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As the night is lit: The nocturnal urban landscapes of Childe Hassam.

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AS THE NIGHT IS LIT

THE NOCTURNAL URBAN LANDSCAPES OF CHILDE HASSAM

By

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B.A., St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1999

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ABSTRACT

AS THE NIGHT IS LIT

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The scientific investigations into light that began with the Enlightenment garnered added information useful for artists. To depict the changes in light due to weather, time of day, and season more accurately, the artist took the information garnered through the refraction of light gained from Isaac Newton's color theories. In the 1820's and 30's, both American and French painters began capturing the natural scenes around them, depicting the light in the scene to its fullest representation. The new technological advances of gaslight and electric arc lighting also changed the way that light was represented on canvas. These new technological advances likewise brought new subjects to the canvases of modern artists, such as garden and urban scenes. Some artists decided to explore the night and the absence of light in their compositions, still depicting moonlight, the setting sun or the myriad of artificial lighting sources now available. New lights meant that artists could explore the depictions of upper- and middle-class citizens during leisure activities at night in paintings called nocturnes. I aim to explore these societal changes and the exploration of the new themes captured in nocturnes through the artwork of Frederick Childe Hassam, American Impressionist. Childe Hassam had a long career, painting over many decades and locations, and investigated many themes within

landscape painting and more that fall into other genres, such as his melding of figurative and still life painting. I am investigating his nocturnes, one sub-genre of landscape painting in which he worked and the effect that these works, and others like them, had upon the genre of landscape painting, other American painters, and the American art scene itself.

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CHAPTER ONE

FREDERICK CHILDE HASSAM

Childe Hassam has been considered one of America's most influential impressionist artists. He was an artist who, even when studying in Paris, never lost the love for his native country. Born in Dorchester, MA, he began working in engraving and illustration before he completed high school. He was always working on the edge of new innovations. He began to paint *en plein air* before it gained prominence in America. At this time, the practice of working in open air in the later 1870's was "considered peculiar by many."[1] Hassam and his wife, Maud, traveled to Paris in 1886. Throughout his studies at the Académie Julien in Paris, he never lost his desire to paint the subjects that interested him the most: scenes of home. He appreciated the landscape in France and the street scenes of Paris, but he was an American at heart. He painted his scenes of Paris streets and the French countryside while imbibing the knowledge he needed to flesh out and grow his style to take back to America. He never retreated from his spirit of nationalism, taking from France the impressionistic palette and techniques that he used for the remainder of his career while working in his scenes of modern American life. Hassam painted city or village scenes predominantly throughout his career. As Elizabeth Broun argues, "From the beginning Hassam established a modern outlook by adopting

[1] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich;: Prestel, 1994, 14.

cities as his primary subject."[2] Childe Hassam was intent on painting the world as he saw it instead of painting scenes from the past. He was quoted by A. E. Ives in an interview conducted while he was painting at Madison Square Park

> Hitherto historical painting has been considered the highest branch of art; but, after all, see what a misnomer it was. The painter was always depicting the manner, customs, dress and life of an epoch of which he knew nothing. A true historical painter, it seems to me, is one who paints the life he sees about him, and so makes a record of his own epoch.[3]

Hassam felt that a painter should paint from their surroundings rather than the teaching of a standardized classical curriculum that art academies and studios promoted. His devout feelings of nationalism and patriotism assisted in the nonabsorption of this standardization of the academy and only enabled the influences of the subjects Hassan wished to linger. The Impressionists wished to break from the stifling conventions of the academy and find their own scenes from which to paint.

> As Edward Gibbon noted in chapter 38 of the *Decline and Fall,* modern European states were to an unprecedented extent motivated by the impulse for mutual emulation…Competition between European nations fostered the development of common criteria of achievement and perpetuated the dream of a universal culture.[4]

One of the subjects that Hassam found compelling were landscapes – both rural and urban. Landscapes of the nineteenth century tended to focus on rural scenes rather than scenes of city streets. In an examination of the development of landscape in America distinct differences are noted between art of the north and art of the south. Historians of

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[2] Broun, Elizabeth. "Childe Hassam's America." *American Art* 13, no. No. 3 (Autumn, 1999) (1999): 32 57. The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. http://wwww.jstor.com/stable/3109339, 34.

[3] Ives, A. E., "Talks With Artists: Mr. Childe Hassam on Painting Street Scenes." *Art Amateur* 27, No. 5 (Oct. 1892), 116.

[4] Craske, Matthew. *Art in Europe 1700 - 1830 a History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Urban Economic Growth.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 131.

the seventeenth and eighteenth century believed "the mind of New England was the mind of America."[5] The South and southern artists became captivated by scenes of a rural life that was quickly being lost. Art historians who study eighteenth and nineteenth century landscapes have found that the South had a distinct vision of the landscape that was different from Northern visions. Luminism was an art school popular in the North that ran contemporary to the Hudson River school of the mid-nineteenth century. Southern art follows the darker tones that came from the German Munich school that was then translated into Tonalism in the 1880's. American tonalism contained facets that led to a romantic feel using dim lighting in the scene. The highlighted areas created these pockets of isolation and emphasis that would give the romantic mood.[6] The key of the color palette is one of the differences between Northern and Southern landscape art. The second is the emotion behind the painting. The key is defined as the overall value of the colors in the painting. "High key foundation values are clustered on the light end of the value scale, with a few spotted darks and middle value as accents. Low key foundation values are on the dark end of the value scale, with a smattering of middle and lighter values as highlights. A middle key is composed of values from the middle of the foundation scale, with darks for shadows and lighter values as highlights."[7] The key assists in setting the emotion in the painting. The lightness of the colors in the high key exemplifies a lighter mood while the darker value in the low key is suggestive of more

[5] William W. Freehling, Jessie J. Poesch, and J. Richard Gruber, *A Place Not Forgotten: Landscapes of the South From the Morris Museum of Art* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Art Museum, 1999), 8.
[6] Arthur Frederick Jones, *The Kentucky Tradition in American Landscape Painting: From the Early 19th Century to the Present* (Owensboro, KY: Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, 1983), 17.
[7] Contributing Author -, "Understanding Value Keys for Painting Landscapes," Outdoor Painter, January 16, 2020, https://www.outdoorpainter.com/how-to-paint-landscapes-value-keys/#:~:text=Value%20Keys-,The%20key%20of%20a%20painting%20refers%20to%20its%20overall%20appearance,and%20middle%20values%20as%20accents.

somber emotions. Northern landscapes include a feeling of celebration of the natural beauty of our land before industrialization. Southern landscapes have a more ominous tone in the landscape. Where the natural landscape is celebrated in the North, the South centers man and their created environments at the expense of the natural beauty of the area.

In this regard, Hassam was an artist of the north, but he also extended his portrayal of the genre of landscapes to add in the modern element of the city street to the genre, something few were executing at the time. He was following "a central tenet of this new painting – as expounded by the critic Edmond Duranty in his review of the second Impressionist exhibition of 1876 – was the artist's need to see and record the life around him."[8] Even though landscapes were considered an inferior genre to historical, portrait and genre painting[9], Hassam made the decision to focus on this genre at the beginning of his artistic career in the 1880's when he established his own studio and worked as an illustrator for publications around Boston.

Childe Hassam made his first trip overseas to paint and study art around Europe in 1883. On this trip, he visited the National Gallery in London and continued to France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain[10]. In the watercolors he painted during the trip, new subject matter began to be seen in his usage of urban subjects, such as city markets

[8] Adelson, Warren, Jay Cantor, William H. Gerdts, Jay Cantor, and William H. Gerdts. *Childe Hassam, Impressionist.* 1st ed. ed. New York: Abbeville Press, 1999, 12.
[9] Craven, Wayne. "*The Grand Manner in Early Nineteenth-Century American Painting: Borrowings from Antiquity, the Renaissance, and the Baroque." The American Art Journal* Vol. 11, No. 2 (Apr. 1979). https://wwww.jstor.org/stable/1594146, 25
[10] Adelson, Warren, Jay Cantor, William H. Gerdts, Jay Cantor, and William H. Gerdts. *Childe Hassam, Impressionist.* 1st ed. ed. New York: Abbeville Press, 1999, 10.

and plazas where tourists and women socialized during the day. The colors of his palette are brightening from the tonal schemes used in his early works from 1880 through 1882. After his European study tour, Hassam's career as a painter began in 1885 and at this time he was painting the avenues and parks in Boston, striving to render the atmosphere of the city. The painters of Boston were influenced by art of the Barbizon school coming by way of France.[11] The Barbizon school was a loose confederation of painters that began to paint in the 1830's in a style that differentiated them from the style of the French Academy. This natural style of landscape painting that featured "nature becoming valued as a primary subject instead of mere background to humanity."[12] The Barbizon painters worked from the colors found in nature so that they could depict the way that light truly fell in the landscape. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot is one of the Barbizon painters whose work Hassam would see in Paris, as seen in this example of Corot's work, Figure 1 *Forest of Fontainebleu*, painted in 1834.

These were the earliest of the influences that Hassam would incorporate into his painting style. He would work from the palette colors found in Corot's *Forest of Fontainebleu* in his paintings around Boston. He was once asked in an interview with how he started painting the busy city streets:

[11] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 44.
[12] Lorinda Christine Fraser, "The Barbizon School (1830-1870): Expanding the Landscape of the Modern Art Market," *The Arbutus Review* 8, no. 1 (October 30, 2017): pp. 4-14, https://doi.org/10.18357/tar81201716809, 6.

Figure 1 *Forest of Fontainebleu,* 1834. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796 - 1875) Oil on Canvas, 69 1/8 x 95 1/2 inches, National Gallery of Art, accession number 1963.10.109.

> I lived in Columbus Avenue in Boston. The street was all paved in asphalt, and I used to think it very pretty when it was wet and shining, and caught the reflections of the passing people and vehicles. I was always interested in the movements of humanity in the street, and I painted my first picture from my window.[13]

[13] A.E. Ives, "Talks with Artists: Mr. Childe Hassam on Painting Street Scenes," *Art Amateur 27* (Oct. 1892),https://archive.org/details/sim_art-amateur-art-in-the-household_1892-10_27_5/page/116/mode/2up, 117.

Figure 2 *Columbus Avenue Rainy Day,* 1885. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 26 x 48 inches, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, purchased with funds from the Florence Scott Libbey Bequest in Memory of her father, Maurice A. Scott.

The beginnings of Impressionist techniques, in addition to the Barbizon influences, were seen in his early paintings from Boston. Figure 2, *Columbus Avenue, Boston*, painted in 1885, takes from Impressionist subjects as its muse in his use of the city street. An example of this can be seen in the subject matter of Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris Street, Rainy Weather*, (Figure 3), painted in 1877. The composition of the street layout Hassam used is remarkably similar to the street corner in the background of Caillebotte's *Paris Street, Rainy Weather.* One difference between the two canvases is that Hassam does not crowd his foreground and middle ground with figures. The Caillebotte canvas has figures that are close to the plane of the canvas, and this serves to pull the viewer into the scene where the Hassam canvas gives the viewer distance between them and the action of the Boston street.

Figure 3 *Paris Street, Rainy Weather*, 1877. Gustave Caillebotte (1848 – 1894), oil on canvas, 83 1/2 x 108 ¾ inches, The Art Institute of Chicago, Charles H. and Mary F.S. Worcester Collection, 1964.336.

