John Sloan and Literature: an Analysis of Literary Influences in the Works and Writings of the American Artist.

By

AMANDA GRIGGIO

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the Degree of

MASTER BY RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

American and Canadian Studies Centre
School of English, Drama, American & Canadian Studies
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
October 2018

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the literary influences present in the art works and writings of the American artist John Sloan. The aim of the thesis is to accompany the reader through a journey that explores three different sides of the artist; the reader, the illustrator and the writer. The first chapter analyses Sloan as a reader, exploring how his artworks were influenced by the literature he read for leisure, and by literary and artistic figures he encountered in his life. In the second chapter, Sloan is introduced as an interpreter of the literature he read under commission for the purpose of creating illustrations. This chapter introduces how Sloan addresses and interprets the relationship between word and image while illustrating short stories, poems, and novels. The third and final chapter examines Sloan's own writing; analysing the content, the literary style and the language he adopted as well as considering some of the illustrations that accompany his own writing to highlight Sloan's awareness and constant engagement with the relationship between word and image.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, my sincerest and deepest thanks go to my supervisors, Dr John Fagg and Dr Rona Cran. Their support and advice have been vital to my growth as a researcher. It has always been inspiring to speak to them and to discuss the ways that I could contribute to the research in this field. Also, a warm thank you to Brittany Moster, who had the immense patience to proofread my work.

I would like to thank my employer and my colleagues, who have been very understanding and supportive throughout this journey.

I would also like to thank my family, who believed in me and supported me with kind words of encouragement throughout this journey. A special mention to mom and dad, who always knew what to say when I needed it the most.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my fiancé Peter for the immense patience demonstrated in the past two years. He put up with me talking constantly about this thesis for the past couple of years despite his little interest in the subject. His moral support has been vital for this process; he has been my rock in my darkest days and my number one fan throughout. Thank you.

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3.5 John Sloan's letter to Robert Henri, 13th November 1912. John Sloan Manuscript Collection, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington.

Conventions Used.

All of John Sloan's quotations cited in this thesis are from a transcribed, annotated and unpublished version, which was given to me by Dr John Fagg at the beginning of this project. This transcribed and annotated version of Sloan's diaries is by Judith O'Toole in consultation with Helen Farr Sloan, and further editing were made by Jeanette Toohey in about 1998. The original manuscripts of the diaries are preserved at the Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, in the Manuscript Collection of the Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives.

The dates for the entries cited are given in the text in parentheses.

Introduction.

This thesis examines both the artistic and written works of John Sloan by highlighting the complex dialogue between literary and visual art in the artist's work.

Sloan's interest in literature is well portrayed in the etching *Robert Henri, Painter*[1] made in 1931 to commemorate his friend and fellow artist Robert Henri following his death in 1929. Sloan portrays his friend sitting on a chair in front of a bookcase, smoking a cigar. Although the subject is Robert Henri the painter, the artist in the picture is neither painting nor drawing. Instead, Henri is posed in front of a bookcase, which alludes to the importance that books and literature had for the artist during his life. Sloan's inclusion of the bookcase in the background also functions as a reminder to the viewer of how their friendship began. Sloan and Henri met at a party for both current students and alumni of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and the two artists bonded due to their mutual interest and admiration of the poetry of Walt Whitman.[2] Literature was a pivotal element in the lives of Sloan and Henri, as they often suggested readings to each other and held discussions on the literature they read. Sloan, in particular, took inspiration for his art from the books he read, reinstating the importance of literature in his life and artistic career. It is therefore evident how the presence of the bookcase in the etching *Robert Henri, Painter* summarises not only the importance of literature for Sloan, but also the aim of this thesis which is to present Sloan as an enabler of the dialogue between visual art and literature.

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[1] Figure 0.1

[2] Bennard B. Perlman, *Revolutionaries of Realism: the Letters of John Sloan and Robert Henri*, Princeton University Press (1997), XXV.

Rebecca Zurier notes in *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School*, Sloan's interest in literature developed earlier and more deeply than his interest in art.[3] Literature inspired his artistic career, as his 'first venture into illustration, for instance, was at the age of twelve, when he illustrated his own copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.'[4]At the age of seventeen, in 1888, he was hired as an assistant cashier at Porter and Coates' bookshop,[5] and obtained a full-time job as an illustrator at the *Philadelphia Enquirer* at the age of twenty.[6] Literature returned to his life later in his career when he drew illustrations for novels and contemporary fiction published in magazines. By the age of twelve, he had read and was familiar with Shakespeare, Dickens, Twain, Zola, and other key literary figures; he once stated that 'We were poor but not underprivileged […] I always had all the books we wanted to read [...] [My] parents were not demonstrative but they had confidence in [me], encouraged [me] to do things on own initiative'.[7] This statement is the starting point for my thesis, as it introduces Sloan's vocational and autodidactic interest in literature. Sloan's curiosity made him read a great variety of literature, ranging from novels to academic articles, which then had a significant impact on his thinking and, consequently, his art.

In this thesis, I argue that it is difficult to understand Sloan's art without acknowledging what he reads, and scholars and art critics have already recognised

[3] Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 251.
[4] Bruce St. John, *John Sloan* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 18.
[5] John Sloan, *John Sloan on Drawing and Painting (Gist of Art)*, (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1994), XII.
[6] Elizabeth H. Hawkes, 'John Sloan's Newspaper Career: An Alternative to Art School' in *The Cultivation of Artists in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Georgia Bradley Barnhill, Diana Korzenik, and Caroline F. Sloat (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1997): 193-209 (194).
[7] Sloan, XI.

Sloan's voracious readership and the influence that this had on his artistic career. Zurier observes in her chapter, 'A Walk Through the City on Paper: the Tradition of the Mobile Observer,'[8] that Sloan and the rest of the members of the Ashcan School became active urban reporters, assuming the role of American flaneurs,[9] meaning that they shared their first-hand experience and reality of the city through their artwork. They represented the reality of urban life by 'revealing in familiar details the urban everyday'[10] to the viewers of their art, highlighting certain social issues such as poverty in New York. Zurier acknowledges and highlights the influence that the Naturalist literature of Zola had on Sloan's art because he adopted Zola's depiction of the poor conditions of the lower classes highlighting the disparity among social classes.

Scholar and biographer John Loughery notes in his book *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (1997) that Henri introduced William Morris Hunt's *Talks on Art* and George Moore's *Modern Painting* to Sloan. Loughery comments that Sloan would relish Moore because he was 'someone who was both sophisticated and volubly conscious of his roots as a native of a country outside the artistic mainstream.'[11] For this reason, the first chapter of this thesis will show how Sloan connected with the Irish novelist. Like Moore, Sloan was conscious of being part of a country that did not have a strong artistic heritage like Italy or France. Moreover, Sloan liked Moore's novel *The Lake* (1905) so much that he recorded reading it in his diary: 'reading George Moore's "The Lake." Splendid; it suits me perfectly' (15 February 1907). The first chapter of the research will touch upon this entry by Sloan to highlight the connection made by Loughery in his

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[8] In *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
[9] Zurier, 93.
[10] Ibid., 90.
[11] John Loughery, *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 35.

biography of the artist and to further confirm the connection that Sloan felt towards Moore.

The current literature on Sloan is not limited to noting Zola's influence on Sloan's art and the interest and admiration he had for Moore. Sloan's art varied from paintings to etchings and illustrations, and scholars and art historians like Zurier, Michal Lobel and John Fagg discussed his art extensively, and his illustrations in particular. Zurier primarily sees Sloan's illustrations as grounding him in popular visual discourse of urban life; Lobel focuses on the way it shapes his sense of himself as an artist and Fagg looks at the way Sloan explores his opposition to forms of idealism through his satirical attack on Gibson et al. Illustrations are the artist's interpretation of an event or a piece of literature, and my research also investigates Sloan's approach to illustrating texts that he read under commission. By looking into Sloan's illustrations of texts such as the short stories 'The Debts of Antoine' by W. B. MacHarg and 'Idella and the White Plague' by Joseph C. Lincoln, and the collection of poems *Canzoni* by Thomas Daly, I will demonstrate Sloan's active role as enabler of the dialogue between word and image.

It is important to mention that the relationship between word and image is a much-discussed topic by both art historians and literary scholars, because the nature of the argument obliges the disciplines of art and literature to enter into a direct dialogue. Dr Catherine Gander and Dr Sarah Garland explore the relationship between verbal, written and visual conventions in American culture,[12] while art historian Jennifer Greenhill recognises the relationship between words and images in her article 'Flip,

[12] See Catherine Gander and Sarah Garland, *Mixed Messages: American Correspondences in Visual and Verbal Practices*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

Linger, Glide: Coles Phillips and the Movements of Magazine Pictures' (2017), where she touches upon Gustave Flaubert's extensive descriptions that function as illustrations of a specific scene, limiting the reader's freedom to interpret the text.[13] Scholar Michael Baxandall argues that 'language is not very well equipped to offer a notation of a particular picture'[14] or piece of art because words generalise the real meaning of an image. Baxandall recognises the limits of language; he believes that images are meant to be seen rather than being narrated with words. Seeing and observing are innate and global instincts of humans, while language has its own limits because it needs to be learned. Even when one learns one language, their knowledge and ability to understand is limited to that one language. John Berger also argues that 'seeing comes before words,'[15] reinstating Baxandall's argument about the limits of language and words. The claims of Berger and Baxandall are the starting point for the argument of this second section of the research, because they recognise the importance that images can have in a literary context, since they can act as a medium to clarify, explain and sometimes translate the text.

In order to showcase Sloan's interest and involvement with literature and the connection between word and image, the research is divided into three chapters, each discussing a different aspect of Sloan' engagement with literature. The first chapter will highlight how the influences from different authors Sloan read have played a significant role in defining his art. The chapter begins by acknowledging the influence that French Naturalist literature had on Sloan's art, then will present the personal and intellectual

[13] Jennifer A. Greenhill, 'Flip, Linger, Glide: Coles Phillips and the Movements of Magazine Pictures', *Association of Art Historians*, vol.40, n.3 (2017): 582-611 (595).
[14] Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intentions* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 3.
[15] John Berger *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 7.

relationship that Sloan shared with the eclectic intellectual John Butler Yeats. Following the acknowledgment of the influences already discussed in the current literature, I will be able to provide additional examples that contribute to the expansion of the scholarship around the influence that Sloan had from the literature he read.

In the second chapter I will present Sloan as an illustrator of the literature he reads under commission and how the artist engages with the relationship between word and image. In *The Gist*, Sloan acknowledges the complementing nature of words and images by stating that words are abstract symbols for the concept that they mean to depict, and that drawings and illustrations are the ideographs that translate the abstract symbols - words - into something that is recognisable to the reader of a text.[16] The second chapter will revolve around this idea presented by Sloan and will attempt to show how the artist himself engaged with it.

In the third and final chapter of the thesis, I will consider a selection of Sloan's writings, such as his correspondence and diaries, to demonstrate how the artist applied his knowledge and understanding of literary forms into his own day-to-day writings. Sloan's diaries and correspondence have been used by scholars and art historians as documents that carry a certain degree of historical value as they account for the artist's activities, political views and act as first-hand accounts of life in New York in the early 1900s. This chapter will acknowledge the historical value of Sloan's writings, and will explore which literature techniques Sloan used in the examples selected in the attempt to showcase the artist's deep understanding of literature and ability to apply certain techniques on his personal writings. I will demonstrate how some passages of his letters

[16] Sloan, 18.

and diaries demonstrate that the literature he read had an impact on the way he wrote as well as his art.

Chapter 1: Sloan as a Reader.

This chapter demonstrates through a series of case studies how John Sloan's art bears the influence of his literary interests. From Sloan's diaries and biographies, it becomes evident that the American artist was a voracious reader from an early age, and he saw literature as both a social and personal activity.

The overall aim of this thesis is to present John Sloan not only as a painter and illustrator but also as a self-taught academic and writer, in spite of the little formal education he received after the age of fourteen, when he ended his brief enrolment in the Philadelphia Central High School. This chapter introduces John Sloan as an avid reader with the purpose of demonstrating the influence that Sloan's reading and literary networks had on his artistic career. The chapter highlights how different literary influences have played a crucial role in defining John Sloan as an artist, and it also targets the provenance of his gift of analytical observation, which he evidently applied in his art, particularly during the Ashcan School period. Sloan declared in *The Gist of Art* (1994) that great authors like Shakespeare 'borrowed from the technique of tradition and created new images by the power of their imagination and human understanding',[17] and that a consumer of art should be able to 'enjoy a work of art for what it is, a document of human, spiritual communication'.[18] Both claims suggest that Sloan himself was subject to the 'technique of tradition' and that he was drawing from tradition to express his own thoughts and create his own techniques with the tools he developed throughout his life. Sloan believed that art should be interpreted as a translation of the

[17] John Sloan, *The Gist of Art* (New York: Dover 1994), 37.
[18] Ibid., 158.

ego of the artist onto canvas; art, according to Sloan, is the imitation of the soul as well as the artist's vision of society.

Whether the art is borrowed from tradition or is a reflection of the soul and experience of the artist, it is important to take into account that both ego and 'inspiration' from other works depend on the influences that other artists, authors, and life experience have had on the final product of the artist, which is the artwork. A starting point for the chapter will be acknowledging the European literary scene of the late 1800s, as well as evaluating its reception in the United States, and particularly Sloan's reception of it. French Naturalist literature played an important role in influencing Sloan's contemporaries due to Zola's philosophy that 'the work of fiction must exemplify a representation of life expressed in terms of truth.'[19] Considering Zola, Balzac, and Maupassant as key figures who influenced American literature, the chapter will present how Zola in particular was an influential figure for Sloan's development as an artist, as acknowledged by Rebecca Zurier et al. The section attempts to highlight key features of French literature present in Sloan's art, demonstrating the transnational and interdisciplinary connections between the arts.

The chapter will then turn to the important intellectual and personal relationship between Sloan and the multi-talented Irish painter John Butler Yeats. Yeats offered his advice as well as stimulated and fed Sloan's interest in literature by suggesting readings and introducing him to Irish poets and writers. Another important connection that will be noted in the chapter is Sloan's relationship with English literature, and in particular how Sloan's works connect to the literature of Joseph Conrad and Walt Whitman.

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[19] Alma W. Byrd, *The First Generation Reception of the Novels of Emile Zola in Britain and America: an Annoted Bibliography of English Language Responses to his Work.* (Lewiston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 15.

While Sloan would claim in his 1939 book *Gist of Art* that artists intuitively 'know just how to interpret their outlook on life,'[20] this chapter and thesis as a whole demonstrate that influences (literary, artistic, and philosophical) help to shape that outlook.

The following paragraphs will address the influence that French Naturalism, in particular the literature of Émile Zola, had on the Sloan and how this influence can be detected in his art. The example discussed below will examine how Sloan's outlook on life has been shaped by Zola's Naturalist literature, since French Naturalism aims towards 'representing the cries for justice for the weak and oppressed and recognition of the obligations of society', [21] which had a significant influence in Europe as well as in America. French Naturalist authors created scandal because were said by critics to be 'nauseously offensive [and] reeking with filth',[22] even though they were reporting the reality lived by the lower classes. Sloan, like many other American scholars such as W. S. Lilly, W. H. Gleadell, and later William Dean Howells and Henry James, read Zola and other French Naturalist authors, and Sloan adopted an awareness of the importance of the themes raised by Zola. Zola focuses on the poverty and squalor of the slums and portrays the social issues deriving from this poverty, such as alcoholism, prostitution, illness, and death, as exemplified in his novels such as *L'Assomoir* (1877)*, Nana* (1880)*,* and *L'Argent* (1891).

Prior to Zola's publications, America and Europe experienced in the 1860s a rapid transformation during which mainly rural societies became urban areas which attracted communities in search of economic stability. In America, as in Europe, the

[20] Sloan, 15.
[21] Byrd, 15.
[22] Herbert Edwards, 'Zola and the American Critics', *American Literature*, Vol. 4, n.2 (1932), 114-129 (117).

living conditions of workers in cities were squalid; as in Charles Dickens' description of a Victorian slum:

> surrounded by a muddy ditch six or eight feet deep […] Crazy wooden galleries common to the backs of half a dozen houses, with holes from which to look upon the slime beneath; windows, broken and patched […] rooms so small, so filth, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor they shelter […] every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage.[23]

Following the increasing influence of Zola, Dickens, and Mayhew and other authors who aimed to give voice to 'the urban poor's invisibility and isolation',[24] artists and writers began to portray these individuals in their everyday lives. The poor, the prostitute, and the alcoholic became the focus of these narratives rather than being marginal, if not ignored, elements. American author and editor William Dean Howells commented that 'Zola's lifework was dominated by anxiety for sincerity and truth, an anxiety inspired by his great feelings of pity and justice'.[25] This statement declares Zola's commitment to communicating the discomfort of society in the late 1800s, and because of this, Zola was eventually interpreted and accepted by American readers after 1888, a year considered pivotal by William C. Frierson and Herbert Edwards in the public acceptance of Zola's works in the United States.[26]

Prior to the late 1800s, Zola's reputation in the U.S. was that of an author whose books were not worth reading, as their 'impure pictures may be life-like, but so would

[23] Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Richard Edward King, 1893), 264.
[24] Russell M. Lawson and Benjamin A Lawson, *Poverty in America: and Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2008), 134.
[25] William Dean Howells, 'Emile Zola', *The North American Review*, Vol. 175, n. 552, (1902): 587-596 (594).
[26] William C. Frierson and Herbert Edwards, 'Impact of French Naturalism on American Critical Opinion', *PMLA*, Vol. 63, n.3 (1948): 1007-1016 (1007).

be the reproduction of a cancerous sore, or a scrofulous ulcer.'[27] This general perception of Zola shifted when well-known American critics such as Henry James and Howells recognised Zola's work and began to praise his contribution as an author and, most importantly, as a humanist. W. S. Lilly commented in 1884 that 'the New Naturalism, whatever our feelings towards it may be, is well worthy of the attention of the student of man and society'.[28] This quotation suggests that Naturalism should be considered a source of knowledge for those who study society, and it highlights the reason that artists like Sloan and Robert Henri were attracted to such literature, for they were themselves 'student[s] of man and society'.[29]

Sloan and his circle embraced Zola's depiction of poverty and the conditions of the lower classes; they recognised the realities that Zola narrates as issues in their own country, and felt the need to share with the rest of society, through art, that poverty, alcoholism, and prostitution were not just European concerns. In order to showcase the disparity between rich and poor in New York and highlight the conditions of the lower class, Sloan produced a series of etchings called 'New York City Life' between 1905 and 1906. In this series, Sloan shows the upper class mainly engaged in activities that publicly display their wealth, such as in the etchings of the wedding of *The Little Bride*[30] (1906) and rich women in a carriage, *Fifth Avenue Circus*[31] (1905). However, for the scenes representing the lower classes, Sloan chooses a domestic setting,

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[27] Herbert Edwards, 'Zola and the American Critics', *American Literature*, Vol.4, n.2 (1932): 114-129 (114).
[28] W.S. Lilly "The New Naturalism", ed. George Joseph Becker *Document of Modern Literary Realism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 276.
[29] Lilly, 276.
[30] Figure 1.1.
[31] Figure 1.2.

suggesting the artist's intent to share with the viewer the intimate details of lives of the lower class.

The etching *Turning Out the Light*[32] (1905), picturing a young woman turning off the lamp in her bedroom before going to bed, is an example of Sloan's use of the domestic setting. The room is modestly furnished; the chair on the right-hand side of the bed it is covered with clothes, and the bed itself resembles the one pictured in *The Woman's Page*[33] (1905), alluding to a potential storyline between the two etchings. The subject and immediate focus for the viewer is the young woman, who is kneeling on the bed, reaching for the lamp with her right hand. She twists her body by moving her head to exchange a knowing gaze with the male figure lying on the bed on the left. As identified by Katherine Manthorne, Sloan guides the viewer through a journey using 'viewing angles and frames [to] enhance the expression of their desire'[34] and to emphasise the theme of the etching. Sloan's image pushes the boundaries of female sexuality by portraying this intimate scene, but it also highlights the connection with Zola's work and his concern with female sexuality expressed in works like the *Les Rougon-Macquart* series, in which he explores the role of women and how their sexuality affects the degradation of the Rougon-Macquat family.

Like Zola's novels, such as *La Terre* (1887), which were often censored due to indecency, Sloan's *Turning Out the Light* is considered 'one of the most transgressive of Sloan's New York series and […] the most censored',[35] and it was also rejected for

[32] Figure 1.3.
[33] Figure 1.4.
[34] Katherine Manthorne, 'John Sloan's Moving-Picture Eye', *American Art,* Vol.18, n.2 (2004), 80-95 (89).
[35] Ibid., 88.

public exhibition in 1906 due to its perceived vulgarity.[36] Zola's influence on Sloan's art is evident not only in the similar reception of their works, general milieu, and frankness regarding sexuality, but also in the ideal of 'character painting', as opposed to 'story telling', which is expressed in realism.[37] Sloan's intention is to portray the reality of the social issue presented – in this instance, women's sexuality – via the portraiture of a character within the constructed scenario, which represents a reality that he wants to criticise or about which he wants to raise awareness. This representation of a constructed reality supports what Sloan would later write about Shakespeare in *The Gist of Art*:

> No great poet, no great artist ever allows facts to interfere with the truth. Facts are not necessarily truth. Poetry can convey the truth more than a statement of fact […] most plays are sums of facts. I rather think a play should be made up of untruths, to bring out some of the deep truths of life. Shakespeare did not hesitate to distort facts to expose truths about human nature.[38]

This statement confirms that Sloan admired Shakespeare for reconstructing reality through poetry and comedy. Reality is subjective to the individual, and artists and authors perceive their own version of reality both around and within them. Sloan argues that this is 'possibly […] more real than the life around [the artist] because it is the life within him applied to the life without, which really gives him his creative consciousness. Many people either never have it or else it is atrophied'.[39] This reinforces the claim that reality is personal to the individual; however, there are certain social issues that are universal, such as those portrayed by Naturalist authors like Zola,

[36] Ibid., 90.
[37] Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 24.
[38] Sloan, 9.
[39] Ibid., 20.

and the scenarios they depict add depth to the reality they intend to convey. It is the artist's and writer's duty to portray reality as they perceive it in a way in which the recipient can relate to, understand, and sympathise with.

