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The Ideas of Progressivism in American Impressionism
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Bakalářská práce se bude zabývat analýzou amerického impresionismu v kontextu progresivismu. V teoretické části se zaměří na historický, kulturní a sociální kontext konce 19. století a začátku 20. století a na ideová východiska progresivismu. Rovněž charakterizuje impresionismus jako hnutí a jeho různé podoby v americkém kontextu (Pennsylvania, California a Ashcan School). Praktická část bude obsahovat analýzu námětů a estetik jednotlivých impresionistů (např. Child Hassam, Mary Cassatt, Theodore Robinson, James Whistler, John Singer Sargent, John Henry Twachtman). Cílem práce je zodpovědět otázku, zda můžeme americký impresionismus vnímat jako součást širšího progresivistického hnutí, případně jak se liší od impresionismu evropského.

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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou amerického impresionismu v kontextu progresivismu. V teoretické části je progresivismus definován společně s jeho historickým, kulturním a sociálním kontextem (pozlacený věk, volební práva žen a rasové problémy) na konci 19. století a začátku 20. století spolu s jeho ideovými východisky. Je zde také charakterizován impresionismus a jeho různé podoby v americkém kontextu (Pennsylvania, California a Ashcan School) spolu s představením amerických impresionistů. Praktická část se věnuje důkladné analýze jednotlivých malířů (Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John S. Sargent, William M. Chase, John H. Twachtman a Theodore Robinson) a také srovnáním amerického a francouzského impresionismu. Cílem práce je zodpovědět na otázku, zda můžeme americký impresionismus vnímat jako součást širšího hnutí progresivismu či nikoliv, případně jak se liší od impresionismu evropského.

Klíčová slova

Americký impresionismus, impresionismus, Childe Hassam, John S. Sargent, Mary Cassatt, pozlacený věk, progresivismus, rasové problémy, umění, volební právo žen

Title

The Ideas of Progressivism in American Impressionism

Annotation

This bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of American Impressionism in the context of Progressivism. The theoretical part defines Progressivism with its historical, cultural, and social context (Gilded Age, women's suffrage, and racial issues) in the late 19th and early 20th century, along with its ideologies. It also characterises Impressionism and its various forms in the American context (Pennsylvania, California, and Ashcan School), together with an introduction to American Impressionists. The practical part thoroughly analyses paintings of individual American Impressionists (Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John S. Sargent, William M. Chase, John H. Twachtman, and Theodore Robinson) and compares American and French Impressionism. The aim of this thesis is to answer the question of whether or not American Impressionism can be seen as a part of the Progressivism movement and, subsequently, how it differs from European Impressionism.

Keywords

American Impressionism, art, Childe Hassam, Gilded Age, Impressionism, John S. Sargent, Mary Cassatt, Progressivism, racial issues, women's suffrage

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Introduction

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the United States experienced a period with a significant series of changes in terms of social, cultural, and political reforms, known as the Progressive Era. This period was characterised by its dedication to enhancing social conditions, regulating the economy, and promoting democratic governance, all of which had a profound impact on the nation. At the same time, American artists started to embrace new innovative forms of expression through visual art. This artistic movement called Impressionism was a unique and radical resistance against the traditional norms both in painting and academic perception of art.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the correlation between Progressivism and American Impressionism. By delving into the historical, cultural, and social factors, and its ideological foundations, it should provide a comprehensive and complex understanding of Progressivism while providing several perspectives from a variety of historians, political scientists, and art critics. This context of Progressivism includes the Gilded Age, women's suffrage, and racial issues. These factors should provide additional context of the period of Progressivism to improve the understanding of such period and the term in general while also determining features that will be examined in the practical part, the analysis of paintings (further explained in the text). It is also important to mention that the term "Progressivism" used in this thesis connotes the Progressive Era in America in the 1890s–1920s. Simultaneously, the term "progressive," which will numerously appear in the following chapters, connotes a person or idea that favours reforms in order to seek improvement. Therefore, in this thesis, it can be said that the term "progressive" means to support "Progressivism."

Furthermore, this thesis seeks to contextualise American Impressionism within its historical framework, the original French movement, and to introduce the biographies of American Impressionists (Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, John Henry Twachtman, and Theodore Robinson) whose paintings will be analysed, and therefore these painters will be referred to as the most prominent further in the thesis. Providing the context of such movements, following analysis of individual artworks of American Impressionists, themes, aesthetics, and subject matter, should help to define the value of painters, especially their visual arts, in the period of Progressivism and their impact or contribution to such era.

The thesis is divided into two major parts. In the theoretical part the thesis will delve into defining the terms of Progressivism and Impressionism. Firstly, it examines the historical, cultural, and social contexts of such an era in America. This includes the introduction of three

sub-chapters: the Gilded Age, Women's Suffrage, and Racial Issues. Each chapter focuses on providing contextual background and, further, the examination of progressive ideologies that might define such a significantly reforming period. Moreover, it examines Impressionism and its journey to the American continent and provides adequate knowledge to support the analysis of paintings in the following chapters in the methodological part of the thesis. This chapter also includes a brief introduction of individual American Impressionists, such as Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, John Henry Twachtman, and Theodore Robinson altogether, with the importance of American Schools (Pennsylvania, California, and Ash Can School) in this particular matter. Secondly, the methodological part will thoroughly analyse selected paintings by American Impressionists, their technique, style, choice of subject matter, use of colours, and embedded ideas or meanings.

The primary objective is to determine whether such paintings or the movement in general, can be considered as a part of Progressivism, whether it intentionally supported the era or not. Additionally, it examines the distinction between the original French movement of Impressionism and its American equivalent.

To finalise, this thesis seeks to contribute to the understanding of two aforementioned terms, Progressivism and Impressionism, mainly in the American context in correlation with each other, while providing contextual backgrounds of both movements and a critical view of studies examining such topics. The primary objective is to answer whether or not Impressionism can be seen as a part of the American Progressive Era through the in-depth painting analysis of American impressionists and their possible interpretations.

1. The Progressive Era and its Ideologies

The Progressive Era was a transformative period characterised by economic, social, and political reforms in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century. The primary ideas of Progressivism included the improvement of the living standards with new labour rights and welfare programs, also concern about the environment and natural resources, focusing on individual progress and citizens' presence in the political sphere, women's suffrage, resolving the racial issues, exposing corruption, and ending the extreme concentration of wealth among the elite and economic "giants" that gained vast economic and political power in the Gilded Age. This age preceded the Progressive Era, and its end might be considered a catalyst of such progressive ideas. The following study of the authors Eldon J. Eisenach and Andrew M. Scott, trying to define Progressivism in the United States, revealed interesting arguments that might help to define and understand such a term.

For instance, Scott emphasised the fact that the government should be more involved in social issues, meaning the exploitation of women and children in the industry. Subsequently, the government should regulate and limit more prominent institutions and businesses while helping with the expansion of foreign trade. Additionally, Scott criticises the American historian Richard Hofstadter, who suggested an unconventional perspective. Hofstadter stated that progressive leaders (Woodrow Wilson, Theodor Roosevelt, Jane Addams, et al.) were more driven by the change in social status and feelings of envy and frustration instead of primarily preferring to help the people and improve their life conditions.¹

On the other hand, political scientist Eisenach seems to consider the progressive movement as purely altruistic. He also strongly emphasised that to fully understand this topic, it is essential to examine the preceding historical and political context. This approach will be used in the next chapter, *Gilded Age*, to better understand Progressivism as a reaction to the late 19th century.²

To finalise the definition of the Progressive Era from all the points mentioned above, it might be clearly said that Progressivism was a period that changed the state and social dynamics through reforms regarding economic, social, and political areas. However, the perspectives differ in not the definition in particular but in the motives behind the reformation.

¹ Andrew M. Scott, "The Progressive Era in Perspective," *The Journal of Politics* 21, no. 4 (November 1959):685–701.

² Eldon J. Eisenach, "Progressivism as National Regime," in *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2021), 8–47.

1.1. Gilded Age

The late 19th century in the United States was a period of excessive corruption, materialism, and wealth accumulation. This era, known as the Gilded Age, was characterized by the concentration of enormous wealth, especially among a small group of people. This group of high-ranked politicians and businessmen were also known as “robber barons” who amassed their wealth and subsequently created monopolies.³ For instance, John D. Rockefeller might be considered a proper one. In 1870, he established the Standard Oil Company, which was concerned with petroleum production, transportation, and refining. Through the strategy of continuously borrowing money from banks, the success of keeping low prices and, afterwards, using monopoly power, he started to accumulate an enormous amount of wealth. This allowed him to buy out any competitors that have appeared while heavily investing in other industries, for instance, railroads, gas, and commercial banks. Other significant figures are, for example, J. P. Morgan, concerned with finance and banking; A. Carnegie, concerned with the steel industry; and others. What is interesting is how Rockefeller and Morgan used similar methods and practices regarding financial management, even if they both differed in the sphere of business.⁴

Followingly, similar examples of businesses highly influenced and helped the rapid increase in industrial activity, the devolvement of businesses and the overall economic situation in the country. Building a significant network of railroads across the country not only helped the efficiency of trade, travelling goods or people but also enabled to maximise the potential use of America’s landscape, from North to South. On the other hand, it also enlarged the gap between the social classes since the wealth was concentrated only in a narrow group of people, mainly between large industrialists, businessmen and political figures. Minding the gap, there was still an improvement in the working class’s wages and life standards. As Ballard C. Campbell states in his work regarding the Gilded Age, wages doubled from the years 1870 to 1900. Yet, this gap was still rather significant due to the rise in living standard costs and urbanisation.⁵

Also, as Campbell suggests, to fully comprehend such a complex period as a catalyst of the Progressive Era, it is important to define the primary aspect that stood for the vast economic rise and change in society: industrialisation. The process of industrialisation, as he defines it, refers to a change that occurs when economic activity moves away from localised harvesting,

³ Ballard C. Campbell, “Understanding Economic Change in the Gilded Age,” *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 4 (1999): 16.

⁴ Norman S. B. Gras, “A New Study of Rockefeller,” *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 15, no. 4 (1941): 52–58.

⁵ Campbell, “Gilded Age,” 16–20.

extracting activities, and home manufacturing and, instead, transitions to a more diverse network of commercial relationships, which include continuous technological innovation and domination of finance capitalism.

Campbell also suggests that such economic change must possess specific features. Therefore, industrialisation highlights the role of six essentials that might be thought of as a cause. These components are technology, railroads, corporations, finance capitalism, labour, and retailing.

The innovation of technology played a vital role in driving industrialisation, with inventions such as the typewriter, phonograph, and electrical bulb and the utilisation of steel, coal, and steam. Not only did these tangible artefacts revolutionise the industrial processes, but so did the stimulus of investments into education and research, for instance, the establishment of engineering schools, industrial labs, and publicly run agricultural experiment stations. Additionally, it led to advancing bureaucratic management in the field of accounting, which was established to enhance the efficiency of the processes.

Campbell states that the building of railroads is a clear symbol of industrialisation. As was mentioned before, railroads really took over the American infrastructure, building a complex network of railroads across the United States. Apart from the enhancement of trade efficiency and maximising the landscape potential, it also led to the formation of a national market with enough competitors to stimulate the economy.