After his marriage, Childe and his wife Maud travelled to Paris in 1886 for their three-year stay. They traveled outside of Paris, like they would do in New York, spending the summer months outside of the city with artist friends, returning to the city for the fall season. The Hassam's returned from Paris in 1889, finding that the center of the art world was in New York and stayed in the city, making it his home and studio for the next thirty years. Hassam's scenes of New York came from his fascination with the city itself. New York was something totally different from his experiences in Boston and even from Paris. He sought to represent this unusual, growing city, "which already symbolized new

cosmopolitan stage of national development."[14] Depictions of the city and its' growth revealed the artist's fascination with New York City. Hassam and his belief that an artist needed to paint the scenes of his own time was not shared by his colleagues. "This now obvious idea was considered revolutionary by his contemporaries, who believed that painting modern subjects and setting were ill-suited to serious painting. As one Boston critic said of Hassam's urban views: "very pleasant, but not art."[15] The art buyers felt the same as his colleagues as his shoreline landscapes garnered more attention than the urban landscapes did at first. These landscapes caught the attention of art collectors who were familiar with the work of the Hudson River School and the landscapes of Winslow Homer and John Singer Sargent. These scenes, while different because of the Impressionist influences that he was exposed to while painting in Paris and the surrounding countryside, were still familiar to the American public in subject matter. Hassam's urban scenes, on the other hand, were unknown artistic territory in America. American art of the late nineteenth century was nationalistic while imbued with the heroic aspects of American life. Or it was less nationalistic while exploring religious subjects from a more modernist viewpoint.

Hassam was by no means working solely in the urban streetscape arena. The artist spent time away from the city in the late spring and summer months when he traveled, visiting artist and author friends and acquaintances along the New England coast. These travels gave him ample time to take in the native elements in the areas in which he

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[14] Broun, Elizabeth. "Childe Hassam's America." *American Art* 13, no. No. 3 (Autumn, 1999) (1999): 32 - 57. The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. http://wwww.jstor.com/stable/3109339, 35.

[15] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 10.

traveled and to paint the scenes that interested him most. He came to have many favorite locations that he and his wife would travel to year after year. These favored locations became gathering places of his contemporaries in the arts. These gatherings of artistic people were influences upon Childe Hassam and the subjects and scenes in which he painted. In these gatherings, he was able to debate and share opinions of the literature, art and music that was popular at the time. He was not shy in recommending writings to his friends, in fact. This time spent traveling gave him a surcease from the rapid pace of New York city life, ensuring that he was well-rested and able to tackle the urban city life and his depictions of it in all lighting and weather.

CHAPTER TWO

LIGHT AND ITS MANY VARIATIONS

Light is depicted in painting in many ways. There are techniques that enable a painter to show us the light in the composition. Painters use the difference in the values of the colors to depict areas of light and shadow on the canvas. The darker colors are especially important in rendering light on a canvas. The shadows contrast with the lighter colors to enable them to be seen by the eye as light. Viewers can see lighter, brighter colors in the trees that reference light shining through the leaves. Eyes are drawn to the glints of light on top of water. Light may also be portrayed as a pillar of bright color, i.e., yellow or gold, highlighting an important feature of the landscape. Our eyes, in league with our brain, tell us that this is how light should look, as it is what we see when looking over the water or through the tree canopy to the sky above. The technique used to create the effects of light and shadow is chiaroscuro. Chiaroscuro means light-dark or the handling of light and shade in drawing and painting to express three dimensional pieces.

An artist, attempting as the Impressionists were to paint an accurate rendition of the scene in front of them, would find oneself faced with a new challenge. As stated by Bluhm and Lippincott in *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 -1900 Art & Science, Technology & Society*, "light plays an integral role in art's making, meaning, and display. Each time the light changes, so does our experience of art and its environment. As we surveyed the eighteenth and nineteenth century paintings, we realized that their painter's

light was not the same as ours."[16] Light, however it is produced, naturally from the sun or by gas or electric, "it was something that has physical presence and physical effects and could be measured and painted like any other substance."[17] The shifting light can be used by a painter to depict different moods for the composition. The mutable light can also alter the way in which a viewer perceives the canvas. It is with this that my exploration into light and its utilization by painters begins.

Natural light is the light that is generated by the sun, the moon and the stars that shine down on us. This, and firelight, was the only light the artists had available until the increase in the technology of artificial light forms. Candlelight is not stable enough to paint by and natural light is so changeable, according to season, time of day and weather. Artists were at the mercy of whatever light was coming into their studio, no matter how open and light-facing their windows were. Artists did not, as a rule, work in the open until the nineteenth century with Claude Monet and his *en plein air* work. So, artists were limited to the pleasant weather and daylight hours to work on their paintings in their studios. Artists and scientific observers were exceedingly interested in light in the seventeenth century. As technology advanced, light was able to be brought into the studio. They began to see the differences in types of light. Sunlight is a warm yellow light from the sun. Daylight is the overall, bluish light contained in earth's atmosphere. Artificial light can seem completely different than both sunlight and daylight. In a pamphlet written in 1817, Henry James Richter describes the way in which daylight and

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[16] Andreas Bluhm and Louise Lippincott, *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 - 1900 Art & Science, Technology & Society* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson; Inc), 11.

[17] Andreas Bluhm and Louise Lippincott, *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 - 1900 Art & Science, Technology & Society* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson; Inc), 19.

sunlight define and limit an observer's knowledge of the physical world.[18] By 1840, artists had begun to use the new gaslight in their studios, thus extending their time for work. Sometimes they were not happy seeing their work in a new light as the colors changed according to the type of light that they were shown in. This brought about many difficulties when it came time to show their work.

The depictions of light in French Neoclassical historical painting utilized a standard depiction of daylight. Artists also used interior scenes in their compositions that were partial shadow and light but the lighting in these scenes played a part in the telling of the story that the canvas portrayed. This was achieved by highlighting the area of significance in brighter colors and the rest of the scene in darker, muted colors. As you can see in Figure 4, *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (1789), there is a distinct separation of the composition between the area in the light and the area in the shadow. The shadow area includes Brutus who has had to make a difficult decision that brings pain to his family in that he was compelled to order the execution of his sons for their treason against the republic. The lit area depicts his wife and daughters as they witness the bodies of the sons brought back to the house for burial. This division between light and shadow reflects the division of the family at the time. The light is focused on the result of Brutus' decision made for the good of the Republic rather than for the good of the family. The decision maker is left in shadow, not acknowledging the fact that the lifeless bodies of his sons are behind him; it looks as if he is pondering the difficult decision he has made, separated from his family by that same decision.

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[18] Andreas Bluhm and Louise Lippincott, *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 - 1900 Art & Science, Technology &*
Society (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson; Inc), 104.

Figure 4 *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons,* 1789. Jacques-Louis David (1748 – 1825), Oil on canvas, 127 x 166 inches, Louvre.

In French Romantic paintings, the light in outdoor scenes is diffuse and not depicted in rays or beams. Figure 5 is an example from Eugene Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). The lighting has no directionality while shadows, or darker areas of the canvas, facilitate the separation of the composition into the different spaces it needs to tell its story. The composition presents Liberty holding the flag up high, leading her people onward. The space behind her, the clouds in the sky, are rendered in light thus highlighting her action without shining a spotlight on her directly. Also, highlighted by the clouds in the sky is Notre Dame, a symbol of France, in the background. Delacroix

Figure 5 *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Eugene Delacroix (1798 – 1863), oil on canvas, 8 ft 6 x 10 ft 8 inches, Louvre, accession date 1891.

uses the lighter colors of the clouds in the composition to accentuate the scenes that he desires to have prominence – the idea of Liberty rallying people onward – leaving the murkier sections of the canvas to denote the unhappier aspect to revolution – death.

Once the artificial light had been invented, natural light "acquired a moral identity – pure, healthy, truthful – as well as a physical one."[19] This enabled the artist to layer meaning for the work in a simple glimmer of light. Even limited to certain hours in which they had the best light to paint, they had many examples of the variety of light within our world to portray in their work. Landscape artists spent many hours outside, looking at how the light comes through the clouds and how shadows move across the land. The light

[19] Andreas Bluhm and Louise Lippincott, *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 - 1900 Art & Science, Technology & Society* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson; Inc), 19.

during a thunderstorm looks different than the light both before and after the storm. The bright sky, summer afternoon light is seen as dissimilar from the light on a clear winter afternoon. With the changeable light and atmosphere, artists had many examples to portray in their landscape paintings. These variable elements proved useful once artists began to look at the surrounding environment as the subject of an arrangement rather than solely the backdrop. Edmund C. Tarbell, a contemporary of Child Hassam's, was aware of how difficult it is to paint sunlight and shadows in his statement; "That's a great thing to know that you have time, and your subject is to be just the same for hours. In sunlight it is never the same, the shadows which are nearly in the same places when you are not painting them, really move with dreadful swiftness when you are."[20]

Sunrise and sunset are also timeframes in which the artist has been able to gain a new compositional framework in which to paint. The light from the setting and rising sun presents the artist distinctive colors with which to work and when you add in cloud formations and environmental elements, such as trees, lakes and mountain ranges, the combinations are many. Sunset and sunrise also bring mystical elements that assist the artist in layering meaning onto their canvas. "An understanding of light symbolism and lighting technology can be key to understanding an artwork."[21]

Twilight is a time of transition. "It is a potent symbol that can endow a landscape painting with the intellectual depth and emotional charge that are typically the area of mystery and wonderment about a life lived that is different from the one being historical

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[20] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 24.

[21] Andreas Bluhm and Louise Lippincott, *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 - 1900 Art & Science, Technology & Society* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson; Inc), 128.

painting."[22] In the urban nocturnes, devoid of natural light, of Childe Hassam, there is no feeling of human insignificance or the end of a life; there are feelings of experienced. Some scenes can be seen as celebrations of a new way to experience life. The advent of light to illuminate streets and experiences bring forth new social happenings for the upper and middle class to partake and the lower classes gain more employment opportunities. In Fig. 6, *Early Evening, Union Square* 1902, we can see this new reality. The light in the

Figure 6 *Early Evening, Union Square*, 1902. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches. Private collection. Photo courtesy of artnet.com.

[22] Andreas Bluhm and Louise Lippincott, *Light! The Industrial Age 1750 - 1900 Art & Science, Technology & Society* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson; Inc), 138.

scene comes primarily from the lampposts and the reflected light from the snow-covered ground.

The scene is set at the corner at street height so that the viewer is placed within the scene. Seeing the figures walking either toward or away, the viewer wonders what they are doing on this cold evening. This lends an air of mystery to the composition. The evening is denoted by the colors in the background sky. The light in the warmer, yellow-orange sky is differentiated from the streetlights that are a clear, cool bluish white. Viewers have seen many sunsets where the sky is a rich golden color as the sun sets behind the horizon, as it is depicted in this painting. The snow is represented by a warm, yellow-washed expanse of snow that reflects the little remaining sunlight that is present in the scene. The snow is not yet reflecting the cool, bluish light that is coming from the streetlights. Anonymity pervades the scene as there are no buildings seen. The viewer has nothing upon which to base an idea as to the nocturnal activities of the people on the street and in the cabs running by. Location remains unknowable as there are no physical descriptors upon which to base a location within the city.

Deeper twilight and the darker hues in the colors are a time of day that some artists have chosen to delve into instead of the more popular scenes in the light of brilliant daylight or stormy afternoons. This time of day presents an artist with the challenge of portraying a scene in deeper colors with little obvious light sources to work in. An evening interior scene lit by candlelight or firelight is an example of another compositional scene available to artists that has a similar palette. One example of this is Monet's *Interior, After Dinner* 1868, (Figure 7). A similarity in color schemes utilized by the painters between Monet's *Interior, After Dinner* and Hassam's *Nocturne, Railway*

Crossing, Chicago (Figure 8), can be seen in the predominant use of blues, yellow, and white. In Monet's canvas, he renders his shadows blending blue and the red that he uses for the floorboards of the room. This color combination for the shadows causes the yellow of the interior light to brightly wash over the surfaces of the furniture in the room. The red of the firelight takes a secondary seat to the light of the electric light in the rendering.

