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Reading American Art

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15 John Sloan's Images of Working-Class Women: A Case Study of the Roles and Interrelationships of Politics, Personality, and Patrons in the Development of Sloan's Art, 1905–16

Patricia Hills

John Sloan (1871–1951) was an early twentieth-century realist painter who embraced the principles of socialism and placed his artistic talents at the service of those beliefs. Hence, his graphic contributions to the radical socialist monthly the *Masses*, and his work as art editor, made it one of the most extraordinary publications of the pre–World War I period. But as a painter Sloan shied from political or social comment. Instead, the paintings celebrate the leisure moments of the working classes, particularly women, in such paintings as *The Picnic Grounds* of 1906–07 (fig. 15.1) and *Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair* of 1912 (Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts). Sloan himself later insisted that these paintings were done with "sympathy but no social consciousness": "I was never interested in putting propaganda into my paintings, so it annoys me when art historians try to interpret my city life pictures as 'socially conscious.' I saw the everyday life of the people, and on the whole I picked out bits of joy in human life for my subject matter."[1]

It is the contradiction between these attitudes and actions that I wish to explore: on the one hand, his belief that cartoons can be politically persuasive, and on the other, his resistance to political overtones in his paintings. To do this means reconstructing Sloan's life in terms of his art, his politics, his personal psychology, and, particularly, his relationship to a key patron, John Quinn. Sloan was not alone in his attitudes. Indeed, in many ways he provides a case study of a member of the radical but wavering intelligentsia, torn between bourgeois notions of art and a socialist conception of what art must be in the decade before the United States entered World War I.

Figure 15.1 John Sloan, *The Picnic Grounds*, 1906–7. Oil on canvas, 24 × 36 inches. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase.

In April 1904 John Sloan moved from Philadelphia to New York with his wife, Dolly. He was the last to arrive of the small, close-knit group of artist-reporters inspired and encouraged to take up painting by Robert Henri in the 1890s. Henri had come to New York in 1900 and continued his active role as a teacher. The younger men—Everett Shinn, George Luks, and William Glackens, as well as Sloan—had been squeezed out of their jobs as newspaper artists in Philadelphia because of developments in printing technology, as photographs replaced drawings as illustrations for news stories. In New York, the center of the magazine publishing industry, these experienced draftsmen and cartoonists found many opportunities for free-lance assignments. Continuing their naturalist, reportorial styles in their magazine illustrations, the four artists all became well known to art editors as specialists in depicting the picturesque charm of city life, specifically the life of the ethnic working classes.[2]

Indeed, the century's first decade was witnessing a national preoccupation with the working classes and particularly with the immigrants, by then a recognized force in shifting sociological patterns and economic structures. For industrialists this group formed a pool of cheap labor. To conservatives they posed a threat to "Anglo-Saxon" values. To reformers they lived as the squalid victims of an inhumane system that offered neither civil liberties nor social justice. To the group of artists around Henri they represented a new spirit that would infuse American life with fresh vitality.

Reviewing the magazines of the period, Frank Luther Mott concluded that a high point was reached in 1905–07, when reporters, writers, and social workers were most actively crusading against injustice, political corruption, and economic chicanery.[3] They actively constituted a "reform movement," which served as more than background for Sloan and his friends, because the very same popular magazines that ran articles by the "muckrakers" also hired the young realists as illustrators. Concern about the social unrest could be found even in art journals of the time. In 1907, when immigrations reached a peak of more than 1.25 million and the panic of that year plunged the country into a severe depression, Gustav Stickley, the designer and editor of *The Craftsman*, declared in an editorial: "Social unrest is, without question, the distinguishing characteristic of this age. Especially is this true in America, where greed and arrogance on the one hand and class hatred and jealousy on the other seem to have arrayed the people into two great factions, represented by the terms Capital and Labor. The prevailing feeling is that a relatively small class has possessed itself of the land and its treasures: that a few great corporations, mostly composed of the same men, control the main arteries of the nation's industry and commerce."[4]

Realism in art and literature has flourished in the past century whenever writers, artists, and intellectuals have articulated such views and demanded an art relevant to the mood of social advocacy. The art critic Charles Caffin, one more voice of 1907, in his important survey *The Story of American Art*, discussed the young followers of Henri in the context of changing attitudes about what constitutes "beauty." Referring to the man of the slums as "morally as well as physically deteriorated, offensive alike to our senses and our conscience," Caffin noted that nevertheless the Salvation Army responded to him, as did the artists.[5] In fact, what was formerly considered "ugly" might contain more truth about life than genteel subject matter: "The foregoing analysis of the place of so-called ugliness in art has been suggested by the effort of a few of our younger painters to shake themselves free from the fetters of prettiness and sentimentality in which much American art is confined. They are men who are interested in life as well as art, and who use the one to interpret the other. One of these is John Sloan."[6]

Caffin, who had interviewed Sloan at length while he was writing his book, focused on Sloan as the quintessential realist. He described Sloan's attraction to the "'passing show' of shops and streets, overhead and surface traffic, and the moving throngs of people, smart and squalid, sad and merry—a phantasmagoria of changing colour, form, and action. Out of the multiplied features of the scene, by eliminating some and emphasizing others, he produces a synthesis of effect, in which confusion has disappeared, but the suggestion of vivid actuality

remains. . . . It is the humanity of the scene, as well as its pictorial suggestions, that interests him. Not, however, in the way of telling a definite story, but by inference and suggestion."[7]

The paintings to which Caffin referred were genre scenes of working-class life in which figures were treated sympathetically, without condescension. In particular, Sloan celebrated the joyousness and camaraderie of women—sometimes shown singly, but usually represented in pairs or in groups, as in *Spring Planting* of 1913 (private collection) or *Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair.* In the company of men, Sloan's women function as the principal actors, engaging men in playful activities, as for example, in *The Picnic Grounds,* a scene he had observed in Bayonne, New Jersey, in 1906, and in *South Beach Bathers* of 1908 (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis).

Robert Henri also praised Sloan's special humanity and enthusiasm about the life around him in a 1910 article about the Exhibition of Independent Artists: "The artists who produce the most satisfactory art are in my mind those who are absorbed in the civilization in which they are living . . . John Sloan, with his demands for the rights of man, and his love of the people; his keen observation of the people's folly, his knowledge of their virtues and his surpassing interest in all things."[8]

Indeed, Sloan's "demand for the rights of man and his love of the people" drew him—alone of the group—into the politics of organized socialism. Sloan joined the Socialist Party in 1909; read party literature and novels, plays, and essays with socialist themes; attended lectures by Eugene Victor Debs, as well as by the anarchist Emma Goldman; participated in strike meetings with his wife; and ran for public office on the Socialist ticket. And from 1909 through 1916 he contributed numerous political illustrations and cartoons to socialist magazines and causes, culminating in his work for the *Masses* from 1912 to 1916.[9]

But given Sloan's social awareness and political involvement, why did he shy away from overt comment in his paintings? Why did he separate his painting from his cartoons? For in those years when he was associated with the Socialist Party and worked closely with his outspoken, radical colleagues on the *Masses,* such as Max Eastman, Art Young, and John Reed, there were encouragement and even demands upon him to forge a partisan painting in the same spirit as his acerbic cartoons. There were demands, that is, for him to be in the avant garde of the working-class movement.[10]

The consensus so far has been that Sloan did not produce a radical painting concerned with the class struggle and critical of capitalism because he was humanitarian and compassionate, a reformer rather than a revolutionary and, perhaps, politically naive. As far as it goes, the consensus view is true, and Sloan, by 1916, could have been so described. But the consensus view masks what must have been a considerable struggle within Sloan to resolve the seeming contradictions during the period of his greatest political involvement, from 1909 to 1916, because Sloan's stance for a time was more radical than any reformer's and politics was the primary preoccupation of his life. Concretely, he was trying to reconcile the demands of the working class and socialism, on the one hand, with the demands of tradition, the academy, and a thoroughly bourgeois (at times even bohemian) art establishment, on the other hand.[11]

At the time, the antagonism between labor and capital was sharp and active, and Sloan was, like many intellectuals and artists of his time, caught up in the swell of prewar working-class consciousness and revolutionary enthusiasm. But he was also influenced by counterforces, which preached acceptance of the status quo or, at best, a few reforms. In terms of painting, that meant adhering to the traditional concerns of nonpartisan, "universal" art.

To press on, to attempt to find a method that would be more useful in terms of our understanding of Sloan, his art, and his times, we should approach Sloan as a case study of a political artist. We must look at his life as a process developing under a set of contradictions manifested in the personal, aesthetic, and political aspects of the whole man. In so doing we need to subject each to a dialectical analysis that sorts out the primary from the secondary aspects of his personal life, his art, and his milieu, each characterized by a particular kind of conflict, in order to gain insight into their resolution.

The questions might then be framed as follows: Why does an artist veer from a course in which politics is primary to one in which it becomes secondary and then seems to fade altogether? At the time when his politics seems to be primary, how does it affect his art, and, conversely, how does the art affect his politics? How does his personal character affect them both? And, not least, what is the content or the message of his art?

One can assume that Sloan was ready to be introduced to socialism long before he first mentioned it in the Diary, which he began in January 1906 and kept faithfully through 1911, with sporadic entries for 1912 and 1913.[12] Sloan began the Diary on the recommendation of Dr. Collier Bower, a physician treating Dolly. The Diary was meant to be an outlet for Sloan's periods of worry and despondence, and also to bolster Dolly's ego, for both Sloan and Bower knew that Dolly would read the Diary, responding to favorable references to herself.[13] To us, the Diary is an invaluable primary source, for it chronicles Sloan's daily activities: his working habits, his relations with magazine editors, his fees for his illustrations, his paintings in progress, his conversations with friends, his reading and evenings at the popular theater, the state of his wife's health, their trips and vacations, and his thoughts on art, the art world, and politics.

The early years of the Diary entries are filled with notes about Sloan's walks in New York City and his impressions of working-class city people. His entry for February 13, 1906, suggests the flavor of his impressions: "Walked through the streets of the East Side. Saw a boy spit on a passing hearse, a shabby old horse. Doorways of tenement houses, grimy and greasy door frames looking as though huge hogs covered with filth had worn the paint away and replaced it with matted dirt in going in and out. Healthy faced children, solid-legged, rich full color to their hair. Happiness rather than misery in the whole life. Fifth Avenue faces are unhappy in comparison."

The working classes were to Sloan, as they were to Henri, the source of knowledge of life. After reading part of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, he noted on January 16, 1908, "Thinking how necessary it is for an artist of any creative story to go among common people—not waste his time among his fellows, for it must be from the other class—not creators, nor Bohemians nor dilettantes[—]that he will get his knowledge of life." Such remarks indicate a person in sympathy with the daily tasks of workers.

