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Near Vermeer: Edmund C. Tarbell's and John Sloan's Dutch Pictures

Writing in April 1891 for the London weekly *The Speaker* the Irish author George Moore celebrated the recently deceased English *Punch* illustrator Charles Keene as "A Great Artist." This piece was republished in the 1893 collection of Moore's art criticism, *Modern Painting*, which the American painter Robert Henri recommended to his friend John Sloan in Philadelphia that same year. "[Keene] affected neither a knowledge of literature nor of Continental art," Moore claims. "He lived in England and for England, content to tell the story of his own country and the age he lived in; in a word, he worked and lived as did the Dutchmen of 1630."[1] Two decades later the art critic Charles Caffin, who emigrated to the United States in the early 1890s, wrote extensively on American and European art, and tended to disguise his English origins, declared "I know no better example of complexity, thus ordered into simpleness by Scientific-Artistic Organization, than the Holland genre picture."[2] These strange declarations about historical Dutch painting make more sense in their specific (art) historical moment. Moore and Caffin, like the American critics Frank Jewett Mather and James Gibbons Huneker, were among a group of well-read, well-travelled commentators on historical and contemporary art who sought to reconcile cosmopolitanism with an on-going investment in national culture, and modernity with a reverence for the art of the past. In their writing, and in broader late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American cultural, historical and political discourse, the art of the Dutch Republic, and indeed the Republic itself, came to signify both rootedness and progressivism.

This essay locates the American painters Edmund C. Tarbell and John Sloan within this broad understanding of "Dutch pictures." It explores Sloan's response to Moore's ideas and Caffin's response to Tarbell's painting, as well as both painters' encounters with seventeenth-century Dutch art in American collections, and the various ways in which they acknowledge and assimilate its influence. In so doing it suggests parallels and dialogues with other instances in which modernists consciously revived specific cultural epochs and relates to the broader sense in which early-twentieth-century modernism involved an interrogation of tradition, nostalgia, influence, homage and pastiche.

As Alexandra Harris observes, of the Bloomsbury Georgian revival, Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf constructed Georgians to fit their own agendas; early-twentieth-century appeals to "Dutchness" were, similarly, a product of presentism, and, to an extent, ignorance.[3] While scholarship was improving rapidly critics tended to generalise about "Dutch" painting with little attention to schools, styles and periods, and repeat misattributions and misinformation. That the insularity Moore ascribes to "the Dutchmen of 1630" has been thoroughly refuted by recent scholarship that reconnects Dutch painting to networks of global trade adds a layer of irony for contemporary readers. This essay does not attempt to correct such misunderstandings but instead takes them as part of a complex, mediated negotiation with art history and a transatlantic dialogue in which ideas and paintings moved through time and space while the painters themselves stay rooted to the spot.

The influence of long dead Europeans on Americans living in Boston and New York contrasts with the seemingly more vibrant and dialogic form of impressionism. Through Mary Cassatt's central role in the movement, Whistler's

and Sargent's complex engagement with its practices, and Tarbell and scores of other art students in Paris who picked up its ideas and techniques, late-nineteenth-century American involvement in impressionism has come to be seen as a paradigm for transatlantic artistic exchange, and American painters' point of access into the mainstreams of modern art. In this context celebrating the artist "content to tell the story of his own country" seems archaic. As Richard Brettell's introduction to the recent *American Impressionism* exhibition catalogue succinctly puts it: "'nationalism' is most often at war with 'the modern', and, if there is a premier form of artistic modernism, it is Impressionism. A term that is frequently applied to this trans-national or even anti-nation modernism is 'cosmopolitanism', which evokes both adaptability and rootlessness… ."[4] Tarbell features prominently in this exhibition and both he and Sloan absorbed but then move away from impressionist technique towards practices that look back, quite consciously, to earlier genre painting traditions. This was a shift from painting that exalted in the ephemeral play of light to art praised for its sense of local soil and sturdy folk. While light might seem a more modern medium than soil, attention to local and national roots would remain a living presence in twentieth-century art.

Modern Painting was a formative text for Sloan, who, at a time when many American artists, including Henri, travelled to Europe for education and inspiration, lacked the means to do so. Art historians Bernard Perlman and Rebecca Zurier have pointed to the ways *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888) and *Modern Painting* shaped both Henri's receptiveness to impressionism when he first travelled to Paris and the inspirational art teaching be brought back to his circle of American friends and students. Sloan's biographer, John Loughery,

observes that when Henri recommended *Modern Painting* it must have struck the young artist as "aesthetic guidance of a high order."[5] Moore's assertion that great art might derive from immersion in the local animates Sloan's first attempts at easel painting in his native Philadelphia, and works such as the New York City Life etchings that he made shortly after moving to lower Manhattan.[6] His attack, in the essay "Our Academicians" and elsewhere, on London art institutions may have bolstered Henri and Sloan in their own stand against the jury system of the National Academy of Design. Sloan's diary records many instances of buying, reading and sharing Moore's later work, and arguments, opinions and turns of phrase found in *Modern Painting* run through Henri's *The Art Spirit* (1923) and even Sloan's *Gist of Art* (1939).[7]

Moore argues that Keene's connection to his "home ground" makes his art "Dutch" and makes him a "Great Artist." Of the original *Punch* drawings shown at the Fine Art Society's memorial exhibition of which Moore's essay is loosely a review, he writes:

> These drawings are Dutch in the strange simplicity and directness of intention; they are Dutch in their oblivion to all interests except those of good drawing; they are Dutch in the beautiful quality of the workmanship. Examine the rich, simple drawing of that long coat or the side of that cab, and say if there is not something of the quality of a Terburg [Gerard ter Borch]. Terburg is simple as a page of seventeenth-century prose; and in Keene there is the same deep, rich, classic simplicity. The material is different, but the feeling is the same. I might, of course, say Jan Steen; and is it not certain that both Terburg and Steen, working under the same conditions, would not have produced drawings very like Keene's?[8]

The qualities Moore identifies as Dutch -- the recurring terms depth, richness and simplicity -- fall in with longstanding Victorian perceptions of the Dutch genre tradition that go back at least to John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1843-60). But it is Moore's provocation that artists did not have to be Dutch to be "Dutch" -- which he twists and extends with relish, stating "even the great Dutchmen themselves were not more Dutch than Keene was English" -- that is striking and that must have struck Sloan.

Keene's illustrations, like Moore's essays, were a lifelong influence for Sloan who grew up surrounded by the British graphic art in his great-uncle Alexander Priestley's "wonderful library with folios of [William] Hogarth and Cruikshank, etc" and first read *Modern Painting* while working as an illustrator for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Here he and his colleagues "studied the work of the English line draughtsman: Leech, Keene, et al, men who worked for Punch and the newspapers" as they honed their craft.[9] Also in Philadelphia he saw the Dutch paintings amassed by the city's wealthy collectors P. A. B. Widener and John G. Johnson.

