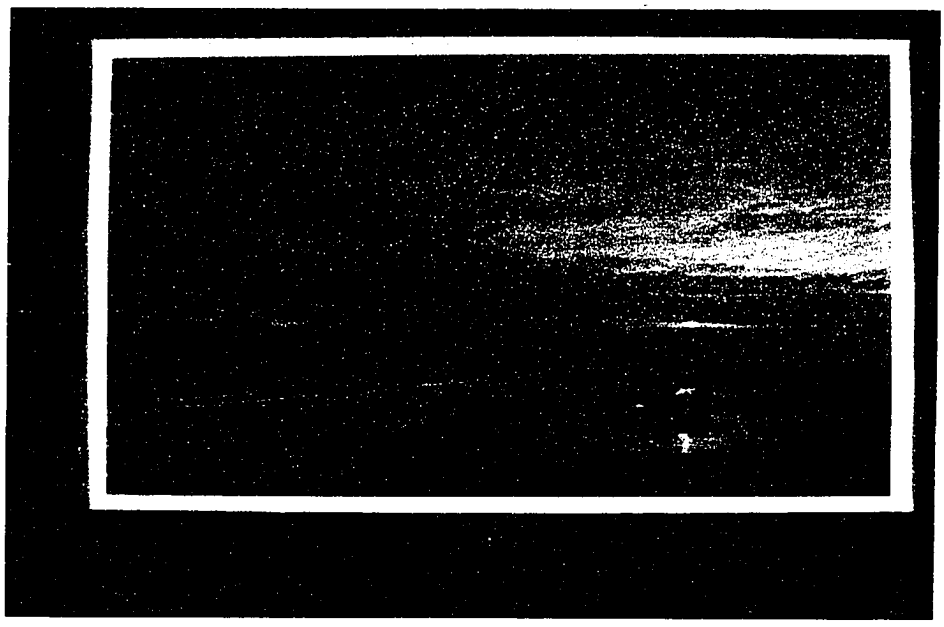


Figure 35: William Trost Richards, *High Tide at Atlantic City*, 1873, opaque watercolor on paper, 8 7/16 x 13 5/8, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Purchased with funds given by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard L. Milberg



Figure 36: Winslow Homer, *School Time*, 1874, oil on canvas, 13 x 19 ¼, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

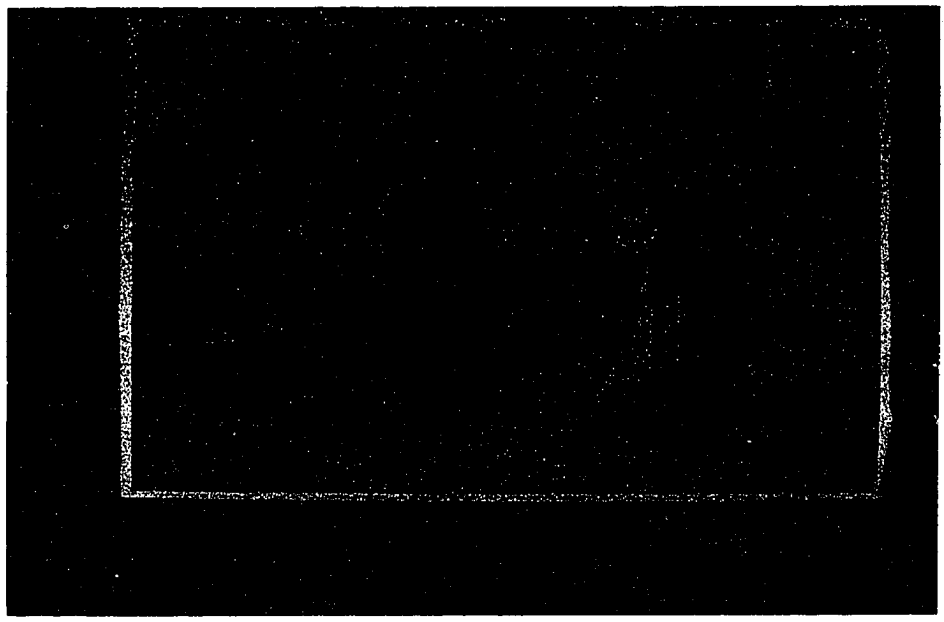


Figure 37: Winslow Homer, *Dad's Coming*, 1873, oil on panel, 9 x 13 5/8, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon



Figure 38: Winslow Homer, *A Temperance Meeting*, 1874, oil on canvas, 20 ¾ x 30 1/8, Philadelphia Museum of Art, John H. McFadden, Jr. Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 39: August F. A. Schenck, *Lost—Souvenir of Auvergne*, c. 1874, oil on canvas, location unknown, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

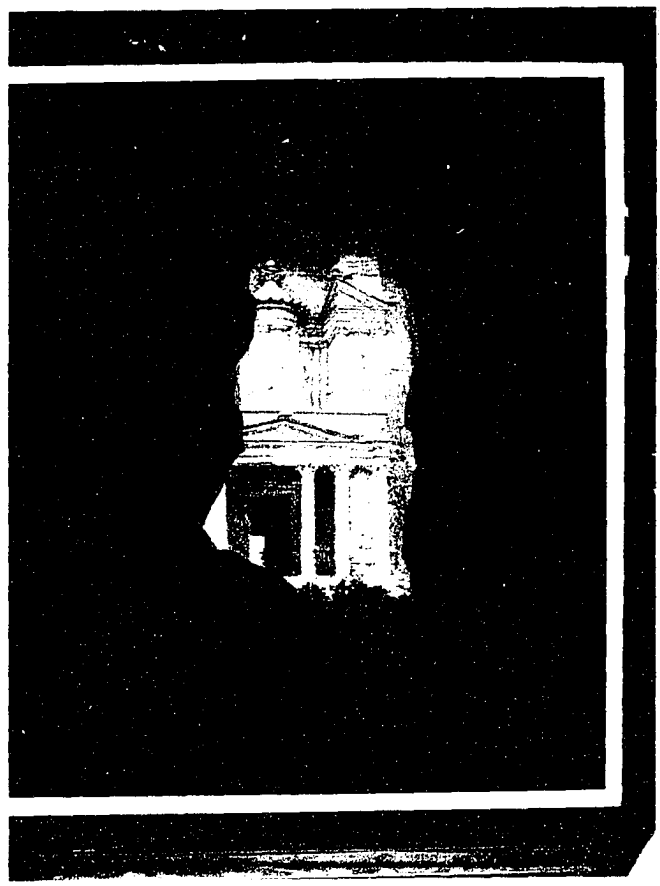


Figure 40: Frederic Church, *Petra*, 1874, oil on canvas, 60 ½ x 50 ½, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

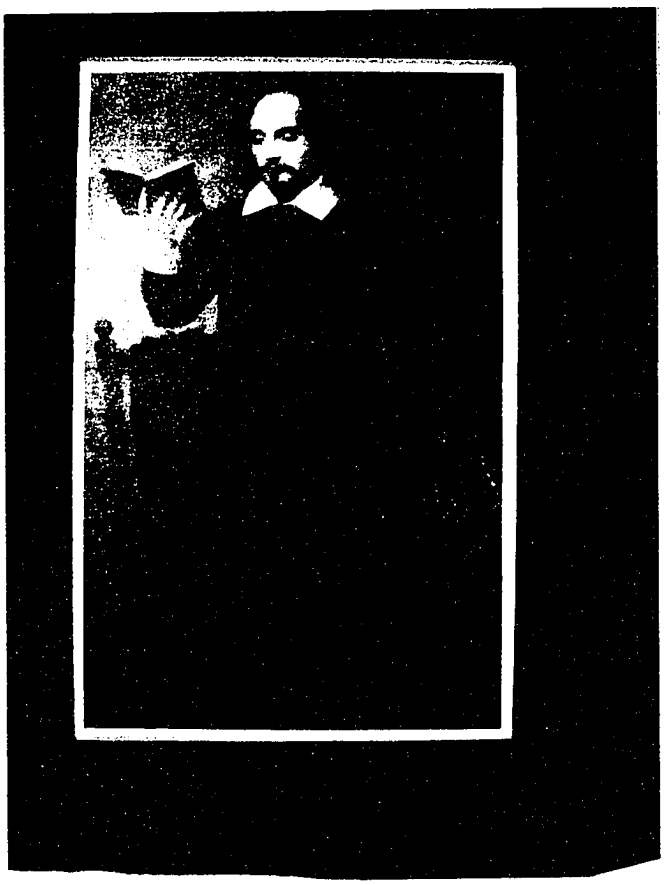


Figure 41: William Page, *Shakespeare Reading*, 1873-74, oil on canvas, 52 x 42, Folger Library, Washington, D.C.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

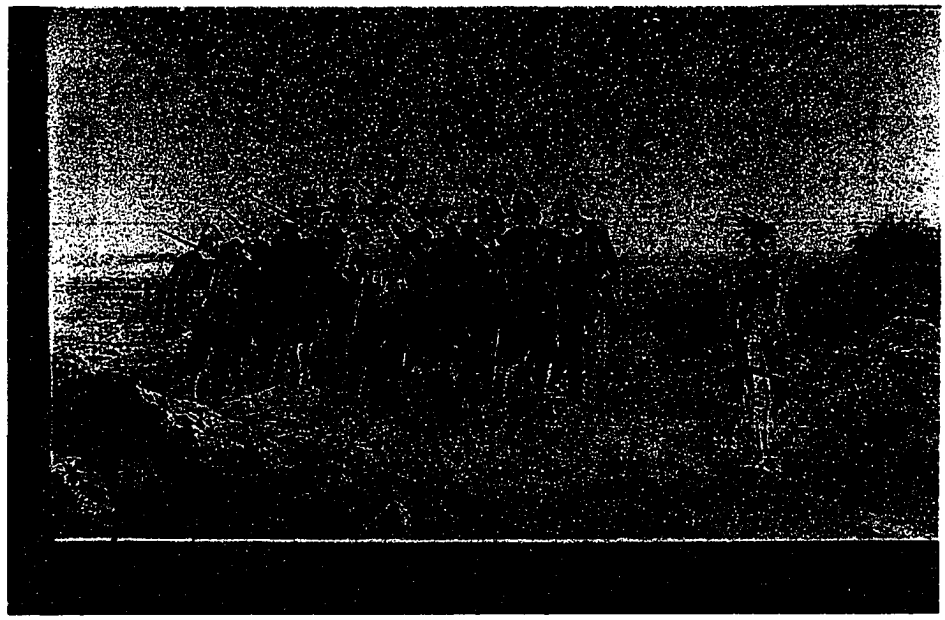


Figure 42: engraving after George Boughton, *Miles Standish and His Men* (*The March of Miles Standish*), location unknown; photograph courtesy of National Museum of American Art Library



Figure 43: Seymour Joseph Guy, *The William H. Vanderbilt Family* (*Going to the Opera*), 1873, oil on canvas, 60 x 72, Biltmore House and Gardens, Asheville, North Carolina

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 44: Julian Scott, *Turkey Shooting,* wood engraving after the watercolor, *Harper's Weekly*, January 17, 1874, illustrated in Robert J. Titterton, *Julian Scott: Artist of the Civil War and Native America* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 1997), p. 12

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

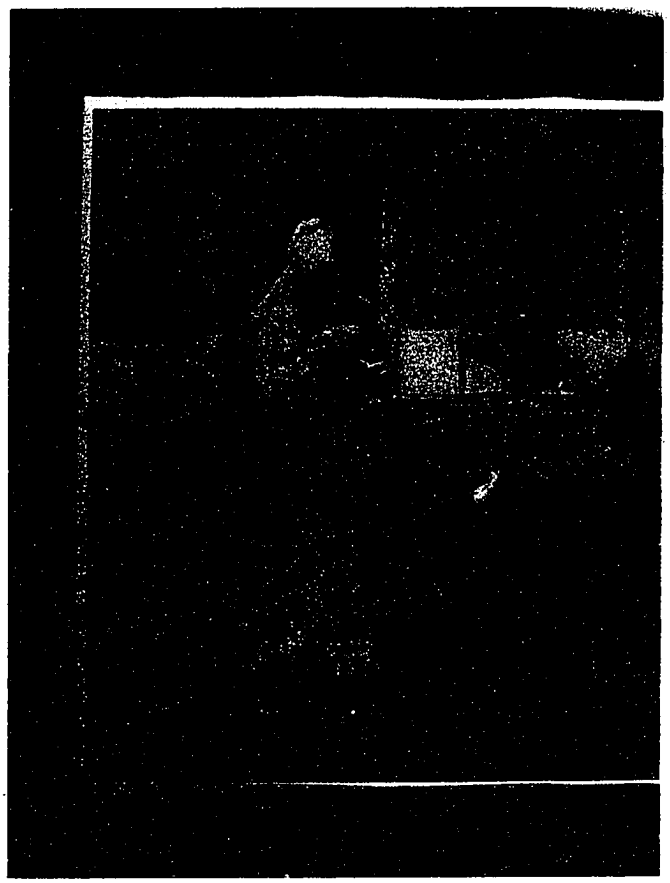


Figure 45: Winslow Homer, *The Sick Chicken*, 1874, watercolor, gouache, and pencil on paper, 9 ¾ x 7 ¾, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1994.59.21

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

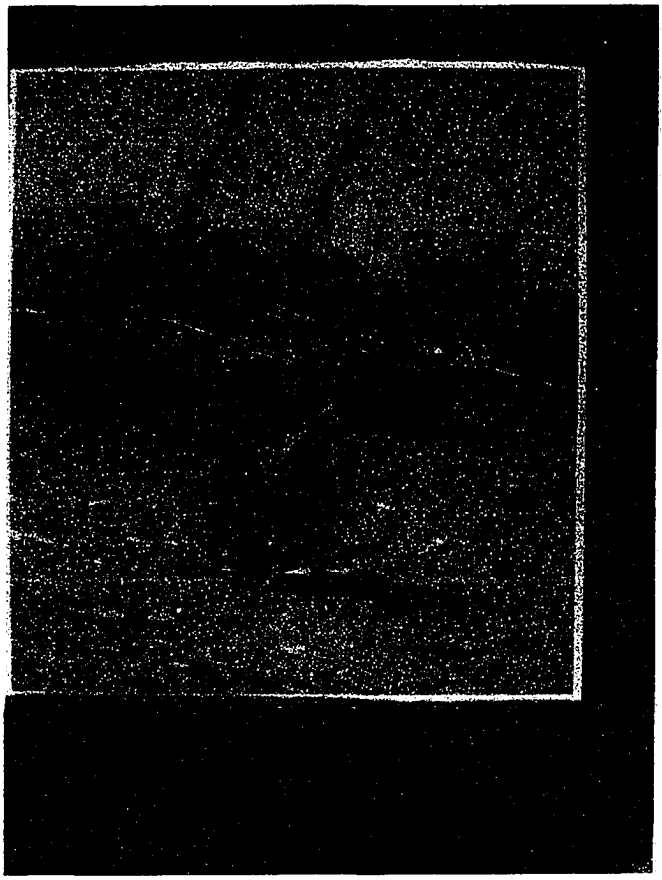


Figure 46: Winslow Homer, *A Basket of Clams*, 1873, watercolor on paper, 11 ½ x 9 ¾, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

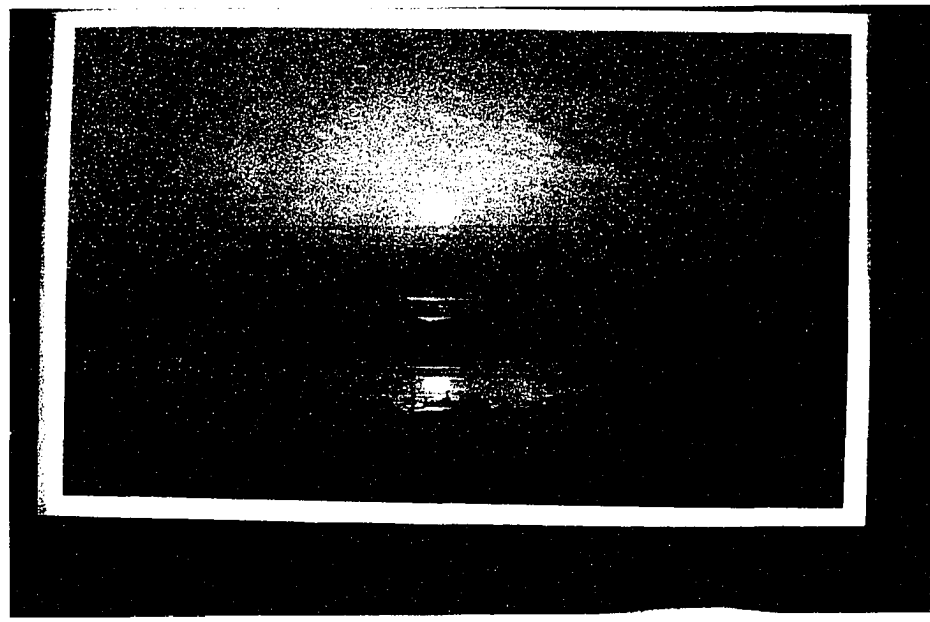


Figure 47: William Trost Richards, *Lake Winnispesaukee at Weir's Landing, Nocturne*, 1874, watercolor and gouache on paper, 8 7/8 x 13 5/8, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Gift in memory of Grace Richards Conant

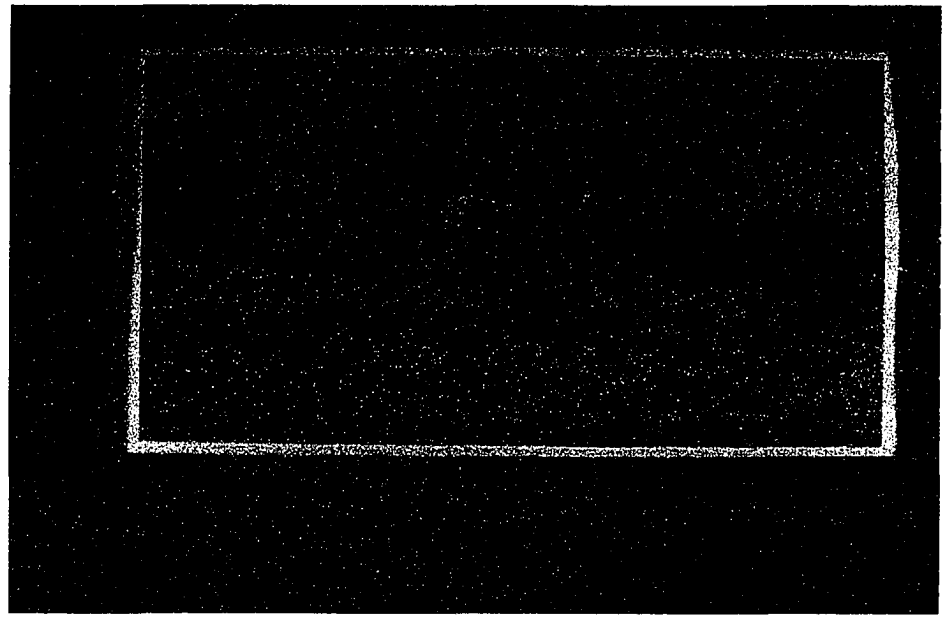


Figure 48: Winslow Homer, *Riding at Anchor* (*Boy with Anchor*), 1873, watercolor on paper, 7 5/8 x 13 ¾, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Norman O. Stone and Ella A. Stone Memorial Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

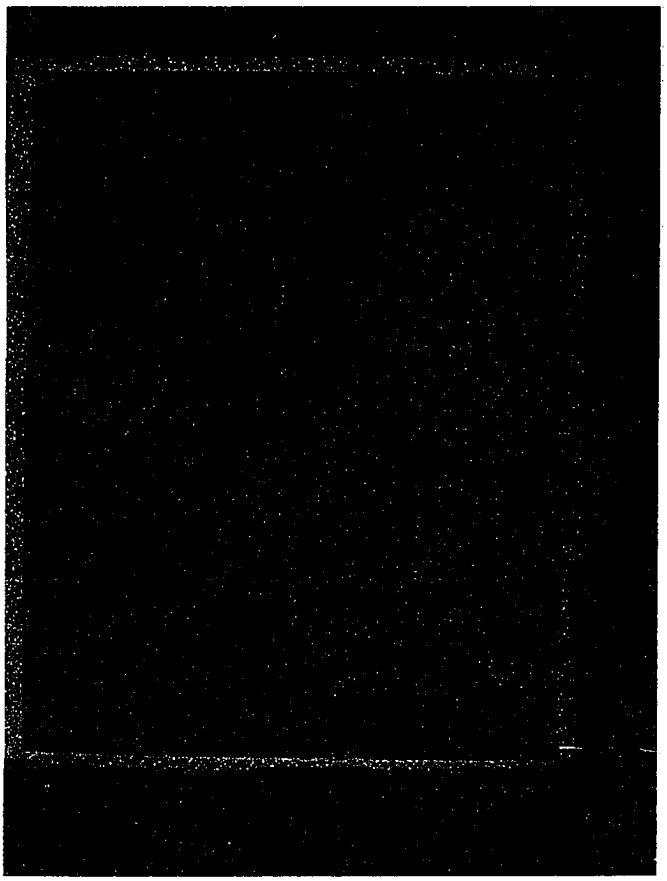


Figure 49: Winslow Homer, *How Many Eggs?*, 1873, watercolor on paper, 12 ½ x 9 ½, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

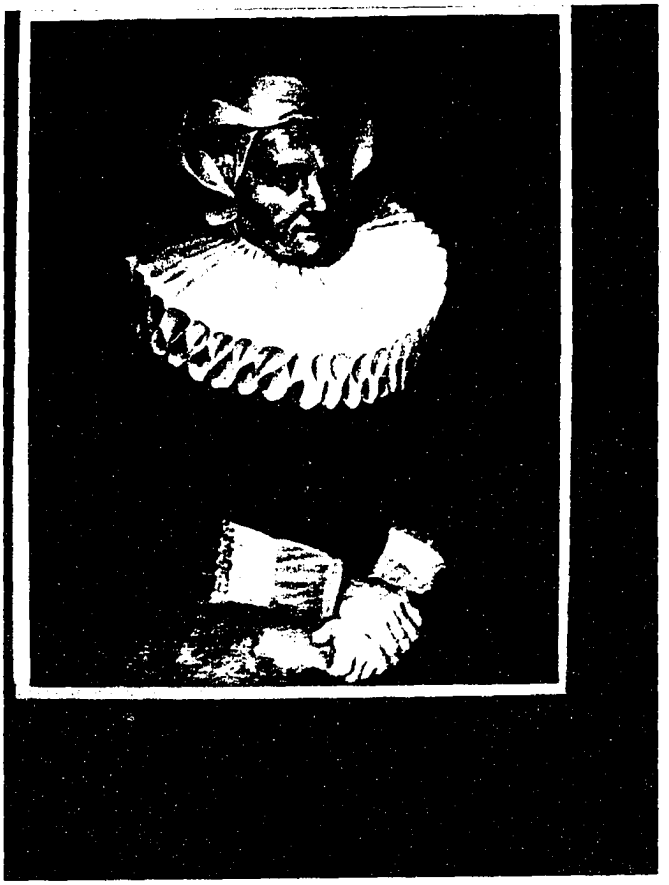


Figure 50: William Merritt Chase, *The Dowager*, 1874, oil on canvas, 36 x 24, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 51: Frederick Bridgman, *The American Circus in Brittany*, 1869-70, oil on canvas, 23 x 48, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 52: John George Brown, *Gathering Autumn Leaves*, 1875, oil on canvas, 30 1/8 x 25, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

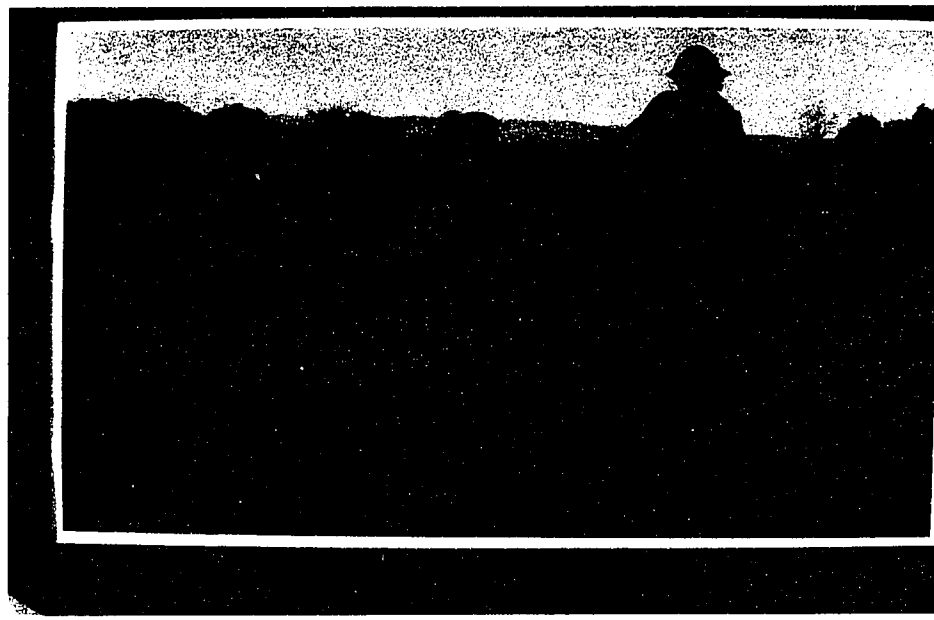


Figure 53: Winslow Homer, *Milking Time*, 1875, oil on canvas, 24 x 38 ¼, Delaware Art Museum, Gift of the Friends of Art and other donors