The shadows have the larger portion of the canvas in various shades of darkness with the central scene vividly lit by the light source. Monet has lit the scene brightly by

Figure 7 *Interior, After Dinner,* 1868/1896, Claude Monet, (1840 – 1926), oil on canvas, 19 ¾ x 25 ¾ inches, National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1983.1.26.

the chandelier, leaving the corners of the room and the mantle upon which the male figure leans in varying degrees of shadow.

Darkness and deep twilight scenes are uncommon in comparison to the variety of day settings. This scarcity is what makes them so compelling. Hassam created the landscape in Figure 8, *Nocturne, Railway Crossing, Chicago,* in a dark key for his palette, utilizing deeper blues and contrasting bright yellow for the little light there is in the scene. The yellow tones of the light from the streetlight, lanterns, streetcar and building lights contrast vividly against the blue tones of the background elements

Figure 8 *Nocturne, Railway Crossing, Chicago*, 1893. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Watercolor on paper, 16 x 11 ¾ inches Museum of Fine Arts, Boston The Hayden Collection—Charles Henry Hayden Fund

One of the interesting things about the painting in Figure 8 is that it is one of his many watercolors. Hassam can create a depth of color with his watercolors that enable the viewer to believe that the scene is, indeed, one of the night. He also can create the depth of scene needed with the intensity of the blue to demonstrate distance, as he is seated facing the way the railway is running and his line of perspective within the canvas is running from lower right back toward the upper left corner of the composition. This makes his depth of field deep. "Whether in daytime or under night skies, these rainy or snowy subjects offered Hassam reflecting surfaces that knit sky and ground together, unifying the picture tonally and creating flat patterns that play against the deep space of the image."[23] He places the tall building in the background to emphasize the perspective and depth within the scene. The railcar and the storefront that is lit up also assist in setting the perspective. Achieving this depth of field and color with translucent watercolors is a difficult technique and shows a great amount of skill in his chosen forms to render landscapes. The reflections on the wet pavement shine and the brushstrokes that are in a downward slanted direction provide the look of rain within the composition. The directionality of the reflections aid in the depth of field and their color gives the eye a path to travel back into the canvas. The translucence of the colors enables the creation of a rainy, misty night scene as Hassam layers his colors to achieve these ethereal effects of the available light while keeping the details in sharp focus.

Childe Hassam shows his mastery of oil and watercolor with these two compositions - *Nocturne, Railway Crossing, Chicago* (Figure 8) and *Early Evening,*

[23] Foster, Kathleen A. *American Watercolor in the Age of Homer and Sargent.* Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2017. https://www.aaeportal.com/?id=-21396.

Union Square (Figure 6). Hassam was never limited in his chosen medium as he worked first as an illustrator and engraver and expanded his drawing skills. These proficiencies worked to his advantage as he began to explore the landscape genre in 1885. His first workings as an artist helped to establish the eye he would need to work within his chosen genre. This sense for detail that was developed in his engraving and illustration experience created an ease with which he could pick up the Impressionist techniques of scrutinizing the scene in front of the painter for the color distinctions and the minute details prevalent in nature.

CHAPTER THREE

EMERGENCE OF LANDSCAPES, THE LIGHT WITHIN, AND THEIR PLACE WITHIN THE GENRES

One of the first Western landscapes painted solely as a landscape instead of as a background for a history painting was first rendered by Albrecht Dürer in 1495 as he painted and engraved scenes of the mountains as he made his first trip to Italy. More landscape engravings came out of Austria and Germany in the sixteenth century from Rubens and Rembrandt. These engravings contained the spirit and emotion of the artists in their visualization of the countryside in which they lived. The Dutch artist, Jacob van Ruisdale, advanced the landscape to another level with the utilization of the cloud formations from the scene within his vast landscape and seascapes. This is the beginning of correct light depictions with cloud formations and the time of day. Painters, leading up to van Ruisdale, used a standard way of creating cloud formations within their compositions and did not hold to the specific formations on the day and time nor of the specifics of the light in the creation of the painting. Van Ruisdale painted the clouds exactly the way they appeared in the sky when he painted the scene. He held to a true representation of the landscape in front of him. The seventeenth century also saw

variations in the vision of "landscapes for landscape's sake"[24] as painters in the Mediterranean lands hesitated in acceptance of Dutch ideas.

Landscape as a background for religious and historical scenes became highly developed with the input from the Northern Masters, but it was still the background to other work. Claude Lorrain, painting in the seventeenth century, developed what was termed the "vaguely 'ideal' landscape."[25] This tradition of academic landscape painting, established by Claude Lorrain, developed into a framework for landscape painting that would continue to evolve over the centuries. But this tradition did not depict light as it was seen but as the artist needed it to enhance the scene to assist in creating the appropriate meaning in the painting.

The English landscape masters arrived on scene in the eighteenth century. They brought a determination to visualize the picturesque in their art, as it is envisaged by the writers of the time and the projects of the landscape designers, such as Humphrey Repton in England. Picturesque is defined as referring "to an ideal type of landscape that has artistic appeal, in that it is beautiful but also with some elements of wildness…The theory of the picturesque was developed by writers William Gilpin and Uvedale Price, who in 1794 published *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful.*"[26] It is during the eighteenth century that landscape gardens connect intimately with "architecture, painting, and poetry"[27]. The picturesque and the English garden

[24] Born, 7.
[25] Born, 7.
[26] "Picturesque." Tate Gallery, 2021, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/picturesque.
[27] Iris Lauterbach, "Landscape and Garden Design in 18th-Century Europe: Architectural Use of the Natural,"Brewminate, January 30, 2018, https://brewminate.com/landscape-and-garden-design-in-18th-century-europe-architectural-use-of-the-natural/.

Figure 9 *Suffolk Countryside*, 1748, Thomas Gainsborough (1727 - 1788). Oil on canvas, 25.6 inches x 37.4 inches, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, www.khm.at/de/object/775/.

become indelibly linked with this theory. Gilpin and Price championed the picturesque to have it added as a third category in addition to Edmund Burke's beautiful and sublime.[28]

In Figure 9, *Suffolk Countryside*, painted by Thomas Gainsborough around 1748, the picturesque element of the surrounding countryside as the subject matter is primary. Even though there is a cottage and figures by the river, they are secondary to the landscape. The landscape is depicted in mid-range color tones, none that has any more emotions than the pleasant view of an untrammeled environment. The light is diffuse with no clear demarcation between bright light and shadow. There are no hints of urban

[28] Townsend, Dabney. "The Picturesque." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55, no. 4 (1997): 365-76.
https://doi.org/10.2307/430924. http://www.jstor.org/stable/430924, 365.

life, nor any storms on the horizon to give the painting more emotion. The Gainsborough is an idyllic landscape that holds this view as the Industrial Revolution approaches.

A reader may wonder why these categories are relevant or important. As stated by Thompson in *The Picturesque*; "…the incorporation of natural scenery and the environment into the aesthetic framework that results in the formation of the concept of the picturesque can tell us a great deal about how the basic aesthetic categories of beauty, sublimity, and taste are understood." The phrase assists in the understanding of what ideas are communicated by the symbols that surround us daily. The lighting in the scenes assists the viewer in identifying if it is one of the picturesque or the sublime. The depiction of the light in the scene is one of the main identifiers, as the light in the picturesque is lit by lighter tones, lending to the pleasing emotional feel of the light while the sublime has crisper edges to the light and dark. In addition, the tones used to create the shadows are darker, bringing a more ominous feel to the painting. When we, as viewers, bring an idea such as nature into our conversation, the phrases we use to describe these symbols tell us much about the symbol itself.

A break from the academic style of French painting began with Edouard Manet. A student of Thomas Couture, he began painting the scenes of society in Paris. He submitted three paintings to the Salon for exhibition in 1863 and was denied. This Salon raised such a cry at the number of refused works of art that Emperor Napoleon III created the Salon des Refusés to be shown at the same time as the Salon de Paris for the public to see and judge the refused art. While drawing negative criticism, the Salon drew in "more than a thousand spectators a day and constituted the beginning of the end for the official

Salon's prestige and the dominance of its aesthetic arbitration."[29] In this exhibition, he exhibited three paintings, one of which was *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1833). The painting subject was considered obscene, and the nude figure stunned viewers. What the public did not see was Manet's composition of Nature, with "its broadly painted foreground, its light and delicate background"[30] In Figure 10, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe.*, the beginning elements of Impressionism are seen in the loose brushstrokes and the scenes of everyday life in Paris. Manet's loose brushstrokes are not the loose brushstrokes of the Impressionists, but the painting does not contain the refined finish required by the Salon.

The exhibition that named the Impressionists came in 1874. The work of this exhibition was derided as "The scribblings of a child have a naivety, a sincerity which makes one smile, but the excesses of this school sicken or disgust" in a review by Emile Cardon in *La Presse*, titled "The exhibition of the Revoltes", dated April 29, 1874.[31] The 30 artists that comprised the group that was working not in the Salon approved style held an showing of their work and drew much criticism, as seen in the previous quotation from Emile Cardon. French painting was generated from the training at the Salon des Beaux-Arts. "During the Second Empire (1852 – 70), when Manet emerged, French art was state art. The salon, the Institut, the Beaux arts, museums, etc. formed what one might call a bureaucratic system for managing the tastes of the public…"[32] Through his training there, Manet began to desire something different in his paintings, rather than the strict canon of painting of the Salon. Manet's break with the academic art broke open the

[29] Benedetta Ricci, "The Shows That Made Contemporary Art History: The Salon Des Refusés," *The Artlander*, August 7, 2020.
[30] Zola Émile and Robert Lethbridge, *Looking at Manet* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018), 73.
[31] Cardon, Emile. "The exhibition of the Revoltes," *La Presse* (Paris, France), April 29, 1874. http://www.artchive.com/galleries/1874/74critic.htm.
[32] Pierre Bourdieu, *Manet. A Symbolic Revolution* (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2017), 6.

Figure 10 *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, Edouard Manet (1832 - 1883), oil on canvas, 207 in x 104 in., Accession number RF 1668, Musée d'Orsay. Official website of the Musée d'Orsay: https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/artworks/le-dejeuner-sur-lherbe-904

doors for painters like Monet and Cezanne to also separate from the academic institution. The *en plein air* style that the Impressionists embraced was seen to be "bent on destroying the sacrosanct traditions of French Painting."[33] Impressionism was accepted in France, and it became the style that artists came to France to learn.

In America, Impressionism was not reviled nor welcomed but it was also not acknowledged as a serious moment in American art. In a remarkable reversal within the

[33] Hassam, Childe, Charles E. Buckley, Hermann Warner Williams, Art Corcoran Gallery of, Charles E. Buckley, Hermann Warner Williams, and Art Corcoran Gallery of. *Childe Hassam: A Retrospective Exhibition.* Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1965, 9.

span of a decade, the work of the European Impressionists began to be seen as a manifestation of a new era in the history of art. This reversal was due to a select few gallerists that worked to bring Impressionist exhibitions to New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities in the United States. Prior to bringing the Impressionists to America, American artists had the opportunity to see Impressionist exhibitions while they traveled abroad, and the reactions were mixed. J Alden Weir, studying academic painting in Paris, wrote to his parents in 1877.