Thus, while, frustratingly, Moore's essay refers to specific examples only by their Fine Art Society's catalogue number (and makes only general reference to "Terburg and Steen"), Sloan knew the kind of work under discussion:

> And now, looking through the material deep into the heart of the thing, is it a paradox to say that No. 221 is in feeling and quality of workmanship a Dutch picture of the best time? The scene depicted is the honeymoon. The young wife sits by an open window full of sunlight, and the curtains likewise are drenched in the pure white light. … Look at that peaceful face, that high forehead, how clearly conceived and how complete is the

> rendering! How slight the means, how extraordinary the result! The sunlight floods the sweet face so exquisitively stupid, and her soul, and the room, and the very conditions of life of these people are revealed to us.[10]

Much of Moore's account is grounded in an English specificity that would have been alien to Sloan, who had read Dickens and knew at least something of *Punch* but lacked the lived experience of English types and classes, and access to Fine Art Society exhibitions, that Moore assumes. Aging ageing jakjfh

Moore's art writing was admired by his British contemporaries, including Roger Fry who likened him to Ruskin and praised his ability to convey "the essential and untranslatable meaning of the picture."[11] No. 221 appeared in *Punch* in 1887 as *In the Honeymoon*, with a caption in which the wife's query, "What first attracted you, Dear?" is met with a rambling obfuscation that ends "I never could guess Widdles!" (fig. 1).[12] Moore's commentary takes readers to the precise locations of the "untranslatable" quality in Keene, that proximity of fit the features and details he depicts to the English middle-class life *The Speaker's* readership could be expected to know intimately. Beyond those elements including the drapery and the wife's forehead that Moore picks out, this quality is perhaps caught in the way the husband's hand, palm upwards and thumb pinched to forefingers, seems to cradle some tangible truth which absorbs the wife's attention but from which his own gaze strays blissfully distracted.

Sloan's 1905 illustration, "'Ain't it better than choc'late?'" (fig. 2) accompanied a light romance published in *McClure's Magazine* in which, in the course of a single Sunday, Irish-American shop workers overcome initial awkwardness, different tastes in ice-cream, and the problems posed by the girl's

drunken father and tyrannical mother. Sloan's five illustrations for the story catch its New York settings, including the Bethesda fountain (its iconic statue visible in the background) and its bustling terrace (replete with the bonnets and bow-ties of Sunday "best") where the young lovers eat ice-cream, as well as the details of type and class and character that are the essential content of Harvey J. O'Higgins' story.[13] The orphaned young man works in wholesale but is saving to buy his own store, and it is the precision with which Sloan's illustrations convey the intertwined anxieties of new romance and second-generation immigrant aspiration that means it would not be paradoxical, in Moore's terms, to see them as "Dutch pictures" too.

Moore's notion of "Dutch pictures" was a way to express his investment in tradition and rootedness and national culture without being nationalistic, and to elevate a form of provincialism while displaying his own erudition and cosmopolitanism. "We should strive to remain ignorant, making our lives mole-like, burrowing only in our own parish soil," writes Moore, who as an aspiring painter had eagerly travelled to Paris. "There are no universities in art, but there are village schools." "Soil," as a figure for the deep connection to place necessary for "great art," is a key term in *Modern Painting*, wherein "the great artist is he who is most racy of his native soil."

In this, and in his understanding of the Dutch Golden Age, Moore moves within the intellectual ambit of the French historian Hippolyte Taine who in his *Art in the Netherlands*, and in his writing on art and literature generally, pays sustained attention to, literally, the country's soil and other environmental conditions before turning, figuratively, to the art and culture that took root and flourished there.[14] Taine's ideas and metaphors profoundly influenced

transatlantic thinking about national culture in the second half of the nineteenth century, for example shaping, as literary historian Kendall Johnson points out, Henry James's expression of American cultural inferiority: "Hawthorne 'sprang' 'Out of the soil of New England … – in a crevice of what immitigable granite he sprouted and bloomed.'"[15] In his own autodidactic scholarship Sloan found his way back to this source, recording in several entries in his 1908 diary the purchase and careful study of Taine's *History of English Literature*.[16]

While Perlman and Zurier are right to say that Henri and Sloan would have encountered Moore's enthusiasm for the impressionism of Manet and Degas in *Modern Painting*, as careful readers they would have also picked up on his discontent with the movement by the late 1880s and disdain for the post-impressionism that followed. Here, too, Moore follows Taine, in whose deterministic model of national culture "A blooming period … is transient for the reason that the sap which produces it is exhausted by its production.[17] Moore's essay "Monet, Sisley, Pissarro and the Decadence" ends:

> France has produced great artists in quick succession. Think of all the great names, beginning with Ingres and ending with Degas, and wonder if you can that France has at last entered on a period of artistic decadence. For the last sixty years the work done in literary and pictorial art has been immense; the soil has been worked along and across. In every direction, and for many a year nothing will come to us from France but the bleat of the scholiast.[18]

Again, there are angles to Moore's writing here that would have been oblique to Henri and Sloan in Philadelphia. As Robert Stephen Becker explains, much of Moore's art criticism was intended as intervention in specific debates and

schisms in the London artworld.[19] But the clear message of *Modern Painting* is that the latter-day followers of the great impressionists were inevitably limited to faddishness and idiosyncrasy.

This may explain Sloan's reservations about the first extended notice he received, from the English writer Charles Caffin, who emigrated to America in the early 1890s and often "passed" as American in his art criticism. In his 1907 work of popular art history, *The Story of American Painting*, Caffin positions Sloan within transatlantic impressionism: "For it is what the Japanese call the 'Ukiyoye' that attracts him – 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."[20] Through reference to the Japanese "art of the floating world," which exerted a powerful influence over the Parisian avant-garde and to the Baudelairean vision of the city as phantasmagoria, Caffin relates Sloan to Manet and his followers. The painting, *Easter Eve* (1907), which Caffin uses to illustrate his analysis, fits this bill. Sloan spreads a swathe of bright colored smears and loose brushstrokes across the centre of the canvas, the wares of a flower shop that its proprietor offers in a solicitous gesture to his well-dressed customers. A woman in the foreground pauses and turns to look, encouraging viewers to see the floral spray, the large bright-lit window, and the couple's umbrella silhouette against them as spectacle. The back of another black-clad figure half-caught at the edge of the canvas implies a stream of pedestrians to be briefly illuminated and fascinated by this scene.

In an earlier chapter, "The Remnants of the English Influence," Caffin makes a withering assessment of antebellum artists such as George Caleb

Bingham and William Sidney Mount: "The genre painting of the middle of the [nineteenth] century is interesting to-day chiefly as an illustration of the kind of picture that amused our forebears and still amuses those of us who care more about some little anecdotal subject-matter than the method of the painting." He is then at pains to differentiate Sloan from this tradition, asserting that he, "like other impressionists … avoids all competition with the verbal artist, and renders exclusively a painter's impression both of the scene and of its underlying human interest."[21] In his account of pre-1940 American art history, Andrew Hemingway explains that in such statements it is, through Caffin, "the emergent aesthetic of modernism speaking, and correspondingly, the models of art practice and art discourse will be French."[22] While pleased to have been given "quite a notice" by Caffin, Sloan's diary records his concern that the critic had granted him "Almost too much prominence in the 'impressionist' movement as he puts it."[23] This might simply be modesty, as Caffin gives far more attention to Sloan than to many of his better-known contemporaries, but it perhaps also acknowledges that this close association with impressionism and "the passing show" misses much of what was at stake in his art.