French literature was not the only external influence on Sloan. In 1892, Sloan met Henri, and they famously established a long friendship due to their mutual interest in Walt Whitman, as established by Ruth L. Bohan.[40] Michael Robertson notes that people who encountered Whitman were captivated by his magnetic quality, and that meeting him led to 'most people going away in a curious state of exaltation and excitement as to produce a partial wakefulness'.[41] Although Sloan and Henri did not meet Whitman themselves, they knew Horace Logo Traubel, Whitman's literary executor and biographer, who perhaps shared many anecdotes about the poet that made the artists feel a connection with Whitman himself. Moreover, Sloan and Whitman experienced similar life events in their youth: both of their fathers were unable to provide for their families, forcing an end to the boys' formal education. In addition, they both had journalistic foundations, although Whitman was a journalist rather than an illustrator like Sloan, and they both suffered financial difficulties throughout their professional lives.

The influence that Whitman had on Sloan is shown, on one hand, by the poet's belief that the 'the proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it'.[42] This shaped Henri's and Sloan's realistic art as they conveyed their relationship with both society and their environment, as demonstrated in Sloan's 'New

[40] Ruth L. Bohan, 'Robert Henri, Walt Whitman, and the American Artist.' *Wat Whitman Quarterly Review* 29 (2012), 131-151 (133).
[41] Michael Robertson, *Worshipping Walt: the Whitman Disciples* (Princeton: Princetown University Press, 2008), 6.
[42] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: Preface to the Original Edition*, (London: Trüber & Co., 1855), 31.

York City Life' series and as Bohan argues by Henri's sympathetic representation of an African American girl, *Eva Green*[43] (1907), and other portraits that 'celebrate[d] the dignity, humanity, and respect of those often overlooked by mainstream American society'.[44] Henri urged the influence of Whitman and Emerson oh his friends, including Sloan and other members of The Eight, and his students, including George Bellows and Glenn O. Coleman. As Bohan notes that for Henri, 'Walt Whitman was such as I have proposed the real art student should be. His work […] is an autobiography – not of haps and mishaps, but of his deepest thoughts, his life indeed'.[45] This statement also reflects how both Sloan and Henri conceived themselves as art students.

On the other hand, Whitman's observation and representation of New York City inspired Sloan's own attention to and illustration of his urban surroundings. Both Sloan's art and Whitman's poetry 'describe appearances and *illustrate* events',[46] especially in relation to urban spaces. They present the issue and unwrap it in a carefully measured manner that not only enables the analysis and critique of society but also allows the recipient of the art to follow their own thought processes and make it their own. This connection between Sloan and Whitman can be seen in the relationship between *Leaves of Grass* and some of Sloan's art.

Whitman's collection of poems was praised by Emerson as a 'wonderful gift […] the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed'.[47] Emerson's comment was inspired by the fact that the reader could

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[43] Figure 1.5.
[44] Bohan, 144.
[45] Bohan, 134.
[46] Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (USA: Stellar Classics, 2013), 94.
[47] Robertson, 14-15.

connect to *Leaves of Grass* on levels ranging from religion to national identity.

Whitman wrote in *Nationality (and Yet)*,

> We need this conviction of nationality as a faith, to be absorb'd in the blood and belief of the people everywhere, south, north, west, east, to emanate in their life, and in native literature and art. We want the germinal idea that America, inheritor of the past, is the custodian of the future of humanity.[48]

Identity and urbanisation are recurrent themes in Whitman, in particular in 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' (1856). As Frances Dickey and M. Jimmie Killingsworth note, Whitman not only attempts to note the inevitable conflicts within an urbanising culture, but most importantly his poems 'bear the signs of a mind adjusting to a new sense of identity and community',[49] signs which are also found in Sloan's art.

Sloan's painting *Election Night*[50] (1907), which depicts New Yorkers crowded beneath the elevated train tracks celebrating the results of the presidential election, can be seen as a painting attempting to portray the search for one's identity. On *Election Night*, Sloan writes in his diary

> Took a walk in the afternoon and saw boys in droves, foraging for fuel for the election fires this evening […] After dinner […] out again and saw the noisy trumpet blowers, confetti throwers and the 'ticklers' in use – a small feather duster on a stick which is pushed in the face of each girl by the men, and in the face of men by the girls. A good humorous crowd, so dense in places that it is impossible to control one's movement (5th November 1907).

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[48] Joseph J. Kwait, 'Robert Henri and the Emerson-Whitman Tradition' *PMLA*, vol.71, n.4 (1956): 617-636 (621).

[49] Frances Dickey and M. Jimmie Killingworth, 'Love of Comrades: The Urbanization Community in Walt Whitman's Poetry and Pragmatist Philosophy,' *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, Vol. 21, n.1 (2003),1-24 (1).

[50] Figure 1.6.

Painted the year before The Eight exhibition and under the significant influence of Robert Henri, this oil painting on canvas can be seen as a representation of Whitman's adjustment to a new community, which is expressed in his poetry from the mid-1850s.

Election Night captures two sides of the city: modernity, represented by the train and the elevated rail tracks above the crowd, and the chaos that it causes to people as they place themselves in this new environment. The symbols of modernity and urbanisation present in the painting have a similar role to that of nature in Whitman's poem 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'. Both Whitman's river and Sloan's urban space, represented by the train, provoke the individual to question his or her position in relation to the city. The poem's narrator imagines the land to be a physical entity while the river is a spiritual medium that allows commuters, including the narrator, to reflect on their relationship with the two stretches of land on either side, as well as on their connection with the urbanised island of Manhattan. The ferry, which runs several times per day, represents the frequent recurrence of the search for belonging and understanding one's connection to the urban. In contrast, Sloan's painting does not employ nature to challenge and reflect on his, or the viewer's, connection with the urban, but instead uses the crowds to question his own belonging.

The 'curious crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes'[51] of *Election Night* appear to be moving and celebrating the outcome of the election; the effect of the crowd's movement is given by the quick brush strokes and hints of brighter colour, which mimic the reflection of light on the people. The viewer's detached and distant point of view from the crowd suggests the insecurity and unawareness of the

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[51] Walt Whitman, 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry', in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Wm. E. Chapin & Co., 1867). l. 3.

artist's own identity, enhancing his alienation from the crowd itself. *Election Night*'s crowd, on closer inspection, is intimidating, and its people have grotesque and demonic features. The viewers, much like the artist, struggle to identify with the crowd, which is perceived as evil and therefore not trustworthy because the viewer does not share the features and characteristics that define this crowd.

The members of the crowd have accepted and embraced modernity, and so they are perceived as alien to the viewer of *Election Night* and narrator of 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'. In both the painting and the poem, the crowds are the antagonist of the artist and the author, contributing to the alienation of the artist, the viewer, and, finally, the poet. In 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry', the narrator and the crowd are physically sharing the journey on the ferry: 'I am with you, you men and women of a generation'.[52] Although the narrator is sharing the journey with the people on the ferry, there is a note of detachment when the poem states, 'Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd',[53] highlighting the narrator's separation from the crowd.

This alienation and detachment from the crowd is evident in Sloan's *Election Night*, where the artist makes use of a distant point of view, showing his interest in 'life the way God is interested in the universe – as a spectator'.[54] In both Sloan's painting and Whitman's poem, the narrators of the scenes are spectators rather than members of the crowds, and this allows them to meditate on their positions in the urban space. The crowds are chaotic and provide a direct contrast with the order and neatness created by the train tracks and the buildings of the city shown by Sloan in *Election Night* and with

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[52] Whitman, 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry', ll. 26.
[53] Whitman, 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry', ll. 28.
[54] Edward H. Madden and Marian C. Madden, 'Transcendental Dimension of American Art', *Transactions of the Charles S. Pierce Society*, Vol.32, n.2 (1996): 154-180 (161).

Whitman's 'spiritual' and contemplative river, creating a powerful dichotomy that implies that the crowd is the projection of the artist's anxieties and feelings of alienation induced by living in a rapidly developing city. As noted by Sloan's contemporary, Gustav Lebon, in a crowd there is a

> Disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of a crowd. [The individual] is no longer himself, but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will.[55]

This was a pessimistic take on the kind of loss of self to the crowd that Whitman, in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" and other poem, characterised as a transcendent communal experience.

The parallel between Sloan and Whitman brings to the attention of the viewer and reader that there is an element of concern from the artists regarding the psychology of both the masses and the individual. The study of psychology began to emerge in the early 1880s, when Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud began to work on the case of a hysterical girl with Dr Joseph Breuer, a case that resulted in the publication of *Studien über Hysterie* (1895).[56] Following this publication, Freud continued studying and developing theories on the human psyche, becoming a pioneer of this emerging field. In his 1926 publication *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, he explores the causes of anxiety, revealing that it is the consequence of a trauma. Depending on the cause of the trauma suffered by the individual, anxiety can be 'objective', 'neurotic', and 'moral'.

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[55] Gustav Lebon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2008), 30.
[56] Sigmund Freud, 'The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis', *The American Journal of Psychology*, v.21, n.2 (1910): 181-218 (181).

Author Henry James famously presented an example of 'a neurotic case of sex repression'[57] in his novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), displaying a 'marvellous understanding of human psychology'[58] and an anticipation of Freudian theories on anxiety. Edmund Wilson recognised Henry James as a pioneer of Freudian theories in his essay 'The Ambiguity of Henry James', and by the end of the nineteenth century, other authors also began to experiment with representations of characters' psychological states in their novels.

In his novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Joseph Conrad explores Freud's theory of the unconsciousness, and Sloan himself notes reading 'Joseph Conrad's "Lord Jim"' in his diary, describing it as 'a splendid psychological sort of narrative, perhaps a bit "styled" (to be critical of it)' (2nd November 1909). Sloan addresses Conrad's novel as 'psychological', implying his understanding and awareness of the studies occurring in these years in this field. On 9th September 1910, the Sloan's diary records meeting one of the exponents of psychoanalysis André Tridon, who would later translate the works of Freud and Adler, meaning that he had the opportunity to discuss and question psychoanalysis and its theories. The increasing popularity of fiction and drama focussing on the psychology of characters, such as Percy Wallace MacKaye's play *The Scarecrow*, which Sloan's wife Dolly and friend Yeats was while he stayed at home painting,[59] meant that there were even more opportunities to discuss the psychoanalytical theories being developed in Europe at the time and that has first been

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[57] Oscar Cargill, 'Henry James as Freudian Pioneer', *Chicago Review*, Vol.10, n.2 (1956) 13-29 (16).
[58] Ibid.
[59] It is noted in the diary (footnote of 4 February 1911 entry) that Dolly saw the play. In this entry, Sloan mentions "which is to fail" expressing his disappointment.

brought to the attention of the American public by William James, who recognised the therapeutic potential of Freud's theories in 1896.[60]

Sloan's views of *Lord Jim* expressed in his earlier criticism are also evident in his painting *Clown Making Up*[61] (1910), which he began on 2nd March 1910: 'In the afternoon Wilson posed as a "Clown" for me and I have started a thing which looks as tho' it might turn out well'. The work portrays a clown getting ready for his show, as the title suggests. Part of the Phillips Collection, the painting is seen as 'so antithetical to Sloan's way of thinking as an artist that it seems likely that he undertook the painting to give employment to his friend Wilson, a specialist in modelling in costume'.[62] As this comment suggests, the process which Sloan used for this painting is unusual, since he rarely painted posed subjects.

However, *Clown Making Up* may have a deeper meaning than just 'giving employment to a friend', and it could relate to Sloan's reading of *Lord Jim*. While the subject matter presented by both Conrad – Jim's shipwreck – and Sloan – the backstage of a circus – are significantly different, they are both concerned with the psychology of their characters and they portray them at their most vulnerable. Both characters are captured contemplating the consequences of their decisions, and they are both 'styled', for the representations of the characters are purposely staged. Paul Kintzele sees *Lord Jim* as a novel that 'continually pushes the reader to choose, to make a judgment, while at the same time it undermines the very conditions whereby a judgment would be

[60] Clarence Paul Oberndorf, *A History of Psychoanalysis in America* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1953), 253.
[61] Figure 1.7.
[62] Footnote 1417 of John Sloan's diary - entry dated March 3rd, 1910.

possible'.[63] In the novel, Jim jumps the *Patna*. Some of the crew believe that the ship is sinking, but the vessel does not sink, and Jim loses his 'honour – the honour, monsieur!'[64] because he cowardly escaped from the danger rather than facing it like a hero. Both Conrad's representation of Jim's feelings in the novel and Sloan's painting present an analogous psychological intensity.

Sloan's comment about Conrad's novel being too 'styled' becomes clearer when analysing its narrative style. The novel's unstable narration shifts from an omniscient third-person narrator to Jim's colleague Marlow, thus giving the sense that the narrative is unreliable. Sloan's narrative approach, in contrast, is more direct and differs from other works analysed in this chapter so far. Ian Watt defines *Lord Jim* as an outstanding example of 'impressionist immediacy',[65] and by 1910 Sloan was moving away from impressionist painting, meaning that his appreciation for unstable narratives like Conrad's diminished as he moved towards a more constructed and less transitory style of art. *Clown* is different from the works cited so far in this chapter because it focuses heavily on the psychology of the man, and the viewer can almost hear the man reflecting on the choices he made and the consequences that these had on his life.

Sloan's dramatic composition of *Clown Making Up* shows his vigorous brushstrokes, highlighting the limited colour palette of browns, oranges, and greys. The clown, making up backstage at a theatre or circus, was intentionally depicted in this moment of alienation and fragility, which is highlighted by the dramatic use of the

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[63] Paul Kintzele, '"Lord Jim": Conrad's Fable of Judgment', *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol.25, n.2 (2002), 69-79 (70).
[64] Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (New York: Bantam Books,1958), 95.
[65] Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 274.

chiaroscuro that projects the clown to the foreground and emphasises his presence and solitude.

Sloan excludes details and decorative objects to purposely draw the attention of the viewer to the clown and to transmit his loneliness, and perhaps to emphasise his alienation from society. The viewer is able to

> grapple with [the] man's intimate need that [the viewer] perceive[s] how incomprehensible, wavering and misty are the beings that share with us the sight of the stars and the warmth of the sun. It is as if loneliness were a hard and absolute condition of existence; the envelope of flesh and blood on which our eyes are fixed melts before the outstretched hand, and there remains only the capricious, unconsolable and elusive spirit that no eye can follow, no hand can grasp.[66]

Conrad's more abstract passages on Jim's psychology can be read into *Clown*; Sloan's composition is designed to allow the artist to emphasise the psychology of this man; he wants the viewer to sympathise with and judge the man behind the clown's mask. The man chooses to become a clown, and, unlike Jim, he has to decide every time he goes onstage whether to make up his haggard face, or to show his true self to the crowd. Jim, on the other hand, decides to be himself with Marlow, one of the narrators of the novel, and to pretend with other characters in the novel up until his breaking point.

Even though the subjects are different and their life choices are different as a consequence, both Jim's and the clown's decisions result in a self-inflicted social alienation as they choose to hide their true selves from society. Sloan's painting can be seen as a self-reflective piece, for by focussing all of the viewer's attention on the clown, he forces the viewer to engage with the emotions of the subject while challenging the viewer's own feelings to the extent that one begins to sympathise with

[66] Conrad, 115.

the clown's loneliness. With *Clown Making Up*, Sloan created a unique and dramatic work that he could not replicate in any later paintings due to its intensity and psychological depth, qualities that demonstrate the great maturity of the artist at this stage of his career.

The connection between Sloan's art and Conrad's literature is not thematic like the connection between Sloan and Zola. Both Conrad and the American artist share the ability to portray human fragility and loneliness by pushing both readers and viewers to examine their life decisions. Sloan's fellow Ashcanner George Bellows expresses his admiration of Sloan's *Clown Making Up* in a 2nd April 1910 letter to Joseph Taylor:

> Sloan is wonderful this way. In all his things you find yourself dreaming about the lives of the people he paints. Big and broad and simple, rough in color and without polish, these pictures have a distinction as human documents which in my experience of painting I believe to be the quality of all the rarest.[67]

The characteristics noted in *Clown Making Up* continued to develop in later years, when Sloan's friendship with John Butler Yeats grew. The Irish artist (and father of the poet William Butler Yeats) had significant influence on Sloan's artistic thoughts and stylistic development. Early in Sloan's career, Yeats compared Sloan to Hogarth, Rossetti, or even Giorgione, suggesting that the American artist, despite not having sold a painting yet, had the talent of the great European artists.[68] Moreover, in a 1912 letter to the lawyer and patron John Quinn, Yeats writes, 'Sloan is reading Ruskin, with what results as regards his art and himself I shall be curious to know. Ruskin loved bright colours connecting them in his mind with poetry and holiness, gloomy opaque colour meant

[67] Letter to Joseph Taylor April 2, 1910 [Transcript] Box 6.13, George Wesley Bellows Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections [on clown painting].

[68] Robert Gordon, *John Butler Yeats and John Sloan: the Records of a Friendship* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1978), 13.

sadness and sin'.[69] This influence on Sloan's painting can be noticed across his paintings of mid-1910s, as in works such as *Spring Planting, Greenwich Village*[70] (1913) and the landscapes he made in the seaside artists' colony at Gloucester Massachusetts. These paintings demonstrate that Sloan read and understood Ruskin's comments on colour and perhaps shared his 'approach to the healing role of the garden' that allowed Ruskin himself to explore the 'introspective relation to his own personal spiritual and intellectual crisis'.[71] On a more practical level, on 13th June 1909, Henri had introduced Sloan to a 'new set of pigments made by a man named Maratta. A regularly gradated sequence: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple with the same "intervals" and low-keyed set of "hues" of the same colors' that allowed Sloan to expand his palette to include more vibrant colours that provide a jollier atmosphere and brightness to his art.

Spring Planting, Greenwich Village is a scene depicting three women planting in their back garden on a spring day, while a fourth woman is observing them from the window of a flat behind their fence. The painting's depth is created by the fence and the buildings behind it, and the laundry hung on the line above the focal point of the perspective brings some dynamism to the painting. The change of colour palette is not the only element that makes this work different from other paintings of this period; the choice of subject and the area depicted are also unique. Greenwich Village was known as a colourful and bohemian area of Manhattan in the 1910s, making this setting ideal to experiment with a new colour palette. The dominant colour is blue in all its nuances,

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[69] Unpublished letter, 28 July 1912, John Quinn Memorial Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.
[70] Figure 1.8.
[71] John Illingworth, 'Ruskin and Gardening', *Garden History*, Vol.22, n.2 (1994), 218-133 (232).

providing a fresh and airy atmosphere. The scene depicts the sun setting; the buildings in the far background and the ground between the path and the fence are tinted pink, which allows the viewer to intuit the time of the day in the painting.

The painting shows 'that brilliancy of the hue, and vigour of the light, and even the aspect of transparency in shade, are essentially dependent on [Sloan's choice of palette and technique]; hardness, coldness, and opacity resulting far more from *equality* of colour than from nature of colour'.[72] This painting was an experiment primarily in terms of new colours, but Sloan also portrays a different aspect of the city; the hue and light, especially on the fence, brighten the whole picture and draw attention naturally to to the central figure using the shovel. Despite blue being traditionally a 'cold' colour, Sloan's careful reading of Ruskin's *The Element of Drawing* encouraged him to experiment on 'the quality [of colours] - as depth, delicacy, &c'.[73] of blues to convey a fresh atmosphere rather than a coldness and distance.

For Ruskin, gardens play a healing role for the individual as they allow one to get back to nature and reconnect to the forgotten bucolic life. Gardens are a 'natural sanctuary for man',[74] and in alignment with this description, the painting shows the woman at the window witnessing the three women in the garden building their temple, which will allow them to reconnect with nature in the middle of a busy and developing city. The garden uses nature as a primary tool for finding one's spirituality, and the four figures in *Spring Planting* achieve different degrees of spiritual enrichment and connection to nature. The woman at the window is the furthest from nature; her position in the painting highlights that she is not yet ready to achieve spiritual renewal through

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[72] John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1857), 221.
[73] Ruskin, 237.
[74] Illingworth, 227.

nature. She is immersed in the urban, but she is attracted by the other figures, and perhaps she is willing to abandon the gloomy opaque walls behind her, symbolising the sadness and sin of urban life mentioned by Ruskin scholar John Illingworth, to join the holiness of nature.

The three figures in the garden are at different stages of their spiritual journey through nature; the woman on the right appears to be waiting for her turn to contribute to the construction of the 'sanctuary'. The one in the middle is digging, and this action is connecting her to the divine, as she is the only one currently contributing to the construction of the 'sanctuary'. The woman on the left guides and advises the other women. Her position on the ground also suggests her deeper connection to nature, demonstrating the healing and spiritual function of the garden. Even though the woman is closer to the ground, she is, however, not sitting directly on it. Between herself and the land there is a manmade path, which, together with the darker colours and shades around her, might mean that she has not been subject to the full healing power of the garden. Maybe the garden cannot fulfil the function of a sanctuary due to its location in the city; therefore, it can only partly heal the individual from the pollution of modernity, demonstrating what Ruskin called a 'personal spiritual and intellectual crisis'.