> I went across the river the other day to see an exhibition of the work of a new school which they call themselves "Impressionists." I never in my life saw more horrible things. I understand they are all mostly rich, which accounts for so much talk. They do not observe drawing nor form but give you an impression of what they call nature. It was worse than the Chamber of Horrors. I was there about a quarter of an hour and left with a head-ache, but I told the man exactly what I thought. One franc entrée. I was mad for two or three days, not only having paid the money but for the demoralizing effect it must have on many.[34]

J. Carroll Beckwith, writing in 1891, has a different opinion from Weir. He writes

> Impressions after dining chez Claude Monet and seeing his work as well as that of Manet, Degas, Renoir, and others. Men of conviction. Painters who have endeavored to search a road removed from the recognized systems of the schools. What pleases me largely is the disregard of method. The earnest endeavor to place on canvas what they see regardless of any preconceived notion of how it should be done.[35]

The one of first exhibitions of Impressionist works came to America via Paul Durand-Ruel. The gallerist sent several paintings for an exhibition at the Brooklyn Art Association on January 9, 1884. This exhibition raised money for the completion of the

[34] Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 969.
[35] Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 970.

pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.[36] Another Durand-Ruel exhibition came in 1886 and encountered mixed reactions from critics and viewers alike. From the New York Times, May 28, 1891;

> Seurat's "Bathing" (No. 170) is among the most distressing paintings shown, because the largest in the collection, the blazing colors offered special offense. M. Guillaumin also contributes some dreadful examples of polychromatic dissipation, and so do M. Monet and M. Renoir, whose portrait of Wagner (No. 210) is more suggestive of a possible chromo-lithographic frontispiece…[37]

William Howe Downs, writing in the *New England Magazine* in 1892, records;

> The term impressionism, used in reference to the art of painting, has acquired a special significance in these days. It defines a new fashion in the art and may be best understood by a study of the works of those who call themselves impressionists. The thing is as new and pretentious as the word which stands for it. It had its origins in France, but it has gained a certain footing in the United States and has exercised a positive influence over the minds of many American painters and a few American amateurs…[38]

During this time, the American artists that were working overseas were finding success in the exhibitions that they entered. In the *Art Amateur,* published in 1892, it is written that Mr. Childe Hassam won an award at the Art Exhibition in Munich. His name was not spelled correctly but attribution was given to the correct award winner. The artists of Impressionism's "emotion and observation"[39] of their surroundings were winning their art the deference of critics and academicians. Their influence was swelling

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[36] "An Art Loan Exhibition, fund for the pedestal to the Bartholdi statue." New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed July 30, 2022.
[37] Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 971.
[38] Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 976.
[39] Hassam, Childe, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, Art Santa Barbara Museum of, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, and Art Santa Barbara Museum of. *Childe Hassam, 1859-1935.* Tucson: University of Arizona Museum of Art, 1972, 18.

globally and influenced many an artist through the maturation of their work. The artists of Impressionism had prevailed in the battle for their preeminence and had persevered through the denigration. Their techniques and processes would influence many generations of artists, if not to be mimicked, then to be worked against.

The traditions of nineteenth century painting in America had developed differently than those in France and the change in technique was not a significant concern. These were changeable times for the new country and one of the topics at the forefront of the minds of the leaders of the country was the creation of a national identity to be considered a peer of the European countries. "Many debates would ensue during the 19th century over which style would express or embody most effectively the country's values and ideals."[40] The new country was founded on the idea of religious freedom and religion played its part in the creation of the style and purpose art would take in the lives of Americans. After the events that created their own country, the frugal and straitlaced Americans felt that art was an indulgence and of little practical use. "Puritans recognized the power of images from their criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church. Painting or sculpture would never have been permitted in the Puritan meeting hall but "nonreligious imagery, especially portraiture was permitted…"[41] Portraits and still-life paintings began to find their way into the homes of the upper-class Americans, as these had value. Art in nineteenth century America was developed from the restrictions on religious iconography in American. Samuel Mathers, in an excerpt from a sermon, states "For the Civil use of images is lawful for the representation and remembrance of a person absent, for honour

[40] Pohl, Frances K. *Framing America a Social History of American Art.* 2nd ed. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008, 82.
[41] Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 11.

and Civil worship to any worthy person, as also for ornament, but the scope of the Command is against Images in State and use religions."[42] Patrons who wanted to show their piety found ways within family portraiture as Protestantism had a literary focus rather than a visual focus.[43] History and genre paintings were popular as religious scenes could be used to educate and emphasize the teachings their religion. By the mid 1700's women began working with quilts, in quillwork with paper, feathers and wax works, all designed to decorate their homes with cultivated embellishments. By the end of eighteenth century, the tide on art had shifted. "The *Fine Arts*, when properly conducted, are a major source of improvement and pleasure to mankind. They have been, indeed, too often perverted to the service of licentiousness and vice but may be rendered a powerful auxiliary to virtue and religion."[44] Art makes a comeback into American homes.

Landscapes came into households of New England citizenry slowly. American artists were beginning to envision their own version of the landscape. Some "believed that the only type of painting truly able to play the part of a national art form was history painting, for only it could "elevate and refine the public feeling by turning their thoughts from sensuality and luxury to intellectual pleasures,"[45]while others disagreed. With the development of the landscape genre in America, it was

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[42] Samuel Mathers, "A Testimony from the Scripture against Idolatry and Superstition," *A Testimony from the Scripture against Idolatry and Superstition* (Cambridge, MA: Samuel Green, 1672).
[43] Pohl, Frances K. *Framing America a Social History of American Art.* 2nd ed. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008, 63.
[44] Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 63.
[45] Pohl, Frances K. *Framing America a Social History of American Art.* 2nd ed. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008, 121.

> through displays of heroic wilderness or the cultivated landscape, American artists attempted to formulate an image of nationhood that accommodated religious, scientific, and commercial concerns, that celebrated God's wonders while at the same time promoting the expropriation and exploitation of the land crucial to the expansionist plans of America's political and industrial elite.[46]

Landscapes and the vast, unknown wilderness depictions now had their place in the American art scene.

In America, the effects of Impressionism on art were subtle. The landscapes that were premier in the country at the time that Hassam began to paint were from the Hudson River school artists and the Luminist artists. Artists in both schools created vast landscapes depicting the rugged wilderness and lands newly opened by Westward Expansion. All categories were represented, from the pastoral to the picturesque to the sublime. This was the material that artists soaked up as an artistic foundation, prior to further training in Europe. It was with this foundation and via these artists, such as Childe Hassam, who studied in Paris in the 1880s[47], that Impressionist techniques reached American shores and were applied within the American landscapes.

Impressionist techniques can be seen in Figure 11, *Summer Evening, Paris* (1889) in many ways. One of these ways includes the diagonal line that extended the depth of the composition. "The rushing diagonals of the esplanade … are an Impressionist device that Hassam would take from his watercolors to his oils…"[48] Impressionist artists did not

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[46] Pohl, Frances K. *Framing America a Social History of American Art.* 2nd ed. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008, 141.
[47] Hassam, Childe, Charles E. Buckley, Hermann Warner Williams, Art Corcoran Gallery of, Charles E. Buckley, Hermann Warner Williams, and Art Corcoran Gallery of. *Childe Hassam: A Retrospective Exhibition.* Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1965, 14.
[48] Foster, Kathleen A. *American Watercolor in the Age of Homer and Sargent.* Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2017. https://www.aaeportal.com/?id=-21396.

Figure 11 *Summer Evening, Paris,* 1889. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas Photo courtesy of frederickhassam.org.

take the time to mix their paints to find the color they needed for the situation. They were working against the transitory nature of the landscape scenes and the available light and changing scenery. Hassam's light source for this composition is the light from the room behind the couple on the balcony, which is seen in the yellow of the woman's skirts, and the orange – yellow from the light of the lampposts on the street below. Hassam used a non-Impressionist technique to create the street below. The artist used what is called optical mixing of colors on the canvas itself. They would utilize the colors needed to mix and position these colors side by side thus giving the eye the mixed color without taking the time to formally mix the paint. This optical mixing of colors is also known as pointillism. Pointillism is used by Georges Seurat in his painting, Figure 12 *Sunday*

Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte, from the 1886 Impressionist Exhibition in Paris. If you can get close to the painting's surface, you will see the small dots of pure color.

Figure 12 *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte,* 1884. Georges Seurat (1859 – 1891), oil on canvas, 81 ¾ x 121 ¼ inches, The Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.224.

Other techniques are seen in the evening scene of Figure 11. Hassam uses techniques that create the misty look to the buildings in the distance by the non-usage of distinct lines. Hard edges were not used with the loose, quick brushstrokes needed to capture the fleeting moment. The hard edges give more of a sense of detail in a scene than the artist wanted for a glimpse of a moment. There are some details present in the closer scene of the couple on the balcony. The detailing in the chair back is distinct in the

softness of the midst of the potted plant and her skirts. The balcony railing gives a hard line, but most is hidden from view by the forms of the couple watching the crowds below.

Hassam laid his foundation for the composition in his use of the upper view of the scene. Throughout his career, Hassam has utilized the elevated viewpoint many times. He also has used the diagonal perspective of the street that gives depth to the composition. The wide boulevard runs from the lower right corner to the upper right, mid-point on the setting. The buildings running alongside the boulevard also aid the sense of depth in the scene. The horizontal lines within the composition – the balcony railing the opposite edge of the boulevard and the top of the buildings – bring a sense of order to the work. The last foundation aspect is the fact that the scene is an urban street scene which was quite different than what the French artists were painting in the late 1880's. The younger artists embraced, and the older generation of American painters derided the style. But younger generation did not fully embrace the French Impressionist style; they adapted it to fit the culture of a modern America. With the mixed reviews from the artists and with the modifications made, the American public came to love the style that could be claimed as the national vision.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGING THE NATIONAL VISION

Most of the thoughts of American artists and progressives during the Revolutionary War time frame of 1774 through 1781 and after revolved around defining the new national identity of America. The American landscape began to be utilized as a symbol of the new nation, bringing the picturesque and the sublime into the realm of American landscapes. As stated prior, the picturesque is defined as referring "to an ideal type of landscape that has artistic appeal, in that it is beautiful but also with some elements of wildness…" The sublime is defined as by Edmund Burke in 1757 "as an artistic effect productive of the strongest emotion the mind is capable of feeling."[49] The sublime references an artwork that is at the height of excellence, grandeur and beauty such that it produces the strongest emotion that a mind is capable of feeling, such as we see in Figure 13, *In the Woods* (1855) by Asher Brown Durand.

The light in the sublime is depicted in darker tones, lending to the quiet emotional feel of the light. Parameters thus defined, the search for a specific type of American landscape scene began in the nineteenth century. The Hudson River artists laid a foundation for future American artists and visionaries to construct their new visions of the American landscape. After the tumultuous years of the Civil War and Reconstruction, American art was seen to have lost some of its spark, compared to European art.[50]

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[49] "Sublime." 2021, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/sublime.

[50] Mancini, JoAnne Marie. *Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. Accessed July 14, 2021. https://www-aaeportal-com.echo.louisville.edu/?id=-18505.

Figure 13 *In the Woods*, 1855. Asher Brown Durand (1796 - 1886), oil on canvas, 60 3/4 in x 48 inches, The MET, Gift in memory of Jonathan Sturges by his children, 1895. Accession number 95.13.1.

The American national spirit was almost broken by the Civil War and did not begin to reform until the 1870's. The art immediately after the Civil War was dispirited, melancholy, and contemplative. The drive to rebuild and strengthen the national spirit was increased and one of the focuses became the desire for our art to be seen as different, and better than, European art. In serving to reestablish a national creative voice, artists began to reject "the traditional notion that art must draw its inspiration from myth,

religion, history, or other art, inverting the academic emphasis on culture over nature."[51] Another of the changes that came to America was the creation of the professional guilds and professional schools to teach these new traditions to up and coming artists.[52] In 1805, the first art school on the Continent was created in Pennsylvania – the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.[53] The National Academy in New York was founded from the example of the Royal Academy in London in 1825. Artists continued to travel to the distant lands that piqued their interests and they opted for travel to Europe. Upon their return, some of them were offered jobs in the new art schools. Artists, in their travels, continued to integrate artistic elements from France, Germany, Italy, England and others into their work. Upon these foreign traditions, American artists overlay their American style and vision and created the new American landscape genre and the new national spirit with vigor and ability.