The Story of American Painting celebrates impressionism as a definitive movement away from genre painting, with its baggage of anecdotalism and nostalgia. By contrast the art critic Frank Jewett began a *New York Evening Post* column, also published in 1907, by stating, "An inspection of the current art exhibitions would show *genre* painting almost completely in abeyance" and goes on to lament its loss as "we need the interpreter of everyday life." Mather argues that romanticism "dealt familiar painting its death blow" with its insistence on the "imaginative" and "unfamiliar," and as a result there is no adequate painterly

record of contemporary life equivalent to that of "seventeenth-century Holland [where] we may consult Hals, Terburg, Jan Steen, the Ostades, Metsu, and a score of others."

Like much of the commentary quoted in this essay, these opinions appeared in a newspaper and so carry questionable lasting significance. The painter and critic Guy Pene du Bois explained that the newspaper art critic "writes and thinks so that a man crushed in a crowded subway train will be able to understand every word."[24] But du Bois's memoir also records a lively and erudite critical community working on the *Post*, the *New York Sun* and other City papers and it is clear from his diary that, for example, Sloan paid attention to this kind of art writing, as it is apparent that it was taken seriously in the wider culture. Mather's column was republished in *The Nation* and prompted a long counter-argument in defence of contemporary genre painters in the liberal Massachusetts newspaper, the *Springfield Republican*.[25]

Mather's column concludes by turning to impressionism as an unlikely site of genre painting's re-emergence:

> Happily, there are suggestions of a revival of this homely art, and paradoxically enough, it is the impressionists who bear the gifts. It is the followers of Manet and Monet, who profess an entirely impersonal devotion to problems of light, that are actually producing as if accidentally the best genre painting. At home one may recall Childe Hassam's occasional excursions in this field, Tarbell's transcripts of country house and studio life, the fresh and vivid impressions of New York streets by [William] Glackens, John Sloan, and George Luks. Good *genre* is rarely brusque: it wants a quiet relish of the human comedy. Truly in the great

> tradition of genre seems to us Jerome Myers's vision of our slums. Here is the brooding quality that constitutes the dignity of a homely art: here is the balance between personal interests and play of chromatic light and shade, that one notes in the sober products of the Dutch school.

Underlying this argument is the recognition that impressionism rarely strayed far from conventional subjects, so that if painters under its influence slowed down their execution (switching from brusqueness to brooding) and moved back from purely "problems of light" to chiaroscuro, traditions of genre (and landscape and still life) painting re-emerged.

Mather's survey of American impressionists-cum-genre painters takes in Henri and Sloan's New York circle, but also, in Hassam and Tarbell, members of "The Ten," a group against whom they sometimes sought to define themselves. In his diary Sloan disparages members of the group as "the poor Boston Brand of American Art!"[26] While "Brand" here is derogatory, the group of Boston painters -- including Frank W. Benson, Philip Leslie Hale and, the younger artist, William MacGregor Paxton -- who were sometimes dubbed the "Tarbellites" in recognition of Tarbell perceived leadership or preeminence, certainly shared much in common as former Paris art students, followers of impressionism who assimilated its methods to those of their more formal training, and pupils and teachers at the Museum of Fine Arts School. This strong sense of a group of artists identified closely with one other, with their city, and with European precedents, was institutionalised with the formation of the Guild of Boston Artists -- invoking the Low Countries' "Guilds of St Luke" -- in 1914. While Mather singles out Sloan's friend Jerome Myers as comparable to "the sober

products of the Dutch school," it was these Bostonians that American critics most commonly associated with Dutch genre painting.

In December 1906, the *Boston Sunday Herald* hailed Tarbell's *Girl Crocheting* (1904) as "The Best Picture in America," and proclaimed, "there are some sober-minded persons who can see in the little painting qualities surpassing some of those in the work of the old Dutch masters, who delighted in the portraiture of interiors and the quiet home life of the Hollanders." The full page spread reproduced Tarbell's painting and Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (1657), which was captioned "Van Der Meer Interior Suggesting Style of Mr. Tarbell's Picture."[27] Such claims extended beyond local pride and the local press. In his account of *New England Interior* (fig. 3, 1906), which was shown "unfinished" two months later at The Ten's 1907 Montross Gallery exhibition in New York James Huneker wearily acknowledges the familiarity of the Dutch painting comparison: "Tarbell is represented by only one picture, but it suffices; a New England interior, unfinished, yet finished beyond the power of other painters. You say Vermeer or Terburg."[28]

The point was perhaps so familiar because it struck writers across the critical spectrum: on this matter Huneker, who shared Moore's commitment to cosmopolitan modernity (but also his reverence for past masters and disdain for postimpressionism), agreed with the more staunchly conservative painter and critic Kenyon Cox. Grouping *Girl Crocheting* and *New England Interior* with *Preparing for the Matinee* (1907) in a 1909 appreciation for *Burlington's Magazine*, Cox writes: "The analogy of this art to that of Vermeer is apparent at a glance. There is the same simplicity of subject, the same reliance on sheer perfection of representation – the same delicate truth of values, the same

exquisite sensitiveness to gradations of light."[29] The emphasis on simplicity, truth and quality resonates with what Moore and his Victorian predecessors saw in Dutch art, but the focus narrows to Vermeer.

Moore presents ter Borch and Steen as essentially interchangeable; indeed it is their absence of individualism, their expression of what is typical and ordinary, that defines their greatness. By the end of the nineteenth-century historians and critics recognised Vermeer, whose identity had long been obscured and paintings misattributed, as an individualistic talent, a precursor indeed to the romantic vision of individual creativity. Tarbell cultivated and acknowledged an association not to Dutch genre painting in general but to Vermeer in particular. Beyond subjective claims about atmosphere and quality, Cox points to a shared "willingness to use a few elements of composition – a few objects – again and again…." Light falls from high windows in sparsely furnished rooms decorated with fine paintings and objects; a woman or women sit or stand absorbed in some combination of hushed talk, silent contemplation, delicate tasks and reading. Moreover, as art historian Ivan Gaskell observes, in *Preparing for the Matinee* "the generic Vermeer allusion is made explicit by Tarbell's incorporation of a fragment as a painting-within-a-painting in the upper right corner of the composition. Cut off by that corner, we see windows and a tiled floor: part of a reproduction of *The Music Lesson* [c. 1662-65]."[30] Art historian Bernice Kramer Leader traces a number of such more and less direct allusions. She also follows the spread of appreciation for Vermeer among Boston painters through a collection of essays by Thoré-Bürger and others published in translation in 1904, through Philip Hale's dedicated, lifelong scholarship, and

through the presence of *The Concert* (c. 1664) at Isabella Stewart Gardner's Fenway Court.[31]

