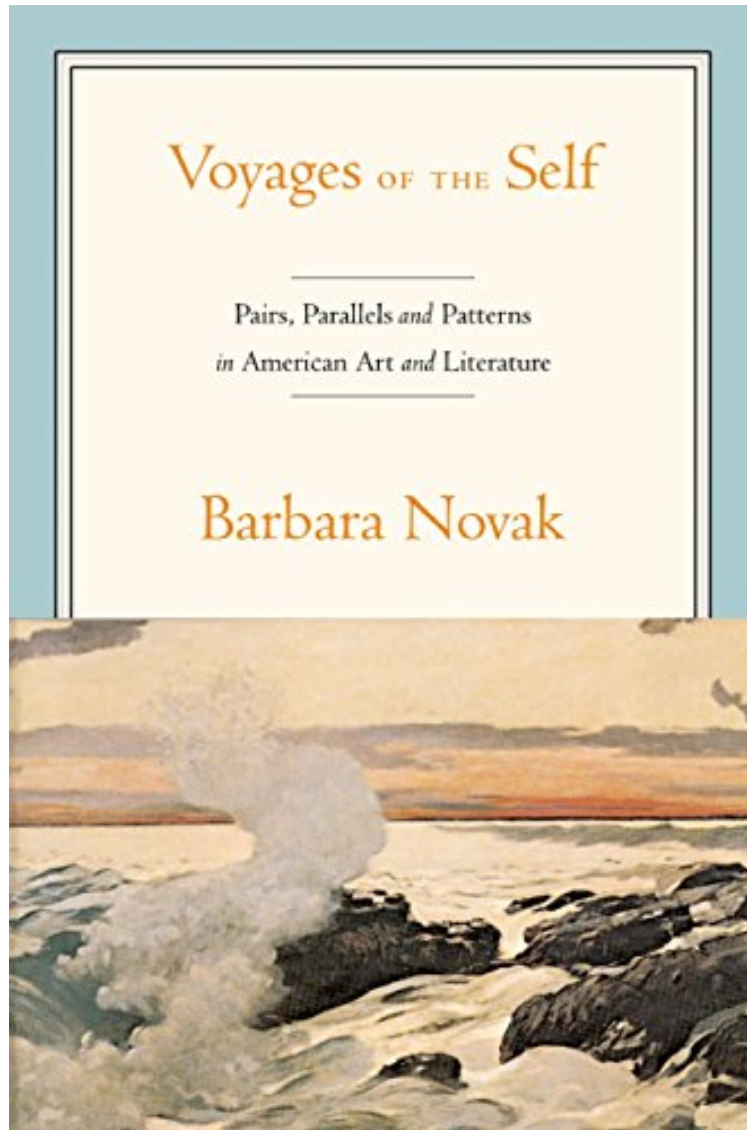


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## Voyages of the Self: Pairs, Parallels, and Patterns in American Art and Literature

Barbara Novak

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**Barbara Novak : Voyages of the Self: Pairs, Parallels, and Patterns in American Art and Literature** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Voyages of the Self: Pairs, Parallels, and Patterns in American Art and Literature:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not easy reading at allBy szVery dense. Not easy reading at all.5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. fascinating juxtaposition of art and literatureBy zeldaBarbara Novak is a fantastic force in the American art criticism and history community.This book finally completes her trilogy and it is

well worth the wait. Novak pairs writers and painters and explores parallels between them. It really is a great way to understand early American culture. Highly recommended!

Barbara Novak is one of America's premier art historians, the author of the seminal books *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* and *Nature and Culture*, the latter of which was named one of the Ten Best Books of the Year by *The New York Times* and was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award. Now, with *Voyages of the Self*, this esteemed critic completes the trilogy begun with the two earlier works, offering once again an exhilarating exploration of American art and culture. In this book, Novak explores several inspired pairings of key writers and painters, drawing insightful parallels between such masters as John Singleton Copley and Jonathan Edwards, Winslow Homer and William James, Frederic Edwin Church and Walt Whitman, and Jackson Pollock and Charles Olson. Through these and other groupings, Novak tracks the varied meanings of the self in America, in which the most salient characteristics of each artist or writer is shown to draw from--and in turn influence--the larger map of American life. Two major threads weaving through the book are the American preoccupation with the "object" and our continuing return to pragmatism. Novak notes for instance how Copley's art mirrors the puritan denial of self found in Jonathan Edwards and how as colonial scientists they share an interest in sensation and observation. She sees Winslow Homer and William James as practitioners of a pragmatic self grounded in an immediate experience that looks for concrete results. Through such fruitful comparisons--whether between Copley and Edwards, or Lane and Emerson, or Ryder and Dickinson--Novak sheds unmatched light on our nation's artistic heritage. Wonderfully illustrated with dozens of black-and-white pictures and sixteen full-color plates, here is a stunning work that yields a wealth of insight into American art and culture--and concludes Novak's landmark trilogy.

"This relatively slim volume can be seen not only as completing the trilogy begun by *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* and *Nature and Culture* but also as a lean, elegant summary of a lifetime's reading, looking, and thinking."--Karen Wilkin, *The Hudson* "A breathtaking achievement. Barbara Novak's brilliant inquiry into the transactions of the American self both accepts the mystery of America's many dualities and explains how they coexist and even reinforce each other."--Marc Pachter, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution "While the identity of the American self is a perennially fascinating subject, no one, to my knowledge, has played off several of the most representative explorations of these journeys in both literature and the visual arts before, and there is no one in American literary or art history who could do it as well as Barbara Novak. Long acknowledged as America's premier guide across these borders, she is true to form in *Voyages of the Self*... It is a pleasure to read prose so wholly free of jargon, always sure of its footing, at the same time elegant and economical in its formulations, and always intriguing. Would that the literature contained more writing like hers and more thinking this perceptive and steadily revealing."--Giles Gunn, Professor of English and of Global and International Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara "With her unmatched knowledge of the total range of American art, Novak uncovers many hitherto unseen correspondences between painting and literature. *Voyages of the Self* is a sweeping contribution to American cultural history, brimming with fresh insights and unexpected revelations. Along with Oxford's editions of Novak's classic books *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* and *Nature and Culture*, it becomes part of a triumphant trilogy and the capstone of Novak's distinguished career as the dean of American art historians."--David S. Reynolds, author of *John Brown, Abolitionist* and *Walt Whitman's America* About the Author Widely recognized as one of the most influential theorists of American art, Barbara Novak is the author of several scholarly books and articles, as well as two novels and a play. Novak received the Woman of Achievement Award from the Barnard Alumnae Association in 1985. She was honored with the College Art Association (CAA) Award for Distinguished Teaching of Art History in 1998, and the Archives of American Art Fleischman Award for Scholarly Contribution to American Art in 1999, among other awards, grants, and medals for her work. In addition, the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, for which she served as Commissioner for about 25 years, recently established the Barbara Novak Acquisition Fund. She advises the Archives of American Art and National Academy of Design. Novak served on the editorial boards of *American Art Journal* and *College Art Journal*. She has served as a fellow at the Society of American Historians. Novak is currently Helen Goodhart Altschul Professor of Art History Emerita at Barnard College and Columbia University.