> In the American adaptation…impressionism was an eclectic mélange incorporating…the dashing technique and rich color of the Munich School, the tonal harmony and flat patterning of James McNeill Whistler, and academic draftsmanship. In addition, American impressionists…eschewed the French focus on working-class leisure and lower-class women, opting instead for upscale urban views, decorous park scenes, or views of fashionable summer haunts at seaside or in picturesque New England villages. So successful was the process of adaptation that, despite initial resistance, impressionism in its American translation was an established and even conventional pictorial language by the turn of the century.[54]

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[51] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, David Park Curry. *American Impressionism and Realism the Painting of Modern Life, 1885 - 1915.* New York, NY: The Metropolitian Museum of Art, 1994, 5.
[52] Mancini, JoAnne Marie. *Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. Accessed July 14, 2021. https://www-aaeportal-com.echo.louisville.edu/?id=-18505.
[53] "About Pafa: PAFA - Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts," PAFA, June 28, 2019, https://www.pafa.org/about.
[54] Burns, Sarah, John September Davis, and John Sept Davis. *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 978.

Figure 14 *Nocturne, Hyde Park Corner*, 1898. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 12.5 x 9.5 inches, Photo courtesy of artnet.com.

In Figure 14, *Nocturne, Hyde Park Corner* (1898), the viewer can see that Childe Hassam brings these combined elements to bear.

The influences of the Munich School came into Hassam's view by way of John Henry Twatchman, who was a student at the Munich School. The city of Munich was known as Kunststadt, or art city, and its art education reached its height in the latter portion of the nineteenth century. Munich drew in many artists to learn the lessons of the art school and to take part in the annual art exhibitions. The first international art exhibition occurred in Munch in 1851 after the opening of the Kunstausstellungsgebaude,

Art Exhibition Building in 1845, and before the building of the Glaspalast, Glass Palace in 1854.[55]

Figure 15 *Hill Reflected in the Pond*, 1890. John Henry Twatchman (1853-1902), Oil on canvas. 7 x 12 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Purchase/gift of Mahonri M. Young Estate, Accession number 820038918.

The characteristics of the Munich School include a naturalistic style in addition to a dark chiaroscuro. Chiaroscuro is derived from Italian "chiaro" meaning light and "scuro" for dark. It is the use of the sharp contrast between light and dark within a composition that assists in creating three-dimensional depth in a piece. As can be seen in Figure 15, *Hill Reflected in the Pond* (1890) the dark, earthy colors prevalent in the Munich School are present in this composition. The chiaroscuro can be seen between the

[55] Klahr, Douglas. "Munich as Kunststadt, 1900-1937" Art, Architecture, and Civil Identity." *Oxford Art Journal*
Vol. 34, No. 2 (2011). https://www.jstor.org/stable/41315377, 185.

reflection of trees in pond and the reflection of the sky in the clearly delineated line of light and dark.

Hassam and Twatchman, along with J. Alden Weir, as founders of "The Ten," they socialized together and attended functions of the group. The Ten, consisting of Hassam, Edward Simmons, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Edmund Tarbell, Frank Benson, Joseph R DeCamp, broke from the Society of American Artists in 1898 "to hold their own shows on a platform of art for art's sake and individual expression."[56] The group was created because of differences of opinions with the older Society of American Artists. Hassam and his peers wished to incorporate their new Impressionist style into the Society but there was much resistance to the idea. The members wished to go their own way and the Ten American Painters group was born.

Hassam incorporated the use of rich color from the Munich School to add to the higher key palette that he brought from the French Impressionists. The depth of the composition is flattened, showing the influence of James Abbott McNeill Whistler. Influences from Japanese composition and spatial effects are seen in Whistler's work by 1863. This is when Sandberg dates the beginning of the Japanese influences by means of documentary and visual evidence.[57] The influence is evidenced by the flattening of the compositions, as you see in Japanese Ukiyo-e prints. Another piece of evidence of Eastern influences is in the "large, flat areas of colour" that are seen in Figure 19, *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea*. In Figure 14, *Nocturne, Hyde Park Corner*,

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[56] Burns, Sarah. *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. https://www.aaeportal.com/?id=-14774.

[57] Sandberg, John. "'Japonisme' and Whistler." *The Burlington Magazine* Vol. 106, No. 740 (Nov., 1964). https://www.jstor.org/stable/874429.

Hassam's depth of field is not as deep as when he is showing the perspective of the scene. The height of the buildings in the background also are not as tall as in other works. Academic draftsmanship is shown in all of Hassam's works. These skills are ones that he earned early in his career as a he left high school early to produce wood engravings for magazines, newspapers, and books.[58]

All of these visions of the American landscape had one thing in common: a sense of pride in the American landscape. The country's expanding borders and contemporary metropolitan cities were sights that were not available in Europe. Late nineteenth century artists took their nationalist feelings and turned to different genres of art. American art was figurative with artists painting the portraits of the elite of the business and social scenes. Academic artists continued to experiment "with gentrified history painting and expanding the range of genre subjects, others created another equally important change, a new type of American Genre painting that is consistent with the generalized and suggestive mood of the landscapes."[59]

As American Impressionists began to create their scenes of the city and of the shorelines of America, some artists also began to experiment with scenes that were new, bold, and mysterious – the night lit by the newest technological creation, streetlamps, and interior lighting.

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[58] Broun, Elizabeth. "Childe Hassam's America." *American Art* 13, no. No. 3 (Autumn, 1999) (1999): 32 - 57. The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. http://wwww.jstor.com/stable/3109339, 34.

[59] Weinberg, H. Barbara. "What's American About American Art? Late-Nineteenth-Century American Painting: Cosmopolitan Concerns and Critical Controversies." *Archives of American Art Journal* 49, no. 1/2 (2010): 66-77. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23025802, 72.

CHAPTER FIVE

CREATION OF ELECTRIC LIGHTS, NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE ADVENT OF A NEW SOCIAL SCENE

The Industrial Revolution had changed the face of life in America and Europe. In a restatement of Paul Valéry from his 1962 *The Outlook for Intelligence,* of the neglect, by history, of the effect of electricity upon the world itself and how it is portrayed in historical annals, Marc Bloch states that it is "an example of one of those 'notable phenomena' which it [history] neglects despite the fact that they [effects of electricity] have 'more meaning and greater possibilities of shaping our immediate future than all of the political events combined."[60] In *The Outlook for Intelligence,* Valéry muses how the events, such as the advent of electricity, and their ramifications that happen over long periods of time are not well considered by the historian and disclosed a lack of documentation of cultural changes wrought by world altering events.[61] Bloch continues in the same train of thought with the statement of the presence of documents and lays it back again at the feet of the historians. The historians have their part to play in this but there are others can take up the task of uncovering one smaller event that sheds light on the larger event traveling largely unnoticed through history.

[60] Bloch, Marc. *The Historian's Craft.* New York: Vintage Books, 1953, 66.
[61] Valéry Paul, *Outlook for Intelligence* (New York, NY: Harper, 1962), 10.

In 1809, Pall Mall, Westminster, England, becomes the first street permanently lit with gas lights. These lights begin to attract tourists, artists, and poets. On the other side of the Atlantic, in 1816, Rubens Peale utilizes gas lighting to illuminate a display at the Philadelphia Museum and the promotion for gaslights in America begins. In 1844, Paris installs electric arc lighting along the Place de la Concorde, thus promoting the next step in artificial lighting. 1850 saw the first New York tourist guidebook written that encouraged the new trend of evening tourism or tourism by gaslight.[62] These progressions of technology vitally changed how people thought, and lived, in the night. In addition to the creation of factories that brought more people to the city, the advent of electrical lights to light the streets and buildings at night brought more people out of their homes to socialize in the evenings and gave them more opportunities and places to work. "Darkness quickly became a stimulant"[63]

With the world now lit, society and the environment evolved; people realized there was an entirely new world to explore.

> its joys and perils needed to be interpreted – morally, aesthetically, and socially. How did the city look to those who ventured forth, the flaneurs prowling the streets in search of inspiration? How were their responses communicated through poems and novels, guidebooks, paintings, prints, and photography? How did nocturnal imagery evolve as people made efforts to comprehend first the gaslit and then the electric city?[64]

David Nye advances the idea of the "electrical sublime" that changes the observation of the landscape: "Dramatic lighting made possible the revisualization of landscapes, filling

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[62] Nye, David E. *Electrifying America Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880 - 1940.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990, ix.
[63] William Sharpe, *New York Nocturne: The City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography, 1850 - 1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 2.
[64] William Sharpe, *New York Nocturne: the City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography, 1850 - 1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 3.

them with new meanings and possibilities."[65] To restate; the sublime is defined by Edmund Burke in 1757 "as an artistic effect productive of the strongest emotion the mind is capable of feeling."[66] To combine the new element of electrical lighting with the definition of the sublime as the extreme of emotions or feelings that are generated by this new technology allows insight into how the citizens of the city felt when their streets are lit for the first time after the sun set.

David Nye states "Electrification is not an implacable force moving through history, but a social process that varies from one time to another and from one culture to another."[67] As these innovative technologies advanced, they became the new subjects on the minds of the artists and other creatives. These flaneurs had many novel places to watch these new alterations in the metropolitan societal tableau. "The light bulb itself was not merely a substitute for gas lighting but facilitated social transformations."[68] Lighting became improved in places such as the theater, clubs and eating establishments. Other enterprises opened their doors in the evening and there was no shortage of locales catering to all tastes and desires. Night had come to have a negative connotation upon which electric lights achieve their glory. It is another way to suggest that light can overcome the darkness. The day landscape is drab and devoid of interest and, in contrast, Piri Thomas wrote "but at night, man, it's a swinging place…. The lights transform

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[65] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
[66] "Sublime." 2021, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/sublime.
[67] Nye, David E. *Electrifying America Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880 - 1940.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990, ix.
[68] Nye, David E. *Electrifying America Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880 - 1940.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990, x.

everything into life and movement and blend the assorted colors into a magic cover-all that makes the drabness and garbage, wailing kids and tired people invisible."[69]

But these new innovations did not always engender a positive response in individual citizens. Childe Hassam did not regard it positively at first when the electric street cars began to share the city streets with the horse drawn coaches. "He expressed guarded fascination for modern technology, the railroad and electric lights, and even for the new skyscrapers of New York, which, if transformed by mist, fog, or light, could be thrillingly beautiful."[70] Even through modernization, horse draw coaches were a favorite subject. So, he adapted and, in the early 1900's, New York, along with other metropolitan cities, was changing from the scenic city that Hassam loved – landscapes changed, landmarks disappeared, the city was modernizing.[71] In Figure 8, *Nocturne, Railway Crossing, Chicago*, Hassam blends the modern with older in the scene that includes both a horse drawn carriage and a modern cable car. The presence of both modern and antiquated shows the melding of the two worlds, old and new, in one location. The shadows of the tall buildings in the background and the streetlights also add more details to the new elements of modern technology. The point of view of the composition begins with the older technology, the horse drawn carriage, and continues to show more modern details as the point of view travels deep into space. Hassam continues to incorporate modernizing technology into his compositions –skyscrapers, motorized vehicles and electric lighting in homes, offices, and shops, all the while regretting the loss of the

[69] Nye, David E. *Electrifying America Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880 - 1940.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990, 390.
[70] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 76.
[71] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 76.

elements he so loved. He will not stop at just recognizing, and including, the advances in technology but he will document how society changes with the new technology.

With these changes in society, taste in art began changing also. "As change became more rampant and the ugliness of urban life became more evident, the American Impressionists sought solace in nostalgic landscape views celebrating a simpler way of life long past."[72] The urban nocturne enabled artists, like Childe Hassam, to work within the genre and still paint the scenes that he loved – the ones right outside of his New York apartment window. He spoke of painting "as if looking out of an open window, and painted just as they see it."[73] Instead of painting scenes that were evoking a place and time in the past, Hassam preferred the modern New York landscape for his urban nocturnes to document the present-day moment but he also composed nocturnes in other locations, such as Boston, Chicago, and Paris. This present-day moment additionally included scenes of "an increase in leisure time for all entrepreneurs and almost all nonfarm workers and the acceptance of the concept of leisure by a society that traditionally and single-mindedly had been committed to a work ethic." In Figure 16, A New Year's Nocturne, New York (1892), Hassam depicts a display of the new increase in leisure time and opportunities to socialize. The view depicts a couple that is window shopping on New Year's Eve, according to the title. They could be coming from or going to the theater, or a party, given that the gentleman is dressed in black tie attire. The modern technology of indoor lighting has given rise to the opportunity of perusal of

[72] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 67.
[73] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 87.