While Tarbell had seen and admired Vermeer's paintings as a student in Europe in the mid 1880s, Gardner's 1892 acquisition brought *The Concert* back to the hometown in which he was firmly rooted. The series of related works that begins with *Girl Crocheting* roughly coincides with the public display of *The Concert* following the 1903 opening of Fenway Court. Here, amidst a highly cosmopolitan collection of European fine art and antiquities displayed in a manner that "subordinated the symbolism of the particular parts … to the aesthetic integrity of the museum as a whole," Vermeer was far from Dutch soil.[32]

In *The American Scene*, his 1907 account of returning to America after prolonged absence, Henry James made much of the sight of such European objects displaced in American settings, with the Aphrodite sculpture at the nearby Boston Art Museum prompting the wry declaration, "he has not seen a fine Greek thing till he has seen it in America." Encountering Fenway Court against the backdrop of a moribund Boston haunted by its former glories, James found solace in his friend's creation: "It is in presence of the results magnificently attained, the energy triumphant over everything, that one feels the fine old disinterested tradition of Boston least broken."[33] James does not mention specific objects at Fenway Court, giving only a brief impression, but Vermeer's work, with which he was already familiar, was surely among the old world objects re-seen and given new life and energy in this new world scene.[34]

In her exploration of *The American Scene*'s mediation of past and present, Beverly Haviland explains that for James

> 'Mrs Jack's' collection … performs a valuable cultural function not merely because it is an example of taste as a creative rather than a merely consuming act but because, even while it remains private property, it is publicly available for others to study, to appreciate, and, perhaps, even to be inspired by. This is re-creation and interpretation of cultural property on a grand scale.[35]

Were Tarbell's paintings the kind of creative interpretation James and Gardner might have envisioned? Recalling his brief time at the Museum of Fine Arts School Lincoln Kirstein told the historian Trevor Fairbrother, "I think all the Bostonians for whom you claim 'elegance' came out of Mrs. Jack Gardner's beautiful Vermeer. You will note that she didn't have much interest in any of them…."[36] As Kirstein suggests, by bringing his art (perilously) near to that of an Old Master, Tarbell risked a derivative rather than generative relationship with the past. Sympathetic critics and commentators were alive to this possibility and sought to defend Tarbell against the charges of imitation and conservatism.

The Boston art dealer S. Morton Vose II recalled that his father, gallery owner Robert C. Vose, admired Tarbell and Benson but dismissed their pupil Paxton with the popular witticism, "A near Vermeer is a mere veneer."[37] "[I]f the inspiration of Vermeer is evident there is no trace of imitation," Cox declared, perhaps with such jibes in mind. "Mr. Tarbell is trying to do what Vermeer did, not to do it as Vermeer did it – still less to give the superficial aspect of the Dutchman's pictures."[38] Certainly, seeing these paintings today, it is striking how far from Vermeer they are. While *New England Interior* has passages of paint -- the bright white shine on the curved arm of the highly polished wooden chair, the carefully worked reflection of the vase on the table top -- on which to hang

Vermeer comparisons, much of the canvas is given over to scumbled surfaces and loose, gestural brushwork. The painting's iconography similarly offers points of comparison -- as in the familiar Dutch genre motif of the open door giving into another interior space -- but complicates or subverts them – the door is quite precisely half-open, playing between the sense of an open, legible home and something more mysterious. In their abbreviations and hints at mystery Tarbell's paintings are, perhaps unsurprisingly, closer to those of contemporaries, such as John Singer Sargent or Vilhelm Hammershøi, who, similarly, brought the lessons of impressionism to contemplative interiors.

Two years after commenting on *New England Interior*, Huneker saw in *Girl Reading*, shown at The Ten's 1909 annual, "silver daylight, the cool light of New England. A girl bathed in its magic is reading. The spacing is alluring, *from the chair to the wall, from the window to the chair*. It is the Vermeer gambit, that no one will deny, but who can handle such difficult and lovely problems as Tarbell does?"[39] Huneker's patient phrasing measures out the dimensions of the room, rendering in language the poetics of interior space that Vermeer perfected and that, on this account, Tarbell consciously and carefully inhabits. In a similar vein, and in a striking extension of Taine's metaphoric association of artistic production with organic growth, Hale argued that Tarbell and Paxton were "very interesting as showing the effect of the Impressionistic movement when grafted, so to say, on good old Dutch stock."[40] Hale traces the "Dutch technique" passed from the Antwerp-trained teacher Otto Grundman to his pupil Tarbell, but also stresses the aspects of colour, handling and composition that distinguish Tarbell's work.

The potential for painting in this vein to lapse into nostalgia was apparent in the popular "Dutch" subjects made by Walter MacEwen and others. One of several American painters based in the Netherlands, MacEwen specialised in "costume drama" style Dutch historical scenes. In his *The Secretary* (1905), as historian Annette Stott points out, "Even the satin dress and fur-trimmed jacket are motifs straight out of Vermeer and other little Dutch masters."[41] For Huneker *New England Interior* did more than merely hark back in this way to an old world past: "You say Vermeer or Terburg. Tarbell has imprisoned also within this frame a separate national, rather sectional sentiment. It is American, and it is New England." The implication here is that this is a "Dutch picture" in Moore's sense of a work analogously immersed in the history of its own time and local soil and character. "The room with its window, above all, its background, fairly floats in atmosphere," Huneker argues. "The women are actual transcripts."[42] As in many of his paintings, the women Tarbell depicts here are his daughters and that connection makes it harder to see them as "types" in the manner suggested by Huneker, but maybe there is something more in the picture than clothing and setting that marks it as a contemporary New England scene. Perhaps the way the girl to the right's hand intrudes into the lap and the personal space of her companion who in turn seems to shy away from her introduces a crackle of tension, an angular vehemence, a heightened emotion, into the becalmed, pristine interior and so perhaps calls to mind New England's history of quietly spoken, fiercely voiced female radicalism and moral suasion. Perhaps this is "sectional sentiment." Perhaps.