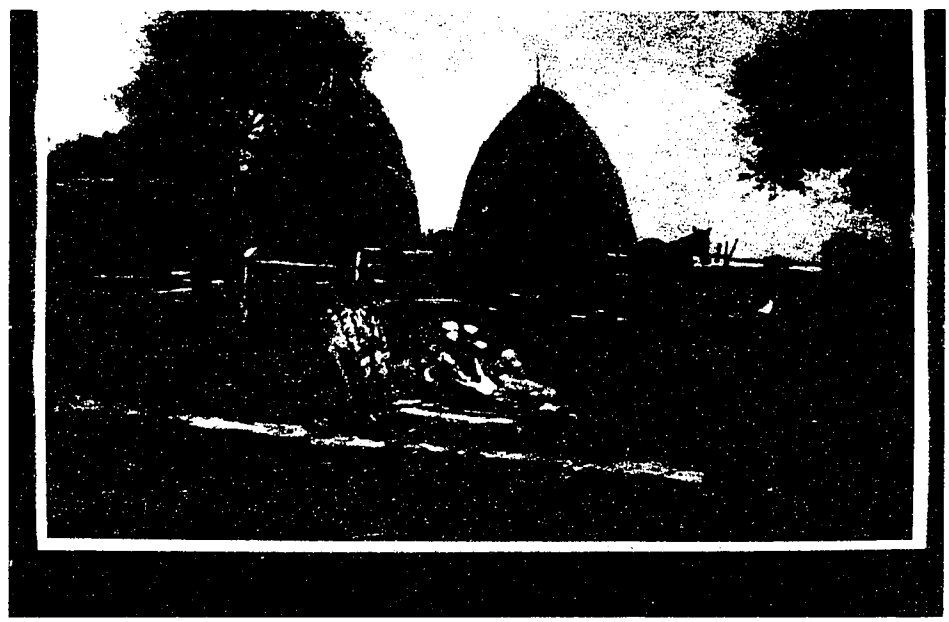


Figure 54: Winslow Homer, *Haystacks and Children*, 1874, oil on canvas, 15 ½ x 22 ½, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 55: Winslow Homer, *Uncle Ned at Home*, 1875, oil on canvas, 14 ¼ x 22, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 56: Enoch Wood Perry, *Old Story*, 1875, oil on canvas, location unknown; illustrated in George William Sheldon, *American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1879), p. 69

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

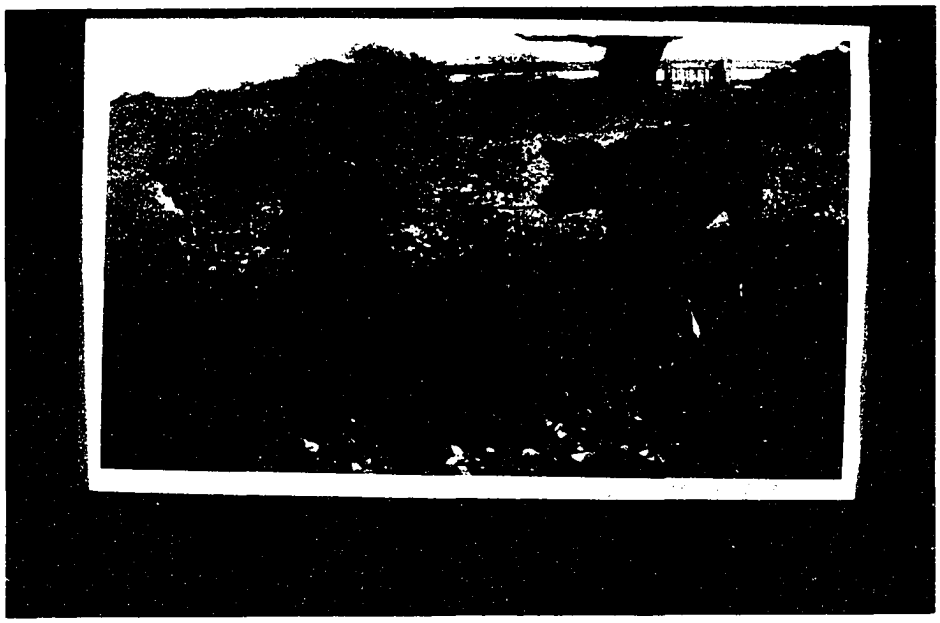


Figure 57: Winslow Homer, *Unruly Calf*, 1875, oil on canvas, 24 x 28, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

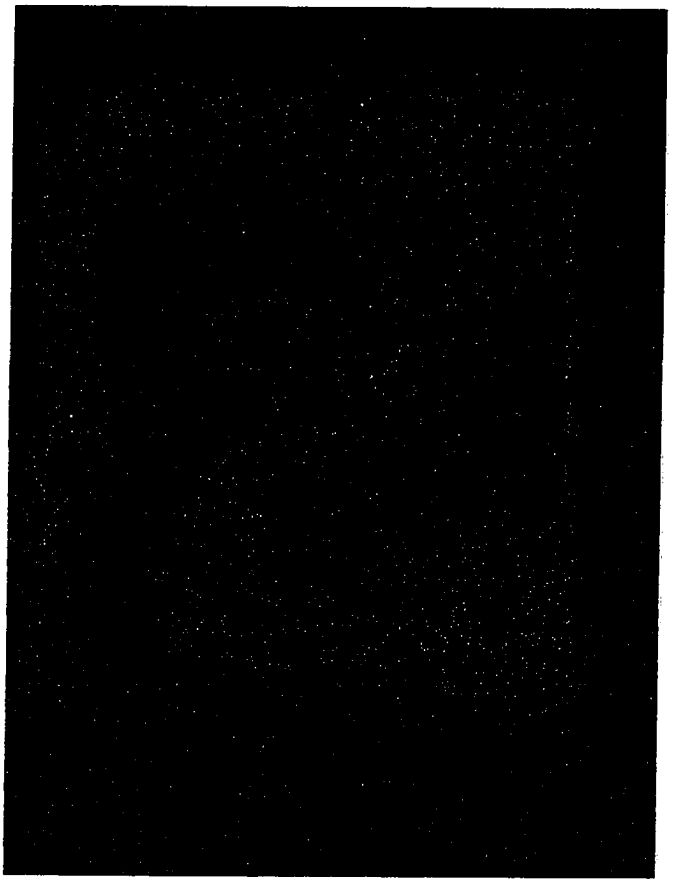


Figure 58: Winslow Homer, *Fiction,* 1875, watercolor on paper, 11 x 10, Detroit Institute of Arts

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

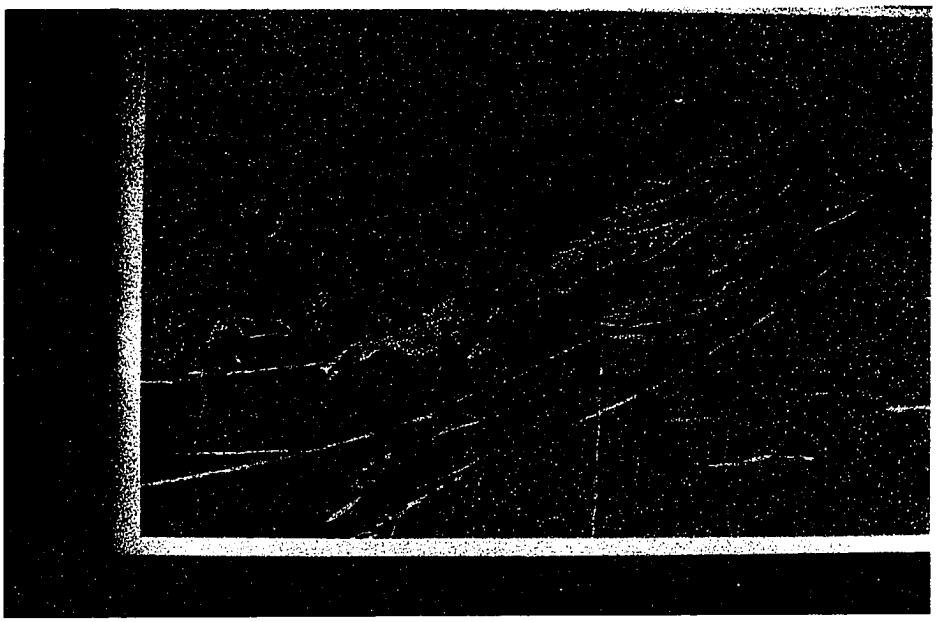


Figure 59: Winslow Homer, *Furling the Jib,* c. 1875, pencil and Chinese white on paper, 8 ¼ x 12 ¼, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

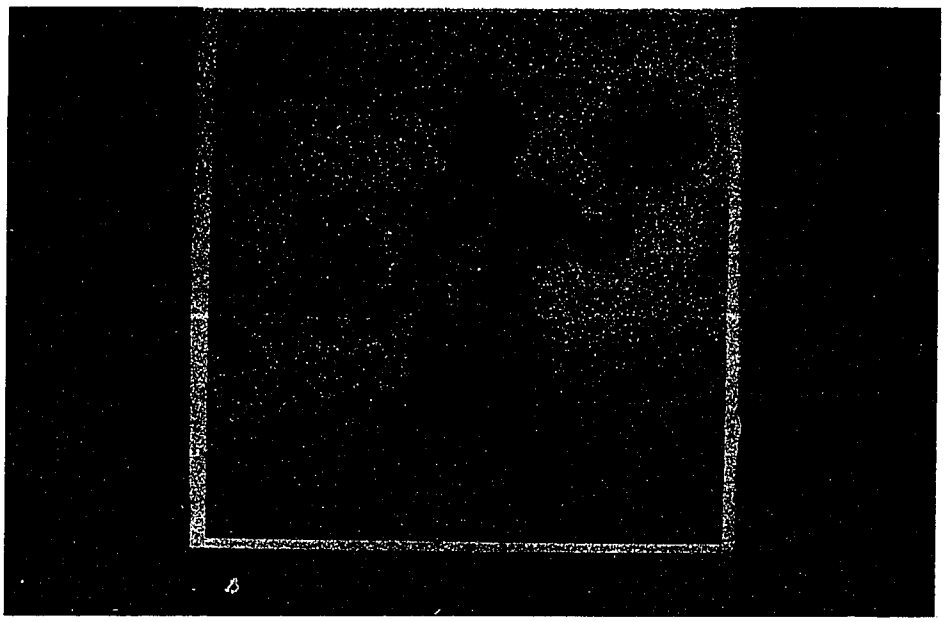


Figure 60: Winslow Homer, *Busy Bee*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 9 ¾ x 8 7/8, Berry-Hill Galleries, New York

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 61: Winslow Homer, *Contraband*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 7 x 5 7/8, Canajoharie Art Gallery and Library, New York

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 62: Winslow Homer, *Sunflower for Teacher*, 1875, watercolor on paper, 7 x 5 7/8, Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

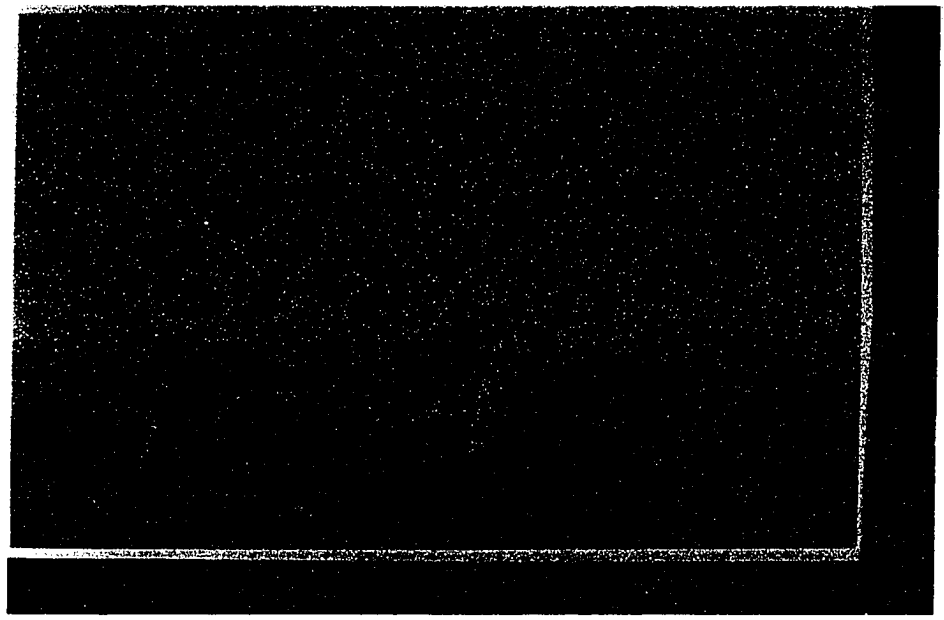


Figure 63: Thomas Eakins, *Whistling For Plover*, 1874, watercolor and gouache on paper, 11 5/16 x 16 11/16, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Museum Collection Fund

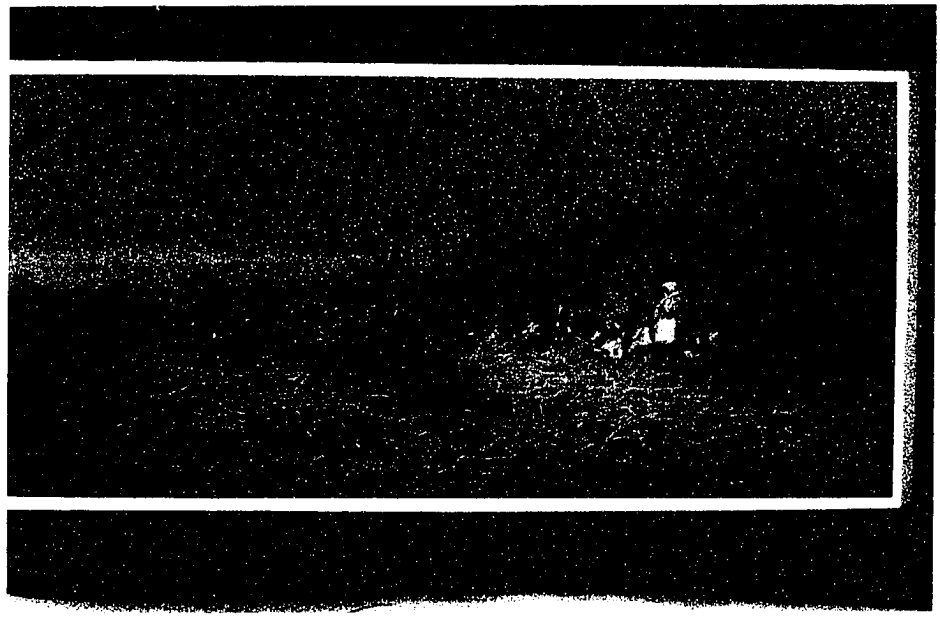


Figure 64: Eastman Johnson, *Husking Bee, Island of Nantucket*, 1876, oil on canvas, 27 ¼ x 54 ¼, The Art Institute of Chicago, Potter Palmer Collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

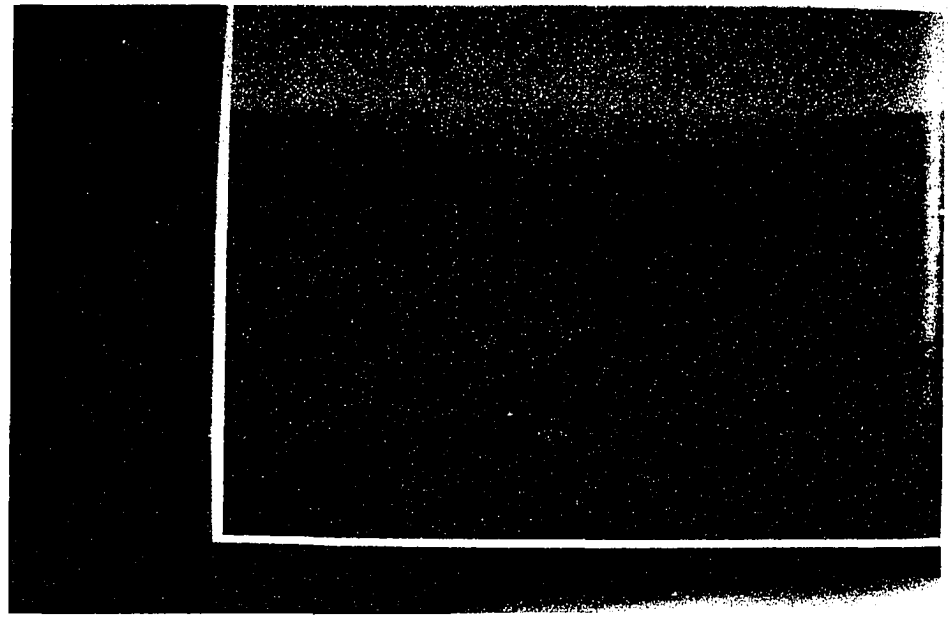


Figure 65: John La Farge, *Paradise Valley (New England Pasture Land)*, 1866-68, oil on canvas, 32 ½ x 42, private collection

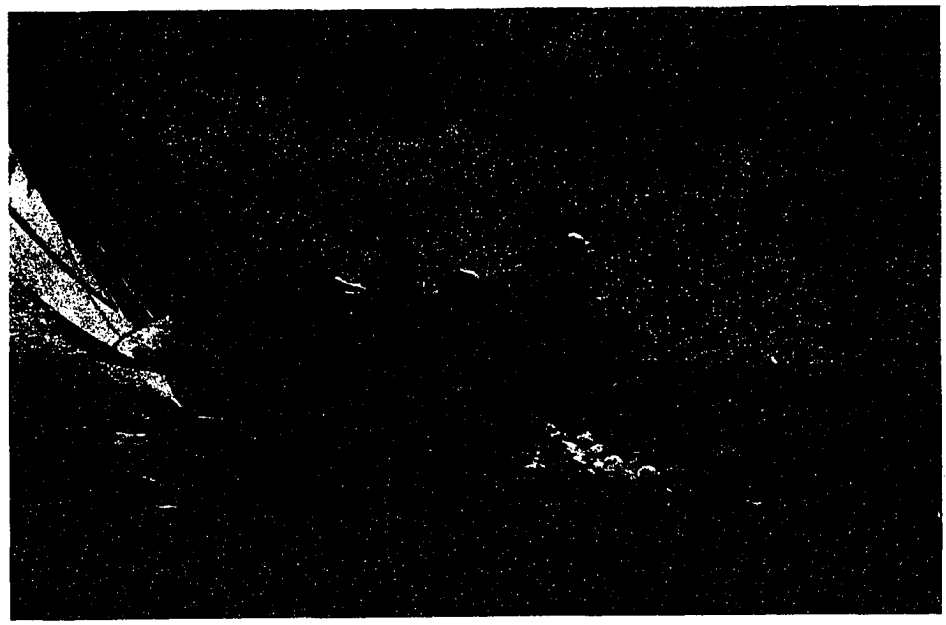


Figure 66: Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation, 1943.13.1

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

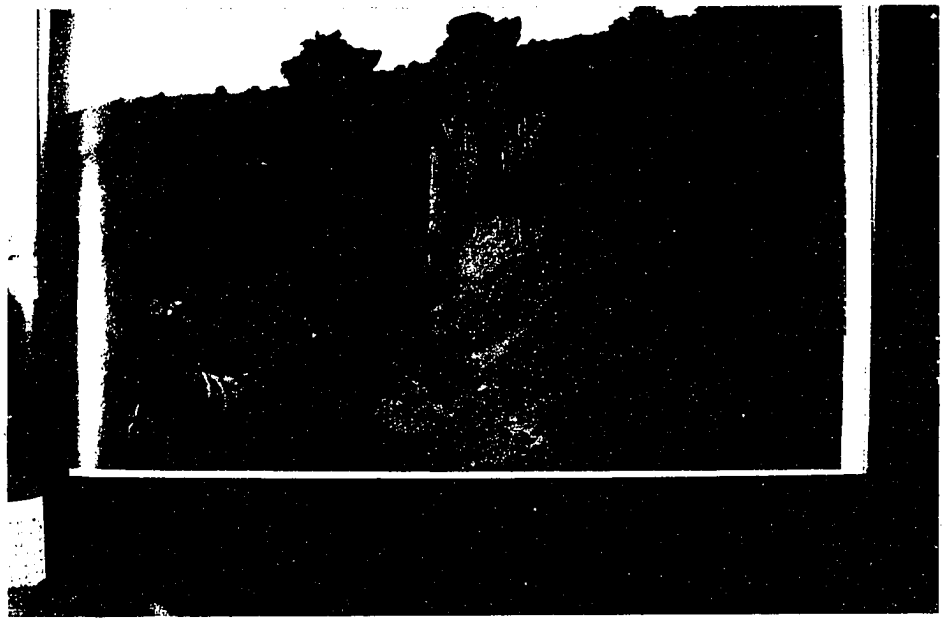


Figure 67: Winslow Homer, *Over the Hills* (*Rab and the Girls*), 1875, oil on canvas, 24 x 38, The Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee

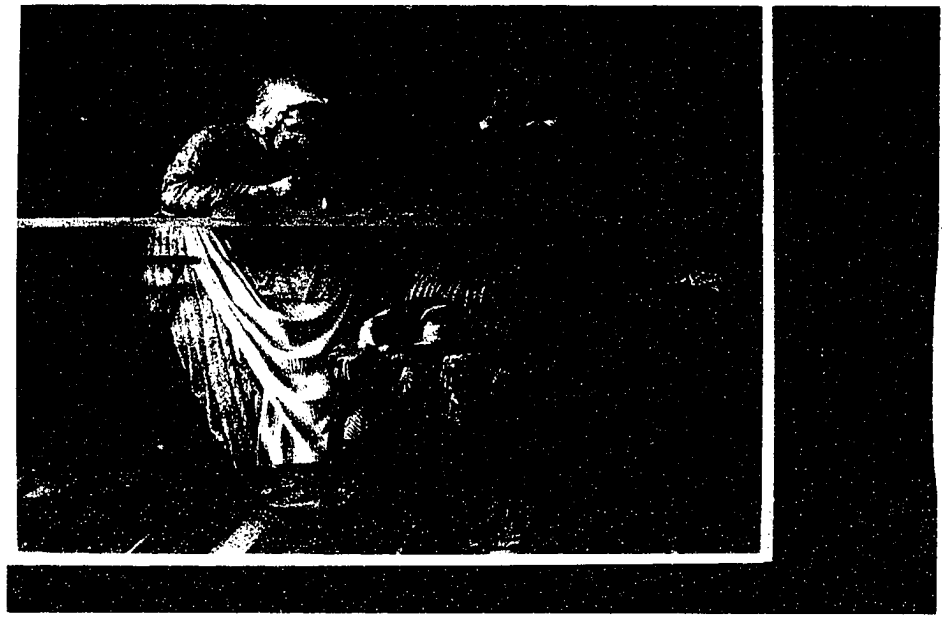


Figure 68: Enoch Wood Perry, *A Quilting Party*, 1876, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 ¼, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