Figure 16 New Year's Nocturne, 1892. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Watercolor and gouache on paper, 22 x 15 inches Photo courtesy of artnet.com.

luxury or necessity items that shoppers did not have prior to the installation of electrical lighting. The new leisure of modern life was both generated and necessitated by industrialization and urbanization."[74]

Hassam worked by getting close to the subject, but not too close to interfere with what was happening on the street. This is seen from his street level point of view. It seems as if the viewer is on the sidewalk with the people celebrating New Year's out on the town in New York. Sometimes, he worked in a hansom cab that he rented and sat gazing at the bustle in the street until the right combination of people gave him the image

[74] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 24.

that he wanted to paint. He epitomized the definition of the ""Flaneur" – an incisive but standoffish observer of the crowd."[75] This was Hassam's preferred approach to gathering scenes to paint. He would look for elements that fit the image of the composition that he desired to create and would wait until the component pieces came into view. "Hassam's use of a deliberately fragmented composition – a device suggesting a random, accidental encounter." This serves to bring the viewer directly into the scene, along with energy and drama.[76] But in the time of these works, "city views like Hassam's, which invoked the dynamic energy of the urban landscape as a positive representation of America,"[77] were startling in a country that still envisioned itself as rural.

Figure 17*, Horse Drawn Cabs at Evening, New York* (1890) is indicative of the way many in rural America saw life in the big city as they had never experienced nor seen life in the metropolitan areas. Technology, and other indicators of modernity, was extremely slow in getting out to the rural areas of America. This image brings modernity but does not make it the focal point of the image. The focal point is the horse drawn carriages and the figures walking on the street. The tall buildings, taller than what could be found in most rural areas, streetlights, and the light in the shops along the street are the interesting background for the focal points of the composition. This image was just one of many that brought the image of these new, modern technologies to the attention of the countrymen living outside the urban city limits. Rural moonlight landscapes, clearly traditionalist at the beginning of the period, gave way to

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[75] Burns, Sarah, John September Davis, and John Sept Davis. *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 985.
[76] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 41.
[77] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 76.

increasingly urban scenes. The nocturne allowed its beholders to adapt to modern realities.[78]

Figure 17 *Horse Drawn Cabs at Evening, New York, 1890.* Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Watercolor and gouache on paper, 14 x 17 3/4 inches, photograph courtesy of frederickhassam.org.

[78] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

CHAPTER SIX

JAMES ABBOT MCNEIL WHISTLER AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NOCTURNE

Nocturnes are a subgenre of landscape painting that came into being in the 1860's and 1870's. With the arrival of electricity as a new form of lighting, the night scene took on new aspects in the eyes of artists. These new urban landscapes became a fresh realm to be explored.

James Abbot McNeill Whistler, ambitious in the expansion of his art, borrowed a term from Chopin. He used the term nocturne to "designate his moonlights where he removed all but flickers of light and human figures in the landscape, detailed in the mist."[79] Whistler was not the only one to make musical connections within their art. Nocturnes, in music, were initially tranquil or expressive pieces, typified by a melodic tune, but can on occasion evoke other moods, like gloom or unease. The same can be said of nocturne paintings. Giles Edgerton catalogued these evocative moments in 1909, "the hush of the woods, the still fragrance of early spring, the ghostly dory in a twilight sea, the hidden pool in the yellow woods, the mysterious radiance of prairie sunsets, the tender, brooding quality of early snow that comes sometimes as a kindly wonderful garment of beauty, twilight about simple homes, isolated old farms with memories that

[79] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

bring quivering response."[80] Edgerton describes of the peaceful side of the nocturne, but artists began to explore the mysterious side of darkness and what it could represent. In 1892, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer stated that she understood why the American Impressionists

chose to work in the nocturne:

> The abrupt, extraordinary contrasts of its sky-line are then subdued to a gigantic mystery; its myriad, many-colored lights spangle like those of some supernally large casino; and from the east or south we see one element of rare and solemn beauty – the sweep of the bridge, defined by starry sparks, as though a bit of the arch of heaven had descended to brood over the surface of the waves.[81]

One of Whistler's first titled nocturnes was Figure 18 Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea (1871). He used nocturne, within his titles, to describe the visual style that he felt evokes thoughts of the night or of scenes without a source of light other than the moon and stars. In Whistler's *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea* (1871), there are hints at buildings on the horizon, also reflected upon the waterway between the viewer and the horizon. There is a dimly lit figure in the foreground. There is not a visible light source except for the pinpricks of lights in the buildings across the waterway. Everything is shimmering in shades of blue with a very faint, reflected light that is found on moonlight nights.

In this stark painting, there is less to gaze upon than in other landscape paintings of the late nineteenth century that are contemporary to *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea*. The elements of landscape painting, such as a distant interest point, a

[80] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 67.
[81] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 168.

Figure 18 *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea,* 1871, James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834 – 1903), oil paint on wood, 19 ¾ x 24 inches, Tate Britain, Bequeathed by Miss Rachel and Miss Jean Alexander, 1972, Accession numberT01571.

foreground point, trees, waterways, mountains, and expressive skies are absent. Riots of natural colors are also not present in the nocturne. Figure 19, Landscape with a Rainbow, depicts all the elements stated above whereas Whistler's Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea in Figure 18 has minimized the elements of the painting.

What are present in the nocturne are elements from the Japanese art that was beginning to be seen in Europe. Japan opened to trade in 1853 and art was one of the commodities that began to stream out of Japan to Europe and America at that time. These

Figure 19 *Landscape with a Rainbow,* 1859. Robert S. Duncanson (1821 – 1872), oil on canvas, 30 x 52 ¼ inches, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Leonard and Paula Granoff, Accession number 1983.95.160.

elements consist of flattening the compositional space, as can be seen in Whistler's *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea*, and the raised horizon line, which forces the eye upwards into the space.[82] These influences are just the beginning of what came to be called nocturnes.

The effect of Japanese art was seen in the sketchbooks of Manet from the later decades of the nineteenth century. There is one theme in common between manet and the woodblock prints coming from Japan at the time – "these works…showed scenes of everyday life in Japan or portraits of popular figures such as actors, fighters, and

[82] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 60.

courtesans."[83] The artists saw that life in Japan was not different from life in Europe and began to sate their curiosity in the art streaming to the Continent from Japan. Strengthening the arguments about depicting the truth in nature by painting what the artist sees, the Japanese prints brought the lack of depth, or lack of linear perspective, for the French to mull over. As in Whistler's case, "the use of a high horizon line can create spatial tension by seeming to flatten the receding spatial plane while asserting its depth through the diminishing size of the forms placed on it."[84]

Landscape in Moonlight (Figure 20), or one like it, could have been seen by Whistler and provided the influence for *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea* (Figure 18). The elements present in the hanging scroll are as spare as the landscape elements in Whistler's piece. But both bring the feeling of experiencing the fullness of the landscape from the waterside. Kano keeps his color spare, just as Whistler does with his blue color scheme for *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea.*

Moonlit scenes are evocative images in many examples of music and art throughout history but also within our timeframe of the turn of the twentieth century. Both Frederic Chopin and Claude Debussy were composers of musical nocturnes and created their masterpieces in the nineteenth century. Both composers were producing their music against the trends of the time. Chopin detested Romanticism. His mind was too "precise to allow color to dominate form."[85] It seems that this precision

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[83] Hanson, Anne Coffin. *Manet and the Modern Tradition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. https://www-aaeportal-com.echo.louisville.edu/?id=-15961.
[84] Hanson, Anne Coffin. *Manet and the Modern Tradition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. https://www-aaeportal-com.echo.louisville.edu/?id=-15961.
[85] Schonberg, Harold C. *The Lives of the Great Composers.* 3rd ed.: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth
Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10110, 1997, 195

Figure 20 *Landscape in Moonlight,* after 1662. Kano Tan'yū (Japanese, 1602-1674), ink on silk, one of a hanging triptych,39 5/8 x 16 3/4 inches, The Harry G.C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard, Accession number 1975.268.50.

and rationality made Romanticism and the emphasis on strong emotion and violent passions difficult for Chopin to embrace. He was a lauded as a composer that changed the rules and created a style that would dominate the latter half of the nineteenth century.[86] In comparison, Debussy believed there was a connection between music and art; “I am more and more convinced that music, by its very

[86] Schonberg, Harold C. *The Lives of the Great Composers.* 3rd ed.: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10110, 1997, 181

nature, is something that cannot be cast into a traditional and fixed form. It is made up of colors and rhythms. The rest is a lot of humbug invented by frigid imbeciles riding on the backs of Masters…"[87] Debussy's music, building upon Chopin's blazed trail, was also a break with conventional musical composition. His music was noted as being comparable to Monet's painting style of vague suggestions instead of precise detail. "Instead of using the precision and clarity of the major and minor scales, Debussy often favored the ambiguity and vagary of the pentatonic and whole-tone scales."[88] In terms of musical styling, to create the feeling in his music, Debussy "sought to express the shimmering effects of light and shade through tone color, dynamics, and chordal structure and, as a result, sacrificed lyric melody, traditional form, and polyphonic complexity for suggestive harmonic progressions."[89] Debussy was inspired by Frederick Chopin and his compositional style and his style would change the musical world again. He took that inspiration and overlay his own thoughts onto his own compositions. Debussy ascribed to the idea that one should seek "ideas not 'within oneself,' but 'outside the self.' The influences that he brought to bear from the outside included Asian philosophies of sound, nature and the occult.[90] In addition to the influences from Chopin, Debussy was inspired by the literary Symbolists and Asian music, specifically the sounds of the Javanese gamelan orchestra he heard at the Paris Exposition in 1889, at the same time as Japanese art

[87] Schonberg, Harold C. *The Lives of the Great Composers.* 3rd ed.: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10110, 1997, 455
[88] Schonberg, Harold C. *The Lives of the Great Composers.* 3rd ed.: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10110, 1997, 457
[89] Cykler, E., M. Wold, J. Miller, and G. Martin. *An Introduction to Music and Art in the Western World.* McGraw-Hill Education, 1995, 296.
[90] Pasler, Jann. "Revisiting Debussy's Relationships with Otherness: Difference, Vibrations, and the Occult." *Music and Letters* 101, no. 2 (2020): 323.

was making a sweep through Europe. At the Exposition, the music that Debussy and others encountered was so unlike European music. Inherent in the radical Otherness of non-European music, and what drew Debussy to it, was "the angklung, the rhythmic complexities of the gamelan, and the effect these produced.[91] These Other elements slowly filtered their way into European art forms and became appreciated on their own.[92] Chopin and Debussy's music, often termed Romantic, would have been heard at many social engagements in America. Romantic music led to the creation of different musical forms, one of which was the nocturne. Romanticism and the revolt against the order and logic of neo-classicism opened the way for the Impressionists and their views of light, the world and life.

Literature that dwelt in the night also opened many new avenues for the creative world. Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as stating; "Dreams acquaint us with what the day omits."[93] Visions of night release the mind to further possibilities as the bright light of day obscures the sundry evils of the world behind flashy facades. Authors took the opportunity to use this literary device as another world in which to tell their story. Walt Whitman's *A Clear Midnight* from 1881 shows that the night frees the soul to ponder the immensity of the world and our place in it.