The first national businesses not only consisted of railroad companies, but they also touched upon the areas of the oil and steel industry, finance and banking. This, however, also transferred to the presence of smaller businesses that gradually rose in significance.

Finance capitalism was mainly developed due to the occurrence of private bankers and investment bankers. Such development of businesses led to the striving for funds for possible expansions, and this demand further stimulated the evolution of the securities market.

Such stimulation of the local economy and industries, in particular, caused the employment of thousands of workers with tied wages, mass production, the rise of managerial positions, and also opening opportunities for semi-skilled and un-skilled workers. The topic of labour in this period faced the complication of heterogeneity of workers; still, some conditions were definite, for example, ten to twelve working hours, racial and gender issues (racism and exploitation of women and children in labour), high rates of accidents due to the heavy machinery use and terrible working conditions. Moreover, despite the thousands of new working positions, employment was still uncertain since many of the industries faced rapid growth and, followingly, a saturation of the market that led to their downturns.

Lastly, industrialisation impacted the new form of advertisement and overall consumerism. There appeared to be new ways of selling products to customers that transformed the management of shopping. For example, the popularity of post-office services, shipping of bought products, mail orders and others.

Although the Gilded Age seems to be quite often perceived with a negative connotation, mainly due to the “robber barons” and terrific working conditions, such views may be challenged by the arguments of providing additional working positions even for immigrants and significant economic prosperity complemented with the philanthropy of wealthy figures. Furthermore, at the end of the 19th century, the United States outproduced every country in the world in terms of the Gross National Product.⁶ Nevertheless, these facts are undeniable; it might be discussed how moral it is to become an economic leader while having such conditions for workers and whether the philanthropy hidden behind collusive and unfair methods of businesses is justifiable. This could lead us to the answer as to why people called for action to reform America and how the Progressive Era began.

⁶ Ballard C. Campbell, “Understanding Economic Change in the Gilded Age,” *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 4 (1999): 16–20.

1.2. Women Suffrage

The activism of the women's suffrage movements (members known as the "suffragettes") occur through many regional and national organisations in America in the 1900s. Examples of these women's movements and organisations included the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), the National Mothers' Congress (NMC), and the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). All these movements were founded before the 1900s. However, it took almost twenty more years for them to get recognisable success. That means a significant rise of memberships in the aforementioned organisations and gradually winning admittance to the polls and policymaking tables. In general, these women's movements both wanted and supported progressive ideas through various reforms considering better work conditions, rights to vote and proper education. These reforms were not only about women's suffrage but also about improving the lives of the entire American working class or the local black community. Many female reformers also advocated for the needs of women and children. Their agendas included campaigns to improve working conditions, prohibition of alcohol, and prostitution.⁷ Thus, it can be said that "suffragettes" took part in the Progressive Era.

Although, the fact that suffragettes are considered to belong to the era of progressivism, the view of their overall impact on activism differs among the authors, for instance, Lewis L. Gould together with Courtney Q. Shah, and Robyn Muncy. All share the fact, already mentioned, that women were part of the Progressive Era. However, Lewis L. Gould and Courtney Q. Shah, in their *America in the Progressive Era, 1890–1917*, suggest that women mainly wanted to appeal on matters of work, wage, and sex equality with men. At the same time, they emphasise that there was a major split that radically deviated from the original moderate feminist movement. Alice Paul and Lucy Burns were at the forefront of the radical wing with their own national organisation, the *Congressional Union* and magazine, *The Suffragist*. Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that their form of public confrontation was not taken as positively as might be expected.

The parade attracted an angry crowd of spectators who verbally (and occasionally physically) attacked them. One newspaper account said that "the women had to fight their way from the start and took more than one hour in making the first ten blocks."

⁷ Robyn Muncy, "The Ambiguous Legacies of Women's Progressivism." *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (1999): 15–19.

Despite this behaviour towards women activists, Gould and Shah consider such an act as successful. Afterwards, there was a significant sign of public sympathy and approving reactions to the movement. This led to numerous petitions being sent to Washington regarding the enactment of women's right to vote, which enhanced the prospect of a constitutional amendment change.⁸

The opposing view, from Robyn Muncy in her *The Ambiguous Legacies of Women's Progressivism*, brings some compelling arguments touching on the theme of morality and a more futuristic point of view of the impact that women suffragettes made by reforms. She argues that although women were rightfully fighting for their rights and social issues such as inequality, everything that was made did not have such a positive outcome as they might have expected. Their endeavour created a better place for white women; on the other hand, this prolonged the gap between the racial issues and segregation towards black women and, therefore, preserved or worsened the problems that were to be overcome.⁹ The argument is shown in the following example:

First, women reformers generally failed to overcome (and white activists often worked to sustain) racial divisions in American life. Second, black and white female progressives changed "the place" of American women in many important senses, especially in winning admittance to the polls and the policymaking table. Third, despite carving out significant public space for women, female progressives—mostly white in this case—embedded in public policy the notion that motherhood and economic independence were incompatible.¹⁰

This, not frequently put, argument opened potential room for discussion, bringing up the morality of their action and considering the futuristic point of view for upcoming generations, which made all their way of behaviour half neglectful and contradictable.

Additionally, women's ambitions differed among the suffrage movement. Some focused merely on racial and immigration issues, such as racial discrimination or opposition to Jim Crow Laws (in more detail in the following chapter, *Racial Issues*), protection of immigrant women's rights, concerning access to education, employment and citizenship. While others emphasised

⁸ Lewis L. Gould, Courtney Q. Shah, *America in the Progressive Era, 1890–1917* (London: Routledge, 2021): 65.

⁹ Muncy, "Ambiguous Legacies," 15. Robyn Muncy, "The Ambiguous Legacies of Women's Progressivism." *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (1999): 15.

¹⁰ Muncy, "Ambiguous Legacies," 15–19.

stronger individualism, freedom, and public engagement, meaning the right to vote, proper education, professionalism, and overall equality with men. At last, there was also an urge to challenge traditional norms, in which women were seen only as caregivers, including childcare, motherhood, and household responsibilities. Therefore, it might be suggested that they tried to challenge the limitations of stereotypical views on the world within the society's responsibilities and change the overall dynamics of life. Most of such expressions took place in the public sector in the various forms of activism, such as demonstrations, protests, public speeches, and forming associations.

During this period, women also made significant contributions to American culture, especially art. For instance, Mary Cassatt, an impressionistic painter, frequently explored themes considering women's conventions in society – motherhood, childcare, and leisure activities in public spaces. But this was not the only example of an artist depicting women's motifs on canvases; we might also mention Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent, and others. Although the argument that women's motifs appear on the canvases of American impressionistic painters is definite, it cannot be said to which extent the visual art depicts the women's suffrage activism narrative in connection with the Progressive Era. This question will be further explored later in the chapter *Emancipation of Women in American Impressionism – From Object to Subject*, where specific paintings will be analysed to examine connections between the narrative of women in the Progressive Era and visual art, American Impressionism.

1.3. Racial Issues

Racial issues seem to be part of American history since the very start of the colonisation. Not even the era of Progressivism was an exception. As already mentioned in the first chapter, the Progressive Era was the transformative period that attempted to reform several spheres, including the political, social, and economic aspects of life altogether, with the gradual industrialisation and rise in urbanisation. This led, even if not directly, to tensions in society in the form of racial segregation, discrimination, white supremacy, and strong racism towards the coloured community. However, the slavery, pre and post-Civil War times followed by the Reconstruction Era, and the formation of racist groups, for instance, the Ku Klux Klan, acted as the main aftermath of racial issues. Such a period contained harsh realities for freed former slaves and their endeavour striving for equality that faced the times of the so-called Jim Crow Era, frequently referred to as Jim Crow Laws or Jim Crow South. The Jim Crow Era is often characterised by laws that strongly emphasised racial segregation even in public facilities. Often, this was complemented by extreme violence towards blacks, public lynching, aggressive mobs and racist constitutions. The aim of such laws was to uplift white supremacy, preserving racial inequality and racial discrimination.¹¹ Of course, the situation concerning racial issues differs across the regions of the American continent. From the historical context, mainly influenced by the Civil War and the two sides that were in the clash – South and North, it might be clearly said why racial issues are strongly connected with the region of the South, while it had a strong connotation of the pro-slavery region. To put the biased view aside, this does not mean that any of the issues related to race discrimination did not appear in the North or even on the West Coast, in which, for example, there was significant racism against the Chinese working community that resulted in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Author Alexander X. Byrd, in his *Studying Lynching in the Jim Crow South*, suggests an interesting perspective on such a topic of racial issues, especially the Jim Crow Laws enacted in the South. Byrd explicitly states an argument that racism that is frequently in regional relations with the South, where it usually happened, does not mean that only the South region, or southern states, should be found guilty. While such harsh violations occurred on the American land, it should be the American nation that is to blame. Byrd is mainly emphasizing the fact that Congress and the White House evidently did not do enough to stop such offences, stating that even prominent politicians, progressives, and ordinary people were included. Since he states

¹¹ Equal Justice Initiative. "FROM SLAVERY TO SEGREGATION," *SEGREGATION IN AMERICA* (2018): 10.

many of the aforementioned figures made public speeches and shared anti-Jim Crow views against racism, discrimination and segregation, it did not transform into such an active fight in reality.¹² Which might later occur as a sign of naivety and patheticness. However, Byrd's perspectives seem not to be putting aside the main argument of such acts against blacks. Another argument by Byrd that undermines the claim of regional guilt for the Jim Crow South is the evidence of race riots across the States demonstrated in the example below:

And if race riots represented the highest form of mob violence fundamental to lynching, then urban America, both North and South, must be counted as fertile ground for some of the most vicious and spectacular instances of lynch laws. Race riots in Chicago, Illinois (1919), Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921), Wilmington, North Carolina (1898), Washington D.C. (1919), Atlanta, Georgia (1906), East St. Louis, Illinois (1917), and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1918), to name but a few, bear witness to this fact.¹³

Consequently, this example demonstrates the evidence that racial issues were also a part of more northern progressive urban regions, avoiding the south rural ones. Such racial issues resulted in the emergence of, for instance, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or anti-lynching campaigns to support African Americans. The most prominent figures who fought against racial inequality were W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells (founders of mentioned NAACP). Subsequently, this brings up room for discussion of whether American impressionists of that period depicted racial issues in any form in order to support the coloured community or to point out matters of segregation and the Jim Crow South. It also raises a thought-provoking question of whether American Impressionists did not avoid such a topic intentionally to appeal to a wider audience, the whites.

¹² Alexander X. Byrd, "Studying Lynching in the Jim Crow South," *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no. 2 (2004): 31–36.

¹³ Byrd, "Studying," 34.

2. Impressionism and its Forms in American Context

This chapter will delve into Impressionism, a revolutionary French artistic movement that emerged as a radical departure from the traditional norms and challenged the academic perception of art in the half of the 19th century. Further, the definition of Impressionism's artistic technique and historical and philosophical context will be examined through the critical perspectives of three authors, such as Duncan C. Phillips Jr., Lionello Venturi, and Lindsay Snider. An important aspect to be mentioned is that in order to achieve a complex view of Impressionism, their studies are collected throughout the whole 20th century – Duncan C. Phillips Jr. (1912), Lionello Venturi (1941), and Lindsay Snider (2001). The following study of their views will attempt to provide a comprehensive and complex understanding of Impressionism, its evolution, and future impact on the American art sphere.