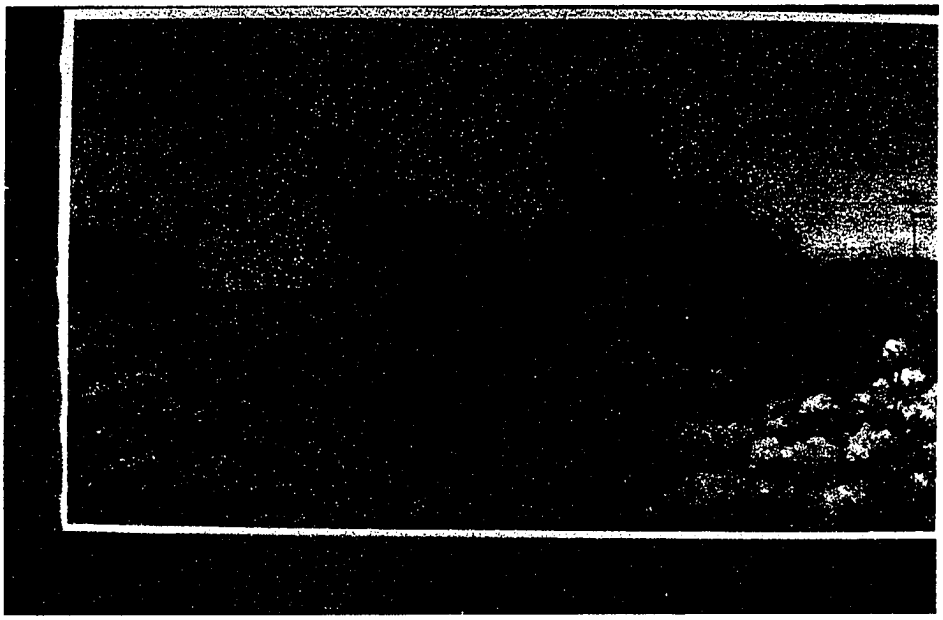


Figure 69: Winslow Homer, *The Cotton Pickers*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 x 38, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Acquisition made possible by the Museum Trustees

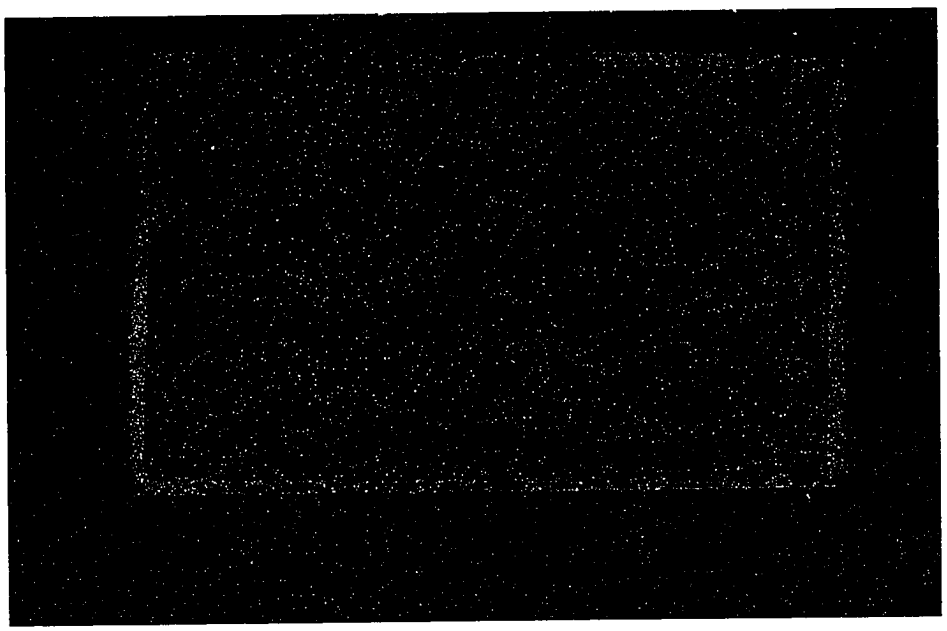


Figure 70: William Trost Richards, *A Sketch*, c. 1877, watercolor and gouache on paper; location unknown; illustrated in Linda S. Ferber, "William Trost Richards (1833-1905)," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1980, p. 550

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

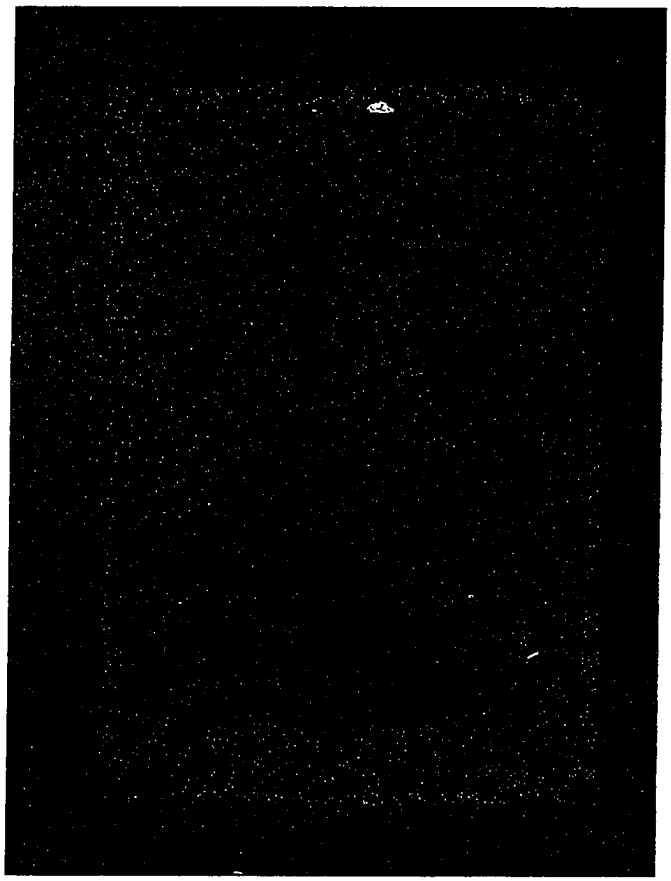


Figure 71: Winslow Homer, *Woman Peeling a Lemon* (*Lemon*), 1876, watercolor on paper, 18 7/8 x 12, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

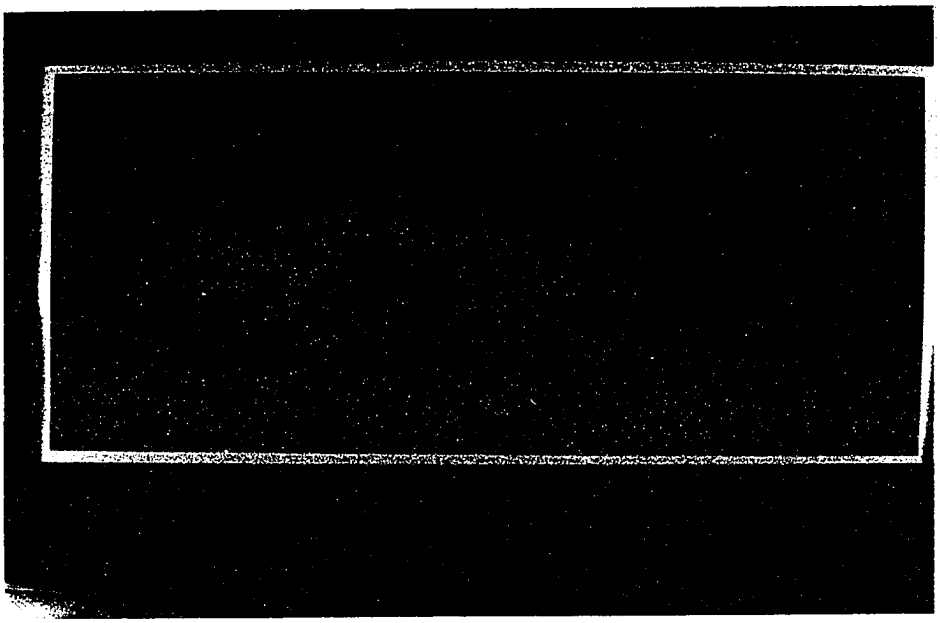


Figure 72: Winslow Homer, *The New Novel* (*Book; Reading; Fiction*), 1877, watercolor and gouache on paper, 9 ½ x 20 7/16, Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, The Horace P. Wright Collection

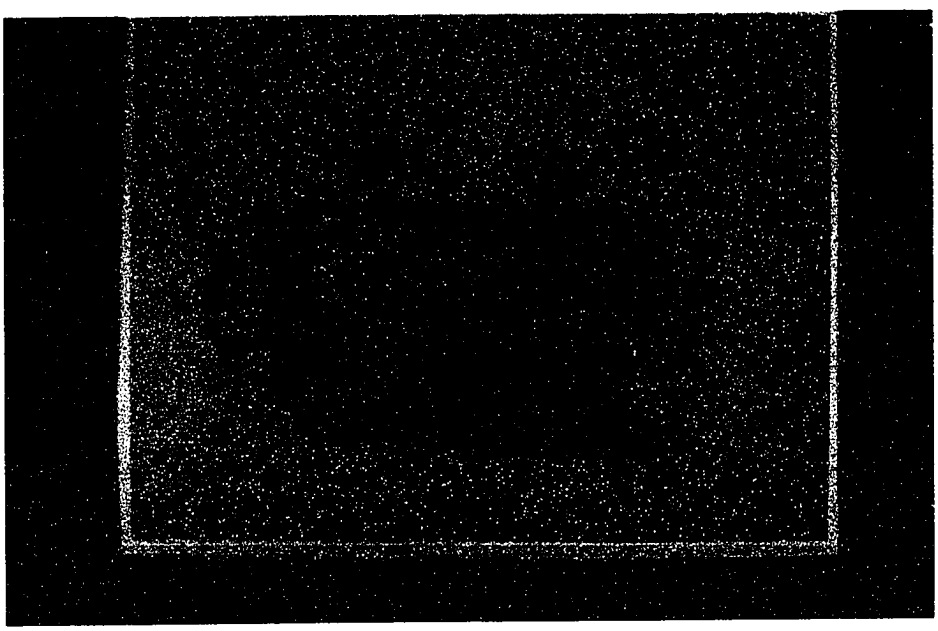


Figure 73: Winslow Homer, *Backgammon*, 1877, watercolor on paper, 22 ¼ x 26 3/8, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3d

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

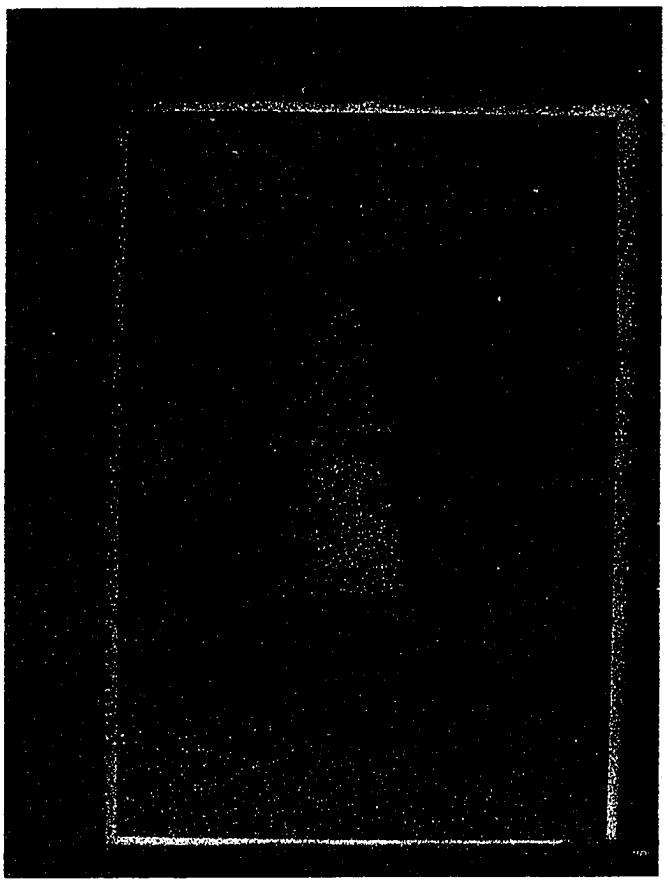


Figure 74: Winslow Homer, *Blackboard*, 1877, watercolor on paper, 19 ¾ x 12 ¾, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift (Partial and Promised) of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr., in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, 1990.60.1

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

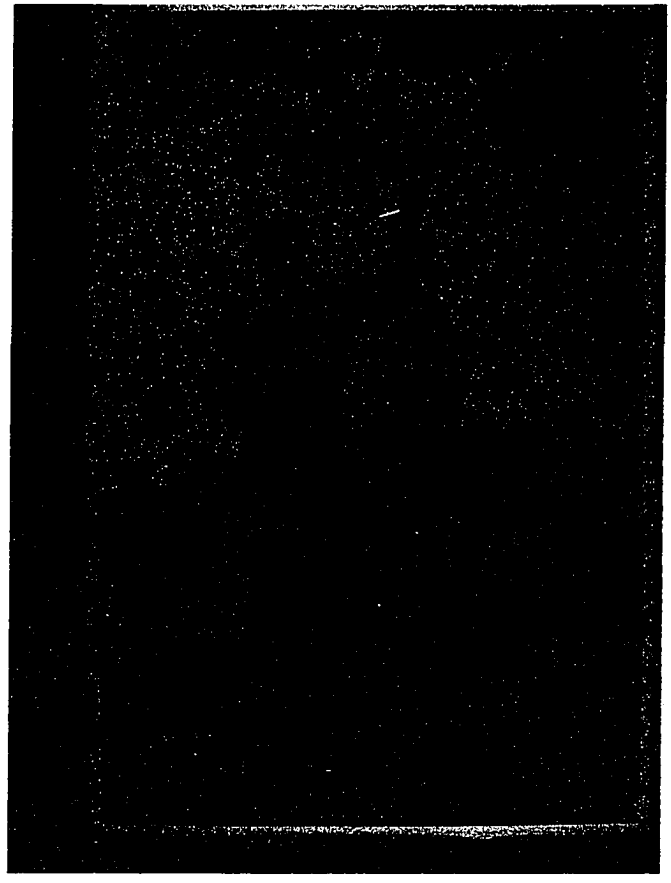


Figure 75: Winslow Homer, *Answering the Horn*, 1876, oil on canvas, 38 1/ 8 x 24 3/8, Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan, Hackley Picture Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

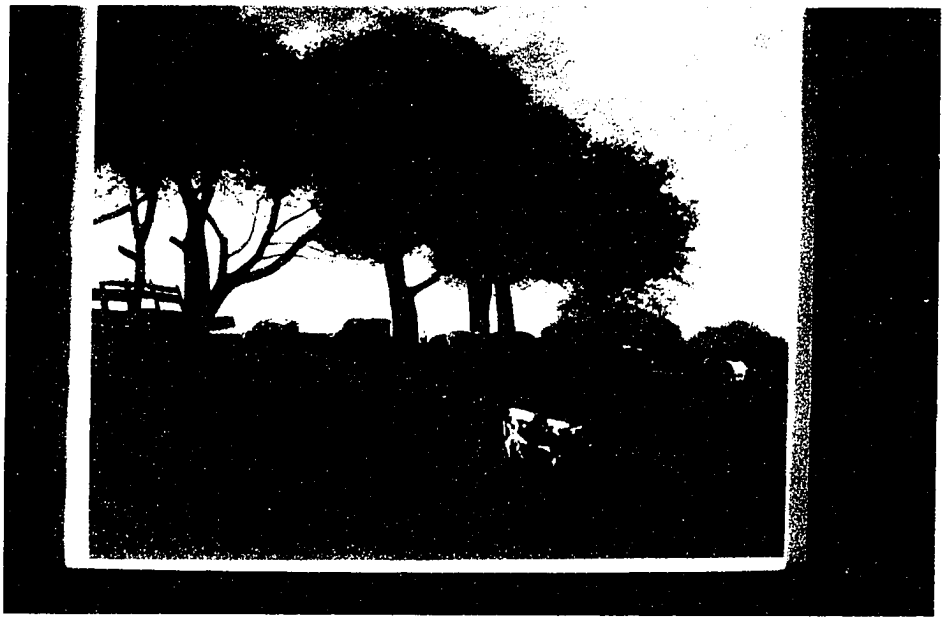


Figure 76: Winslow Homer, *Twilight at Leeds* (*Landscape*), 1876, oil on canvas, 24 x 28, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of David P. Kimball



Figure 77: Frank Duveneck, *The Turkish Page*, 1876, oil on canvas, 45 x 59 ¾, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 78: Walter Shirlaw, *Sheep Shearing in the Bavarian Highlands*, by 1877, oil on canvas, 50 x 84, private collection, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

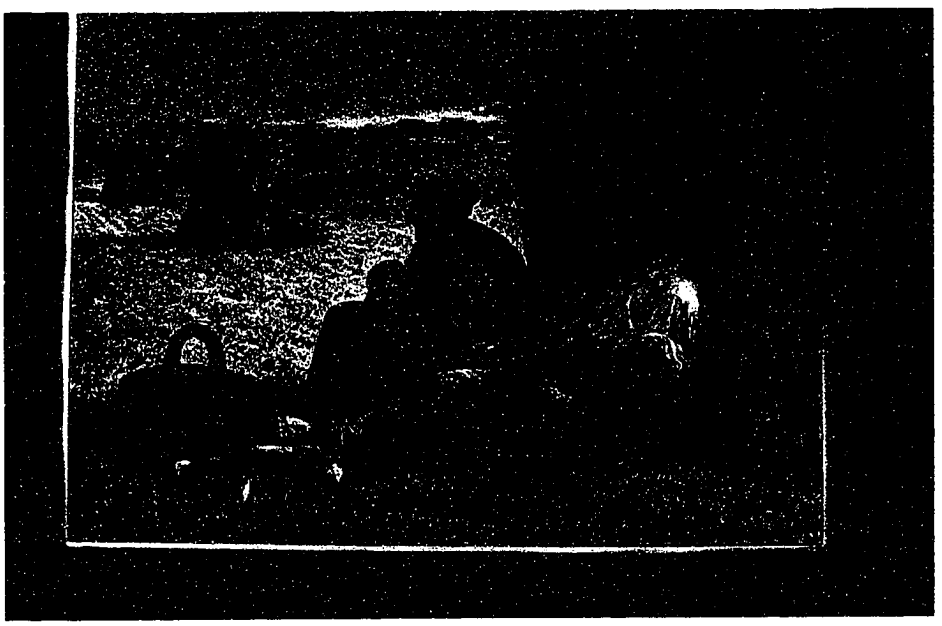


Figure 79: engraving after Wyatt Eaton, *Harvesters at Rest*, c. 1877, oil on canvas, location unknown; illustrated in G. W. Sheldon, *American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1879), p. 170

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

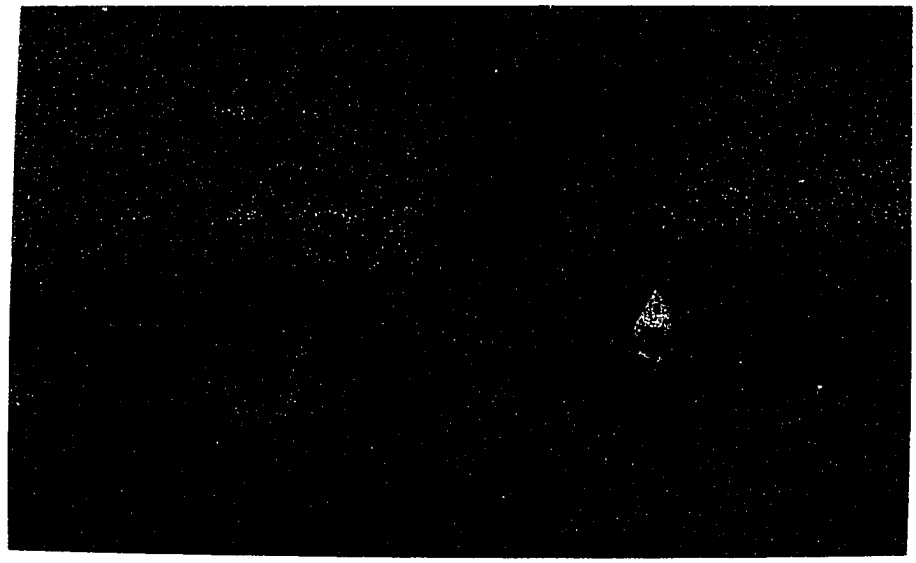


Figure 80: George Inness, *Autumn* (*The Homestead*), c. 1877, oil on canvas, 36 ½ x 54 ½, The Haggin Museum, Stockton, California



Figure 81: Jules Breton, *The Recall of the Gleaners*, 1859, oil on canvas, 36 x 70, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Arras

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

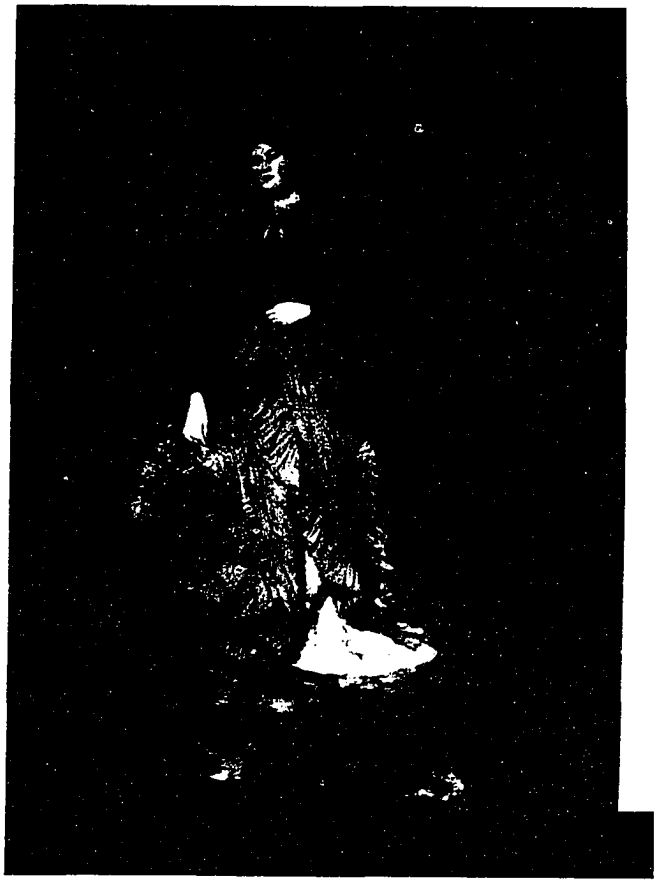


Figure 82: Winslow Homer, *Autumn*, 1877, oil on canvas, 38 ¼ x 24 3/16, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1985.64.22

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

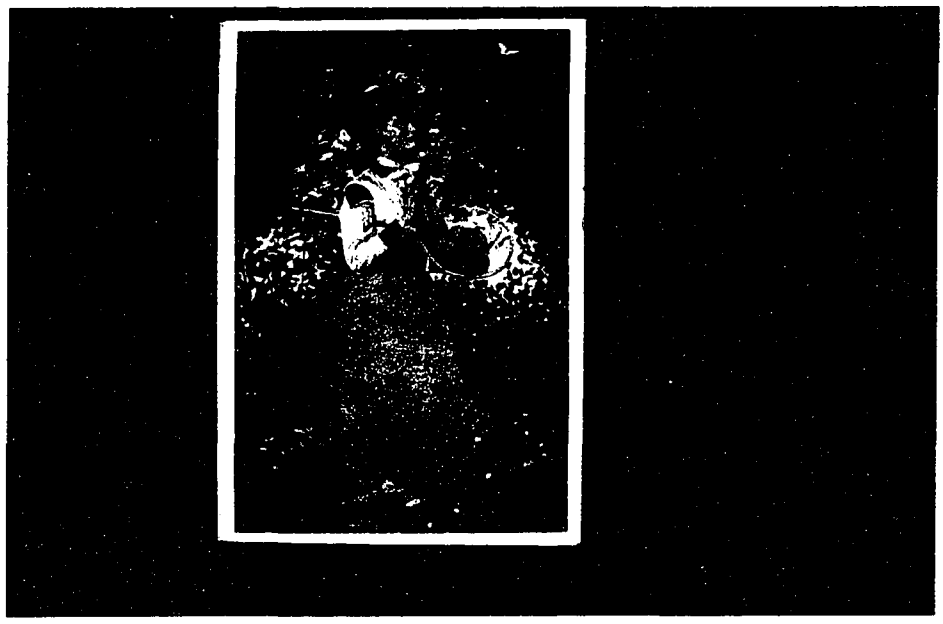


Figure 83: Winslow Homer, *Summer (Butterfly Girl)*, 1878, oil on board, 37 ½ x 23 ½, New Britain Museum of American Art, Friends of William F. Brooks