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[91] Pasler, Jann. "Revisiting Debussy's Relationships with Otherness: Difference, Vibrations, and the Occult." *Music and Letters* 101, no. 2 (2020): 322.
[92] Pasler, Jann. "Revisiting Debussy's Relationships with Otherness: Difference, Vibrations, and the Occult." *Music and Letters* 101, no. 2 (2020): 324.
[93] Sharpe, William Chapman. *New York Nocturne: The City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography.* Princeton University Press, 2008, 24.

> Thus is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless
> Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done
> Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering thy themes thou lovest best
> Night, sleep, death, and the stars[94]

To give weight, light and dark are often put in proximity to emphasize the distinct differences in both. Whitman references night, sleep, death, and the darkness of space as the times when the mind is more open to ponder the wealth of information and truth in front of us, not the brightness of day. Some also have thought that nocturnal mysteries are "ritualistic flouting of daytime taboos."[95]

Like Whitman, "Henry David Thoreau … would dwell on the nocturnal beauty and poetry that cities might taint but never fully corrupt." Others, 'like [George C.] Foster and Edgar Allen Poe, would try to 'read' the urban nighttime in order to dissect the motives and mysteries that darkness was thought to shroud."[96] These creative devices have moved forward into our modern literature, art, music and film and still strive to open the modern mind to the truth, not fear, shown by the night.

Hassam was influenced by the literature, religion, and music of his time. He took these thoughts from contemporaries on the aspects of light and dark and how they worked within society. He used these influences to paint not only beautiful daylight scenes of the shoreline and historically important landmarks but scenes of life after the sun sets, his nocturnes.

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[94] Whitman, Walt. *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose.* Riverside Editions; A34. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/walt-whitman, http://www.whitmanarchive.org/, http://www.waltwhitman.org/.

[95] Sharpe, William Chapman. *New York Nocturne: The City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography* Princeton University Press, 2008, 61.

[96] Sharpe, William Chapman. *New York Nocturne: The City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography.* Princeton University Press, 2008, 39.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INFLUENCES INTO THE NOCTURNE

Many other artists worked in the nocturne. Childe Hassam took Whistler's vision of the nocturne and applied more of the influences coming out of Japan. The influences from the "clear, bright landscapes"[97] emerging from Japan were accepted by contemporary artists who desired an opportunity to delve into an unknown foreign world. These influences were also seen in the restricted colors in the composition and in the simplicity of line that exemplifies Asian works. Other ways in which Japonisme is seen in European and American art is through a proliferation in texture and the contrasts between light and dark tones. In Figure 22, *New York Blizzard*, the texture is shown in the brushstrokes and his placement of the paint on the canvas.

Hassam also uses the contrast between the light and dark tones or chiaroscuro, to create his composition. The small, swooping brushstrokes that denote the wheels of the carriage are rendered in seemingly insignificant placements of bright color that show the carriage moving through the swirling snow, eager to arrive at the destination. The second set of wheels behind the carriage in the foreground indicates more travelers on the road in the frightful weather. The texture of the brushstrokes lends to the energy of the composition and contributes to the action of the carriage traveling down the street.

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[97] Hassam, Childe, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, Art Santa Barbara Museum of, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, and Art Santa Barbara Museum of. *Childe Hassam, 1859-1935.* Tucson: University of Arizona Museum of Art, 1972, 18.

Figure 21 *New York Blizzard, 1889*. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on panel, 4 ¾ x 8 inches.

Childe Hassam's methods and techniques progressed from his work in a realist quality to the Impressionist style that he combined with the other elements of Japonism. An example is Figure 22, *July Night*. He is using a technique of painting that is close to pointillism. Pointillism, as seen previously in Figure 12, *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte*, is a technique of neo-impressionist painting using tiny dots of various pure colors, which become blended in the viewer's eye. It was developed by Georges Seurat with the aim of producing a greater degree of luminosity and brilliance of color. These tiny dots, added to Hassam's use of color theory, lend to the appearance of abstraction in *July Night*. The contrast of opposing colors enables the light to appear in these paintings. His almost iridescent colors are a radical departure from his normal color scheme. He uses yellow to show the shine of light as it falls behind the figure of the

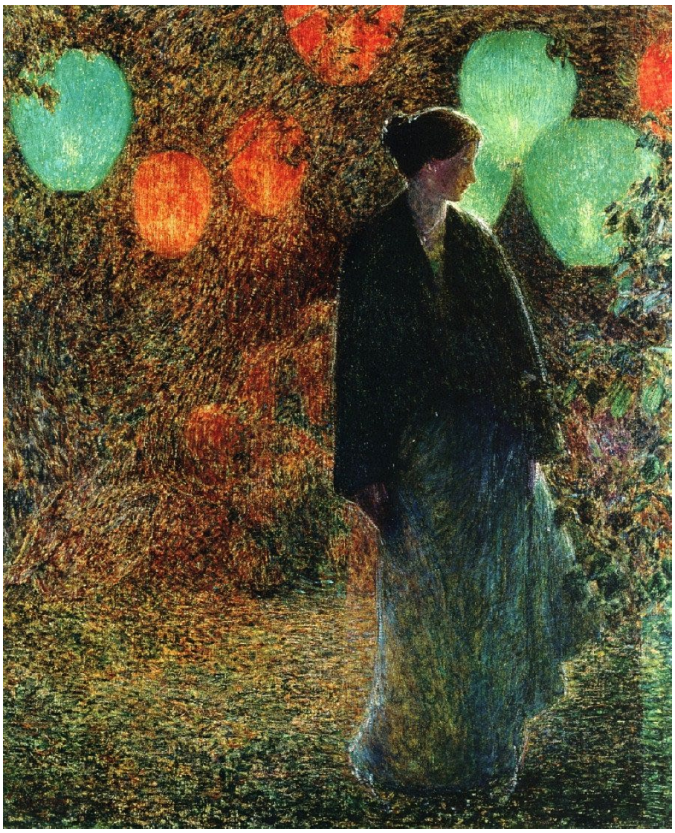

Figure 22 *July Night*, 1898. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 31 x 31 inches Photo courtesy of artnet.com.

woman as she admires the garden. The viewer can see the sparkle of light within the paper lamps hanging in the background. The edges of the figures' face, shoulder and the left edge of her skirts have a thin line of shine that is added by points of white paint that contrasts sharply with the yellow of the lantern light and the darkness of the night. This thread of radiance accents her face against the green lantern and accentuates the movement of her skirts against the ground. The pointillism technique in addition to his use of color theory gives the scene a sense of illumination that highlights, but does not intrude upon, the intimacy of the scene. This, in addition to the dreamlike mood of the

subject of the composition, push the boundaries beyond Impressionism.[98] The female figure in the foreground, Mrs. Hassam[99], is clear in the strong lines of the garment she is wearing as a jacket or a kimono. The lines in the skirt of her dress are more softly defined as the contrast in the colors is not as distinct as in the upper portion of her garb. More influences of Japonisme are indicated by the outfit of the female figure in the foreground in addition to the lanterns in the background. In his examination of a scene's conventional elements, the rich textural way in which he worked brings his approach rather close to pure abstraction. "This process of abstraction distills the real landscape into a place within the mind."[100] The influences of Japanese art also can be seen in the "dramatic use of voids" in the composition and "by the use of decorative patterns" that can be seen in *July Night.* The decorative patterns are detailed in the pointillism that he uses.

The simplicity in influence is seen in a statement by Whistler; "By using the word nocturne, I wished to indicate an artistic interest alone, divesting the picture of any outside anecdotal interest which might have been attached to it. A nocturne is an arrangement of line, form, and color first."[101] His nocturnes are composed much like music, very simply in its basic elements. Hassam's nocturnes share this simplicity with Whistler's. It is possible that Whistler's devotion to careful selection of aesthetic

[98] Hoopes, Donelson F. *Childe Hassam.* New York: Watson-Guptill, 1979, 50.
[99] Art in America, Vol. 1, pg. 150.
[100] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
[101] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

elements from routine reality prompted artists, like Hassam, to see that beauty could be found and brought out of the commonplaces of New York.[102]

American art had to make a change that, in keeping with the fast-moving modern society, depicted the new society and the novel avenues for socializing. These new landscapes became "dominated by darkness and fog."[103] This darkness led to there being a changeability in the interpretation of a nocturnal scene. Hassam "developed an acute eye for the activity of street life with its many revealing details."[104] In his travels throughout the city looking for the scenes that caught his eye, he observed, as all flaneurs do. He observed the seedy underbelly as well as the high-class crowds outside the theater and promenading on Fifth Avenue.

> Even though the tragedies of human existence are absent from Hassam's canvases, human feelings are always present. The sordid and vulgar did not appeal to his brush, and he took delight in showing the beauty that lives among us and inviting us to find it for ourselves. But his nocturnes hint at the sordid and vulgar, if viewers look closely enough to see it.[105]

In Figure 23, *Fifth Avenue Nocturne*, the figures are not easily seen within the composition. The streetlights are the most prominent feature of the canvas. Both forms are outside of the light that is shining from the lights onto the pavement between the two. The depth of the perspective is shown with the lights that move back diagonally from left to right.

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[102] Weinberg, H. Barbara, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry. *American Impressionism and Realism the Painting of Modern Life, 1885 - 1915.* New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994, 143.
[103] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
[104] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 11.
[105] Hassam, Childe, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, Art Santa Barbara Museum of, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, and Art Santa Barbara Museum of. *Childe Hassam, 1859-1935.* Tucson: University of Arizona Museum of Art, 1972, 22.

Figure 23 *Fifth Avenue Nocturne*, 1895. Frederick Childe Hassam ()859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 24 ⅛ x 20 1/16 inches, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Anonymous gift, 52.538.

The brightness of the lights and the movement from left to right keeps the eyes in the center of the canvas where the viewer can see the two figures in the foreground and the darker indication of a carriage in the background.

Childe Hassam never portrayed the vice of the city streets, and the viewer can wonder if he is hinting that the female in the foreground is a prostitute, as upper-class women in this day did not go out in the evening without an escort. Is he hinting of a connection between the two individuals in the scene? The fact that details of neither of the people depicted within the light lends credence to the idea of the artist hinting at the sordid New York city streets.

These elements that serve as influences into nocturnes, specifically the ones of Childe Hassam, came from many disparate sources. These sources came from new art that was flooding into the country with the opening of Japan in 1854, literature that was discussed in many of the social settings around the city and the group meetings that were the foundation of the professional artists groups. These aspects enabled influences to circle through and be seen in the work of contemporary artists and authors around the world.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SCENES OF NEW YORK AT NIGHT

Childe Hassam came to the urban nocturne earlier than many of his contemporaries. With this new subject, "most of the important painters of the early twentieth century attempted to portray the city at night, despite the considerable difficulty of doing so."[106] They had a new vision of the world, one that was exciting and spectacular but at the same time, softer and dreamier. They also opted to adopt a view that Hassam was already using – the elevated view. But where Hassam continued to show evidence of people and their various activities, some of his colleagues focused on the geometrical skylines of lofty buildings and the twinkling lights.

Childe Hassam showed that American Impressionism was well suited to such subjects, as he showed in Figure 24, *Broadway and 42nd Street*,

> a canvas from 1902 which depicts the crowds, coaches, and street cars in Times Square on a snowy evening. In the *New York Sun* he noted that the city was best "viewed in the early evening when just a few flickering lights are seen here and there and the city is a magical evocation of blended strength and mystery.[107]

[106] Nye, David E. *Electrifying America Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880 - 1940.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990, 76.
[107] Nye, David E. *Electrifying America Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880 - 1940.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990, 77.

This is shown in the composition using the perspective in the arrangement. The buildings stretch back into the work from right to left without giving a great amount of detail. He inserts the bright applications of color to indicate the lit interiors of shops and streetlights. But these lights do nothing to show the viewer detail within the composition.