The beginning of Impressionism as a movement dates around the years of 1870s, in which a small group of Claude Monet, Renoir, and Pissarro shared their painting techniques in the village of Montmartre close to Paris. These three painters are considered to be the former members of Impressionism. The term “Impressionism” first appeared in the year 1874, right after the first impressionistic and independent exhibition. However, their paintings did not achieve any form of success, rather the opposite. Their exhibition was considered harsh, unfinished, unsuitable, and incomparable to conventional forms of art. Therefore, Louis Leroy, an art critic, wrote in his article the term “Impressionism” as an insult to the artists. As time passed, more painters followed their style, and a group of Impressionists started to form. The primary Impressionists were Edouard Manet, Clade Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Jean Frederick Bazille, Paul Cézanne, and Edgar Degas. Sometimes, even American painter Mary Cassatt is included in the primary movement, mainly due to her close relationships with primary painters, especially Edgar Degas.¹⁴ Both Venturi and Snider agree on the origin of Impressionism. However, Phillips strongly disagrees. His opposing view emphasises the fact that Impressionism was included several centuries back in the landscape paintings of China and Japan.¹⁵ This is an interesting argument; however, it lacks serious evidence. Additionally, Phillips delves into the more philosophical aspects of art that might marginally justify his statement. Otherwise, his contrasting philosophical perspective on Impressionism will be discussed in the following paragraph.

¹⁴ Lindsay Snider, “A Lasting Impression: French Painters Revolutionize the Art World,” *The History Teacher* 35, no. 1 (2001): 89.

¹⁵ Phillips C. Duncan, “What Is Impressionism?” *Art and Progress* 3, no. 11 (1912): 707.

Paintings under the cloak of Impressionism are characterised by a bright colour palette with a short, looser brushstroke technique. Some, for instance, Paul Cezanne, even turned to the field of pointillism. They strongly emphasise the depiction of light and air in an attempt to capture the overall atmosphere of the moment. The painting was done outside the studio, preferably in nature; the painting part was much shorter in order to capture the true moment of setting light and precise moment depiction. Another important and characteristic aspect was the attempt to challenge the traditional art motifs, often containing biblical or mythological virtues, while rather emphasising nature, landscapes or urban areas, and bustling streets of Paris in the daily life scenes and the fleeting moments of life. Such scenes stemmed from the realistic foundations that set the very first lines of Impressionism. On the contrary, Phillips suggests that Impressionism cannot be categorised by the technique nor by the composition. Firstly, he considers Impressionism an artistic achievement by whatever method is used unless there is an aspect of spontaneous impressions that is designed by the brain and crafted by hand. Secondly, he states that Impressionism does not depict natural scenes by any means; it only addresses the intangible moment of impression.¹⁶ To complete the complex view of Impressionism and its perception, Venturi strongly emphasises that Impressionism stems from an old theory – *appearance of reality* from Plato’s *Republic*. Therefore Impressionists did not paint reality but just its appearance.¹⁷

Impressionists also opposed and despised the traditional way of displaying art on exhibitions that were, in the majority of the times, led by the Salon in Paris. Which meant that the art was controlled by the Salon. Thus, if any of the particular paintings did not fit the frame of “requirements” of the Salon, they automatically became irrelevant pieces of art. In conclusion, Impressionists despised the Salon since the only way how to become a notable and successful artist was to be accepted by the Salon regardless of the quality. This caused the establishment of independent exhibitions led by the Impressionists themselves. They end up having eight exhibitions in the years 1874–1886.¹⁸

The last Impressionistic exhibition in 1886 was the exact year when Impressionism was introduced to the American nation. This significant step was realised by the famous Paul Durand-Ruel who was an art collector and the primary patron of French Impressionists. This

¹⁶ Phillips C. Duncan, “What Is Impressionism?” *Art and Progress* 3, no. 11 (1912): 706–707.

¹⁷ Lionello Venturi, “The Aesthetic Idea of Impressionism,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 1, no. 1 (1941): 36.

¹⁸ Lindsay Snider, “A Lasting Impression: French Painters Revolutionize the Art World,” *The History Teacher* 35, no. 1 (2001): 89.

exhibition was an overwhelming success, which resulted in the opening of several other exhibitions for the public. In these exhibitions people could see the most prominent pieces of visual art from the leading Impressionists, such as Manet, Monet, Degas, Sisley, Renoir and Pissarro. The reactions to the new French artistic style mainly provoked the American Press, and since then, contemporary Impressionistic painting has seemed to be the main subject of art magazines. Even in one most prominent article, the Impressionists were described as a technical talent of a higher level. Afterwards, Impressionism began to express new inspiration for American artists. This was the beginning of the period when American artists started to travel to France to study the “new” form of aesthetics close to their French representatives. Walther, the art historian, in his book about Impressionism, states that French Impressionism adapted so well in American country due to one specific reason. That is, Americans saw Impressionism as a new cosmopolitan approach that replaced the old national focus that prevailed in the previous centuries. The reason behind this approach stems from the transformation of self-confidence after the Civil War. This particular event led to the emergence of a new modern America as a society determined by commercial interests and the emphasis on national pride in individual states that should be shown to the world.¹⁹ Impressionism began to rise in popularity among American painters, and new names started to influence the art sphere. The next chapter will unfold the lives of American impressionists, such as Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, and Henry John Twachtman, to enhance the understanding of Impressionism on the American continent and its further context.

¹⁹ Peter H. Feist, Info F. Walther, and Blanka Pscheidtová, *Malířství impresionismu: 1860–1920* (Praha: Slovart, 2008) 591–593.

2.1. American Impressionists

After the arrival of Impressionism to the American continent, the majority was strongly influenced by the French Impressionists. However, even if they continued to preserve the Impressionistic foundations (loose brushstrokes, depiction of light, etc.), over time, most of them have succeeded in developing their own personal style with adjusted features, including thicker brushstrokes and different compositions. A brief introduction of such forefront painters will help to improve understanding of American Impressionism complemented with the context of artists' lives to enhance the comprehension of their paintings, which will be analysed in the following chapter, *Depiction of America alias Brushstrokes of Change*.

Childe Hassam was born in 1859 in today's suburban area of Boston, the Dorchester. Hassam had to start working at the early age of 20 due to his father's business failure. Therefore, he started in the field of painting as an illustrator and commercial painter.²⁰ This very moment might be the key moment that shaped his future life and his view on visual art in general, while it might later cause his inclination to commerce painting, especially for articles or other types of prints. He soon became a well-known artist with quite an impressive reputation due to his impressive art skills and use of a colour palette. He first visited Paris as a tourist; however, during the period from 1886–1889, he attended the prestigious Académie Julian in Paris, in which he was fascinated by the style of Impressionism, which he quickly mastered, apart from his other contemporaries. In the year 1889, he went back to the United States and moved to New York City. His paintings depict the vibrant and bustling streets of New York with short and loose brushstrokes with an emphasis on light and shadow depiction. A few essential aspects that made Hassam a unique painter among his peers were mainly the composition choices of hectic urban areas or monumental buildings with cultural values. He won numerous exhibitions and became an honourable figure in the cultural sphere. The major catalyst of his success might be the fact that he outproduced all the painters of his times by painting a great deal of paintings in a short period of time, which allowed him to exhibit freshly drawn paintings in each of these competitions. In the final stage of his life, he mainly dedicated his visual art skills to etchings and prints.²¹

Another very significant character regarding American Impressionism was Mary Cassatt. She was born in 1844 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. However, Cassatt spent most of her childhood in France and Germany with her family, which may already imply why she had such a close

²⁰ Elizabeth Broun, "Childe Hassam's America," *American Art* 13, no. 3 (1999): 34.

²¹ Broun, „Childe Hassam,“ 34–38.

relationship with the original French movement. At first, she studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (1860–1862). Nonetheless, she wanted to widen her horizon regarding painting expertise, and therefore, she went to Paris, where she took private lessons from leading academic painters. It did not take long, and her talent resulted in the success of her painting *The Mandolin Player* (Oil, 1872) being accepted by the Paris Salon. Furthermore, she continued her journey through Europe to Italy, Spain, Belgium and Holland. There, she studied famous paintings while improving her painting skills. In France, she closely worked with Edgar Degas, a former member of Impressionism, who helped her improve her technique through valuable advice as her mentor. That led to Mary Cassatt becoming a member of the famous movement of Impressionism in France as the first and only American nationality, even participating in four out of eight total impressionistic exhibitions.²² Therefore, one might say that the influence of French Impressionism plays a crucial role in her technique and style of painting. Her painting style mainly consisted of bright pastel colours and precise depictions of woman figures. She dedicated her life to the theme of the mother and child bond, which contradicts her artist persona with her real character. This paradox created a clash of personalities, which was seen by art critics and feminine figures. On the one hand, she emphasised the value of motherhood and the strong individualism of women painted as a subject of their own, while she led a life of upper-middle-class women that mainly focused on fame and money. After the 19th century, she severely suffered from the eyesight issues that led to the downturn of her artistic career.²³

Another American impressionist was William Merritt Chase. His path towards impressionistic style was a lengthy process since he first adopted the style of realism. Chase was born in Indiana in the year 1849. He studied art design in New York City. However, he got a chance to study arts in Europe. Subsequently, he chose to study in Munich instead of Paris. In Germany, Chase was strongly influenced by the painter Wilhelm Leibl. Although he was fascinated by the art produced in Europe, he still returned to New York City afterwards, and worked as an art teacher. Nevertheless, he had planned several trips to Europe to revise the works of Old Masters, and at the same time, he fell under the influence of former members of French Impressionism, Eduard Manet and Claude Monet, which caused a major change in his style and technique regarding painting. He is mainly known for his urban scenes depicting the city parts of New York City and its progressive evolution, e.g., urban development and social

²² Barbara H. Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, David P. Curry, and Mishoe Brennecke, *American Impressionism and realism: The painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013) 348–349.

²³ Broude Norma, “Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?” *Woman’s Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (2000): 36–43.

dynamics. During his life, he very actively supported the art sphere in America. Chase also met several times his contemporaries, John Singer Sargent, John Henry Twachtman and James McNeil Whistler.²⁴ J. M. Whistler will not be mentioned any further in the thesis, although it is said that he had profoundly influenced the depiction of subject matter as an urban area in future Chase's paintings altogether with the visits of French impressionistic exhibitions. Nonetheless, his style of painting, which seems to be more post-impressionistic, does not fit the overall theme of this thesis.