These fine distinctions and observations made in earnest by informed critics have been largely dismissed by later art historians. By 1912 Huneker

could boast to the *New York Sun* editor Edward P. Mitchell, "I've seen every Vermeer in existence even the one down in Budapesth (*sic*)."[43] Hale's comments appear in his *Jan Vermeer of Delft* (1913), which was the first monograph on the painter in English and which continued to be taken as serious scholarship up to and beyond the publication of a revised edition, *Vermeer*, in 1937. Tellingly while a chapter on "Vermeer and Modern Painting" appears in both editions, the remarks about Tarbell and Paxton do not. By the 1930s American taste had moved far from their genteel scenes of leisure class women, and Vermeer's status had risen such that, regardless of the *Boston Herald*'s claims to the contrary, comparisons could not but seem iconoclastic and pretentious. On the few occasions in which Tarbell and his peers have figured in subsequent histories of American art, critics have tended, like Leader, to dismiss the associations with seventeenth-century Dutch art as profoundly conservative and backward looking, or to bracket them, as curator Erica Hirshler does, as a misguided facet of the contemporary reception in order to stress other more proximate influences such as Japonisme and the Arts and Crafts movement. Bound up with the *Boston Herald*'s hyperbole and *New York Tribune* critic Royal Cortissoz's claim that *Girl Crocheting* was a "modern Ver Mer," Cox, Huneker and Hale's more nuanced references to Vermeer might seem best left to their historical moment.[44]

Writing in that moment, for *Harper's Monthly* in 1908, Charles Caffin suggested ways of seeing Tarbell in relation to both modernity and Vermeer -- while studiously avoiding direct reference or comparison to seventeenth-century Dutch painting. As with his earlier claims about Sloan's impressionism, Caffin sees Tarbell moving beyond genre painting's constraints by making scenes of

everyday life vehicles for aesthetic expression. "We no longer regard them as *genre* in the old sense that their significance is to be calculated by their immediate representation of familiar things," Caffin writes on the page facing a reproduction of *New England Interior*. "It is true that such matters form the ostensible subject of his pictures; but they are merely the necessary substratum of fact upon which his real intention must be built – the fabric of subtle suggestion to one's sense of abstract beauty."[45] As Andrew Hemingway points out, Caffin brought to his popular art writing a strong sense of medium specificity and other ways in which French postimpressionism and critics like Roger Fry were beginning to stake out the terrain of modernism.

But Caffin would title a later book *Art For Life's Sake* (1913), and was also keen to adumbrate Tarbell's relevance to contemporary society. He opens his *Harper's* essay by paraphrasing an editorial in the progressive Christian weekly, *The Independent*, which asked,

> what the artists of America are doing toward embodying [current and emerging] ideals. How do they respond to the intense patriotism of the country, to the new religion of humanity in its conflict with disease and crime, to the eager spirit of uplift, to the thousand and one ways in which the modern mind is triumphing anew and more conclusively over matter?[46]

This question is a roll call of Progressive concerns and keywords, the stuff of Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism and Herbert Croly's *The Promise of American Life* (1909). Refuting the belief at the root of such inquiry -- that a painter absorbed by beauty and technique has necessarily "retired into a quiet

backwater, far from the real stream of thought and conduct" -- Caffin sees Tarbell's art as an aesthetic corollary to these ideals.

In a subtle argument, the full sense of which only becomes apparent when read in relation to his other art-writing, Caffin moves back and forth between the aesthetic qualities he finds in Tarbell's painting and what he saw as the dominant values of Progressive America: "For to-day it is the environment in which our form of life exists and the relation of the one to the other that determine not only our own ideals, but those also of the truly modern artist."[47] The vague claims about environment and "form of life" make more sense in the context of Progressive concerns with urban planning and renewal and the City Beautiful movement, about which Caffin had published in *Harper's Monthly* and elsewhere.[48] For Caffin, Tarbell paints "with a rare vision that is keenly sensitive to the most subtle and intangible and fugitive evidences of beauty" and importantly "knows how to unify all these myriad nuances into a chord of complete harmony."[49] This then is the aesthetic corollary to the language in of Progressivism: Croly's *Promise of American Life* sought to rethink "that harmony between public and private interest which must be the object of a national economic system"; John Dewey valued the cultural pluralism that resulted from mass immigration because, "This interactive relationship between things creates unity, and harmony on a higher scale."[50]

Caffin's related writing about Dutch art develops these claims further. In another *Harper's Monthly* essay, published exactly one year later, Caffin introduced Tarbell's friend and fellow Boston School painter, Frank W. Benson, with references to various schools of European painting. He argued that the ideals of contemporary America "come nearer to those of seventeenth-century

Holland than to those of Italy," that the Dutch Republic upheld a "democratic ideal, compact as a crystal" and that "Among the artists in America who are responding to our present-day ideals is Frank W. Benson." A few months later Caffin published *The Story of Dutch Art* (1909), which begins, "To the present and future art of the new republic of the United States of America this story of the art of the old Dutch Republic is dedicated by the author." The parallels drawn here fit a wider cultural phenomenon, coined "Holland Mania" by the historian Annette Stott, wherein revisionist American historians in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth century developed an account of the Dutch Republic as the European antecedent and point of origin for the modern United States. These ideas found expression in the scholarship of John Lothrop Motley but also in the more frivolous form of Walter MacEwan's popular paintings and the "Old Dutch Cleanser" household product trademarked in 1906. "For the modern world dates from the seventeenth century, and its pioneers were the Hollanders of that period," Caffin explains, in a presentist manner that fits both the form of his populist art writing and American progressives' investment in seeing Holland as an alternative antecedent to Britain. "Practically everything that we recognize to-day as characteristic of the modern spirit in politics, religion, science, society, industry, commerce, and art has its prototype amid that sturdy people." Dutch Republicanism, but also free-thinking, entrepreneurship and cleanliness, were frequent invoked.

A respectful but critical reviewer for *The Nation* observed of *The Story of Dutch Art*, "Mr. Caffin is caught as he frequently is by putting on an equal basis the artist's concrete work and his own inferences as to its spirit."[51] The same observation might be made of his claims about the Boston School painters, which

in his writing of 1908-09 coalesce with his thoughts on Dutch painting and culture. Tarbell and Benson were residents of the Progressive Boston of Louis Brandeis and William James but there is little sense of dialogue between the Museum School and Harvard. Moreover, Tarbell was an apt representative of what Henry James found to be early-twentieth-century Boston's "inexpressive generation." His credo "why not make it like" appears in the *Boston Herald*'s tribute, recurs in numerous other accounts of the man and his work, and comes to seem like his definitive statement on his art. But Caffin's arguments rest little on how Tarbell and Benson saw their relationship to either seventeenth-century Dutch art or their contemporary America.

Where Moore claims that Terburg and Keene share an analogous approach to their environment -- they would, in the same "conditions" produce the same work -- Caffin creates interwoven analogies between the ideals of the Dutch Republic and progressive-era America and between painters who express those ideals in aesthetic form in each moment. These arguments find fullest and strangest statement in *Art for Life's Sake*, which must be one of the few books to devote equivalent attention to Johannes Vermeer and Frederick Winslow Taylor. It is here that Caffin asserts, "I know no better example of complexity, thus ordered into simpleness by Scientific-Artistic Organization, than the Holland genre picture."[52] By bringing his painting near to such Dutch pictures Tarbell, on a sympathetic viewing, creates works that invoke, acknowledge or call to mind Vermeer. In so doing they do not ask for comparison but for a contemplation of mutual or equivalent aesthetics and ideals. Intended to hang in Boston Brahmin homes, as *New England Interior* was following Catherine Codman's purchase of

the painting, they acknowledge that they shared the city with Vermeer's *The Concert*, and perhaps inflected the way that work could be seen in Boston.