Spring Planting could also be interpreted as Sloan's attempt to capture Emerson's philosophical theory that nature is a necessary expression of the divine spirit, which acts through humanity, as demonstrated with the Triadic Motif. Sloan's painting, then, could be seen as a transcendentalist manifesto. Reading Ruskin's theories on colour and being aware of his passion for gardening and nature awoke in Sloan the Emersonian theories, which were then applied to the painting of *Spring Planting*. The concept of triadic motif links to Ruskin's belief that 'God revealed both beauty and

universal moral laws through nature and art. The artist, then, should imitate the particulars of nature in the language of art in order to communicate the highest moral values'.[75] Ruskin was an artist and an academic; his thoughts, artistic experience, and techniques were written about in scholarly publications, which were read and utilised by artists and critics like Sloan, who then experimented with and built on the written techniques to create his own style. Edward H. and Marian C. Maddens' article 'Transcendental Dimensions of American Art' (1996) states that Henri and his associates did not accept Emerson's spiritual and idealistic interpretations of nature or the notion that nature reflects the divinity inherent in human beings,[76] a statement that contradicts the theory mentioned above. However, even though Henri and Sloan rejected Emerson's interpretations of nature, that does not mean that they did not attempt to reproduce it in painting or that they rejected Emerson's ideology without analysing it. It has been established that *Spring Planting* is an experimental painting, so one can argue that Sloan could have experimented through processing Emerson's thoughts in his work.

The use of chiaroscuro in the painting could also have a role in defining the spiritual journey of the three female figures which contradicts the above analysis. The woman on the left, which was believed to be the closest to nature due to her lower position on the ground, might actually be the furthest away from nature and the divine if one considers the theory of reading colours. Ruskin suggests that darker colours convey sadness and sin; this figure sits in the shade of the chiaroscuro with a black cat

[75] Mary Anne Stankiewicz, '"The Eye is a Nobler Organ": Ruskin and American Art Education', *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, Special Issue: Defining Cultural and Educational Relations – An International Perspective*, (1984), 51-64 (53).
[76] Edward H. Madden and Marian C. Madden, 'Transcendental Dimensions of American Art', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol.32, n.2 (1996), 154-180 (157-8).

observing her from the fence. The presence of the black cat in that part of the picture implies some spiritual and esoteric connotations which are reminiscent of Emerson's philosophy: 'Nonhuman animals such as domestic cats […] are quite egotistical, with a strong instinct for self-preservation and self-maintenance'.[77] The statement might imply that the cat in the picture acts as a reminder for the women to build the 'temple' of the garden in an attempt to save themselves from their urban environment.

Emerson's influence can also be appreciated if one takes into account his Triadic Motif for Emersonian Theatre of True Dream mentioned by David Lyttle, where the three figures project the light of the divine to create the apparent world of nature. [78] Nature is therefore a reflection of the divine, and being close to it makes a person closer to the divine itself. 'In the Theatre of True Dreams the Light and the lens are the reality, and the picture (nature) is appearance. No one part of this triadic motif of his monism can be separated from the other, or the theatre goes dark'.[79] One could argue that in *Spring Planting*, Sloan found the 'light' of the divine; in other words, Sloan achieved a way of projecting light onto his painting, and this is the main difference between his earlier works and the one examined here.

George Moore, like Ruskin, was another notable figure in Sloan's artistic career. Loughery, in *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (1995), recognises Moore to be a key influence on Sloan's works: 'the Irish novelist, critic, and early advocate of Impressionism, was […] someone who was both sophisticated and volubly conscious of

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[77] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol.V 1835-1838, ed. Merton M. Sealts Jr (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard Press, 1965), 25.
[78] David Lyttle, '"The World Is a Divine Dream": Emerson's Subjective Idealism', *The Concord Saunterer, New Series*, Vol.5 (1997), 92-110 (100).
[79] Ibid., 100.

his roots as a native of a country outside the artistic mainstream'.[80] His knowledge of artists like Degas and Manet allowed Sloan to expand his artistic knowledge through reading Moore's *Modern Painting* (1893), a work which was a 'formative text for Sloan, who, at a time when many American artists […] travelled to Europe for education and inspiration, lacked the means to do so'.[81] As Becker mentions in his review 'George Moore – Artist and Art Critic', by the early 1890s, Moore was 'ranked with England's leading critics of modern art […] Moore had freed art criticism from the moral trappings of his eminent predecessor [John Ruskin] and achieved a commentary on art that conveyed "the essential and untranslatable meaning of the picture"'.[82]

Sloan and Henri appreciated Moore's work and absorbed his criticism to be then applied in their own works. *Modern Painting* may be seen as playing a similar role to Vasari's *Le Vite* (1550), which collated the lives and art of his contemporaries such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and more, providing the first art criticism on sculpture, paintings, and architecture, and functioning as a guide for artists on how these arts should be executed. Moore's work is not as complex and structured as Vasari's six volumes; he explores the works of his European contemporaries in 106 pages, providing more personal insight and less encyclopaedic information on the artists he includes.

Moore suggests that Western artists had the tendency 'to copy Nature, but the Japanese knew it was better to observe Nature […] the whole art of Japan is selection, and Japan taught Mr Whistler, or impressed upon Mr Whistler, the imperative necessity

[80] John Loughery, *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 35.
[81] John Fagg, 'Near Vermeer: Edmund C. Tarbell's and John Sloan's Dutch Pictures', *Modernist Cultures*, Vol. 11, n. 1 (2016): 86-117 (88).
[82] Robert Stephen Becker, 'George Moore: Artist and Art Critic', *Irish Arts Review*, Vol.2, n.3 (1985): 49-55 (49).

of selection'.[83] Japanese art greatly influenced late nineteenth-century Western art including Monet and other Impressionists, Whistler and his circle, and the graphic and poster art of the 1890s, that Sloan was instrumental in bringing to American illustration and commercial art. In Gist of Art he recalls that,

> Back in the Nineties, when I was working for *Philadelphia Inquirer*, I met Beisen Kubota, Japanese Art Commissioner to the Chicago World's Fair, and I began drawing in a flat, sort of Japanese, black and white style. […] That was before I had ever seen the work of Beardsley, McCarter, Bradlet, Steinlen, and Toulouse-Lautrec.[84]

Sloan had already read *Modern Painting*, so by the time he encountered the Japanese Art Commissioner, he knew about the technique that he then applied to his works of that period. This interest and influence continued on into his New York years, as he notes in his diary on 4th April 1912:

> Came home, then out again and walked up to Berlin Photo gallery to see Hokusai Jap. drawings. Some of them very interesting. Stopped in 35 6th Ave. Nothing has been done on my studio there. Went to Public Library to see more Japanese work C prints. Very interesting lot.

Toulouse-Lautrec's works, as well as those of other artists, physically arrived in the United States with the Armory Show in 1913, so artists, people passionate about art, and Sloan himself could see the original masterpieces. Moore's *Modern Painting* provided readers with an introduction to the movements and the artists that were shown at the Armory Show such as Matisse, Degas, and Manet. Sloan's claim that 'art would be greater if we could lose some of that individualism'[85] might lie in the desire for

[83] George Moore, *Modern Painting* (1893), 12.
[84] Sloan, 1.
[85] Ibid., 22.

anyone to be able to understand and appreciate art, rather than allowing only a select group of educated people to understand the individualism applied to the artwork.

Sloan's claim connects to Moore's criticism on Impressionism mentioned in *Modern Painting*, and it implies that the primary purpose of Moore's work is to educate readers so that they could appreciate contemporary artworks. Whistler, Manet, and Degas are particularly praised in *Modern Painting*; Moore recognises the uniqueness of these men as artists who followed their visions and attempted to break the ground rules set by previous movements. Moore stated that Impressionism

> is a word that has lent itself to every kind of misinterpretation, for in its exact sense all true painting is penetrated with impressionism, to use the word in its most modern sense – that is to say, to signify the rapid noting of illusive appearance – Monet is the only painter to whom it may be reasonably applied.[86]

This strong statement implies that people have loosely applied the term Impressionism to accommodate artists who do not fall into the category of Impressionists. Moore's work was a useful textbook that Sloan and Henri consulted for their own works, and they taught their students theories and techniques that they learnt from Moore's work, such as his concept of colours and tones. Moore writes,

> A tone is a combination of colours. In Nature colours are separate; they act and react one on the other, and so create in the eye the illusion of a mixture of various colours - in other words, of a tone. But if the human eye can perform this prodigy when looking on colour as evolved through the spectacle of the world, why should not the eye be able to perform the same prodigy when looking on colours as displayed over the surface of a canvas?[87]

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[86] Moore, 84.
[87] Ibid., 89-90.

George Moore was not only an artistic inspiration for Sloan. In a diary entry dated 15th February 1907, Sloan records that he was 'reading George Moore's "The Lake." Splendid; it suits me perfectly'. This novel explores the internal battle between the religious faith and carnal love of a Catholic priest. It is an intense novel, and uses the strong metaphor of the lake as an 'obstacle to be conquered, since it holds more sinister connections of guilt, death, spiritual stagnation and suicide'.[88] This metaphor for uncompromising Catholicism might have 'appealed to Sloan's rebellious state of mind at this time',[89] which could have been a consequence of his move from Philadelphia to New York City in 1904. The artist was adjusting to a new lifestyle and environment that became sources of inspiration for his Realist works. His artistic rebellion could have developed from the 'boredom' of depicting his subjects in similar styles to each other. In 1906 and 1907, Sloan felt the need to rebel against the style he adopted under Henri's influence. He started experimenting with new styles and techniques that then resulted in deeper and more elaborate compositions in later years, as presented earlier in the chapter, such as experimenting with new colour palettes and subject matters. Sloan interpreted the lake as representing the art world he was part of and felt subdued by. Consequently, he attempted to find his own path in art, and this, of course, was unsettling for the artist, whose artistic rebellion made him face his own 'lake' and made him able to sympathise with Father Gogarty in Moore's novel.

Moore was a source of artistic inspiration and perhaps self-reflection for Sloan, but John Butler Yeats' contribution to the American artist's career should also be noted. Yeats' friendship with Sloan had a significant influence on Sloan's artistic and personal

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[88] Linda Bennett, 'George Moore and James Joyce: Story-teller versus Stylist', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review,* Vol.66, n.264 (1977), 275-291 (278).
[89] Footnote 474 of John Sloan's diary - entry Feb 13, 1907.

life, contributing to his development and growth as an artist. Sloan's initial impression of the father of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats was that of an 'interesting old gentleman with white beard, kindly and well informed. He is a painter, I believe, also a writer' (22nd July 1909), and he acted like a father figure, a friend, a supporter, and an artistic advisor for Sloan.[90]

Yeats' influence on Sloan differed from that of other authors, and it was so strong that Sloan's second wife, Helen Farr Sloan, observed: '[Sloan] had said that Henri was his "father in art" – as a phrase – but in deep sense Yeats was closer to him, much closer',[91] suggesting the level of empathy and collaboration between them. Their friendship provides a valuable commentary on the artistic and literary reality of New York at the time. Yeats' artistic and literary networks in both Europe and America were a source of inspiration for Sloan, who was still developing his style. Yeats' name appears in many occasions in Sloan's own diaries; Yeats participated in numerous dinners and events entertaining the participants with readings of his own works or of other Irish authors, and these readings introduced Sloan and the other guests to contemporary Irish literature.

Yeats was a busy man himself; he lectured, sketched, painted portraits on commission, and wrote short stories, poems, and journal articles. Given this, it is understandable how Sloan's attention was captured by such an eclectic character who embodied all of Sloan's interests and stimulated his intellectual interests. He also

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[90] Paul B. Frankin, 'Pilgrim Father, Native Son: John Butler Yeats, John Sloan, and the Making of a Friendship in New York City, 1909-1922', in *Prodigal Father Revisited: Artists and Writers in the World of John Butler Yeats*, ed. Janis Londraville (West Cornwall, CT, Locust Hill Press, 2003), 280.
[91] Interview, 6 December 1971 cited in Robert Gordon, *John Butler Yeats and John Sloan: the Records of a Friendship* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1978), 11.

provided Sloan with confidence, as Sloan believed Yeats was a 'man of heart & of a man of genius – a man always interesting – with whom it is always a pleasure to associate'.[92] The relationship between Sloan and Yeats was exceptional; they had animated discussions about their different views regarding art, literature, and politics due to Sloan's strong views on Socialism. However, these arguments made their relationship intellectually challenging and stimulating for both. Sloan admired Yeats and appreciated his advice, applied it to his art in most occasions. Sloan was aware that Yeats 'has lived and had the poet's joy [that] he has known people' (6th May 1910), as his young personality and charisma attracted young talents.

Yeats acted as an Aristotelian figure for Sloan, not unlike the Aristotle portrayed by Raphael in *The School of Athens*[93] (1511), who aimed for people to take part in artistic, literary, and philosophical discourses with his circle of disciples at Petitpas. The discussions covered art, politics, and foreign literature to expand the participants' knowledge through sharing experiences and ideas. As a testimony to these dialogues and collaborations among the arts and their exponents, Sloan 'worked on a new canvas, the Petitpas' Yard, "our table," Mr. Yeats at the head of it' (2nd August 1910) on Sloan's birthday in 1910.

The painting *Yeats at Petitpas*[94] (1910) not only set a precedent for Sloan's subsequent McSorley's pictures due to the indoor setting,[95] but it was an ambitious composition. In his diary Sloan noted that he 'scraped out the Petitpas picture and made a new start on it' (12th August 1910) because the composition, made of ten figures, was

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[92] Gordon, 20.
[93] Figure 1.9.
[94] Figure 1.10.
[95] Mariea Candill Dennison, 'McSorley's: John Sloan's Visual Commentary on Male Bonding, Prohibition, and the Working Class' *American Studies*, vol.47, n.2 (2006), 23-38 (25).

very complex, not only due to the quantity of the characters, which was unusual for Sloan, but mainly because he wanted to depict each individual's personality and psychology, which of course was more difficult in a multi-subject painting rather than a single-subject work like *Clown Making Up*.

In a footnote related to the entry just cited, there is a mention of the etching *Memory*[96] (1906) being the first and only of Sloan's works to attempt being a 'conversational piece'. *Memory* presents only four subjects: Sloan himself on the left, Dolly looking directly at the viewer, Robert Henri on Dolly's right, and finally Linda Henri in the foreground 'recalling one of many evenings of intimacy and good-fellowship that these two couples shared in their brief time together in New York'.[97] The composition of this etching is simpler than that of *Yeats at Petitpas* and is less sophisticated in terms of the characters' psychology, partly because this was created in an earlier stage of his career, and partly because the intent was not to depict the psychology of the characters, but rather to commemorate Henri's wife Linda, who died the previous year. The subjects are engaged in actions that help the viewer to identify the person depicted; Sloan and Henri are drawing facing each other, balancing the composition, and Linda reads while Dolly looks mindlessly at the viewer. The detail of the faces leaves no room for speculation as to the identity of the subjects represented, thus facilitating the identification of each character. The etching was conceived in memory of Linda's death, and it was also originally referred by Sloan as 'Family group plate', stressing the personal and professional relationship between the two artists.

The picture of Petitpas, on the other hand, is the representation of Sloan's artistic

[96] Figure 1.11.
[97] Loughery, 90.

family, with Yeats functioning as the patriarch and Aristotelian figure. Loughery states that the picture was 'reworked at odd moments over a period of three years until Sloan was happy with it'.[98] The canvas shows, from left to right, literary critic Van Wyck Brooks, who wrote Sloan's biography *John Sloan: A Painter's Life* (1955); John Butler Yeats; poet Alan Seeger; Dolly; Celestine Petitpas, standing between the artist's wife and miniature painter Eulabee Dix; Sloan himself in the right corner; the editor of *Literary Digest*, Fredrick Allen King; and, finally, Vera Jelihovsky Johnston, the wife of the Irish scholar Charles Johnston. In contrast to *Memory*, not all of the characters' faces present an impeccable level of detail, as is noticeable in the portraits of Fred King and Alan Seeger, which are just a few brushstrokes of different colours attempting to define the figures' identities. The colours used for the compositions do not reach the level of sophistication shown in *Spring Planting*, as there is no evident influence of Ruskin's *The Elements of Drawing* and his theories on colours yet.

However, the colours in this canvas are not intended to have the same functions as in *Spring Planting* since they are not being used to contrast the natural to the urban and instead are used to draw attention to the depicted characters. Sloan uses a similar technique to what he used in *Turning out the Light* to draw the attention of the viewer to Yeats; all of the male characters on the right-hand side of the painting and Vera Jelihovsky Johnston are facing towards Yeats, leading the eye of the viewer towards him. Yeats then becomes the centre of the painting, like Raphael's Aristoteles, emphasising his role as the mentor of the group. Of course, Sloan's painting of the Petitpas does not have either the composition or techniques of the Renaissance fresco, but both artists emphasise the presence and recognise the wisdom and leadership of the

[98] Loughery, 161.

two figures by leading the attention of the viewer to those subjects. The gazes of the other figures and the use of light in the painting have been identified by Katherine E. Manthorne as a way for the artist to convey the vitality and movement that he associated with Yeats.[99] Paul B. Franklin also recognises the Italian Renaissance connection of this painting, comparing it to Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*[100] (1497 c.ca), where 'at the table at Petitpas surrounded by his flock of followers, Yeats *pére* played the part of Christ, and impoverished soothsayer […] unencumbered by material trappings, eager to preach his gospel on art to anyone willing to listen'.[101]

Yeats at Petitpas may also represent how Sloan felt about literature, art, and being an artist; he portrays the proponents of some of his intellectual interests enclosed in a 'sanctuary or retreat from the urban world'[102] where they can spend 'an evening of the sort I like. Sketching, making funny drawings, looking at picture books' (23rd October 1909) and discussing intellectual matters. This painting shows what made Sloan comfortable and happy, and the painting becomes, then, a 'utopian tale of the good life to be found in a cosmopolitan setting'.[103] By portraying himself in literary company, Sloan shows how the 'Philadelphian found a way to "feel like an artist" by creating his new community in New York'.[104]

The picture at Petitpas portrays Sloan's life interests – literature and art – and it is clear evidence of the connections the artist had at the time and the influence that these had on his works. Thus, the painting provides evidence in favour of the argument raised

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[99] Manthorne, 170.
[100] Figure 1.12.
[101] Franklin, 296.
[102] Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 298.
[103] Ibid., 299.
[104] Ibid.

in this chapter of art being influenced by literature and vice versa. *Yeats at Petitpas* showcases how Sloan's environment and friendships, especially with Henri and Yeats, were profoundly stimulating ground for intellectual discussions that facilitated interdisciplinary interactions. The open discussions, which allowed the artists to learn from each other and share their experiences, techniques, and points of view, enabled an important and valuable collaboration that enriched the participants' understandings of European art, literature, and philosophy, thus benefiting all literate Americans and particularly John Sloan himself. This chapter presents a different side of Sloan – that of an avid reader and keen experimenter in applying some of the techniques used by authors to his paintings, creating a preliminary relationship between word and image. In the following chapter of this research project, I will explore in more depth how Sloan approaches and interprets the relationship between word and image by focussing on the illustrations Sloan made at different stages of his life and career.

Chapter 2: Sloan as an Illustrator.

The previous chapter of this project focussed on the influence that literature and literary figures had on Sloan's art. This chapter is dedicated to analysing the relationship between word and image, with a specific focus on the illustrations that Sloan produced under commission for poems and short stories at different stages of his career. Sloan states in *The Gist of Art*,

> the writer automatically uses symbols. The word animal does not look like the thing but it is a symbol for the communication of the idea. Drawing is one of the three means of communication between spirits, like speech and music. … Art is an ideograph… the artist forms concepts of what he has observed in nature. He crystallizes the prose of nature into poetic images. Art is the result of the creative urge of life consciousness.[105]

This statement, made later in his life, addresses Sloan's thoughts on the relationship between word and image, demonstrating that Sloan understood and thought thoroughly about this relationship and embraced the complementing natures of the arts. The chapter presents Sloan's understanding and early application of the relationship between word and image supported by the analysis of illustrations by Sloan which were commissioned by magazines such as *McClure's* and *Collier's*, as well as illustrations he made for poems such as Thomas Daly's collection of verse *Canzoni* (1906) and W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915). The aim is to demonstrate the artist's remarkable verbal and visual skills, which were required to understand, interpret, and represent literary works in art form. The first chapter established that literature was a crucial element of Sloan's personal life and artistic career. This second section of the thesis presents Sloan as a visual interpreter of the literature he read by displaying his

[105] John Sloan, *John Sloan on Drawing and Painting (Gist of Art)*, (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 18.

ability to convey the message of the author as well as the common expectations of the reader, in addition to providing his own personal interpretation of the literature he illustrated.

In order to explore the relationship between word and image and Sloan's own interpretation of this relationship, the chapter will analyse the illustrations Sloan made for the short stories 'The Debts of Antoine' by W. B. MacHarg and 'Idella and the White Plague' by Joseph C. Lincoln, both published by *McClure's* in 1906. A selection of illustrations made for his friend Daly's collection of poems *Canzoni* (1906) will also be analysed. The illustrations for the short stories and verses just listed provide the reader with an insight into the life of European immigrants in the United States, and the responses of the American people to this phenomenon. Moreover, the chapter will present how illustrations, in this socio-historical context, served as a medium for understanding a text written in a language that was foreign to the majority of the population of New York at the turn of the century.

Finally, the chapter will focus on the novel *Of Human Bondage* (1915) by Maugham and how Sloan's illustration *The Art Teacher* has been regarded his last tribute to his friend John Butler Yeats. Although Sloan's illustrations have been widely discussed by art historians and academics such as John Fagg, Rebecca Zurier, and Michael Lobel, this chapter focuses on exploring less frequently discussed illustrations by Sloan with the intent to provide an additional view to the existing literature on Sloan's work as an illustrator, as well as contributing to the current discussions regarding the relationship between words and images and how Sloan contributed to these discussions.