Figure 24 *Broadway and 42nd Street,* 1902. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 26 x 22 inches, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot, (1876 – 1967), 1967, Accession number 67.187.128

The only details that can be seen are in the foreground of the composition in the separation of the some of the figures. Hassam renders his carriages indistinctly, not giving the viewer specifics as to whether they are horse-drawn carriages or the motorized vehicles that came to be seen on the streets of New York. The upper floors of the nearest

building are indicated in pinpricks of lighter colors. The viewer can discern that this is a busy city street but not specifically which street. Faces of the individuals cannot be seen but the texture of the painting behind the foreground figures gives the illusion of a crowd of people. As noted by Helene Valance, nocturnes often revealed a complex play between surface and depth, openness, and closure.[108] There are two sources of light in this scene. The first is the moon. You cannot see the moon, but the top portion of the composition is lit with a diffuse light. This light reflects off the snow that is shown in the foreground in front of the people he depicts on the street. The second source of light is from the shops that are lit with electric light. This light is depicted differently than the moonlight. It is rendered with a yellow tint to the paint as compared to the moonlight which is depicted with a clear blue-white light. There are also pinpricks of light in the floors above the shops at street level. These glints of light can be seen in the buildings facing the street. There are also twinkles of light on the carriages. This could be candles in lamps on horse drawn carriages or electric light in automated coaches. In nocturnes, the light is still there, just rendered differently.

Childe Hassam did not highlight the skyscraper, the symbol of capitalist pride and modernity, for it had no place in his scenes until later in his career. Thus, he was able to depict his genteel, middle-class leisure scenes with his nostalgic lens. He included visuals of taller buildings in Figure 25 *Nocturne - Big Ben*. I feel the intention here was to include Big Ben in the composition for nostalgic and location identification purposes. Even the misty image of Big Ben allows knowledgeable viewers to know where this image was painted.

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[108] Valance, Helene. *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890 - 1917.* Translated by Jane M. Todd. Boston, MA: Yale University Press, 2018.

Figure 25 *Nocturne - Big Ben*, 1898. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on canvas, 10.5 x 14.3 inches.

The nocturne turned the traditional landscape away from light and color, proposing a visual product distinct from the traditional painting palette. The traditional palette of colors includes a wide variety of colors to choose the color scheme, though they were very earthy colors. Early artists had to create their paint and mix their colors in preparation for their next project until the mid-nineteenth century. This was a time-consuming and expensive matter for the artist. Therefore, the artists used a limited number of colors in their composition.[109] Pigments were expensive and difficult to obtain. Advances in the creation of oil paints happened in the 18th century and this gave artists more options for their palettes. Paint was now available for purchase pre-mixed,

[109] Van Druten, Terry. "Making and Creating. The Painted Palette in Late Nineteenth-Century Dutch Painting." In *Hiding Making - Showing Creation*, edited by Rachel Esner, Sandra Kisters and Ann-Sophie Lehmann. The Studio from Turner to Tacita Dean. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2013. 74.

and this gave painters more color options. “The new availability of paints and their improved characteristics, thanks to new chemical compositions, led to a definitive change in the way artists dealt with their material.”[110] Impressionist paintings utilize a high key palette which are tones from midrange to brighter colors. Nocturnes, by definition, must use low key colors at the other end of the brilliance scale. Hassam uses a complementary color scheme for Figure 25, Nocturne - *Big Ben*

The complementary color scheme is where the artist chooses colors that oppose one another on the color wheel to create their compositions.[111] His darks are from the purple tone range and his lights are from the yellow tones. This contrast in bright and dark enables the eye to see the contrast in sharp relief and draw the most attention to the composition.

Hassam created his paintings in all types of weather, good and bad alike. One way in which American Impressionists differed from French Impressionists is that they “tended to show the city ‘made beautiful by romantic light; by a veil of haze, rain, or snow; or by an editing that eliminated or ameliorated ugly features.’”[112] Hassam looked for elements that would add a sense of drama or energy to his compositions and found them in the weather. Using weather features like rain, snow, moonlight, and fog became the themes used in his paintings. In *Nocturne – Big Ben*, Figure 25, it is difficult to distinguish if he is using a misty fog or rain to lend the atmosphere and lack of detail that

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[110] Van Druten, Terry. "Making and Creating. The Painted Palette in Late Nineteenth-Century Dutch Painting." In *Hiding Making - Showing Creation*, edited by Rachel Esner, Sandra Kisters and Ann-Sophie Lehmann. The Studio from Turner to Tacita Dean. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2013. 75.
[111] "How to Choose the Right Color Schemes." Artistsnetwork, accessed July 28, 2021, www.artistsnetwork.com/art- techniques/color-mixing/choose-color-schemes.
[112] Weinberg, H. Barbara, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry. *American Impressionism and Realism the Painting of Modern Life, 1885 - 1915.* New York, NY: The Metropolitian Museum of Art, 1994, 162.

the canvas has. In his early career, one writer remarked that he was glad to see that Hassam has gotten out of his period of "rainy days" compositions of the middle 1880's.

As viewers can see in Figure 26, *Across the Common on a Winter Evening,* Hassam can articulate quite a lot when using the fewest elements in a composition. "Contemporaries remarked on Hassam's uncanny sensitivity to the nuances of place, which allowed him to capture the distinct flavor of any locale."[113] What the artist is also able to capture here is the obscurity of the city. There are no faces, no details of any of the figures in the arrangement. Just the forms, tree trunks and the streetlamps. The muted details of the picture match the muted colors in the palette. It looks as if the artist added either black or white to orange to create his range of colors, so the painting is monochromatic in color. All these distinct elements that Hassam uses throughout his nocturnal landscapes contribute to telling the story that Childe Hassam desires to tell of the ever-changing New York.

Figure 26 *Across the Common on a Winter Evening Frederick Childe Hassam 1859 - 1935 Oil on canvas Photo courtesy of frederickhassam.org.*

[113] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 76.

CHAPTER NINE

THE NOCTURNE AND THE CHANGING EXPECTATIONS

OF THE TRUTH OF ART

> Although it may now appear to be an inoffensive mood piece, the nocturne in fact represents an aggressive reevaluation of the conventions of postromantic poetry and painting. Privileging the formal over anecdotal, the urban world over the natural one, musical analogies over literary references, abstraction over detail, and Japanese compositional devices over western mimesis and perspective, nocturnes dramatically anticipated the aesthetic values of modernism. As night transforms the city, so in the later nineteenth century the nocturne altered expectations about the sorts of truths art should reveal…[114]

` Hassam's works, the nocturnes, and his daylight scenes, along with art by his like-mined contemporaries, served as the point of departure for the Ashcan school of artists. The Ashcan artists worked to portray the people of the cities and the conditions under which they lived in the light of truth. They did not use the lower-class workers to highlight the middle and upper classes. They sought to bring attention to the truth of life in all areas, not just the genteel life lived along Fifth Avenue in New York.

> The urban realists known as the Ashcan school included empathic portrayals of "common people" in their scenes of gritty, unpicturesque ordinary life in New York City…Modernism became a flashpoint for public discourse on a variety of issues, including truthful representation, national identity, and politics.[115]

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[114] Sharpe, William Chapman. *New York Nocturne: The City after Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography.* Princeton University Press, 2008,

[115] Davis, John and Michael Leja. *Art of the United States, 1750 - 2000: Primary Sources.* Chicago: Terra Foundation for American Art, July 1, 2021, 2020. doi:https://www-aaeportal-com.echo.louisville.edu/?id=-20031.

Hassam would wander the streets looking for compositional pieces and interesting elements for his pieces, either on foot or via cab. His "treatment of subject matter was sensitive and straightforward; a keen interest in human beings kept him at all times alive to their pictorial qualities, their emotional suggestion, their dramatic significance."[116] Even though Hassam painted the life that he knew – the genteel, upper-class life – he was not without empathy for others who did not have his advantages. He was genuinely interested in the aspects of life that he had no personal experience with and believed that it was his role as an artist to communicate all these facets with the truthfulness required to give these subjects the justice that they deserved. In Figure 27, *Cab Stands at Night,* "the shadows of trees and standing cabmen strongly silhouetted against the snow are pictorial testimony to the new electric illumination, as this area – Madison Square – was one of the first to gain electric lights in 1880."[117] Hassam continues the candor of the composition in the addition of the new electric lights and also by documenting the lives of the ones who are also affected by the increased hours of society and their numerous functions. The social spectacle that Hassam observes is the contrasting wealth and fashion, fine ladies and gentlemen with cabbies, cobs, and newsboys.[118] His paintings serve as

[116] Hassam, Childe, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, Art Santa Barbara Museum of, Art University of Arizona. Museum of, and Art Santa Barbara Museum of. *Childe Hassam, 1859-1935.* Tucson: University of Arizona Museum of Art, 1972, 18.
[117] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 145.
[118] Hiesinger, Ulrich W., Childe Hassam, Gallery Jordan-Volpe, Childe Hassam, and Gallery Jordan-Volpe. *Childe Hassam: American Impressionist.* Munich: Prestel, 1994, 66.

Figure 27 *Cab Stand at Night, Madison Square, New York, 1891*. Frederick Childe Hassam (1859 – 1935), Oil on panel, 8 1/4 x 13 3/4 inches, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts, Bequest of Annie Swan Coburn (Mrs. Lewis Larned Coburn), 1934.

documentary evidence of the life lived in New York during these rapidly changing times when the center of New York society changed by the years.

As the new aesthetic values of modern art took hold in the art world, artists began expanding past the ideals held by Childe Hassam, John Abbott McNeil Whistler, and other American Impressionists coming into the early 1900's. Artists, because of new and expanding technologies, had new materials to work with. The Impressionists, both American and European, began the move away from traditions in their rejection of the canon of the French academy. Artists rebelled at the glossy depictions of city life; artists rebelled at creating what the consumer wanted rather than what they desired to create.

> He [the artist] was not content with natural works of art rendering beauty, sentiment, joie de vivre to adorn rooms of private dwellings, thus confronting the age of machinery with values complementing it, with a relaxed principle in art or with works aiming at a wholeness: Man the technician, the scientist, and man the observer of beauty, intuitive, humanist man, both appeased.[119]

The art world changes again.

[119] Hodin, J. P. "The Aesthetics of Modern Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 26, no. 2 (1967): 181-
86. https://doi.org/10.2307/428453. http://www.jstor.org/stable/428453, 181.

CONCLUSION

Nocturnes seem to indicate an end to the idea of landscape painting as a defining national art for the United States. With the advent of the nocturne and the popularity of the night landscape, the traditional precepts of landscape painting were seen to be ending. Hassam's urbanscapes are much more than sumptuous Impressionist paintings, they are visual records of the life of the city, the records of the life of the city lived under the artificial light generated by electricity. He recorded the transformation of America's premier metropolis with enthusiasm, love, and regret.[120] Additionally, the artists of American Impressionism, with their combination of "academic rigor and plein-air directness had transformed the ways in which art was taught, exhibited, and perceived."[121] These changes in the landscape of American art opened the way for future generations, such as the Ashcan School, to bring their interpretation and vision to the people. To borrow the musical terminology in which Whistler was so fond, the nocturne made it possible to harmonize the disparate elements of the twentieth-century American urban landscape, but dissonances persist.[122] What precipitates these changes to the art of the time is the increase of technology seen in the advancement of lighting, paint colors

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[120] Fort, Ilene Susan. *Childe Hassam's New York.* San Francisco, CA: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1993, xii.
[121] H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life: 1885-1915* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 24.
[122] Valance, Hélène and Jane M. Todd., *Nocturne: Night in American Art, 1890–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

and society in general. The movement of people from the rural to urban areas and the development of the middle-class as consumers drove adjustments within the artistic fields as the desire for art in the home modified the type of art that buyers preferred. My investigations into the nocturnal landscapes of Childe Hassam brought together all these disparate elements into a cohesive viewpoint and understanding of the transformations wrought by technology and ambition on a national and global scale.

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