As *The Nation* noted, the publication of Caffin's book on Dutch art coincided with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1909 Hudson-Fulton loan exhibition, which, as part of a city-wide celebration of 300-year anniversary of Henry Hudson's "discovery," gathered an array of seventeenth-century Dutch art from the burgeoning collections of wealthy Americans, including Henry C. Frick and J. Pierpont Morgan (but not Isabella Stewart Gardner, whose Vermeer stayed, resolutely, in Boston). The catalogue boasted: "Some little astonishment will no doubt be felt in European art circles that it was possible to assemble in New York one hundred and forty-nine paintings of first importance, among them thirty-seven Rembrandts, twenty Frans Hals, and six Vermeers."[53] The exhibition both expressed and encouraged the feelings of reverence and kinship toward the Dutch Republic that Stott describes in *Holland Mania*. Dutch painting from this period was, curator Wilhelm Valentiner explained in his "Preface," the product of "political freedom," in which "the nation had time and opportunity to occupy itself with the aesthetic expression of newly achieved nationality."[54] The parallels between the Dutch and American "new nations" were underscored by the overall design of the Hudson-Fulton exhibition, in which these paintings were shown alongside a section surveying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American art.

Critics writing about the exhibition, whether caught up in the spirit of the wider Hudson-Fulton celebrations or convinced by Lothrop's revisionist history, happily claimed Dutch painters as antecedents. In the *New York Tribune*, Royal Cortissoz (who was of Spanish and Caribbean origins) saw that "The light that

suffuses this land of *our ancestors* is gray and cool" (italics added). Writing in *The Craftsman* Natalie Curtis (primarily known for her work as a pioneering ethnomusicologist) quotes George Moore's claim that the "Dutch School" of the seventeenth-century was "entirely original" in its turn to "the most ordinary incidents of everyday life." In Moore's essay, "The Failure of the Nineteenth Century" (reprinted in *Modern Painting*), Dutch artists' engagement with quotidian subjects is attributed to their being "unimaginative, stay-at-home folk" whose "whole country was known to them."[55] The perception of an insular Dutch Republic in contrast to empire-building Britain carried particular currency in the context of early twentieth century America's evolving sense of itself as a republic increasingly imbricated in imperialist incursions in Cuba, the Philippines and elsewhere. More prosaically, Curtis taps into the same associations as Old Dutch Cleanser, to find in the exhibition a rebuke to contemporary standards: "as we think of the dark narrow canyons leading from lower Broadway, with the skyscrapers towering on every side, it seems impossible to believe that those very streets once held the homes of the scrupulous Dutch, who in the old country washed even the outside of their houses three times a week."[56] That the exhibition was of public and art historical significant is apparent from Kenyon Cox's long review, which ran over three separate issues of *Burlington's Magazine*.[57]

Curtis urged that the Metropolitan Museum exhibition "must be an artistic event in the life of every American visitor who cannot go abroad,"[58] and it certainly provided an opportunity for John Sloan to contemplate the presence of Dutch painting *en masse* in his adopted hometown. He visited the exhibition with his friend, the illustrator George Fox, and, in his diary, described

> A great collection loaned for the most part by private collectors. A number of fine Frans Hals and Rembrandts. Saw again Rembrandt's Finding of Moses, a small oval picture which I had seen in Mr. J. G. Johnson's collection in Philadelphia. A beautiful "flute player" by Hals and "boys singing" by the same artist. Several Jan Steens and many other great things captured by the money of these American bourgeois riche.[59]

It is unsurprising that Sloan mentioned Rembrandt and Hals as both were well known to him and were the most extensively represented painters in the exhibition. But his mention of the five Steens rather than the six Vermeers is significant. Seeing these Steens, and perhaps reading reviews in *The Craftsman* (which Ashcan School painters knew, and sometimes wrote for or featured in) and elsewhere, may have taken him back to Moore's grouping of Steen, ter Borch and Keene in *Modern Painting*, and he may also have seen parallels with his own art. Cortissoz's review of the exhibition ended in a disparaging assessment of Steen, that may have resonated with Sloan: "Nevertheless, you cannot find delight, a lasting sensation of beauty, in the Dutch Hogarth as you can find it in Vermeer." In an appreciation of his work published in *The Craftsman* early in 1909, Charles Wisner Barrell likened Sloan to Hogarth, and the "American Hogarth" association stuck.[60]

Sloan saw a great deal of art in the galleries of New York City in these years, ranging from the work of contemporaries such as The Ten, to European modern and Old Masters painting, to Japanese ukiyo-e prints, and it was more than likely these encounter with original objects, as with Tarbell and *The Concert*, that spurred and inspired his art. But Sloan was an avid reader too, of both art and literary history and contemporary art commentary. While often

dismissive of the newspaper critics -- after reading Cortissoz's "sermon" in the *Tribune* on The Eight's exhibition he concluded he would "rather have the opinion of a newsboy" -- this writing shaped and solidified, in agreement and in opposition, his own thinking. Cortissoz urged his readers to look, in Dutch paintings, at "the heavy frames and honest but quite unemotional physiognomies of the men and women, and at the wholesome, earthy lives they lead indoors and out. What more natural than that the artists dwelling in such an age of sturdy materialism should develop the gifts which go to the making of a realistic picture?"[61] A "sturdy materialism" was among the effects that Sloan would come to pursue in his own painting from around the time of the Hudson-Fulton exhibition.

Sloan was in the habit of visiting the Astor Place Library, often in the company of his friend John Butler Yeats, to research illustrations he was producing for magazines and to read about art. His May 25, 1910 diary records one such visit, on which he "looked at a few numbers of the Burlington Magazine. Was much interested in the work of Cézanne." Maurice Denis's long article, introduced and translated by Roger Fry, ran concurrently with the second and third installments of Kenyon Cox's Hudson-Fulton exhibition review, which included reproductions of three "Vermeers" and a Jacob Ruysdael landscape. Cox's third review groups Pieter de Hooch, Nicholas Maes, Adriaen and Isack Van Ostade, Steen and ter Borch as "minor" painters and -- with Cortissoz but in contrast to Moore -- sees them as fine craftsmen but not great artists like Rembrandt, Hals and Vermeer.[62] Sloan in that moment -- browsing a London-based art magazine in a library built and bequeathed by one of the old Dutch New York families; reading at length about French postimpressionist painting;

and re-seeing, even if he did not stop to read the accompanying article by an American critic, the seventeenth-century Dutch paintings he had been taken by the previous autumn -- was immersed in currents of transatlantic and transhistorical exchange. Indeed, Roger Fry emphasizes modern painting's relationship to the art of the past in brief remarks on two of the paintings illustrated, *The Bathers* and *The Satyrs*. Here Cezanne "takes the old traditional material of the nude related to landscape" but while "keeping quite close within the limits established by the old masters, gives it an altogether new and effective value."[63] This moment gave rise to Sloan's most "Dutch" painting.

