

power of the photographic image. This is an excellent study of the relationship between photography and literature and the importance of the photographic image as a literary metaphor in the late nineteenth century and provides an illuminating focus on the fiction of Henry James.

The volume contains an especially convincing discussion of the visual tendencies, both pictorial and cinematic, which appear in James' later fiction. In spite of his neglect, at times scorn, of the "art" of photography in his essays, James' fiction reveals a spacial quality and a modernist pictorial consciousness which related time and motion and space in a new type of composition and which together were largely responsible for his radically experimental prose style.

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WINSLOW HOMER WATERCOLORS. By Helen A. Cooper. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1986. \$39.95.

This is a very solid book. It is pretty, too: the color cuts are numerous and lovely. Helen Cooper has done her homework; the volume answers questions technical, historical and aesthetic, assembling information which was simply not readily available a few decades ago. Let me suggest ways in which this specialized art book is useful to American Studies. "Study 'transit of culture,'" one of my graduate school professors preached. Whenever we can learn the sources which influence an artist, we learn about lines of communication which were available and open at the period; we may learn also about the state of media and about subtle aspects of style. In accounting for Homer's watercolor technique, for instance, Cooper shows what Homer learned from books, what from his commercial work, what from paint catalogue instructions, what from his work in oils (and vice versa, for the watercolors influenced the oils as well). Barbizon painters strongly influenced Homer; John La Farge said that Homer "has, like myself, been largely made by them" (52). The story of influences on Homer is much more involved than La Farge could have known, but drawing that connection raises very interesting issues. What Homer did technically with watercolors was, ultimately, so revolutionary that we are likely to lose track of how close his subjects were in various periods to work which other artists were doing. His topics do reflect theirs. Sometimes his manner as well, for there is a period-style, a visual language common to the era.

Cooper also covers the influence on Homer of science in general and color theory in particular. She provides generous quotations from contemporary critics who, despite our cliché-ed assumption that art pundits always failed to appreciate what was new and always panned the experimental, were often excellent. I had not known, moreover, that Homer's entire career was so carefully covered in the contemporary press. Cooper is conscientious also in her coverage of art trends in the United States. One has to immerse oneself in the periodical literature to find out things of this sort. She notices in the 1870s a striking increase of interest in this country in tendencies in European art, a sensitivity which flavored the painting even of such reputedly reclusive and idiosyncratic painters as Homer.

I very much appreciated the detail and texture incorporated in the prose in this volume. Homer's art took a sharp turn after his famous stay in the Tynmouth area in England, but I had never before understood exactly what Cullercoates, the village where Homer lived, was like: it had an artist's colony, and there was at the time an established market for genre stuff dealing with seacoast folk. Knowing those facts certainly changes our perception of Homer's work in that era and of its social context.

Cooper pulls together the scholarship of others and fills gaps with original work of her own in a book of unusual depth and fruitfulness. People who come to it just for aesthetic kick will be rewarded, but it also speaks eloquently to art historians and to the imaginative American Studies reader as well. It shows Homer's paintings in social, intellectual and stylistic context in their own landscape, so to speak, against the society, the popular and commercial culture, the art and the environment in which they were set. All these good things can be said of Cooper's work, then, because she provides adequate context, technical, aesthetic, intellectual and social.

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PHILADELPHIANS AND THE CHINA TRADE, 1784-1844. By Jean Gordon Lee. Essay by Philip Chadwick Foster Smith. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1984. \$45.00.