The relationship between word and image is a subject which has been explored by both literary scholars and art historians, since the nature of the argument brings the disciplines of art and literature into direct dialogue. Art historian Jennifer Greenhill explores this relationship from the perspective of commercial artist Coles Phillips and his representation of women on the covers of magazines such as *Good Housekeeping*. Greenhill stresses that ‘magazine illustration was not like oil painting, and it makes sense that an artist who stressed his commitment [like Phillips and Sloan] to the flexible and collaborative frameworks of commercial art would investigate the experimental particularities that reinforced – illustrated even – these conditions’.[106] Greenhill recognises the collaboration and experimentation which is necessary for commercial artists, like Sloan in his early career, to practice in order to produce art that can be appreciated and understood by the reader and that is recognisable as their own. Greenhill touches upon the relationship between word and image by observing that ‘Gustave Flaubert prepares a reader to imagine a body moving, even vanishing, from the scene, by preceding the passage with description of some thing less solid and more faint or fleeting’.[107] In other words, Greenhill recognises that some authors, like Flaubert, ‘illustrate’ their works through lengthy descriptions of scenarios that the reader might be familiar with in order to create the image of the scene in the reader’s imagination.

Similarly, illustrations work to shape and inform the reader’s interpretation of the scene, allowing them to become a fundamental part of the text, like Flaubert’s

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[106] Jennifer A. Greenhill, ‘Flip, Linger, Glide: Coles Phillips and the Movements of Magazine Pictures’, *Association of Art Historians*, vol.40, n.3 (2017): 582-611 (595).
[107] Ibid., 601.

extensively detailed descriptions in *Madame Bovary* (1856) that do not allow the reader to imagine any details, limiting their freedom to interpret the text:

> C'était une de ces coiffures d'ordre composite, où l'on retrouve les éléments du bonnet à poil, du chapska, du chapeau rond, de la casquette de loutre et du bonnet de coton, une de ces pauvres choses, enfin, dont la laideur muette a des profonderus d'expression comme le visage d'un imbécile. Ovoïde et renflée de baleines, elle commençait par trois boudins circulaires; puis s'alternait, séparés par une bande rouge, des losanges de velours et de poils de lapin; venait ensuite une façon de sac qui se terminait par un polygone cartonné, couvert d'une broderie en soutache compliquée, et d'où pendait, au bout d'un long cordon trop mince, un petit croisillon de fils d'or, en manière de gland. Elle était neuve; la visière brillait.[108].

Detailed descriptions provide the reader with all of the necessary elements to visualise the object or scene rather than allowing them to create and visualise their own version. Illustrations, on the other hand, are interpretations of the text expressed by the artist and, in some instances, these did not meet the expectations of the reader or fit successfully with the text. With illustrations, the reader has the freedom to either accept the interpretation of the illustrator or to use it as a starting point to build their own interpretation of the text. When publishing illustrated short stories, the editor of the publishing magazine would have reviewed the illustrations before printing an issue to check that the drawings met the anticipated expectations of the readers. If the editor decided that the illustrations were not suitable or did not fit the text, the images would be rejected.

[108] 'It was one of those head-gears of composite order, in which we can find traces of bearskin, shako, billycock hat, sealskin cap, and cotton nightcap; one of those poor things, in fine, whose dumb ugliness has depths of expression, like an imbecile's face. Oval, stiffened with whalebone, it began with three round knobs; then came in succession lozenges of velvet and rabbit-skin separated by a red band; after that a sort of bag that ended in a cardboard polygon covered with a complicated braiding, from which hung, at the end of a long thin cord, small twisted gold threads in the manner of a tassel. The cap was new; its peak shone.' Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (Paris: Nelson Éditeurs, 1957), 10-11.

Another point that this chapter will raise, even though it has been explored by academics such as John Fagg in his essay 'Bewhiskered Rustic, Turned Orator',[109] is the role of illustrations in literary texts. As Fagg highlights, some illustrations make use of a melodramatic tone and conventions to communicate their message, like Robinson's *The Great White Way* (1913) poster. The inclusion of melodrama in the interpretation of some illustrations introduces a different angle to the understanding of illustrative art, and this chapter explores the role of illustrations in a multilingual society, where melodramatic images – which translated the written text for illiterate people and for immigrants who were not fluent in English – could be understood and enjoyed without a high level of literacy and without an understanding of the text's language.

Even though Robertson's image relies on melodrama to convey his message, it features written words that provide an explanation to the melodramatic expression of the subject depicted. The inclusion of words in the image implies that the words are connected to the image in order to convey the message of the artist. The connection between words and image is not, however, just an artistic concern; many authors explored such connection in literature in order to articulate a piece of art. Ekphrastic literature is a vivid description of a work of art or a scene, as famously exemplified by Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1819). Through the process of addressing the urn itself and personifying it by calling it 'bride of quietness',[110] the poet attempts to give voice to an object that cannot speak. With this poem, Keats introduces the debate that ekphrasis

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[109] John Fagg, '"The Bewhiskered Rustic, Turned Orator" Robert Robinson's Old Men, Politics, and the Saturday Evening Post', *American Art*, 27, 2, (2013): 68-93.
[110] John Keats 'Ode on a Grecian Urn l.1, in ed. John Barnard, *John Keats* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

has created amongst scholars: whether art or literature is most effective in communication.

Ekphrasis relies on the description of a work of art. Without the artwork, the ekphrastic poem or piece of literature would not exist, while the work of art would still exist without its written description. However, academics like Michael Davidson, as noted by James A. Hefferman, oversimplify ekphrasis by implying that art cannot compete with literature since words can be more powerful than a physically static object that is art[111]. 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', like most ekphrastic literature, 'reveals the tensions between the two competing strains of ekphrastic description: the yearning for movement, for animation, and the equally strong desire for graphic stasis'.[112] These tensions between movement and desire for stasis can also be noted in illustrations, where the artist captures the development of a story or a poem – the movement – into the graphic stasis of a picture, thus addressing what ekphrasis is unable to address fully.

Illustrations are a form of artistic representation of a key section of a literary text and they function in a way similar to ekphrasis since they highlight certain parts of the text and help the reader to interpret the text they represent. On this subject, Baxandall claims,

> language is not very well equipped to offer a notation of a particular picture. It is a generalising tool. Again, the repertory of concepts it offers for describing a plane surface bearing an array of subtly differentiated and ordered shapes and colours is rather crude and remote. Again, there is an awkwardness, at least, about dealing with a simultaneously available field – which is what a picture is – in a medium as temporally linear as language:

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[111] James A. Hefferman, "Ekphrasis and Representation", *New Literary History*, vol.22, n.2, Probings: Art, Criticism, Genre (1991): 297-316 (299).
[112] Grant F. Scott 'Keats and the Urn' in *John Keats: Updated Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 164.

> for instance, it is difficult to avoid tendentious re-ordering of the picture simply by mentioning one thing before another.[113]

Baxandall's statement does not imply that language is 'inferior' to art, or pictures, because it is not able to express the picture itself; however, he recognises its limits. This argument relates to John Berger's notion that "seeing comes before words. It is seeing that establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it".[114] Both Baxandall's and Berger's arguments explain the importance of illustrations in written texts, since they draw on the reader's basic instinct of looking and observing rather than having to engage with a more complex action like interpreting a verbal or poetic text, as is required by ekphrastic literature.

By illustrating literature, Sloan allows literature to be part of the means of 'communication between spirits'[115] so drawing enters in communication with the author's words and vice versa. Sloan was aware of the collaborative relationship between art and literature, words and image. Through his illustrations, Sloan begins the dialogue with literature necessary for him to 'crystallize the prose of nature [that he receives filtered by the author's point of view] into poetic images',[116] which are his illustrations. Sloan's role is to understand the author's meaning and interpretation of the nature portrayed in their literary works, and to reproduce in art form the author's intended message for the reader. Once Sloan captured these elements, he incorporated them into the illustration elements of the text. Moreover, Sloan provided elements of his

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[113] Baxandall, *Patterns of Intentions* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 3.
[114] John Berger *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 7.
[115] Sloan, 18.
[116] Sloan, *Gist of Art,* 18.

own interpretation of the text, which allows the pictures to be recognised as his work and classifies them as unique pieces of art.

Michael Lobel notes that when Sloan, along with Luks, Shinn, and Glackens, began to illustrate, the 'expansion of newspaper and magazine publishing into truly modern mass media in the late nineteenth century offered abundant opportunities for illustrators'.[117] Sloan's career as an illustrator started at the *Philadelphia Enquirer*; following this opportunity, he illustrated and designed puzzles for other magazines, such as *McClure's* and *Collier's,* before pursuing a career as a painter and teacher. These early jobs as an illustrator and designer of puzzles allowed Sloan to engage early in his career with the relation between image and word. In his early puzzles, such as those he produced for the Sunday supplement of the *Philadelphia Press*, he demonstrates how words and images are connected by a subtle link, and it is the artist's verbal and artistic skills that highlight this connection. The *What Musical Wind Instruments Are These*[118] puzzle exemplifies Sloan's wit and amusement in creating 'word charade' puzzles, where he plays with letters and images to create words or sentences.[119] To solve the puzzle, the reader has to guess the musical instrument based on the clues, which are made up of both letters and images. The top left square[120] of the strip presents the personified letter 'S' swinging an axe towards the telephone on the wall to create the word 'saxophone'. Even though the rebus itself is simple to solve, this first section of the puzzle is different from the others as it incorporates Sloan's caricatured face as a way to mark his art, since puzzle designers were anonymous on

[117] Sloan, 14.
[118] Figure 2.1.
[119] Lobel, *John Sloan: Drawing on Illustration*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 36.
[120] Figure 2.2.

most occasions.[121] This puzzle demonstrates Sloan's awareness of and initial approach to visually representing the relationship between words and images. In rebuses, letters and art have to be interpreted together in order to resolve the puzzle, forcing the reader to see beyond letters and images and experience the relationship between these art forms.

Since his early works were commissioned by the magazines, Sloan had to follow the guidelines given by the editors in order for his works to be approved. For most of his pieces, Sloan had to meet with the editor, as recorded in a diary entry dated 2nd July 1906, when he 'saw Blackman – have the advertising drawing to finish. Wish it was done, am afraid there will be trouble suiting him'. In the footnote related to the 26th January 1909 entry, the editor of the diaries explains that normally publishers owned the original art commissioned from illustrators, unless there was a special agreement between illustrators and publishers.[122] The commissioned works that Sloan took on at this stage of his career can be compared to commissioned works that Renaissance artists produced in fifteenth-century Italy. In *Patterns of Intentions*, Baxandall notes the processes that artists throughout history had to go through and the demands that they had to fulfil while completing commissions of various kinds.[123] Despite the evident disparity between Sloan and fifteenth-century artists of bourgeois patronage, they all had to oblige the contractual terms of commission as well as adhere to the needs, demands, and visions of their commissioners,[124] which constrained the idea of 'artistic

[121] Lobel, 37-8.
[122] The full footnote cites: 'as a general rule in 19th Century, publishers owned the original art commissioned from illustrators unless a special arrangement has been made. Some were sold, some were kept by editorial staff, but most were destroyed. Early in the 20th Century as a professional organization was trying to reverse this situation and eventually succeeded. Sloan evidently had to negotiate with *Century* for the return of his original drawings.'
[123] Baxandall, 106.
[124] Ibid.

freedom'. However, artists demonstrated the ability to insert their own interpretations of patrons' ideas and to put their own signatures on the finished pieces, making their works unique and recognisable as their own.

Publishers and editors of magazines played a significant role in influencing and developing the production of illustrations by imposing specific standards to illustrators on how to produce images that would, in the publisher's mind, appeal to the reader. Evidence of such standards and feedback provided to illustrators can be found in Sloan's diaries. He reported comments from publishers such as *Collier's* that certain details of his work needed 'a little strengthening' (22nd March 1906) in order to be accepted by the publisher. Sloan experienced rejection from *Collier's* when he was trying to get his 'New York City Life' series published, because his aesthetic did not fit the magazine:

> Reuterdhal came in having shown my etchings, especially "Roof Tops – Summer Night" to Mr. Collier, who said that while he appreciated them himself he felt that his millions of readers were not educated to that point – which (comment by myself) is all rot – and merely shows that he don't really believe that they are good. The people have always taken the best that has been offered. The reason that it's hard to reach the "common people" is that educated idiots in droves block the path – protecting them. (17th July 1906)

It is clear from the entry that Sloan did not agree with the standard imposed by Peter Fenelon Collier in this occasion, as he believed the magazine was negatively influencing the view of the readers and insulting them by considering them 'not educated' enough to understand Sloan's art.

The insulting tone of the editor shows that magazines were looking for art that was easy to understand and interpret for the uneducated reader. Artists like Coles

Phillips, Robert Robinson, Edward Hopper, and Sloan himself had to oblige this and other requests from the publishers when creating mass production illustrations. Phillips contributed to the covers of mainstream magazines such as *Life*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Vogue*, and *Good Housekeeping* targeting women, in particular 'the pretty girl' who would eventually buy the magazines and the products advertised.[125] Artists of mass production illustrations needed to 'create a bond of shared sentiment and familiarity that would stimulate the impulse to bring the object into one's own physical space – by buying, by owning'.[126] In other words, these illustrations had to instigate the reader to purchase a copy of the magazine, which of course meant profits for the publishers. By instigating the urge to own the magazine, publishers and illustrators created the illusion for the reader that by owning a physical copy of the life represented by a magazine, they owned part of that world and society. This new concept of materialism is seen in Sloan's *The Woman's Page*[127] (1905), where the woman pictured is escaping from her lower-class background while reading the women's page of the paper. Peter Fenelon Collier's comment, reported by Sloan in 1906, may be expressing the publisher's need to have relatable, simple, intuitive, and effective art that allowed the reader to escape from reality.

Following the creation of puzzles for the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, Sloan started illustrating short stories for magazines such as *McClure's* and *Collier's*. On 16th September 1906, Sloan 'made some rough sketches on the "Debts of Antoine" story for McClure's', which got approved by the editor for following day.[128] 'The Debts of

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[125] Greenhill, 594.
[126] Ibid., 600.
[127] Figure 2.3.
[128] 'Took sketches to McClure's. Saw Russell and he approved them. Showed him two water colors of Nan's which he said he liked but could not use' (17 September 1906).

Antoine' by W. B. MacHarg touches upon the prejudice against immigrants shown at the turn of the century in America. The protagonist, Antoine, is a French immigrant who tries to integrate with his local community. Instead, he is caught kissing a girl on the hand, which causes turmoil. His redemption is brought about when an epidemic of little-pox hits the community and a member of the girl's family, Mr Burke, is affected. Despite the disease being highly contagious, Antoine looks after the man until his full recovery. His action allows him to gain respect and acceptance within the community.[129]

During the 'new immigration', which occurred between the 1880s and the 1920s, twenty-four million people arrived on American soil,[130] which resulted in the American government making drastic changes in immigration policies to reduce the influx of immigrants, such as the Immigration Act of 1917 and the Emergency Quota Act of May 1921.[131] European citizens went to America seeking opportunities that their native countries could not provide. Some sought financial stability and the hope for a wealthier future while others escaped starvation and religious persecution. The hopes of the immigrants were not often fulfilled; Nancy Foner summarises immigrants' conditions in New York at the turn of the century, particularly those arriving 'with little or no English and few transferable skills' who had to 'endure working conditions in jobs nobody else wants'.[132] Foner also remarks that immigrants tended to 'cluster in

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[129] W.B. MacHarg, 'The Debt of Antoine', McClure's, 28 (Dec. 1906): 188-197.
[130] Axel R. Schäfer "American Immigration" pp.147-169, chapter 7 of *A New Introduction to American Studies* ed. By Edward Temperly and Christopher Bigsby (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 150.
[131] Ashley S. Timmer, Jeffrey G. Williams 'Immigration Policy Prior to the 1930s: Labor Markets, Policy Interactions, and Globalisation Backlash' *Population and Development Review* vol.24, n.4 (1998): 739-771 (739).
[132] Nancy Foner, 'Then and Now or Then to Now: Immigration to New York in Contemporary and Historical Perspective', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 25, n. 2/3, Immigration, Incorporation, Integration, and Transnationalism: Interdisciplinary and International Perspectives, (2006): 33-47 (35).

ethnic neighborhoods with their compatriots […] [to] seek comfort and security among kinfolk and friends'.[133] The formation of these areas, such as Little Italy, often had a clear predominance of one nationality.

Many of these conditions and situations can be seen in the story Sloan illustrated. Antoine 'worked in a lithographing establishment',[134] and 'the neighbourhood was hostile to him chronically. He moved to his society of mingled races, to which one might think nothing could be alien, as an alien – not understood not understanding himself'.[135] This lack of integration in the community contrasts with Foner's explanations of immigrant life, but there is an explanation for this. MacHarg clarifies that Antoine is 'the latest arrival [which was] more likely to begin life in New York outside the classic ethnic neighborhood, in many cases in polyethnic neighborhoods of extraordinary diversity';[136] his neighbourhood is made of Irish and German immigrants, and perhaps other minorities not mentioned by the author.

Antoine's alienation is evident from the first lines of the text, when Mrs Regan and her family attack him because he was caught kissing the hand of Mrs Regan's daughter. The illustration[137] of this scene has been placed at the top centre of the page, functioning as 'curiosity impeller'[138] for the reader, since it sets the visual tone of the text and stimulates them into wanting to know more about the story. By being involved in similar projects, Sloan was aware of the role of these pictures, and in drawing this

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[133] Forner, 35.
[134] MacHarg, 188–197.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Foner, 36.
[137] Figure 2.4.
[138] The Sun (N.Y.) October 27, 1912, Fourth Section Magazine p.15 – image provided by: The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation (https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1912-10-27/ed-1/seq-57/).

first illustration he captures the austere atmosphere as set out by MacHarg in the first lines. In the centre of the image, there is Antoine in a defensive pose trying to defend himself, surrounded by accusatory fingers and astonished and confused faces on his left, depicting the first sentence of the short story: 'there was trouble on the stairway'.[139]

Made of ten figures placed on different levels, the composition appears to be complex; Antoine stands on the floor directly in front of the stairs, surrounded as a 'wolf among sheep-dogs, one man among many mothers.'[140] Even without reading the first paragraphs of the story, the reader understands from the illustration that the male character is in trouble. The faces of the women pointing on the right and the woman directly behind him look violent and ready to fight, recalling the Irish stereotype depicted by Thomas Nast's illustration *The Usual Irish Way of Doing Things*[141] published by *Harper's Weekly* in 1871. Nast's Irish man is portrayed as a drunk and aggressive ape, waiving an empty bottle of liquor, and lighting the barrel of gunpowder on which he sits. The 1870 illustration is different from Sloan's illustration of the women; Sloan adopts some of Nast's features – such as the aggressive eyes, the open mouth suggesting shouting and swearing, and the arms waving in anger – and mellows them so that the women's nationality is recognisable but not grotesque. The manly features of the women behind Antoine contrast with the delicate figure of Mrs Regan's daughter, on the top right, and Antoine himself. By depicting Antoine as a frail individual, Sloan highlights his inferiority in this context; he is the only adult male in the scene and he is the only French national.

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[139] Ibid., 188.
[140] MacHarg, 188.
[141] Figure 2.5.

The first paragraph of the text highlights MacHarg's choice of writing the narrative of the story in normal English and adopting the vernacular, or dialect, for the dialogue. This technique has been frequently used in American literature to introduce a more realistic depiction of the characters by attempting to translate the speakers' dialects and accents into written words. Mark Twain adopted this narrative technique in his novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), which sparked discussions among philologists regarding dialect and nationalism. Twain argued in *Concerning the American Language* (1888) that 'a nation's language […] is not simply a manner of speech obtaining among the educated handful; the matter obtaining among the vast uneducated multitude must be considered also'.[142] Although Twain's argument was directed at the linguistic and social elitism of American English in the late 1800s, this can be transferred to discourses concerning European immigrants and their use of American English. MacHarg's use of the vernacular in 'The Debt of Antoine' helps the reader distinguish the nationalities of the characters speaking. MacHarg includes, for example, 'the colloquial tone of voice ("ain't a-going to no more"), the grammatical errors ("knowed"), misspelling ("sivilised")', all of which 'create a sense of spontaneity'.[143] He also includes genuine dialogue made by non-native and less educated English speakers, such as 'Ye kissed her', 'I have now, Herr Hirsch, thirty-seven years', and 'Eet was nosing'.

The first and last illustrations of the short story capture the shift in the mood between the beginning and the end of the story. The illustrations' compositions are

[142] Quote from: Twain, *Concerning the American Language*, 265-267. This was originally written as a chapter for *A Tramp Abroad* (1880) but was excluded from the published version. Found this citation in Gavin Jones, *Strange Talk* at page 14.
[143] Sieglinde Lenke, *The Vernacular Matters of American Literature* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2009), 59.

different; the first shows Antoine being surrounded, although Sloan includes space between Antoine and the other figures to highlight the alienation he is experiencing. With the progression of the story, it becomes clear to the reader that immigrants had to prove their worth, so it is only after Antoine takes care of Mr Burke that he is accepted and fully integrated into the community. Consequently, the last illustration[144] shows Antoine as less distinguishable from the other members of the community as he blends in with the rest of the characters, although he is recognisable by his moustache and attire featured in previous drawings. The reader can recognise some characters, like Herr Hirsch,[145] who was featured in an illustration early in the narration, and Mr Burke, who is standing at Antoine's right guiding him through the welcoming crowd. The overall composition of the last illustration is less structured than the first, as the characters are presented all on one level, symbolising their equality.