"Started today on a subject I have had in mind for some days, the scrub women in the Astor Library" wrote Sloan in his June 1 diary entry. "Got the idea when there with Yeats last week." *Scrubwomen, Astor Library* (fig. 4, 1910-11) describes a richer, more complex interior architecture than that afforded by Sloan's familiar terrain of single room tenements and cheap cafes. Three women exchange seemingly jovial words as one, on her hands and knees, scrubs the highly polished floor while her companions, carrying buckets and brooms, turn to ascend the spiral staircase. The women occupy a dim-lit, enclosed foreground space beneath the library's mezzanine balconies, which gives out into the large, light-filled reading room. Here three figures slump and recline around a table scattered with books. Art historians Robert Snyder and Rebecca Zurier note the painting's Dutchness: "The architectural setting and harmonious golden tone, evocative of Dutch interior scenes with housewives, almost make the scrubwomen's work seem pleasant, if not easy."[64] Given Sloan's proximity in this moment to Steen and ter Borch (and Maes and de Hooch), in whose compositions apertures contrast interior spaces of domestic labor -- often the

famed Dutch scrubbing and cleaning of the early-twentieth-century imagination -- with exterior spaces and sites of leisure, this seems like more than a general evocation. For example, de Hooch's *The Bedroom* (1658/60), lent by Widener to the Hudson-Fulton exhibition, positions a women folding bedding in the right foreground of a dim-lit room and a playful child in the doorway that lets into increasingly bright interior and courtyard spaces. Consciously positioned within this tradition, Sloan's ambivalent scene -- who among the jovial scrubwomen and reclining readers is at work and who is at leisure? -- is imbued with both depth of allusion and license for playful interpretation.

Sloan's diary records his daily progress on the painting. On the fourth day he, "Went over the whole picture of the 'Scrub women in the Library,' brought it up in key." (June 4) The "harmonious golden tone" identified by Snyder and Zurier was thus a conscious choice or revision, which moved Sloan away from the dark palette he and Henri inherited from Manet. Sloan worked intensively on the painting in June 1910, showed it to an approving Henri in October, and then worked it some more in March 1911. Henri, who in the spirit of Parisian impressionism urged his students to paint quickly -- "Do it all in one sitting if you can. In one minute if you can" -- liked to pun on "Sloan" and "slow," but this was an unusually extended process. In an uncharacteristically expressive utterance, Tarbell, when asked, "how long it would take him to make a picture as he wished it to," responded, "Oh, about a hundred years."[65] Again, slow, meticulous painting moved Sloan and Tarbell away from impressionism and at least a little nearer to Vermeer, whose famously slender body of work was often attributed to painstaking craftsmanship. In an article for *Harper's Weekly* published in November 1913, John Butler Yeats, who was present at the painting's inception,

asked of *Scrubwomen, Astor Library*, "Why does this picture interest anyone: What is the charm of this sad colored arrangement in brown? Is it the old women or the two (*sic*) readers? Or the walls lined with books or the atmosphere made thick, as one fancies, by the dust of so many mouldering volumes: Are we looking at a picture of silence made visible? I cannot say."[66] The painting's sense of agedness and pathos, its uncertain hold on the interests of his contemporaries, its difference from the passing show of *Easter Eve* just two years earlier, all might stem from Sloan's commune with old Dutch pictures.

Painting in this way attuned Sloan to thinking slowly about the life around him that was not fleeting and ephemeral but rather rooted and cyclical. The scrubwomen, as he must have noticed on his repeat visits to the library, scrubbed everyday. *Scrubwomen, Astor Library* instigates a series of paintings, including *A Woman's Work* (1912), *Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair* (1912), and *Sun and Wind on the Roof* (1915), that depict with varying degrees of meticulousness, New York women at their regular chores and routines. The first of these paintings makes overt Sloan's attention to the ceaseless nature of domestic labour, and in its title, offers another kind of connection to Dutch genre paintings, which often drew their themes and allusions from proverbial wisdom:

> Man may work from sun to sun,
>
> But woman's work is never done.

Seen in light of this proverb the rigged up clothesline create a circuit of work; the shadow passing across the courtyard charts the passage of the working day; and the fire escape ladders become symbols of 'escape'. Such interpretative possibilities return Sloan to precisely the kind of anecdotal or proverbial genre painting that Caffin sought to distance him from, that George Moore railed

against at various points in *Modern Painting*, and that later modernist critics including Fry and Clement Greenberg would identify as the antithesis of medium specificity.

Tarbell and Sloan learned a lot from looking at and thinking about Dutch pictures. In the terms of what would become canonic modernism they perhaps took the wrong lessons, veering dangerously close to imitation and nostalgia; towards replicating the archaism rather than abstracting the essence of past masters. The *Burlington* article on Cezanne that caught Sloan's attention and led him to proclaim, "A big man this. His fame is to grow," pointed towards another way with masters and classics in which their values and qualities might be reimagined in wilder, freer, less illusionistic idioms. But other stories about twentieth-century (American) painting recuperate Sloan at least. The turn from an impressionist concern with light to a "Dutch" sense of soil (place, home, local character) made Sloan an important precedent for the celebration of the "American Scene" in the 1920s and 1930s. That rhetoric, of "100% Americanism," tended to elide the Ashcan School's cosmopolitanism but valorised their feeling for and commitment to New York City. Tarbell's overt allusion to European precedent made him a difficult fit for nationalistic narratives of American art. A twenty-first-century openness to pastiche (or "knowing imitation") as a way of making meaning help us to see the potential in painting "near Vermeer."

[1] George Moore, *Modern Painting* (London: Walter Scott, 1893) 215.

[2] Charles H. Caffin, *Art For Life's Sake* (New York: The Prang Company, 1913) 225.
[3] Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010). For further discussions of modernist revivalism see, Donna Cassidy, *Marsden Hartley: Race, Region, and Nation* (Lebanon, NH: UP of New England, 2005).
[4] Richard Brettell, "Impressionism and Nationalism: The American Case" in *American Impressionism: A New Vision, 1880-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) 15-21 15
[5] Bernard Perlman, *Painters of the Ashcan School: The Immortal Eight* (New York: Dover, 2012) 45; Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) pp 112-16; John Loughery, *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995) 35.
[6] On Sloan's localism see Heather Campbell Coyle and Joyce K. Schiller, *John Sloan's New York* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) pp; Jennifer Parsons??
[7] Sloan's diary mentions *The Lake* (1905) on 13 and 15 February 1907 and *Memories of My Dead Life* (1906) on May 26 and June 8 1907. All references are to the unpublished version of the Diary transcribed and annotated by Judith O'Toole and based on originals in Delaware Art Museum's John Sloan Manuscript Collection.
[8] Moore, *Modern Painting*, 215-16.
[9] John Sloan, The Gist of Art () 2, xi.
[10] Moore, *Modern Painting*, 216.
[11] Quoted in Robert Stephen Becker, "George Moore: Artist and Art Critic," *Irish Arts Review* (1984-1987), Vol. 2, No. 3 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 49-55 49
[12] Charles Keene, *In the Honeymoon*, in *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 93 (20 August 1887) 75; FAS publication?
[13] Harvey J. O'Higgins, "The Steady," *McClure's Magazine* (August 1905) 399-405.
[14] Hippolyte Taine, *Art in the Netherlands*, trans J Durand (New York: Leypoldt & Holt, 1871).
[15] Kendall Johnson, *Henry James and the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 27.
[16] John Sloan, *Diary*, 1, 15, 21 and 23 August 1908.
[17] Taine, *Art in the Netherlands*, 185
[18] Moore, 96
[19] Becker, "George Moore," 54-55
[20] Charles H. Caffin, *The Story of American Painting* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1907) 373.
[21] Caffin, *American Painting*, 94, 373-4.
[22] Andrew Hemingway, "American Art Pre-1940 and the Problem of Art History's Object," *Internationalizing the History of American Art*, Barbara Groseclose and Jochen Wierich eds. (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009) 63.
[23] John Sloan, *Diary*, 19 December 1907.
[24] Guy Pene Du Bois, *Artists Say the Silliest Things* (**) 146.