Sloan first mentioned "socialism" in his Diary on November 16, 1908, noting that a friend had voted on the Socialist ticket in the presidential elections of that year. On December 7, he had a long conversation on the subject with Charles Wisner Barrell, who had just written an article on Sloan's etchings for the *Craftsman*. Sloan confessed to the Diary, "He has become a Socialist and talked with me on the subject—wants me to attend a Sunday meeting in Jersey City some time. It sounds well to me. I believe my next vote will go to their candidates."

In January and again in April 1909 he had further talks with Barrell and others, recording his enthusiasms as well as reservations—remarks understandable for someone just examining new ideas. After a session of talk with Barrell on April 15, he declared: "I can't help feeling that the movement is right in the main," adding, "I am rather more interested in the human beings themselves than in the schemes for betterment. In fact, I rather wonder if they will be so interesting when they are all comfortable and happy." These words indicate an underlying romanticization of poverty, an attitude shared at the time with the other realist artists.

In May 1909 he agreed to the sale of his etchings as part of a fundraising event for the Rand School. That same month he met Herman Bloch, the art writer for the socialist daily newspaper the *New York Call*, and informed him that he "had no intention of working for any Socialist object in my etchings and paintings." This statement, made on May 5, 1909, that the etchings and paintings were not to be touched by political concerns, was a declaration he would keep inviolate. Nor, in the years to come, would pressures from his friends in the Socialist Party change his mind on this point. But by consciously splitting his art into two categories—paintings and etchings on the one hand and illustration on the other—he initiated a dialectical struggle that would be waged within himself, that would affect his relationships with his socialist colleagues, and that would ultimately spell the direction of his art.

Because Sloan did feel that his illustrational gifts could be put to use for the socialist cause, he was soon sending voluntarily political cartoons to the *Call*. They first appeared on August 23, with the signature "Josh Nolan," Sloan's anagram in his first year of political cartooning.

Sloan also investigated socialism in his reading. An avid reader, Sloan noted books bought and read in his Diary. That May he subscribed to Traubel's *Conservator* and read Oscar Wilde's *Soul of Man Under Socialism*, as well as the 1908 platform of the Socialist Party. In response to the latter, he wrote on May 21, 1909: "Can't understand why the workers of the country were so disinterested or intimidated as not to vote en masse for these principles."

The Diary entries for the remainder of 1909 indicate Sloan's growing political awareness. Examples are numerous, but a few important points are in order:

On May 29, 1909, he argued vigorously against the antiworker sentiments of his friend Potts: "He and I argued on the Social problems of the day! He seems to think what's the use of trying to do anything to better the workers—they are not worth it. The rich have the money because they have the brains to get it—the others haven't the brains so they must pay the penalty. I feel that if 5,000 people in this city are wealthy and content and two million are unhappy, something is wrong."

Many of the entries indicate that his former world view is in struggle with newer, egalitarian ideas. On June 9, 1909, he pondered whether hierarchical differences existed between manual and mental labor: "Will the great mass of the workers, when they find the power of the united vote, stand for differences in the rewards between their ordinary labor and mental labor? Of course all will have every necessary [sic] to existence, and comfort—but should not the higher faculties have some higher reward? Or is this feeling in me, only a surviving view of the present upper class feeling?"

Sloan had become antimilitarist at the time of the Spanish-American War,[14] but his convictions against war at this time were clearly political, and he argued in his Diary on June 12, 1909, that modern wars are made by capitalists with expansionist ambitions: "I am too old or too much convinced of the Socialist antimilitary principle for this highly impossible tale [Edward Everett Hale's *The Man Without a Country*] to move me to a love of the plutocracy's government. Why should the workers fight each other in order to preserve or expand or destroy the trade relations in which they have no real interest? Suppose we agree

to call this country a province of England or France or Germany? Does it make any difference to me? or to any laboring man?" And again, commenting on a parade of September 30: "Parades like this make the 'patriotism' which furnishes soldiers, workers to kill the workers that capital may hold its upper hand."

Throughout the fall of 1909 he took many opportunities to argue vigorously with friends and strangers on behalf of socialist precepts. By December 19 he confided to the Diary: "I think . . . that I have passed the feverish stage and that it has now amalgamated with my make up. I feel much more quiet and in a sense happier minded." On December 29, 1909, Dolly and Sloan filled out forms to join the Socialist Party.[15]

The Diary for the years 1910, 1911, and 1912 continue the comments of a political nature, charting Sloan's growing sophistication and recording his attendance at various political meetings and the social visits of friends with whom he talked politics. We turn now to the entries that describe his graphic work for the socialist cause: political cartoons for George Kirkpatrick's *War—What For?*, the *New York Call*, the *Coming Nation*, and other periodicals. Some of these illustrations were done in response to immediate events, such as the drawing done the day after he had heard of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire, a disaster that took the lives of 154 women on March 25, 1911.

In his effective cartoon, Death and the Capitalist hold up a triangle, the sides of which are labeled "Rent," "Profit," and "Interest"—three ways that capitalists amass their fortunes (fig. 15.2). The still smoldering body of a victim is trapped inside that triangle, a reference to the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, and, by implication, inside the capitalist system. One charred arm projects toward us. Sloan's message is clear and immediately comprehensible.

Sloan did not take payment for the illustrations he sent to the *Call* and the *Coming Nation*, nor did he take payment for his *Masses* cartoons.

His desire to place his talents as an illustrator at the disposal of the socialist cause was strong and active enough so that in 1912 he joined with others in the reorganization of the *Masses*, originally founded in 1911 by Piet Vlag.[16] Sloan participated in a meeting in August in which it was decided that Max Eastman would be invited to join the staff as editor; Sloan was to be the art editor. The first issue appeared in December 1912. In the January 1913 issue, an editorial declared the editors' intentions to produce "a revolutionary and not a reform magazine; a magazine with no dividends to pay; a free magazine; frank, arrogant, impertinent, searching for the true causes; a magazine directed against rigidity and dogma wherever it is found; printing what is too naked or true for a money-making press; a magazine whose final policy is to do as it pleases and conciliate nobody, not even its readers."[17] This statement includes an obvious element of

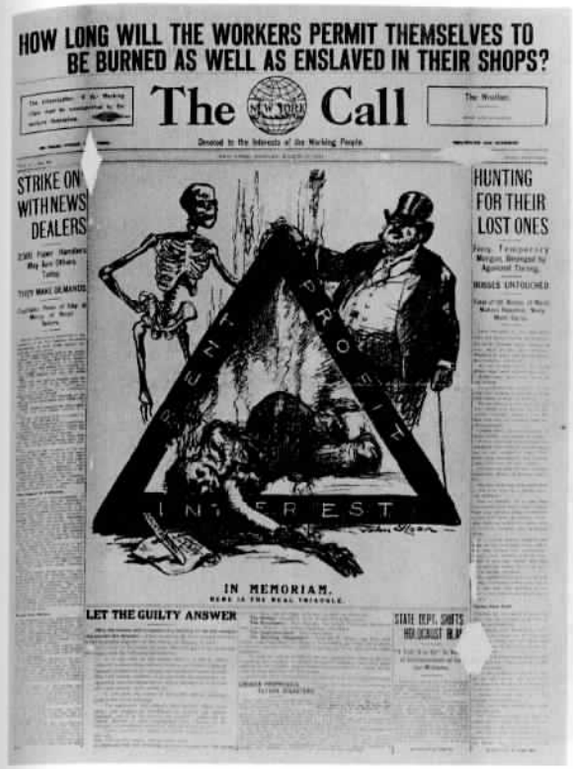

Figure 15.2 John Sloan, "In Memoriam. Here is the Real Triangle," with headline: "How Long Will the Workers Permit Themselves to Be Burned as Well as Enslaved in Their Shops?" *New York Call*, March 27, 1911. Delaware Art Museum, gift of Helen Farr Sloan.

bohemianism. The contributors had mixed motives for joining in the enterprise, and many defined their "socialism" broadly.[18]

Sixty-three illustrations of Sloan's were published in the *Masses* between December 1912 and mid-1916.[19] Many were straight drawings, such as *Bachelor Girl* in the February 1915 issue; many were satirical, such as *The Unemployed*, the March 1913 cover. Others were powerful statements of the class struggle, such as the June 1914 *Masses* cover entitled *Class War in Colorado*, depicting a Ludlow miner holding a young child and firing his gun, presumably at the National Guard or Rockefeller's agents (fig. 15.3).[20] What is radical about this illustration is that the worker is firing back; the message is defense through armed struggle and rebellion, hardly a reformist position.

In the published cartoons for the socialist publications, particularly the *Masses*, Sloan's men take an active part in on-the-job struggles, including actual brawls at street rallies and polling places. When women are active, it is as suffragists. In one instance Dolly is the model for a figure at a suffragist rally, in the illustration *She's Got the Point* in the October 1913 issue (fig. 15.4). In only one

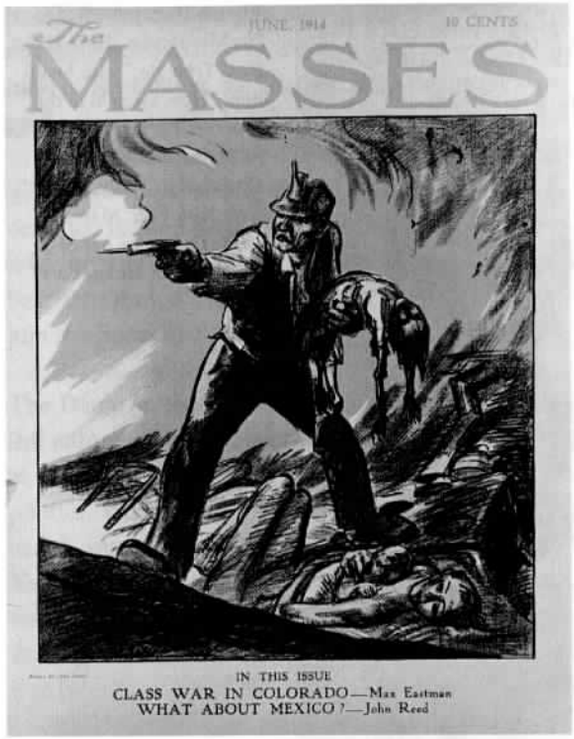

Figure 15.3 John Sloan, "Class War in Colorado." *The Masses*, June 1914; cartoon refers to the Ludlow massacre. Delaware Art Museum, gift of Helen Farr Sloan.

instance are women singled out as the strikers, in the *Call* cartoon of January 27, 1913, entitled *Strikers and Scabs or Inferiors and Equals*, in which two strikers glare contemptuously at a female scab who emerges from the building with her boss. Usually Sloan depicts women either as victims of society (for example, in *Before Her Makers and Her Judge*, an illustration published as a double-page spread, August 1913, in connection with an article exposing the entrapment of prostitutes by the police) or as carefree and removed from political struggle (as in the July 1913 cover, *The Return from Toil*, and the November 1913 cover, *Innocent Girlish Prattle, Plus Environment*).[21]