'The Debt of Antoine', like many other stories published in magazines, was a story about immigrants for immigrants who had different levels of fluency in English. Illustrations in these kinds of stories played a significant role in explaining the story itself because they did not require any language skills to be understood, which allows the text to be accessible to anyone regardless of their fluency in English. Berger observes that people learn to see their surroundings before being able to express what they see in words.[146] In terms of illustrations for a text, one can argue that looking at the illustrations is the simpler and most natural way for an individual to understand a text, as the words forming the text must be learnt in order to understand and interpret their meaning. Berger's statement supports the argument that illustrations simplify the

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[144] Figure 2.6.
[145] Figure 2.7.
[146] Berger, 7.

interpretation of a text for non-native speakers and illiterate individuals because they engage with the innate skill of looking at an object or image. Moreover, the use of illustrations as ‘translations’ of the text evokes the ‘redundancy’ of language mentioned by Baxandall in *Patterns of Intensions*.[147]

On 2 January 1906, Sloan was ‘working rather fitfully on illust[ration]s for story for *McClure's Magazine* 'Idella and the White Plague” – a girl who rids her family of the imputation of the popular ditty’. The short story written by Joseph C. Lincoln and published in *McClure's* in 1906 introduces the Sparrow family, whose father, Washington, is declared too ill to work by doctors, so his wife and eldest daughter, Idella, have to work in order to support the family. This scenario was not uncommon; in some occasions, the bread winners of the family could not work due to injury, illness, or because there were no jobs that required their skills, so other members of the family had to go to work. Sometimes, children ‘had to give up school at fourteen [if not younger] to stay at home and mend and cook and sweep and tend baby while her mother went out washing’.[148] Washington claims to have the symptoms of tuberculosis or ‘White Plague’ and exploits the symptoms of this disease to keep from working. Idella returns home with her new husband after working as a housekeeper at a doctor's home and proposes a cure for her ‘invalid’ father. Reluctantly he agrees to the treatment, and following many attempts, Idella ‘cures’ her father, who eventually goes to work with his son in law.

The illustrations follow a similar pattern to those in ‘The Debt of Antoine’, where the curiosity impeller illustration is placed at the top of the story's front page, the

[147] Baxandall, 3.
[148] Joseph C. Lincoln ‘Idella and the White Plague’, McClure's, 27 (May, 1906): 104-112 (105).

last illustration portrays the ending of the story, and the other images illustrate the key passages of the text. In the curiosity impeller illustration[149] for Lincoln's story, 'the viewer looks over the shoulder of a woman seated with a window on her right and domestic chaos all around her',[150] which recalls the *Woman's Page*, as highlighted by Fagg. The scene's chaos and noise are indicated by the melodramatic poses of some characters. Once again, Sloan helps the reader's understanding of the story by exaggerating poses and facial expressions, such as the girl who sits in between her parents and who has a rather staged surprised reaction to the news of her sister's wedding.

Another example of where Sloan exaggerates certain characters' expressions and features to interpret the scene for the reader is in *The Procession Moved Across the Yard.*[151] By viewing the illustration, the reader is able to understand immediately that Idella and her husband, Bill, know that Washington is lying about his condition. Bill's contemptuous smile shows to the viewer his pleasure in pushing Washington, and Idella's expression conveys slight pleasure in inflicting a punishment on her father for his lies. The mother, the first character on the right, is worried for her husband's health. Finally, Washington begs to be released from what he sees as 'torture'. By exaggerating and highlighting certain elements of the illustration, Sloan clarifies to the reader the characters' intentions, thoughts, and actions, facilitating the understanding of the story. In this instance, the illustration is placed a couple of pages before the scene takes place in the story, which may influence the way that the reader interprets the text. By seeing

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[149] Figure 2.8.
[150] John Fagg, 'Chamber Post and Gibson Girls: Clutter and Matter in John Sloan's Graphic Art', *American Art*, vol.29, n.3 (2015): 29-57 (41).
[151] Figure 2.9.

the illustration before reading the scene, the reader has already envisaged Sloan's interpretation of the passage, as well as the rest of the story, which helps the reader to understand the text as a whole.

While working on puzzles and illustrations for magazines in 1906, Sloan began illustrating a collection of verses by his friend Thomas Augustine Daly, as noted in a diary entry dated 2nd August 1906.[152] This marks the beginning of a new working relationship which was different from the collaboration he had with magazines, giving the artist the opportunity to adopt a different perspective when engaging with the relationship between word and image in a poetic context. As explored earlier in the chapter, illustrating short stories required the artist to have a good understanding of the message that the author wanted to convey, as well as the ability to compromise with the expectations of the publisher. Working with Daly meant that Sloan's illustrations had to be approved only by the author, which left the artist free from having to fulfil the publisher's expectation while executing the illustrations.

Daly became well known for the verses collected in *Canzoni* (1906), which became popular enough to be 'ranking with the best dialect rhyming of the period'.[153] Not only were the verses widely appreciated, but Sloan's illustrations made an excellent impact on both author and reviewers. On 15th September 1906, Sloan received a 'letter from Tom Daly expressing his satisfaction with the drawings', and on 11th October 1906, Sloan confirmed that '*Canzoni* by T.A. Daly [received] by mail today. Etching and illus. mine.' The reception of the illustrations from newspapers were positive

[152] "Tom Daly writes from Phila. that he would like [me] to illustrate a book of his poems which he is going to get out in the fall".
[153] Gaetano Cipolla, 'Thomas Augustine Daly: An Early Voice of the Italian Immigrants', *Italian Americana*, 6, no.1 (1980): 44-59 (45).

according to the artist, as he notes on 27th October 1906: 'The Evening Sun Book Review column today notices "Canzoni", rather disparaging Daly's verses but speaking too well of my work.' *Canzoni* (1906), illustrated by John Sloan 'in only 3 days' (8th July 1911), sold 50,000 copies in 12 editions, and Sloan's diaries mention fairly regular payments made to him. On 14th December 1906, he records the receipt of $75 for the drawings, and on 1st March 1907, 'Daly says "Canzoni" is in its fourth thousand and that there will be another payment to me when he gets accounts straightened', just to mention a couple of examples.

While there is no detailed record of their relationship, it is clear that Sloan and Daly were friends, probably dating back to their time in Philadelphia. Sloan's 1910 diary records Dolly making 'a dress for little Nancy Daly [Daly's daughter] which [I] mailed to Phila' (20th May 1910). Whatever the exact nature of the relationship, it is likely that Daly approached Sloan to illustrate *Canzoni* on the basis of Sloan having a remarkable portfolio and the reputation he had built with the Philadelphia papers. Daly was also probably encouraged by the illustrations Sloan made for Harvey O'Higgins' 'The Steady', published by *McClure's Magazine* in August 1905. Sloan's reputation for illustrating immigrants' stories combined with his knowledge and experience of New York City played a certain advantage when producing the illustrations for *Canzoni*. Many of the poems are set in New York, and Sloan's knowledge of the city and his well -known desire to observe the people of New York provided a more accurate depiction of the poems' subjects. These credentials and the acquaintance between Sloan and Daly certainly allowed Sloan more artistic freedom when creating the illustrations, as Daly was the only known reviewer of the illustrations. This allowed Sloan to have to engage only with the author's expectations.

Canzoni engages with the social and political discourses related to immigration, and it particularly portrays immigrants from Italy and Ireland. Regarding the setting of the poems, some explicitly mention New York, whilst others do not specify the city in which they are set, leaving the representation of immigrants broader so that readers from all over the United States could recognise the people depicted. Daly's verses in Italian and Irish dialects were interpreted by Daly's contemporaries as a mockery by the author of the immigrants as individuals, of their culture, and of their poor English or different accents and pronunciation. Arguably, the interpretation of the verses by Daly's contemporaries derived by the tendency of American people to insult and ridicule the newly arrived immigrants for the reasons just mentioned. Given this reception and interpretations of Daly's verses, the definition of dialect humour given by scholars and linguists reflects the attitude of those engaging in such narrative technique as

> one of disdain towards their target. The speech being made fun of is considered 'inferior', 'crude', or 'primitive' and its characteristics are often attributed to backwardness, stupidity, and [some] other negative qualities.[154]

Racial and ethnic stereotypes helped the reader to place the nationality of the figures presented, thus allowing them to read the poem with the correct dialect in mind. Daly worked in a grocery store in Philadelphia where he encountered the Italian-American dialect which he later applied in his poems.[155] Because of his personal experience with Italian immigrants in particular, it is possible to argue against Daly's seeming willingness to label them as ignorant or inferior and to suggest instead that he used his

[154] M.L. Apte, "Dialect Humor", in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. R.E. Asher, 10 vols. (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), II, 907.
[155] Cipolla, 51.

poetry to highlight their language and cultural differences and show a certain degree of affection for the Italian community.

In the poem 'Handicapped' in *Canzoni*, Daly highlights the struggles that some immigrants had to face due to the language barrier. Gaetano Cipolla argues that Daly, and possibly Sloan as well, was driven 'by a desire to portray Italian Americans in a realist way but also by the desire to show their constant struggle with a tool that was too unwieldly and too refractory'.[156] Sloan's illustrations in *Canzoni* as a whole tend to portray Italian and Irish people in a realist manner, even though he applies some ethnic stereotypes in order to make the characters more recognisable for the reader. In the illustration of 'Mia Carlotta',[157] Sloan portrays the man in the centre of the illustration fulfilling some Italian stereotypes: 'the men wore peaked hats and had drooping mustaches. Some were organ grinders and fruit peddlers, but most worked at construction. The Italian was supposed to be hot-blooded and volatile, given to quick argument and frequent violence'.[158] He presents the physical characteristics just mentioned; however, there is no specification of short temper, and he does not work in construction and is instead a barber. The illustration is positioned halfway through the poem; the first four stanzas, which are descriptive of Giuseppe's appearance, are followed by Sloan's illustration confirming the description given by the poet and help the reader visualise the scene and the character. The final two stanzas following the image repeat Giuseppe's physical description; he had 'da bigga, da blacka mustache',[159]

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[156] Ibid., 48.
[157] Figure 2.10.
[158] William R. Linneman, 'Immigrant Stereotypes: 1880-1900', *Studies in American Humor*, Vol.1, n.1, (1974): 28-39 (37).
[159] Thomas Augustine Daly, 'Mia Carlotta', in *Canzoni* (Philadelphia: Catholic Standard &Times Pub.Co., 1906), l.2.

like the stereotype cited above, and black curly hair, which are common features of Southern Italian and Mediterranean people.

From the poem, the reader gathers that Giuseppe 'playnta good cash',[160] and Sloan captures this by portraying him in a three-piece suit and hat and carrying a cane under his right arm in a confident pose. In illustrating *Canzoni*, Sloan took inspiration from reality, whether this was expressed in photographs or whether he witnessed it by walking the streets of New York. It is debatable whether Sloan was inspired by the stereotypical images drawn by other illustrators, as the images of Italians circulating at the time were photographs which depicted the reality of the subject rather than exaggerating certain features and highlighting others as an illustrator would do.

According to Cipolla, *Canzoni* was received as a derision of the 'racial inferiors and outsiders',[161] and he argues that Daly's poems provide the reader with an interesting account of how Irish and Italian immigrants were seen by Americans at the time, as well as a representation of their struggles. The choice of title for the collection indicates Daly's interest in Italian culture and willingness to integrate Italian poetical techniques and terminology into twentieth-century America, reinforcing the theory that Daly did not intend to belittle either the Italians or their culture. Canzoni were forms of poetry from medieval and renaissance Italy, and Dante ranked them above the sonnet and ballata in literary excellence.[162] It is a poetic form which, although its name means 'song', was not intended for musical arrangement, like the ballata. Canzoni were 'dedicated to lofty and serious subjects'[163] such as courtly love that can relate to

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[160] 'Mia Carlotta', l.3.
[161] Foner, 39.
[162] "Vulgarium poetatum suprematum" cited in W. Thomas Marrocco, 'The Enigma of the Canzone', *Speculum*, vol.31, n.4 (1956): 704-713 (708).
[163] Thomas W. Marrocco, 'The Enigma of the Canzone', *Speculum*, vol.31, n.4 (1956): 704-713 (712).

immigration in Daly's context. By choosing to name the collection *Canzoni*, Daly was praising Italian literary tradition and the nation's rich cultural background rather than mocking its immigrants' handicapped ability to speak English. By expressing this intellectual admiration for Italian immigrants, he 'offers a view of Italian Americans as humane and interesting people, a view […] which runs counter to that generally held by American society'.[164]

The perceived general theme of *Canzoni* is the desperate desire of immigrants to comply with American standards of language and culture so that they can be assimilated into the American community while attempting to retain their national identity and traditions. This collection explores the theme by accounting for the alienation felt by some immigrants, as well as the traumatic realisation that they did not find the American Dream once arriving in America. Language was the biggest hurdle that stopped their full integration into American society, especially for Italian immigrants. The poem 'Handicapped' states this issue clearly: 'Eef I could talka 'Merican / Like w'at U can Italian'.[165] The poem shows the frustration of a character who cannot express himself the way he wants to, so people 'mak'da face an' laugh'[166] at his 'tongue [that] ees gat too twist' for speak'.[167] The use of vernacular language in Daly's poems 'provide[s] opportunities for language experiments and linguistic innovation',[168] and it highlights the social and personal issues of non-native English speakers. The dynamism created by the use of the vernacular by authors like Daly has the 'potential to challenge

[164] Cipolla, 46.
[165] Thomas Augustine Daly, 'Handicapped', in *Canzoni* (Philadelphia: Catholic Standard &Times Pub.Co., 1906), ll.1-2.
[166] 'Handicapped', l.21.
[167] 'Handicapped', l.20.
[168] Holger Kersten, 'The Creative Potential of Dialect Writing in Later-Nineteenth-Century America', *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* vol. 55, n.1 (2000): 92-117 (98).

prevailing literary patterns and conventions to turn its creative energies to productive use in the future development of American literature',[169] which may have been one of the reasons for Daly's popularity at the time.

Vernacular writing was a popular form of literary expression in the late 1800s and was used mostly to portray dialogue in order to convey a more realistic representation of the characters themselves and their different accents and dialects, like those in 'The Debt of Antoine'. Although this technique was popular, Thomas Bailey Aldrich stated that this 'endangered the English language and the unity of the American people',[170] since language was regarded as a means of national identity due to mass immigration at the turn of the century. At this point, scholars like Howells distinguish between 'the broken English of partly Americanized immigrants' and 'true dialect' – the descriptive of generic facts and ideas –[171] stressing that the difference between languages and nationalities was well defined. However, the immigration of different nationalities to America brought new vocabulary that contributed to the development and enrichment of American English. With this said, Aldrich's statement is not entirely correct since the English language was not endangered, but rather was subject to mutations and enrichment brought by new words, different pronunciations, and the Anglicisation of foreign words introduced by non-native speakers. Howells' distinction between 'broken English' and 'true dialect' defines in a more refined manner the evolution of American English and its reflection in American literature at this point in history, because the new vocabulary and pronunciations appearing in literature enabled

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[169] Ibid.

[170] Thomas Bailey Aldrich, "Unguarded Gates," *Poems of American History*, ed. Burton Egbert Stevenson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), 650; see also Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 17.

[171] Elsa Nettels, *Language, Race, and Social Class in Howell's America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1988), 67.

readers to recognise and adopt those in their daily speech, so becoming part of the American vocabulary.

Sloan's challenge while illustrating *Canzoni* was to create the visual language of Daly's vernacular humour so that the verses and the illustrations would convey the same message. In addition, he had to provide clues for the reader to unlock the spelling and meaning of the poems to make the poem more accessible to the reader. The vernacular can be seen as the realistic representation of characters' speech because it includes distinctive details, such as the speaker's broken English or 'true dialect' mentioned by Howells, contributing to a more genuine representation of the characters and their experiences. For this reason, this technique is the most appropriate one to express the themes represented in *Canzoni*, because it provides a more honest representation of the issues that Daly wants to convey.

A poem that summarises the general theme of alienation and desire of integration of immigrants raised in *Canzoni*, and one which challenges Sloan's ability to recreate Daly's intended message to the reader, is 'Da Besta Frand'.[172] The poem presents regular rhyming couplets throughout, and the structure mirrors that of Petrarch's *Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono*, echoing the Italian tradition of poetry that he already celebrates with the title of the collection. The poem introduces the alienating experience of many immigrants of that time, regardless of their nationality: 'Som' people com' an' look, but dey / Jus' smile an' notta care; / So pretta soon dey gon' away / an' leave me seettin'dere'.[173] These verses are narrated in the first-person vernacular to emphasise the struggle of the character. This way, the author allows the

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[172] Figure 2.11.
[173] Thomas Augustine Daly, 'Da Besta Frand', in *Canzoni* (Philadelphia: Catholic Standard &Times Pub. Co., 1906), ll.33-36.

protagonist to 'speak' about his experience despite his limited vocabulary, and so the character becomes a speaker for many immigrants in similar situations. In this instance, the vernacular also puts the reader into Carlo's position of struggle, as the spelling of the poem is hard to understand and read fluently.

At the turn of the century, '[Jews and] Italians entered a city that had been dramatically changed by the massive German and Irish immigration of earlier decades and where […] Irish Americans were frequently the hosts who taught newcomers lessons about racial and ethnic boundaries',[174] a situation that recalls the one illustrated by Sloan in the first image of MacHarg's story, where it is clear that the Irish women want to teach Antoine his place within the community. Although the identity of the robber mentioned at line nineteen of 'Da Besta Frand' is unknown, it could have been an action aiming to 'teach a lesson' to the newly arrived Italian immigrant.

Being robbed was not Carlo's only negative experience: the 'Beeg poleeman'[175] he approaches for help laughs at his plight and leaves Carlo alone and penniless. It is a demonstration of the little interest that the community shows for immigrants. This treatment certainly did not meet the expectations of many people who embarked on a journey for a better life on the New Continent, who expected a supportive community rather than being alienated due to their nationality and inability to articulate their needs in a foreign language. The ending of the poem, however, is hopeful; although Carlo does not retrieve his belongings, he encounters a dog that gives him reassurance: 'But steell he leeck my hand / As eef he say to me: "Cheer up! / I gona be your frand"'.[176] Despite the difficult situation depicted, the character is still 'blessed with good humour

[174] Foner, 41.
[175] 'Da Besta Frand', l.25.
[176] 'Da Besta Frand', ll. 50-52.

and wit and [is] capable, at times, of appreciating irony', symptoms of a 'superior form of intelligence'.[177] The poem's first stanza demonstrates this point, which is highlighted by Cipolla. The tone set in the first lines is aggressive because of how 'Meester 'Merican'[178] has mistreated Carlo's dog. However, the tone becomes apologetic and friendlier with the development of the poem, in the hope that Carlo's auditor could listen to his story and offer him help

> No keeck my dog! Ha! Don'ta dare
> For jus'so queeck you do,
> You Meester 'Merican, I swear
> I brack your face for you!
> Eh? W'at? Well, den, dat's alla right,
> […]
> Escusa me for gat exite';
> Com' look! I smila! See?
> I want to frand weeth you[179]

This change of tone demonstrates Carlo's wit, because he adapts his attitude by becoming a storyteller of his misfortune. The spelling of words is challenging for the reader, as they must learn as they read the phonology used by Daly to convey the Italian dialect. Daly aimed for the reader to 'hear' the poem and acquire the dialect of the protagonists while reading, placing the reader in an uncomfortable position that forces them to sympathise with Carlo. Daly, like Sloan, is aware of the importance of language and how the inability to articulate sentences properly contributed to the stereotype of Italians being gullible and unintelligent like the protagonist of 'Da Besta Friend'.

Sloan's illustration captures Carlo's desperation and the hope and encouragement given by the dog, both of which are key emotions that Daly wanted to

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[177] Cipolla, 46.
[178] 'Da Besta Frand', l.3.
[179] 'Da Besta Frand", ll.1-10.

convey in the verses. The dog is the 'kinda 'Merican; da first [he] evva knew'[180] who comforts the immigrant rather than making fun of him. Sloan's representation of the man is insightful and so moving that one can hear the man sobbing: 'I see teen street – I am so blue - / An' justa hold my head / An' theenk "w'at am I gona do?" / An' weesh dat I am dead.'[181] By achieving this, Sloan reinforces the non-linguistic power of illustrations, and by allowing Daly's poem to be 'heard' by the reader while looking at the illustration, he engages multiple senses and allows a more comprehensive experience. Sloan highlights Carlo and the dog to visually emphasise the desperation and isolation of a man who has lost his material possessions. Sloan illustrates Carlo sitting on the edge of the pavement, leaning his head on his left hand, a pose that communicates his distress and exasperation. The reader does not need to see Carlo's face, hidden by the heavy chiaroscuro, to interpret his feelings and sympathise with his situation. The pose and the composition are not melodramatic; Carlo's body language reminds one more of the 'verisimilar code' define this adopted by actors from the 1910s[182] as opposed to the 'histrionic'[183] nature of illustrations, as highlighted earlier in the chapter in images such as 'Idella and the White Plague' and 'The Debt of Antoine'. Even though the illustration is not melodramatic, it adheres to Baxandall's definition of an ekphrastic picture, allowing the reader

> within the first second or so of looking [to] have a sort of impression of the whole field of a picture. What follows is sharpening of detail, noting of relations, perception of orders, and so on, the sequence of optical scanning

[180] 'Da Besta Frand', ll.59-60.
[181] 'Da Besta Frand', ll.29-32.
[182] John Fagg, '"The Bewhiskered Rustic, Turned Orator" Robert Robinson's Old Men, Politics, and the Saturday Evening Post', 78.
[183] Ibid.

> being influenced both by general scanning habits and by particular cues in the picture acting on our attention.[184]

This is a similar process that applies to *Clown Making Up*,[185] analysed in the previous chapter. Sloan's illustration interprets the text and facilitates the reader's understanding of the poem itself. Sloan reduces the stereotyped elements, makes the humour more gentle, and emphasises the picturesque qualities an observer, like him, would perceive in the Little Italy neighbourhood.