John Singer Sargent was born in Florence, Italy, in the year 1856. Sargent was encouraged to start with art by his mother. Which followingly led to his future studies in Paris. He seemed to be very talented, having impressive prospects in the Salon. He also made several important trips across the European countries and even visited the United States. Alike William M. Chase, he was highly influenced by the style of French impressionists such as Monet, and Manet who is said to be the primary inspiration for his portraits. His most popular and prominent work is *Madame X* (Oil, 1883–1884), which dealt with considerable criticism mainly due to the indifference to the conventions of posing and modelling captured in the painting. He spent the rest of his life in London and devoted the majority of his career to the painting of portraits due to the frequency of commissions. His paintings mainly attracted American patrons; British ones joined later.²⁵

The last two painters, John Henry Twachtman (1853–1902) and Theodore Robinson (1852–1896) will be introduced just briefly due to their insignificance in this thesis. Twachtman was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied at several universities, from the fields of mechanics and art design in America to the Royal Academy in Munich and, later, the Académie Julian in Paris. Similarly to his contemporaries, he was influenced by Impressionism, especially by Monet. His main themes contain countryside, farmland, and his harmonic and subtle depictions of the landscapes of Greenwich. During his life, he received little commercial success and mainly criticism; however, he was admired by other artists.²⁶ Robinson underwent studies in Chicago and New York, together with private training in Paris. Alike his associate Twachtman, he was mainly influenced by Monet and his commercial achievements were rather negligible. Oppositely, his reviews were quite positive.²⁷ The majority of his paintings were done in

²⁴ June L. Ness, "William Merritt Chase and the Shinnecock Summer Art School," *Achieves of American Art Journal* 13, no. 3 (1973): 8–12.

²⁵ Barbara H. Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, David P. Curry, and Mishoe Brennecke, *American Impressionism and realism: The painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013) 355.

²⁶ Weinberg, Bolger, Curry, and Brennecke, *American Impressionism*, 357–358.

²⁷ Weinberg, Bolger, Curry, and Brennecke, *American Impressionism*, 354.

watercolours, and his landscapes included women figures, which made his paintings unique. He dedicated his life to searching for similar places to the Coastline of Seine and Giverny in the American country, which turned out successful in his final stage of life, Vermont Valley.²⁸

²⁸ Sona Johnston, "Looking for Giverny in America: Theodore Robinson and His Impressionist Watercolors," *Master Drawings* 40, no. 4 (2002): 332–344.

2.2. American Schools

American Impressionism differed across the country; therefore, it is essential to cover its variety of forms, including movements that supported and popularised Impressionism in America or, in the opposite view, rejected the artistic style and focused on different motifs and scenes with different intentions. The major forms were Pennsylvania, California, and Ashcan Schools. This chapter will, therefore, delve into these deviations and contextualise them in the period of American Impressionism.

Pennsylvania School, often also referred to as Pennsylvania Impressionism or New Hope School, was an American Impressionist movement of the 1900s–1930s that was located in Bucks County near New Hope town in Pennsylvania. Such a region is said to have attracted artists since the colonial period. There might be two major reasons why. First, Bucks County is located between two major art cities, Philadelphia and New York. Secondly, the landscape is lined with picturesque villages, farmlands, rocky quarries, valleys, forests, and meadows, which altogether create the perfect environment for landscape artists. The famous story of Bucks County began in the years 1896–1898 when two major figures had moved there. It was William L. Lathrop and Edward Redfield. After a few years, their popularity rose, and many other artists started to follow their path. The community began to form, and that led to the creation of a new art colony known for its landscape paintings, Pennsylvania Impressionism. Their paintings were characterised by plein-air painting in French open-air, their adherence to the rules of original French Impressionism (emphasis on light depiction), occasionally just adjusting thicker brushstrokes. The New Hope School term was adopted later when Lathrop and his wife organised regular tea times with other artists in which they discussed art. New Hope art colony peaked in the 1910s with considerable success in several national exhibitions and competitions in which Pennsylvania Impressionists achieved success that could be comparable to such luminaries as John H. Twachtman, William M. Chase, and John S. Sargent. After such achievements, the movement started to decline in popularity.²⁹ The main idea regarding Pennsylvania Impressionism that should be emphasised is the level of artists' individuality that differs and, subsequently, denies any other forms of categorisation other than being under the umbrella term Pennsylvania Impressionism. Its main contribution is popularising the style of Impressionism while heavily emphasising the subject matter of rural areas and landscapes. This

²⁹ Brian H. Peterson, and William H. Gerdtz, *Pennsylvania impressionism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 1–12.

movement could possibly be seen as a deviation from the typical French tendency of depicting urban scenes.

California Impressionism, or California plein-air, was indeed a very active artistic period from the start of the 20th century until the Depression in the United States. California Impressionists continued the French legacy of Impressionism and preserved a bright colour palette and loose and short brushstrokes with an emphasis on light depiction within the fleeting moment. However, there are also two major aspects in which it differed from the original French movement. First, California artists preferred painting motifs with defined lines in order to suggest structure and solidity over the French dissolving technique. Secondly, similarly to the Pennsylvania Impressionists, they dedicated their paintings merely to rural scenes and landscapes. The popularity of the Golden State, especially of Los Angeles, rose simultaneously with the interest in Impressionism. The main contribution to that fact was the opening of the new railroad between Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago in 1885. This led to the rapid increase in population and the development of business and commerce, which also attracted many artists. Los Angeles later became the centre of alternative art for young artists from the whole of California. At that time, most of the artists settled, and by 1915, the plain-air artists had their own official establishment with dealers, patrons, and writers. Unfortunately, as Pennsylvania School, in the 1930s, the movement was on the decline and became a matter of nostalgia. Nonetheless, California Impressionism popularised Impressionism as a new style with a strong emphasis on regionalism.³⁰

Ashcan School was the first modern American revolution in painting. The group formed after the 1900s and was mostly centred around its leader, Robert Henri. The majority of his followers were from Philadelphia and followed Henri's ideology of "art for life's sake," meaning art has a purpose, as an opposing view to the former "art for art's sake". The most prominent figures apart from Robert Henri were George Bellows, John Sloan, William J. Glackens, George Luks, and Everett Shinn. Ashcan School was characterised by everyday urban scenes of New York and its dark colour palette. They were not afraid of roughness and ugliness to emphasise the authenticity while avoiding romanticising such scenes. They were fascinated by slum life and the harsh realities of side streets (as their name suggests). Interestingly, in the early 1900s, they were seen as too radical and, contrastingly, by 1920, as old-fashioned. Their unique choices of subject matter in urban scenes might be seen as opposing radical deviation from the Impressionistic movement. However, it is important to state that some of their earlier

³⁰ Susan Landauer, Donald D. Keyes, and Jean Stern, *California impressionists* (California: University of California Press, 1996), 73–74.

paintings might have been influenced by the colour use and brushstroke technique of Impressionism.³¹

To conclude, it is surprising that none of these aforementioned forms of visual art had a significant influence on the majority of American Impressionists in this thesis. Pennsylvania and California School seemed to have rather a regional purpose, merely focusing on rural areas and landscape paintings. On the other side, the Ashcan School tend to radicalise the Impressionistic movement into social realism with the change of brushstroke technique, dark palette use, and emphasis on the subject matter, not the form. Apart from Childe Hassam (who still differed in the depiction of urban scenes), the Ashcan School was focusing on revolutionary urban scenes of New York, therefore contradicting the previous two landscapist schools. In conclusion, the Pennsylvania School preserved the depiction of rural areas over the interest in urban scenes with a strong sense of regionalism, similarly to the California School. On the contrary, Ashcan School tried to popularise new subject matter of everyday urban life while transforming their visual art into the style of realism. Paradoxically, it seems that these forms were assumably rather influenced by the American Impressionists of this thesis than the other way around.

³¹ Sincere gratitude to doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D., for her valuable knowledge regarding American Art, specifically Ashcan School, from her seminar classes.

3. Depiction of America alias Brushstrokes of Change

This chapter will examine paintings from selected American Impressionists, such as Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, and Theodore Robinson. The analysis of their paintings will be divided into 3 subchapters, including *Emancipation of Women in American Art – from Object to Subject*, *Class Struggle*, and *Invisible Racial Issues*. In each subchapter, the thorough analysis will examine selected themes, which will be further described at the beginning of each subchapter. In the first two subchapters, the analysis will be more detailed. Therefore, there is the *Appendix I – Figures*, which should help with visualisation.

The aim of this analysis is to determine whether such themes appear in the selected paintings. If the answer is yes, then to which extent do they acknowledge such themes, and what is their approach to that matter and the meaning behind it. Moreover, to which extent they seem to support the Progressive Era, or contrastingly, whether they completely avoid it.

3.1. Emancipation of Women in American Art – from Object to Subject

Women wanted to be seen as strong individuals in society who have the possibility to change the world around them, for instance, by having the right to vote, accessible education and equality. While women across America were fighting for themselves for various reasons, they also started appearing more frequently on canvases of American artists, especially on Mary Cassatt's. Until the 19th century, the depiction of women in American visual art was merely within the traditional norms. In which women were mainly depicted as symbols of beauty, grace, and virtues of many kinds or as the ideals of conventional standards – domestic life and household. Although, for example, the themes of domestic life, taking care of the household and bearing children were preserved, they were approached from entirely different perspectives with depth and unlike meanings. Among other popular themes regarding women in art were private life, leisure activities (even in public spaces) and the sense of motherhood, specifically the mother and child bond, with emphasis on strong individualism. (see Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)

These series of paintings with such content were mainly produced by Mary Cassatt, one of the most influential figures among the Impressionists in America, participating even in the original French Impressionistic movement. Her famous motifs included the bond between mother and child, the emphasis on the individuality of the figures and the women as a clear subject of its own. Most of them were created in her later career, dating around the 1900s.

In these paintings, *Mother and Child* (further referred to as *Num. 1*), *Young Mother Sewing* (further referred to as *Num. 2*), *Mother and Child* further referred to as *Num. 3*) and *Mother and Child with a Rose Scarf* (further referred to as *Num. 4*), the primary subject matter are women who are holding their child and taking care of it. These women in the roles of mothers wear simple cotton dresses in pastel colours, excluding the vivid tones, and therefore, it creates a contrast with the child who is half-naked wearing a white shirt or having subtle cloth around the waist. Such colour use might emphasise the importance of women figures complemented by the innocence and purity symbolised by children. The precise selection of pastel colours always matches the colour palette of the subject that is in the front, also considered as important – women's dress, child's clothing, and surrounding items or details. By such work with colours, Cassatt creates a beautiful contrast in the painting, making clear for the observer what is important and what lies behind. In other words, Mary Cassatt is making the women the subject of such work, not the object, while also not just making the women seen as an object of aesthetics but giving the work and mainly the women more profound meaning that tries to enhance the

position of women in the society altogether with the endeavour of shaping the unconventional view on the women at these times around the beginning of 20th century.

In *Num. 2*, Cassatt focuses on the domestic life scene that tries to reflect the realities of women's lives during that time by portraying women engaged in everyday activities and showcasing the value of such significant domestic contribution, in this example, sewing. In *Num. 1, 3 and 4*, Cassatt is trying to challenge the traditional norms, the woman not being seen only as a caregiver but also as a central figure of a family. Although women's caregiving was already a significant and signature attribute of theirs, Cassatt seemed to have quite different intentions that led to the creation of paintings in which women were engaged in everyday activities, as mentioned before, however, in more depth. This means that the women as subjects were humanised in a way that portrayed personal experiences, relationships, and individuals with emotions.