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

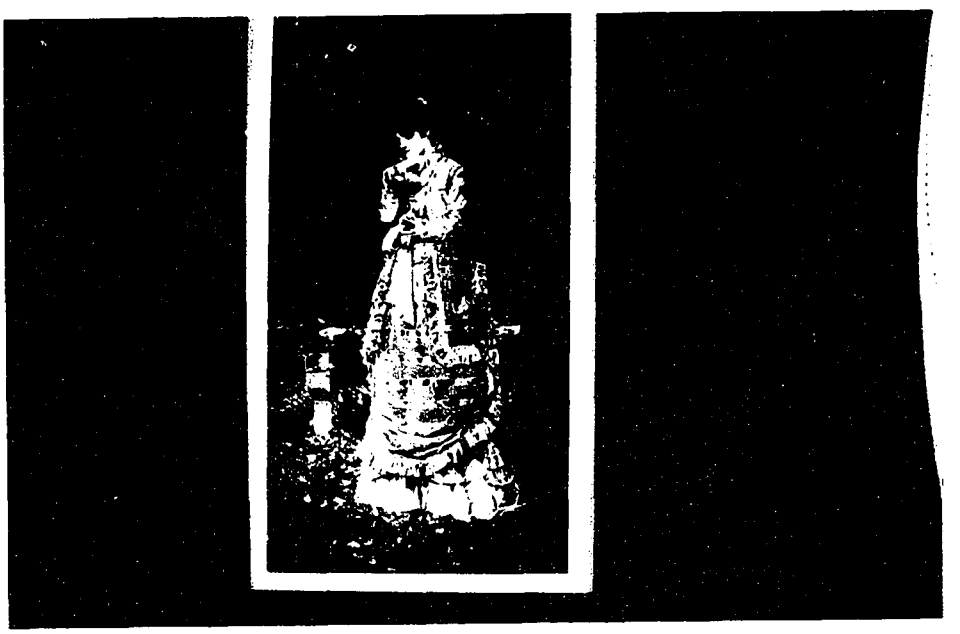


Figure 84: Alfred Stevens, *Fall*, c. 1878, oil on canvas, 46 9/16 x 23 5/16, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

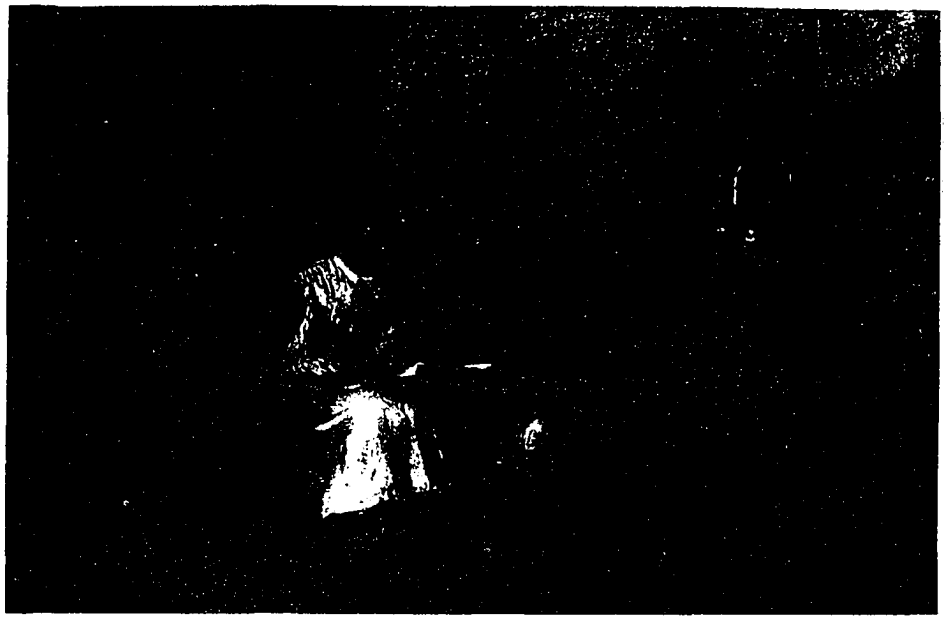


Figure 85: Winslow Homer, *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, 1877, oil on canvas, 18 x 24, Cincinnati Art Museum, John J. Emery Fund



Figure 86: Winslow Homer, *A Visit From the Old Mistress*, 1876, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 1/8, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of William T. Evans, 1909.7.28

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

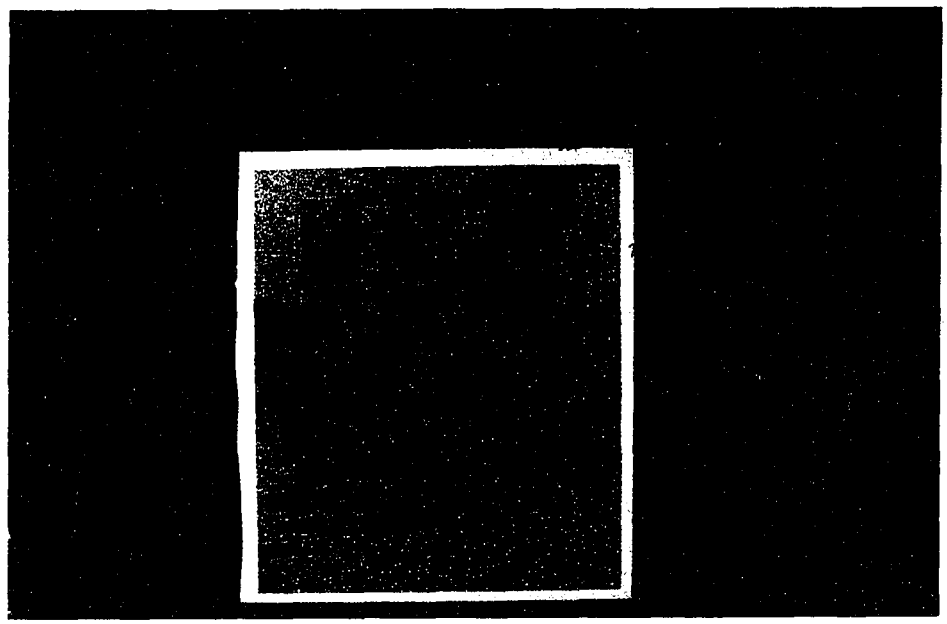


Figure 87: Thomas Waterman Wood, *Sunday Morning*, c.1875, oil on canvas, 14 x 10, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

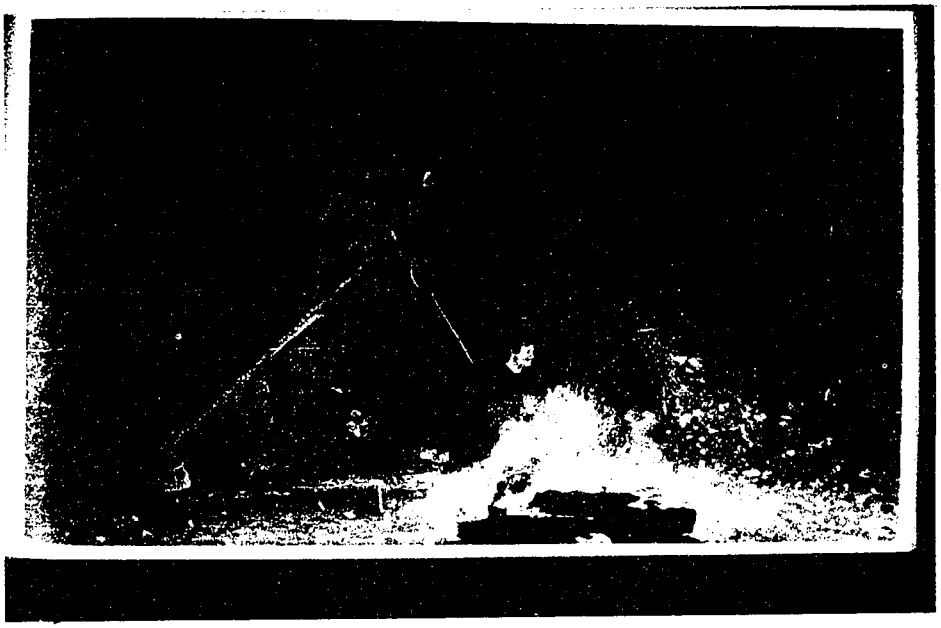


Figure 88: Winslow Homer, *Camp Fire*, 1877/80, oil on canvas, 23 ¾ x 38 1/8, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Henry Keney Pomeroy

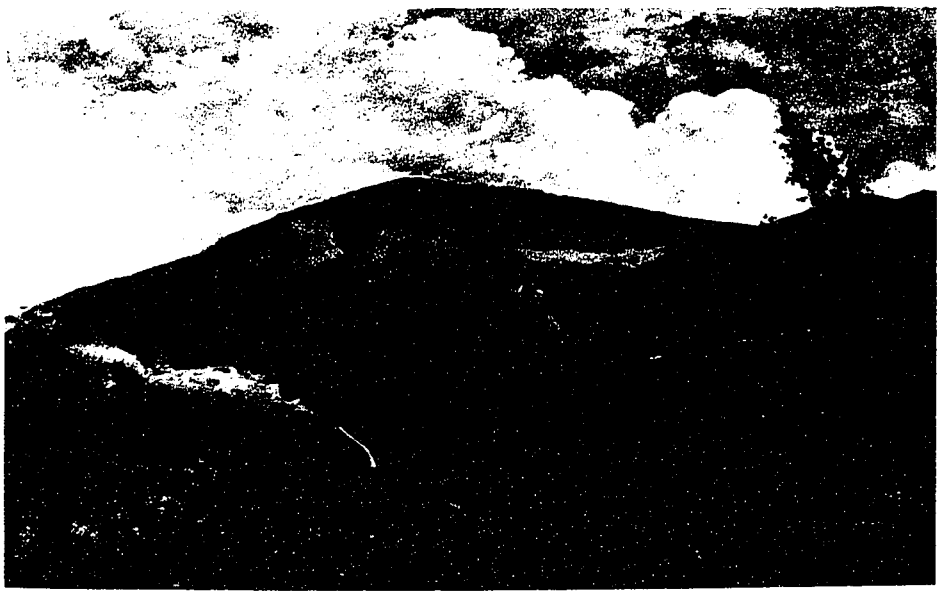


Figure 89: Winslow Homer, *The Two Guides*, 1877, oil on canvas, 24 ¼ x 38 ¼, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 90: Winslow Homer, *Watermelon Boys*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

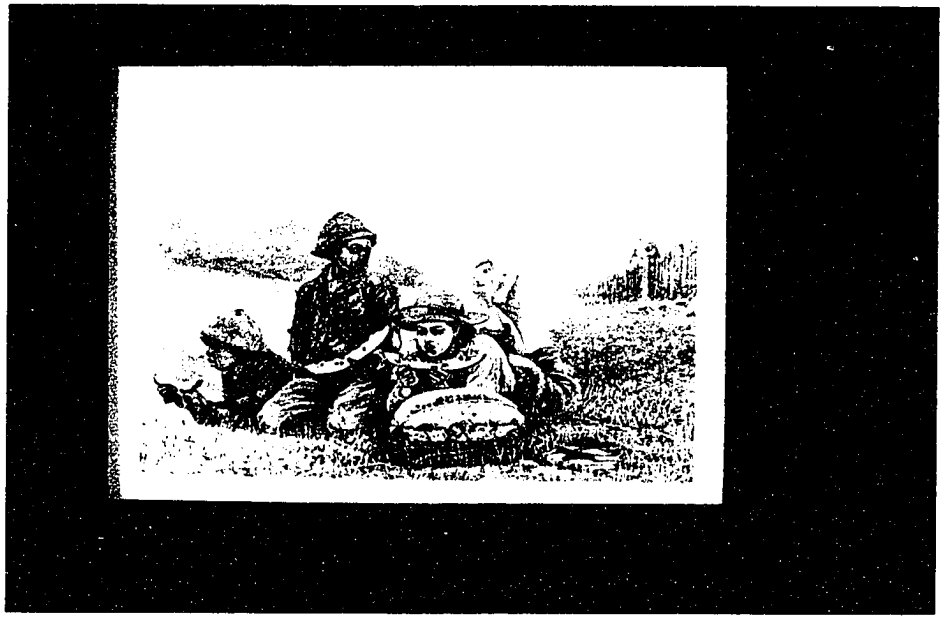


Figure 91: engraving after Winslow Homer, *Watermelon Boys;* illustrated in G. W. Sheldon, "American Painters – Winslow Homer and F. A. Bridgman," *Art Journal* 4 (August 1878), p. 226

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 92: Winslow Homer, *Shall I Tell Your Fortune?*, 1876, oil on canvas, 24 x 24, Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

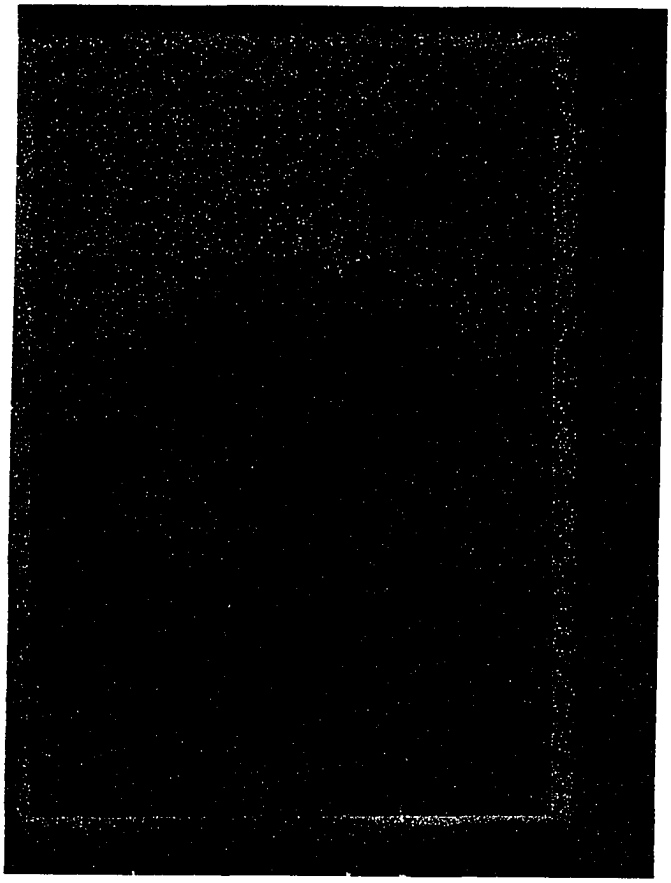


Figure 93: Winslow Homer, *Song of the Lark* (*In the Field*), 1876, oil on canvas, 38 ½ x 4, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 94: John George Brown, *Pulling For Shore*, 1878, oil on canvas, 34 ¼ x 56 1/8, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia

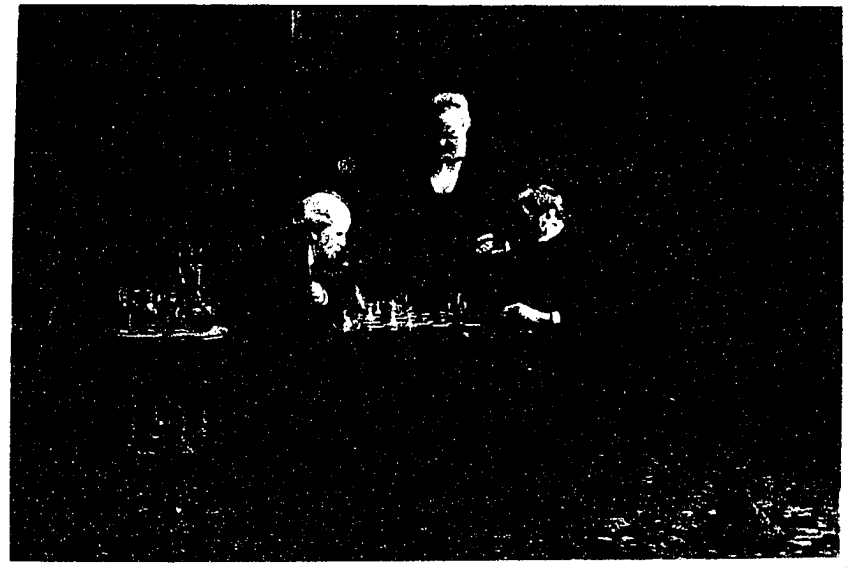


Figure 95: Thomas Eakins, *Chess Players*, 1876, oil on canvas, 11 ¾ x 16 ¾, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the artist

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 96: John George Brown, *Passing Show*, 1877, oil on canvas, 20 x 30, private collection

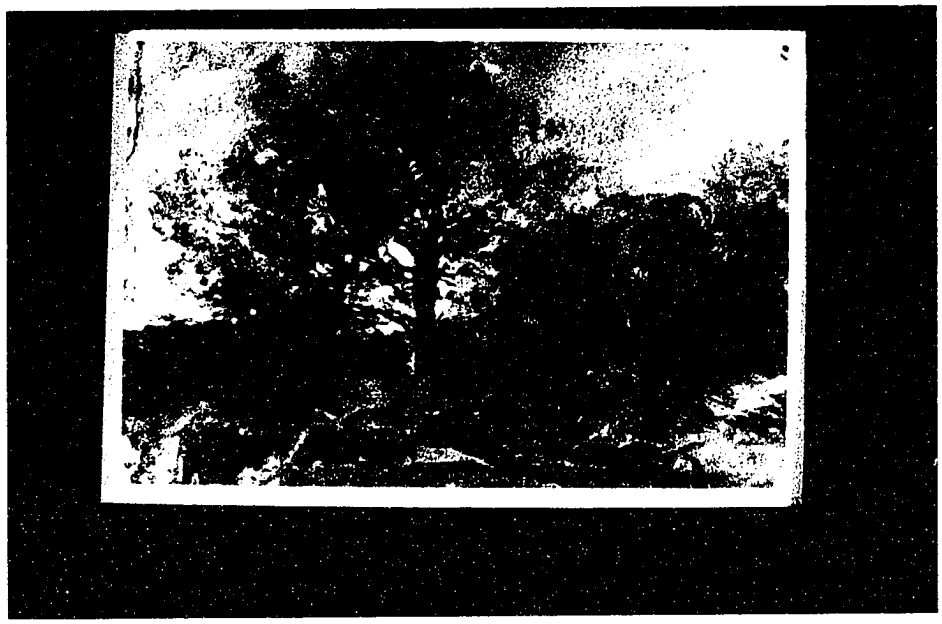


Figure 97: J. Frank Currier, *Polling bei Weilheim, Bayern*, 1878, watercolor on paper, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

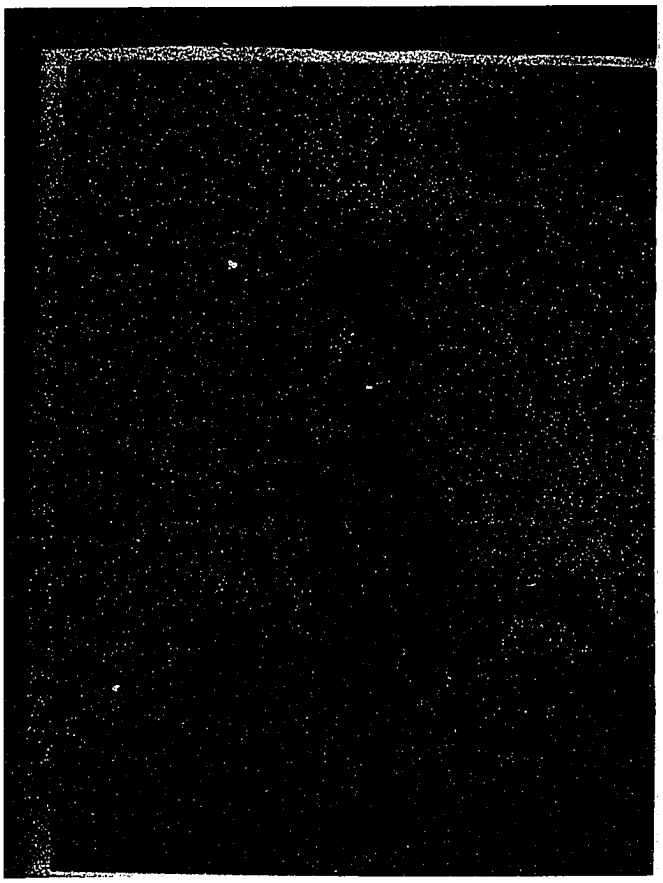


Figure 98: Winslow Homer, *Fresh Air*, 1878, watercolor and gouache on paper, 20 1/16 x 14, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Dick S. Ramsey Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 99: Winslow Homer, *Apple Picking*, 1878, watercolor and gouache on paper, 7 x 8 1/8, Terra Museum of American Art



Figure 100: Winslow Homer, *Weary*, 1878, watercolor and pencil on paper, 9 ½ x 12 ¼, Terra Museum of American Art

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 101: Winslow Homer, *On the Stile*, 1878, watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper, 8 11/16 x 11 1/8, National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

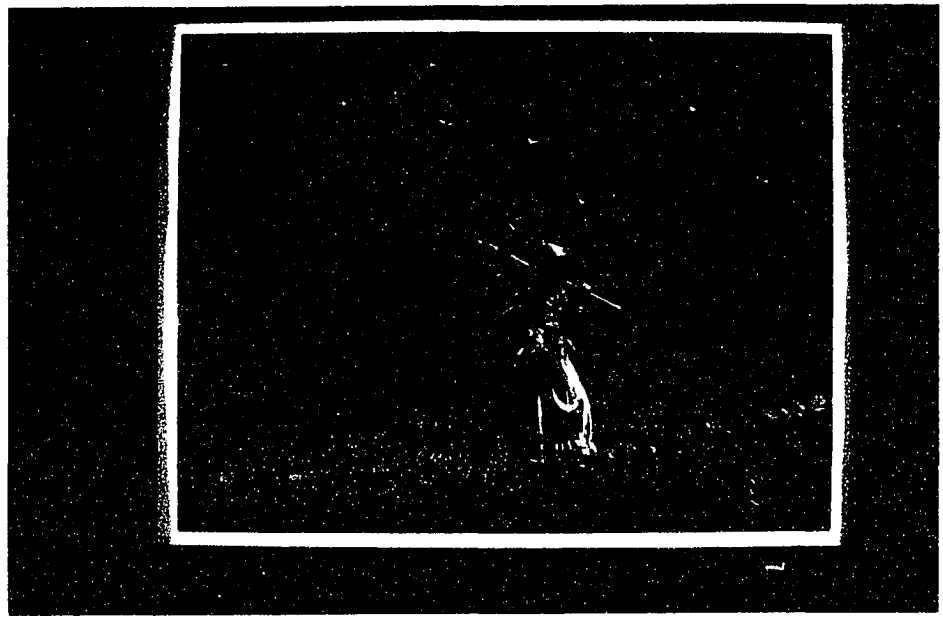


Figure 102: Winslow Homer, *Girl with a Hay Rake*, 1878, watercolor and gouache on paper, 6 15/16 x 8 7/16, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

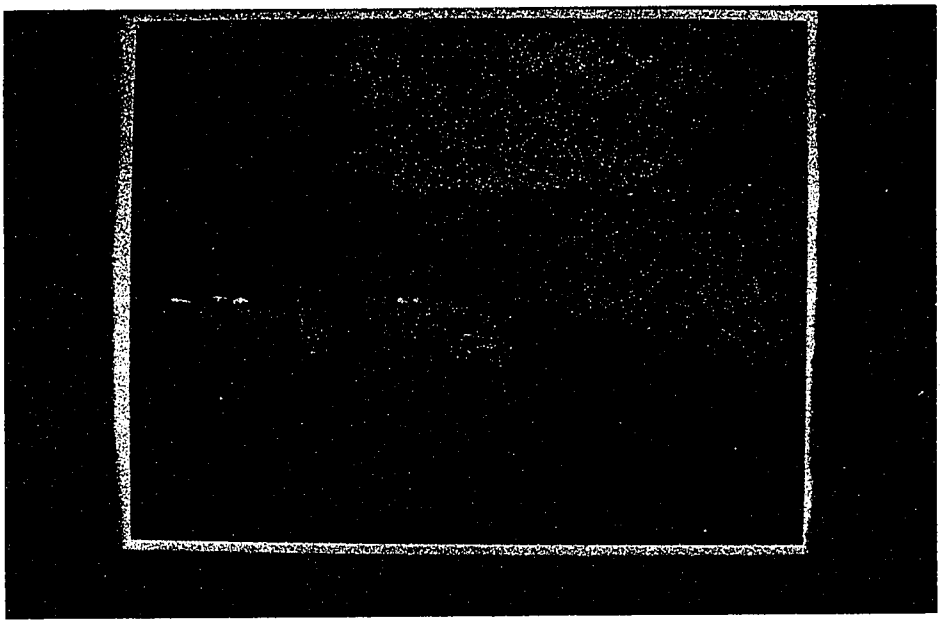


Figure 103: Winslow Homer, *Warm Afternoon* (*Shepherdess*), 1878, watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper, 6 7/8 x 8 ¼, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