With the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914, Sloan entered a period of disillusionment with organized politics. He must still have been a member of the Socialist Party through 1915, because he was a Socialist candidate for a judgeship in the general election of that year. Although there is no substantial evidence, we may conjecture that his drift away from active participation begins at this time.[22] He also seems to have dissociated himself from the *Masses*, for only a handful of his drawings appeared in 1915 and 1916. His artwork for the

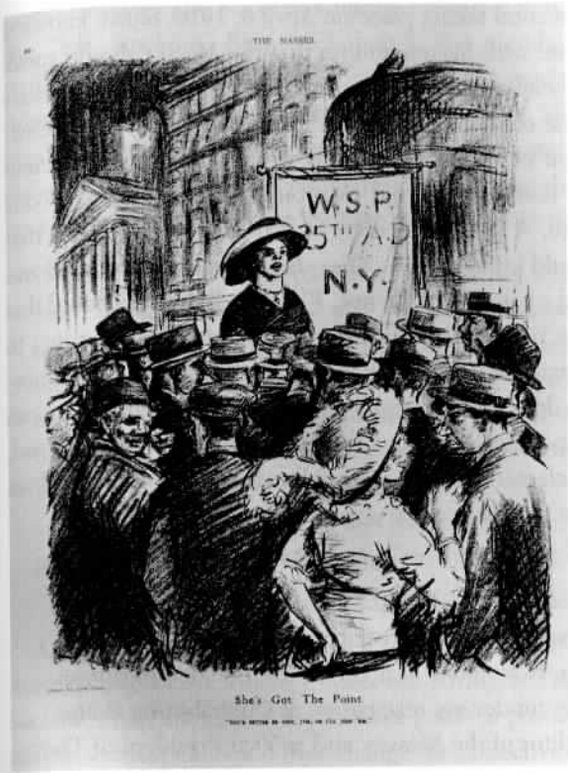

Figure 15.4 John Sloan, "She's Got the Point." *The Masses*, October 1913; Dolly Sloan is the figure delivering a speech at a suffragist rally. Delaware Art Museum, gift of Helen Farr Sloan.

Masses had been of three categories—straight drawings (usually vignettes of women), satirical drawings to which he would add an ironic caption, and sharp political cartoons. Max Eastman and the other editors, however, wanted to insert captions with a pungent political message beneath *all* categories without discussing their changes with him. Sloan felt that the "artistic" drawings should not be tampered with, that there was a place for nonpolitical art as well as propaganda in the magazine. Moreover, he resented Eastman's autocratic ways. The issues were two: one of form, specifically, what seemed to be Eastman's one-man control; and one of content—should the magazine wholly emphasize the socialist view or be broad in its appeal?

Meanwhile, Stuart Davis, Glenn O. Coleman, and Henry J. Glintenkamp enlisted Sloan as their spokesperson, for they too resented Eastman's doctrinaire ways, and perhaps the socialist doctrine as well.[23] Eastman and Art Young, focusing on the second issue, justified the propaganda intent of the magazine, reasoning that these were violent times; the war in Europe and the U.S. reaction had sharpened the urgency to proselytize for socialism. The issues came to a

head at two meetings, the second taking place on April 6, 1916. Sloan, knowing that many on the staff agreed with his contention that the *Masses* should speak to a general, not merely a socialist, readership, proposed that editorial decisions be collectively settled by the contributing editors at monthly meetings.[24] Eastman disagreed, arguing that committee decisions were impossibly inefficient when deadlines had to be met, and offered to submit his resignation. Sloan's proposal received a tie vote. A second meeting was held, with the hope that more members present would break the tie. They did, and Sloan's proposal was defeated; Eastman received a vote of confidence. Floyd Dell then proposed that the rebels be expelled; Art Young seconded the motion, stating, according to Eastman: "To me this magazine exists for socialism. That's why I give my drawings to it, and anybody who doesn't believe in a socialist policy, so far as I go, can get out!"[25] The vote on expelling Sloan and the others was defeated; instead, Sloan and Coleman were elected officers. The following day, however, Sloan sent his letter of resignation to Eastman:

> Dear Max:
>
> "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." This afternoon I played the part of one of the five fingers in the above suggested tragedy, and foolishly resisted amputation. Now, alone at night, I have decided to submit to the operation. I hereby tender my resignation as Contributing Editor of The Masses, as Art Editor of the Masses, and as Vice President of The Masses Publishing Company.
>
> May The Masses live long and prosper is the rather sincere wish of yours truly,
>
> JOHN SLOAN[26]

Sloan, by admitting that his was the offending hand, was acknowledging that he had factionalized the *Masses* at a time when solidarity was becoming crucial. For all his ambivalence on many issues, the decision to leave the *Masses* was clearly painful to Sloan, for he was as vigorous in his denunciation of the war as the others. Resigning with Sloan were Stuart Davis, Glen O. Coleman, and Robert Carlton Brown, the writer.[27]

Sloan had made a choice. He had created a situation of irresolvable confrontation between politics and *art*. The seeds of the confrontation had been planted when he first separated out his political cartoons from his art—and he was now choosing art.

In his retreat from socialism, however, Sloan was not alone. He had joined the Socialist Party during its "Golden Years"—at a time when many progressive New York intellectuals, writers, and artists were drawn to organizations that

urged reforms. The Socialist Club he belonged to was Branch One, nicknamed the "Silk Stocking" Branch. Although the members supported the workers' strikes, very few had personal contact with the workers. Sloan left the party at a time when thousands of others were also leaving. Sloan was adamantly antiwar; his disillusionment, shared by many, was that as an international movement socialism had failed to check nationalism and to stop the war in Europe.[28] Looking back at the period from the vantage point of 1950, Sloan reflected:

> We all felt that we were part of a crusade that would help to bring about more social justice at home and prevent the outbreak of world war. We were seriously alarmed by the new scientific discoveries which could make warfare a thing of terrible violence. . . . We did not have any doctrinaire ideas about running the world. Every time we went to a meeting, the speakers would talk about some new ideas for bringing about more justice without getting the world into the tyranny of some huge bureaucracy. Debs used to warn us that the socialist party should never have power of its own, that the ideas of the movement should be carried out through many different agencies of private and governmental types.[29]

As much as Sloan was opposed to the capitalism of early twentieth-century America, his fear of violence was even stronger. Therefore, he agreed that the Socialist Party should not try to seize political power—rather, it should seek to diffuse socialist ideas and thus change the collective consciousness.

We must return to our original question, slightly rephrased: Given that Sloan continued to isolate his etchings and paintings from partisan politics, did his choice of women as subjects—those joyous, spontaneous women—follow as a natural or logical corollary of that unwavering decision? We shall see what the evidence so far already suggests: that the answer is affirmative, with the reasons operating on levels that are cultural and sociological as well as personal.

The American cultural tradition had stressed the representation of the sociable and pleasant aspects of human intercourse. Few novels or paintings done by Americans depicted working-class strife or the ugly side of industrialization, although in Europe a handful of artists were developing the genre. The myth of America as a society free of class struggles was firmly ingrained in the minds of the culture-shapers. William Dean Howells wryly commented on American novels in 1891: "The wrong from class to class has been almost inappreciable, though all this is changing for the worse. Our novelists, therefore, concern themselves with the more smiling aspects of life, which are the more American, and seek the universal in the individual rather than the social interests."[30] Howells

knew that class antagonisms were sharpening (given the times, he could hardly avoid that reality) but admitted that in American culture the smiling aspects were the "more American."

The art critic Charles Caffin specifically focused on American paintings when he reviewed the Paris Exposition of 1900, and he found them as a group a "little fibreless and lacking in marrow." He drew the parallel of painting to fiction and found it unfortunate that the painters had "become directly infected with the prevailing pseudo-ethics of the publishers." To Caffin, their art thus seemed mannered and artificial rather than vital and lifelike: "The necessity of prettiness, of not giving offence to 'the most fastidious' and of exploiting the obvious, has been urged upon them, until it is small wonder that a great deal of American painting is characterized by irreproachable table-manners rather than by salient self-expression; by a desire to be amiable rather than convincing."[31]

In the terms of the social history of the era, the culture-shapers unquestionably presumed that women would be the bearers of those "smiling aspects" and would fulfill "the necessity of prettiness." George Santayana was later to deplore a society that relegated culture to the domain of decorum rather than to experience:

> The truth is that . . . one-half of the American mind, that not occupied intensely in practical affairs, has remained, I will not say high-and-dry, but slightly becalmed; it has floated gently in the backwater, while, alongside, in invention and industry and social organisation, the other half of the mind was leaping down a sort of Niagara Rapids. This division may be found symbolized in American architecture: a neat reproduction of the colonial mansion . . . stands beside the sky-scraper. The American Will inhabits the sky-scraper; the American Intellect inhabits the colonial mansion. The one is the sphere of the American man; the other, at least predominantly, of the American woman. The one is all aggressive enterprise; the other is all genteel tradition.[32]

Women certainly dominated the subject matter of the popular and established figure painters in New York and Boston—artists such as Edmund Tarbell, Frank Benson, William Merritt Chase, and, a decade later, William Paxton.[33] They depicted women removed from the activities of commerce and politics—genteel leisure-class women surrounded by flowers, their friends, children, and art works, defined so well and so ironically by Thorstein Veblen as "chief ornaments" of the household. Veblen had observed in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* of 1899: "Propriety requires respectable women to abstain more consistently from useful effort and to make more of a show of leisure than the men of the same social classes. It grates painfully on our nerves to contemplate the

Figure 15.5 William McGregor Paxton, *Tea Leaves*, 1909. Oil on canvas, 36⅛ × 28¾ inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of George A. Hearn, 1910 (10.64.8).

necessity of any well-bred woman's earning a livelihood by useful work. It is not 'woman's sphere.' Her sphere is within the household, which she should 'beautify,' and of which she should be the chief ornament."[34] Examples in art are Frank Benson's *Girl Playing Solitaire* (Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts) and William Paxton's *Tea Leaves* (fig. 15.5), both of 1909.

Sloan's view of women is strikingly different, although one could argue that his very choice of women as principal subject of painting was part of this larger cultural and sociological pattern. The differences, however, are striking. In subject matter, the salient difference is one of class, with the style working in concert to produce a radically different content.[35] The genteel women in *Tea Leaves* enact the bourgeois afternoon ritual of the social call and end by being bored and distracting themselves with daydreaming about past possibilities or future fortunes. Paxton's brush gently caresses the precious, expensive objects, which harmonize, in color and texture, with these graceful and fashionable corseted young matrons, restrained by wealth, propriety, and etiquette. Quiet, hermetic, sealed off from the world by the screen behind, they suggest a time-frozen image of genteel femininity.

Figure 15.6 John Sloan, *Three A.M.*, 1909. Oil on canvas, 32 × 26 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art, given by Mrs. Cyrus McMormick.

Sloan's painting *Three A.M.* (fig. 15.6) was also a ritual, one he observed from his rear window. In his Diary, April 28, 1909, Sloan wrote, "A good day's work, painting on the subject that has been stewing in my mind for some weeks. I have been watching a curious two room household, two women and, I think, two men, their day begins after midnight, they cook at 3 A.M." The breakfast scene of the working-class women is less social ritual than a nutritionally necessary part of the day's beginning. The image is not static but full of disorder and movement. The thick, fluid stroke seems appropriate to the heavy young woman cooking and to the seated woman engaged in animated conversation. In particular, the loose handling of paint on the nightgown makes visually convincing her unconstrained freedom to move about within her clothing and, as suggested by the sketchily rendered open door in the background, to move as well into the spaces outside the room, even into the city. The interior furnishings—old stove, cheap tea-kettle, rude table, chair, and crockery—receive little more than a summary treatment, for Sloan is, after all, primarily concerned with the women. These women are active and involved in the present, not idly reading their fortune. Upon hearing of the painting's rejection by the jury of the National Academy of Design annual in March 1910, Sloan commented offhandedly in his

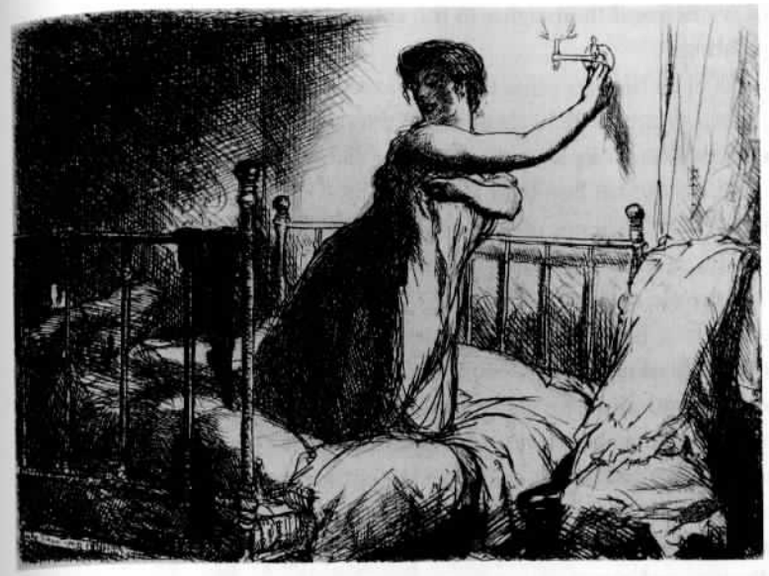

Figure 15.7 John Sloan, *Turning Out the Light*, 1905 (from "New York City Life"). Etching, 4⅜ × 6⅜ inches. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase.

Diary of March 9 that the work was, after all, "sent . . . as much as a joke like slipping a pair of men's drawers into an old maid's laundry, so that its refusal I expected surely."

In the company of men, Sloan's women are the principal actors. In *The Picnic Grounds* it is the women—described on May 30, 1906, as "young girls of the healthy lusty type with white caps jauntily perched on their heads"—who tease and chase the young man around the tree. Similarly, in his etching *Turning Out the Light* of 1905 (fig. 15.7), it is the woman who activates the scene. Dressed in a nightgown, she kneels on the mattress in order to reach the gas wall fixture, while turning to smile at her companion who lies at the farther edge of the brass bed. Her gesture expresses a movement and mood that are physically and psychologically right. The picture celebrates frank and mature sexuality—projecting an image of amiable companionship rather than erotic coquettishness, of equality with the man rather than submissiveness. Across the woman's face plays a smile suggesting a state of inner well-being. The woman, as in most of Sloan's prints and paintings, is the principal player of the drama—the agent of action rather than the object. Viewing these works with the historical context in mind, we cannot say that Sloan's political beliefs are irrelevant: He believed in the

equality of women and their rights to the vote—beliefs revealed in the content of these paintings.

Five works mark the exception to Sloan's aversion to the theme of work: *Scrub Women, Astor Library* of 1910 (Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York), three paintings representing women hanging wash on clotheslines—*Woman's Work* of 1911 (Cleveland Museum of Art), *Red Kimono on the Roof* of 1912 (Indianapolis Museum of Art), and *Sun and Wind on the Roof* of 1915 (Randolph Macon Women's College, Lynchburg, Virginia)—and *Spring Planting* of 1913 (private collection). Women's work in these paintings is of a special kind. The first four involve the theme of cleanliness, with women cast as working for the benefit of others—keeping libraries clean for the work of minds and clothes washed and aired for daily grooming. In *Spring Planting* one woman turns the earth with a shovel in preparation for planting while two others look on, and a third leans out from a nearby tenement window. The women's roles are to husband the earth, and thus nurture themselves and their families. As a group Sloan's paintings reveal women's work as necessary ritual cleansing and renewal, with purification and regeneration the essential content.

We should move with caution and tact toward the investigation of the psychological dimension of Sloan and try to avoid those superficial Freudian interpretations that mechanistically explain away the rich complexity of Sloan's inner life.[36] But again, we must search through the diaries, reminiscences, and biographical accounts for clues to a psychological character—Sloan's—drawn to certain themes rather than to others in his paintings of women.

Sloan seems to have had conflicting attitudes toward women. On the one hand, he shouldered responsibilities for caring for them. He quit high school in order to contribute to the support of his father, mother, and two younger sisters. His first wife, Dolly, was an alcoholic who suffered from depressions throughout the marriage, and Sloan tenderly cared for her. However, Sloan also yearned to be cared for himself. On his birthday after his mother's death, August 2, 1908, he wrote of Dolly as being his "wife and mother now." And numerous entries refer to his desire to be cared for by her, which was no doubt true, even though these passages may have been inserted to raise her sense of self-esteem.

He often thought of women as psychologically stronger than men. Observing a family in a tenement across from the rear windows of his West Twenty-third Street apartment, he witnessed a scene where a child died in its mother's arms and the men were, in Sloan's words of June 11, 1906, "powerless, helpless, stupid." On May 24, 1908, he made a lithograph that he described as a "woman, primitive, sitting with child at breast. An old idea of mine, Mother of the Man who first made himself Chief or King of Men." And for the February and March

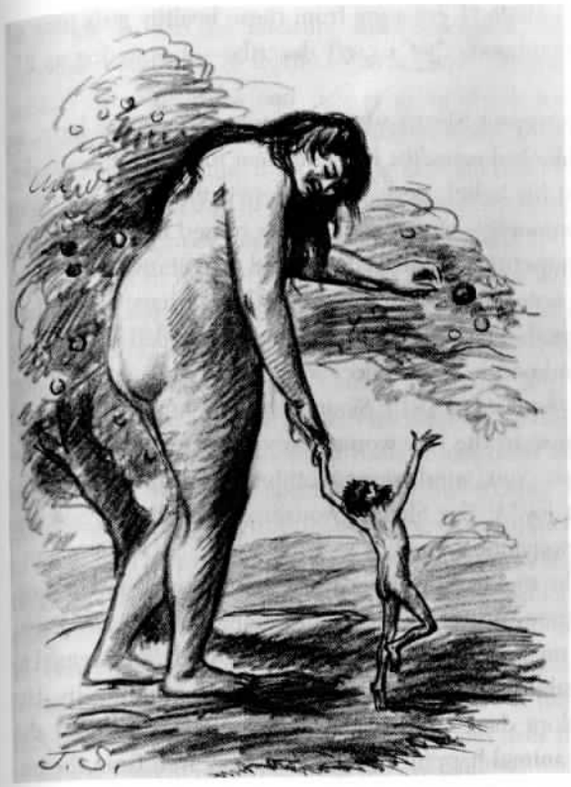

Figure 15.8 "He Won't Be Happy 'Til He Gets It!" *The Masses*, March 1913; one of five drawings Sloan did for the February and March 1913 issues of *The Masses*—a series entitled "Adam and Eve: The True Story." Delaware Art Museum, gift of Helen Farr Sloan.

issues of the *Masses* in 1913, he made a series about Adam and Eve called "The True Story," depicting a gigantic and cheerful Eve dominating a puny, pint-sized Adam (fig. 15.8).

Another view of women that Sloan held—a view that dominated his references to women in his diary of 1906 through 1908[37]—was as people free of class worries, spontaneous, and capable of bringing joy and pleasure to their own lives and the lives of men. These references also served, of course, as verbal notes for later paintings. On June 26, 1906, he wrote: "Walked down to the East Side this afternoon, enjoyed watching the girls swinging in the Square, Avenue A and 8th Street East. A fat man watching seated on a bench interested in the more mature figures."[38] On July 20, 1906, he reported on a visit to Washington Square, where he "saw young girls at their lunch hour strolling through the park arm in arm—benches on either side filled with all sorts of men interested in them and not interested. Shade of trees, heat of sun, odors of human life and sweat."[39] For March 25, 1907, he reported: "Sat in Madison Square and watched the children at play. Two young nurse girls playing ball, watched by bums, self

and others."[40] For June 18, 1908: "I get a joy from these healthy girls (one of them on the verge of womanhood) that I can't describe—it is as big as life itself."

It misses the point to interpret Sloan's women watching, as some have, as voyeurism arising out of a blocked sexuality. It seems clear to me that Sloan's delight in women stems from his belief, perhaps even envy, that they represent pure, simple, innocent spontaneity—spontaneity often ruined by the deleterious effects of living in a competitive, industrialized, and exploitative society. In Sloan's published teaching notes, *Gist of Art*, he recorded: "I have always had enthusiastic interest in unspoiled girlhood, more in evidence in 1912 than now. Growth toward real womanhood is often checked at about this age." Of the painting *Sun and Wind on the Roof* of 1915, Sloan recalled: "An urge to record my strong emotional response to the city woman, any woman running up the colors of a fresh clean wash. Sun, wind, scant clothing, blowing hair, unconscious grace give me great joy."[41] For Sloan, joyousness, cleanliness, and unconscious grace became synonymous.

Isadora Duncan, whom he met in November 1909, made a profound impression on Sloan, who at the time was on the verge of joining the Socialist Party. When Sloan saw her dance on November 16, he was enraptured. She seemed to sum up the best of the possibilities of women and, indeed, all of humanity. His Diary reads: "We saw Isadora dance. It's positively splendid! I feel that she dances a symbol of human animal happiness as it should be, free from the unnatural trammels. Not angelic, materialistic—not superhuman but the greatest human love of life. Her great big thighs, her small head, her full solid loins, belly—clean, all clean—she dances away civilization's tainted brain vapors, wholly human and holy—part of God." The imagery here relates vividly to the metaphor of birth and regeneration, rather than to erotic sexuality. To Sloan, Duncan was a woman capable of producing a new race of men and women. When Sloan saw her dance again, on February 15, 1911, he remarked in his Diary: "Isadora as she appears on that big simple stage seems like *all* womanhood—she looms big as the mother of the race." His painting *Isadora Duncan* of 1911 (Milwaukee Art Center) captures his impression of that memorable day.

Recalling those paintings of women scrubbing, hanging wash, and planting, we can rightly speculate that the covert meaning of many of his paintings of women is the desire for purification, redemption, and regeneration in a world *here and now*. It was the same wish as that of idealistic socialists, to which Sloan was giving visual form.