Apart from that, Cassatt also painted women in public spaces enjoying their leisure time, providing a view of the significance of life outside the household. Such examples are *In the Loge* (further referred to as *Num. 5*) and *Reading Le Figaro* (further referred to as *Num. 6*). In *Num. 5*, a woman is depicted sitting in her private loge in the opera. The subject is not looking at the observer nor is seemingly interested in the surroundings, just the performance. Here, Cassatt explores the complex act of gaze while the observer turns out to be in the same position as the distant man in the back, admiring and looking at the woman with opera glasses. By this, Cassatt highlights the act of looking and being looked at.³² This creates social dynamics that contradict the traditional expectations of women in public spaces. It also depicts the engagement of women in public and cultural activities that show independence and interest in cultural events, not only confined to domestic scenes. Both paintings were drawn in her earlier career; therefore, her colour palette is in darker tones, using a lot of black and white. In *Num. 6*, the main subject is again a woman reading a newspaper, an activity that was usually done by men at these times. By this, Cassatt again contradicts the traditional female norms and shows a more complex view of women's interests.

A similar depiction of women can be seen in the paintings of Childe Hassam, an American Impressionist painter. Although, upon initial observation, the approach might seem completely different, the depth of meaning remains the same. In other words, the abstract perspective is similar, but the form of aesthetics differs. The women are no longer the subject of the paintings but rather being a part of it. For instance, in *Washington Arch, Spring* (further referred to as

³² Norma Broude, "Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?" *Woman's Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (2000): 37.

Num. 7) and *Fifth Avenue in Winter* (further referred to as *Num. 8*), women are portrayed as part of a greater whole, the bustling street. In *Num. 7*, the colour palette is darker; however, in *Num. 8*, it is the other way around. In both, it seems women have been used to showcase the contrast between the social classes. In *Num. 7*, the brighter tone of colours and the depiction of light demonstrate typical features of Impressionists. On the left there is a man who seems to be a poorly dressed street sweeper with a small wooden cart. In contrast, on the right side, there is a lady walking down the street in fashionable clothes from the upper class. A similar depiction can be seen in *Num. 8*. In front, there is a small boy who seems to be a postboy, while behind him is the bustling street with women in fashionable clothes and carriages. This aspect praises the social ladder and the progressive aspect of the “new” modern life in America. These well-dressed women and black carriages on populated streets might be seen as a symbol of upcoming progress that keeps going forward.

John Singer Sargent and his *Portrait of Madame X* (further referred to as *Num. 9*) is the last painting that this chapter will cover. This painting and the overall style of John Singer Sargent are distinguished by many aspects from the other artists that were mentioned before. In *Num. 9*, Sargent used colours of a darker tone, mainly black. The woman is moved from the position of subject merely to object of fascination. In addition, the depiction of woman’s value also differentiates. Sargent strongly emphasises elegance, nobility, and wealth, and his focus seems to capture mainly people from higher levels of social classes (*President Theodore Roosevelt*, *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*, and *Dr. Pozzi at Home*), especially the elite class. All these values are centred on a woman’s black satin dress, pale skin, and provocative posing, which led to scandalous reactions from the public.

Although all the artists depicted women as their subject of art, they differed in the depth of the meaning. Mary Cassatt tried to make the women as subjects of their own, individuals with personal experience. Childe Hassam painted women in the same sense. However, he just included them in the “bigger picture” as a part of a symbol of progress. Lastly, John Singer Sargent had a completely different approach to depicting women from the elite class. According to the research, he never seemed to have any connections or interests to shape or influence society progressively with his art. On the other hand, Childe Hassam is often shown to be quite progressive, especially in the publication *Childe Hassam’s America* by *Elizabeth Broun*, and it must be admitted that his paintings seemed to be progressive-focused. Lastly, Mary Cassatt painted women with the intention of praising feminine values against the traditional norms but never seemed to admit that she explicitly supported women’s movements. It seems it is just her own personality of admiring women’s values and sharing them with others through her painting.

3.2. Class Struggle

The time period of 1890 – 1920 put the majority of Americans into a completely new and rapidly changing environment brought by many aspects, such as industrialization and significant technological improvement, followed by gradual modernisation. Therefore, the social class difference continued to rise. Not only did the streets of America begin to change, but also the themes, and motifs that appeared on canvases were affected. The previous chapter was led mostly by Mary Cassatt and her paintings. However, this one mainly covers a leading Impressionistic painter, Childe Hassam. (see Fig. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11)

It is important to understand the beginning of Hassam's career; it seems that these two pieces of art, *Rainy Day, Boston* (further referred to as *Num. 10*), and *Rain Shower, Rue Bonaparte* (further referred to as *Num. 11*), shaped his future art in many ways. Additionally, they might be great examples to compare with his future work, especially *Num. 7* and *Num. 8*, which share the same composition.

In *Num. 10*, the first considerable work of Hassam depicted a street in Boston. In which he spent a part of his childhood. At first, one might notice the darker tone of his painting, which will gradually brighten throughout his career. This phenomenon appears quite frequently among the Impressionists, even from the original French movement. For instance, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Paul Cézanne. At the beginning, their colour palette is quite dark-toned, but later brightens up, and at the final stage of their career, the vivid colours again fade into dim tones. Back to Hassam, his choice of colours is extraordinary, as if they all together create an impression of the scene of the bustling street. The rainy weather emphasises the precise depiction of light reflection on the pavement, road, and umbrellas, which only suggests how Hassam mastered the Impressionistic technique. What is unusual is an empty space in the centre of the painting. By doing so, he might have intended to create this psychological play with the observer to point out the harmony of the bustling street and give the painting a certain level of depth and conception that people's lives are divided the same as the street is. Which might correlate with the gap in social classes at that time. A similar technique is used in his following paintings in which he uses the road as a dividing line between the classes, such as in *Num. 11*. On the left side, there is a group of coachmen wearing fashionable white cloaks and hats, who might be waiting for their wealthy customers. There is also a line of carriages and a wall plastered with commercial posters. On the other side of the road, right at the front, there is a poorly dressed man with his daughter, carrying a wooden cart; he seems to be a pushcart vendor. The depiction of fashionably dressed women in the back seems to be pushing them out of the scene, almost as if there was not enough space for them. This might signal the aspect of

prosperity and upcoming progress. Again, the rainy weather allows Hassam to take advantage of the light reflection depicted in the water, complemented by the details of the horse carriages.

Another example is *Num. 7*; here, Hassam used a significantly brighter palette. On the contrary, this painting lacks artistic features with light; some may even suggest the impression of overexposure. This might be caused by the spring weather and clear sky. Apart from the sky, Hassam used matt subtle colours, such as pink, green, yellow, and blue. Similarly to the previous *Num. 10*, this painting also includes an empty space a little below the centre of the painting and is further divided in half. On the left, there is a poorly dressed street sweeper, contrastingly, behind him is a distinctive and elegant black carriage. On the other side, there is a fashionably dressed woman walking on the street. It is exactly the same approach as pushing the poor guy out of the scene by using elements of higher status (as in *Num. 10*) and letting the fashionable and elegantly dressed people parade the street.

Such a style is similarly occurring in *Num. 8*. This work might be divided into three parts (top, middle and bottom), while the author emphasises each as an individual part with its own function. Firstly, the bottom part is quite empty; there is only a small figure that could, perhaps, be a young postboy (due to his uniform). His posture and facial expression might suggest feelings of confusion, sudden unexpected change, or getting caught in the moment of realising the progress that is happening behind his back. Secondly, in the middle part, Hassam depicted a chaotic scene of a bustling street in the winter. Numerous carriages pass by while fashionable couples are strolling down the street under a fine blanket of snow. One couple even seems to walk a dog, which is quite unusual to see. This might create a contrast between the relaxed way of walking couples in their leisure time and the hardworking carriage drivers to display the evolution of society and their lives. Followingly, one might also notice the black-red carriage in the centre of the painting that seems to be full of people, suggesting a unique sign of public transport. Additionally, some may also notice the commercial sign at the right, which might evoke the era of commerce and consumerism. Thirdly, in the top part, Hassam closes the whole composition of the painting with monumental buildings. To conclude, this Hassam's painting might be considered progressive as there appeared to be several progressive themes, such as strolling couples from the upper class, carriages, commercial signs, monumental buildings, and public transportation, and all of these suggest prosperity and improvement.

Another painting, *The Hovel and the Skyscraper* (further referred to as *Num. 12*), has quite a unique composition, unlike the other paintings analysed by Childe Hassam. The author depicts a scene of workers building a skyscraper in the winter. He used a bright colour palette of white, yellow, orange, and brown that beautifully characterised the winter. In the front, there are several

figures painted and something that might be a prototype of a crane that is used to move heavy materials and objects. Hassam created a very pleasant depiction of ongoing progress in America, while below this building, we might see a blurry carriage passing by. Carriages were very previously used as a symbol of upcoming progress, while in this particular painting, it might suggest the past fading away. On the horizon, there is a large city again signalling what is unavoidable – the progress. As Elizabeth Broun says in her *Childe Hassam's America*:

His composition tells the story: the strong framing device of the construction beams, the rising tower that would obstruct the view of the hovel beyond, and the hulking city in the distance all suggest the future overtaking the past.³³

Another painting, *Union Square in Spring* (further referred to as *Num. 13*), illustrates Union Square in Manhattan, New York City. The bright palette of colours is used similarly as in the *Num. 7*. Again, the colours of green and yellow dominate the painting, altogether with significantly shorter brushstrokes that evoke that Hassam really belongs to the movement of Impressionism. Behind the park, the modern and vibrant city opens as if it would drag one in and offer countless opportunities. What is interesting is how the observer sees Union Square from above. The painting is simply done by the vertical attraction of the observer that forces him to look at the painting from down to up. It can also suggest the gradual change from the natural motif to the industrial city full of opportunities and chances to improve one's life. Among the others, this painting seems not to consider any of the aspects of social classes; rather, it puts such a theme into the more generalised depiction of prosperity in the city of New York.

Elizabeth Broun, an American art historian, considers Childe Hassam a progressive Impressionist. At first, such an approach seemed sceptical; however, after a thorough analysis of his paintings, one cannot deny that the majority of his art is dedicated to the depiction of prosperous urban scenes of New York. To support such argument, his paintings were frequently used as illustrations for commercial articles, for instance, the painting *Washington Arch, Spring* in the article *Century* by *Mariana G. Van Rensselaer* in 1893. However, it is rather speculative to which extent his painting intentionally supported the Progressive Era or whether he took it only as a well-paid opportunity.

³³ Elizabeth Broun, "Childe Hassam's America," *American Art* 13, no. 3 (1999): 43.

Other American Impressionists seem to lack an interest in painting urban scenes of prosperous and bustling streets, and that is why Childe Hassam was such a revolutionary and unique painter. Mary Cassatt mainly addressed the women's emancipation themes to contradict the traditional conventions; however, it seems that she had no other interest in delving into the issue of social class differences. Similarly, John S. Sargent and his paintings of the social elite also suggest that there might be, even if a marginal, some connection to the issue of social classes; nonetheless, it appears that his paintings lack such profound ideas in this particular matter. And the rest of the painters preferred motifs of nature and landscape paintings to preserve the beauty of untouched nature in contrast with rapid industrialisation and urbanisation.