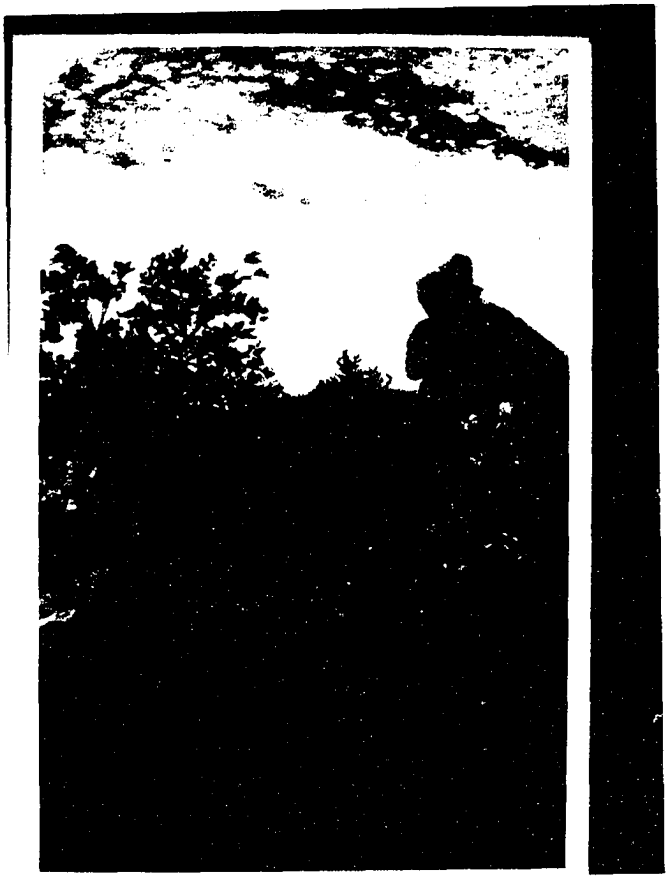


Figure 104: Winslow Homer, *Upland Cotton*, 1879/95, oil on canvas, 49 x 29 ¼, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 105: Winslow Homer, *Shepherdess of Houghton Farms*, c. 1879, oil on canvas, 24 ½ x 28 1/8, private collection

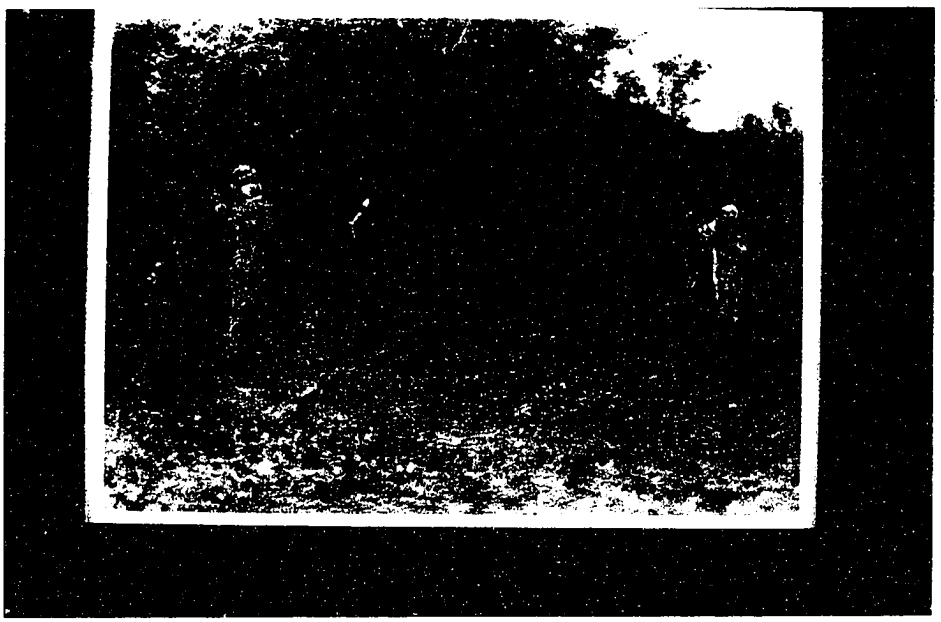


Figure 106: George Fuller, *And She Was a Witch*, 1877/83, oil on canvas, 30 x 40, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George I. Seney, 1887

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

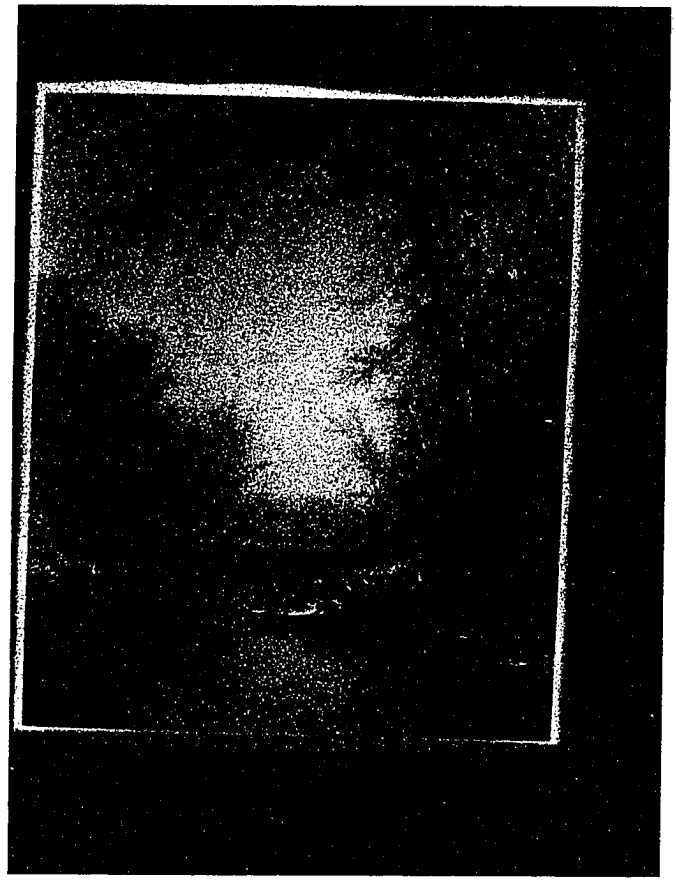


Figure 107: Sanford Gifford, *An Indian Summer's Day on Claverack Creek*, 1877-79, oil on canvas, 30 x 24, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 108: Winslow Homer, *Promenade on the Beach*, 1880, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 1/8, Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts

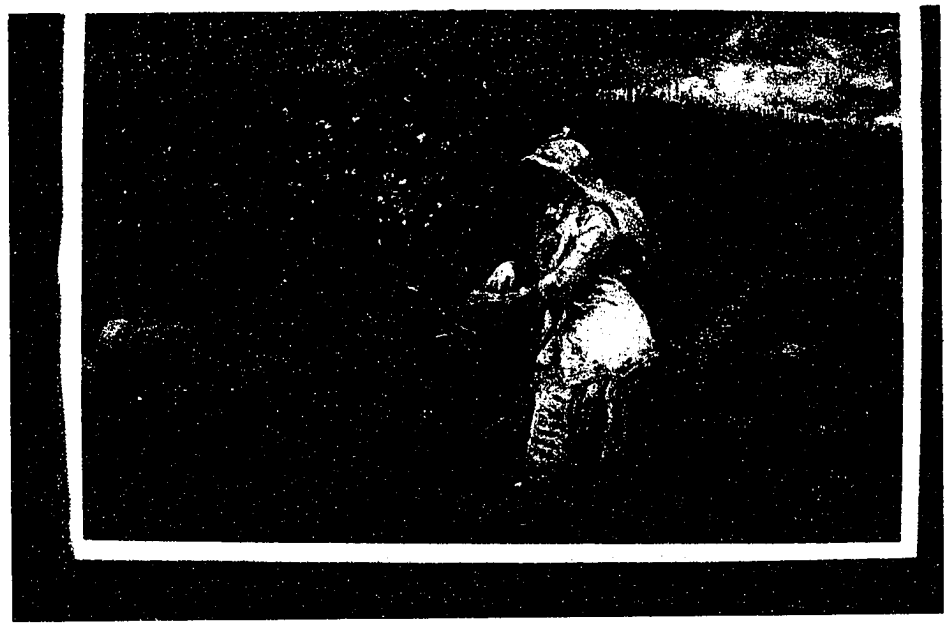


Figure 109: Winslow Homer, *Peach Blossoms*, 1879, oil on canvas, 16 x 22 ½, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

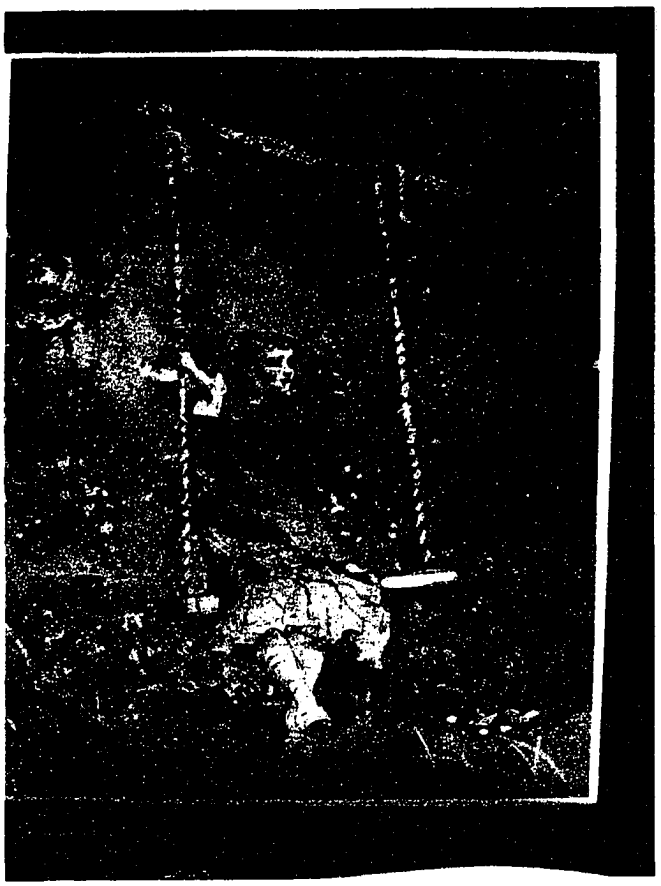


Figure 110: Winslow Homer, *Girl Swinging* (*Girl on a Swing*), c. 1879, watercolor on paper, 12 ½ x 9 ½, private collection

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

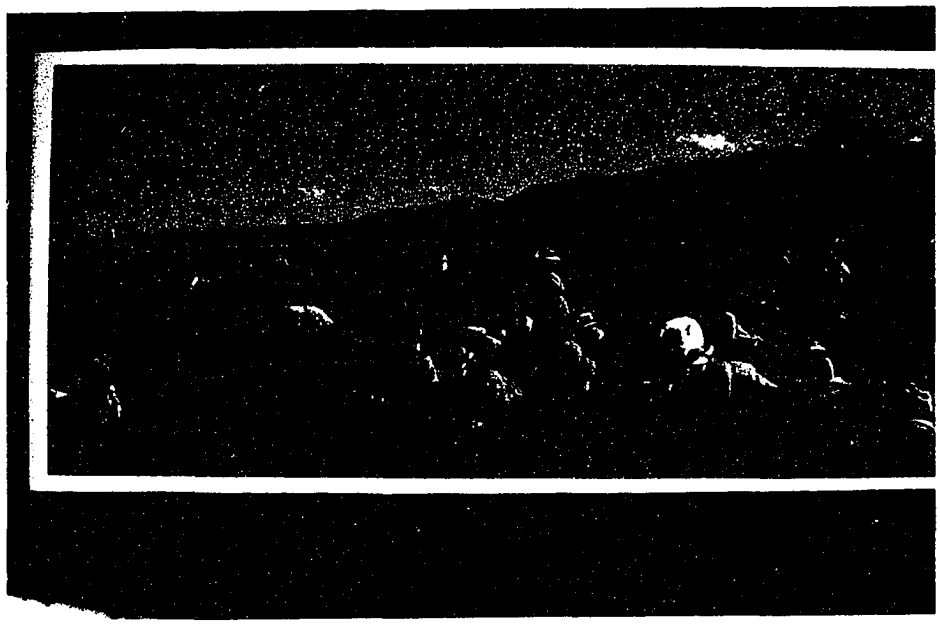


Figure 111: Eastman Johnson, *Cranberry Harvest, Nantucket* (*Cranberry Pickers*), 1880, oil on canvas, 27 x 55, Timken Art Gallery

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 112: George Fuller, *The Quadroon Girl*, 1880, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 ½, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George A. Hearn, 1910

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 113: John George Brown, *The Longshoremen's Noon*, 1879, oil on canvas 33 ¼ x 50 ¼, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Figure 114: Thomas Dewing, *Morning*, 1879, oil on canvas, 36 x 59 ¾, Delaware Art Museum, Special Purchase Fund

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

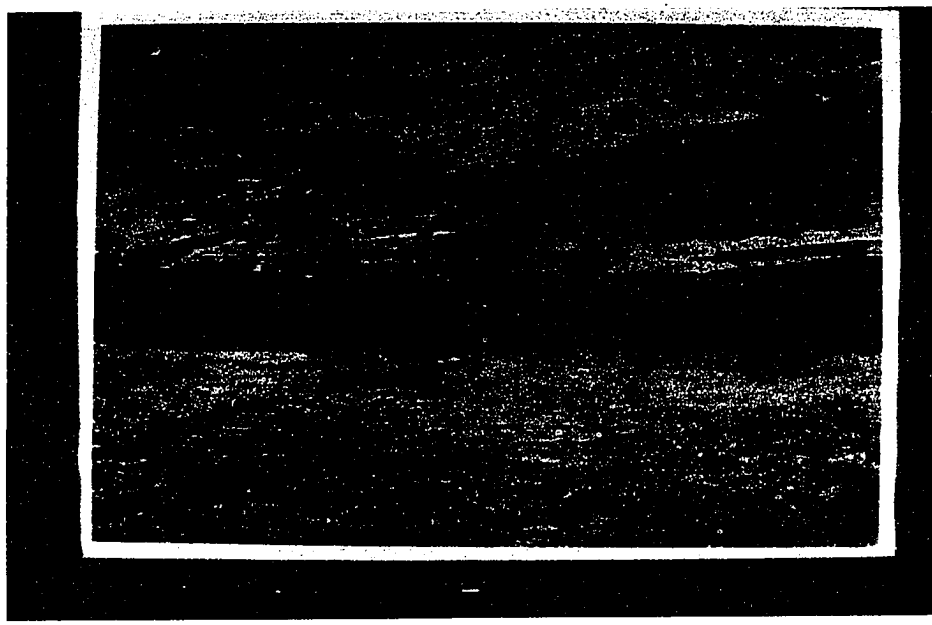


Figure 115: Winslow Homer, *Gloucester Sunset*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 9 ½ x 13 ½, private collection

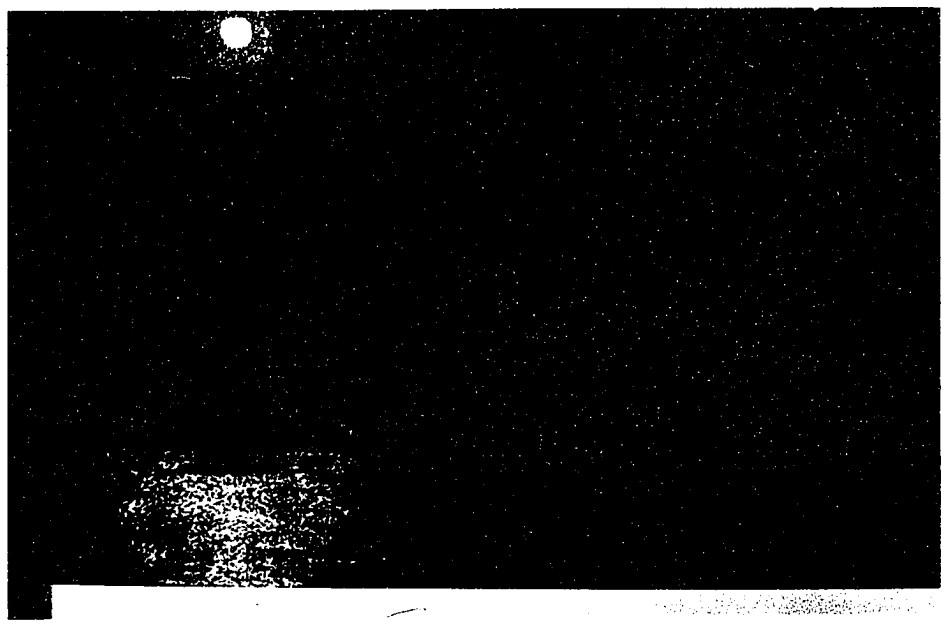


Figure 116: Winslow Homer, *Eastern Point Light*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 9 5/8 x 13 3/8, The Art Museum, Princeton University, Gift of Alistair B. Martin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

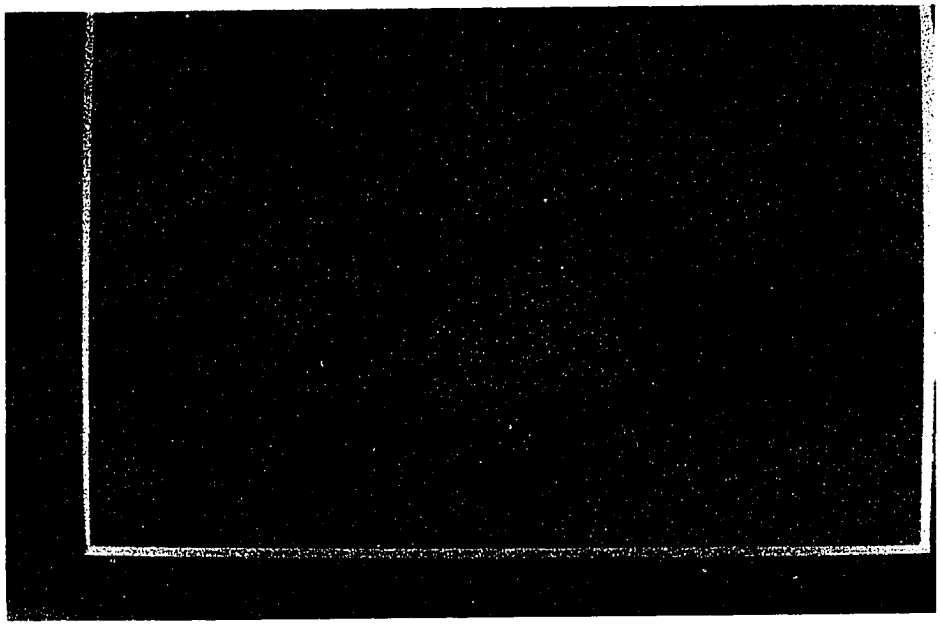


Figure 117: Winslow Homer, *Gloucester Schooners and Sloop*, 1880, graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper, 13 13/16 x 19 3/4, Philadelphia Museum of Art



Figure 118: Drawing after Thomas Waterman Wood, *The Cup That Cheers*, 1881, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 198

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 119: Drawing after George H. Smillie, *Oaks Near Portland, Maine*, 1880, medium unknown; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 195



Figure 120: Drawing by F. S. Church after J. Frank Currier, *Landscape*, 1881, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 197

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



Figure 121: Drawing after Thomas Hovenden, *The Puzzled Voter*, 1880, medium unknown; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 199

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

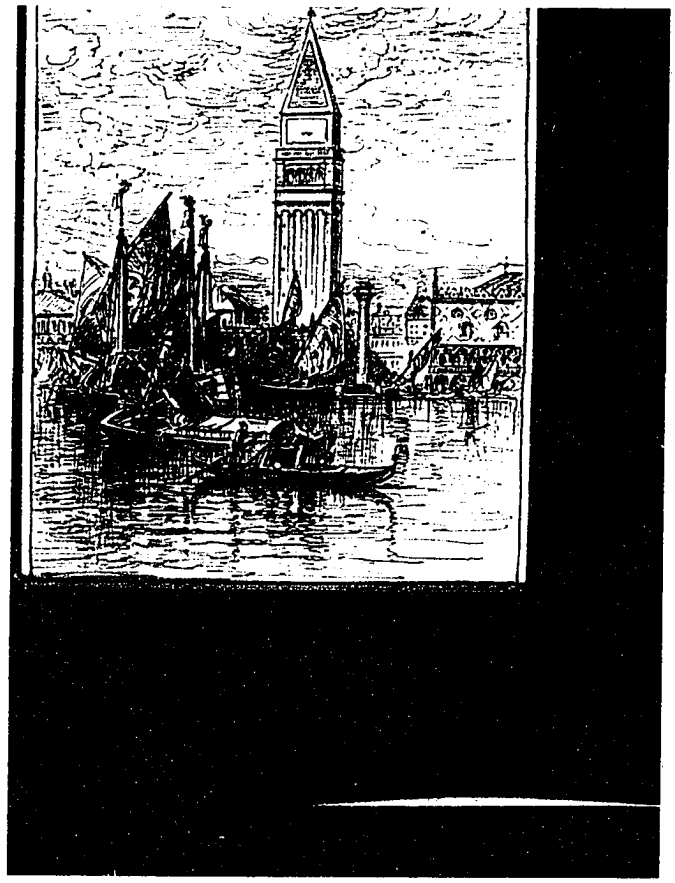


Figure 122: Drawing after Samuel Colman, *The Tower of St. Mark's*, c. 1880, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 194

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

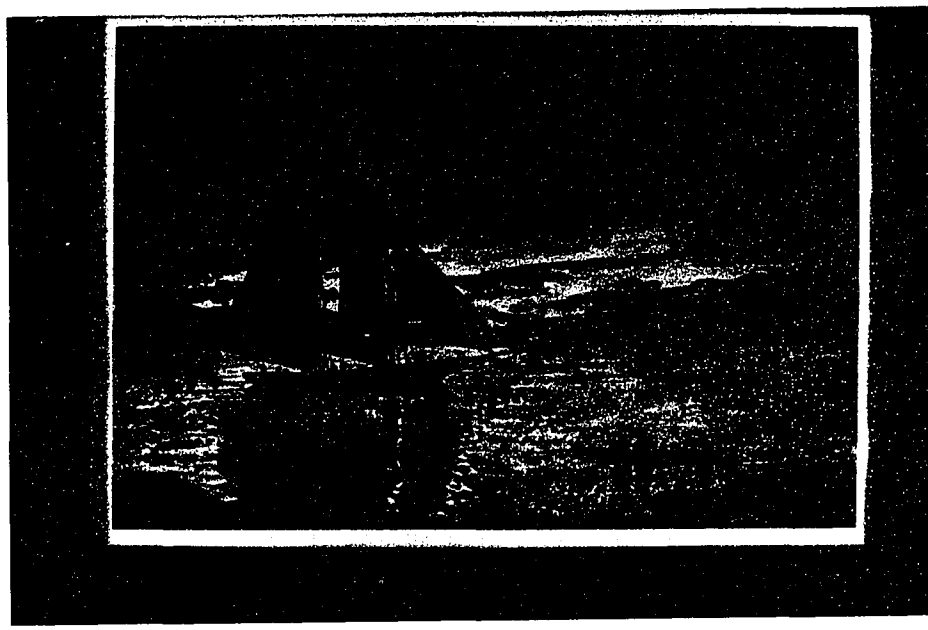


Figure 123: Winslow Homer, *Sunset Fires*, 1880, watercolor on paper, 9 ¾ x 13 5/8, Westmoreland Museum of Art, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, Gift of William A. Coulter Fund, 64.36



Figure 124: Drawing after Roswell M. Shurtleff, *Basin Harbor, Lake Champlain*, c. 1880, watercolor on paper; illustrated in *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881), p. 197

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL

Books and Catalogues

Abbatt, William, comp. *The Colloquial Who's Who.* Tarrytown, N.Y.: W. Abbatt, 1924-25.

Abrams, Alan E., ed. *Journalist Biographies Master Index*. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1979.

Andrews, E. Benjamin. *The History of the Last Quarter-Century in the United States, 1870-1895*. 2 vols. New York: C. Scribner's, 1896.

Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography.

Arms, George, and Christoph K. Lohmann, eds. *William Dean Howells Selected Letters*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979.

Armstrong, William M., ed. *The Gilded Age Letters of E. L. Godkin.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974.

Ashley, Perry J., ed. *American Newspaper Journalists, 1690-1872*. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1985.

_____. *American Newspaper Journalists, 1873-1900*. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1983.

Baehr, Harry William. *The New York Tribune Since the Civil War*. New York: Octagon Books, 1972.

Banner, Lois W. *American Beauty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Banta, Martha. *Imaging American Women: Ideas and Ideals in Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Beatty, Richmond Croom. *James Russell Lowell.* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1942.

Bender, Thomas. *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

_____. *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, from 1750 to*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Beginnings of Our Own Time. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.