As in his 1910 painting *Clown Making Up*, in the illustration of Carlo, Sloan drives the viewer's attention to the man, the narrator and protagonist, and highlights him by surrounding him with lighter and sketches of objects that are lighter in colour. This technique mirrors and visually represents Daly's use of the first-person narrator. It is the emphasis on the subject being unposed and the engagement with his feelings that allows Carlo to 'speak' to the reader, elevating the poem and the image to a multi-sensational experience for the viewer. Sloan uses dark colours perhaps to symbolise the darkness of the moment Carlo is experiencing, rather than the lighter tones he uses for the clown, which symbolise the epiphany that the man has been caught in. Carlo's dog, on the other hand, is lighter, partly because Daly describes his fur as being yellow, but also because he is symbol of hope for the man. This use of colour is an important component of Sloan's art, as he concluded that form and 'color are separate entities in perception, and therefore should have separate symbols to suggest them'.[186] He demonstrates this when emphasising the presence and emotions of a character. Sloan's interpretation of the poem expressed in chiaroscuro exhibits the 'fables of his characters without either

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[184] Baxandall, 4.
[185] Figure 2.12.
[186] Carl Zigrosser, 'The Graphic Work of John Sloan' *The Philadelphia Museum Bulletin*, Vol.51, n.248, John Sloan Memorial: His complete Graphic Work (1956): 19-31 (19).

exploiting them or descending to caricature',[187] as Sloan anonymises Carlo's identity. This confirms the perception that a reader might have formed of Carlo from Daly's vernacular, therefore balancing the mockery the reader's perception without undermining Daly's authorial intent and tone.

Sloan continued producing etchings and illustrations until a few years before his death in 1951. In April 1937, Sloan made sixteen etchings illustrating Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915), a commission from George Macy, the director of the Limited Editions Club of New York, which was devoted to producing fine illustrated editions of well-known books.[188] This commission differs from Daly's, as on this occasion Sloan was not selected by the author himself and the illustrations were not part of the first edition of the novel, so the first readers of the novel were not influenced by Sloan's art in the same way that *Canzoni*'s readers may have been. As established in the first chapter, John Butler Yeats was an important figure in Sloan's formation as an artist because he mentored Sloan and challenged his art and artistic thought. Yeats died in 1922, and Sloan pays his last artistic tribute to their friendship by 'turning in memory to what Yeats had told him of his own experiences in art school, in London in the late 1960's' [189] when he made the illustration of chapter 43, *The Art Teacher*, of Maugham's novel *Of Human Bondage*.

Maugham's novel narrates the crucial decisions and events of the life of Philip Carey, a character who shows several autobiographical traits of the author and who is left orphaned at a young age and travels Europe in the 'search for his pattern in human

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[187] Cipolla, 45-6.
[188] Alice Lee Parker and Milton Kaplan, 'Prints and Photographs' *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, vol.17, n.1 (1959): 51-62 (54).
[189] Robert Gordon *John Butler Yeats and John Sloan: the Records of a Friendship*, (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1978), 23.

experience'.[190] Philip travels to Paris to study art in the hope of becoming a professional artist. After realising that art would not support him financially, he returns to London to pursue his late father's career and studies medicine.

The Art Teacher,[191] the illustration of chapter 43 of the novel, records Sloan's memories of Yeats' tales of Heatherley's art school in London, and in this drawing, Sloan adapts his friend's experience to represent Philip's own experience at the Parisian art school. As Robert Gordon observes, 'Yeats had never crossed the Channel to study',[192] but Sloan's memories of Yeats' experiences were accurate enough for the author to be satisfied with the illustration of the novel's passage. The scene described by Maugham of Philip's first art lesson is likely to have triggered Sloan's inspiration for the illustration:

> the studio was large and bare, with gray walls, on which were pinned the studies that had received prizes. A model was sitting in a chair with a loose wrap thrown over her, and about a dozen men and women were standing about, some talking and others still working on their sketch.[193]

The image is of a nude, as mentioned by Maugham, standing on a pedestal surrounded by learning artists. The attention of the viewer is drawn to the man sitting and correcting the picture of one of his students. The resemblance to Yeats is to be noted; the man has a long beard, thinning hair, and a three-piece suit, and looks like Yeats as portrayed by Sloan in *Yeats at the Petitpas* (1910), suggesting that Sloan used his memories of Yeats' appearance to illustrate the art teacher in Maugham's novel. In the foreground, an artist, potentially Philip, resembles Sloan and is looking attentively at the teacher and the

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[190] Theodore Spencer 'Somerset Maugham', *College English* vol.2 n.1, (1940): 1-10 (8).
[191] Figure 2.13.
[192] Gordon, 23.
[193] W. Somerset Maugham, *Of Human Bondage* (Stockholm and London: Continental Book Co., 1947), 265-6.

corrections that he is making to a fellow's sketch. The appearance of these two characters suggests the autobiographical nature of the illustration; a plausible interpretation of this is that Sloan wanted to celebrate his friendship with Yeats by portraying what he considered to be the most important aspect of their relationship: Yeats' mentorship of Sloan. One can argue that the illustration, although based on Maugham's chapter forty-three, includes many of Sloan's fond memories of his friendship with Yeats, creating an emotional tribute to the eclectic artist. In *The Art Teacher*, Sloan's artistic maturity is shown not so much in his technique, but in the way he manages to create an autobiographical illustration that suits the text in a way that the reader may not realise the personal reference that Sloan incorporated in the drawing.

Even though *The Art Teacher* differs, to an extent, from the other illustrations analysed in this chapter because it is mainly an autobiographical illustration, it still presents the main principles outlined in this chapter. Despite the fact that Sloan illustrated the art teacher to look like Yeats and drew largely from his own memory, he still engaged with the text in order to create an illustration that was relatable to the text from the reader's perspective. Throughout the chapter, I have presented examples of Sloan's awareness and engagement with the relationship between word and image, where he becomes an interpreter of the literature which he was commissioned to illustrate. Sloan's role as illustrator was one in which he mediated between words and images by making the texts he illustrated more accessible to the reader. The examples showcased in this chapter show how Sloan's illustrations engage with the innate instincts of observing and looking instead of requiring the performance of an activity, like reading, that requires learned skills. This chapter has demonstrated Sloan's deep understanding of literature, which will be explored from a different perspective in the

third and final chapter of this research project, where I will look at Sloan as a writer and how he engages with the relationship between word and image from a literary point of view.

Chapter 3: Sloan as a Writer.

The previous chapters explored John Sloan as an artist, illustrator, and interpreter of the literature he read. The first chapter investigated the influence that the literature Sloan read for leisure and self-improvement had on his paintings, such as Yeats' suggestions of texts like Ruskin's *The Elements of Drawing*. The second chapter explored the role that the artist had in interpreting and conveying the literature he read for works commissioned by magazines such as *McClure's* and *Collier's*, and authors like Tom Daly. The aim of this final chapter is to investigate and contextualise Sloan's own writing. Sloan wrote several different kinds of texts, including correspondence to his friends, his unpublished diaries – which have been extensively referenced in this thesis – and his 1939 collection of lectures, *Gist of Art*. By reading Sloan's written words, his art becomes more accessible because one can learn more about the challenges he experienced. Therefore, these documents acquire a certain degree of historical value for their readers, and they bring the reader closer to the artist as an individual. The chapter will forward the idea that Sloan's correspondence and diaries provide the reader with the necessary context to improve their understanding of Sloan's art and the background from which he created it. In presenting a selection of letters that Sloan wrote to Henri, collected in *Revolutionaries of Realism* (1997) edited by Bennard B. Perlman, and selected entries from his unpublished diaries, the chapter highlights Sloan's interest in creative writing which was expressed in vividly described passages and poetry. Moreover, the chapter will continue to present Sloan's engagement with the relationship between word and image and how this engagement was not limited to the interpretation of authors' texts through his art, but was also present in his private letters, which he often accompanied with sketches or calligrams.

Sloan's writing has been used by art historians and in this thesis as historical and autobiographical evidence of the thoughts and opinions of the artist in matters relating to art, politics, and literature. Diaries and private letters 'belong to the overlapping domains of history and literature',[194] meaning that they can be interpreted as both historical and literary documents, even if they have been often considered marginal by literary academia.[195] This chapter demonstrates that Sloan did not write his diaries just for the sake of producing a 'serial narrative'[196] of his personal and artistic life, or his letters for communicating with relatives and acquaintances. One of the key aims of this chapter is to identify the purpose of Sloan's writing, and this chapter will establish that Sloan used writing as a tool for his own and other people's entertainment, as well as to capture his impressions of his urban environment and the events that had a particular impact on his life.

It is plausible to think that Sloan imagined his diaries being published and used as a source by others, as it was common practice in the nineteenth century to collect and posthumously publish the private correspondence and journals of prominent intellectual figures as a tribute to their lives and work, a custom that encouraged the development of archival research.[197] Given this practice, some authors, politicians, and artists requested that their private writings, especially their correspondence and diaries, be destroyed soon after their death.[198] Since the practice of publishing private texts was reserved for

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[194] Irina Paperno, 'What Can Be Done with Diaries?', in *The Russian Review*, vol.63 (2004): 561-573 (p.561).
[195] Judy Simons, *Diaries and Journals of Literary Women from Fanny Burney to Virginia Woolf* (London: MacMillan, 1990), 201.
[196] Jochen Hellbeck 'The Diary between Literature and History: A Historian's Critical Response', *The Russian Review*, Vol.63, n.4 (2004): 621-629 (628).
[197] Ed. Celeste-Marie Bernier, Judie Newman, and Matthew Pethers, *Epistolary Studies and Nineteenth-Century American Letters and Letter-Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017) epub accessed at the British Library (ISBN: 978 0 7486 9294 1), 51.
[198] Ibid., 53.

renowned intellectuals, one can speculate that artists and authors who hoped for posthumous recognition began to take more care of the form, language, and structure they used in their private writings in order to provide reading material for future generations.

Academic Buzz Spector recognises that some artists, such as Delacroix and Gauguin, created passages in their journals that 'have the force and poetry of great literature',[199] and from the passages recorded in this chapter it will be clear that Sloan adopted a similar approach to create interest. His second wife, Helen Farr Sloan, kept and donated to the Delaware Art Museum a vast collection of Sloan's correspondence, creating 'authority and purpose for her own life and for her husband's legacy'[200] as well as building a valuable archive for the research and study of early American modernism. Sloan's writing is not limited to letters and diaries; later in his artistic career and life he also lectured on art. His lectures were collected and published by the American Artist Group in 1939 under the name *The Gist of Art*. This collection of Sloan's lectures is an important and valued piece, as it communicates Sloan's thoughts on art and his reflections on his own works in a later stage of his life and career. Because *The Gist of Art* was published towards the end of his career, it will not be explored in this chapter, as timeframe of this research project ends in 1912 and examines only the early years of Sloan's career. However, even though *The Gist* includes contradictions to and rejections of some of his earlier works and thoughts, it will still be used as a helpful resource to discuss points raised in the chapter when appropriate.

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[199] Buzz Spector and John Wilde, 'Artists' Writing', Art Journal, Vol. 48, No. 4, Critical Issues in Public Art (1989), p 349.
[200] Alexis L. Boylan, 'The Curious Case of the Two Mrs. Sloan', *Woman's Art Journal*, vol.33, n.1 (2012): 25-31, (25).

The following paragraphs will explore some of Sloan's correspondence to his friend, mentor, and fellow artist Robert Henri. Bennard B. Perlman notes in his book *Revolutionaries of Realism: the Letters of John Sloan and Robert Henri* that the letters collected in his book show the special friendship shared by the two artists throughout their lives, but that ceased upon Henri's death in 1929.[201] As was the case for many literate people in the long nineteenth century, Sloan's primary form of communication with family and friends was epistolary correspondence. Celeste-Marie Bernier, Judie Newman, and Matthew Pethers highlight in the introduction of *Epistolary Studies and Nineteenth-Century American Letters and Letter-Writing* that during the nineteenth century, written correspondence played an important role in bringing together 'individuals separated by the nation's extensive geography, [by becoming] a primacy grounded in mass literacy and the building of a vast postal network'.[202] These factors contributed to America becoming an important area for the development of modern epistolary culture. Bernier et al. have also argued that letters belong to their own genre, characterized by distinctive conventions and forms that do not compromise the inclusion of forms from other cultures and can be delivered by a range of different writers.[203] Bernier et al.'s point is shown by Sloan's large correspondence, which varies in content and structure but still presents the distinctive conventions that characterise the genre. Perlman's *Revolutionaries of Realism* shows the variety of content and structures that Sloan used in his letters to Henri.

[201] Bennard B. Perlman, *Revolutionaries of Realism: the Letters of John Sloan and Robert Henri*, Princeton University Press (1997), XX.
[202] Bernier et al., 53.
[203] Ibid., 51.

Sloan so highly valued letters from his friend Henri that he criticised Henri in his diary when he kept receiving postcards instead of letters:

> Received a set of postcards from Gosewisch in Hanover. Have heard from Henri only in this way. Rather dislike the postcard fad. Would rather have a letter from a friend than a damaged photograph of a street in the town where they stop in, or cancel ink stained reproduction of a painting. (9th August 1910)

The entry clearly states Sloan's disappointment in receiving a brief note from his friend, who was travelling Europe at the time, highlighting the importance that Sloan attributed to letters, in particular those from a dear friend. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Sloan turned to writing not only to keep in touch with family and friends, but also as a form of entertainment for himself. One can notice that in some of the instances presented in Perlman's book, Sloan's aim was to entertain Henri while still keeping him informed about what happened in his absence.

In a letter to Henri dated December 8th, 1895,[204] Sloan includes a scene setting that could have been part of a play. This letter is among the longest correspondence collected by Perlman, and it can be divided into three sections. The first two sections address Sloan's disappointment with the Tuesday night, a weekly gathering held at Henri's studio at 806 Walnut Street that Sloan began to attend following the failure of the Charcoal Club. About the gathering, Sloan writes, 'Tuesday nights are getting "curiouser and curiouser." They lack peaceful contemplativeness and intellectual tone I'm afraid; You know they showed symptoms of this kind of degeneration even before you left and of course when you – well we wont be complimentary'.[205] These evenings

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[204] Perlman 18-20, the whole letter is reproduced as Appendix 2.
[205] Perlman 18.

were meant to be a ‘discussion group on art, literature, and philosophy, including the thought of Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, Zola, Balzac, and Iborsen’.[206] Sloan’s judgement of the Tuesday nights is expressed by quoting from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* – ‘Tuesday nights are getting “curiouser and curiouser”’[207] – a quotation which anticipates the chaotic events the artist will describe in the scene-setting second part of the letter, which I will address in detail after commenting briefly on the letter’s third section.

The final part of the letter addresses a common topic of conversation between the two friends, which is art. Sloan mentions having sent Henri’s painting *Blond Portrait* to Pittsburgh for an exhibition, and he comments on the works of the Swedish painter Anders Zorn, saying that Zorn’s work is ‘awfully clever but seems thin, lacks dignity, too damnly clever’.[208] He also speaks about his sister Marianna, who had a poster published by the *Woman’s Edition Press*. The letter does not include great analysis of either Zorn or Marianna; however, this final section of the letter fulfils the purpose of using writing as a tool for sharing thoughts on art.

The second section of the letter includes the letter’s actual purpose, which is to entertain Henri with the context and developments of an event which Sloan witnessed during Henri’s absence. The first paragraph clearly sets the location and actions: ‘Scene 806 Walnut St 4th floor time Tuesday 8.30 P.M. Darkened studio save for the reflected glare from Gilmores over the way’.[209] Only two characters enter the scene, Sloan and Kellys [sic] Ghost. At the exit of the Ghost, the scene becomes increasingly turbulent

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[206] Robert L. Gambone *Life on the Press: the Popular Art and Illustrations of George Benjamin Luks* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 29.
[207] Perlman, 18.
[208] Ibid., 20.
[209] Perlman, 18.

and chaotic due to the procession of apparently random characters, who are introduced only by their nicknames:

> Enter Preston, greetings, both light pipes, wander [ditto marks under 'aimlessly about room'] wish they were hard workers, start to have an edifying conversation on the benefits of thinking much and working little. (Noise Below as though a herd of cattle were being driven up stairs) Enter 'Ebby' Shinn and 'Dinkbots,' Sr. The latter is usually sober perhaps. Enter Howes, of Boston, bearing package of cheese   Enter Davis, bearing loaves of bread (On the night in evidence, the first time since you left enter) Redfield, horticulturalist, Pessimist, Painter and Poker fiend 'star' seller at the recent Art Club exhibition   he sold a picture perhaps he has written the tidings to you ere this 'well any way.'[210]

The almost absurd and casual entrance of characters is followed by an equally random series of events that unfold one after the other, creating a crescendo of actions. This may remind one of a pantomime or of the Mad Hatter's tea party in Carroll's novel, where the escalation of events happens rapidly and without any logical order. The sense of chaos and confusion is conveyed by the lack of paragraph breaks, which would define a clear sequence of events. However, the events roll one after the other, conveying the rapid escalation from apparent order to certain intellectual individuals' performing of exotic dances: 'Hell Howls! The "Houla Houla" Dance is played and Sloan dons a wig and ballet skirt and does the Danse du Ventre'.[211] The order is restored by the reappearance of Kelly's Ghost who sings a chant of four stanzas with a regular AAB CCB rhyme scheme. It is not certain whether the song has been written by Sloan for the purpose of this letter, or if this was actually sung at the end of the gathering.

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[210] Ibid., 18-19.
[211] Ibid., 19.

The scene concludes with the end of the night, when 'the footsteps on the stairs cease, the front door bangs shut, silence, - gloom, curtain'.[212] The lack of dialogue, acts, paragraphs, or storyline and the length of the script anticipates the Theatre of the Absurd, where 'the characters hardly have any individuality and often even lack a name' and 'halfway through the action they tend to change their nature completely'.[213] This chaotic form seems to point towards Sloan's disappointment with the evening and with the gatherings more generally.

This letter provides insight into Sloan's interest in experimenting with different kinds of literature. The text incorporates three literary forms – correspondence, playwriting, and poetry – which demonstrate Sloan's familiarity with different literary styles and ability to bring them together within the same text, while still fulfilling his primary purpose of entertaining and informing Henri. The tone of the letter varies in accordance with the style of literature he adopts; in the correspondence section of the text, he expresses his disappointment directly, as highlighted by the *Alice in Wonderland*'s reference. However, for the sections relating to the theatrical script and poem, he adjusts the tone to be more comical, which helps to convey the absurd sequence of events and the friendly tone of the chant. Sloan's ability to adapt the tone of the letter to fit the different writing styles is indicative of his interest in experimenting and manipulating literature in a similar way to how he approaches art, as shown in the previous chapters. Arguably, Sloan's attempt to write in a theatrical style that developed in the Theatre of Absurd in the 1950s, a style of drama writing appeared on European

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[212] Perlman, 20.
[213] Martin Esslin, 'The Theatre of the Absurd', *The Tulane Drama Review*, vol.4, n.4, (1960): 3-15 (3).

stages with the plays of Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov and Eugéne Ionesco,[214] suggests Sloan's avant-garde vision in terms of literature.

The 8th December 1895 letter may be seen as an exercise for Sloan to entertain his friend Henri while informing him of what happened during one of the Tuesday night meetings. However, it also displays that Sloan does not intend for all of his writing to have reflective and deeply meaningful content. Sloan used his private correspondence with Henri as a tool to entertain his friend and display his ability to write playfully and amusingly. An example of this can be seen in an undated note written to Henri in 1897:

> Said a rising young artist named Henri
> Whose favorite grog was Rock n Rye
> As my paintings won't sell
> I will step down to Hell
> And paint Sacred Subjects from Mem'ry
> J.S.[215]

This limerick demonstrates the artist's confidence and ability to understand, play with, and manipulate words. Perlman observes that the purpose of the limerick was to ease Henri's disappointment after not having sold any paintings during one of his exhibitions at the Paris Salon.[216] Writing verses requires knowledge of poetic metre and of the role that words can play in constructing poetry. Sloan adopts the limerick form and modifies it slightly demonstrating his aim of entertaining Henri alongside his knowledge of literary forms. His familiarity with words and literature certainly derived from his voracious reading habits and from his natural creativity, qualities that allowed him to create literature for his own and other people's entertainment, like on this occasion.

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[214] Esslin, 3.
[215] Perlman, 24.
[216] Ibid.

These two examples of Sloan's correspondence were intended to be private, and they allow the reader to capture a glimpse of Sloan's life and personality beyond the art he produced. The letter and the limerick reveal a more playful side of Sloan, and they allow the reader to create an image of Sloan as an individual that goes beyond the painter and his art. However, Sloan also included his artistic views in his personal correspondence, such as in a letter to Henri dated 30th October 1898, in which he expresses his ideas about art and being an artist in New York and Philadelphia.[217] In July 1898, Sloan moved to New York to work for the *New York Herald*. He then returned briefly to Philadelphia in October of the same year – the same date as the letter to Henri. From the letter, the reader perceives Sloan's struggle to adapt to life in New York, which is communicated by the artist through the way he arranges the text.

Sloan begins the letter by expressing his happiness to be back temporarily in Philadelphia, and he then compares the experiences he had working for the papers mentioned above. The *Herald*'s fulltime team was larger and was supported by external artists, while *The Press* of Philadelphia had fewer staff and demanded more from them, a situation which did not 'give a man the time to finish'[218] his job. The comparison of these papers is immediately followed by the statement that Sloan would not work for *The Press*, as he needed to 'take the necessary time to turn out slick newspaper work'.[219] This is followed by another mention of working in New York and how much more he earned in the city in the three months he lived there. However, Sloan also writes that he feels 'like an artist in Philadelphia, even tho' the <u>town</u> is so ugly

[217] Perlman, 34-5, the whole letter is reproduced in Appendix 3.
[218] Ibid., 34.
[219] Ibid.

compared to New York,'[220] and this statement underlines his frustration about not feeling like an artist in New York. The letter reveals an alternation of positive and negative feelings associated with either New York or Philadelphia. Philadelphia is perceived by the artist as a more relaxed, less busy and measured city, where artists still have time to produce high-quality art. On the other hand, New York is perceived as an unfriendly and buzzing environment where there were more opportunities and better salaries; however, New York artists were overworked, for work in the city was fast-paced in order to satisfy the demands of mass production.