The artistic process necessarily entails that the artist stand back from the subject in order to process that subject into an object that exists on his canvas. Physically

he needs to take the measure and proportion, to ascertain the dominant or expressive features, to fix the relative tones. Psychologically, he must deny the subject its subjectness and view it as an object integrally related to the total composition. That distancing is inherent in the creative process, although many artists try to overcome it by probing into the inner character of the subject, selecting and distorting in order to communicate their personal expression of the subject or to convey the subject's "inner essence."[42]

Sloan, more than others, needed to distance himself from his subjects. To him it was not just an aesthetic necessity but a personal, psychological one as well, based on his respect for the integrity of his subjects. He did not know the people who inhabited his scenes of everyday life. Fascinated by women, he spent much time observing them unobserved in the parks and on the streets of New York and on the tenement roofs across from his rear windows on Twenty-third Street. Referring specifically to the etching *The Women's Page* of 1905 (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York), he recalled in 1949 that period of his life: "The psychologists say we all have a little peeper instinct, and that's a result of peeping—the life across from me when I had a studio on 23rd Street. This woman in this sordid room, sordidly dressed—undressed—with a poor little kid crawling around on a bed—reading the Women's Page, getting hints on fashion and housekeeping. That's all. It's the irony of that I was putting over. No intent to make a design, in this case, but to put over this ironical attitude that my mind assumed in regard to what my eye saw."[43]

The evening of July 6, 1911, when friends were visiting, Sloan became outraged that his friends openly gawked at the rear window neighbors. He reflected: "I am in the habit of *watching every bit* of human life I can see about my windows, but I do it so that I am not observed at it. I 'peep' through real interest, not being observed myself. I feel that it is no insult to the people you are watching to do so unseen, but that to do it openly and with great expression of amusement is an evidence of *real vulgarity*." Sloan would not condescend, would not put himself in a position of superiority. Therefore, that distancing was necessary for Sloan and, he thought, for his *art*. And the artist, to Sloan, had a right to peep—if he or she did so in a spirit of respect, without violating the humanity of the subject.

Moreover, he abhorred blatant sexuality as a motive for art: sexuality in which the woman became a mere object for men's lust. On October 24, 1908, he wrote regarding nudes in art, "The artists most of them are proud and feel that they have taken a lofty flight into the higher realms of glorious 'Art' when they paint a nude woman. A picture that could only inspire lust in a perverted mind so little is there of humanity in it." Women, too, should prudently be kept at a distance in order that they not inspire sexual interest. For a man's sexual preoccupations

with a woman would deprive them of their inner integrity, would turn them from subjects to objects. Perhaps he feared, too, the attendant violence that such a process entailed.

Viewing his times, the turn-of-the-century years, one can recall many artists who peeped as well. Indeed, part of the naturalist program was to depict a slice of life of the working classes. George Moore, whose books Sloan read avidly, quoted Edgar Degas in *Impressions and Opinions of 1891:* "Hitherto . . . the nude has always been represented in poses which presuppose an audience, but these women of mine are honest, simple folk, unconcerned by any other interests than those involved in their physical condition. Here is another; she is washing her feet. It is as if you looked through a keyhole."[44] European artists who "looked through a keyhole" and found naked women washing up, men and women in quiet conversation, and other activities, would include not only Edgar Degas but also Jean-Louis Forain and Walter Sickert, all of whom had done etchings with which Sloan no doubt was familiar.

What is important here is that Sloan's aesthetic and psychological attitudes mirrored his political practice, for indeed he sought to *distance* himself from politics as well. Even though he and Dolly were actively involved in Socialist Party politics, his Diary reveals a man who on many occasions pulled himself back.

On February 11, 1910, Sloan went to his "first Socialist Branch Business Meeting at the Rand School," which he found "rather dry," so that he entertained himself by looking at a "pretty young . . . secretary." He passed out leaflets in Battery Park on July 26, 1910, but admitted: "There is a curious kind of humor about such an affair and it seems curious I have gone into it. And yet it surely is better than to paint pandering pictures to please the ignorant listless moneyed class in this U.S." Although he was a candidate for the State Assembly in November 1911 and ran again in the primary elections in September 1912 and 1913 for the same seat, there is barely a mention of these activities in his published Diary.[45] Attending a Socialist Party fund-raising dinner, he remarked to his Diary on September 15, 1911, that "I enjoyed it much as one enjoys squeezing a painful boil and yet I think it was a good thing." And when on November 12, 1911, he attended a lecture by Emma Goldman, which drew other socialists as well, he complained: "She was good but here and there demanded too much social consciousness from the artist. For instance, she said that if the great painter (therefore revolutionist) should paint a wealthy lady he would show the parasite covered with diamonds—this is too far, takes it out of art—which is simple truth as felt by painter." These instances show symptoms of his vacillation between full partisanship in the working-class cause and his need to individualize himself. For Sloan, in arguing for simple truth *as felt by the*

Figure 15.9 John Sloan, *Sunday Afternoon in Union Square,* 1912. Oil on canvas, 26¼ × 32¼ inches. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, bequest of George Otis Hamlin.

painter, was rejecting the collective response and opting instead for the individual response. The working-class view would naturally be full of anger and bitterness, which Goldman understood; but in his paintings Sloan was not willing to represent those emotions—emotions that carry the threat of violence as well.

In arguing for simplicity, he was contending that aesthetically and psychologically simplicity makes for more effective images. Coincidentally, a few days later, on November 17, 1911, he wrote of reading Frank Harris's *The Bomb:* "It is a good piece of historical fiction—makes a good story which takes all the known facts of the legal murder of the Chicago Anarchists in '86 and makes a probably [sic] life story. Very simple language and true 'convincing' as they call it."[46] Indeed, the appeal of Sloan's paintings of this period lies in large measure in their convincing simplicity.

The review, thus far, of his choice of subjects in his paintings confirms his distancing from politics in his art. His everyday-life paintings of the period 1910–13 do not differ in content from the earlier ones.[47] As before, he turned to women as the primary subjects. He went to a May Day meeting in Union Square

Figure 15.10 John Sloan, *Renganeschi's Saturday Night*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 26¼ × 32 inches. Copyright 1996 The Art Institute of Chicago, all rights reserved, gift of Mrs. John E. Jenkins, 1926.1580.

in 1912; what he had seen might have occasioned a painting of events at the meeting. But his painting that year of a scene of Union Square, *Sunday Afternoon in Union Square* (fig. 15.9), represents two young women strolling through the park. In 1912 Dolly was very active in the support of the strike of Lawrence, Massachusetts, mill workers and organized the housing for the Lawrence children who had been sent to New York during the strike. But instead of painting women organizers in 1912, Sloan depicted women enjoying a meal at a popular restaurant in his *Renganeschi's Saturday Night* (fig. 15.10). In these two paintings women are the focus of attention—strolling together or dining together. If aware of male attention, they choose to ignore it. These women have been emancipated by the artist through his art, and they represent the smiling aspects of what everyday life might be.

Sloan had a need to distance himself from women for his art. And his art provided a rationale against giving himself over to full involvement in politics. The either/or stance—an artist either makes art or makes politics—offered a convenient justification and was fully sanctioned by tradition, his friends, and his patrons.

The intentions and styles of artists often change in tandem with the attitudes of their critical audience—the supportive system that sanctions or condemns their innovations and progress. In the twentieth century an artist's critical audience consists of family, friends, fellow artists, and art critics (whose praise or advice affects the artist's emotional morale), as well as dealers, curators, museum directors, and art collectors, collectively called "the patrons." The patrons provide important financial support by purchasing or commissioning specific works, and as tastemakers they can influence the course of an artist's success, if not always the artist's career.

Robert Henri encouraged Sloan during the artist's early New York residence, and he and his first wife, Linda, were frequent guests at the Sloans'. Henri, as a philosophical anarchist, took a position with younger artists of championing freedom of subject and expression.[48] Because Henri eschewed organizations or philosophies that would restrict the artist's individuality, he would have encouraged Sloan's intentions not to be "doctrinaire" in his paintings. However, after Henri's second marriage in 1908, the Sloans saw less of him, and his influence on the younger painter waned.[49]

The painter John Butler Yeats, father of William Butler Yeats, replaced Henri as the central influence on Sloan following their meeting on July 22, 1909. The elder Yeats acted as a force of moderation, writing to Sloan, "Only minor artists and poets meddled with propaganda—except in their unripe youth."[50] Van Wyck Brooks, who frequented the circle of Yeats and Sloan, observed in his biography of Sloan: "Yeats saw in Sloan 'the artist and poet, solitary, self-immersed in his own thoughts,' with 'no desire to impress other people,' but with 'the kind of spontaneity which makes his pictures refreshing to the eye wearied with conventional art.' For the rest, human as Yeats was, he delighted in 'this artist's message . . . that human nature has a perennial charm.'"[51] These sentiments were expressed in Yeats's many conversations with Sloan, recorded in the latter's Diary, as well as numerous letters from Yeats to Sloan. Yeats imposed on Sloan the image of the artist as solitary, self-immersed, and by nature alienated from social and political life. The affection of Yeats for the Sloans was mutual. When Yeats died, Sloan wrote to the family in Ireland: "He was a second father to me." Helen Farr Sloan has recorded that Sloan further remarked about Yeats: "When I became too exercised about problems of social justice, losing my sense of humor and perspective on things in general, he scolded me."[52] In other words, Yeats helped Sloan distance himself from politics.

All during the period 1904–16 Sloan supported himself by the sale of his illustrations to the New York magazines, his puzzles for the *Philadelphia Press* through 1910, occasional portrait commissions, and a stint of teaching here and there. He had high hopes of selling his ten etchings of 1905–06, entitled

New York City Life, which he took around to gallery dealers and sent to the exhibition of the American Water Color Society in March 1906.[53] He did interest the influential critic Russell Sturgis in viewing them and offered a set to Sturgis. Sturgis slipped out only *Turning Out the Light* for his own collection, thereby breaking the set, to Sloan's annoyance. Frank Weitenkampf, the knowledgeable print curator of the New York Public Library, purchased a set for the library, and John Quinn, the wealthy lawyer and collector of early twentieth-century art, purchased a group of Sloan's etchings in 1910.

The critical reception of his paintings in those early years was mixed—approval from his friends and sympathetic critics, and indifference or rejection from the art establishment. Each year he sent works to the National Academy of Design annual, but their acceptance depended in large measure on whether Henri or a sympathetic friend was on the jury of selection. Although Sloan made light of his rejections, he must have felt some regrets. The exhibition of The Eight at the Macbeth Galleries and the Independents Exhibition in 1910 brought his work to public attention in a context in tune with his own aims. By 1913, events indicated a turn for the better. That year he sold his first painting, *Nude in the Green Scarf*, to Dr. Albert C. Barnes, a school chum from Philadelphia. In 1915 he received a bronze medal for an etching at the San Francisco Pan-Pacific International Exposition, and that year he met Mrs. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, who gave him his first solo exhibition at the Whitney Studio from January 26 to February 6, 1916.