Bercovitch, Sacvan, and Myra Jehlen, eds. *Ideology and American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Berger, Meyer. *The Story of the New York Times*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1951.

Brooks, Van Wyck. *New England Indian Summer, 1865-1915*. New York: Dutton, 1940.

Bronner, Simon, ed. *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1930*. New York: Norton, 1989.

Brown, Clarence Arthur. *The Achievement of American Criticism*. New York: Ronald Press, 1954.

Browne, Junius Henri. *The Great Metropolis: A Mirror of New York*. Hartford, Conn.: America Publishing Co., 1869.

Buck, Paul H. *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937.

Cady, Edwin H. *The Road to Realism: The Early Years of William Dean Howells*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1956.

Caswell, Lucy, ed. *Guide to Sources in American Journalism History*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.

Charvat, William. *The Origins of American Critical Thought 1810-35*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936.

Chielens, Edward E., ed. *American Literary Magazines: The 18th and 19th Centuries*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.

The Columbia Encyclopedia, 5th ed.

Connery, Thomas B., ed. *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.

Cortissoz, Royal. *The New York Tribune: Incidents and Personalities in Its History*. New

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

York: New York Tribune Co., 1923.

_____. *The Life of Whitelaw Reid.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.

Crouthermel, James. *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1989.

Cushing, William B. *Initials and Pseudonyms: A Dictionary of Literary Disguises.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1885.

_____. *Anonyms. A Dictionary of Revealed Authorship.* Cambridge, Mass.: W. Cushing, 1889.

Cyganowski, Carol Klimick. *Magazine Editors and Professional Authors in 19th Century America.* New York: Garland, 1988.

Dayton, Abram C. *Last Days of Knickerbocker Life in New York.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897.

Davidson, Cathy N., ed. *Reading in America: Literature and Social History.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Davis, Elmer. *History of the New York Times.* New York: New York Times Co., 1921.

Degler, Carl N. *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Derby, J. C. *Fifty Years Among Authors, Books and Publishers.* New York: G. W. Carleton, 1884.

Dicken-Garcia, Hazel. *Journalistic Standards in 19th Century America.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Dictionary of American Biography.

Dictionary of Literary Biography.

Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture,* 2d ed. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Emery, Edwin, and Henry Ladd Smith, eds. *The Press and America.* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954.

Exman, Eugene. *The House of Harper.* New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fairfield, Francis Gerry. *The Clubs of New York.* New York: Henry Hinton, 1873.

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-77.* New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

Godkin, Edwin Lawrence. *Reflections and Comments, 1865-1895.* New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1895.

Green, Harvey. *The Light of the House: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victoria America.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

Grover, Kathryn, ed. *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society, 1830-1940.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.

Hall, Peter Dobkin. *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality.* New York: New York University Press, 1982.

Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Harris, Neil. *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Harris, Sharon M. *American Women Writers to 1900.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Haskell, Daniel C. *The Nation: Index of Titles and Contributors.* New York: New York Public Library, 1953.

Heininger, Mary Lynn Stevens. *At Home with a Book: Reading in America, 1840-1940.* Rochester, N.Y.: Strong Museum, 1986.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955.

Hudson, Frederic. *Journalism in the United States from 1690-1872.* New York: Harper Bros., 1873.

Jackson, Kenneth T., ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York City.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

John, Arthur. *The Best Years of the "Century."* Urbana: University of Illinois Press,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1981.

Kasson, John F. *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1990.

Kirkland, Edward Chase. *Dream and Thought in the Business Community, 1860-1900.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1956.

Kluger, Richard. *The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune.* New York: Knopf, 1986.

Kobre, Sidney. *Development of American Journalism.* Dubuque, Ia.: W. C. Brown Co., 1969.

Lears, T. Jackson. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.

Lee, Alfred E. *The Daily Newspaper in America.* New York: Macmillan, 1937.

Leininger, Philip, ed. *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*, 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

McCabe, James D., Jr. *Light and Shadows of New York Life.*1872; reprint, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1970.

_____. *New York By Gaslight: A Work Descriptive of the Great American Metropolis.* 1882; reprint, New York: Greenwich House,1984.

McJimsey, George. *Genteel Partisan: Manton Marble, 1834-1917.* Ames: Iowa State Press, 1971.

McKelvey, Black. *The Urbanization of America 1860-1915.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963.

Maass, John. *That Glorious Enterprise.* Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1973.

Machor, James L., ed. *Readers in History: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Contexts of Response.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Marchalonis, Shirley. *The Worlds of Lucy Larcom, 1824-1893.* Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1989.

Martin, Jay. *Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865-1914.* Englewood Cliffs,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Marzio, Peter C. *The Men and Machines of American Journalism.* Washington, D.C.: National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 1973.

Meixner, Laura L. *French Realist Painting and the Critique of American Society, 1865-1900.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Milne, Gordon. *George William Curtis and the Genteel Tradition.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959.

Morgan, H. Wayne. *Victorian Culture in America, 1865-1914.* Itaca, Ill.: F.E. Peacock, 1973.

Mott, Frank Luther. *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960*, 3d. ed. New York: MacMillan Company, 1962.

_____. *The History of American Magazines*, v.1-3. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967.

_____. *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States.* New York: MacMillan, 1947.

Mumford, Lewis. *The Golden Day: A Study in American Literature and Culture.* New York, 1926; 3d ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1968.

Myerson, Joel, ed. *The American Renaissance in New England.* Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1978.

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind.* Rev. ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

Nevins, Allan. *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878.* New York: Macmillan, 1927.

_____. *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism.* 1922; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1968.

The New York Sun: 100th Anniversary, 1833-1933. New York: The Sun, 1933.

The New York Tribune: A Sketch of Its History. New York: [s.n.], 1883.

O'Brien, Frank M. *The Story of the Sun.* 1928; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

O'Connor, Richard. *The Scandalous Mr. Bennett.* New York: Doubleday, 1962.

Ogden, Rollo, ed. *Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin.* 2 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1907.

Oleson, Alexandra, and John Voss, eds. *The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860-1920.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979.

Parrington, Vernon Louis. *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. 3: *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860-1920.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930.

Payne, George Henry. *History of Journalism in the United States.* 1920; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1970.

Pizer, Donald, and Earl N. Harbert. *American Realists and Naturalists.* Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1982.

Prichard, John Paul. *Criticism in America.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.

Raleigh, John Henry. *Matthew Arnold and American Culture.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.

Rathbun, John and Harry H. Clark. *American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905.* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979.

Riley, Sam G., ed. *American Magazine Journalists, 1850-1900.* Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1989.

Robinson, Allan. *The Mendelsohn Glee Club.* New York: privately printed, 1930.

Rogers, William Allen. *A World Worth While, A Record of 'Auld Acquaintance.'* New York: Harpers Bros., 1922.

Rourke, Constance. *American Humor.* 1931; reprint, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959.

Rutland, Robert Allen. *The Newsmongers: Journalism in the Life of the Nation, 1690-1972.* New York: Dial Press, 1973.

Schwarzlose, Richard A. *Newspapers: A Reference Guide.* New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sheehan, Donald. *This Was Publishing: A Chronicle of the Book Trade in the Gilded Age*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1952.

Sloan, William David. *American Journalism History: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.

Smith, Henry Nash, ed. *Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1967.

Smith, Matthew Hale. *Sunshine and Shadow in New York*. Hartford, Conn.: J. B. Burr and Co., 1869.

Spencer, Benjamin T. *The Quest for Nationality*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1957.

Stone, Candace. *Dana and the Sun*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1938.

Summers, Mark W. *The Gilded Age*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1997.

Sutherland, Daniel E. *The Expansion of Everyday Life, 1860-1876*. New York: Harper and Row, 1989.

Taylor, Welford D., ed. *The Newsprint Mask: The Tradition of the Fictional Journalist in America*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991.

Tebbel, John, and Mary Ellen Zuckerman. *The Magazine in America, 1741-1990*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Vanderbilt, Kermit. *Charles Eliot Norton: Apostle of Culture in a Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1959.

Wingate, Charles F., ed. *Views and Interviews on Journalism*. New York: F. B. Patterson, 1875.

Dissertations, Theses, Papers, and Manuscripts:

Blanton, Lynee. "The Agrarian Myth in 18th and 19th Century American Magazines." Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1979.

Jaffe, Steven Harold. "Unmasking the City: The Rise of the Urban Newspaper Reporter

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in New York City, 1800-1850." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1989.

Mitchell, Robert Earl. "American Life as Reflected in the *Atlantic Monthly*." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1951.

New York Tribune Papers. Manuscript Division. New York Public Library.

Parke Godwin Correspondence. Bryant-Godwin Papers. Manuscript Division. New York Public Library.

Richard Bowker Rogers Correspondence. Richard Rogers Bowker Papers. Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

Sterne, Richard Clarke. "Political, Social, and Literary Criticism in the New York *Nation*,1865-81." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1983.

Periodicals:

Browne, Junius Henri. "Types of American Beauty." *Galaxy* 11 (January 1871): 108-16.

_____. "Women as Tacticians." *Galaxy* 16 (November 1873): 662-70.

Brownell, William Crary. "The American Girl." *Nation* 30 (8 April 1880): 265-66.

Degler, Carl N. "What Ought To Be and What Was." *American Historical Review* 72 (December 1974): 1467-90.

Harper, Fletcher. "Fifty Years of *Harper's Monthly*." *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 101 (May 1900): 947-60.

Higginson, Thomas W. "Americanism in Literature." *Atlantic Monthly* 25 (January 1870): 56-63.

"The National Education Bill." *Nation* 14 (29 February 1872): 133.

"Obituary of Earl Shinn." *Art Amateur* 9 (16 December 1886): 3.

Rhodes, Albert. "The Coming Marriage." *Galaxy* 16 (September 1873): 293-304.

Scholnick, Robert. "Between Realism and Romanticism: The Curious Career of Eugene Benson." *American Literary Realism* 14 (1981): 242-61.

"School-Children." *Aldine* 5 (October 1872): 198.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Swisshelm, Jane Grey. "American Character." *Galaxy* 22 (November 1876): 618-23.

Thompson, Mrs. Launt. "What is An American?" *Atlantic* 35 (May 1877): 561-67.

"William Henry Hurlbert Dead." *New York Times*, 7 September 1895: 5.

ART

Books and Catalogues

Axelrod, Alex, ed. *The Colonial Revival*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1985.

Benjamin, Samuel Greene Wheeler. *Art in America*. New York: Harper Bros., 1880.

_____. *Our American Artists*. Boston: D. Lathrop, 1879.

Boime, Albert. *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Bolger, Doreen, et al. *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement*. New York: Rizzoli, 1986.

Burnham, Patricia M., and Lucretia Hoover Giese, eds. *Redefining American History Painting*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Burns, Sarah. *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth Century American Art and Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.

_____. *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

Campbell, Catherine, et al. *The White Mountains: Place and Perceptions*. Hanover, N. H.: University Presses of New England, 1980.

Casteras, Susan P. *English Pre-Raphaelitism and its Reception in America in the 19th Century*. Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1990.

Champney, Benjamin. *Sixty Years' Memories of Art and Artists*. Woburn, Mass.: Wallace & Andrews, 1900.

Edwards, Lee. *Domestic Bliss: Family Life in American Painting, 1840-1910*. Yonkers, N.Y.: Hudson River Museum, 1985.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fawcett, Trevor, and Clive Phillpot, eds. *The Art Press: Two Centuries of Art Magazines*. London: The Art Book, 1976.

Ferber, Linda, and Barbara Dayer Gallati. *Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent and the American Watercolor Movement.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.

_____, and William H. Gerdts. *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites.* Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1985.

Gallati, Barbara Dayer. *William Merritt Chase*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995.

Gerdts, William H. *American Impressionism.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1984.

_____. *Art Across America.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1990.

_____, and James Yarnall, comps., *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986.

Goetz, Thomas H. *Taine and the Fine Arts.* Madrid: Playor, 1973.

Harris, Neil. *The Artist in American Society: 1790-1860*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Harvey, Eleanor Jones. *The Painted Sketch: American Impressions from Nature, 1830-1880.* Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1998.

Hills, Patricia. *The Genre Painting of Eastman Johnson: The Sources and Development of the Style and Themes*. New York: Garland, 1977.

_____. *The Painter's America: Rural and Urban Life 1810-1910.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.

Hobbs, Susan. *American Art at the Centennial.* Washington, D.C.: National Collection of Fine Arts, 1976.

Hollister, Sturgis. *Jules Breton and the French Rural Tradition.* Omaha: Joslyn Art Museum, 1982.

Howat, John K. *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School.* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987.

Huntington, David, and Kathleen Pyne. *Quest for Unity.* Detroit: Detroit Institute

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of Arts, 1983.

Jarves, James Jackson. *Art Thoughts.* New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869.

Jacobs, Michael. *The Good and Simple Life: Artist Colonies in Europe and America.* Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1985.

Johns, Elizabeth. *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Low, Will H. *A Chronicle of Friendships 1873-1900.* New York: Scribner's Sons, 1908.

McSpadden, J. Walker. *Famous Painters of America.* New York: Crowell, 1907.

Marzio, Peter C. *The Democratic Art: Pictures for a 19th Century America, Chromolithography 1840-1900.* Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1979.

Meixner, Laura L. *An International Episode: Millet, Monet and Their North American Counterparts.* Memphis: The Dixon Gallery and Gardens, 1982.

_____. *French Realist Painting and the Critique of American Society, 1865-1900.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Mitchell, W. J. T. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Morgan, Wayne. *New Muses: Art in American Culture, 1865-1920.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

Mumford, Lewis. *The Brown Decades; A Study of the Arts in America.* 2d rev. ed. New York: Dover Books, 1955.

Murphy, Francis. *The Book of Nature: American Painters and the Natural Sublime.* Yonkers, N.Y.: Hudson River Museum, 1983.

Murray, Linda and Peter. *A Dictionary of Art and Artists.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968.

Naylor, Maria. *The National Academy of Design Record 1861-1900.* New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1973.

O'Brien, Maureen. *European Paintings at the Pedestal Fund Loan Exhibition.* Southampton, N.Y.: Parrish Art Museum, 1986.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

O'Leary, Elizabeth. *At Beck and Call: The Representation of Domestic Servants in Nineteenth-Century American Painting.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.

Rainey, Sue. *Creating "Picturesque America."* Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994.

Robinson, Frank T. *Living New England Artists.* 1888, reprint New York: Garland, 1977.

Sheldon, George William. *Hours with Art and Artists.* c. 1882; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, 1978.

Shinn, Earl. *The Masterpieces of the Centennial International Exhibition.* Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1876-78.

Sill, Geoffrey M., and Robert K. Tarbell, eds. *Walt Whitman and the Visual Arts.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992.

Sizer, Theodore, ed. *The Recollections of John Ferguson Weir.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Stein, Roger. *John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America, 1840-1900.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Strahan, Edward [Earl Shinn]. *The Art Treasures of America.* Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1880.

_____. *The Chef-d'oeuvres d'art of the International Exposition, 1878.* Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1878.

Strickler, Susan E., ed. *American Traditions in Watercolor: The Worcester Art Museum Collection.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1987.

Sullivan, Edward J. *Fortuny: 1838-1874.* Barcelona: Fundació Caixa de Pensions, 1989.

Sullivan, Mark White. *The Hudson River School: An Annotated Bibliography.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1991.

Taylor, Joshua C. *The Fine Arts in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Titterton, Robert J. *Julian Scott: Artist of the Civil War and Native America.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co.,1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Tuckerman, Henry. *Book of the Artists*. 1867; reprint, New York: J. F. Carr, 1966.

van Rensselaer, Mariana. *Six Portraits*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889.

Weinberg, Barbara. *The Lure of Paris.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1991.

Weisberg, Gabriel P. *Redefining Genre: French and American Painting 1850-1900.* Washington, D.C.: Trust for Museum Exhibitions, 1995.

Weiss, Ila. *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford.* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987.

White, Nelson. *The Life and Art of J. Frank Currier*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1935.

Winner, Viola Hopkins. *Henry James and the Visual Arts.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970.

Dissertations, Theses, Papers, Manuscripts

Adams, Karen M. "Black Images in 19th Century American Painting and Literature." Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1977.

Baxter, Jean Taylor. "Burdens and Rewards: Some Issues for American Artists, 1865-76." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1988.

Bermingham, Peter. "Barbizon Art in America: A Study of the Role of the Barbizon School in the Development of American Painting, 1850-1895." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1972.

Bienenstock, Jennifer A. Martin. "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983.

Brown, Joshua Emmett. "*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*: The Pictorial Press and the Representations of America, 1855-1889." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993.

Burns, Sarah. "The Poetic Mode in American Painting: George Fuller and Thomas Dewing." Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1979.

Dinnerstein, Lois. "Opulence and Ocular Delight, Splendor and Squalor: Critical Writings in Art and Architecture by Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York Graduate Center, 1979.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Docherty, Linda Jones. "A Search for Identity: American Art Criticism and the Concept of the 'Native School,' 1876-1893." Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1985.

Earl Shinn Papers. Archives of American Art.

Fink, Lois. "The Role of France in American Art, 1850-1870." Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1970.

Fletcher, Frank. "The Critical Values of William Crary Brownell." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1951.

Foster, Kathleen Adair. "Makers of the American Watercolor Movement, 1860-90." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1982.

Guttzeit, Carol Jean. "The Darwinian Presence in American Painting, 1859-1900." Ph.D. diss., The State University of New Jersey, 1993.

Heft, Lynn Harris. "Charles Lanman: Cultural Networking in the Nineteenth Century." Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1996.

Jervis McEntee Diary. Jervis McEntee Papers. Archives of American Art.

Meixner, Laura Lee. "Jean-Francois Millet: His American Students and Influence." Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1979.

Myers, Julia Rowland. "The American Expatriate Painters of French Peasantry, 1863-1893." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1989.

Peters, Lisa N. "Charles DeKay: Art Critic for the People." unpublished paper, 1985; courtesy William H. Gerdts American Art Library.

Roberts, Helene Emylou . "American Art Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century." master's thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 1961.

Simoni, John P. "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth Century America." Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1952.

Simon, Janice. "*The Crayon*, 1855-61: The Voice of Nature in Criticism, Poetry, and the Fine Arts." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990.

Skalet, Linda Henfield. "The Market for American Painting in New York, 1870-1915." Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1980.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Swinth, Kirsten N. "Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of a Professional Ideal in American Art, 1870-1920." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1995.

Thorn, William John. "Montgomery Schuyler: The Newspaper Architectural Articles of a Protomodern Critic." Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1976.

Tolles, Thayer. "Helena deKay Gilder: Her Artistic and Institutional Achievements During the 1870s." master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1990.

Van Hook, Leila Bailey. "The Ideal Women in American Art, 1875-1910." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1988.

Vincent, Gilbert Tapley. "American Artists and Their Changing Perceptions of American History, 1770-1940." Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1982.

Weiss, Jo Ann W. "Clarence Cook: The Critical Writings." Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 1976.

Wright, Lesley Carol. "Men Making Meaning in Nineteenth Century American Genre Painting, 1860-1900." Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1993.

Yount, Sylvia L. "'Give the People What They Want': The American Aesthetic Movement, Art Worlds, and Consumer Culture, 1876-1890." Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995.

Zalesch, Saul. "Ryder and Writers: Friendship and Patronage in the New York Art World, 1874-84." Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1992.

Periodicals

1865-1881 (in chronological order)

"Critics and Criticism." *Nation* 1 (6 July 1865): 10-11.

"What Is Art Criticism?" *Nation* 2 (19 April 1866): 504-6.

Aldrich, T[homas] B[ailey]. "Among the Studios, III." *Our Young Folks* 2 (July 1866): 395-98.

_____. "Among the Studios, IV." *Our Young Folks* 2 (September 1866): 573-74.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cranch, Christopher P. "Art Criticism Reviewed." *Galaxy* 4 (May 1867): 77-81.

"Fine Arts, American Pictures from the French Exhibition." *Tribune,* 14 January 1868: 2.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Quotation and Originality." *North American Review* 106 (April 1868): 555.

"The Academy of Design. Private View of the Forty-Third Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 15 April 1868: 4.

"The National Academy of Design. Forty-Third Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 4 May 1868: 2.

"Fine Arts, Forty-Third Exhibition of the National Academy of Design." *Nation* 6 (7 May 1868): 376-77.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design–Forty-Third Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 21 May 1868: 2.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fourth Article." *Tribune,* 18 June 1868: 2.

Benson, Eugene. "Eastman Johnson." *Galaxy* 6 (July 1868): 111-12.

"Editor's Easy Chair." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 37 (July 1868): 270-74.

Benson, Eugene. "Democratic Deities." *Galaxy* 6 (November 1868): 661-65.

_____. "New York Journalists. W. H. Hurlbut." *Galaxy* 7 (January 1869): 30-34.

_____. "New York Journalists. II. Parke Godwin, of the Evening Post." *Galaxy* 7 (February 1869): 230-36.

_____. "Historical Art." *Appleton's Magazine* 1 (10 April 1869): 45-46.

_____. "Childhood in Modern Literature." *Appleton's Magazine* 1 (24 April 1869): 118-19.

"Fine Arts. Forty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Herald,* 26 April 1869: 7.

"Fine Arts. Forty-Fifth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design." *Nation* 8 (29 April 1869): 340-41.

"Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design." *Times,* 30 April 1869: 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"National Academy of Design. Third Article." *Commercial Advertiser,* 12 May 1869: 1.

"The Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design. Forty-Fourth Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 22 May 1869: 1.

"Fine Arts." *Putnam's* 4 (October 1869): 507-10.

"National Academy of Design. Annual Winter Exhibition." *Tribune,* 4 November 1869: 4.

"National Academy of Design. Third Winter Exhibition." *World,* 6 November 1869: 12.

"Art Matters. Third Winter Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. Second Article." *Express,* 24 November 1869: 1.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design." *Post,* 24 November 1869: 1.

S. S. C. [Samuel Stillman Conant]. "Literature and Art." *Galaxy* 8 (December 1869): 858-59.

"Fine Arts. Third Winter Exhibition at The Academy. Third Article." *Tribune,* 4 December 1869: 4.

"The Academy of Design." *Tribune,* 15 April 1870: 4.

"National Academy of Design. Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition." *World,* 24 April 1870: 3.

"National Academy of Design. First Notice." *Post,* 27 April 1870: 1.

"Fine Arts. Forty-Fifth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design." *Nation* 10 (28 April 1870): 278.

"Art Matters. National Academy of Design-Second Article." *Express,* 30 April 1870: 2.

"Fine Arts. The Landscape at the Academy." *Tribune,* 30 April 1870: 5.

Benson, Eugene. "The Belmont and Blodgett Private Galleries." *Putnam's* 5 (May 1870): 534-40.

"Art Gossip. The Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the N.A.D." *Mail,* 4 May 1870: 1.

"Art Notes. National Academy of Design." *Herald,* 8 May 1870: 3

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Academy of Design. Second Article." *World*, 8 May 1870: 5

"National Academy of Design. Second Notice." *Post,* 9 May 1870: 1.

Jones, John. A. M. "The National Academy of Design." *Harper's Weekly* 14 (14 May 1870): 307.

Benson, Eugene. "The Annual Exhibition of the Academy." *Putnam's* 5 (June 1870): 699-708.

"Art Gossip. The Forty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the N.A.D." *Mail,* 27 June 1870: 1.

Jarves, James Jackson. "Museums of Art." *Galaxy* 10 (July 1870): 50-59.

"The Century." *Mail*, 6 February 1871: 1.

Townley, D. O'C. "Living American Artists." *Scribner's* 2 (May 1871): 4-49.

Jarves, James Jackson. "Expression and Character." *Independent,* 1 February 1872: 4.

James, Henry. "Art." *Atlantic* 29 (March 1872): 372-77.

"Art Intelligence. The Academy Exhibition." *Express*, 12 April 1872: 2.

"Fine Arts." *Tribune,* 12 April 1872: 5.

"Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Tribune,* 17 April 1872: 6.

"Art Matters. The Academy Exhibition. Second Article." *Express,* 18 April 1872: 2.

"The Realm of Art. Some Notes on the Academy Spring Exhibition." *Telegram,* 20 April 1872: 2.

W., A. C. [Andrew C. Wheeler]. "Gossip in a Gallery. A Visit to the Academy of Design." *World,* 21 April 1872: 2.

Jarves, James Jackson. "Art. Something About Art Training." *Independent,* 25 April 1872: 2.

"National Academy of Design." *Independent,* 25 April 1872: 2.

"The Realm of Art. Some Notes on Genre Pictures and Beauties of the Academy Exhibition." *Telegram,* 27 April 1872: 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Jarves, James Jackson. "Art. The Needs of a Young Artist." *Independent,* 2 May 1872: 4.

"The Spring Exhibition of the National Academy." *Appleton's Journal* 7 (25 May 1872): 578-80.