New York played an important role in Sloan's artistic career. He became known for his affiliation with The Eight, who worked in New York painting its people and culture, and he became a prominent illustrator for New York papers. The 30th October 1898 letter to Henri captures the feelings of insecurity and uncertainty that were firmly present in New York's artists, who were experiencing great changes in one of the most populated, thriving, and modern cities of the early twentieth century. The postscript of the 30th October 1898 letter to Henri is dated 20 November, because he had been 'carrying the above in my pocket for 3 weeks'.[221] The postscript witnesses Sloan's tone being more positive as he writes about the paintings he had been working on. Moreover, the brevity of the note may also indicate that he did not need to use pen and paper as therapy to externalise his worries, which could have potentially put a blocker on his inspiration to produce art.

Sloan's sense of discomfort, which is communicated in his October letter to Henri, can also be detected in his art from this period. The oil on canvas *Philadelphia*

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[220] Perlman, 34.
[221] Ibid., 35.

Stock Exchange (1897-1898)[222] exemplifies the struggle and torment communicated by Sloan to his friend. The painting is dominated by the iconic stock exchange building in Philadelphia, which occupies three quarters of the painting. The dominant and almost solitary presence of the Philadelphia building highlights an apparently deserted city, confirming Sloan's perception in the letter, which clearly contrasts New York's buzzing growth observed by Sloan. In the painting, human presence is almost absent; the artist paints two figures in the background by the buildings on the right of the Stock Exchange, as if to remind the viewer that Philadelphia is not a deserted city. Despite the warmth of the brown palette, Sloan creates a cold and sterile atmosphere with the brushstrokes and the combination of browns and greys that create the illusion of the aftermath of a sandstorm.

The letter to Henri was written after the painting was made, verbalising the emotions that the artist painted on the canvas. In this instance, the letter allows *Philadelphia Stock Exchange* to become more accessible to the viewer, as one can read that Sloan's perception of Philadelphia has changed after his experience of life in New York. He began to recognise the lack of opportunities that Philadelphia could offer artists like him, which is represented by the sense of desolation and sterility transmitted by the painting.

From the letters just analysed, the reader perceives Sloan's observation of and curiosity about the world surrounding him, which he then applied to his art. His writings, particularly his diaries, were a way for Sloan to note his observations about the urban environment, particular events happening in the city, or even simple occurrences

[222] Figure 3.1.

of his personal life, such as personal and social engagements. The diaries were kept from 1906 to early 1913, providing an almost daily account of the artist's life. The frequency of the entries is less consistent from 1912 to the last entry on 21st May 1913. The reader of his diaries becomes part of Sloan's world and life in New York, and they are a source of valuable information about his personal and artistic life, providing the reader with a broader understanding of the context in which he produced his art.

The language and structure of the entries vary; in some entries, the language is sketchy and minimalist, like in the entry dated 21st October 1909, where he briefly annotates, 'Made two cartoons for The Call (if they care to have them)'. Brief sentences and colloquial language are recorded mainly in entries concerning household and business records, where he mainly annotates tasks, deliveries, and work carried out by household help.[223] In some other instances, the sketchy and almost journalistic style is used to record multiple events that happened in one day, such as the 1st February 1910 entry. The entry is composed of four paragraphs, each one of them addressing a different event or episode that happened on the day. Although the length of the note is longer than the entries about housekeeping or business, each paragraph is a maximum of two sentences long, and the language and style imitate those of news headlines. In the final paragraph, Sloan mentions that 'my card and Dolly's card, membership in Socialist Party, arrived today […] Now we are Reds!' (1st February 1910). Although each paragraph of the entry is of similar length, the element that suggests that, for Sloan, this event was more important or exciting than the others is the underlined sentence 'we are Reds'. Socialism was an important element of Sloan's personal and

[223] Unpublished diaries of John Sloan – p. 2 in this note they also mention that previous editors of the diaries have removed such information as they did not feel the need to include it.

artistic life, and he began to contribute drawings and illustrations to the *New York Call* and other socialist newspapers and magazines in 1909. However, even though he was an active member of the Party, Sloan chose to keep his political and artistic lives separate. He states in *The Gist*,

> I draw a distinction between an artist and a working-man, a craftsman. The artist, the real artist, must work for himself. Artists who classify themselves as tradesmen have given up their birthright to independent work. […] To make a living you have to make something that someone else wants. […] If an artist makes his living as a craftman, doing commercial work, he must belong to a labor organization that will protect his living. The work he does for himself, his painting, cannot come under the standards of commercial competition.[224]

While Sloan was indeed involved with the Socialist Party and contributed to magazines and papers, he did so under the pseudonym Josh Nolan so that he could keep his political activism separate from his artistic career.[225]

In contrast to the journalistic language Sloan uses in many of his diary entries, at times he also uses more elaborate sentence structure and less colloquial language, particularly in those entries describing events that caught his attention and which he believed were worth longer mentions since they broke his daily routine. An example of this more complex composition can be found in the entry dated 21st February 1911. In this instance, it can be speculated that Sloan's syntax is indicative of a creative writing exercise that the artist practiced for his own leisure. He describes a nearby house fire, and Sloan's observations can be compared to Zurier's American flaneur, which Zurier

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[224] John Sloan, *The Gist of Art* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 2015), 33-4.
[225] Gail Gelburd, 'John Sloan's Veiled Politics and Art', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, vol.7, n.1 (2008): 69-88 (73).

defines as a 'literary persona, with journalistic origins'.[226] Sloan's report of the event states,

> Back of us a slight fire with lots of smoke. A young, greasy, fat woman managed to squeeze herself thro' a very small, dangerously small, window onto a fire escape where she stood like a much frightened lump of dough. A brave Jew lad from a 7th Ave. delicatessen shop climbed the ladder to the railed iron platform where she stood. He tried to get her over the rail to a nearby fire escape, but she was too fat and inert with fear. Also, she was too big to go thro' the opening in the platform to the ladder. The smoke poured out of the windows and an older woman was pulled out of the small window by the Jew lad, who was brave enough. The little window was very high from the floor so that these exits were most difficult. Neighbors passed a long fur coat which the young piggish woman put on. A gray sweater did for the old woman. The selfish terror of the younger was comic. Three firemen came to the window, but evidently told the woman to stay on the escape out of the smoke, the fire being under control. Great difficulty themselves back thro' the window.

Although Sloan's description is full of details, the scene appears to be 'speaking as is to an audience of familiars who recognize the telling details described,'[227] raising the question of whether Sloan intended for his diaries to be published and read posthumously. In other words, Sloan provides many details of the incident, but it seems that he expects the reader to be familiar with some of the details he describes. For example, when Sloan mentions the 'Jew lad from a 7th Ave delicatessen shop', Sloan implies that the reader knows who he is referring to, so he fails to provide any further description of the character.

This passage can be seen as more than just an account of an incident Sloan witnessed through his window; it reveals Sloan's observation of and engagement with the urban space and the sense of community surrounding him. The passage also aligns

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[226] Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 91.
[227] Ibid.

Sloan with the observant urban aesthete, like those featured in the London *Spectator*, who described 'urban incidents and characters from an ironic perspective'.[228] Sloan's 'ironic perspective' is manifested in the humorous descriptions of the characters involved, such as the 'young, greasy, fat […] piggish woman', and in the description of the scene. This diary passage highlights Sloan's observance of the city and shows his ability to write a piece of realist literature that allows the reader to 'live' that moment. The detailed description allows readers to create a picture in their minds of the event in a manner similar to Gustav Flaubert's description of Mr Bovary's cap, discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, the entry highlights Sloan's attention to passages written by other authors and his ability to adapt his language and style to the events he witnessed. The scene is reminiscent of a passage described in McHarg's 'The Debt of Antoine,' the short story mentioned in Chapter 2 of this project. Both texts fit the same genre of urban reportage, which aims to record stories of everyday life. Both involve a domestic fire in proximity to the narrator, and in both a brave civilian climbs a ladder to save a woman, demonstrating the strong sense of community displayed in certain areas of New York. Both Sloan and MacHarg describe the smoke of the fire as 'pouring out of the windows',[229] and this might be seen as an example of Sloan imitating the language he came across while reading MacHarg's short story.

Even though Sloan's text presents similarities to MacHarg's passage, there are some differences. The lengths of the two passages are significantly different, as are their purposes. MacHarg's text is part of a narrative that shows how the main character, Antoine, comes to be accepted by his community. On the other hand, Sloan simply

[228] Zurier, 93.
[229] W.B. MacHarg, 'The Debt of Antoine', McClure's, 28 (Dec. 1906): 188-197 (191).

reported an event he noticed while looking out of his window and used this event to practice his creative writing. Sloan does not include dialogue in his passage because he has produced a reporting narrative rather than narrative fiction, where the inclusion of dialogue is necessary for the narrative purpose of the story. It is widely acknowledged that Sloan was, as he writes, in the 'habit of watching every bit of human life I can see about my windows' (July 6th, 1911), and the 21st February 1911 entry clearly demonstrates how his own life experience and his observation of other people's lives was the inspiration for this and other entries, as well as for the illustrations of 'The Debt of Antoine' and other stories.

On March 25th, 1911, only a few weeks after Sloan wrote the February diary entry, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirt Waist Company in Lower Manhattan. Sloan's reaction to the event in his diary has a different tone from the entry he wrote about the house fire. This one is more journalistic and factual, despite expressing his political and personal opinions:

> Over 140 shirtwaist makers were burned to death in the Triangle Factory. These girls made the successful strike of last year! This sort of holocaustic celebration in honour of the fact that the Supreme Court of N.Y. yesterday declared the employers liability act of last session unconstitutional. It wasn't much of an act, but it was a move in the right direction.

He refers to the 'successful strike' of the victims, which took place between 22nd November 1909 and 15th February 1910 and during which thousands of women working in factories and sweatshops demanded better and safer working conditions, among other rights. According to Ellen Wiley Todd, the 'Triangle Company was one of the first against which workers struck, one of the first to stage a lockout against it employees [...] in the end, the Triangle Company successfully thwarted workers' attempts to

organize and improve working conditions',[230] resulting in the tragedy recounted by Sloan.

Both diary entries – the one from February and the one from March – present the incident of a building on fire; however, Sloan's reactions to the events are radically different. In the first instance, he expresses his reaction in writing by creating a well-articulated entry that portrays the incident and how it unfolds. In the 25 March entry, due to the political connections of the event itself, Sloan's style of writing is concise and to the point, characteristics that occur in journalistic writing. The brevity of this entry in relation to the actual scale of the incident may be related to the fact that he was still in shock while writing it. Moreover, because Sloan noted this event in his private journal, there is no reason to believe that he was interested at the time in making a public political statement about it. Sloan did, however, later make his thoughts on the incident public.

His second reaction to the Triangle Factory fire was expressed as a drawing called *The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire,*[231] published by *The New York Call* on 27th March 1911. The drawing manifests Sloan's opinions of the reasons for the factory workers' deaths. The composition is simple but effective in conveying Sloan's indignation and rage at the event. The triangle featured in the drawing, which is a reference to the factory, cites 'rent, profit, interest', elements that the artist regards as the causes of the tragedy.[232] The burnt corpse of a woman lying in the middle of the triangle but the word 'interest', is the clear representation of all of the victims, who

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[230] Ellen Wiley Todd, 'Photojournalism, Visual Culture, and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire', *Labor, Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, vol.2, n.2 (2005): 9-17, (9).
[231] Figure 3.2.
[232] See http://emuseum.delart.org:8080/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/items$0040:9974.

were mainly young women. The female figure is accompanied by two figures standing on either side of her. The skeleton on the left represents death is drawn by the word ‘rent’, while the fat man on the right by the word ‘profit’, represents the employer who benefits economically from this tragedy and becomes richer and fatter like a Gargantua. The Employers Liability Bill is pinned beside the victim with a knife from the courts – ‘whatever it says specifically in the drawing’ is written on its handle – to highlight the failure of the law to oblige employers to provide a safer work environment to their employees. Sloan’s public reaction to the event was intended to spur a political awakening in the people viewing the drawing. Sloan used his art to express his political view in the powerful image that is *The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire*, leaving the viewer in no doubt about the artist’s position on the matter. Although Sloan’s main message is conveyed by pictures, he accompanies these with words, providing the viewer with some clues to interpret the work in a similar way to the ‘word charade’ puzzles seen in Chapter 2. The presence of words in his works reinstates Sloan’s continuous investigation of the relationship between word and image through his art as well as his writings.

The chapter has so far established that Sloan used writing for a number of reasons, which included communication and entertainment for the recipient of his writing. It is crucial to divide Sloan’s writing into two categories: writing that was meant for the ‘public’, like his correspondence, and writing intended to be ‘private’, like his diaries. Lawrence Rosenwald defines diaries as texts that were written ‘in the first-person, in separate instalments, ideally on a daily basis, and ostensibly for the purposes of giving an account of the writer’s personal experience in a given day, which is not

necessarily addressed to someone other than the diarist'.[233] Sloan's diaries satisfy the criteria set by Rosenwald; however, the language and structure of some entries imply that Sloan is addressing an audience other than himself, as already noted about the 21st February 1911 entry.

Sloan's reason for keeping a diary was not only to engage in a continuous narrative and commitment with himself to write what happened in his life, but perhaps to share with future generations his reflections on his personal and artistic life. Alexis L. Boylan's paper 'The Curious Case of the Two Mrs. Sloans' introduces other two functions of Sloan's diary keeping: 'first, as a mechanism suggested by the physician treating Dolly to resolve some of Sloan's unhappiness, and second, as an opportunity for him to write complimentary things about Dolly because he knew she would read his diary'.[234] In other words, by writing down his unhappiness knowing that Dolly would read of this, he blurs the line between private and 'public' of certain entries of his diary, because those entries are no longer a personal outlet of Sloan's emotions but become a tool for letting Dolly know of how her alcoholism affected him. The purposes of Sloan's diaries highlighted by Boylan confirm Stephen Kagle's idea that 'the life of a diary is often born of tension, a disequilibrium in the life of its author, which needs to be resolved or held in check'.[235] Sloan's need to articulate his 'tension' and 'disequilibrium' created by Dolly's condition justify why some passages are more descriptive than others and adopt different structures and language, so going beyond the transcription of personal experience that characterises most diaries and journals. An example of this is the entry dated 14th January 1911.

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[233] Lawrence Rosenwald, *Emerson and the Art of the Diary* (New York, 1988), 5-6.
[234] Boylan, 29.
[235] Stephen E. Kagle, *American Diary Literature: 1620-1799*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 17

The structure of this entry suggests that this was meant to be read by someone else, perhaps Dolly; the events are divided into three parts, suggesting three different times of the day in which they occur.

> **Jan. 14, 1911** During the day I worked sporadically, as you might say, on the Collier Pirate drawings, but on the account of the engagement to go to Henri's in the evening, I could not settle down to work properly.
>
> Mrs. Ullman called on Dolly. She showed D. and me a legal paper: "Agreement" of separation. She said that Judge Frieseke, Ullman's friend, has told her it was all right. It was drawn up on paper with the name of an Italian lawyer, Coaca, I think. Ullman signed it, but she did not. I wondered why the notary (Goldsteen) had not had both sign. $10 per week is the sum she is to get, to be sent here (165 W. 23).
>
> After dinner, ham and spinach, we dressed and went to Henri's. Glackens and Mrs., Preston and Mrs. (who is looking thinner than when I saw her last, nearly a year ago I think), C. FitzGerarld, who is looking much better. He has hone to Ireland and returned since I last saw him. Johnson [sic], the fat editor of the Sunday World and his wife, replacing his first (they were divorced). She is rather thin and dark with pale skin. George Luks arrived alone with a 'jag' on. He was funny to start with, but as he drank more he became tiresome. Mrs. Luks telephoned but did not come down. Zinzig [sic] was there mysteriously. Stupid seems to be the word for him. The Robertses, he first; she came later. My old, old but well detested beast of a friend Wikefrund was there to spoil my evening. Had not seen him for some time.

The first paragraph of the entry is a brief note stating what the artist was attempting to do perhaps in the morning. The second paragraph of the text, possibly written in the afternoon, appears to be a reminder to himself and to the reader of what Mrs Ullman received from the lawyer. The third and final section contains the most engaging content of the entry. Sloan describes the events which happened in the evening at Henri's and mentions, 'my old, old but well detested beast of a friend Wikefrund was there to spoil my evening. Had not seen him for some time', referring to his drunken wife Dolly. This sentence can be interpreted as a clue to the purpose of the whole entry,

which is to remind Dolly of the events which happened that day, as Boylan suggests. Sloan's wife's drunken behaviour caused him embarrassment, which highlights the extent of the problem in Sloan's eyes. The artist states in the *Gist* that 'I never mean exactly what I say',[236] and it has been highlighted by Gail Gelburd that he often used the name Wikefrund, an anagram of 'drunken wife', to refer to Dolly. By using the anagram, Sloan purposely hides his wife's identity in case the diaries were to be read by someone unfamiliar with Sloan's private life, thus hiding the embarrassment of his wife's alcoholism. However, if the diary were read by someone who knew the Sloans' circumstances, for instance Dolly, Henri or anyone close to them, the reader would have understood who he was referring to and understood the impact that her alcoholism was having on his life. The third passage of the entry expresses Sloan's skill at hiding the truth behind a thin veil, showing his ability to address an issue by partially detaching himself from the personal through the act of writing, and becoming able to analyse the events and Dolly's problem through the lens of objectivity.

The entry of the following day lacks objectivity and show evident resentment towards Dolly's and other participant's drunken behaviour. He refers to the event as a 'stupid affair' (15th January 1911) and despises the 'crowd of supposedly intelligent people sitting about listening and giggling at the maunderings of a drunken fool, whose whole idea seems to be to lay claim in some remote way to Irish ancestors'. Although the entry mostly talks about the painter George Luks, it is possible to interpret this passage as Sloan expressing his anger and frustration towards his wife's drunken behaviour. These two entries demonstrate that 'diarists never have control over what comes next in their texts. They write with no way of knowing what will happen next in

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[236] Sloan, 7.

the plot, much less how it will end'.[237] Philippe Lejeune's statement is valid when applied to the entries just mentioned because, of course, Sloan cannot anticipate what will happen the following day. However, Sloan seems to be controlling what he writes in his texts, beginning from adding anagrams instead of his wife's name, and stressing certain behaviours like he does in the 14th and 15th January 1911 entries.

It is evident that Sloan, like any diarist, 'express[es] the feelings of the moment' and describes the event 'as he feels it was and not as more considered judgment might have more truly shown it to be'.[238] However, having the diary read by others, such as Dolly, pushes Sloan to construct the text and deprive it from certain elements of intimacy and immediacy that characterise diary literature, as he might have had to restrain himself to write his true thoughts, which can transform the text from a document telling the story of Sloan's life into fiction. Nevertheless, it is also arguable that the anagrams used by Sloan in this passage are a tool for him to restore part of the privacy he requires to express his real feelings and use the diary as a tool to resolve or keep under control the author's life disequilibrium as suggested by Kagle. However, this does not mean that Sloan's diaries are not relevant as historical documents, as they still provide historical information given first-hand by the author. Rachael Langford and Russell West state that diaries are:

> an uncertain genre uneasily balanced between literary and historical writing, between the spontaneity and reportage and reflectiveness of the crafted text, between selfhood and events, between subjectively and objectively, between the private and the public, constantly disturbs attempts to summarize its characteristics within formalised boundaries.[239]

[237] Philippe Lejeune, 'The Diary as "Antifiction"', *On Diary,* (2009) Published by University of Hawai'i.
[238] Kagle, 19.
[239] Rachael Langford and Russell West, 'Introduction: Diaries and Margins,' in *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms: Diaries in European Literature and History*, ed. Rachael Langford and Russell West (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 8.

Due to diary writing being confused about which one it is between literary and historical writing, diaries have encouraged wider debates on how one should interpret these texts. It is certain, however, that Sloan's writings are valuable sources of information about his life, and about the activities and struggles of an artist with an alcoholic wife.

Diaries tell one reality, which is the one written by the diarist; they could therefore be considered realist literature, because the reality captured by the diarist is a subjective 'repository of ego documents that simultaneously express and produce notions of self'.[240] As seen when analysing the entry above, his omissions of certain names and facts together with anagrams transform the text from a documentary of the artist's life into constructed fiction. It is likely that Sloan recognised that his diaries could have been published posthumously, thus reaching a different and wider audience than he originally intended. This realisation of the potential value of his own words possibly made him more conscious about the terms he used and people he addressed, resulting in more carefully structured passages and the omission of certain names from the entries.

So far, the chapter has established that Sloan's writing was another tool for the artist to test his ability to engage with literary forms. As seen in Chapter 2, Sloan's deep understanding in literary forms such as poetry and fiction allowed him to engage with the relationship between words and images. Sloan's engagement with such relationship, however, was not limited to translating into art the literature he read, as seen in the first

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[240] Jochen Hellbeck 'The Diary between Literature and History: A Historian's Critical Response', *The Russian Review*, Vol.63, n.4 (2004): 621-629 (623).

two chapters of the project. Sloan also used art when he wanted to communicate his opinion in a public forum, as with the Triangle Factory incident. It is possible that in this instance he believed that his art would be more effective than words, as he could count on his artistic skills and minimal but effective words to provide the viewer with a powerful message that expressed his opinion regarding the event. However, Sloan did not revert to art just to convey his own political views. He includes sketches and drawings in much of his personal correspondence to Henri and in some pages of his diary as a means to complement the text.