3.3. Invisible Racial Issues

Despite the fact that the Progressive Era explicitly dealt with racial issues in terms of segregation, discrimination, Jim Crow Laws, and immigration issues, it is essential to examine paintings of Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase and John Henry Twachtman to unfold whether American Impressionism can be considered as a part of the progressive movement and to determine the presence or absence of racial themes in their works. The aim of this chapter is to analyse a series of paintings from each individual in order to focus on any aesthetics that might reveal or indicate racial issues of that time.

Analysed paintings of Mary Cassatt:

A Woman and Girl Driving (Oil, 1881),

Little Girl in a Blue Armchair (Oil, 1878),

Mother About to Wash Her Sleepy Child (Oil, 1880),

Profile Portrait of Lydia Cassatt (Oil, 1880),

Young Woman Sewing in a Garden (Oil, 1880–1882),

Woman in a Loge (Oil, 1879),

The Boating Party (Oil, 1893–1894),

Lady at the Tea Table (Oil, 1885),

Summertime (Oil, 1894),

On the Meadow (Oil, 1880),

Lydia Crocheting in the Garden at Marley (Oil, 1880),

Alexander J. Cassatt and his Son Robert (Oil, 1884).

Mary Cassatt's colour palette is full of matt subtle colours contrastingly completed with bright tones, such as blue, white, pink, and green. Her colour use indicates a talent to create a painting that is naturally appealing to the observer by the colour play across the canvas. The paintings in dark tones are not exceptions. *Little Girl in a Blue Chair* and *Mother About to Wash Her Sleepy Child* are primarily done in the tones of blue, which creates a strong aesthetic impression of harmony and finesse. The combination of blue and pink colour might also acknowledge the hidden influence of her close associate, Edgar Degas, from Paris times. Although Cassatt's work with colours is extraordinary, as if everything perfectly matches together as a unified piece of visual art, the perspectives of composition somehow shatter and create an internal clash of unsatisfactory feelings. Simply put, these paintings might occasionally feel unrealistic. This

usually appears in paintings in which the figures are being depicted, for instance, sitting in an armchair. Also, the depiction of eyes feels repetitive without the uniqueness of human nature, usually being too dark, almost black. Regarding the composition, Cassatt primarily painted women motifs, including women engaged in leisure activities, for example, sewing, boating or visiting opera and theatres. Women were depicted in both public spaces and in their private moments at home. Another common theme was the bond between mother and child. However, there is also an exceptional example of father and son, as in *Alexander J. Cassatt and His Son Robert*. What might be admirable is the ability to emphasise women as the main subject while giving them the role of individual characters with their own emotions and a sense of independence. Overall, the composition is easy to follow. Therefore, the observer's eyes will always end up on the subject matter, usually a woman figure. Although she depicted women as their main subjects, which in a way contributed to the ideas of women's emancipation in the Progressive Era, it seems that Mary Cassatt has not explored any other area in the context of Progressivism, especially not any form of racial issues, which also supports the fact that she primarily painted only white women, seemingly avoiding any other race. However, this statement might sound quite clear, she also painted mainly figures of her close associates or relatives, which might imply that there is not any underlying reason that she would avoid other races intentionally.

Analysed paintings of Childe Hassam:

Grand Prix Day (Oil, 1887),

The Little Pond, Appledore (Oil, 1890),

Fifth Avenue (Oil, 1919),

Fifth Avenue Nocturne (Oil, 1895),

Rainy Midnight (Oil, 1899),

Rainy Day on Fifth Avenue (Oil, 1917),

Spring Morning in the Heart of the City (Oil, 1890),

Poppies, Isles of Shoals (Oil, 1891),

Winter in Union Square (Oil, 1889–1890),

The White Dory (Oil, 1895).

Hassam seems to have mastered the Impressionistic style of painting, and therefore, being classified as a former Impressionist in America is more than justified. Hassam's paintings are often coloured in very bright tones; however, even if he uses quite a dark palette, still the whole

piece gives the impression of brightness. He often experiments with darker colours to create contrasts in his works, which mostly appear in urban scenes. In terms of technique, his depiction of light is mastered to the perfectness. His urban scenes of streets are depicted in rainy weather, which allows him to fully apply his technique of light depiction, mostly reflecting in water on the pavement, carriages, and smaller objects such as umbrellas or people's clothing. Also, despite his Impressionistic technique with dissolved lines, the individual objects are depicted in quite a detailed way – buildings, carriages, figures, flowers, flags, etc. The composition not only contains urban scenes and bustling streets in rainy weather but also women characters and landscapes as coastlines with colourful flowers. In the urban scenes, the majority of them depicted such monuments as the Union Square, Washington Arch, and Fifth Avenue that are sentimentally connected with the American identity. Which he mostly depicted in spring or winter. Quite a unique example is *Fifth Avenue*, which contained flags and masses of people to symbolise patriotism (mainly during the times of the First World War). Although he frequently painted urban scenes and compositions full of people, for instance, big masses of people or people strolling down the street, there was no sign of addressing any of the racial issues or even people of different races, especially Afro-Americans.

Analysed paintings of John Singer Sargent:

A Boating Party (Oil, 1889),

A Morning Walk (Oil, 1888),

Two Girls on a Lawn (Oil, 1889),

Madame X (Oil, 1883–1884),

Dr. Pozzi at Home (Oil, 1881),

The Wyndham Sisters (Oil, 1899),

The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit (Oil, 1882),

Theodore Roosevelt (Oil, 1903),

Two Girls with Parasols (Oil, 1888),

Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose (Oil, 1886–1886).

John Singer Sargent was quite an unusual artist among his Impressionistic contemporaries. His themes, compositions, colour use, and overall style were simply unmatched. His colour scheme was mostly dark-toned, including a lot of black, green, brown, and red. His colour-matching skills and the perfect depiction of materials, especially the clothing of figures, gave his art a certain sense of profoundness and elegance. Sargent demonstrates an impressive variety of

styles in his works, from blurred, shortly brush-stroked compositions to very realistic paintings, including details and flawless knowledge of human proportions and perspective. His most frequent themes are women figures, including the famous portrait of *Madame X*. Sargent also painted prominent figures like Theodore Roosevelt. Overall, his portraits mainly express elegance, class, and beauty, and his subjects function as objects of fascination and admiration.

Analysed paintings of William Merritt Chase:

The Open-air Breakfast (Oil, 1888),

The Nursery (Oil, 1890),

Idle Hours (Oil, 1894),

At the Seaside (Oil, 1892),

Landscape: Shinnecock, Long Island (Oil, 1896),

First Touch of Autumn (Oil, 1898),

Lady in Black (Oil, 1888),

Bessie Potter (Oil, 1895),

A City Park (Oil, 1887),

Tompkins Park, Brooklyn (Oil, 1887).

Apart from the previous painters, William M. Chase seemed to abandon motifs of urban life with one exception, and that is a series of paintings dedicated to Tompkins Park in Brooklyn. In these paintings, he depicts a beautiful, harmonical scene of city life hidden in a park. Moreover, the majority of his paintings displayed natural themes such as landscapes. Therefore, his impact is mainly regional. He might have wanted to sustain the picture of untouched nature during gradual industrialisation and urbanisation. That can possibly explain why his only city-themed series depicted a city park as a symbol of preserving nature in the industrial city. Mostly, Chase used colours of lighter tone; however, quite frequently, there are very prominent contours and vivid colours of red, green, and yellow. He also paid attention to the depiction of light, which was typical for the Impressionistic movement. In most examples, his compositions consisted of horizontal views of landscapes by the seaside. He emphasises the aspects of weather, sky, and light. Followingly, the bright sky and the use of vivid colours on the objects beneath create a prominent contrast that is appealing to the observer's eye. Such objects are human figures, their clothing, walls, or flowers. According to the analysed paintings, one might notice quite frequent occurrences of human figures that are embedded in the landscape scene. The second aspect of aesthetics is the portrait paintings. They were painted both from a distance, where the whole

human figure can be seen or, in contrast, close-up portraits. Chase used very dark-toned colours on the subject's clothing, but similarly, he kept the background in the same tone, so the only thing that stands out from the painting is the pale face and skin. In such paintings, his style is similar to that of John S. Sargent when painting elite families.

Analysed paintings of John Henry Twachtman:

Winter Harmony (Oil, 1890s),

Horseshoe Falls, Niagara (Oil, 1894),

The White Bridge (Oil, 1896),

Horseneck Falls (Oil, 1889–1900),

Hemlock Pool (Oil, 1900),

Arques-la-Bataille (Oil, 1885),

On the Terrace (Oil, 1897),

The Rainbow's Source (Oil, 1890–1900),

Sailing in the Mist (Oil, 1895),

Snow (Oil, 1895–1896).

Similarly, John Henry Twachtman also dedicated his paintings mainly to the depiction of natural scenes and landscapes, rarely with any figures. Apart from others, Twachtman uses a quite dark colour palette with a lot of black, brown, and dark green. However, such a stereotype is disrupted by winter-themed paintings, in which he uses a snow-white palette. Also, there appears to be a phenomenon that might be called a “mist effect” that causes the majority of the paintings to have a fine layer of grey on the top. This creates an impression of mist that expresses a mysterious and enigmatic feeling. There is also quite a frequent occurrence of water elements in his paintings, usually a depiction of waterfalls or mountain streams. Therefore, his impact can also be seen as more regional.

To finalise the statement from the analysis of chosen paintings from American Impressionists: Mary Cassatt, Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent, William M. Chase, and John H. Twachtman, it can be clearly said that none of the themes of race or racial issues did appear. Most of them painted only landscapes and completely avoided urban motifs. However, not even Childe Hassam, who dedicated his paintings primarily to the depiction of urban life, seemed to display any forms of racial issues, not even including any other ethnicities in his work. Surprisingly, despite many seeming to include elements of progressive ideas in their art, it seems they did not address any racial issues at all.

4. Comparison with European Impressionism

Both movements were created on different continents at different time, one deriving from the other. And although they might not differ significantly at first, a more thorough view might perhaps reveal the opposite. Therefore, this chapter will compare both movements' features, such as style, colour use, composition, technique, themes, and motifs, and further determine what are the major differences and, contrastingly, in which they both differ.

In terms of colour use regarding tones, colour schemes, and palettes, Impressionistic painters generally preferred the use of brighter tones. However, it seems that American artists tend to use more frequently subdued tones or completely dark colour schemes, for example Hassam's midnight street scenes. On the other hand, French Impressionists were not afraid to experiment with vibrant and bold colours, even including turquoise. Occasionally, American paintings deal with the impression of overexposure, something that French Impressionists seemed to avoid. Additionally, there might be a tendency to darken the visuals over the years on both sides. Nevertheless, colour use seems to vary across the canvases, depending mostly on individual preference. Therefore, it is difficult to generalise.