"Gossip Among the Brushes." *Telegram,* 8 June 1872: 2.

"Fine Arts. Close of the National Academy of Design." *Post,* 6 July 1872: 1.

"The Return of the Artists." *Herald,* 19 October 1872: 6.

"Art Notes." *Herald,* 27 November 1872: 4.

"Fine Arts." *Times,* 16 December 1872: 3.

"Art Matters." *Commercial Advertiser,* 10 December 1872: 1.

"Art at the Century." *Post,* 3 February 1873: 2.

"Art at the Century." *Post,* 4 March 1873: 2.

"Fine Arts. The Sherwood Collection." *Tribune,* 23 April 1873: 4.

"Fine Arts. Mr. John H. Sherwood's Collection." *World,* 23 April 1873: 5.

"Art." *Mail,* 26 April 1873: 2.

"The Century Club." *Post,* 12 January 1874: 4.

"American Society of Painters in Water Colors. Seventh Annual Exhibition." *Post,* 28 January 1874: 3.

"The Watercolor Exhibition." *World,* 5 February 1874: 4-5.

"Water-Color Paintings. Some of the Pictures Now on Exhibition at the Academy of Design." *Daily Graphic,* 7 February 1874: 663.

"Fine Arts. The Water Color Exhibition." *Tribune,* 14 February 1874: 7.

"Fine Arts. Why the Exhibition of Water-Colors is Succeeding." *Mail,* 18 February 1874: 1.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Notes." *Nation* 18 (12 March 1874): 172.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Art." *Atlantic* 32 (April 1874): 502-9.

"Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition." *Times,* 6 April 1874: 2.

"Fine Arts and Music. National Academy of Design–The Forty-Ninth Annual Exhibition. Third Article." *Tribune,* 13 April 1874: 7.

"National Academy of Design. First Article." *World,* 19 April 1874: 2.

"Art. The Water-Color Exhibition." *Aldine* 7 (May 1874): 107.

"National Academy of Design." *Post,* 4 May 1874: 1.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. I." *Nation* 18 (7 May 1874): 304-5.

_____. "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. II." *Nation* 18 (14 May 1874): 320-21.

"Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. IV." *Watson's Art Journal* (13 June 1874): 1.

Hooper, Lucy. "Fine Arts." *Appleton's* 11 (20 June 1874): 796.

"Art Notes." *Post,* 25 July 1874: 2.

"Movements of Artists." *Watson's Art Journal* (1 August 1874): 142.

"Art Matters. Studio Gossip." *Express,* 31 October 1874: 1.

"Art Notes." *Mail,* 5 November 1874: 1.

"Art and Artists. The Progress Made in Painting in Water Color." *Telegram,* 1 February 1875: 4.

South, Erastus. "Fine Arts. The Water Colors at the Academy–The Lotus Club Monthly Art Reception." *Daily Graphic,* 2 February 1875: 672.

"Art Matters. The Water-Color Exhibition. First Article." *Express,* 6 February 1875: 1.

"The Fine Arts. American Society of Painters in Water Colors." *Times,* 7 February 1875: 9.

"Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition." *Mail,* 10 February 1875: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition." *Sun,* 10 February 1875: 2.

"Fine Arts." *Independent,* 11 February 1875: 6-7.

"The Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition." *Appleton's* 13 (13 February 1875): 216-17.

"The Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition–Concluding Notice." *Times,* 14 February 1875: 5.

"Art Notes." *Herald,* 15 February 1875: 5.

"The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Notice." *World,* 15 February 1875: 5.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society's Exhibition. II." *Nation* 20 (18 February 1875): 119-20.

"Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition." *Mail,* 22 February 1875: 1.

"Fine Arts. The American Society of Painters in Water Colors–Eighth Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 22 February 1875: 5.

"American Society of Painters in Water-Colours." *Art Journal* 1 (March 1875): 91-93.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society's Exhibition. III." *Nation* 20 (4 March 1875):156-57.

"Studio Notes." *World,* 22 March 1875: 5.

"Art." *Atlantic* 35 (April 1875): 508-9.

"Culture and Progress. Eighth Exhibition of the Water-Color Society." *Scribner's* 9 (April 1875): 762-64.

"National Academy of Design. Opening of the Fiftieth Annual Exhibition." *Post,* 7 April 1875: 2.

"The Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Times,* 10 April 1875: 3.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. Fiftieth Annual Exhibition of thc Academy of Design. I." *Nation* 20 (15 April 1875): 264-65.

"Fine Arts. A Glimpse of the Pictures at the Academy of Design. Second Article." *Daily Graphic,* 16 April 1875: 347.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"The National Academy of Design. A Half Century of American Painting." *Sun,* 21 April 1875: 2.

"The Fine Arts. New Pictures and Where They May Be Seen." *Times,* 25 April 1875: 10.

"Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design. Fiftieth Annual Exhibition. Third Notice." *Tribune,* 29 April 1875: 7.

C., S. N. [Susan Nichols Carter]. "The Academy Exhibition. III. Genre and Fancy Pictures." *Post,* 1 May 1875: 1.

"The Arts." *Appleton's* 13 (8 May 1875): 599-601.

"Fine Arts. A Word for the Painters." *Daily Graphic,* 15 May 1875: 571.

"The National Academy of Design. Second Article." *World,* 15 May 1875: 4-5.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. Fiftieth Exhibition of the Academy of Design. IV." *Nation* 20 (20 May 1875): 352.

"The National Academy of Design." *Express,* 28 May 1875: 1.

"Culture and Progress. The Academy of Design." *Scribner's* 10 (June 1875): 251-52.

James, Henry. "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited." *Galaxy* 20 (July 1875): 89-97.

"Topics of the Time. About an American School of Art." *Scribner's* 10 (July 1875): 380-81.

"Fine Arts. Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Water-Color Society–Private View." *Tribune,* 31 January 1876: 5.

South, Erastus. "The Water-Color Exhibition. A Glance at the Work of Our Prominent Artists." *Daily Graphic,* 3 February 1876: 734.

"The Fine Arts. Exhibition of Water Colors." *Times,* 6 February 1876: 10.

"Fine Art. The Ninth Exhibition of the Water Color Society." *Mail,* 7 February 1876: 1.

"Fine Arts. Exhibition of Paintings in Water Colors." *Independent,* 10 February 1876: 7.

"The Fine Arts. Exhibition of Water Colors. Second Notice of the Collection at the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Academy of Design." *Times,* 13 February 1876: 10.

"Art Notes. The American Society of Painters in Water Colors." *Express,* 17 February 1876: 1.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. Ninth Exhibition of the Water-Color Society." *Nation* 22 (17 February 1876): 119-20.

"The Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Notice." *Appleton's* 15 (19 February 1876): 250-52.

"The Water-Color Exhibition." *Tribune,* 19 February 1876: 7.

"Fine Arts. The Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors." *Mail,* 24 February 1876: 1.

"The Water-Colour Exhibition, New York." *Art Journal* 2 (March 1876): 92-93.

"Fifty-First Exhibition of the National Academy." *Sun,* 28 March 1876: 2.

"Fine Arts-Music-The Drama. Fine Arts. Fifty-First Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design." *Tribune,* 28 March 1876: 4.

"The Art Exhibition. The Annual Display of the National Academy." *Daily Graphic,* 29 March 1876: 229.

"Fine Arts. The Fifty-First Academy Exhibition." *Mail,* 30 March 1876: 2.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-First Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 1 April 1876: 7.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the National Academy of Design." *Nation* 22 (6 April 1876): 234-35.

"The Fine Arts. Exhibition of the National Academy (Third Article)." *Times,* 8 April 1876: 6.

"Academy of Design. Fifty-First Annual Exhibition. Second Notice." *Tribune,* 8 April 1876: 2.

"The Arts. Representative Pictures at the Academy." *Appleton's* 15 (15 April 1876): 508-10.

"Art Matters. A Hasty Glance at the Academy Exhibition." *Express,* 20 April 1876: 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. II." *Nation* 22 (20 April 1876): 268.

"Artistic Criticism." *American Architect and Building News* 1 (22 April 1876): 130-31.

"The Arts. The Academy Exhibition." *Appleton's* 15 (22 April 1876): 539-40.

"The National Academy of Design." *Sun,* 30 April 1876: 2.

"The National Academy of Design. First Notice." *Art Journal* 2 (May 1876): 157-59.

"The National Academy of Design. Second Notice." *Art Journal* 2 (June 1876): 189-91.

"Art." *Atlantic* 37 (June 1876): 758-61.

Gar. "The Art of America. Some Paintings to be Proud Of." *Times,* 11 June 1876: 1.

"Fine Arts." *Herald,* 19 June 1876: 9.

"Fine Arts. New York Centennial Loan Exhibition." *Tribune,* 23 June 1876: 3-4.

"The Loan Collections. II." *World,* 31 July 1876: 5.

C., E. A. "Fine Arts at the Centennial. III." *Mail,* 10 August 1876: 1.

C., S. N. [Susan Nichols Carter]. "Paintings at the Centennial Exhibition." *Art Journal* 2 (September 1876): 283-85.

"A Ramble Among the Studios." *Tribune,* 25 November 1876: 2.

"Art." *Atlantic* 38 (December 1876): 754-59.

"Brooklyn Art Association." *Brooklyn Union,* 5 December 1876: 3.

"The Johnston Picture Sale." *Telegram,* 18 December 1876: 2.

Benjamin, S. G. W. "Contemporary Art in England." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 54 (January 1877): 161-79.

"Fine Arts." *Independent,* 4 January 1877: 6.

Fairman, James. "Art Education in America." *Tribune,* 13 January 1877: 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Our Water Color Painters. The Tenth Annual Exhibition of the American Society." *Commercial Advertiser*, 20 January 1877: 3.

"Pictures at the Academy. The Exhibition of the American Society of Painters in Water Colors." *Daily Graphic*, 22 January 1877: 3.

"Art Matters. The Water Color Exhibition." *Express*, 22 January 1877: 1.

"The Fine Arts. Exhibition of Water-Color." *Times*, 22 January 1877: 5.

"Display of Water-Colors at the Academy of Design. A Look into the West and the Northwest Rooms." *Times*, 28 January 1877: 7.

"Water-Colors at the Kurtz Gallery." *Tribune*, 3 February 1877: 7.

"The Painters in Water Colors. Pictures by American Artists in the Exhibition. Second Paper." *Post*, 13 February 1877: 1.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts." *Nation* 24 (15 February 1877): 108.

"Water Colors. Success of the Exhibition – Review of Some of the Pictures." *Commercial Advertiser*, 21 February 1877: 1.

C., S. N. [Susan Nichols Carter]. "The Tenth New York Water-Colour Exhibition." *Art Journal* 3 (March 1877): 95-96.

Benjamin, S. G. W. "Contemporary Art in France." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 54 (March 1877): 481-503.

"Fine Arts. American Pictures on Exhibition." *World*, 1 March 1877: 5.

Weir, J. F. "Relations and Points of Contact Between the Arts." *American Architect and Building News* 2 (10 March 1877): 76-78.

"Art and Art Critics." *Tribune*, 10 March 1877: 3.

"Artists and Art Critics." *Tribune*, 10 March 1877: 6.

"Letters From the People." *Tribune*, 12 March 1877: 5.

"Art and Art Critics." *Tribune*, 13 March 1877: 5.

"The Old Cabinet." *Scribner's* 13 (April 1877): 866-67.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Paintings. The Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. Character of the Display." *Commercial Advertiser*, 2 April 1877: 3.

"Fine Arts." *Independent*, 5 April 1877: 7.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fifty-Second Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Nation* 24 (5 April 1877): 207-8.

"Pictures in the Spring Exhibition. The Present Attractions of the Academy of Design–Works by Representative Artists." *Daily Graphic*, 6 April 1877: 225.

"At the Academy. II. Figure Pictures and Portraits." *Tribune*, 7 April 1877: 5.

"American Art. The Academy of Design. A Second View of the Exhibition–Landscapes by the Younger Artists." *Times*, 8 April 1877: 4.

"National Academy of Design. The Fifty-Second Exhibition." *Sun*, 15 April 1877: 3.

"The Academy of Design." *Times*, 15 April 1877: 6.

"Academy of Design. III. Genre Pictures." *Tribune*, 16 April 1877: 5.

"The Academy of Design. Some Landscapes in the Fifty-Second Annual Exhibition." *Post*, 21 April 1877: 1.

"Academy of Design. IV. Landscapes." *Tribune*, 21 April 1877: 7.

"Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. II." *Mail*, 23 April 1877: 1.

"The Academy Exhibition. IV." *World*, 23 April 1877: 4.

"The Academy Exhibition." *Art Journal* 3 (May 1877): 157-60.

"American Art Progress." *Herald*, 7 May 1877: 6.

"The Academy Exhibition. VI." *World*, 7 May 1877: 4-5.

"The Academy of Design. Genre Painting in the Fifty-Second Annual Exhibition." *Post*, 12 May 1877: 1.

"Art Announcements." *Post*, 31 May 1877: 2.

Benjamin, S. G. W. "Contemporary Art in Germany." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 54 (June 1877): 1-22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Culture and Progress. The National Academy Exhibition." *Scribner's* 14 (June 1877): 263-64.

"Personal." *Post,* 19 June 1877: 2.

"Studio Notes." *Herald,* 24 September 1877: 3.

"Fine Arts. Studio Jottings." *Herald,* 1 October 1877: 5.

"Reopening the Studios. New Pictures." *Tribune,* 13 October 1877: 2.

"Gossip of Local Art Circles. Something About the Associations in New York." *Daily Graphic,* 10 January 1878: 458.

"The Annual Sale of American Paintings. A Brilliant Display in the Leavitt Art Rooms." *Post,* 25 January 1878: 3.

"Pictures for the Paris Exhibition." *Post,* 26 January 1878: 2.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. Eleventh Exhibition of the American Water-Color Society. I." *Nation* 26 (14 February 1878): 120-21.

"American Art in Water Colors. The Eleventh Annual Exhibition of the Water-Color Society in the Rooms of the Academy of Design." *Post,* 20 February 1878: 1.

"A Plea for Finish in Art." *Times,* 17 March 1878: 6.

"The Academy of Design. Opening of the Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition." *Post,* 30 March 1878: 4.

Sheldon, George W. "A New Departure in American Art." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 56 (April 1878): 764-68.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design." *Mail,* 1 April 1878: 4.

"The Coming Exhibition. Academy of Design Paintings." *Times,* 1 April 1878: 5.

"Art at the Academy. The Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition." *Tribune,* 2 April 1878: 5.

"National Academy of Design. Some of the More Notable of the Paintings Exhibited." *Daily Graphic,* 3 April 1878: 234.

Weir, John F. "Painting and Sculpture at the Centennial. VI." *American Architect and*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Building News 3 (6 April 1878): 121-22.

"The Academy Exhibition. Portraits." *Times,* 7 April 1878: 6-7.

"Pictures and Critics." *Telegram,* 9 April 1878: 2.

"National Academy of Design. A Glance at the Paintings Included in the Present Exhibition." *Daily Graphic,* 10 April 1878: 287.

"The Academy Exhibition. Critics on the Fence." *Times*, 10 April 1878: 2.

"The National Academy of Design. II." *Sun*, 14 April 1878: 4.

"Fine Arts. The Academy Exhibition. II." *Independent*, 18 April 1878: 9.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition. III." *Tribune*, 19 April 1878: 5.

v. R. M. G. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer]. "National Academy of Design, New York. Fifty-Third Annual Exhibition." *American Architect and Building News* 3 (27 April 1878): 149-50.

Carter, S. N. "The Academy Exhibition." *Art Journal* 4 (May 1878): 157-59.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design – Seventh and Concluding Notice–The Corridor and Sculpture Room." *Herald*, 6 May 1878: 5.

"Art and Artists." *Mail*, 7 May 1878: 4.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. V." *Tribune*, 11 May 1878: 6.

"The Academy Exhibition. III." *World*, 18 May 1878: 6.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The National Academy Exhibition. Final Notice." *Nation* 26 (30 May 1878): 363-64.

"The Paris Exposition. English Opinion of American Pictures and Artists." *Herald*, 3 June 1878: 4.

"American Art at the Exposition." *Times*, 16 June 1878: 6.

"Brush and Pencil. Notes from the Studios." *Tribune*, 22 June 1878: 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Fine Arts." *Post*, 23 July 1878: 2.

"Editor's Table. About Finish In Pictures." *Appleton's* 5 (August 1878): 184-87.

Gar. "American Genre Painters. Eastman Johnson, Winslow Homer, and the Rest." *Times*, 25 August 1878: 10.

[Cherbuliez, Victor]. "Cherbuliez on American Painting." *World*, 28 August 1878: 4-5.

Field, Kate. "Kate Field in Switzerland." *Daily Graphic*, 31 August 1878: 422.

Brownell, William Crary. "Art Schools of New York." *Scribner's* 16 (October 1878): 761-81.

S., W. J. [William James Stillman]. "The Paris Exposition–IX. American Painting." *Nation* 26 (3 October 1878): 210-11.

Hooper, Lucy H. "The Pictures at the Paris Exhibition. IV. The American Pictures." *Art Journal* 4 (November 1878): 348-50.

"Fine Arts. New Pictures in the Galleries." *Herald*, 11 November 1878: 5.

S., R. [Russell Sturgis]. "The Paris Exposition–XV. The United States Fine Art Exhibit." *Nation* 26 (28 November 1878): 331-32.

"Pictures at the Exposition." *Atlantic* 42 (December 1878): 707-17.

A., D. M. [David Mailtand Armstrong]. "Art at the Paris Exposition." *Scribner's* 17 (December 1878): 276-81.

"Studio." *Art Interchange* 2 (11 December 1878): 50-51.

"Fine Arts. Among the Studios." *Herald*, 23 December 1878: 9.

[Tardieu, Charles]. "Some Foreign Notions About the Fine Arts in America." *Sun*, 25 December 1878: 2.

[Lefort, Paul]. "American Artists at Paris. A Foreign Critic's Opinion." *Tribune*, 25 December 1878: 2.

"Water Color Exhibition. Extent and Importance of the Collection." *Mail*, 1 February 1879: 1.

"The Water-Color Society. A Brilliant Show at the Twelfth Exhibition." *Times*, 1

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

February 1879: 5.

C., C. [Clarence Cook]. "The American Water Color Society. Twelfth Annual Exhibition." *Tribune*, 1 February 1879: 5.

"The Water Color Exhibition." *Sun*, 2 February 1879: 3.

"The Water-Color Exhibition. I." *World*, 5 February 1879: 4.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The American Water-Color Society's Exhibition." *Nation* 28 (6 February 1879): 107.

"The Water-Color Exhibition. II." *World*, 10 February 1879: 4.

"American Art in Water-Colors. The Twelfth Annual Exhibition of the Water Color Society at the National Academy of Design. I." *Post*, 11 February 1879: 1.

"Fine Arts. The Black and White Exhibition of the Salmagundi Sketch Club–First Notice." *Herald*, 12 February 1879: 6.

"Fine Arts. The Black and White Exhibition at the Kurtz Gallery." *Daily Graphic*, 13 February 1879: 707.

"Fine Arts. The Salmagundi Exhibition." *Mail*, 14 February 1879: 4.

"The Water Color Exhibition." *Sun*, 16 February 1879: 3.

"The Studio. Water Color Exhibition." *Art Interchange* 3 (19 February 1879): 26.

"The Water-Color Exhibition." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 22 February 1879: 1-2.

"Fine Arts. Water Color Exhibition–Fifth and Concluding Notice–The Corridor and Black and White Room." *Herald*, 24 February 1879: 5.

Carter, S. N. " The Water-Colour Exhibition." *Art Journal* 5 (March 1879): 93-96.

Benjamin, S. G. W. "Present Tendencies in American Art." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 58 (March 1879): 481-96.

Cook, Clarence. "The Water-Color Society. Twelfth Annual Exhibition." *Tribune*, 1 March 1879: 5.

Round, Wm. M. F. "Fine Arts. The Water Color Society." *Independent*, 6 March 1879:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

9.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The Growing School of American Water-Color Art." *Nation* 28 (6 March 1879): 171-72.

van Rensselaer, M. G. "Recent Pictures in New York." *American Architect and Building News* 5 (22 March 1879): 93-94.

"The Academy Exhibition. A Creditable Display of the Work of American Artists." *Daily Graphic*, 29 March 1879: 207.

"Fine Arts. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Academy of Design–Important Pictures–First Notice." *Herald*, 30 March 1879: 8.

"Preparing the Pictures. The Artist's Varnishing Day." *Times*, 30 March 1879: 6.

"The Academy Paintings. A Better Display Than Has Been Seen for Years." *Telegram*, 31 March 1879: 1.

"The Academy Exhibition." *Mail*, 1 April 1879: 4.

"The Spring Exhibition. National Academy of Design. First Notice." *Art Interchange* 3 (2 April 1879): 50, iii.

"Fine Arts. National Academy." *Independent*, 10 April 1879: 12.

"The Academy Pictures. Further View of More Prominent Works." *Telegram*, 22 April 1879: 3.

"Academy of Design. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition. Fourth Article." *Tribune*, 26 April 1879: 5.

"The Academy Exhibition. III." *World*, 27 April 1879: 3.

"Fine Arts. Fifty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design–Seventh Notice–The West and Northwest Galleries." *Herald*, 28 April 1879: 5.

"Editor's Table. The Academy Exhibition." *Appleton's* 6 (May 1879): 469-71.

Carter, S. N. "The Academy Exhibition." *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879): 158-60.

"An Amateur in the Academy." *Daily Graphic*, 3 May 1879: 451.

van Rensselaer, M. G. "The Spring Exhibitions in New York. The National Academy of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Design. The Society of American Artists, Etc." *American Architect and Building News* 5 (10 May 1879): 148-49.

[Shinn, Earl]. "Fine Arts. The Fifty-Fourth Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Nation* 28 (15 May 1879): 341-42.

[van Rensselaer, Mariana Griswold]. "The Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Boston. II." *American Architect and Building News* 5 (17 May 1879): 157-58.

"The Academy Painters. Features of the Annual Exhibition at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-Third Street." *Post*, 24 May 1879: 1.

Strahan, Edward [Earl Shinn]. "The Art Gallery. The National Academy of Design. First Notice." *Art Amateur* 1 (June 1879): 4-5.

Bishop, W. H. "The Two New York Exhibitions." *Atlantic* 43 (June 1879): 777-87.

"Culture and Progress." *Scribner's* 18 (June 1879): 310-13.

Benjamin, S. G. W. "Fifty Years of American Art." parts 1-3, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 59 (July/September/October 1879): 241-57; 481-96; 673-88.

"Summer Haunts of Artists." *Art Amateur* 1 (August 1879): 50-51.

Brownell, William Crary. "Whistler in Painting and Etching." *Scribner's* 18 (August 1879): 481-95.

Moran, John. "Studio Life in New York." *Art Journal* 5 (November/December 1879): 343-35; 353-55.

"Mr. Inness on Art Matters." *Art Journal* 5 (December 1879): 374-77.

"Exhibitions and Sales." *American Art Review* 1 (1880): 269-70.

"Book and Art Sales." *Post*, 14 January 1880: 3.

"Fine Arts." *Post*, 26 January 1880: 2.

"Brush and Pencil." *Tribune*, 26 January 1880: 5.

van Rensselaer, M. G. "Decorative Art and Its Dogmas. Two Papers–I." *Lippincott's Magazine* 25 (February 1880): 215-20.

"The Water-Colors Again. A Wonderful Catalogue." *Times*, 1 February 1880: 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"The Water-Color Exhibition." *World*, 7 February 1880: 4.

"Fine Arts. Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society–Fourth Article." *Herald*, 16 February 1880: 8.

van Rensselaer, M. G. "The Water-Color Exhibition, New York." *American Architect and Building News* 7 (28 February 1880): 80-82.

"Fine Arts." *Post*, 3 March 1880: 2.

"The Union League Club." *Times*, 12 March 1880: 5.

"Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Mail*, 27 March 1880: 1.

"Fine Arts. National Academy of Design." *Independent*, 8 April 1880: 6.

"Artists and Their Work. Pictures in the Academy." *Times*, 9 April 1880: 5.

[Brownell, William Crary]. "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design–Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition–I." *Nation* 30 (15 April 1880): 295.

Strix [George Hows]. "Our Feuilleton. The Academy Exhibition. Third Article." *Express*, 24 April 1880: 1.

"Fine Arts. Fifty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design–Fifth Notice." *Herald*, 27 April 1880: 6.

Benjamin, S. G. W. "The Exhibitions. V–National Academy of Design. Fifty-Fifth Exhibition. First Notice." *American Art Review* 1 (May 1880): 306-13.

"Editor's Table. The Spring Exhibitions." *Appleton's Journal* 8 (May 1880): 471-72.