In *Revolutionaries of Realism*, Perlman includes many letters from both Henri and Sloan that incorporate sketches and drawings by the two artists to each other. These include Sloan's drawings of his mother's furniture, Henri's sketches of traditional Dutch clothing, and a satirical sketch by Sloan of Henri completing a portrait of the mayor of Halifax, to name a few examples.[241] The presence of the sketches and drawings varies depending on the length and content of the letter, and they also seem to occur when perhaps the artists felt that an illustration could have added aesthetic or humorous value to the correspondence.

A further example of Sloan's experimentation and playfulness with words and images can be appreciated in an undated letter from June 1906,[242] which presents two calligrams.[243] As defined by the best-known author of this form of poetry, Guillaume Apollinaire, calligrams are 'une idealisation de la poésie verslibriste et un precision typographique à l'époque où la typographie termine brillament sa carrière, à l'aurore

[241] See Perlman 134-6, 148, 168.
[242] Ibid., 122-123.
[243] The calligrams are reproduced in Figure 3.3 and 3.4.

des moyens nouveaux de reproduction que sont le cinema et le phonographe'.[244] In other words, calligrams are poems in which the visual arrangement of the words creates an image that can bear a metaphorical or metonymical meaning in relation to the words of the poem itself. Literary scholars like Roger Little and Willard Bohn recognise the link between Apollinaire's calligrams and cubism, since they both challenge conventional structures of poetry and perspective. It is also to note that both Sloan and Apollinaire were eclectic individuals and voracious readers[245] who expressed an interest in the union of words and their visual representation. While Apollinaire did not invent the calligram, as there are earlier examples of such poems dating from the 15th century – Stephen Hawes' 'A Pair of Wings' from around 1500 and Lewis Carroll's 'A Mouse Tail' in his manuscript *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* are some examples[246] – he did attempt 'to establish the parameters of his art by exposing the foundation of the creative process'.[247] Bohn's paper 'Metaphor and Metonymy in Apollinaire's Calligrams' illustrates the principles for which Apollinaire's works are unique, and recognises the complexity behind the construction of these picture-poems. Sloan's calligrams, 'Recto' and 'Verso', are not as complex as Apollinaire's works, but they still exhibit the principle of arranging words to create an image.

Sloan's calligrams are humorous notes that the artist wrote to his friend Henri to read during his naval trip from Boston to Gibraltar following a letter that Henri wrote in June 1906 about his sea-sickness.[248] The arrangement of words creates a spiral; both notes begin from the outer side of the shape, and the words work their way inwards,

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[244] Letter to André Billy, 29 July 1918, quoted in Roger Little, 'The Shaping of Modern French Poetry: Visual Lyricism', *Roger NP Reviews,* vol.19, n.1 (1992): 58-60 (58).
[245] Little, 58.
[246] Created c.ca 1862-64.
[247] Bohn, 166.
[248] Perlman, XXI.

becoming increasingly challenging to read. In both notes Sloan mentions Henri's seasickness, which makes the content of the picture-poems in itself rather amusing since he suggests that Henri read the first calligram 'twice after each meal',[249] which would of course cause dizziness and nausea. Sloan's entertaining notes incorporate the intricate 'network of action, reaction, and interaction'[250] identified by Bohn. Sloan's calligrams aim to make Henri feel dizzy and nauseous while reading. To read the poems, the reader has to turn the page clockwise while reading, which not only produces the nauseous reaction, but emphasises the interaction that Henri has with the text.

Sloan's calligrams can be compared with Apollinaire's *Jeunes Filles à Chapullepec* because they have a similar shape. However, the striking difference between them is that Sloan's sequence of words is more conventional, despite being arranged as a spiral, because the whole text follows one line. Apollinaire's, however, challenges the reader in deciphering each word within the design. Sloan's calligram 'Recto'[251] is more challenging to interpret for the reader than 'Verso'[252]. The outlines of both calligrams appear to be the same size; however, in 'Recto' there are more words, which make the spiral more compact and consequently more difficult to read. In 'Verso', however, the legibility is improved because there are fewer words in the poem, allowing more space between each loop of the spiral. While Sloan created calligrams for entertainment, both his own and Henri's, what is most important about these two examples is the further proof of Sloan's involvement in exploring and experimenting

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[249] Ibid., 122.
[250] Bohn, 166.
[251] Figure 3.3.
[252] Figure 3.4.

with the relationship between image and word and creating something novel and avant-garde that allowed him to explore this relationship from a different perspective.

Another example of Sloan's letter-illustrations is from a letter written on November 13th, 1912, in which Sloan invites Henri to Greenwich Village to visit him the following day. According to Perlman, Henri 'spent the summer of 1912 with an art class in Spain and returned to New York in October, when he was welcomed to Sloan's new studio at 35 Sixth Avenue'[253] with this letter drawing. The illustration presents part of Greenwich Village's skyline, including a skyscraper that looks like the Flatiron Building and from which a caricature of Sloan with binoculars is observing Dolly, below, waiving a handkerchief at him. The illustration includes two pieces of writing labelling parts of the drawing; one 'home smallest' to indicate his home is located, and 'studio largest house in Greenwich' which aims to direct Henri for his visit. As Heather Campbell Coyle and Joyce K. Schiller highlight in their book *John Sloan's New York*, the caricature of himself in the 'flat-iron' building 'suggests a new level of comfort in the city and his resident status'.[254] The comfort conveyed from this illustration contrasts with the tone of Sloan's letter to Henri dated 30th October 1898 analysed previously, in which Sloan expressed his torment about living in New York. As noted by art critic Charles Wisner Barrel, by 1909 Sloan 'has made his home in the heart of New York City […] New York to him is America crystallized and from his roof or studio window he can watch the pageant of humanity stream by in all its million phases'.[255] As Barrel suggests, Sloan was finding his place in New York, and the drawing in his letter

[253] Perlman, 213 and Figure 3.5.
[254] Ed. Heather Campbell Coyle, Joyce K. Schiller, John Sloan, *John Sloan's New York*, (New Haven and London: Delaware Art Museum in collaboration with Yale University Press, 2007), 108.
[255] Charles Wisner Barrel, 'The Real Drama of the Slums as Told in John Sloan's Etchings', *Craftsman* (1909): 559-65 (564).

highlights a newfound peace and artistic fulfilment that contrasts with the anxiety expressed in the 1898 letter. By 1912, Sloan had reached a higher level of fulfilment and was an established illustrator, but most importantly he had built a network of acquaintances and friendships, which included John Butler Yeats, that stimulated him artistically and intellectually and helped him to settle in in New York. The note in the 13th November 1912 letter does not carry any particular literary importance, and the sketch is simple but effective. However, the note is worth mentioning because it is further evidence of the use that Sloan makes of art. In this instance, he is using art as a tool that complements his words, as if he could express himself better with sketches and drawings rather than with words. He chose to provide Henri with a graphic explanation of where his new studio was located and used the relationship between word and image to convey his message, and perhaps to add an element of fun to a note that would have been otherwise too plain for the artist.

The example just given confirms the points raised in this chapter, because his art updates the reader, or viewer on his emotions and new-found happiness of living in New York, the chapter overall demonstrates how Sloan's writing can be used as a toll for the reader to get to know the artist beyond his art persona. This chapter has demonstrated both the literary and sociological value of Sloan's writing, which showcases his talent for creative writing while bringing the reader closer to the artist by providing insight into his life and his intellectual circle in New York at a time of great change. It must be acknowledged that the writings analysed in this chapter provide the reader only with Sloan's reality, which does not account for the point of view of the people mentioned in his writings. To create a fuller and more complete reality of the events and challenges portrayed by Sloan in his diaries and correspondence, researchers

should consider the diaries and correspondence of Henri and other Ashcanners and compare the realities that they present. Since this research project focuses on John Sloan, the aim of this chapter has been to present his writings and introduce how these can be used as a tool to interpret and better understand the meaning of his art. This final section of this thesis proves that Sloan's understanding of literature goes beyond a simple appreciation for literature, and resulted in his ability to play and experiment with words in a similar way that he does with art.

Conclusion.

The thesis offers a different and additional point of view to the existing literature on John Sloan because it demonstrates how both his art works and his writings have been influenced by the literature he read. The analyses I present throughout this thesis can be used to strengthen the arguments presented by scholars, and also provide additional examples that contribute to the research presented by Rebecca Zurier, Michael Lobel and John Fagg. This research falls under the less explored field that sees the disciplines of art and literature being connected while complementing each other. Sloan, as underlined in my thesis, was aware of this connection between the two disciplines and he reproduced it in his art.

The overall conclusion to draw on from this research is that literature has a significant influence in Sloan's personal life and artistic career, an influence that becomes evident in his art and writing. I have presented examples of Sloan's artistic and written works highlighting how the artist himself engaged with the relationship between word and image. I have highlighted this connection in each chapter; in the first chapter, I demonstrate how Sloan incorporated in his art elements of the literature of Émile Zola and Walt Whitman – already acknowledged by scholars – as well as George Moore, John Ruskin and Joseph Conrad – additional readings that I have identified through Sloan's diaries. Once I have highlighted these literary connections, I investigated Sloan's role as illustrator of short stories and poetry in the second chapter, showing how the artist became a visual interpreter of the texts he read under commission. Finally, in the third chapter I analysed Sloan's own diaries and correspondence highlighting how Sloan's writing was influenced by the literature he read. With the final chapter of the thesis I aim to contributing to the current literature on Sloan with the hope that his

diaries and correspondence can be considered for an in-depth analysis to present how the literature he read influenced his writing as well as his art.

By presenting the significant influence that European literature played on Sloan's art, it is possible to argue that Sloan was not as much as a 'local' artist as he is portrayed by scholars. Sloan has often been regarded as a local artist due to the focus of his art being the depiction of the neighborhoods and people of Chelsea and Greenwich Village in New York. However, in depicting these neighborhoods, Sloan adopts the techniques and ideas developed by European artists and intellectuals, such as Zola's naturalist representations of the poor and John Ruskin's theories on colours. Therefore, even though Sloan depicted American subjects, he did so while celebrating and promoting European literature. The research therefore highlights that although Sloan was seeking for his own individuality as an American artist by portraying American subjects, he relies on the European tradition to convey domestic subjects. An example that I give to demonstrate this is my analysis of the painting *Spring Planting: Greenwich Village* (1913). In this painting, Sloan depicts the bohemian and colourful area of Manhattan in a manner that displays elements of Ruskin's *Elements of Colours* that he read the year before he painted *Spring Planting*.

As I discuss in the three chapters of the thesis, Ruskin was not the only literary influence that Sloan had during his artistic career. Each book, essay or poem he read contributed to his development as an artist. Reading all kinds of literature made Sloan more responsive and open to international and intellectual influences, which made him stand out from the other members of the Ashcan School. His art techniques and approach to on-the-spot drawing was different to those that characterised The Eight. His friend Henri often mocked Sloan by saying that his surname was 'the past participle of

“Slow”’[256] because he took his time to study and construct the composition of his drawings, rather than adopting Henri’s approach of creating his art on the spot. Illustrating literature provided Sloan with a more reflective and calculated approach to composing his art, because he was required to provide an interpretation of the reality he saw and translated this into art. Moreover, having to read carefully to capture the message of the author so that he could include it in the illustrations taught Sloan to absorb what he read, which resulted in him gaining a deep understanding of literature. As a result of this depth in understanding, he began to experiment with literary forms in both his writing and art works.

To conclude, the thesis has presented other perspectives to John Sloan the artist and I have more examples to provide in order to reinstate the points made in each chapter. This research can be expanded further if one explores, perhaps as a Doctor of Philosophy project, the similarities and differences between Sloan’s work and George Cruikshank, the illustrator of Charles Dickens’ works. I would be interested in exploring the parallel between the two artists because one could analyse the artistic techniques adopted by both Sloan and Cruikshank when depicting the subjects of the texts they illustrate – poor people in a harsh environment – while providing an analysis of the social and literary scene of Victorian England and early 1900s New York.

[256] Brooks Van Wyck, *John Sloan: A Painter’s Life* (New York: Dutton, 1955), 20.

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Appendix 2 – Sloan's letter to Henri dated 8th December 1895.

806 Walnut St

Phila. Dec 8 1895

Dear Henri: - Dear "Degenerate Type": -

There – this letter is started at last Ive been waiting and hoping for some subject matter for a letter for weeks but as nothing occurs now, Ive plunged into ink and will take my chance on some inspiration

Oh my! its quiet. I wish it were possible for me to follow your footsteps to Paris and accept the "shake down" you so kindly offer As for the cold to cure I guess I could contract that all right and of course should not flinch at the "fine" and curaço

I have one wheel out of the rut, or at least into a shallower rut. I have left the Inquirer and cast my fortunes with Preston, "Dinkbots," Davis, Ruyl, Crane, Howes and Company Mark makers and pen pushers; Of-fice 5th floor Press Building.

I am in better company and I am getting more money for which Allah be thanked and may he speed the day when I shall quit the newspaper business entirely.

Tuesday nights are getting "curiouser and curiouser." They lack peaceful contemplativeness and intellectual tone I'm afraid; You know they showed symptoms of this kind of degeneration even before you left and of course when you – well we wont be complimentary –

The matter of a Tuesday night these days is something after this wise: -

> Scene 806 Walnut St 4th floor time Tuesday 8.30 P.M. Darkened studio save for the reflected glare from Gilmores over the way. Enter John Sloan followed up steps by Kellys ghost (you know the sound) gropes way across the room to the old black shelf, finds match after much fumbling among bric a brac, turns on gas, attempts to strike match, fails once, more fails, curses, (Match strikes only on box) Ghost laughs as Sloan seeks box, at last finds it and gas islit. S. lights pipe, fixes stove, wanders aimlessly about room, wishes he was more industrious, lights another pipe load, [ditto marks under "wanders aimlessly about room"] etc

Exit Ghost

Enter Preston, greetings, both light pipes, wander [ditto marks under "aimlessly about room"] wish they were hard workers, start to have an edifying conversation on the benefits of thinking much and working little. (Noise Below as though a herd of cattle were being driven up stairs) Enter "Ebby" Shinn and "Dinkbots," Sr. The latter is usually sober perhaps. Enter Howes, of Boston, bearing package of cheese   Enter Davis, bearing loaves of bread (On the night in evidence, the first time since you left enter) Redfield, horticulturalist, Pessimist, Painter and Poker fiend "star" seller at the recent Art Club exhibition   he sold a picture perhaps he has written the tidings to you ere this "well any way"

Poker game starts at once between Reddy Sloan and Dink distant mutterings of "Welsh Rarebit" "Come on Dink" Start her up "Drop that game" etc. Mutterings reach thunder pitch and as Dink is "in" 25 cents he quits and starts the Rarebit – Dink mounted on stepladder is captain and "Centre" the rest of the team are stationed at the 35 yeard line armed with plates and burned vread in slices (The Gamblers are to be euch'red out of their rarebit by football strategy)   The cheese begins to simmer in the frying pan which Dink holds over the gas burner. "4" – "11" – "2" – "8" – "16" – "24" – "15" – "**10**" shouts Captain Luks the cook and the solid phalanx of hungry men come plunging doen on the Rarebit (The Gamblers keep on playing)   The cheesy greasy mass is splashed over everything but every one gets some share (excepting the Gamblers) who however manage to secure a portion of a portion through earnest pleading with one who has more than he can eat) "Wheres the whiskey?" S. produces ½ pint another is sent for a punch is brewed and tehn the regular weekly "Orchestra" tunes up: Luks is past master of the Conch shell bass horn, "Chimmy" Preston thrums the broken guitar, two tin plates furnish Shinn with cymbals, Davis plays the ocarina and groaning in a bottle while passing an umbrella across the front of an easel make a bass viol accompaniment to Sloans manner of thinking. All visitors are armed with other strange noise making devices. Hell Howls! The "Houla Houla" Dance is played and Sloan dons a wig and ballet skirt and does the Danse du Ventre   Luks imitates every living man, beast, bird, and fiend, and winds up with a long side splitting discourse on – Oh well you have met him. (The Gamblers resume playing)   Train time comes for "Chimmy" Preston and others. none but the Gamblers are left. The game goes on. At last it's over. S. is star looser, of course (not for very much this night however and thi is really the first game since you left – You see Redy has not been on hand) All exit   Sloan puts out gas and exits   Enter Kellys dear olf Ghost (Sings)

One of them still am I
Never to really die

So long as Tuesday night shall last.
Singing and quaffing beer,
Little they think I'm here
Seeking for the comrades of the past
May Fortune each befriend
And guide them to the end
And Merry men and good men may they be
When friends of friends are met
Let no ones friend forget
To smoke a pipe and drain a glass for me
(Exit Ghost)

The footsteps on the stairs cease, the front door bangs shut, silence, - gloom, curtain)

O Say: how about those photographs you were to pick up for me in Paris, guess you've forgotten to send them haven't you

I have asked "St Elmo" about Moods he says he sent two copies addressed to you c/o Morgan Harjes Et Cie one for you and one for Glack.

By the way, I guess this number (our number) is the last of "Moods"

Lewis has kind o' droped out he's hare brained you know

I sent your Blond Portrait to Pittsburgh and Rudy tells me it is well placed perhaps you have received a check for it for ought I know I have not heard whether the exhibition is over or Not, at any rate the cat has not "came back" to me.

We are thinking of getting up a Variety Bill for Christmas jamboree at Studio.

There has been a Swedish exhibition at the Academy work is very interesting but peculiar Zorn's work is awfully clever but seems thin, lacks dignity, too damnly clever the work looks too easy for him, where work is so easily done thought should be harder, it seems to me. (of course I speak only of what I have seen)

There has been a "Womans Edition of the Press" Sister made a poster for it of course under the eagle eye of The Art Editor Miss Sartain all my sister's best sketches for posters were turned down and the worst perhaps of her sketches selected the old lady is certainly a big-bear in a case like this.

I wish I would wind up this letter by jumping in and sealing myself up but Im afraid I cant afford the stamps so Ill send my best Christmas wishes to Henri & Glackens and back them up with remembrances from Preston Davis Luks

Shinn and the rest of the true Believers   Dont get even by waiting long before you let <u>me</u> hear from <u>you</u> both

Your each ones friends

John Sloan

Appendix 3 – Sloan's letter to Henri dated 30th October 1898.

Philadelphia Oct 30 – '98

To Robert Henri in Paris:

Dear Henri: --

Perhaps old man some explanation of the date line at the top of this page is first in order – For I am back in Philadelphia and again on the Press – and once more occupy the old "806" studio where you may yet hope to see me in old age surrounded by books and stage properties dating back as far as The "Widow Cloonan's Cruse"

But I dont think that I have been unable to hold my opinion in the Metropolis or that I have returned once more to sleep the sleep of the Philadelphian I have returned by my own wish – and under my own steam – to the Press The Town and the Studio in order to be worked under more pressure. Of course a New Yorker might not believe it but it is a fact – A newspaper artstist on the Herald the Greatest Paper in the World dont know what work is compared to the artist on the "Press" of Philadelphia. The reason is easily given. The Herald has 18 men on its regular staff (all good men and "thorough") It has also 10 men at least in the outside. The Herald likes work "tickled up" & "finished" The artist is expected to do so and is given time to do so. The Press has 9 men – 5 of them only are equals in quality of work (from a newspaper standpoint) to the Herald staff The Press can not give a man the time to "finish" even tho' the editors may wish to see Herald work in the "Press". Now if Sloan must do newspaper work is he not better off where he is the big frog in the little puddle and where he dare not take the time necessary to turn out slick newspaper work I think so – and as the Press with much groaning came up to $45 per ad as $45 here is equal to $65 in New York I feel quite well satisfied with the change I have learned a great deal in the 3 moths of New York and somehow I feel differently from my old rusty self This may be a delusion however At any rate I'll give myself a trial and see whether I am changed at the end of, say a year.

I feel more like an artist in Philadelphia, even tho' the town is so ugly compared to N.Y.

And already I have had a chance to spread myself in a full page drawing for the Sunday Press. Of course my work will be "under a bushel" here in Philadelphia The world won't know what it misses in not seeing the Press But on the other hand my bad efforts wont be seen – majority sways –

I hope you will not feel disappointed in hearing of my return – you know your letter says "It has always done me good to come over here and it has always done me good to go back again" – I agree with you perfectly; even the 3 months have done me good and I'm back to find out whether the last part of your statement holds good for me.

Jimmy Preston has dropped newspaper work and is doing work for The Saturday Evening Post, a weekly magazine run by the Ladies Home Journal Publishers he gets children stories to do and seems to be much more in his proper element

Philadelphia has just pulled thro' a Peace Jubilee three days of Naval, Military and Civic parades and general foolishness Crowds in town, and after 12 oclock at night no one sober a great Court of Honor on Broad street between Chest. & Walnut Sts which looked pretty fine altho

not perfect design. I will see if I can get a print of a photo which Davis tool at <u>night</u> showing the Illuminations   <u>Poor</u> old William on the Tower has had a circle of electric lights on his had all week as well as the lights which were around his feet when you saw him last.

Postscript after carrying the above in my pocket for 3 weeks.

Nov. 20   Well I still think the change was all right   I have been painting 2 or 3 mornings a week in a class which we ("The Press Gang") have started at the studio and am making some progress (I think)   Miss your criticism tho'. Have seen a couple of drawings from Ruyl sent to the Press and in the last one I think there is considerable improvement in his work. Remember me to him of you see him   tell him to write if he gets a chance

The old 806 is looking in better trip than it has for years   Joe and I have thrown out lots of stuff and it looks like a work room. Suppose I'll see something of yours at the Academy this Ex.?

My regards to Mrs Henri and best wishes for you and your work

Sincerely your friend

Sloan.