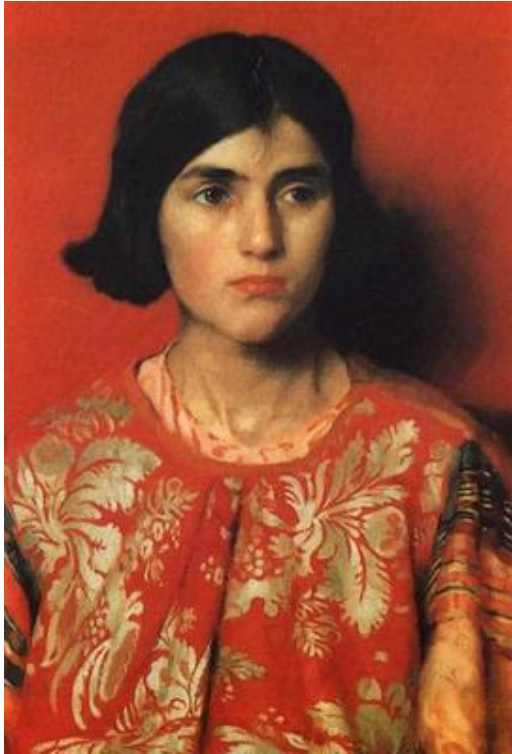


*Tuesday, August 09, 2005*



The new novel of J.M. Coetzee directly attracts your attention when visiting a bookstore. The book cover is amazingly beautiful and gives you the urge to buy this book, even when you have got no idea about the contents. I am sure more customers react like this. The cover shows a detail of a portrait painting by Thomas Cooper Gotch. The title sounds highly romantic: "*The Exile: heavy is the price I have paid for love*". Mr Cooper painted it in 1930 when he was in his seventies. He belonged to the Pre-Raphaelites. Usually the work of this school are too sentimental, but this portrait is a masterpiece. The painting shows a young lady with bobbed black hair and dressed in a red with a golden pattern. The same kind of red has been applied in the background and comes back in her lips and a bit in her blush on her cheeks. So there is hardly a difference between the color of the foreground and of the background. Also, it is quite an art to use so much red in a painting. Some academy teachers call red the enemy of a painting, but Cooper overcame this enemy. He applies a brownish red, a 'stone red' a color which never bores you. The earth color of Venetian red mixed with a lot of poisonous cadmium red pigment is a lust for the eye. The dark of the hair and the stronger shade of the head compensates the intensity of the red. I still wonder what the dramatic title of the painting refers to. The love affair could be a subject for a new novel.