[25] Frank Jewett Mather, "Status of Genre Painting," *New York Evening Post* (February 4, 1907): 8. The column is unsigned but the column was reprinted three days later in *The Nation*, with which Mather was also closely associated and the phrase "brooding quality" recurs in his 1910 assessment of the Ashcan School (quoted in Howard Wayne Morgan, *Keepers of Culture: The Art-thought of Kenyon Cox, Royal Cortissoz, and Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.* [Kent OH: Kent State University Press, 1989] 123).
[26] John Sloan, Diary, 8 November 1906.
[27] "The Best Picture in America," *Boston Sunday Herald* (9 December 1906) Magazine Section.
[28] James Gibbons Huneker, "Ten American Painters," in *Americans in the Arts: Critiques by James Gibbons Huneker*, Arnold T. Schwab ed. (New York: A. M. S. Press, 1985) 554.
[29] Kenyon Cox, "The Recent Work of Edmund C. Tarbell," *Burlington's Magazine for Connoisseurs* 14.70 (Jan 1909) 254-255+258-60, **259**
[30] Ivan Gaskell, *Vermeer's Wager: Speculations on Art History, Theory, and Art Museums* (London: Reacktion Books, 2000) 222.
[31] Bernice Kramer Leader, "The Boston School and Vermeer," *Arts Magazine* 55.3 (1980): 172-176.
[32] Mark Rennella, *The Boston Cosmopolitans: International Travel and American Arts and Letters* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) 164
[33] Henry James, *The American Scene* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1907) 252, 255.
[34] On James and Vermeer see Adeline R. Tintner, "James Discovers Jan Vermeer of Delft," *Henry James Review* 8.1 (Autumn 1986) 57-70.
[35] Beverly Haviland, *Henry James's Last Romance: Making Sense of the Past and the American Scene* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
[36] Trevor Fairbrother, *The Bostonians: Painters of an Elegant Age, 1870-1930* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1986) 92 n95. Douglas Shand-Tucci, *The Art of Scandal: The Life and Times of Isabella Stewart Gardner* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997) cites several instances of Gardner's disdain for Boston School painters.
[37] Oral history interview with S. Morton Vose, 1986 July 24-1987 April 28, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-s-morton-vose-12367>
[38] Kenyon Cox, "The Recent Work of Edmund C. Tarbell, The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs 14.70 (January 1909) 259.
[39] Huneker "Ten American Painters," 556, italics added.
[40] Philip L. Hale, *Jan Vermeer of Delft* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1913) 230
[41] Annette Stott, *Holland Mania: The Unknown Dutch Period in American Art and Culture* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1998) 108.
[42] Huneker "Ten American Painters," 554.
[43] James Huneker, *Letters of James Gibbons Huneker*, Josephine Huneker ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922) 142-3.
[44] Erica E. Hirshler, "'Good and Beautiful Work': Edmund C. Tarbell and the Arts and Crafts Movement," in Susan Strickler et al, *Impressionism Transformed: The*

Painting of Edmund C. Tarbell (Manchester, NH: Currier Gallery of Art, 2001). Cortissoz quoted in Hirshler.

[45] Charles H. Caffin, "The Art of Edmund C. Tarbell," *Harper's Monthly* (June, 1908) 65-73, 66-67.

[46] ibid. 65.

[47] ibid. 68.

[48] Charles H. Caffin, "Municipal Art," *Harper's Monthly* (April, 1900) 655-666. See also Charles H. Caffin, "The Beautifying of Cities," *World's Work* 3 (November 1901) 1429-40.

[49] Caffin, "The Art of Edmund C. Tarbell," 72.

[50] Herbert Croly, 1909 *The Promise of American Life* (New York: MacMillan, 1912) 368 and *passim*; Dewey quoted in Rivka Shpak Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 176.

[51] Review, Charles H. Caffin, *The Story of Dutch Art* (1909), *The Nation* 89:2317 (Nov. 25, 1909) 522-23.

[52] Caffin, *Art For Life's Sake*, 225.

[53] W. M. Valentiner, *Catalogue of a Collection of Paintings by Dutch Masters of the Seventeenth Century*, vol. 1 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1909) ix. For discussion of the tastes and collecting practices that shaped American collections of Dutch art see, Esmée Quodbach ed., *Holland's Golden Age in America: Collecting the Art of Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Hals* (Penn State University Press, 2014)

[54] Valentiner, x.

[55] Moore, *Modern Painting*, 51.

[56] Natalie Curtis, "The Hudson-Fulton Memorial Exhibit in New York," *The Craftsman* (November 1909): 124-141, 140

[57] Kenyon Cox, "Dutch Painting in the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 16.81 – 16.83 (December 1909 – February 1910).

[58] Curtis, "Hudson-Fulton Memorial," 140.

[59] Sloan, *Diary*, 9 October 1909

[60] Royal Cortissoz, "Old Dutch Masters" reprinted from the *New York Tribune* in *The Metropolitan museum of Art Bulletin*, 4.10 (October, 1909) 161-67+ ,167; Charles Wisner Barrell, "The Real Drama of the Slums, As Told in John Sloan's Etching," *The Craftsman* 15.5 (February 1909) 559-64.

[61] Cortissoz, "Old Dutch Masters," 162-63.

[62] One of the Vermeers, *Lady with a Guitar* (then in the collection of John G. Johnson) is now recognized as a copy of *The Guitar Player* (c. 1670-72) at Kenwood House and is no longer considered part of Vermeer's oeuvre.

[63] Roger Fry, "Introductory Note," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 16.82 (January 1910) 207-08

[64] Rebecca Zurier, Robert W. Snyder and Virginia Mecklenburg, *Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York* (New York: Norton, 1995) 175.

[65] "The Best Picture in America," *Boston Sunday Herald*, December 9, 1906 Magazine Section. On slow, painstaking genre painting as a form of anti-modernity in this period see Emily D. Shapiro, "J. D. Chalfant's Clock Maker: The Image of the Artisan in a Mechanized Age," *American Art* 19.3 (Fall 2005), pp. 40-59

[66] John Butler Yeats, "The Work of John Sloan: 'Nature I Loved and Next to Nature Art," *Harper's Weekly* (November 22, 1913) 20-21, 21.