The brushstroke technique also differs among the painters. Both movements share significantly loose strokes. In France, the majority used short strokes that sometimes even transferred into light tapping on the canvas, for example, Pissarro's later work or Monet's water reflection. Such an experimental technique might provoke the impression of graininess, which might not appeal to some. In contrast, it creates a level of depth and comprehensiveness that allows the expression of the painting as a whole, creating the effect of ambience and vibrant experience. On the contrary, American Impressionists tend to make thicker strokes; these might be seen especially in the landscape paintings of J. H. Twachtman and Theodore Robinson.

According to the light depiction, for which this artistic movement is known, it seems to prevail priority to the majority of the painters from both spheres. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the individual patterns. For instance, Mary Cassatt and John Singer Sargent uniquely depicted light, mainly on the subject's clothing, to create a realistic picture with a sense of structure. Furthermore, Hassam used the rainy weather to create realistic reflections of light across the street. On the other side, French painters rather focused on the depiction of light in the shadows. In conclusion, both spheres were dedicated to displaying light to capture the fleeting moment and thus better transfer the impression of the whole piece. They just differed in the form of light depiction.

The accompanying objects that support the main subject matter and help the painting achieve harmony and unity also differ across the movements. For example, in America, the frequent depiction of the sky is not that sophisticated rather it prevails as a monochromatic part that creates a contrast or, on the contrary, supports the composition beneath it. It usually consists of a white or grey palette with a drop of blue. Therefore, the use of sky is simply to allow the painter to truly depict the current weather conditions, usually rain or sunny day. This allowed the Impressionists to depict the aspect of light and its reflection, as described in previous paragraph. Other supporting objects, such as trees, grass, and flowers, seem to be depicted more precisely in the American sphere with greater attention to detail. On the contrary, French authors tend to omit such detailed depictions. Followingly, the flowers have a significant role in both spheres, in which they occur in beautiful pastel colours that help to finish the matching layer of colours to create a likeable picture for the observer's eye.

French impressionists tend to depict themes of bustling city life in Paris, including places such as theatres, coffee shops, squares, and streets. Their paintings reflected the dynamics of the urban environment and moments of public spaces. For instance, Renoir's and Pissarro's bustling and overcrowded streets or Degas' dancing lessons and ballet performances. Contrastingly, they were also keen on depicting more rural scenes in natural environments, such as Monet's ponds and lilies. This might emphasise the harmony and appealing aesthetics of natural scenes containing the moment of life. American impressionists also painted the bustling streets of New York City, however, in a completely different manner and much lower frequency since only Childe Hassam and William M. Chase adapted such urban motifs. They tried to capture the moment of the street along with the monumental buildings that possess certain historical and cultural value, such as Washington Arch, Union Square, and Fifth Avenue. Another subject matter is female figures, heavily due to the painter Mary Cassatt, who dedicated her career to such a theme. However, the most prominent paintings are landscapes and seascapes by which painters tried to sustain the untouched nature in the times of gradual industrialisation and urbanisation on the American continent. Occasionally, it might express a feeling of advertisement to showcase the American untouched nature and bustling streets full of opportunities that offer something more than other continents could not. Which might feel quite paradoxical when the majority of the American Impressionists travelled to Europe for inspiration.

This strongly correlates with themes, motifs, and ideas used in the Impressionistic paintings. The original French movement seems to capture moments of life as objects of impression and aestheticism through the use of several elements, such as light, loose and short

brushstrokes, and avoiding detailed backgrounds to create a piece of visual art that needs to be considered as whole to be rightfully judged. On the contrary, from the previous chapter's analysis, it seems that, although both spheres used the same aesthetics, both wanted to depict different ideas. In the matter of American impressionists, some of them, mainly Childe Hassam, seemed to include numerous progressive aspects in his paintings, for instance, to signal upcoming or already happening progress in terms of changing social and cultural areas of life. John Singer Sargent, who depicted wealthy elite figures, and Mary Cassatt painted mainly women figures to emphasise strong individualism and independence while challenging the traditional norms. On the other side, French Impressionists tend to primarily challenge the traditional conventions of art and how it is perceived in the academic sphere.

Although French and American Impressionism share many similarities, they also differ in several aspects, and their different cultural and artistic context contributed to the creation of unique and diverse art forms. Therefore, these two movements deserve recognition not only as historical phenomena but also as inexhaustible sources of inspiration for future generations of artists.

Conclusion

This thesis delves into the movements of Progressivism and Impressionism in the American context. It defines several essential terms to fully comprehend the movements and also provides essential knowledge and context to support the analysis of selected paintings from American Impressionists (Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, John Henry Twachtman, and Theodore Robinson). The analysis mainly focuses on the progressive themes (emancipation of women, social class difference, and racial issues) and their possible expressions on the artists' canvases. Lastly, the analysis compares American and French Impressionism.

Regarding the theme of women's emancipation, the analysis of selected paintings clearly confirmed that all of the artists included women in their paintings. However, they differed in the approach and style of depiction. Mary Cassatt strongly emphasised women figures in the style of close-up portraits in various activities, from bearing children to women engaged in leisure activities in both private and public spaces. Her paintings proved to support feminine ideas, especially opposing stereotypical views on women and challenging the traditional norms in both art and society. Although the paintings certainly supported these ideas, there appeared to be no direct connection between her art and Progressivism. The research rather unfolds the motive behind producing such paintings, which seemed to be just her personality to support feminine ideas. On the other hand, Childe Hassam included women in his painting as a part of the whole, symbolising the prosperity of city life. Although the women he depicted lacked the role of the main subject, they still significantly expressed the progress of individuals who spent their time parading the streets. Therefore, this chapter proved Childe Hassam to support Progressivism. On the contrary, the two previous painters, John Singer Sargent, completely differed in their approach to the woman narrative. The analysis of his painting determined his rejection of progressive factors in his art. His visual art depicted women mainly as an object of fascination, admiring nobility, class, and elegance.

Whether the previous paragraph outlined Hassam as a possible progressive-focused painter, then the chapter concerning the social class difference proved Hassam to be the leading artist of the Progressive Era. The second analysis of his paintings confirmed Hassam to explicitly include progressive ideas in all of the selected paintings. Such examples promoting Progressivism are scenes of bustling streets with commercial-themed factors that frequently express overwhelming contrast within the social classes. This argument is also supported by the choice of places with cultural values, such as Union Square, Washington

Arch and Fifth Avenue, that seemed to symbolise a sense of national pride. Or the depiction of monumental buildings, skyscrapers, and cities in general, highlighting the prosperity and modern aspects of life. Hassam's inclination to Progressivism seemed to approve of the facts of his frequent involvement in the commercial sector and the appearance of his paintings as illustrations in several articles. The analysis displays the lack of interest in painting urban scenes by other artists, who, on the contrary, primarily seemed to focus on the motifs of nature and landscape to preserve the untouched land. This approach only justifies Hassam as a revolutionary painter.

Racial issues were definitely part of the broader Progressive movement. This thesis, therefore, included a third analysis of a series of paintings from American Impressionists, such as Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase, and John Henry Twachtman. This analysis reveals that none of the analysed paintings addresses any form of racial issues, nor did they depict any other ethnicities, especially Afro-Americans. Although this analysis confirms avoiding racial themes or other ethnicities in their paintings, opposingly, it does not suggest that they did that intentionally. Such a result raises a question concerning the reason why such a theme was avoided.

This thesis also delves into the comparisons of the two Impressionistic movements, the American and European alias the original French Impressionism. The thorough analysis of numerous paintings from both isms found several similarities that mainly appear in the light depiction, colour use, and brushstroke technique. However, they also differed, especially regarding the choice of composition and style of detailing. This analysis implies that the most significant aspects that influenced the differences between the movements were their cultural and artistic context that contributed to the creation of unique and diverse art forms.

In conclusion, this thesis confirmed and approved Childe Hassam as an explicit supporter of the Progressive Era, since his implementation of several progressive factors into his paintings, choice of composition – depiction of vibrant urban scenes that symbolise prosperity and progress, and lastly, due to his inclination to commerce. Mary Cassatt, on the other hand, significantly supported feminine motifs and the emancipation of women. However, the analysis did not find enough evidence to consider her a supporter of Progressivism. The rest of the painters lacked any sign of connection between their visual art and the Progressive Era. Although the analysis has confirmed one of the most prominent painter, Childe Hassam, to be a supporter of Progressivism, he seems to be the only one and, therefore, this thesis denies the American Impressionism to be considered as a part of the

Progressive movement, while it emphasises on the diversity of the American Impressionists' individuality.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou amerického impresionismu v kontextu progresivismu, jakožto hnutí, které probíhalo ve Spojených státech amerických na konci 19. století a na začátku 20. století. V úvodu bakalářské práce je nastíněno, jak bakalářská práce k tomuto tématu přistupuje, definuje období progresivismu a pojem „progresivní“. Dále práce představí americké malíře, kteří jsou bráni jako nejvýznamnější v této oblasti. V neposlední řadě úvod představí hlavní otázku bakalářské práce, tedy zda je možné americký impresionismus vnímat jako součást širšího hnutí progresivismu, popřípadě jak se liší americký impresionismus od francouzského. Hlavní otázka bude zkoumána pomocí analýzy obrazů od vybraných umělců.

První kapitola se zabývá progresivistickou érou a jejími ideovými východisky. Najdeme zde definici progresivismu jako éry na přelomu 19. a 20. století, která je především charakterizována ekonomickými, sociálními a politickými reformami. Tyto reformy se především týkaly zlepšení životní úrovně obyvatel, volebního práva žen či rasových otázek. Dále se také zabývaly odhalováním korupce a následným ukončením extrémní koncentrace bohatství v úzké skupině lidí, která vznikla převážně v pozlacené éře. Tato éra je blíže vysvětlena v nadcházející podkapitole jakožto hlavní faktor vzniku progresivní éry. Kapitola se dále věnuje definováním pojmu progresivismu se zaměřením na jeho ideová východiska. S tímto napomůžou i pohledy na danou problematiku od autorů Andrew Scott a Eisenoch. Oba autoři se shodují na definování výrazu progresivismu jako hnutí, které cílí na pokrokové zlepšení ve více oblastech života. V čem se ale autoři rozcházejí je motivace, která předcházela tyto pokrokové reformy.

Další podkapitola se zabývá již zmíněným obdobím, a to pozlaceným věkem. Toto období předchází progresivistickému hnutí, často je také označováno za jednu z hlavních příčin celého hnutí. Toto období je charakterizováno jako období nadměrné korupce, materialismu a koncentrace obrovského bohatství, zejména u malé skupiny lidí na konci 19. století. Tato skupina se často nazývala jako „loupeživí baroni“. Patří sem například John D. Rockefeller, který velice příkladově charakterizuje tuto dobu a problémy s ní spojené. Podkapitola také nastíní, jak se tito „robber barrons“ dostali k takovému bohatství pomocí nekalých praktik a monopolních metod. Na druhou stranu tyto monopolní podniky sehráli velmi důležitou roli v hlavním rozkvětu industrialismu ve Spojených státech amerických. Pomocí práce od Ballarda Cambela tato podkapitola tedy definuje období pozlaceného věku spolu s pojmem industrialismu, který je podle něj stěžejní pro vytvoření pokrokové éry. Dále Cambel charakterizuje šest pojmů, které jsou pro vznik industrializace stěžejní. Těmito pojmy jsou dle

nej technologie, železnice, korporáty, finanční kapitalismus, práce a maloobchod. Tyto aspekty jsou tedy shledány jako příprava pro vznik progresivistického hnutí.