Such recognition did not mean that his paintings were sought after, merely that the professional art world began to recognize his merit. According to Helen Farr Sloan, he had sold only eight paintings by the time he was fifty years old; and only in that year, 1921, did he sell a painting to a museum, when the Metropolitan Museum of Art purchased *The Dust Storm, Fifth Avenue* of 1906.

On the face of it, this brief history indicates a pattern little different from that of any other artist struggling for recognition. The diaries and letters, however, disclose that one patron stood out as an important friend and shaping influence: John Quinn.

Sloan's references in his Diary before his meeting with Quinn indicate his antagonism to rich patrons. On January 11, 1910, he worried that the Independents Show would provide an opportunity for the rich to be patrons of art. The remarks imply both his antagonism toward the rich, an antagonism shared by most other socialists, and an awareness of the subtle power of patrons to subvert the political and artistic integrity of artists.

John Quinn, however, was to become to Sloan the model of the enlightened rich collector. A review of Sloan's impressions of their meetings reveals Sloan's attraction to the urbane and upright lawyer, his pleasure in being entertained by a man of means, his awareness of his own quite different economic situation, his solicitous desire to be advised by Quinn on legal matters, and, in turn, his willingness to advise Quinn on art purchases. But an underlying and important leitmotif in his recordings is his desire, even eagerness, to have Quinn respond to his paintings.

John Butler Yeats introduced Sloan to Quinn on May 8, 1910, when both visited Quinn's Central Park West apartment to view Quinn's art collection. On June 9, Sloan invited Quinn to dinner along with William Glackens and his wife, noting in his Diary that Quinn showed an interest in Sloan's etchings and his collection of *Charivari* Daumier illustrations. Three days later, Quinn returned to view the paintings and was particularly interested in *The Dust Storm, Fifth Avenue*. Sloan quoted $350 for the work, a price he assured Quinn was $150 less than the exhibition price. Quinn responded that he would buy a painting after consulting with John Butler Yeats. Quinn then ordered a complete set of Sloan's etchings illustrating Charles Paul De Kock's novels.

Sloan's hope for a possible sale to Quinn must have preoccupied him. Two days later, June 14, he recorded with a touch of irony, "Mr. Yeats called and coaxed us to come to Petitpas' for dinner and we consented as he is now to be honored and humored by us, we tell him, on account of the fact that he is acting as Mr. Quinn's advisor in the purchase of a picture." On June 16, 23, and 26, Quinn called on the Sloans. During these ten days or so, Quinn did not buy a painting, but he did buy a number of other Sloan prints in addition to the De Kock etchings, for Sloan noted in the June 26 entry: "He said that he was pleased with the prints that I had sent him. I sent him a memorandum for the lot amounting to $340.00. This went to his office so he as yet had not received it. I can't make up my mind whether this is a large price or not. At any rate it is the smallest price I'd care to part with them for. I rated the 51 De Kock etchings at $250.00." After receiving the check two days later, Sloan added that the purchase was his first large sale, "excepting orders for illustrations which I don't count in importance."

Sloan's admiration of Quinn grew with each meeting and contact throughout the summer. On July 5, Sloan recorded: "Mr. Quinn sent me 16 reproductions from [Augustus] John's drawings in his possession. They are fine and interesting things. Quinn proves to be a good friend to me, and I admire him for a kind of broad fairness of mind. He is a good example of the 'trained' mind as he calls it and advocates it. But it does not always prove as fair and really considerate as his." Quinn, by sending Sloan reproductions, was trying to educate the artist.

Throughout August, Sloan referred often in his Diary to Quinn and his largesse. On August 2 Quinn invited Yeats and the Sloans to dinner. On August 6 Yeats called on the Sloans and read a letter from Quinn "in which Q. repeats

that he intends to buy a painting of mine." On August 13 Quinn treated Dolly, Sloan, John Butler Yeats, and Ezra Pound to an afternoon and evening at Coney Island:

> We dined and talked till nearly 10 o'clock, then went about the "shows." Rode the elephant (my first elephant ride), shot the shutes. Went in some tubs in a wild ride which Mr. Yeats found "much worse than it looked." Ate popcorn and in short did the thing up in great style. John Quinn was full of boyish enthusiasm about the whole place. He has a personal pride in all New York's good things. At about quarter of twelve he puts us all in a big touring car and while at first he intended to take it to Sheepshead there to go home by train he decided to send us all the way to 23rd St. by automobile so we had a swift ride into town (my first long ride in an auto, I see why the rich like them).[54]

Sloan apparently began to feel "rich" himself. With his savings and the recent cash from Quinn, Sloan entertained the possibility of purchasing a house in New York, thereby saving on rent. On August 16 he wrote to Quinn, soliciting his advice. Quinn replied, pointing out hidden expenses Sloan might not have anticipated. Sloan's Diary for August 17 ends with the remark "His letter weakens my idea of doing it."

There are only two brief mentions of Quinn in the Diary from August 17, 1910, to February 3, 1911, when Quinn invited Yeats and Sloan to join him for dinner, to be followed by a preview of paintings put up for auction. Sloan's passage is extensive, ending on a note of ironic realism regarding his own situation. The last phrase, no doubt, was meant to cheer Dolly:

> We saw many poor pictures by famous names sold. . . . By taxi to Mr. Quinn's home after stopping at Shanley's where he had chops and Mr. Yeats and I Irish whiskey. . . .
>
> "I can't paint to suit myself. How then can others paint to suit me." In criticism of a picture by a French Impressionist which Quinn bought lately for about $1200.00! Mr. Quinn has a portrait by Augustus John which is a good crude strong thing it seems to me. Perhaps it misses some of the nobleness of Q.'s head. Mr. Yeats says so. Q. also has a Chas. Shannon, an actress in Spanish dress in part of Donna Anna in "Superman" Shaw's play. Interesting but not great—$2000.00! Just got it. Mr. Yeats and I stepped out of this house of riches, or rather apartment, crowded with pictures and books—into a slushy wet night and home we rode in a street car, but there was a row of interesting faces opposite and a wife at home for me!

Quinn, after all, had not purchased one of Sloan's own paintings, nor would he ever.

On March 23, 1911, Quinn asked Yeats and Sloan to advise him on Manet paintings that he hoped to purchase from the Durand-Ruel exhibition in New York. Sloan's response to the Manet paintings was not wholly enthusiastic, as he frankly told Quinn. On April 15 Sloan was again a willing adviser to Quinn but was obviously aware of his manipulation by the collector: "Today in response to a 'command' from John Quinn, Mr. Yeats and I met Q. at the Union League Club to look at the exhibition. Q. liked the show and said that it was much better than the Independent Kent show, more art." Another gallery was visited by the trio that day, and Sloan urged Quinn to purchase works by Jerome Myers, a fellow painter of the New York working-class scene. Before the month was out, Sloan had sent Quinn more etchings.

As noted above, Sloan was at this time—1910 and 1911—deeply involving himself in the Socialist Party organization, cartooning for the *Coming Nation* and the *Call*, and continuing his production of magazine illustrations in order to support Dolly and himself. Eleven months passed before Sloan again mentioned Quinn in his Diary. The next entry, March 24, 1912, provides the occasion for Sloan to mull over his personal philosophy about his art:

> Mr. Yeats came, routed out of his roost by Mr. Quinn who brought him around to see us. We were glad to see Mr. Quinn who takes a very material interest in my work. He told me he had just bought two of my lithographs from the Berlin Photo Co. . . . I was glad to hear that but surprised that Q. had not known I had some few lithographs. Quinn wanted to buy from me the drawing illustration to De Kock "Madame Dubotte Callé" which I have on the wall in the hall, but I with regret told him I did not want to sell it. The truth of the matter, which I told him, is that it is one of the best drawings I ever made and I could not ask enough for it to compensate me for its absence as a sort of pace setter.

To Sloan, personally favored art was beyond the marketplace—something priceless and a measure for future progress.

Later in the fall of 1912, Sloan wrote Quinn to encourage his financial support for the *Masses*. Sloan felt obliged to assure Quinn that his own art would not be adversely affected by his involvement with this political endeavor. The letter, dated November 24, 1912, opens: "I thank you in the name of the Masses Publishing Company, of which I am a member, for your generous contribution toward the success of our idea. I hope to do my share toward making it an artistic and Socialistic success, but as it is a monthly I do not fear that the work I do for it need sap my force for better things if my paintings can be called such."[55]

Sloan continued with talk of art matters and added that the "breezes of brighter color" are sweeping the land, a reference perhaps to the upcoming Armory Show.

On December 26, 1912, Sloan thanked Quinn for his second contribution of twenty dollars and solicited his thoughts about the magazine. Quinn replied on January 2, 1913, that he "liked the art things, that is your things, better than the text. The poetry I didn't much care for."[56]

On January 23, 1913, another letter of thanks from Sloan repeated his request for an extended response: "I wonder what you think of the magazine. . . . We are trying to keep the magazine as cheerful as we can & tho' I myself cant [sic] quite fiddle while Rome burns we hope to attract some fiddlers."[57]

Quinn's immediate reply of January 24, expanded upon his earlier criticism:

> You ask me what I think of the magazine. I think it is too bitter in tone to make converts. Bitterness in propagandist literature may keep those already converted but it does not bring converts. . . . If the aim of the magazine is to *make* converts, there must be argument, reasoning, statements of fact and not exaggerations in text or cartoons.
>
> I understand of course that a person who feels that the present organization of life and business and administration of law results in injustice and cruelty can't always think of the proprieties or the niceties of literature. I'm talking of it merely from the propagandist's point of view. As a rule the more bitter the attack, the harsher the cartooning, the more repellant the thing is and the less it attracts.[58]

Quinn touched on issues that have affected all partisan writing. At what point does propaganda become so vigorous and bitter that its very exaggeration strains the credulity of its audience? Or perhaps I should recast my question: Why indeed should one modify partisan writing and tone down images in order to placate liberal sensibilities? In any event, Quinn's words were also part of the chorus intoning the "dangers" of propaganda in art.

Quinn was encouraging Sloan in the direction of "high" art, lending the artist F. T. Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto.[59] Sloan's response to the Italian avant-garde movement and to the bombast of its manifestoes is not fully known. However, in his letter to Quinn of November 21, 1914, in which he returns the pamphlet, Sloan stated he wanted Quinn to visit his studio, adding: "I'd like to show you my summer work[.] I've an idea you would like many of the things I painted[.] I have without doubt gone on in color and in other ways."[60] The paintings were of the Gloucester shore, far removed from the life and the politics of the city.

A patron's influence on an artist is a subtle affair, and an artist's favorable response should not be construed as a mere eagerness to close a sale. They both were brought close through their shared friendship with John Butler Yeats, a source of worry as Yeats grew older. Moreover, Sloan admired Quinn's sophistication about art matters, his morally upright and intelligent stance, his sense of personal style, and his freedom to pursue his art interests. Quinn, in turn, seemed to have enjoyed Dolly's and Sloan's company and felt an obligation to encourage and broaden Sloan's artistic horizons. It is therefore not out of order to speculate that Quinn's failure to purchase a painting from Sloan might have prompted the artist to consider that his work lacked aesthetic or other qualities sought by the discerning connoisseur. Sloan's move away from politics toward an involvement with formal, artistic problems coincided with his shift of concern from the mass readership of the *Masses* to the more limited audience that frequented the galleries, including patrons such as Quinn.[61]

Sloan was, however, already moving to broaden his artistic horizons. His preoccupation with the Hardesty Maratta system of colors introduced to him by Henri in 1909 indicates that he never ignored the formal problems of art making.[62] But the important event that turned his head was the Armory Show, to which he sent two paintings and five etchings. Sloan later recalled the enormous impact on his art of the European modernist works exhibited at the Armory Show: "I began consciously to work from plastic motives more than from what might erroneously be called 'story-telling' motives."[63] And again: "The blinders fell from my eyes . . . and I could look at religious pictures without seeing their subjects. I was freed to enjoy the sculptures of Africa and prehistoric Mexico because visual verisimilitude was no longer important."[64] Not only was art not about politics, it was no longer even about life's reality; it was about art. Modernism offered to Sloan, as to many others, a retreat from the world of politics and into the detached and distanced world of formal aesthetic relationships.

Our investigation so far has been intricate, dealing with areas of Sloan's life that were not mutually exclusive. A summation of the main points considered seems to be in order before we return to women as theme.

First, there was no tradition of social criticism in painting in America—although a strong and vital one existed in the European graphic arts, with which Sloan was intimately familiar.[65]

Second, the myth persisted in those years that it was right and natural for women to be removed from commercial endeavors and politics in all its forms—that the function of women was to serve as a comfort or as an inspiration to men, and that women were pure, untouched by the stains and strains of civilization. And the myth found its expression in the art of the period.

Third, Sloan was indelibly impressed with Henri's admonitions to express in paint the élan and spirit of working people living in New York. Sloan remarked about Henri in 1948: "Henri . . . was my father in Art, I got my Whitman

through him. Whitman's love for all men, his beautiful attitude toward the physical, the absence of prudishness . . . all this represented a force of freedom. . . . I liked what resulted from his descriptive catalogues of life: They helped to interest me in the details of life around me."[66] Sloan was part of a movement that asserted its identity by its doggedly realistic scenes, which did not, however, completely challenge the old myths.

Fourth, John Butler Yeats, whose influence on Sloan replaced that of Henri, reinforced Sloan's belief that "serious" art must not be partisan, must not be burdened with "extra-aesthetic" intentions. John Quinn, a source of patronage for Sloan, reasoned that even in political cartoons, "the more bitter the attack, the harsher the cartooning, the more repellant the thing is and the less it attracts." Propaganda was, to be sure, unaesthetic. Moreover, *none* of Sloan's close friends were engaged in the creation of a partisan painting; they were not even attracted to his politics. He must have had many doubts, particularly when his output of paintings reached a low. On August 10, 1911, he confided to his Diary: "I'm sure my conservative artist friends would say that's what's the matter with Sloan. Too much Socialism. I don't agree with this theory of my present poor efforts at painting." He also smarted when his friends accused him of losing his sense of humor because of his socialism. It was Yeats who pushed Sloan back to individualism at a time when the dream of community was collapsing.

For, finally, the socialist movement at that time was failing to provide a well-formulated ideology and determined organization to combat the growing nationalism as well as individualism, because it contained serious revisionist tendencies, including the failure to commit itself to seizing political power. The socialist movement, one could say, also *distanced* itself from power politics.

Thus, in the years before the country entered the war, Sloan's depictions of women mirrored a complex response to life—his commitment to the lives of the urban working classes as well as an artistic aversion to venturing into the relatively new terrain (at least for Americans) of conjoining painting with politics. In spite of the fact that in many instances women, including his wife Dolly, fully participated in strikes and mass meetings, Sloan shared the attitude that viewed women as embodiments of innocence removed from the "class struggle." They were, then, suitable subjects for Sloan's definition of art as "simple truth as felt by the painter."

Sloan also held on to the assumption that serious art, especially painting, must be ideologically neutral, that is, above partisanship. On August 1, 1911, Sloan wrote to Abe Simons of the *Coming Nation*, refusing to write an article for the magazine. He confided to his Diary, "Said that I couldn't and wouldn't write an article such as I think he wants showing how art is being democratized. I told him that when propaganda enters into my drawings it's politics not art—art being merely an expression of what I think of what I see." Sloan refused to unite the two aspects of his concerns; either one made art, or one made political propaganda. And *art* to Sloan was personal expression, not social expression.

Perhaps Sloan realized that the realistic depiction of working-class men could not have avoided partisan, and even violent, themes arising out of the antiwar movement, labor strikes, and other social struggles of the time. Such themes would not, he knew, be "simple truth." Perhaps, then, he rejected men and their concerns as too complex and too inherently partisan to be appropriate subjects for his paintings, except for two or three works such as the McSorley's Bar paintings, which show men at their leisure. But it is precisely men who dominate the representation in his political illustrations.

Given the aesthetic position that the artist should stand apart and the ideological position that a socialist should avoid revolution by working instead through the polls and with methods of verbal persuasion, and given Sloan's fascination with women and his idealization of them as joyous and innocent, the choice of women as dominant subject and theme for Sloan's paintings and etchings seems inevitable.

Sloan was neither ahead of nor behind his times, and he responded much as others did. If he had focused on the contemporary struggles and aspirations of both sexes of the working class (which he understood), he might have contributed to an authentically radical, revolutionary painting—an art that finds universal significance and validity in the specific and concrete actualities of the lives of real working people, that does not view art and social consciousness as antagonistic, and that challenges the bourgeois illusion of the neutrality of art.

Notes

This essay was originally published, in an expanded form, in *Prospects* 5 (1980): 7–19. The author has updated and edited the notes for the present publication.

1. John Sloan, "Early Days," in Helen Farr Sloan, ed., *American Art Nouveau: The Poster Period of John Sloan* (Lock Haven, Pa., 1967), unpaged. Sloan made the remarks in about 1946 or 1947 according to Mrs. Sloan in conversation with the author, March 12, 1979. Joseph J. Kwiat, however, argues that Sloan was socially conscious in his paintings, in "John Sloan: An American Artist as Social Critic, 1900–1917," *Arizona Quarterly* 10 (Spring 1954): 52–64.

2. For histories of the group, see John Edgar Bullard III, "John Sloan and the Philadelphia Realists and Illustrators, 1890–1920" (master's thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1968); William Innes Homer, *Robert Henri and His Circle*, with the assistance of Violet Organ (Ithaca, N.Y., 1969); and Bennard B. Perlman, *The Immortal Eight: American Painting from Eakins to the Armory Show, 1870–1913* (New York,

1962). For recent histories of the group, see Elizabeth Milroy, *Painters of a New Century: The Eight and American Art*, exh. cat. (Milwaukee, 1991); Robert Hunter, "The Rewards and Disappointments of the Ashcan School," in Lowery Stokes Sims, *Stuart Davis: American Painter*, exh. cat. (New York, 1992), 35–41; H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885–1915*, exh. cat. (New York, 1994); and Rebecca Zurier, Robert W. Snyder, and Virginia M. Mecklenburg, *Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York*, exh. cat. (New York, 1995). Although George Bellows was not one of the Philadelphia realists, he needs to be added to this group; see Marianne Doezema, *George Bellows and Urban America* (New Haven, 1992). A recent biography of John Sloan is John Loughery's *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (New York, 1995).

3. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), 4: 207.

4. Gustav Stickley, "Social Unrest: A Condition Brought About by Separating the People into Two Factions, Capital and Labor," *Craftsman* 13 (November 1907): 183.

5. Charles H. Caffin, *The Story of American Painting* (New York, 1907), 367.

6. Ibid., 370, 373.

7. Ibid., 367.

8. Robert Henri, "The New York Exhibition of Independent Artists," *Craftsman* 18 (May 1910): 162.

9. For facts and dates I have relied primarily on John Sloan, *John Sloan's New York Scene: From the Diaries, Notes and Correspondence, 1906–1913*, ed. Bruce St. John (New York, 1965), referred to in the text as the Diary. Quotations given with the permission of Helen Farr Sloan. For Sloan's later remarks and comments by Mrs. Sloan published in that volume, the reference will be to *New York Scene*. For dates regarding Sloan's involvement in Socialist Party politics, see Barbara Anne Weeks, "The Artist: John Sloan's Encounter with American Socialism" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 1973).

10. Helen Farr Sloan in her introduction to *New York Scene*, xx, stated: "When Sloan was actively interested in socialism, back in 1909 until the First World War broke out in 1914, he was often *pressed* by doctrinaire-minded party members to put political propaganda into his work."

11. The dilemma has been shared by many artists, writers, and college professors since Karl Marx first observed, "In an advanced society the petty bourgeois necessarily becomes from his very position a Socialist on the one side and an economist on the other; that is to say, he is dazed by the magnificence of the big bourgeoisie and has sympathy for the sufferings of the people. He is at once both bourgeois and man of the people. Deep down in his heart he flatters himself that he is impartial and has found the right equilibrium, which claims to be something different from the golden mean. A petty bourgeois of this type glorifies *contradiction* because *contradiction* is the quintessence of his being. He is himself nothing but social contradiction in action. He must justify in theory what he is in practice." Marx to P. V. Annenkov, Brussels, Dec. 28, 1846, in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Selected Works in Two Volumes* (Moscow, 1955), 2: 451.

12. Weeks, "Artist," 7, believes the roots of Sloan's socialism can be traced back to his childhood, when he spent Saturdays reading at the Philadelphia Public Library and other days poring over his uncle's print collection of Hogarth, Rowlandson, and Cruickshank.

13. Helen Farr Sloan, Introduction, *New York Scene*, xvi.

14. Helen Farr Sloan in conversation with the author, Aug. 9, 1978.

15. On March 6, 1910, Sloan wrote in his Diary about the General Strike in Philadelphia: "To read of the trouble makes me feel really ill in sympathy for these people ground down and yet unable to see that only by united political action can they do the right thing for themselves. We are feeling the first throbs of the great Revolution. I'm proud of my old home—cradling the newer greater Liberty for America!"

16. See Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911–1917* (Philadelphia, 1988), chap. 1.

17. Issues of the *Masses* can be found in the John Sloan Archives, Delaware Art Museum.

18. Regarding bohemianism at this time, see Arthur Frank Wertheim, *The New York Little Renaissance: Iconoclasm, Modernism, and Nationalism in American Culture, 1908–1917* (New York, 1976), particularly "Part One: Iconoclasm: The Revolt Against the Genteel Tradition." Richard Fitzgerald, in *Art and Politics: Cartoonists of the "Masses" and "Liberator"* (Westport, Conn., 1973), 17, maintains that the originality of the *Masses* was in part due to "the unformed nature of American socialism, with its roots in bohemian revolt, before the impact of the Bolshevik model on the United States."

19. Bullard, "John Sloan," 109.

20. The same drawing was also reproduced on the front page of the *Call*, April 25, 1914. For the July 1914 cover of the *Masses*, Sloan represented John D. Rockefeller, Jr., whose family had the controlling interest in the mine, attempting to wash from his hands the blood of the women and children murdered when National Guardsmen set fire to their tents pitched after the Ludlow miners had been evicted from their company-owned homes. See Samuel Yellen, "Bloody Ludlow," *American Labor Struggles: 1877–1934* (1936; rpt. New York, 1974), 205–50.

21. Women appear as supporters for striking men in *Direct Action* in the January 1913 issue of the *Masses*. Sloan was also preoccupied with what he considered the failure of organized religion, as noted by Lloyd Goodrich, *John Sloan* (New York, 1952), 44.

22. See Weeks, "Artist," 40, regarding Sloan's candidacy for judge. Sloan's slide away from the Socialist Party began about this time, according to Helen Farr Sloan, in conversation with the author on Aug. 9, 1978. Goodrich, *John Sloan*, 47, states that Sloan left the Socialist Party "within the next few years" after his 1916 break with the *Masses*. Goodrich adds: "But although no longer active politically, in his thinking and his emotional reactions he remained a socialist to the end of his life, and both in private and public he often expressed himself on that side of issues."

23. The circumstances of Sloan's leaving the *Masses* are discussed in Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living* (New York, 1948), 549–56, and Goodrich, *John Sloan*, 45–47. According to Helen Farr Sloan (letter to author, April 3, 1979), Maurice Becker also asked Sloan to attend the meeting.

24. A draft of Sloan's proposal, which enunciated a complete reorganization, is on

file at the Sloan Archives, Delaware Art Museum. The issues were not clear-cut; on the issue of financial support for the magazine, Sloan was more radical than Eastman. Sloan's last point in the proposal stated: "Let us go to our money contributors for as *little* as *possible*. Let us form a committee or ask for volunteers to do this unpleasant work. Let us lift the 'masses' out of the Organized Charity class of drains on the purses of the rich."

25. Quoted in Eastman, *Enjoyment*, 554.

26. Ibid., 555.

27. Ibid. Eastman maintained that Maurice Becker also resigned. Fitzgerald, *Art and Politics*, 38, n. 37, stated that Becker informed him on July 31, 1968, that he did not walk out, and in fact contributed to three more issues of the *Masses*.

28. Regarding the decline of the Socialist Party during the war years, see Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," in Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., *Socialism and American Life* (Princeton, 1952), 1: 291–321. The discussion about the Socialist Party is not necessarily valid about other socialist or Marxist groups of that time.

29. Sloan, *New York Scene*, 382.

30. William Dean Howells, *Criticism and Fiction* (New York, 1891), 128.

31. Caffin, *Story of American Painting*, 343–44.

32. George Santayana, "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," in *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion* (New York, 1926), 188. Address delivered in 1911; first published in 1913. I am grateful to Mary Ann Lublin, who several years ago pointed out this quotation to me.

33. I discuss painters of the "genteel tradition" briefly in *The Painters' America: Rural and Urban Life, 1810–1910* (New York, 1974) and *Turn-of-the-Century America: Paintings, Graphics, Photographs, 1890–1910* (New York, 1977).

34. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (1899; rpt. New York, 1953), 126.

35. Sloan was aware of these painters and their works. On Nov. 8, 1906, he commented in his Diary on the members of the annual jury of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: "The Penn. Academy Jury has Glackens on it, which is fine, but oh, the rest of the list is out today. Redfield, chairman, DeCamp of Boston, Benson of Boston. Oh the poor Boston Brand of American Art! Childe Hassam, who owes debts of kindness to last year's Juries, Julian Story the temporary Philadelphian. Oh sad outlook! Redfield on the Hanging Committee!! S'death."

36. A pretentiously ambitious yet simplistic and humorless attempt to interpret much of Sloan's work as "evidence of regression to scoptophilic impulses, the original sublimation of which must have led Sloan to become an artist," is John Baker's "Voyeurism in the Art of John Sloan: The Psychodynamics of a 'Naturalistic' Motif," *Art Quarterly*, n.s., 1 (Autumn 1978): 379–95.

37. As Sloan was drawn into politics in 1909, his references to women substantially decrease in that and following years of the Diary.

38. Sloan's drawing made from this memory was "At the Top of the Swing," used as the May 1913 cover for the *Masses*.

39. These notes may later have inspired *Sunday Afternoon in Union Square* (1912, Bowdoin College Museum of Art).

40. These notes may have occasioned *Nursemaids, Madison Square* (1907, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, F. M. Hall Collection.)

41. The first quotation is from John Sloan, *Gist of Art: Principles and Practise Expounded in the Classroom and Studio*, recorded with the assistance of Helen Farr Sloan, rev. ed. (New York, 1977), xxxi. In his Diary, on Oct. 2, 1909, he wrote of seeing a parade of children: "Crowds of children merrymaking always makes me sad, rather undefined in origin—perhaps it is the thought of this youth and happiness so soon to be worn away by contact with the social condition, the grind and struggle for existence—that the few rich may live from their efforts. The struggle to be one of the rich makes the earnest working slave." The second quotation is from the original *Gist of Art*, published in 1939 by American Artists Group, Inc., New York, 244.

42. The distinction has to do with the artist's intentions. Many early twentieth-century artists, intent on expressing the "inner essence" of the thing to be represented, were drawn to theories of empathy, as formulated by the German philosopher Theodore Lipps. Henri, however, stressed personal expression—putting the emphasis on *the artist* rather than *the subject* expressed.

43. The remarks were first made on an NBC television program, May 13, 1949, and quoted in Peter Morse, *John Sloan's Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné of Etchings, Lithographs, and Posters* (New Haven, 1969), 141.

44. George Moore, *Impressions and Opinions* (London, 1891), 318. I am grateful to Alicia Faxon for bringing this reference to my attention. Sloan owned Moore's *Modern Painters* (Sloan Archives). In 1907 he bought Moore's *The Lake* and read *Leaves from My Dead Life* and *Confessions of a Young Man*, all of which were recorded in his Diary.

45. Weeks, "Artist," 40. During her research, Weeks studied the records of the Socialist Party's Branch One at the Tamiment Library, New York University.

46. Entry from Sloan's Diary, Sloan Archives, Delaware Art Museum, not published in *New York Scene*. *The Bomb* was published in London in 1908 and in New York in 1909. John Quinn, discussed later, owned both copies, which were sold at auction. See Anderson Galleries, *Complete Catalogue of the Library of John Quinn* (New York, 1924), Lots 3845 and 3846. In spot-checking the ellipses in the published Diary (that is, Bruce St. John's edited *New York Scene*), I found few instances as interesting as this remark by Sloan. Often the omissions have to do with addresses of artists, the food he ate, and the like; nevertheless, the serious researcher would find it necessary to peruse the original.

47. A breakdown of the kinds and numbers of paintings done by Sloan can be found in Grant Holcomb III, "A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings of John Sloan, 1900–13" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1972). Briefly: between 1904 and 1908 Sloan painted 24 genre paintings, 15 portraits, and 45, mostly small, landscapes; between 1909 and 1913, he painted 31 genre scenes, 34 portraits, 9 landscapes, and 11 paintings of the female nude. Helen Farr Sloan reminded the author in a letter of April 3, 1979, that the later works are distinctly lighter in palette.

48. Henri's philosophy at this time was expressed in his article "Progress in Our

National Art Must Spring from the Development of Individuality of Ideas and Freedom of Expression: A Suggestion for a New Art School," *Craftsman* 15 (January 1909): 386–401.

49. The Sloans did not warm to Marjory Henri, whom they met on Oct. 29, 1908. At their second meeting, on Nov. 3, Sloan commented: "Mrs. H. does not seem to show any hopeful signs on second meeting. I can not see what intellectual help she could be, nor economical household assistance—nor can I even feel that she is beautiful as an ornament." Sloan was being ironic in his remark about her as "an ornament."

50. Quoted in Van Wyck Brooks, *John Sloan: A Painter's Life* (New York, 1955), 114. Brooks incorrectly states (p. 101) that the meeting took place in the summer of 1908. He emphasizes Yeats's influence on Sloan, which Helen Farr Sloan confirmed in several conversations with the author during 1978. For another detailed discussion, see Robert Gordon, *John Butler Yeats and John Sloan: The Records of a Friendship* (Dublin, 1978), a shorter version of which was published in the *Art Journal* 32 (Spring 1973).

51. Brooks, *John Sloan*, 121.

52. Quoted by Helen Farr Sloan, *New York Scene*, 339.

53. The Water Color Society rejected four of them for being "vulgar" and "indecent." See Morse, *John Sloan's Prints*, 134.

54. See also B. L. Reid, *The Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends* (New York, 1968), 86.

55. Letter from Sloan to Quinn, dated Nov. 24, 1912, New York Public Library. Reprinted with the permission of Helen Farr Sloan and the John Quinn Memorial Collection, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

56. Letter from Quinn to Sloan, dated Jan. 2, 1913. All the letters quoted here are with the permission of Mrs. Sloan and/or The New York Public Library.

57. Letter from Sloan to Quinn, dated Jan. 23, 1913, New York Public Library.

58. Letter from Quinn to Sloan, dated Jan. 24, 1913, carbon copy on file in the New York Public Library.

59. Quinn, as an early patron of twentieth-century modernism, was an enthusiast interested in converting his American friends. It is not known, however, which version of the manifesto he gave Sloan. The manifesto is not listed in the Anderson Galleries' sale catalogue for Quinn's library.

60. Letter from Sloan to Quinn, dated Nov. 21, 1914, New York Public Library.

61. Sloan, in October 1913, ran an advertisement in the *Masses* offering his New York etchings for sale, but he received not one order. In February 1915 he sent about 1,600 sales-promotional brochures to institutions and individuals culled from *Who's Who*. This venture was almost equally unsuccessful, with only two sales made. See Morse, *John Sloan's Prints*, 17.

62. The Maratta system was described in Sloan's Diary, June 13, 1909: "A regularly gradated sequence; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple with the same 'intervals' and a low keyed set of 'hues' of the same colors. Henri thinks there are great possibilities. The palette which a painter uses now [earth hues and mineral colors], certainly has big jumps in it." Several references to the Maratta system in his Diary were edited out of the published *New York Scene*.

63. Quoted in Brooks, *John Sloan*, 123.

64. Quoted in ibid., 134.

65. It is not known whether Sloan at this time knew of the works of Käthe Kollwitz, the preeminent early twentieth-century artist of social protest, whose etchings are biting indictments of the workers' plight.

66. Sloan in conversation with Joseph J. Kwiat on Nov. 30, 1948, quoted in Joseph J. Kwiat, "Robert Henri and the Emerson-Whitman Tradition," *PMLA* 71, no. 4, pt. 1 (September 1956): 620.