"Exhibition of the Academy of Design." *Art Amateur* 2 (May 1880): 112.

Strahan, Edward [Earl Shinn]. "The Art Gallery. The Metropolitan Museum of Art." *Art Amateur* 2 (May 1880): 114-16.

"Art in the Cities." *Art Journal* 6 (May 1880): 158-60.

Carter, S. N. "The New York Spring Exhibitions." *Art Journal* 6 (May 1880): 153-56.

Brownell, William Crary. "The Younger Painters of America. First Paper." *Scribner's* 20 (May 1880): 1-15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Culture and Progress." *Scribner's* 20 (June 1880): 313-14.

Brownell, William Crary. "The Younger Painters of America. Second Paper." *Scribner's* 20 (July 1880): 321-35.

[van Rensselaer, Mariana Griswold]. "The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Loan Collections. I." *American Architect and Building News* 8 (17 July 1880): 27.

"Fine Arts." *Post*, 4 November 1880: 3.

"Fine Arts." *Post*, 11 November 1880: 2.

"Exhibitions and Sales." *American Art Review* 2 (December 1880): 83-85.

"Artists And Their Work." *Times*, 13 December 1880: 2.

"The Studio. Art Interchange Artists." *Art Interchange* 5 (22 December 1880): 130.

"The Water Color Exhibition." *Post*, 22 January 1881: 6.

"Painters in Water-Color. The Exhibition at the Academy of Design." *Times*, 22 January 1881: 2.

"Fine Arts. The Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition." *Tribune*, 22 January 1881: 5.

"The American Water-Color Society." *Sun*, 23 January 1881: 3.

H., G. W. [George W. Hows]. "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. First Article." *Express*, 25 January 1881: 3.

_____. [George W. Hows]. "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Second Article." *Express*, 29 January 1881: 3.

"Fine Arts. American Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition. Second Article." *Tribune*, 29 January 1881: 6.

"Fine Arts. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society–Third Notice." *Herald*, 31 January 1881: 6.

Strahan, Edward [Earl Shinn]. "Exhibition of the American Water-Color Society." *Art Amateur* 4 (February 1881): 48-51.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Fine Arts. The American Water-Color Society. Fourteenth Exhibition." *Independent*, 3 February 1881: 8.

"Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition." *Nation* 32 (3 February 1881): 80-81.

"The Water-Color Society. Art and Artists in the Present Exhibition." *Times*, 6 February 1881: 5.

H., G. W. [George W. Hows]. "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Fourth Article." *Express*, 8 February 1881: 3.

"The Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition (Second Notice)." *Critic* 1 (12 February 1881): 39-40.

[Hows, George W.]. "Fine Arts. The Water-Color Exhibition. Concluding Article." *Express*, 12 February 1881: 3.

"Pictures Here and There." *Telegram*, 12 February 1881: 2.

"Fine Arts. Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society–Sixth and Concluding Notice." *Herald*, 21 February 1881: 6.

B., S. G. W. [Samuel Green Wheeler Benjamin]. "The Exhibitions. V–Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society." *American Art Review* 2 (March 1881): 196.

"Art Notes. The American Water-Color Society." *Art Journal* 7 (March 1881): 95-96.

"Fine Arts. Art and Artists in New York. Second Paper." *Independent*, 3 March 1881: 8.

van Rensselaer, M. G. "The Water Color Exhibition, New York." *American Architect and Building News* 9 (19 March 1881): 135-36.

_____. "Our Monthly Gossip. Art Matters. The New York Water-Color Exhibition." *Lippincott's* 27 (April 1881): 417-18.

"Culture and Progress: Winter Picture Exhibitions." *Scribner's* 21 (April 1881): 955-56.

v. R., M. G. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer]. "The New York Art Season." *Atlantic Monthly* 48 (August 1881): 193-202.

Post 1881 (listed in alphabetical order)

Andrews, Wayne, and Garnett McCoy. "The Artist Speaks: Part III, Realists and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mystics, 1860-1900." *Art in America* 53 (August-September 1965): 54-67.

Baekeland, Frederick. "Collectors of American Painting, 1813 to 1913." *American Art Review* 3 (1976): 121-66.

Baur, John I. H. "American Luminism." *Perspectives, U. S. A.* (Autumn 1954): 90-98.

Blaugrund, Annette. "The Tenth Street Studio Building: A Roster, 1857-95." *American Art Journal* 14 (Spring 1982): 64-71.

Burns, Sarah. "Barefoot Boys and Other Country Children: Sentiment and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century American Art." *American Art Journal* 20 (1988): 24-50.

Caffin, Charles H. "American Painters of the Sea." *The Critic* 43 (December 1903): 548-61.

Commager, Henry Steele. "The Artist in American History." *The Corcoran Gallery of Art Bulletin* 4 (June 1951): 2-13.

Curti, Merle. "America at the World's Fairs, 1851-1893." *American Historical Review* 55 (July 1950): 833-56.

Downes, William Howe, and Frank Torrey Robinson. "Later American Masters." *New England Magazine* 14 (April 1896): 131-51.

Eager, G. "Iconography of the Boat in 19th Century American Painting." *Art Journal* 35 (Spring 1976): 228.

Fidell-Beaufort, Madeline, and Jeanne K. Welcher. "Some Views of Art Buying in New York in the 1870s and 1880s." *Oxford Art Journal* 5 (1982): 48-55.

Fink, Lois M. "French Art in the United States, 1850-1870: Three Dealers and Collectors." *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 92 (September 1978): 87-100.

_____. "American Artists in France, 1850-1870." *American Art Journal* 5 (Nov. 1973): 49.

Gallatin, A. E. "Notes on Some Masters of the Water Color." *Arts and Decoration* 4 (April 1916): 278-79.

Gerdts, William H. "The American 'Discourses': A Survey of Lectures and Writings on American Art, 1770-1858." *American Art Journal* 15 (Summer 1983): 61-79.

_____. "American Landscape Painting; Critical Judgments, 1730-1845." *American Art*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Journal 17 (Winter 1985): 28-59.

_____. "Square Format and Proto-Modernism in American Painting." *Arts* 50 (June 1976): 70-75.

Goodrich, Lloyd. "The Study of Nineteenth-Century Art." *Art in America* 33 (October 1945): 220-40.

_____. "What is American in American Art?" *Art in America* 4 (1963): 24-39.

Harris, Neil. "Realism, Photography and Journalistic Objectivity in 19th Century America." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 4 (Winter 1977): 86-98.

Hoeber, Arthur. "American Sea Painters." *The Mentor* 1 (7 July 1913): 2-3.

Johnston, W. R. "Fortuny and His Circle." *Walters Art Gallery Bulletin Supplement* 2 (April 1970): n.p.

_____. "W. H. Stewart, The American Patron of Mariano Fortuny." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 77 (March 1971): 183-88.

Matthews, Mildred B. "The Painters of the Hudson River School in the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876." *Art in America* 34 (July 1946): 143-60.

Meixner, Laura Lee. "Popular Criticism of Jean Francois Millet in 19th Century America." *Art Bulletin* 65 (March 1983): 94-105.

Meservey, Ann Farmer. "The Role of Art in American Life: Critic's Views on Native Art and Literature, 1830-65." *American Art Journal* 1 (May 1978): 73-79.

Miller, Lillian B. "Painting, Sculpture and the National Character, 1815-60." *Journal of American History* 53 (March 1967): 696-707.

Minton, Lee. "The James M. Cowan Collection of American Paintings in the Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee." *Antiques* 118 (November 1980): 988-97.

O'Doherty, Barbara Novak. "Some American Words: Basic Aesthetic Guidelines, 1825-1870." *American Art Journal* 1 (Spring 1969): 78-91.

Tatham, David. "The Iconography of the Early White Mountain Resort Hotels, 1852-1875: Prints, Photographs, and Maps." *Historical New Hampshire* 50 (Spring/Summer 1995): 67-80.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Troyen, Carol. Innocents Abroad: American Painters at the 1867 Exposition Universelle, Paris." *American Art Journal* 16 (Autumn 1984): 3-29.

Walsh, J. C., and S. E. Strickler. "Technique in American Watercolors from the Worcester Art Museum, Mass." *Antiques* 131 (February 1987): 412-25.

"Walter Shirlaw." *Bulletin of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences* 5 (October 15, 1910): n.p.

Weinberg, H. Barbara. "Thomas B. Clark: Foremost Patron of American Art from 1872-1899." *American Art Journal* 8 (1976): 60-75.

Young, Mahonri Sharp. "The Tile Club Revisited." *American Art Journal* 2 (Fall 1970): 81-91.

Zalesch, Saul E. "Competition and Conflict in the New York Art World, 1874-79." *Winterthur Portfolio* 29 (Summer-Autumn 1994): 103-20.

HOMER

Books and Catalogues

Atkinson, Scott. *Winslow Homer in Gloucester.* Chicago: Terra Museum of American Art, 1990.

Beam, Philip C. *Winslow Homer at Prout's Neck.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1966.

_____. *Winslow Homer's Magazine Engravings.* New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

_____. *Winslow Homer Watercolors.* Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1983.

Cikovsky, Nicolai, Jr., ed. *Winslow Homer, A Symposium.* Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1990.

_____, and Franklin Kelly. *Winslow Homer.* Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1995.

Cooper, Helen A. *Winslow Homer Watercolors.* Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986.

Cox, Kenyon. *Winslow Homer.* New York: privately printed, 1914.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Curry, David Park. *Winslow Homer: The Croquet Game*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1984.

Dalton, Karen, and Peter Wood. *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.

Davis, Melinda Dempster. *Winslow Homer: An Annotated Bibliography of Periodical Literature*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1975.

Downes, William Howe. *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911.

Flexner, James Thomas. *The World of Winslow Homer*. New York: Time Incorporated - Time-Life Library of Art, 1966.

Gardner, Albert Ten Eyck. *Winslow Homer, American Artist: His World and His Work.* New York: Clarkson K. Potter, 1961.

Goodrich, Lloyd. *American Watercolor and Winslow Homer*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1945.

_____. *The Graphic Art of Winslow Homer.* New York: The Museum of Graphic Art, 1968.

_____. *Winslow Homer*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1944.

_____. *Winslow Homer.* New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1973.

_____, and Abigail Gerdts. *Winslow Homer in Monochrome*. New York: Knoedler & Co., 1986.

Gould, Jean. *Winslow Homer: A Portrait*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962.

Green, Samuel M. *The Harold Trowbridge Pulsifier Collection of Winslow Homer Paintings and Drawings at Colby College*. Waterville, Maine: Colby College Press, 1949.

Hendricks, Gordon. *The Life and Work of Winslow Homer*. New York: Abrams, 1979.

Hoopes, Donelson F. *Winslow Homer Watercolors*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1969.

Murphy, Alexandra R. *Winslow Homer in the Clark Collection.* Williamstown, Mass.: The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1986.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pousette-Dart, Nathaniel. *Winslow Homer*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1923.

Simpson, Marc. *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*. San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1985.

Tatham, David. *Winslow Homer in the Adirondacks.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996.

_____. *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1992.

Watson, Forbes. *Winslow Homer*. New York: Crown, 1942.

Wilmerding, John, ed. *Essays in Honor of Paul Mellon.* Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986.

_____. *Winslow Homer*. New York: Praeger, 1972.

_____, and Linda Ayres. *Winslow Homer in the 1870s*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.

_____, and Elaine Evans Dee. *Winslow Homer, 1836-1910: A Selection from the Cooper-Hewitt Collection, Smithsonian Institution.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972.

Winslow Homer Memorial Exhibition. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1911.

Dissertations, Theses, Papers, and Manuscripts:

Carren, Rachel Ann. "From Reality to Symbol: Images of Children in the Art of Winslow Homer." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 1990.

Colacino, Jana. "Color Theory in Winslow Homer's Watercolors." master's thesis, Syracuse University, 1993.

Giese, Lucretia Hoover. "Winslow Homer: Painter of the Civil War." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985.

The Lloyd Goodrich and Edith Havens Goodrich Whitney Museum of American Art Record of Works by Winslow Homer.

Provost, Paul Raymond. "Winslow Homer's Drawings in Black-and-White, ca. 1875-1885." Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Tatham, David. "Winslow Homer in Boston: 1854-1859." Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1970.

Periodicals

Adams, Henry. "The Identity of Winslow Homer's Mystery Women." *Burlington Magazine* 132 (April 1990): 244-52.

_____. "Mortal Themes: Winslow Homer." *Art in America* 71 (February 1983): 112-26.

_____. "Winslow Homer Exhibitions." *Burlington Magazine* 133 (June 1991): 407-8.

_____. "Winslow Homer's Mystery Woman." *Art and Antiques* 7 (November 1984): 38-45.

Avery, K. J. "Winslow Homer." *Arts Magazine* 56 (February 1982): 13.

Baldinger, Wallace S. "The Art of Eakins, Homer and Ryder: A Social Re-evaluation." *Art Quarterly* 9 (Summer 1946): 212-33.

Benson, E. M. "Nineteenth Century Americans: Winslow Homer and Homer D. Martin." *American Magazine of Art* 29 (October 1936): 184-85.

Boime, Albert. "Blacks in Shark-infested Waters: Visual Encodings of Racism in Copley and Homer." *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 3 (Winter 1989): 19-48.

Bolton, Theodore H. "The Art of Winslow Homer: An Estimate in 1932." *The Fine Arts* 18 (February 1932): 23-28, 52-55.

_____. "Homer Revisited at the Whitney." *ArtNews* 43 (October 15-31, 1944): 16-19.

Brinton, Christian. "Winslow Homer." *Scribner's Magazine* 49 (January 1911): 9-23.

Buch, John H. "Winslow Homer's Paintings." *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 6 (February 1911): 43-44.

Buchanan, Charles L. "Inness and Winslow Homer." *The Bookman* 47 (July 1918): 487-97.

Burns, Sarah. "Modernizing Winslow Homer." *American Quarterly* 49 (September 1997): 615-39.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Barefoot Boys and Other Country Children: Sentiment and Ideology in 19th-Century American Art." *American Art Journal* 20 (1988): 24-50.

_____. "Yankee Romance: The Comic Courtship Scene in Nineteenth-Century American Art." *American Art Journal* 18 (1986): 72-73.

Caffin, Charles H. "A Note on the Art of Winslow Homer." *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 6 (March 1911): 50, 52.

Calo, Mary Ann. "Winslow Homer's Visits to Virginia During Reconstruction." *American Art Journal* 12 (Winter 1980): 4-27.

Chase, J. E. "Recollections of Homer." *Harper's Weekly* 54 (October 22, 1910): 13.

Cikovsky, Nicolai, Jr. "Winslow Homer's *Prisoners From the Front.*" *Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal* 12 (1977): 155-72.

_____. "Winslow Homer's Unfinished Business." *Studies in the History of Art* 37 (1990): 92-117.

Coffin, W. A. "A Painter of the Sea." *Century Magazine* 58 (September 1899): 651-54.

Comstock, Helen. "Winslow Homer in Review." *The Connoisseur* 115 (June 1945): 109-10.

_____. "Winslow Homer Memorial Exhibition." *The Connoisseur* 97 (May 1936): 281.

Cooke, Herewald Lester. "The Development of Winslow Homer's Watercolor Technique." *Art Quarterly* 24 (Summer 1961): 169-94.

Corn, A. "Reckoning with Winslow Homer." *ArtNews* 90 (January 1991): 164.

Cox, Kenyon. "Three Pictures by Winslow Homer in the Metropolitan Museum." *Burlington Magazine* 12 (November 1907): 121-24.

_____. "The Watercolors of Winslow Homer." *Art in America* 2 (October 1914): 404-15.

_____. "Winslow Homer." *Nation* 100 (February 18, 1915): 206-7.

Davidson, Abraham A. "Early and Late Works at the Baltimore Museum of Art." *Arts* 43 (November 1968): 54-55.

Docherty, Linda J. "A Problem of Perspective: Winslow Homer, John H. Sherwood and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Weaning the Calf." *North Carolina Museum of Art Bulletin* 16 (1993): 32-48.

Downes, William Howe. "Life and Works of Winslow Homer." *Nation* 94 (4 January 1912): 19-20.

Du Bois, Guy Pene. "Two Exhibitions of Winslow Homer." *Magazine of Art* 30 (January 1937): 50-51.

E., H. W. "Winslow Homer: Early Criticisms." *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 5 (December 1960): 268-69.

Fosburgh, James W. "Winslow Homer, Artist." *The New York State Conservationist* 3 (August-September 1948): 16-18.

Foster, Allen Evarts, comp. "A Check List of Illustrations by Winslow Homer in Harper's Weekly and Other Periodicals." *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 40 (October 1936): 842-51.

_____. "A Check List of Illustrations by Winslow Homer Appearing in Various Periodicals: A Supplement to the Check List Published in the Bulletin of the New York Public Library." *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 44 (July 1940): 537-39.

Fowler, Frank. "An Exponent of Design in Painting." *Scribner's Magazine* 33 (May 1903): 638-40.

Francis, Henry S. "Recent Additions to the Collection of Homer." *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 42 (March 1955): 51-54.

Gardner, Albert Ten Eyck. "Metropolitan Homers." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* n.s. 17 (January 1959): 132-43.

Gerdts, W. H. "Winslow Homer in Cullercoats." *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 36 (Spring 1977):18-35.

Gibson, E. "Homer and Sargent: Yankee Honest vs. Cosmopolitan Flair." *New Criterion* 5 (February 1987): 58-65.

Giese, Lucretia H. "Winslow Homer's Civil War Painting. *The Initials*: A Little-Known Drawing and Related Works." *American Art Journal* 18 (Summer 1986): 4-19.

Goodrich, Lloyd. "Realism and Romanticism in Homer, Eakins, and Ryder." *Art Quarterly* 12 (Winter 1949): 17-29.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Winslow Homer." *The Arts* 6 (October 1924): 185-209.

_____. "Winslow Homer." *Perspectives* no. 14 (1956): 44-45.

Greenberg, Clement. "Art." *Nation.* 159 (October 28, 1944): 539-41.

Gunther, Charles F. "Nature and Her Moods." *Toledo Museum of Art: Museum News* n.s. 8 (Summer 1965): 41-46.

Hoeber, Arthur. "Art and Artists." *New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, 7 February 1911: 8.

_____. "Painter of the Sea." *World's Work* 21 (February 1911): 17.

Hurley, Patricia M. "Forum: Winslow Homer's Children Playing on a Fence." *Drawing* 8 (Sept./Oct. 1986): 58.

Hutson, M. "Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of American Art." *American Art Review* 3 (July-August 1976): 76-91.

Ingalls, Hunter. "Elements in the Development of Winslow Homer." *Art Journal* 34 (Fall 1964): 18-22.

Kaplan, Sidney. "The Negro in the Art of Homer and Eakins." *Massachusetts Review* 7 (Winter 1966): 105-20

Katz, Leslie. "The Modernity of Winslow Homer." *Arts* 33 (February 1959): 24-27.

Knauff, Christopher W. "Certain Exemplars of Art in America: IV. Elliott Dangerfield—Winslow Homer." *The Churchman* 78 (July 23, 1898): 123-25, 128.

Kuspit, Donald B. "Nineteenth Century Landscape: Poetry and Prosperity." *Art in America* 64 (January 1976): 69-71.

La Farge, Henry A. "Early Winslow Homer." *ArtNews* 52 (November 1953): 41.

Mather, Frank Jewett, Jr. "Art of Winslow Homer." *Nation* 92 (March 2, 1911): 225-27.

_____. "Winslow Homer as a Book Illustrator with a Descriptive Checklist." *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 1 (November 1939): 15-32.

Mechlin, Leila. "Winslow Homer." *International Studio* 34 (June 1908): cxxv-cxxvi.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Morton, Frederick W. "The Art of Winslow Homer." *Brush and Pencil* 10 (April 1902): 40-54.

Nettles, Gail. "Winslow Homer and the Women in His Works." *Winslow Homer: An Annual* 6 (1991): 3-62.

Newlin, Alice. "Winslow Homer and Arthur Boyd Houghton." *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 22 (March 1936): 56-59.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Tides of Change: How Winslow Homer, Driven by Failure, Redefined the Craft of Watercolor and Established His Reputation." *Art and Antiques* (March 1987): 70-75.

Porter, Fairfield. "Homer, American vs. Artist: A Problem in Identities." *ArtNews* 57 (December 1958): 24-27, 54, 56.

Provost, P. R. "Drawn Toward Europe: Winslow Homer's Work in Black and White." *Master Drawings* 31 (Spring 1993): 35-46.

Prown, Jules D. "Winslow Homer in His Art." *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1 (Spring 1987): 31-46.

Quick, Michael. "Homer in Virginia." *Los Angles County Museum of Art Bulletin* 24 (1978): 60-81.

Richardson, E. P. "The Dinner Hour—Winslow Homer." *Art Quarterly* 11 (1948): 125.

_____. "Three Early Works by Winslow Homer." *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 31 (1951-52): 6-9.

Saint-Gaudens, Homer. "Winslow Homer." *Carnegie Magazine* (February 1937): 259-68.

Sanborn, Ashton. "Winslow Homer's Adirondack Guide." *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 46 (June 1948): 48-51.

Sheldon, G. W. "American Painters–Winslow Homer and F. A. Bridgman." *Art Journal* 4 (August 1878): 225-29.

_____. "Sketches and Studies. II. From the Portfolios of A. H. Thayer, William M. Chase, Winslow Homer, and Peter Moran." *Art Journal* 6 (April 1880): 105-9.

Sherman, Frederic Fairchild. "The Early Oil Paintings of Winslow Homer." *Art in America* 6 (June 1918): 201-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Shurtleff, R. H. "Correspondence. Shurtleff Recalls Homer." *American ArtNews* 3 (29 October 1910): 4.

Spassky, Natalie. "Winslow Homer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 39 (Spring 1982): 4-48.

Stein, Roger B. "Winslow Homer in Context." *American Quarterly* 42 (1990): 74-92.

Stonehouse, Augustus. "Winslow Homer." *Art Review* 1 (Feb.1887): 12-14.

Tatham, David. "A Drawing by Winslow Homer: Corner of Winter, Washington and Summer Streets [Boston]." *American Art Journal* 18 (1986): 40-50.

_____. "Trapper, Hunter, and Woodsman: Winslow Homer's Adirondack Figures." *American Art Journal* 22 (1990): 40-67.

_____. "*Two Guides*: Winslow Homer at Keene Valley, Adirondacks." *American Art Journal* 20 (1988): 21-34.

_____. "Winslow Homer and the New England Poets." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society Annual Meeting* 89 (October 1979): 241-60.

_____. "Winslow Homer in the Mountains." *Appalachia* 36 (15 June 1966): 73.

_____. "Winslow Homer's Library." *The American Art Journal* 9 (May 1977): 92-98.

Trumble, Alfred. "One New Movement in Watercolor Painting." *Art Review* 2 (1887): 73-76.

v. R., M. G. [Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer]. "An American Artist in England." *Century Magazine* 28 (November 1883): 15.

Walker J. *Long Branch, New Jersey. Ladies' Home Journal* 64 (August 1947): 40-41.

"Water-Colors by Winslow Homer." *World*, 4 March 1880: 2.

Watson, Forbes. "Ryder, Eakins, Homer." *The Arts* 17 (May 1930): 630-34.

W[ehle], H. B. "Early Paintings By Homer." *Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art* 18 (February 1923): 38-41.

Weitenkampf, Frank. "The Intimate Homer: Winslow Homer's Sketches." *Art Quarterly* 6 (Autumn 1943): 306-21.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Wheelwright, John. "Remington and Winslow Homer." *Hound and Horn* 6 (July-September 1933): 611-31.

Wilmerding, J. "Winslow Homer's Creative Process." *Antiques* 108 (November 1975): 965-71.

_____. "Winslow Homer's *Right and Left*." *Studies in the History of Art* 9 (1980): 59-85.

Wilson, Christopher Kent. "A Contemporary Source for Winslow Homer's *Prisoner's From the Front*." *Source* 4 (Summer 1985): 37-40.

_____. "Winslow Homer's Thanksgiving Day-Hanging Up the Musket." *American Art Journal* 18 (1986): 16-83.

_____. "Winslow Homer's *The Veteran in a New Field*: A Study of the Harvest Metaphor and Popular Culture." *American Art Journal* 17 (Autumn 1985): 2-27.

"Winslow Homer's Cotton Pickers." *Post,* 30 March 1877: 2.

"Winslow Homer's Water-Colors." *Times*, 5 March 1880: 8.

Wright, W. H. "Modern American Painters—and Winslow Homer." *Forum* 54 (December 1915): 670-72.

Young, J. W. "The Art of Winslow Homer—America's First Great Outdoor Painter." *Fine Arts Journal* 19 (February 1908): 57-63.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.