Druhá podkapitola zkoumá problematiku volebního práva žen v období progresivismu. Pojem „women’s suffrage“ představoval jak volební práva žen, tak vzniklá aktivistická hnutí spolu se sufražetkami v jejich čele. V podkapitole jsou také zmíněny konkrétní příklady vzniklých hnutí a organizací. Také je nutné podotknout, že ženský aktivismus se nezabýval pouze usilovným bojem o volební práva žen, ale také mnoha dalšími tématy. Mezi ně patří například boj proti dětské práci, pracovní práva a podmínky pro ženy. Dále se zabývaly prohibicí alkoholu a prostitucí. Jejich nejdůležitějším tématem ale nadále zůstává rovnoprávnost žen a mužů, ať už v oblasti volebního práva či za rovné pracovní možnosti a příležitosti. Výjimkou nebyla ani témata týkající se rasových a imigračních problémů.

Třetí a poslední podkapitola se věnuje rasovým otázkám, které se objevily nebo nacházely v období progresivismu. Tyto rasové otázky se objevily především kvůli již zmíněným reformám, rapidní industrializaci a postupné urbanizaci. To postupně vedlo k tensím ve společnosti a dále se to promítalo i do společenského hnutí v podobě rasových problémů. Tyto rasové problémy se týkaly především rasové segregace, diskriminace, bělošské nadřazenosti a celkového rasismu proti černošské komunitě. Tato podkapitola také rozebírá otázku jižanského stereotypu týkajícího se rasových problémů. Tato otázka je následně rozuzlena kritickou prací od Alexandra X. Byrda, který viní z rasových problémů celou americkou společnost nikoliv pouze Jih. Na podporu tohoto argumentu uvádí příklady rasových nepokojů, které jasně ukazují fakt, že se rasové problémy objevovaly napříč celými Spojenými státy americkými, a to i v progresivním Severu. Nakonec autor vyzdvihuje otázku pro analýzu, která se nachází ve třetí kapitole, zda i američtí impresionisté pracovali s těmito rasovými problémy ve svých námětech či nikoliv.

Druhá kapitola definuje pojem impresionismus především jako francouzské umělecké hnutí. Celkové definici tohoto pojmu napomůžou autoři L. Snider, L. Venturi a D. C. Phillips Jr. Každý z nich reprezentuje odlišnou dobu tak, aby pohled na impresionismus byl co nejvíce komplexní. Kapitola se nejprve zaměřuje na vznik impresionismu na francouzském území a následně se snaží vysvětlit původ slova impresionismus. Kapitola také představuje zakládající členy tohoto uměleckého hnutí a jeho pozdější přední představitele. Dále se věnuje filozofickému významu impresionismu a následné charakteristice malířských technik, námětů, motivů a témat a postoji k akademickému vnímání umění. V neposlední řadě se kapitola zaměřuje na přechod francouzského impresionismu na americký kontinent, reakce veřejnosti a postupné přijetí americkou uměleckou scénou.

Druhá podkapitola se zaměřuje na krátké představení nejstěžejnějších malířů amerického impresionismu v této bakalářské práci. Mezi tyto malíře patří Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, Willima Merritt Chase, John Henry Twachtman a Theodore Robinson. Úkolem této podkapitoly je představit a přiblížit životy malířů a jejich umělecký styl, který hraje nezbytnou roli pro celkové pochopení jejich obrazů, které jsou součástí analýzy v pozdějších kapitolách.

Poslední podkapitola teoretické části týkající se impresionismu jsou americké „školy“ jako formy vycházející z amerického impresionismu. Konkrétními příklady těchto škol jsou Pennsylvania, California a Ashcan School. Každá z těchto škol je představena v kontextu amerického impresionismu. Kapitola dále zkoumá malířské techniky, náměty a přední malíře jednotlivých „škol.“ Pennsylvania a California School spíše představují regionální formu amerického impresionismu zaměřující se převážně na krajiny a přírodní motivy. Naproti tomu Ashcan School se více zaměřuje na realismus se zaměřením na městské motivy, které vychází z amerického impresionismu.

Třetí kapitola představuje konkrétní díla amerických impresionistů, především malíře Childe Hassama, Mary Cassattové a John S. Sargenta. První podkapitola se věnuje tématu ženské emancipace a zachycení ženských motivů v americkém impresionismu. V analýze je představeno devět obrazů. V prvních šesti obrazech od autorky Mary Cassatt je kladen důraz na ženské motivy, které vyzdvihovaly hlavně znaky mateřství a dále obrazy žen s důrazem na jejich osobitost a samostatnost. V neposlední řadě se zde objevily obrazy znázorňující ženy vykonávající každodenní aktivity, které měly vzdorovat tradičním stereotypům ve společnosti a umění. Městské scény byly další formou, kde se objevoval ženský narativ. V tomto případě byly ženy pouze využity jako součást celku, který se snažil upozornit na problémy sociálních tříd. V neposlední řadě se ženy objevovaly v portrétech J. S. Sargent, zde však byly pouhým předmětem fascinace, vznešenosti a sociální úrovně.

Druhá podkapitola se zabývá analýzou zbylých šesti obrazů od Childe Hassama. V obrazech nacházíme především náměty v podobě rušných ulic, ve kterých se nachází různé prvky jako například kočáry, komerční cedule či plakáty, elegantně oblečené ženy a kočí. Tyto prvky vyzdvihují „novou“ moderní éru ve Spojených státech amerických, probíhající pokrok a prosperitu. Je zde využit kontrast, kde ulice je vždy použita jako dělící prvek, na jehož druhé straně se objevuje chudě oblečený muž, který představuje pouličního prodáváče či zametače, pro kterého již ve scéně není místo. V neposlední řadě kapitola důrazně vyzdvihuje Hassamovu působivou techniku a malířské dovednosti. Hassam se tedy zdá být jediným, kdo se ze

zmíněných malířů soustředí na městské motivy, kde se snažil vyobrazovat pokrokové Spojené státy americké a probíhající progres, včetně rozdílů v sociálních třídách.

Poslední podkapitola se zabývá analýzou sbírek obrazů od následujících malířů: Childe Hassam, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase a John Henry Twachtman. V těchto sbírkách obrazů je zobrazena rasová problematika v podobě rasové diskriminace, segregace nebo například zákony Jim Crowa. Avšak žádný z těchto prvků se na zmíněných obrazech přímo neobjevil, nenalezneme zde ani bližší zmínky či náznaky. Můžeme tedy říci, že žádný z těchto malířů nezakomponoval žádnou formu rasových problémů do svých obrazů, včetně vyobrazení ostatních etnik.

Poslední kapitola se zabývá porovnáním amerického a francouzského impresionismu pomocí několika faktorů, kterými jsou styl, použití barev, technika, kompozice, zobrazená témata a motivy. Také je důležité zmínit, že většina rozdílů se spíše odehrávala na individuální úrovni mezi jednotlivými malíři, nikoliv mezi směry jako takovými. Co se týče barevné stylizace, oba směry používaly převážně světlé odstíny, nicméně se zdá, že američtí impresionisté častěji inklinovali k tmavším odstínům. Na druhou stranu francouzští malíři často experimentovali s výraznými barvami. Krátké tahy štětcem jsou zachovány v obou směrech, s výjimkou občasných silnějších tahů u amerických krajinářů. Oba směry se taktéž zaměřují na vyobrazení světla. Americký impresionismus častěji vyobrazuje světelné efekty na různých materiálech jako například na látce či v odrazech vody a mokřem povrchu. Nejvýznamnější rozdíly se však nacházely v zobrazovaných námětech a motivech. Francouzští malíři se hlavně soustředili na rušné ulice Paříže a obecně na každodenní městské scény. Naproti tomu američtí impresionisté se převážně soustředili na přírodní motivy s výjimkou Hassamových ulic.

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Appendix 1 - Figures



Figure 1 – Mary Cassatt, *Mother and Child*, 1895. Pastel. The Pushkin Museum, Moscow.



Figure 2 – Mary Cassatt, *Young Mother Sewing*, 1900. Oil on canvas. 92.4 x 73.7 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 3 – Mary Cassatt, *In the Loge*, 1878. Oil on canvas. 81 x 66 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Figure 4 – Childe Hassam, *Washington Arch, Spring*, 1890. Oil on canvas. 66 x 54 cm. The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC.



Figure 5 – Childe Hassam, *Fifth Avenue in Winter*, 1892. Oil on canvas. 54 x 71 cm. Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.



Figure 7 – John Singer Sargent, *Madame X*, 1883. Oil on canvas. 92.5 x 43.25 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 8 – Childe Hassam, *Rainy Day, Boston*, 1885. Oil on canvas. 66 x 122 cm. Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio.



Figure 9 – Childe Hassam, *Rain shower, Rue Bonaparte*, 1887. Oil on canvas. 102 x 196 cm. Hirschl and Adler Galleries, New York



Figure 10 – Childe Hassam, *The Hovel and the Skyscraper*, 1904. Oil on canvas. 88.3 x 79 cm. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Meyer P. Potamkin, Philadelphia.

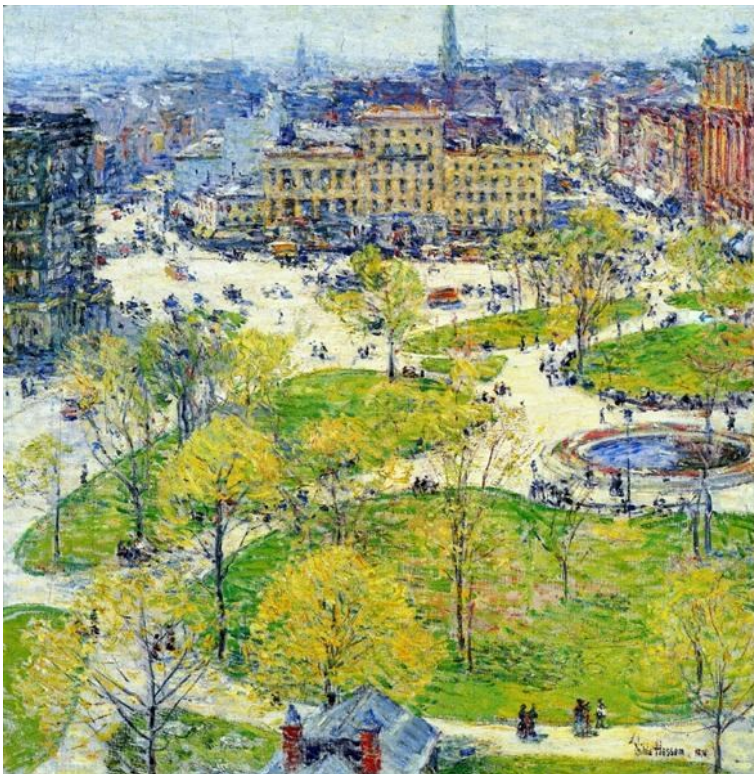


Figure 11 – Childe Hassam, *Union Square in Spring*, 1896. Oil on canvas. 54.6 x 53.3 cm. Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts.