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CLASS CONFLICT IN WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS'S THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM AND A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES: ARISTOCRATIC NOSTALGIA

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por

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ABSTRACT

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1999

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In the second half of the nineteenth-century, the United States shared the world view that they were a democratic and egalitarian society, liberated from aristocratic exclusiveness, snobbery and separation of people in castes or social classes. Likewise, in his criticism, William Dean Howells identified Realism with democracy and defended that literature should promote national unity and the egalitarian aims of American people. In The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes, however, there is an aristocratic pull that seems to undermine those egalitarian principles. Howells's ideological preferences in relation to the conflict between America's democratic and aristocratic classes is perceived in these novels' treatment of the anxiety about social mobility involving the families of nouveaux-riches businessmen and "aristocratic" Bostonians and New Yorkers. Class markers such as attitude towards money, social manners, linguistic refinement, and conversational ease, knowledge of painting, architecture, literature, housing and dressing function as class barriers and determine the possibility or impossibility of climbing socially, emphasizing the gulf between social classes. Hazard is greatly concerned with the distribution of political power, with the economic disparity between classes, and with the political ideologies defended by its characters, pointing to democratic and aristocratic responses. I propose an investigation of the class markers found in The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes and of the political ideologies discussed in Hazard with the purpose of (1) showing that the class structure portrayed in them is based both on a tradition of aristocracy and democracy and (2) seeking the novels' ideology by verifying the narrative voice position with relation to those markers and the two classes in question.

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RESUMO

CLASS CONFLICT IN WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS'S THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM AND A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES: ARISTOCRATIC NOSTALGIA

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Na segunda metade do século dezenove, os Estados Unidos compartilhavam da visão de mundo de serem uma sociedade democrática e igualitária, livre da exclusividade e esnobismo aristocráticos e da separação das pessoas em castas ou classes sociais. Do mesmo modo, em sua crítica literária, William Dean Howells identificava Realismo com democracia e defendia que a literatura deveria promover a unidade nacional e os princípios de igualdade do povo americano. Entretanto, em The Rise of Silas Lapham e A Hazard of New Fortunes, verifica-se uma tendência aristocrática que parece enfraquecer esses princípios. As preferências ideológicas de Howells em relação ao conflito entre as classes democráticas e aristocráticas americanas é percebida no tratamento da ansiedade vivida por famílias de novos-ricos comerciantes e por membros da aristocracia de Boston e Nova Iorque no que se refere à mobilidade social. Marcadores de classe como as atitudes perante o dinheiro, as formas de comportamento, o refinamento lingüístico, o domínio da conversação, o conhecimento sobre questões como moradia, vestimenta, pintura, arquitetura e literatura, funcionam como barreiras entre classes, enfatizam a distância entre elas, e determinam a possibilidade ou impossibilidade de subir socialmente. Em Hazard há também uma preocupação significativa com a distribuição de poder político, com a disparidade econômica entre classes e com as ideologias políticas defendidas por seus personagens, o que aponta para respostas democráticas e aristocráticas. Investigando os marcadores de classe encontrados nos referidos romances bem como as ideologias políticas discutidas em Hazard, proponho (1) mostrar que a estrutura de classe neles apresentada

baseia-se tanto em uma tradição aristocrática como democrática, e (2) identificar a ideologia dos romances através da verificação do posicionamento da voz narrativa em relação aos marcadores e às duas classes em questão.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

William Dean Howells: An Ideological Paradox

Statement of the Problem

In the second half of the nineteenth century, American people shared the widespread view that the United States were a democratic and egalitarian society, and took for granted Alexis de Tocqueville's assertion that equality of conditions was responsible for the social development and for the economic drive of American emergent capitalism.

In 1871, Walt Whitman saw the words "America" and "democracy" as exchangeable and defined America as an egalitarian society "presently given over to material progress and well being, and a polity fastened on electoral politics alone" (qtd. in Trachtenberg 176). Likewise, Leo Marx and Gerald Graff (1986) discuss the progressive world view of nineteenth-century America as embodying the idea that upward social mobility was available for any industrious white man as well as the idea of liberation from the "oppressive priests and aristocrats" (Marx 41). For them, that world view became the ideology of middle-class America.[1]

However, the egalitarian and libertarian middle-class ideology was the prevailing but not the only ideology of America. It seems that the nation's democratic spirit was

[1] For Leo Marx, "when a particular social group, or coalition of social groups, uses a shared world view as the basis for a program of action, they in effect shape it into an ideology." Ideology is for him "programmatic," "prescriptive," and "political" (Marx 41).

challenged by an aristocratic tradition, which rejected the ideal of social equality and praised taste and the separation of people in castes or social classes.[2]

Alfred Kazin acknowledges a New York colonial aristocracy that desired to "keep away from innovation and scandal and restless minds" (75), and Nancy Glazener says that just like the European aristocracy, in the post-Civil War, New England bourgeoisie powerfully maintained its cultural and economic hegemony with the intermarriage between its leading families. More than in other regions, these families had developed an aristocracy that tried to reproduce the European class system.

In the post Civil War era, which was marked by the rush to industrialization, by the consequent making of new fortunes and the impoverishment of the best established families in society, and by the rise of a new commercial and merchandising society, the greatest representative of the democratic ideal was the industrial businessman, defined by Howells as "the man who has risen," and by Kazin as the archetype of that era. As Edwin H. Cady explains, the modern businessman is a potent social, political and economic figure that generally owned small allegiance to the old dominant classes and that "symbolized and wielded forces which were then as mysterious in their meaning as they were obviously gigantic in their power to alter the fabric of human life" (xxi). The appearance of the businessman greatly disturbed the member of a genteel middle-class, characterized by reserve, well-breeding, tradition and cultural dependence on European aristocracy, mainly the British one. These genteel men could not ignore nor tolerate the nouveaux-riches,

[2] During the nineteenth century, Americans used the term "democracy" very often not as an expression of the thoughts of the common people, but of a smaller cultural elite that desired to end with any tyrannical authority (Radway, qtd. in Glazener 274).

mocked them and emulated their pleasures, and although, according to Kazin, they "soon came to admire them" (76), they insistently tried to maintain their aristocratic norms and to keep distance. An indication of that is James Bryce's and other Europeans sociologists' belief that the nouveaux-riches were better accepted in the English high society than in America (Lipset 133).

According to many articles and books written by historians, American essayists, European members of the aristocratic elite that visited America after the Civil War, "conformity"--understood as caring for other people's opinions (153)-- was the other American dominant characteristic from the pre Civil War period until 1940 (Lipset). More than that, these sociologists saw the ideology of equality as responsible for conformity because, in institutionalizing the notion that economic success and upward social mobility were accessible for everybody, it increased the competition for social prestige and the conscience of social status, as well as the insecurity and anguish linked to them. In large cities, such as Boston and New York, conformity was even stronger than in small towns and farms because in those social status is less stable, and because rich and miserable, refined and rude were gathered together.

In addition, according to John F. Kasson, contrary to popular historical stereotypes, the rise of the material development and of a bourgeois society after the Civil War did not distribute wealth more equally than before, but increased economic stratification, transforming the character of everyday life, stimulating new tastes and cultural practices and restructuring traditional notions of social relations, manners, consciousness, and the integrity of the self (93). For these reasons, sociologists saw that every class of the United States was tortured by the anxiety of maintaining appearances and by the constant fear of

being condemned by their actions and beliefs, and generally tended to submission and acquiescence towards the "dominant" opinion.

Seymor M. Lipset observes that American society valued the question of status even more than aristocratic societies of Europe because it lacked any well-defined structure of deference connected to a legitimate aristocratic tradition where the propriety of social hierarchies is not questioned (133). According to him, in every privileged stratum of a conservative society which is not really aristocratic (in the sense of titles of rank and government by a class of people depending on birth or wealth), there is a pressure for the creation of aristocratic norms that aims at the justification and perpetuation of their high status, as well as the elimination or the possibility of being supplanted by the "new men" (197). These norms are going to be referred to as class markers.

For these reasons, it could be said that the tradition of American society is democratic, but in practice, all classes are suffused by prejudices, snobbery and exclusiveness. Actually, class consciousness and class distinction themselves contradict America's professed belief in equality. Theodore Roosevelt's assertion, for instance, that "money-making" and "oratory" are the essential qualities of good citizenship in a democracy (Netells 19) points to a nation which carries both a democratic (money-making) and an aristocratic (grammatical and good speech) tradition.

The tension between democratic an aristocratic values was also felt, for example, in the cultivation of the arts of social intercourse. The cultured elite considered itself the main bearer of cultural and intellectual interests and of aesthetic refinement, and its members had two different views according to the distribution of artistic culture in the country. One group, combining a sense of *noblesse oblige* with democratic ideals, was concerned with spreading culture to common people. They endowed the libraries, museums, and art

galleries, and founded symphony orchestras. The other group was based on an anti-democratic tendency which defended that only the cultured elite could ever appreciate art, and so they found ways of barring the public in cultural institutions "through their own rules as private clubs" (Paul Finkelman 9).

In the realm of literature, as Realism reflects the constant disorder of American life in the years between the Civil War and the WWI, and according to Kazin, the situation of society between one moral order and another and the dissolution of "old standards and faiths," this literary movement reflects the conflicts between American democratic and aristocratic tradition.

William Dean Howells, a key figure in the process of consolidation of Realism in America, certainly deals with the conflicts between different social classes and the democratic ideal of equality. This conflict can indeed be perceived in the contradictory relationship between his private life and his criticism and fiction.

According to Kazin, Berthoff, Netells, and Donald Pease, Howells belonged to and embraced the conventions of the "genteel" tradition. He showed an "everyday satisfaction with polite society and the best companies" (Bertoff 60), and according to Netells, he was afraid that the immigrants would threaten the "old stock" of American life; he made distinctions between the " well bred and the ill bred," and believed that "one cannot behave rudely without ultimately becoming at heart a savage" (188). However, in his literary criticism, Howells identified Realism with democracy and defended that literature should promote national unity and the egalitarian aims of the American people.

In his criticism, Howells always equated the aims of Realism with the ideals of democracy. He asserted that the realist feels 'the equality of things and the unity of men," declared that American Literature should "seek the universal in the individual, rather than

the social interest" (qtd. in Glazener 42), and like other prominent realist writers, defended that Realism had the political function of providing a relationship between elites and the people" (152). Although Glazener advocates the idea that Realism was an institution aimed at the reproduction of gentility, her book (Reading for Realism: the history of a U.S. literary institution, 1850-1910), provides some explanations for what she calls the literary historians' "stubborness" to associate Realism with a democratization of literature, which can help us to understand what Howells's democratic Realism consists of.

Howells believed that the portrayal of the domestic and of the "experience common to all" could diminish the gap between social classes because it could make privileged readers understand the less privileged and help to alleviate their distress, acting through the state or other institutions. Informing the privileged populations about their social inferiors was considered a political intervention, and the mere depiction of non-elite characters--mainly poor or working class characters--counted as a flourishing of democracy (Glazener 41). In this way, Howells's Silas Lapham, Zerilla, the Dryfooses, and Lindau, are in themselves examples of Howells's democratic Realism.

Howells's encouragement of regionalist writers also represented a democratization of literature because, according to Glazener, no matter how exquisite the regionalist was, the choice for regionalism meant taking up a distance from the high Realism of Boston and New York, the most literary and elitist version of Realism (198). His artistic reluctance to enforce a moral lesson for his readers also carries an informally democratic value, because while the open support of a conviction or reform was considered authoritarian, "subtler ways of inducing readers to reaffirm the culture's central truths" opened space for diversity or dissent (Glazener 104).

Howells also embraced the democratic function of Realism in his call for serious literature from African-Americans, in his promotion of New York Jewish writers, in his encouragement of the new writers to break with the restraints and prejudices of European models, and in his rejection, at the end of his life, of the "insistently masculine tone in literature that he labeled 'rugged masculinity' " (Martin 127).

His valuing, however, of both the aristocratic and egalitarian principles is especially reflected in his fiction's treatment of the problems of class relations in a democracy and in his satire on social mobility. In fact, in his novels there is an emphasis on the realistic picture of American barriers between classes, which suggests that the ideal of equality that his Realism affirmed was mistaken.

Twenty years after the Civil War, Howells wrote the popular The Rise of Silas Lapham, the novel that established his reputation as an author and that is considered by many critics to be the first study of the American businessman in American literature. Five years later, he wrote his second great novel, A Hazard of New Fortunes, which is more social than the first in the sense that it provides more direct criticism of social and economic inequities. Both novels can be considered a study of middle-class manners, and a reflection of the complexities of the American existence and of the conflict between the forces that unite and divide the American people, which for Netells is the central theme of Howells's fiction.

The characteristic that most unites both novels is the treatment of the anxiety about social mobility involving the class of nouveaux-riches businessmen and the "aristocratic" families of Boston and New York. As America does not have a "real" aristocracy but a genteel middle class with aristocratic tradition, and a commercial and acquisitive middle class with egalitarian traditions, the question of upward social mobility is connected to

matters of cultural acquisition; and it is worth noting that the dominant concept of culture of the period was always related to Matthew Arnold's definition of it as "the best that has been taught and known" ("culture"). Supporting this elitist view, James Cox defines culture as "the refinement that may give grace to the natural man" and the ease in the coded manner of society (117). He adds that contrary to the middle-class wish, the advent of frenetic capitalism made acquisition of such culture possible on large scale and, accordingly, Lilian Furst identifies the nineteenth century with the "mania of possession of things" as indicators of class and as status symbols (131).

Both The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes deal with the (un)bridgeable gulf between social classes and prove that money is not enough to buy a social position to the nouveaux-riches. Much to the contrary, more than money, class markers such as attitude towards money and money-making, social manners, linguistic refinement and conversational ease, knowledge of painting and literature, housing and dressing, function as class barriers and determine the possibility or impossibility of climbing socially. As Hazard is also greatly concerned with the distribution of economic power and with how particular violations of laissez-faire politics contribute to the increase of social injustice and of disparity between social classes, the analysis of its social differences cannot be restricted to the investigation of class markers. Its political-economic context demands the support of the political ideologies defended by its characters, which, by their turn, also point to responses that range from democratic involvement and aristocratic disinterested commitment towards social inequities.

Objective

What the present study proposes is an investigation of the class markers found in The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes and of the political ideologies discussed in Hazard with the purpose of (1) showing that the class structure portrayed in them is based both on a tradition of aristocracy and democracy and (2) seeking the novels' ideology by verifying the narrative voice position with relation to those markers and the two classes in question. I will also compare those class markers and political- economic considerations with Howells's ideas expressed in his non-fiction essays, focusing particularly on the understanding of Realism as a form of affirmation-negation of democracy. I operate with the assumption that in Howells's fiction there is a nostalgic aristocratic pull that undermines the egalitarian principles he defends in his non-fiction.

Value of the Research

An analysis of the criticism about Howells reveals that although a lot has been written about his commitment with the perpetuation or the reformulation of the status quo, his aristocratic (genteel condescension) or democratic (critical and social investigation) responses to social inequalities remain contradictory in The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes. With regard to Howells's differentiation of classes, however, very little has been done in order to determine his ideological preferences in relation to the conflict between America's aristocratic and democratic classes --a conflict which I assume to be present in his fiction and non-fiction, and which exposes his paradoxical way of thinking.

Even though Silas Lapham is a novel of manners whose business plot is secondary to the Laphams' entry in society, critics have focused their interpretation on the business plot alone, and underplayed the question of social status and mobility[3]. Critics have done the same in relation to Hazard, concentrating their readings exclusively on the novel's political ideologies, distribution of economic power and human responsibility to poverty. Critics like Berthoff and Pease have taken those social elements into consideration only to accuse Howells of reducing Civil War ideological imperatives to a nagging about cases of manners and incivility.

Nonetheless, in focusing their interpretation purely on the novels' political-economic contexts, critics have left aside a fundamental element for criticism, because manners, as Kasson notes, are not empty formalities, but "inextricably tied to larger political, social and cultural contexts and their ramifications extend deep into human relations and the individual personality" (3). Or, using Tocqueville's words, "Nothing, at first sight, seems less important than the external formalities of human behavior, yet there is nothing to which men attach more importance.... The influence of the social and political system on manners is therefore worth serious examination" (qtd. in Kasson 3).

I believe that a careful analysis of the issues of social status and civility in The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes can lead to a more comprehensive and accurate interpretation of Howells's genteel or aristocratic ideological preferences, and of his realism as well.

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[3] James Cox is an exception to this rule. While critics have situated the novel in the context of socio-economic critique, Cox in "*The Rise of Silas Lapham*: The Business of Moral and Manners" concentrates on issues of civility and social manners and demonstrates the extent of middle America's anxiety with regard to social mobility. His direct comments on the novel's treatment on art, literature, manners, conversation and housing will help to support my analysis of class markers. Elsa Nettels's arguments about the use of dialect in Silas Lapham and Hsin- Ying Li's general views about the novel's social aspects will also contribute significantly to my study.

Methodology

I intend to begin my study by reading the criticism about The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes and by investigating the class markers found in them. As the political-economic content of Hazard cannot be neglected, I will also investigate its leftist and right wing political approaches. As a second step, I will compare those novels' ideology regarding the aristocratic and egalitarian traditions with the ideology that Howells defends in his non-fiction works, mainly in Criticism and Fiction and Other Essays and in his letters to Henry James collected in Letters, Fictions, Lives. The final step, to be developed in my conclusion, consists in verifying the existence or absence of an aristocratic pull that contradicts the egalitarian principles Howells defends in his criticism about Realism.

Because the analysis of social class and mobility in The Rise of Silas Lapham will be based particularly on class markers, whereas the analysis of A Hazard of New Fortunes will be based both on class markers and political-economic considerations, I will use different trends concerning the definition of social class: the tradition of social stratification and the Marxist tradition. The chapter about Silas Lapham will be entirely supported by social stratification concepts, and the chapter about Hazard will be divided in two parts: the first one, which consists in the analysis of its political-economic contents in the light of the Marxist economic interpretation of class; and the second part, which follows the pattern of analysis of Silas Lapham.

Considerations About The Marxist and the Social Stratification Definitions of Social Class

The definition of social class has been a major issue and a problematic one in classic and modern Sociology. In the works of sociologists and economists there is an incredible multiplicity of definitions of social class, which only adds to the difficulty of using such an expression. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss some of the various uses to which the term has been put by different authors.

According to Boudon & Bourricard, Aguiar and Melnikov, there are two main traditions in relation to this issue: (1) a Marxist tradition, which considers the organization of the means of production as the cause of the existence of classes, and (2) the tradition of stratification, which defines the notion of class on the basis of indicators of status. Neither of them has presented a systematic definition of social class.[4]

As Stavenhagen, (qtd. in Cupertino 22) says, Marx and Engels gave scientific basis to the concept of class and integrated it "as part of its sociological and economical system." For them, the notion of class is defined according to the position that the social agents occupy in the system of production, whereas social classes "are differentiated by the control or absence of control of the means of production and by the possession or not of those means and of the final product" (Aguiar 17). Although their economic theory has deeply influenced the theoretical approaches traditionally concerned with the development of social classes, their concept of class diluted itself and lost its original meaning in the sociology of the second half of the twentieth century (Cupertino 23).

[4] According to Boudon & Bourricard, Marx and Engels's definition of class is non-systematic in the sense that they do not include social agents involved in the relation of means of production who are neither proletarians nor capitalists in any class; and also in the sense that Marx himself distinguishes two classes in The Communist Manifesto, three classes in O Capital, and seven classes in As Lutas de Classes na França, depending on the problem posited and on the public in question (215).

Sociologists contrary to the Marxist definition of class take other criteria than the relation with the means of production into consideration to define social class. Among them, American sociologists and economists influenced by Max Weber, mainly Talcott Parsons e W. Lloyd Warner, have been occupying a position of evidence since the fifties, when they developed the theory of social stratification.[5] Social stratification consists in the study of social hierarchies that characterize the individual of a society. As hierarchy means a "group of people who has the same 'status' or social position" (Aguiar 14), for those sociologists social class refers to a group of people related to and similar to each other in terms of status and who are coordinated or subordinated to other groups of people also in terms of social position. It is important to note that these groups create oppositions to each other and that, within social stratification analysis, the classification of people in social classes serves as a way of excluding people from social interaction (Aguiar 16).

The determination of hierarchies (i.e., status) is based on a set of criteria which is presented differently by many sociologists, such as Talcott Parsons, W. Lloyd Warner, Aguiar, Boudon & Bourricard, and Fairchild. But, apparently the following list embodies all the factors mentioned by them. Warner, Boudon and Aguiar, for example, mention salary, prestige of the profession exercised, family origin, and level and kind of education; Aguiar also refers to social honor--"the value of a person before his own eyes, and before the eyes of society [...] the right to pride" (45)[6]--, esteem, distribution of deference, blood

[5] Weber, the first exponent of the theory of stratification, divided any society into "class," "groups of status" ("estamentos"), and "power strata," represented by an economic order, honor and prestige socially attributed, and political power, respectively. For its followers, the concept of class based purely on an economic order lost its importance before the importance of status to such an extent that, according to Stavenhagen, the concepts of class and groups of status have become synonyms in any kind of stratification (142).

[6] Weber, Parsons and Tumin define the words prestige and social honor as synonyms: obtention of a sufficiently favourable answer for one to obtain goods and services desired to verify the correction of his self-image as someone valuable" (144).

or social purity, ideology, life-style--types of consumed goods and consuming restrictions--, racial characteristics and level of personal prestige--"feeling beyond which some people are admired and envied, while others are treated as if they were nobody" (46). Fairchild mentions family connections, friendship, kind of vacations, political and religious affiliation; Parsons comments on power--a person's ability to influence others and his ability to achieve or guarantee possessions of material and non-material objects, including the qualities of people--(152), and Tumin adds marital status, being urban or rural, and "psychological gratification"--"whatever non-material resource or answer of others that brings happiness, well-being or pleasure" (64).

The fact that all these criteria contribute to identify the social status of groups of people seems enough to explain why the concept of social class has been so controversial in sociological studies. In addition, as Rivière puts it, the literature about stratification has not answered many questions related to the establishment of what the fundamental and the secondary values for a given society are (14). Just as Marx and Engels did not formulate a systematic definition of social class, according to Boudon & Bourricard, sociology's attempt to present a general theory of stratification is predestined to fail (220).

Recognizing the problems of the non-Marxist tradition related to the establishment of an analytic concept of social class as well as the imprecision of limits of class, in what relates to the analysis of class markers, I will nevertheless base my comments on social class (and mobility) on stratification concepts, because they are more efficient to explain Howells's conflict of classes than the Marxist theory. They are so because of three reasons: (1) they sustain an analysis capable of making more subtle distinctions of class than the Marxist discrimination of the two large classes of capitalists and proletarians; (2) they include people's self-classification in society; and (3) they cover the class markers that

underlie my study of Howells's fiction, especially in regard to level and kind of education, social honor, life-style, prestige, family origin and friendship, and on the classification of people by way of exclusion of social interaction.

With relation to the political-economic analysis of A Hazard of New Fortunes, in face of its Marxist content, the Marxist economic definition of class will be adopted to instruct my study.

CHAPTER II

Laughing at the Nouveaux-riches: Class Markers in The Rise of Silas Lapham

After the Civil War, social status dictated Americans' actions, tastes and relationships, and was dictated by severe rules that had the power of classifying people in social classes. In The Rise of Silas Lapham and A Hazard of New Fortunes these class markers play a fundamental role in the understanding of Howells's ideological preferences in relation to the conflict between American democratic and aristocratic traditions. Among other markers, attitudes toward money and money-making, social manners, linguistic refinement and conversational ease, knowledge of painting, architecture, literature, housing and dressing, do not draw the nouveaux-riches and the genteel middle-class together, but emphasize the barriers between them, a fact that helps to point to the novels' nostalgia for aristocratic exclusiveness.

Attitudes Toward Money and Money-Making

In the second half of the nineteenth century, conservative families required abstention from productive work as a prerequisite of high status. With the exception of Tom and James Bellingham, in The Rise of Silas Lapham, the Coreys and their acquaintances have the aristocratic prejudice towards money-making, and believe that in order to be a gentleman, a man should live on inherited money and never enter business. Making money was considered vulgar and speaking about it, even worse. Edith Wharton,

for instance, who in New York, was educated to a world of leisure, had learned from her mother to "never talk about money" and to "think about it as little as possible" (qtd. in Kazin 74 and Kasson 67). It is not surprising, therefore, that Tom, even though ashamed of living upon his father's money and of entering business, when asked about the characteristics that place Silas outside their world, answers that he bragged in a personal way about money (67).

In fact, at the dinner-party, Silas's bragging about the amount of money he would give to charity and about becoming, as he says, "worth a million, and meeting you gentlemen like one of you" (213), causes the genteel and the reader's repulse towards him and testifies that although he can be a one million-dollar man, he will never become a gentleman.

Silas has an initial distaste for the unproductive lifestyle of the Coreys and regards their living upon inherited money as effeminate (Hsin-Ying Li). He would not like to be taken care of like a "young lady" (59) as Tom was, and at the dinner party, he announces his old wish of making a man of Tom. Silas had once considered Bromfield Corey's appearance "everything that was offensively aristocratic" and "had long hated their name as a symbol of splendor which, unless he should live three generations of his descendants gilded with mineral paint, he could not hope to realize in his own" (93). As this last sentence suggests, although Silas denies it, he envies the Coreys' social status, falls in love with it and starts working toward possessing it.

Silas is proud of making his own fortune honestly, and he constantly says that with his money he is no worse than any gentleman. When Persis says that Tom was not arrogant in their first contact, for instance, Silas answers that this was natural because he "could buy him and sell him, twice over" (29), and when Persis says that for a man in the position

of Tom it would not be difficult to get courage to talk to Irene, Silas prohibits her of repeating this insinuation because he is "worth nigh on to a million," and his "girls are the equals of anybody" (159). Persis repeats this justification afterwards: "I don't believe [the Coreys] are [better]; and I don't see why they should be. And there ain't anybody has got a better right to hold up their head than you have, Silas. You've got plenty of money, and you've made every cent of it" (187). Even though Silas initially believes to be the Coreys' equal for being able to buy their style, later on he realizes that his money cannot do so, at least for his generation, and those repetitions of his own value are just an evidence of that. Also, when Silas says to Persis that Bromfield is the pleasantest person he ever saw, the narrator enters into his conscience and says that:

> He was not letting his wife see in his averted face the struggle that revealed itself there – the struggle of stalwart achievement not to feel flattered at the notice of sterile elegance, not to be sneakingly glad of its amiability, but to stand up and look at it with eyes on the same level. God, who made us so much like himself, but out of the dust, alone knows when that struggle will end. The time had been when Lapham could not have imagined any worldly splendor which his dollars could not buy if he chose to spend them for it; but his wife's half discoveries, taking form again in his ignorance of the world, filled him with helpless misgiving. A cloudy vision of something unpurchasable, where he had supposed there was nothing, had cowed him in spite of the burly resistance of his pride. (149)

Melvin M. Tumim presents ways that people use to hide or to avoid a designation of social inferiority, and one of them is to reject the patterns of valorization by which they are judged and substitute them for other patterns (139). In the Laphams' case, they substitute family name, tradition and cultural expertise for money, the only characteristic (with exception of Irene's beauty) they find to exhibit and to make up for their social inexperience. Tumim also mentions the strategies of spending an extraordinary amount of money to buy status symbols, as well as parents affirming that their status is not important,

but the position and well-being of their sons. This last strategy, Silas and Persis use throughout the novel.

It is certain that through the figure of Tom, Howells shows that the prejudice towards business was out of context in a city already living a commercial fate, and that sooner or later the nouveaux-riches' money would be appreciated as if it were old. Even Bromfield recognizes this when he says to Mrs. Corey that "If money is fairly and honestly earned, why should we pretend to care what it comes out of, when we don't really care? That superstition is exploded everywhere (96). Bromfield also comments that "the suddenly rich are on a level with any of us nowadays. Money buys position at once. I don't say that it isn't all right. The world generally knows what it's about, and knows how to drive a bargain. I dare say it makes the new rich pay too much" (65). But he also implies that the understanding of money as "the poetry of our age" would certainly cost for the Bostonian society a "shrinkage in values" (97).

Howells, in a way, identifies with Bromfield's opinions, by giving voice to his ironical remarks towards money. Bromfield says that Tom was insensitive to his examples of European persons that led a life of idleness (98), and that he was afraid Tom was selfish for wishing to do something for himself. Also, with an ironical sigh, he answers to Tom's shame of depending upon him in this way: "Ah, we shall never have a real aristocracy while this plebeian reluctance to live upon a parent or a wife continues the animating spirit of our youth. It strikes at the root of the whole feudal system" (68). In spite of Bromfield's extravagant views, because they are presented with self-mockery, the reader cannot dislike him, but sympathize with his sense of humor.

Penelope and Persis themselves do not object to Tom living upon his father, and Penepole says that if she were a man, she would live just like him (59). In this way, on the

one hand, there is a humorous attack upon the inconvenience of the prejudice towards money-making and, on the other hand, no attack at all upon non-working families. A tone of regret towards the open valorization of money persists.

As pointed by Cox and Furst, moneyed people who wanted to enter fine society had the option of "buying" cultural acquisition, but, as Thorstein Veblen notes, the possession of money itself was not enough to acquire culture. People who wanted to rise socially also must have the "education in taste and discrimination as to what articles of consumption are decorous and what are the decorous methods of consuming them" (32). The Laphams believe the possession of things can hide their social inferiority, but although they meet people who instruct them in the acquisition of culture, they will never reach the cultural level of the Coreys because as the narrator says, "they did not know how to spend in society" (26). Their inability to buy things that would function as status symbols is used by the narrator as a way of signaling his distance from them. He exemplifies their inability to spend "properly" using a tone of condescending irony, which implies that he is in a more advanced social stage than they: The Laphams "had not yet thought of spending their superfluity on servants who could be rung for" (169), and "Lapham had not yet reached the picture-buying stage of the rich man's development" (26).

Painting

The anxiety about social mobility involving the nouveaux-riches and the Coreys comes from cultural conflicts, and one of the greatest aspect of the Laphams' cultural characterization and the clearest difference between them and the aristocrats is their attitude towards art. The Laphams' first indication of artistic ignorance is related to

painting, in the narrator's statement that they decorated their house "with the costliest and most abominable frescoes" (26). Their paintings contrast with the portraits by Stuart Newton, and Copley, the most famous Bostonian portrait-artist of the end of the century, that decorated the Coreys' house. In addition to bad taste, Silas values painting in terms of money. He believes that in order to have a "first-class picture," one needs only to pay the painter enough, as if talent could be bought. Money is the last thing that the Coreys would relate art with, and indeed, Bromfield stops painting because he thought it absurd to sell his pictures and "ridiculous to paint them for nothing" (71). Bromfield's attitude is reflected in the essay "A Man of Letters as a Man of Business," written in 1893 for the literary magazine Scribner's, in which Howells expresses his view about the relationship between money and art. He says:

> I do not think any man ought to live by an art. A man's art should be his privilege, when he has proven his fitness to exercise it, and has otherwise earned his daily bread; and its results should be free to all. There is an instinctive sense of this, even in the midst of the grotesque confusion of our economic being; people feel that there is something profane, something impious, in taking money for a picture, or a poem, or a statue. Most of all, the artist himself feels this. (298)

Silas, as Bartley Hubbard ironically says, proudly "decorated" the landscape with his mineral paint, and his landscape advertisements are the only paintings Silas seems to appreciate. They shock Hubbard and the Coreys because, using Li's words, they symbolize "the worst qualities of a moneyed-class: vulgarity, pushiness, and self-service" (109). In fact, Tom says to his mother that he intends to use his influence with Lapham to "have his paint scrapped off the landscape" (103). The narrator shares the Coreys' view of Silas's artistic ignorance when he ironically says that, at the Coreys' dinner party, Silas "himself

introduced the subject of his [mineral] paint, in a natural transition from pictures [the Coreys' portraits]." (emphasis added)

Architecture

Just like painting, architecture points to the striking difference in the standard of artistic taste between the Laphams and the aristocrats, and Howells repeats the same methods he uses with painting in his treatment of this class marker. The narrator, for example, states that the Laphams "had a crude taste in architecture and admired the worst" (35), whereas Silas thinks that the quality of an architect's work is proportional to the amount of money he receives. This view contrasts mainly with Bromfield's belief that "architects and the musicians are the true and only artistic creators," who create innovative forms, and not imitations of previous ones (198). In addition to those examples, when Silas builds his house in Back Bay, the reader accompanies with amusement the way in which he is lead to accept his architect's project of a house that goes completely against his tastes.

Literature

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a rising level of refinement in literature which followed the standards of Boston and New York emerges in the United States (Kasson 6). The Lapham's story takes place in 1875, when Boston was considered the metropolitan literary center of New England, and as the Coreys share the precepts of this cultural elite, literature, more than painting and architecture, is the type of art that better stresses the Laphams' cultural distance from the Coreys. Howells works with this class

marker throughout the novel, and the reader gets to know the level of literariness of almost every character in a variety of ways: through the narrator's direct comments on the characters' literary knowledge, through the characters' own criticism about novels and comments on the importance of literature, and through their opinions about the reading habit and tastes of other people.

In his first appearance in the novel, Bromfield is reading the literary journal Revue des Deux Mondes, which Howells considered "the highest literary authority in the World" (qtd. in Crowley, *The Rise of...* 383) and to which the Atlantic-group magazines of Boston tended to respond. According to Glazener, these magazines were at the time the greatest literary authority of America; they promoted class-marked[1] kinds of reading and high-literary culture, and had the power to confer distinction on its readers.

In addition to Bromfield's genteel taste, in his conversation with Tom about the "bestial darkness" (120) in which non-literate people live, he says that "all civilization comes through literature," that people must read or "barbarize" (121), calls girls of polite origin who are indifferent to literature "young animals" (121), thinks less of Irene and Penelope when he learns that they read the novels that are talked about in the circulating library, calls the Laphams uncivilized, compares their shrewdness and sensibility with those of the Sioux (121), and asks Tom if at least they have knowledge enough to be ashamed of their ignorance (emphasis added). Li raises the question that through Bromfield's comment that civilization "is really an affair of individuals" (120), Howells denies that the upper class monopolizes civilization and asserts that they welcome the "self-made intellect" (117). But, although some genteel men welcomed the nouveaux riches' effort to become culturally educated, it seems unlikely that Howells believed that good taste of literature

could be taught to the common people. In those times, according to Glazener, literary subtlety and discrimination were considered qualities that could not be taught, but that were naturally inherent to certain privileged classes, and implicit in Bromfield's comments is the idea that those individuals who achieve literariness by themselves are an exception to the rule, just like Howells was. Howells, who suffered a dramatic process to be considered an insider in Boston, rose to literary fame, but his refinement and craftsmanship were justified with the idea of inborn cultivation.[2] (Glazener 46)

Penelope is one of those individuals without polite origin who acquire a taste for books, but Howells presents her level of literariness as being quite distant from the Coreys', as he treats her reading in terms of quantity, and not of quality. The narrator says she had "an odd taste of her own for reading" (27), and Tom says to his mother that that it is Penelope who apparently does the family reading, but he does not "believe that even she overdoes it" (101). Moreover, in spite of the fact that she had read the fictitious novel *Tears Idle Tears* discussed by the aristocrats, and criticised it for being "rather forced" (224), she does not seem to have Nanny's "keen sense of the novels' inaccuracy as representations of life" (160), since she behaves like the romantic heroine of the novel in the triangle affair.

Nonetheless, Penelope's intellect is one of the main reasons why she is worthy of Tom, and one can argue, as James W. Tuttleton does, that through their marriage Howells would be defending American democratic egalitarianism and attacking the rigidity of conservatism. Nevertheless, I believe that he uses literature as class barrier in the novel,

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[1] Glazener also bases her discussions of class on the theory of social stratification.
[2] James Russell Lowell wrote about Howells in The North American Review that Howells was an example of "men who are born cultivated" (qtd. in Glazener 46)

because Penelope's intellect is not enough to make her conquer the sympathy of Tom's family, and Tom's attraction to her is mainly based on her conversational ease and sense of humor.

Mrs. Corey shares Bromfield's views about the importance of literature, and apparently the same prejudices. After listening from Tom that the Laphams seemed to be apologizing for not having more books, she says with scorn: "I dare say they never buy a book. I've met some of these moneyed people lately, and they lavish on every conceivable luxury, and then borrow books, and get them in the cheap paper editions" (102). Mrs. Corey concern with the printing quality of the books is another characteristic of the genteel. In the late century, the publishers saw the necessity of packing high-culture books in luxury bindings in order to mark their status and to establish a distinct market identity (qtd. in Glazener 273), and according to Angel Kwolek-Folland, for both the middle-class and the upper-class books were transformed into a decorative object (29). Paul Finkelman even mentions a manual that suggested ways that a "gentleman might furnish and stock his private library" (10). Howells himself, in a letter to Henry James, wrote that "my library is all in chestnut, with a three-story mantel-piece . . . I try not to be proud" (Anesko 85). As an affirmation of Mrs. Corey's talking, right in the next chapter, Irene tells Tom that Penelope thinks it is "perfectly ridiculous" to have a library at home (117).

The insistence with which Howells works with this marker is surely related to his critical attack on the exaggerated sentimentality of the romantic novels, as many critics agree; but I believe that more than that, he uses literature expertise as a way of excluding the nouveaux-riches' ignorance from the world of intellectual command of the aristocrats.

Manners

In addition to proper attitude towards money, good taste, and artistic refinement, expertise in proper social manners was essential for social success in the late nineteenth century. As the rise of a middle-class urban culture shook traditional notions of social relationships and manners, knowing what was proper was a serious issue for those who wanted to ascend socially; and if fine manners functioned for much of the urban middle class as an instrument of inclusion in the upper ranks of society, at the same time they also served as a protective wall for the upper class who dictated them (Kasson 43). The greatest indication of the Americans' concern with manners is the proliferation, between 1870 and the turn of the century, of books of etiquette addressed generally to middle-class readers who believed and were encouraged to believe that they could purchase proper manners and social respectability. Although, as Kasson argues, these books provided the middle class with standards for socialization, they ended by disseminating, legitimizing, and justifying the authority of the rules of politeness.

Kasson also notes that in spite of focusing on personal matters, etiquette writers, "as believers in progress, apostles of refinement, and popularizers of gentility," found themselves involved in public and political issues (57). They stood between two opposing fronts: Americans with aristocratic pretensions, who regarded American society and republicanism as incurably vulgar and analogous to rudeness; and democratic critics who related civility with aristocratic "snobbery and class interests" (58). Etiquette writers defended themselves as not being anti-democratic, basing their responses on the assumptions that they adopted English old rules to America's republican government and egalitarianism, and that the genteel norms unify people at democracy's service. In propagating the cultivation of civility, for example, they were

both putting the theory of equality into practice, since manners were the "first step to both financial and social success" (68), as well as collaborating for the control of social order, because rules of etiquette were regarded as social laws that taught "each individual his social duties" (62). In the words of an etiquette writer in 1868: "the rules of etiquette are to society what Civil law is to a country" (61).

In addition to these democratic responses, etiquette writers grounded rules of politeness in a moral order. American writers frequently asserted that "morals and manners are one" and this principle remained fashionable during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century (Kasson 116). According to Ellery Sedwick III, for the genteel men of the turn of the century, manners were an outward expression of the inner spirit, and Kasson attests that this argument was present in the etiquette and advice literature of the time. As noted by Veblen, also in popular apprehension, good manners were a sign of a worthy human soul, and for this reason, a breach of decorum touched men with "instinctive revulsion," and was less pardonable than a breach of faith (31). Howells also hints his belief in the inter-dependence of manners and morals in a commentary he gave about the necessity of speaking beautifully to Harper's Bazar: "Manners comprehend speech, and a person's manners, 'if they are bad or null, end in vitiating or vacating his morals'" (qtd. in Nettels 190).

I believe that in what relates to manners in Silas Lapham, Howells comes close to the group of aristocrats who conceive that manners are primary for the control of social order and for guaranteeing social and financial success for people living in a democratic society. He denies, for instance, the unrefined Silas success in both areas and reserves a bright financial future to the refined Tom. Howells also distances himself from the Laphams in the many moments when he complements the presentation of their social

gaffes, uneasiness, embarrassment, and feeling of inferiority with the narrator's innuendo in a tone of mockery.

The Laphams imitate the Coreys' secure dominance of social manners at the cost of much material and psychological tension, and at the same time that the Coreys' manners exert a powerful attraction upon them, their admiration is mixed with anxiety about living up to the standards of fine society and the fear of their inaptitude to doing so (Li 106). Howells works so insistently on the Laphams' rude manners, anxiety, and embarrassment that he even makes the reader feel ashamed for them, and maybe wish for their separation in order to spare them from anguish and shame.

Within social stratification concepts, being urban was a basic requirement for ascending to the upper ranks of society, and for the Laphams' misfortune, they are the representatives of the American rural type, as the interview that opens the novel indicates. Silas talks ungrammatically and sentimentally about his life at the farm and about his whole family, and transgresses urban manners. He compliments Hubbard with his left hand, does not maintain an adequate physical distance from him, and uses his feet to point at casks of paint and to close the door. In addition, as John Seelye puts it, Silas' name means "man of woods," and Lapham alternatively pronounced is similar to laughter (58).

Still in the interview, Howells reinforces his indelicate manners by calling attention to the size of his foot, to his "large head," "hairy fist," and "massive shoulders." This physical description continues throughout the novel and is exclusively directed to Silas, which suggests that more than a neutral characterization, it is a way of relating his physical awkwardness and lack of elegance with his personal abruptness. In addition to the fact that being fat was itself a signal of lack of elegance, it would be

unimaginable that the Coreys would have been portrayed in Silas's brutal appearance (Dimock 83). Bromfield's appearance is described in a kind way: He is tall and slim, has long and limber fingers (149), characteristics Howells related to aristocracy, and "his skin had the pearly tint . . . and the lines which time had traced upon it were too delicate for the name of wrinkles" (95).

Like Silas's physical characterization, his rude ways continue to be his mark, and although his entire family does not share the social customs proper to the aristocrats, the examples of social gaffes are mostly related to him. The examples are many times followed by the narrator's innuendo, which signals his distance from Silas's incivility. Silas leaves the dinner party, Rogers, and his house without any salutation, "as his custom often was" (339); and in the dinner party he compliments people asking "What name?", an attitude the narrator ironically explains: "He did that because a great number of man to whom he had been presented on the platform at a public meeting had done so to him, and he knew it must be right" (195).

Their rural ways are exposed sarcastically especially during the preparation for the dinner party and in the dinner party itself. This fact is particularly relevant because, according to Kasson, at the end of the century, dining was the most honorable and elaborate ritual of the home, and dinner-parties were considered by social conservatives as the highest social compliment (200). Offering a dinner-party required economic and cultural competence, and formed a social bond between the hosts and the guests. Kasson explains that "the elaboration of structure and the celebration of hierarchy in the meal itself certified diners' own place in the larger social hierarchy" (207). For both middle and upper classes, the preparation of table was a high art that expressed an educated sensibility (Kwolek-Folland 29). Being so, it is not without reason that when Bromfield

gets to know that the Laphams had never offered a dinner, he says probably in mocking hopelessness: "Horrible! How is society to assimilate them?" (143)

The Laphams' realization of the confrontation with the Coreys' refinement causes so much desperation in them that this prepares the reader for the vexation of the dinner itself. In the Laphams' indecision about whether Silas should or should not wear gloves, for example, we perceive Howells to be making fun of them. After perspiring during the debate with his family, Silas "formulated and repeated over to himself an apparently careless question , such as, 'Oh, by the way, Corey, where do you get your gloves?' . . . But Lapham found that he would rather die than ask this question" (189). After so much suffering about the matter, Silas "desperately" decides to wear them and in the dinner-party, after spending five minutes in putting them on, when he sees Tom is not wearing it, he takes them off "with as much indifference as he could assume" (194). Afterwards, "pallid with anxiety . . . , giving thanks to God he should have been spared the shame of wearing gloves where no one else did, but at the same time despairing that Corey should have seen him in them, had an unwonted aspect of almost pathetic refinement" (194).

As the Laphams' entry in fine society is the real business of the book, the dinner party is the crucial moment of the story, for it puts the Laphams into various social tests regarding their command of manners, good taste, artistic sensibility, intellectual dominance, and good conversation--tests that many times are presented with a comic tone. The dinner involves great emotional stress, and results in Silas's realization that he should break connections with them.

Howells opens the dinner party chapter saying that all the Corey's residence "wears an air of aristocratic seclusion," which already suggests the tone of what is

going to be not a dinner for the Laphams, but a "Lapham dinner," using Bromfield's expression (176). They turn out being the food, just like Anna and Bromfield had planned, and worse, they naturally played the perfect hosts and did not force their uneasiness. The Laphams have done everything by themselves. It would take a lot of lines to describe all their gaffes, but the two following ones exemplify the way in which Howells enters into Silas's conscience to make fun of his social insecurity.

Not knowing that social performance is most demanding at table and that the maxim of the refined was "You're how you eat" (Kasson 193), Silas becomes relieved when he "[sinks] into his chair," for he feels he would be "safe from error if he kept a sharp lookout and did only what the others did." He thus imitates Bellingham putting his napkin on his collar and when he perceives that only Bellingham did so, he "became alarmed and took it out slyly" (196). Then, when the ladies leave the men alone for coffee, and the men stand up for them,

> Lapham started to follow Mrs. Corey, but the other men merely stood in their places, except young Corey, who ran and opened the door for his mother. Lapham thought with shame that it was he who ought to have done that; but no one seemed to notice, and he sat down again gladly, after kicking out one of his legs which had gone to sleep. (206)

When Silas is drunk, he loses his embarrassment, but this turns out to be even worse, since he behaves so vulgarly that not only the aristocrats, but also the reader feels embarrassed for him (Cox 123). The next day, Silas concludes what everybody had already concluded: that he would never be part of the Coreys' society. He apologizes to Tom in a "savagely abrupt way," which is the ultimate indication that he will never be able to join the world of the aristocrats. Silas's shameless confession of

shame drives the final wedge between himself and the reader, who sees that even sober, he does not understand proper behavior (Seelye 56). Howells relies on Silas's social gaffe to emphasize the existing social barrier between his family and the aristocrats.

If the insistence on examples and comments are not enough to indicate that Howells distances himself from the Laphams, then at least, as Cox argues, there is something about the Laphams Howells is embarrassed by (127).

Like Silas, the women are aware of lacking refinement and are afraid of being looked down on the aristocrats. The girls did not finish their education because "they were afraid of being snubbed by the other girls" (33), they are ashamed of Silas's bragging to Tom, and Penelope confesses to Tom to be afraid of his family (370). Mrs. Lapham "was forced to a confession full of humiliation" (31) of not knowing how to invite people for the girls to become socially active because, as she says, she is a country person who has kept her country ways, and at the same time that she regrets their social isolation, she opposes to Silas's proposal to build at Back Bay because she is afraid of changing their way of life. Persis and the others' fear is not without foundation.

At the same time that the nouveaux-riches suffer the fear of entering high society, they constantly admire the aristocrats' refinement, and cannot deny the delicacy of their ways. For Silas, the relationship with Tom "was one of the sweetest flavors that he had yet tasted in his success" (93), and Persis, in the first meeting with the Coreys, considers them the nicest people she had ever seen because "they had about the best manners . . . and knew everything" (29). She explains to Silas he cannot make the advances to the Coreys because he does not know what to do and what to say in society, does not have the education they have, and has "different" brains than theirs, if not "less" (123). In a way, the nouveaux-

riches' admiration justifies the aristocrats' feeling of superiority. Their admiration and exclusion confirm Howells' statement that

> it is certain that our manners and customs go far more in life than our qualities. The price that we pay for civilization is the fine yet impassable differentiation of these. Perhaps we pay too much; but it will not be possible to persuade those who have the difference in their favor that this is so. They may be right; and at any rate the blank misgiving, the recurring sense of disappointment to which the young people's departure left the Coreys is to be considered. That was the end of their son and brother for them; they felt that; and they were not mean or unamiable people (374).

As Seelye remembers, Howells offers the possibility of a union between the Laphams and the Coreys only to refuse any likelihood between them. In the end, the Laphams are not accepted in society, and Silas "is put where he belongs--back in nature" (63), where, as Howells puts it, "the Colonel was more the Colonel." There, his hubris of thinking he could relate with his social and intellectual superiors can express itself (Seelye 54).

One could argue that manners are not as important in the novel as a differentiation of class, since Tom decides to ask Penelope's hand right after Silas's humiliating apology to him. This however is not the case. Initially, as Seelye says, Tom's behavior can be considered a flaw in the decorum of realism because his feelings of disgust toward Silas and of class superiority unexpectedly and unrealistically change to his wish to get married. But this change is twice strategic to the plot: Penelope's reluctance to stay with Tom will lead to the novel's critique on the bad influence of romantic novels; and, through their union, Howells shows that, although Tom has less prejudice towards the nouveaux-riches than his family, the Laphams's manners do not allow the romantic subplot to end happily. The couple is put in a kind of social limbo (Seelye 61),

and Penelope is not totally incorporated in society. She receives only courteous tolerance from his family, and goes to Mexico in her "painful pleasure," crying on Tom's shoulder (Dimock 85). Even for Silas and Persis, as Howells says, the marriage "brought . . . none of the triumph" because it "came after so much sorrow and trouble, . . . so much misgiving for the past and future."

> Adversity had so far been his friend that it had taken from him all hope of the social success for which people crawl and truckle [...] Neither he nor his wife thought now that their daughter was marrying a Corey; they thought only that she was giving herself to the man who loved her. (372)

Tom and Penelope's happy ending is measured with pain, and such measuring was typical of the realistic novel's great concern with the "economy of pain," which, translated in Reverend Sewell's terms, leaves one suffering instead of three. Such economy of pain fits Howells's belief that the task of the realistic novel is to portray "human feelings in their true proportions and relation," and indeed, in The Rise of Silas Lapham, pleasure and pain give the characteristic balance of the realistic narrative. In this way, this realistic preoccupation with positing equivalence overshadows the romanticism of Tom's turnabout and Penelope's response to it, at the same time that it does not dismiss the importance of manners in the novel (since it provides a half happy ending).

At the turn of the century, manners were regarded as a sign of morality. Following this belief, an analysis of the moral ethics of the novel, which for many critics is the strongest characteristic of the novel, can lead to the conclusion that in the end, Silas becomes a gentleman because of his moral responsibility to himself and to the business society.

Silas is a dedicated husband and father, helps Zerilla and her mother, and is portrayed by Hubbard as "one of the nature's nobleman." But more than these characteristics, it is the moment when he has to choose between a connivance with Rogers to get economic salvation and between his moral damnation that his humanity is emphasized. As Patrick Dooley points out, Howells declared that he intended to make of Silas's rise a moral one (80). He is not portrayed as a typical unscrupulous capitalist of the time, but as a man who suffered from a guilty conscience for having built his fortune by expelling Rogers from the paint business when it was promising to bloom. Silas sees himself drawn in a business system whose ethics favors malevolence and implacability with economic, political and social success; but he does succumb to that system's laws and prefers losing his fortune and his position to erase his previous "business sin" from his mind. As John O'Hara sees it, Silas's moral resentment is his denial to be subjected to capitalism's excesses; and according to Pizer, Silas uses the economy of pain formula in opting to behave on behalf of society as a whole, rather than on individual need. For Pizer, Silas weights his own, Roger's and their families personal needs against the greater need of all men for decency and honesty.

Some critics argue that Silas's moral rise was not exactly a rise. Paul A. Bové and O'Hara say that in his moral agonies Silas and Persis are a reflection of the ascetic type appropriate to the country and collapsed values of "learned and prideful Puritanism." Bové even calls attention to the fact that, in the end, Silas becomes a kind of comic figure, uncertain of the motives of his acts and understanding only that he would again prefer to ruin himself and his family than to wrong the interests of others (41). O'Hara mentions that in his rougher appearance, Silas is a type of religious eremite.

Crowley and Li, based on Dooley's "Nineteenth Century Business Ethics and The Rise of Silas Lapham," argue that Silas's rejection of Rogers's proposition of selling his worthless land to the Englishmen and not worrying about any subsequent transaction was exaggeratedly scrupulous and realistically incompatible with the age of Robber Barons and Captains of Industry. For them, Roger's reasoning was faithful to the precepts of limited moral duty and would be seen by contemporary readers as ethically acceptable.

Even though Bové, O'Hara, Crowley (*The Rise of* ...) and Li seem to ignore Dooley's information that Howells had Silas's moral rise in mind, I would take their point of collapsed Puritanism and exaggerated scruples to say that although Silas rises morally, and is referred to as a "gentleman," this does not diminish the gap between his family and the aristocrats. It is true that according to the sociological view of class, being called a gentleman would correspond, to the nouveau-riche man, to a rise in the social ladder. However, Silas does not rise socially because his good manners are limited to the business sphere, and as Bromfield explains to Tom, "society is a different sort of thing from good sense and right ideas." That is the reason why Silas "isn't to [Bromfield's] taste, though he might be ever so much to [his] conscience"(67). Howells questions the nobility of Silas's attitude by saying that "[a]ll those who were concerned in his affairs said he behaved well, and even more than well, when it came to the worst" (103), and also by saying that Silas did not mention anything about Rogers and the Englishmen to anybody because he did not care to have Bellingham, or anybody, perhaps think he had been a fool" (365). The aristocrats do not get emotionally involved with Silas's moral drama: When Silas tells Bellingham he had a chance of selling half of his business to the New York man but that he had to tell him about his competitors,

Bellingham does not see "till afterwards the full significance of Lapham's action" (365); and at best, he "gives Silas high praise for behaving 'like a gentleman where [his own] interest is vitally concerned'" (Li 115). Tom's family was proud of Silas, but Bromfield in his condescending posture finds a "delicate, aesthetic pleasure in the heroism with which Lapham had withstood Roger's and his temptations --something finely dramatic and unconsciously effective" (373).

Although Silas changes from a situation of laissez faire individualist to a businessman motivated by Christian charity, his and his family's qualities consist of their moral characteristics only, while two members of the aristocracy are irreproachable both in terms of manners and morals: Tom and James Bellingham, who do not share the sense of superiority, "airs" and concern with appearances of Tom's family.

Through the portrayal of the characters' manners and consciousness, and the commentaries that follow it, as well as through the end attributed to the characters, Howells is more inclined to the aristocrats than to the nouveau-riche businessman. As Li explains it, "as much as the novelist sympathizes with Silas's native innocence, he fears that renunciation of social manners will result in the ignorance of civilization" (118); or using Howells own words, he fears that one "cannot behave rudely without ultimately becoming at heart a savage" (qtd. in Nettels 188).

Conversation -- "A Grammar of Classes"

According to Nettels after the Civil War, the issues concerning theories of language and its usage were the most diffused subjects in the United States. The leading magazines, including The Atlantic, whose editor was Howells from 1871 to 1881, published many

articles about language and counted on contributions of readers about questions such as: Which language should be written and spoken in America? Who should control language? Are British and American one or two languages? Does the use of dialect in literature promote class spirit, or is it democratic, as Howells affirms in "Criticism and Fiction?"[3] Language was seen as a "means of social advancement and a test of social fitness," and for this reason had implications in social intercourse. Proper speech was vital to polite behavior and Americans who wanted to ascend socially read books of etiquette that typically contained chapters on "Proper Speech" and "The Art of Conversation." Habits of speech were, above certain tastes and manners, regarded as "the surest test of a gentleman." Nettels even mentions that some writers used to compare language itself to a social order: accepted words were members of good English society; everyday words, respectable but inappropriate in poetry were respectable citizens who did not belong in "the most select circles;" new words of uncertain status were immigrants seeking admission and citizenship; and undesirable words were criminals, tramps, usurpers (18).

For Nettels, the aspect of life that most interested Howells was the nature of language and the speech of American people. But she sees Howells as an author whose use of American language and speech is contradictory, for he defends the use of dialect and of "a good natural English" to unite different people of the country while using language as class barriers in his fiction. Howells defended that the standard language of America should be the natural good English, which consists in the fusion of literary English with spoken language, and which is "to the last degree informal and to the last degree refined" (qtd. in

[3] Howells idea of realism is based on the belief that people are bound to each other by their humanity, and he believed that dialect promoted a spirit of national unity by showing people that under different conditions, human nature is always the same. For him, in every distinctive feature of a particular culture that dialect reveals, there is always hidden some universal of human nature (Nettels 104).

Nettels 25). Through it, he defends a simple style that goes against the artificial style of "book English" and its verbal inflation and euphemisms. Actually, Howells often defended Realism in terms of language, and his "natural good English" is a reflection of the idea that language should be used in a way that testifies reality. In "Criticism and Fiction" he claimed that the realist writer must "try to tell just how he has heard men talk" (12) and not "put on fine literary airs," but "speak the dialect, the language, that most Americans know--the language of unaffected people everywhere . . . " (51). But, if in his criticism he identified Realism with democracy and defended that literature should promote national unity and the egalitarian aims of American people, in his private life and fiction, these beliefs fall into contradiction. Howells advised his family to study grammatical rules more carefully, and hated some words and expressions common to the uncouth. In his fiction, according to Kazin, Berthoff , Pease, and Nettels, he adopted the conventions of the "genteel" tradition. Henry James calls him a "master of certain refinements of style," and shares James Russel Lowell's appreciation of the "fastidious purity of his style" (Anesko 16). According to Nettels, Howells preferred contractions but "did not write an essay with all the contractions used in speaking, . . . objected to inversions such as 'protested the man', 'ungainly' and 'not modern' and criticized himself for using them in The Rise of Silas Lapham" (26); and his novels are filled with sentences ending with prepositions.

For Nettels, The Rise of Silas Lapham is Howell's work which mostly determines the decisions and attitudes of its characters by language, since its characters reveal themselves and their social conditions by their speech, and since their speech creates barriers and exposes unbridgeable gulfs between them. Howells transforms the characters'

different use of language into "class dialect"[4]; which is understood as speech characterized as non-standard, standard, and cultivated (according to the presence of errors in morphology, grammar, and pronunciation) and which classifies people as semi-cultured, pseudo-cultured, and cultured.

An analysis of the characters' class dialect, of their voice and intonation, of their incapacity to communicate and to understand others more complex sentences, and of their valuing of good conversation, as well as the narrator's attitude towards their level of linguistic refinement, reveals that conversation is what definitely separates the Laphams from the Coreys.

Howells portrays the dialect of the Laphams with all their errors, but, throughout the novel, he uses different strategies related to language use which mark their speech as inferior and signal their inferior status. Through the use of italics, innuendo and parenthetical clauses, the narrator informs their deviations from grammar and pronunciation, their country expressions, and their abrupt way of talking. In this way, he signals that his speech is different from the non-standard speech of the nouveaux-riches. While the narrator distances himself from the Laphams, we can also perceive the novel's penchant for the Corey's dialect when Howells endows Bromfield with ironic remarks, and marries Tom with Penelope, the only one who passed through the "test of talk," using Nettels's expression.

The first aspects to be noted are the Laphams' ungrammatical talking and the fact that while Howells features Silas's, Persis's, and Irene's vernacular in a way that exposes a certain crudity of bearing in them and calls familiar stereotypes to the reader's mind, he

[4] Term borrowed from George P. Krapp (qtd. in Nettels 105).

does not do so with Penelope, who is already put in the upward social ladder. Silas says "wn'nt' ," "I dunno," and together with Persis says "I thought I *should* die," "I want you should," which is an expression of country people who instead of expressing desire in the form of a wish, do so as a moral imperative (Cox 121). In addition to recording their dialect forms with insistence, Howells marks some of their errors with italics, and directly calls attention to their ungrammaticality, saying that Silas "laps[ed] more and more in his vernacular" (135), that "at times the Colonel's grammar failed him" (39), and that Irene's talk "was very unliterary, and its effect seemed hardly conscious" (137).

The rendering of their colloquialisms and the narrator's comments on it are most marked in the first half of the novel, before the dinner-party, when it is necessary to portray the irreconcilable differences among the two families. When Silas becomes drunk, Howells does not transcribe his vernacular anymore because his manners, what he says and reveals to feel are enough to make the reader and himself accept their separation as "proper" (Nettels 149).

The Laphams converse without reflection, in short and simple sentences, and are unable to form and understand complex sentences correctly. Their vocabulary is limited, and they always repeat some words that, to Nettels, do not belong to the genteel repertoire: They call the drawing-room, "sitting-room," and constantly say "I declare...", (including Penelope) "I guess," and "I presume." Silas has the servile habit of repeating the word "sir" to everybody he addresses to (yes sir, no sir, well sir); and like Persis, he uses the expressions "Here!" and "There!" to begin his sentences, to change the subject and to protest, which more than lexical poverty, reveals an abrupt way of talking.

Howells calls attention to the couple's abruptness all through the narrative in the form of authorial innuendo: "'Here!', said Lapham, with the same prompt, gruff

kindness" (19); "'Do you want to leave?', he asked, with savage abruptness" (217); "'Who is takin' that way?' retorted Lapham savagely" (242); "[Lapham] savagely resented his wife's interference" (294); "'Irene!', she said harshly" (251).

As Nettels suggests, at the same time that these remarks emphasize their vernacular and signal their inferior status, they serve to distance the narrator from the characters, a thing Howells does more efficiently by occasionally inserting a parenthetical clause to imply he does not speak as the characters do (Nettels 137). To illustrate: "Corey had not been in this room before; the family had always received him in what they called the sitting-room" (222); "They liked to have it, give and take, that way, as they would have said, right along" (38); Silas "liked to knock off early, as he phrased it." Nettels explains that "[b]ecause nothing that any of the Coreys think or say is branded 'as he would have said', 'as they phrased it', the reader assumes that they and the narrator adhere to the same standard, from which any deviation is a mark of inferiority" (149). It is as if the narrator invited the reader to watch with a pleasant sense of detachment the crudities of the socially inferior.

Like her family, Penelope talks ungrammatically, but "she is betrayed by none of their rusticisms, which would disqualify her from marriage into the Corey family" (Nettels 146). On the contrary, she has "achieved the stage of mimicking Silas," she has the capacity of "mak[ing] fun of nearly everything" (27), and she first attracts Tom by her talk. Penelope has still another quality: She can engage in different conversations because she always finds something to say about different issues. In relation to the triangle affair, for example, she dominates the conversation and consequently controls the situation (Li 111). Although Penelope's humor is "perhaps too unlike their own to be easily recognizable" (374), and she tells Tom that his family would not want her as his

wife because they do not understand her way of talking, Bromfield "made a sympathetic feint of liking Penelope's way of talking."; a sign that she has passed the "test of talk", since with his frequent ironic remarks on his own position, Bromfield dominates the level of conversation in the novel. This quality of Penelope is of great advantage to her, because for the aristocrats, good conversation was fundamental. Just as an illustration, according to Frank Norris, Howells was "especially fond of good talk" (qtd. in Kirk 276). Bromfield reflects the importance of good conversation when, in his self-satire he says:

> The whole Lapham tribe is distasteful to me. . . . I ask myself, what have I done nothing for, all my life, and lived as a gentleman should, upon the earnings of somebody else, in the possession of every polite taste and feeling that adorns leisure, if I'm come to this at last? . . . It wasn't their behavior . . . but their conversation was terrible. Mrs. Lapham's range was strictly domestic; and when the Colonel got me in the library, he poured mineral paint all over me (277-8).

Likewise, Lily and Mrs. Corey's criticism about Irene is restricted to her "extremely limited" range of things to say (164), and, in the end, the narrator sympathizes with them when he says that Tom's marriage had not, "thanks to an overruling Providence, brought the succession of Lapham teas upon Bromfield . . . and neither Lily nor Nanny Corey was obliged to sacrifice herself to the conversation of Irene" (374).

It is thanks to Penelope's sense of humor and to her "conformity to the Corey's way of speaking" that she enters in their world. As Li says, "[l]ove can prevail over social differences, but the new arrivals must first win the hearts of the natives, possibly only by adopting a socially approved style" (119)-- in Penelope's case, conversation dominance and reading habit.

Bromfield's ironical remarks are another indication of Howells's sympathy for the aristocrats. In giving voice to his ironical remarks about his own life of leisure, Howells

creates a relationship of sympathy between the aristocrats and the narrator, who is a great ironist himself.[5] In addition to that, his irony reveals his conscience of making part of a social class that is dying, as well as his self-mockery of being in such a condition. Through this, Howells is making a big claim for the Coreys, because the self-mockery underlying his ideas and opinions suggests that his snobbishness is not base. As Tuttleton notices, although Bromfield likes to remember that "we are Essex County people, and that in savor we are just a little beyond the salt of the earth" (68), his irony undercuts his wife's view of their high social position. His "snobbishness, in a less whimsical man, would be vicious. We cannot help liking him, however, for the self-mockery underlying his most serious but extravagant opinions" (Tuttleton 113).[6] The narrator explains that Bromfield is a "sympathetic humorist who would be glad to have the victim of the circumstance laugh with him, but was not too much vexed when the victim could not" (276).

The Coreys' irony is related to a form of social power that the aristocrats exert upon the families of nouveaux-riches businessmen: their power of speech, that is, their ability to hold and manipulate a conversation with nimbleness and in their facility to talk ironically and sometimes without saying anything. Contrary to the Laphams' engagement in "no conscious ambiguity or play on words," the Coreys's conversations "often circle around the subject, imply rather than state their meaning" and are enriched with "polite formulas

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[5] Both the narrator's ironic remarks on the Laphams's country ways and Bromfield's remarks on his own position imply their superiority to the nouveaux-riches on status grounds. Irony has often been seen as the trope of the intellectual and the upper classes, for it suggests mental alertness and sophistication, a "doubting mind," and to some theoreticians, a certain degree of leisure, ease and security (Hutcheon 123). In this way, Howells includes the narrator and Bromfield in a same social order at the same time that he differentiates and excludes the Laphams --who are insensitive to irony-- from their community.

[6] Bromfield's self-deprecating use of irony involves duplicity and signals his self-doubts: at the same time that irony may point to a sense of self-negation (and perhaps to his reluctance to assume superiority), it can also hint at an indirect self-promotion, in the sense that he excuses his snob views with the justification that he does not really means what he says.

by which feelings are masked or simulated" (Nettels 124). The narrator himself explains part of this power of speech, in a sentence that implies his superiority for the mere fact of his being able to make such observation:

> If the husband and wife are blunt, outspoken people like the Laphams, they do not weigh their words; if they are more refined, they weigh them very carefully, and know accurately just how far they will carry, and in what most sensitive spot they may be planted with most effect (50).

The best examples of their power of speech are the consequences that the brief visit of Mrs. Corey has on Penelope and Persis. In her condescending posture, Anna makes them feel very bad in a conversation that was apparently a pleasant one. After the introduction, Penelope sits down "indolently submissive on the surface to the tests to be applied" (170), and afterwards tells Irene she made herself as hateful for Mrs. Corey as she made herself to her, cries and runs upstairs. Persis, as Anna later reports to Bromfield, was "extremely embarrassed and excited" (174), and "declare[s, she] never felt so put down in [her] life for anybody" (184).

Persis and Penelope are too innocent to understand the subtleties of Mrs. Corey's attitudes, and that is the reason why they also do not understand the purpose of Mrs. Corey's dinner invitation, made right on the same day of her visit. They can only conclude that they must have mistaken her reserve for hostility (Li 106). Incited by Bromfield, Mrs. Corey proposes the dinner-party counting on Silas's impropriety to end with Tom and Penelope's affairs. Tom is kind of mistrustful of his mother's idea, and when he asks her not to invite them, she had already done so, foreseeing this would happen. She is not sorry for disappointing Tom because, as the narrator says, "it was

quite time that he should think seriously of his attitude toward these people if he had not thought of it before" (182).

Although Mrs. Corey generates in the Laphams an uncomfortable feeling, instead of making them indifferent to her or depreciating her, they feel elated by her approximation and even more desperate to fit in her family customs, as the anxiety involved in all the family preparation for that dinner reveals.

Once again, fear is mixed with admiration. On the one side, just as they were apprehensive about the aristocrats' manners, they are afraid of entering into their conversation; and on the other side, they envy their conversation ease as they do their other cultural possessions. But unlike dressing, housing and manners, they cannot buy nor imitate conversation.--"They talked of people mostly, it astonished Lapham to hear with what freedom they talked" (202).

The best translation of their fear consists of their preference for being silent when among the aristocrats. When Persis hears from Anna that her family has "*all* been very kind" to Tom, for example, she "redden[s] once more, and murmur[s] that it had been very pleasant to them, she [is] sure" (172); and although she had read that she should communicate Penelope's absence for the dinner, she does not do it because of not "know[ing] how to get in" (190). In relation to Silas, when Tom tells him that Mrs. Corey was glad about their presence, "Lapham was very short with him. He said yes, he believed that Mrs. Lapham and the girls were going. Afterward he was afraid Corey might not understand that he was coming too; but he did not know how to approach the subject again, and Corey did not, so he let it pass" (188). At the dinner-party, whenever Silas wants to speak, "before he could get the courage to address the whole table," somebody talks first, or are entertained in another subject. Twice Silas manages to speak, but says

only a sentence and stops suddenly, letting "all wait[ing], as if expecting him to speak" (207).

The most interesting and ironical part is that when Silas is drunk and talks all kinds of improprieties, Howells humorously gives him a chance to experiment the sensation of talking like the Corey's circle, and to feel important for doing so!

> He was himself conscious of having talked very well. He now wore an air of great dignity, and, in conversing with the other gentlemen, he used a grave and weighty deliberation. . . . As he cast off all fear, his voice rose, and he hammered his arm-chair with the tick of his hand for emphasis. Mr. Corey seemed impressed; he sat perfectly quiet, listening, and Lapham saw the other gentlemen stop in their talk every now and then to listen. After his proof of his ability to interest them, he would have liked to have Mrs. Lapham suggest again that he was unequal to their society. . . . He did not understand why young Corey seemed so preoccupied . . . At last he had the talk altogether to himself; no one else talked, and he talked unceasingly. It was great time; it was a triumph. (211-2)

According to Nettels, within the late nineteenth century concern with language, pronunciation, voice and intonation were also seen as markers of social fitness, and there was a general sympathy for British standards. Despite some leading American observers' claims that upper class English should not be the arbiters of language, they, including Howells, joined the British complaint of the "nasal twang and the harsh tones" of Americans' "strident, high-pitched, unmodulated" voice (Nettels 45). Nettels also mentions the case of American ladies who returned from England pronouncing like the English.

Howells, following his general treatment of the Laphams' speech, calls attention to wrong pronunciation of words and harsh tones. Silas, as the greater representative of his family's rusticisms, is more exposed to the narrator's innuendo. His rusticisms are more present during the interview, like the following: " 'And when I got the first coat

on',--Lapham called it *cut*;" "'pass you over the road',--he called it *rud*;" "'Your mother does'. He said *doos*, of course;" "[h]e accented it [peroxide] as if it were purr-ox-*eyed*; and Bartley had to get him to spell it." Silas also answers "'No-o-o-o', with a long, loud drawl ," and swells out a "No, sir" to Tom, among other examples.

Contrasting to his father stridency, Penelope in addition to attracting Tom with her Wild West humor (Li 111) has a "slow, quaint way of talking, that seemed a pleasant personal modification of some ancestral Yankee drawl, and her voice was low and cozy, and so far from being nasal that it was little hoarse" (39).

The fact that Penelope's voice, grammar and intonation are different from her family is an indication that the portrayal of the characters' speech does not have the function of enriching the characters' traits. It instead functions as another way of establishing their place in the social scale. Actually, from the analysis of the Laphams' and the Coreys' speech, it is possible to conclude that Howells's use of dialect reflects class spirit, and not his preoccupation in showing that people are like one another independently of their speech. While the speech of the Coreys is never commented upon, the description of the Laphams' particularities of voice and intonation, rude way of speaking, and errors of grammar and pronunciation are many times accompanied by a tone of mockery, which registers that their vernacular is not only different from the Coreys', but inferior to it. Moreover, the use of italics and parenthetical clauses, reveals the narrator's wish of showing that his speech is different from the Laphams and similar to the aristocrats; and his option for one of the dialects presented also implies that this is better than the rejected one. Whether Howells did so unconsciously or not, the portrayal of the Laphams' deviations from the standard does not appear as a neutral

characterization of their speech, but as a way of inferiorizing them, of signaling their inferior status, and of increasing the distance between them and the Coreys.

Housing

By the late nineteenth century, according to Furst and Kasson, the house itself and its objects assumed a greater semiotic significance in defining and revealing personality and in stabilizing more formal social relationships. As the center of private life, the style and refinement of their façade and interior were the proof and shelter of gentility. Andrew Downing, for example, an influential American landscape architect, said that "Much of the character of every man may be read in his house" (qtd. in Kasson 169), and many others shared his conviction. Howells himself seemed to be particularly interested about his residences when he comments about them in two letters he sent Henry James: "I've found an apartment in two floors, in a huge old house overlooking Livingston Place, where we shall dwell in some rooms of rather a European effect. (I have mainly in mind a metal-framed mirror)." "The house we have was the home of a granite quarry magnate..." (qtd. in Anesko 272, 357).

In accordance with this view, Silas's two houses stand for more than simple buildings. While the Nanqueen Square house reflects their lack of good taste and simplicity,[7] the Back Bay house is what Cox calls the "expansive embodiment of [their] upward social mobility" (119), for its burning before it is completed and just

[7] When Mrs. Corey asks Tom "What sort of people do they seem to be at home?", he says that "there was everything in the house that money could buy. But money has its limitations;" from what she answers "Yes, there is a point where taste has to begin" (102).

after the insurance has lapsed, represents the burning of Silas's dream of rising socially and the punishment for what was already called his hubris. Howells does not sympathize with the Laphams both for burning their house, and for making the narrator share the Coreys' impression of the Laphams' bad taste.

Among all parts of a house, especially after the mid-nineteenth century, the drawing-room became the most undeniable declaration of its owners' culture, taste and artistic sensibility. It was furnished as a "carefully elaborated social statement" with the best furniture and objects of decoration, and in it, the demands of polished performance were most exacting because it was the setting for a variety of social functions, such as formal calls and visits from friends, teas, small concerts, and engagement parties (Kasson 174).

Maybe this is why Bromfield, who up to now had only mocked the Laphams through irony, after Tom and Penelope engagement at the Laphams drawing-room, does not resist an open joke at them and says to Anna: "that drawing-room! Really I don't understand how Tom stands that. Anna, a terrible thought occurs to me! Fancy Tom being married in front of that group, with a floral horse-shoe in tuberoses coming down on either side of it!" (361) That group consists of white marble statues "expressing an Italian conception of Lincoln Freeing the Slaves" that the narrator presents in a detailed description of their drawing-room. The narrator shares Bromfield's debauchery when he says that at that same occasion, Penelope after letting the Coreys "have the full brunt of the drawing-room," enters there and sees his father "sitting . . . a little tilted away from the Emancipation group, as if he expected the Lincoln to hit him with that lifted hand of benediction" (360).

As the narrator uses the same objects of the house that had been just chosen by Bromfield to mock the Lapham's rusticity, he clearly reveals that he shares the Coreys' taste, and what is most important, he legitimizes Bromfield's right of mocking the Laphams on the basis of their taste.

Dressing

In matters of dressing, Howells's inclination toward the aristocrats' side is more evident. Just like the narrator's direct comments on the Laphams' bad taste concerning painting, architecture, and decoration, he says that Persis "spent on rich and rather ugly clothes" (26), and that "if [Irene] dressed well, perhaps too well, it was because she had the instinct of dress" (28). The narrator also makes fun of their anxieties about dressing properly, not only for the dinner-party, but also when Tom overhears Persis "engaged in a moral contest" with Silas about him putting or not a coat on (154). Moreover, when Silas and Tom are on the boat heading to Silas's house, the narrator steps outside the story to give his own opinion about the Americans' clothing in comparison to the English:

> The women were dandified in dress, according to their means and taste, and the men differed from each other in degrees of indifference to it. To a straw-hatted population, such as ours is in summer, no sort of personal dignity is possible. We have not even the power over observers which comes from the fantasticality of an Englishman when he discards the conventional dress. In our straw hats and our serge or flannel sacks we are no more imposing than a crowd of boys. (82)

In crediting himself with the authority to comment on the dressing habits of American people, the narrator marks his command on the issue, thus giving credibility to his judgements on the Laphams' bad taste.

Final Remarks

A reading of the criticism about The Rise of Silas Lapham and about Howells's works in general, suggests that critics take Howells's defense of the democratization of literature, which is the basis of his criticism, to interpret his fictional works as democratic, or using Howells's words, as works that seek to "widen the bounds of sympathy and "proclaim the equality of things and the unity of men."

Although his thoughts of brotherhood, liberty and equality, as well as his discontentment with the aristocratic view of literature are expressed in "Novel Writing and Novel Reading", Letters, Lives, Fiction, "Criticism and Fiction" and in many other essays initially published in North American Review, Century, Forum, Atlantic Montly, Harper's, among other magazines, these essays and especially Letters, Fictions, Lives, also reveal that his personal life and writing style are admittedly guided by genteel tastes, as it has been exemplified within the analysis of the class markers. Howells himself admitted to be contradictory when self-defined "a socialist in theory and a democrat in practice" (qtd. in Nettels).

Recognizing that neither his private life nor his criticism are enough to denominate his novels as democratic or "aristocratic," I believe that in The Rise of Silas Lapham

Howells inclines for the tastes and principles of the Bostonian aristocracy represented by the Coreys, and for their defensive reaction against social change.

In terms of plot, Howells's penchant for the aristocrats is related to the Laphams' passion for the Corey's secure social dominance and their struggle to be like them, to Silas's social and financial failure, and to Penelope's uncertain social position. In relation to the narrator's attitude towards the characters' social characteristics, there are different strategies with which he mocks the Laphams and distances himself from their gaffes and abruptness: The narrator makes direct comments about their bad taste in painting, architecture, literature, dressing, and complements the presentation of their country manners, eating habits, artistic ignorance, housing, dressing, and conversation with innuendo in a tone of mockery, just as he does with their anxieties and embarrassment. He voices Bromfield with ironical remarks towards his own and the Lapham's social position; shares Bromfield's mockery of the Laphams drawing-room; distances himself from the Laphams' bad speech and abrupt way of talking by marking their grammar and pronunciation errors with italics and parenthetical clauses, implying that he talks differently from them; and, finally, gives his own opinion about the importance of manners, about dressing, and also about the perhaps "uneffaceable" (373) differences between them.

It could be said that in comparing the aristocrats' secure social dominance and cultural superiority with the nouveaux-riches' vulgarity and effort to be accepted in society, Howells was just being faithful to the reality faced by the nouveau-riche businessman, who had emerged as the dominant reality of the country, and that he was promoting his democratic ideals by portraying a society that denies social equality. But, as the narrator isolates himself from the Laphams by mocking them and showing he is different from

them, I would say that he expresses a longing for their values and shares Bromfield's fear that the businessman would bring a shrinkage in the old values of the country.

CHAPTER III

New Social Antagonisms: Class Conflict in A Hazard of New Fortunes

A Hazard of New Fortunes is a novel in which Howells changes his happy portraiture of a democratic society to a criticism on the miseries of living in an industrial environment under competitive capitalism, a change that for many critics, like Kazin and John W. Crowley (*The Unsmiling Aspects*), is a result of Howells's growing awareness of the country's tremendous differences between rich and poor, of his involvement with socialist politics, and of his conversion to the Christian Socialism he absorbed from his readings of Tolstoy. In the preface to the novel, Howells mentions that it reflects his concern with the "humaner economics," the dreams of social justice of Henry George and Edward Bellamy, and the "bombs and scaffolds of Chicago," comments, however, which do not necessarily imply a defense of the socialist theories that were beginning to be discussed by the intellectuals of the time.

The novel questions if such theories could provide ameliorative plans to social inequality, but its socialist content is basically a call for the free expression of socialist ideas, or whatever political thought the country could face. In other words, it constitutes a "democratization" of ideas in America, and Howells's criticism on what Louis Hartz calls Americans' ideological isolationism, i.e., Americans' tendency to transform any ideological pression from without into heresy, danger of subversion, and threat to their fundamental belief in the Lockean democratic liberalism.

Two years before the publication of the novel, Howells himself criticized America's isolationism when in the New York Tribune he protested against the execution of seven eminent anarchists of Chicago, and risked his position as novelist and editor of Harper's. As Howells told a friend, he did so because it was not their supposed bombing of the Haymarket Square that was on trial, but socialism (Crowley 81).[1] In 1912, he confirmed his objection in a paper offered to Harper's as a personal reminiscence of the early days of their relationship, and not as an essay to be printed in its wholeness. He wrote that "it was wrong to hang five men for a murder never proved against them, because they were violently spoken enthusiasts" (qtd. in Kirk 380). Thimothy L Parrish take this well-known episode into consideration to stress Howells's leftist tendencies, but, as Crowley remembers, although Howells demanded justice for the anarchists, he never committed himself to their cause, but distanced himself from those who considered them revolutionary martyrs, in order to demonstrate his aversion to political extremes and also to "defend bourgeois interests in which he ha[d] a stake" (*The Unsmiling Aspects* 84). Howells felt uneasy about labeling his political beliefs as socialist, because Americans often related socialism as an attack upon their religion, freedom and prosperity.

Howells's connection with socialism was rather vague. To Kazin, he had no will toward socialism and no social program to embrace, and in The Liberal Tradition in America, to exemplify America's rejection to Marxism, Hartz mentions that when Howells said that it "smells to the average American of petroleum [meaning the bad odor], suggests

[1] In 1886, the police intervened in a clash between strikers and scabs, beating several workers and shooting, at least two fatally. The next day, in the Haymarket Square of Chicago, several workers, labor organizers, and political radicals were protesting against police brutality when a bomb exploded, killing seven policemen and wounding some workers. Seven well-known anarchists of Chicago, whose presences at the square were not even proved, faced the death penalty for the crime. As remembered by Parrish, with exception of one anarchist condemned, the others were Europeans, and their execution served as an excuse to attack the rising

the red flag, and all manner of sexual novelties, and an abusive tone about God and religion," he had even the enthusiasts of his fellow Edward Bellamy in mind (243).[2] Also, in a letter to his sister, he wrote that anarchism doctrine was "unthinkable" to "plain common sense" (qtd. in Crowley *The Unsmiling Aspects* 85).[3]

Howells's non-real attachment to the Marxist theories as well as his involvement with the free expression of the Chicago anarchists are well transposed to Hazard's protagonist, Basil March and to his relationship with the German socialist Lindau. When ordered by the owner of the literary magazine to fire Lindau, March, the editor, believing the reason of the dismissal was Lindau's political opinions, refuses to do so and stands by him saying that if Lindau leaves, he will leave the magazine too, because he does not want to cooperate with the disrespect of the Americans' guarantee of free expression. Besides risking his job, Basil does not interfere with his son Tom's contact with Lindau's ideas, because he thinks that it is better to let him find by himself if they are false, either because "it will be good exercise for his faculties of research [or because, since] those things are getting said nowadays; he will have to hear them sooner or later" (254). March pities Lindau for being so much stuck to his "peculiar opinions" (309), tells Conrad he does not agree with them (303), and assures Isabel he "shall not let [Lindau] array [him] with the constituted authorities" (255); but he also says to Fulkerson that whatever they think of his ""brinciples,"" they're "bound to respect his fidelity to them" (279).

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tide of immigration served as an excuse to attack the rising tide of immigration and labor reform, considered two connected movements (102).

[2] According to Kirk, during 1889,1890,1891, Howells attended the Society of Christian Socialists, inaugurated in 1889 by a famous Christian Socialist episcopal priest. Howells frequently met with Bellamy, Laurence Gronlund and others, at the church in Boston, to discuss the "new economic and social ideas in the light of Christianity" (249).

3 During the eighties and nineties, with exception of few Americans, people mixed the term socialism with communism and anarchism. (Crowley)

A socialist or not, it is possible to see that, as a result of Howells's growing political consciousness, different from The Rise of Silas Lapham, in A Hazard of New Fortunes, the theme of social mobility and social status shares space with political considerations. In it, many characters with different and opposing political ideas, all newcomers to New York City, are gathered around a literary magazine, which suscitates discussions not only about Christian and Utopian Socialism, but also about Liberalism, hatred of the commercial spirit, labor unions, slavery, the collapse of religious doctrines, and the conflict between the world of letters and the realities of the literary market, among others.

Modern industry and its impact upon the social structure of class in America are at the back of such discussions, and this is a reflection of the Marxist struggle between capital and labor, and of his view of capital, machine and free competition as exploiting and slavering forces. This view is fully shared by Lindau, whose main idea of American capitalism is best translated in the following assertion of the Communist Manifesto: "In the same proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion as the proletariat, the modern working class, developed--a class of laborers who live only so long and they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital" (26).[4]

This thematic shift between the two novels, mainly the incorporation of the proletarian element may be surprising if one considers the short period of five years that separates their publication. However, The Rise of Silas Lapham takes place in 1870, when

[4]It must be remembered that within the analysis of such political-economic contexts, the Marxist classification of people into bourgeosie and ploretariat cannot be left aside. So that now, within the economic concept of class, the novel's nouveau-riche businessman and its genteel and ordinary middle-class characters become part of a same social class (the bourgeoisie); while in the sphere of social status they continue to make part of different social classes. As status questions will be eventually mentioned in this first part of the analysis, for the matter of clarity, I will continue to use the terms "genteel middle-class" and "upper middle-class" to designate those characters who make part of that cultural stance which follows aristocratic traditions. (Even though some writers use the term bourgeosie to refer to the cultural gentry, in the literature of the time and about the time, those terms have been usually preferred).

American society was still adapting itself to the figure of the industrial businessman. In 1890 though, New York was a big industrial city and its politics and economy were completely on the hands of the businessman; so that if he was still not well seen by the genteel middle class, he had not to ask permission for entering high society anymore. Still, in spite of his political corruption, he was regarded by most of the middle-class as a national hero. Moreover, the mid-eighties can be regarded as a particularly agitated moment within American history, since it witnessed various political movements that generally enforced laissez-faire economics, but that also brought counter-movements and the need of innovative ways of experience, like the growing popularity of socialism among intellectuals during the eighties and nineties. Some manifestations are: the formation of the American Federation Labor in 1886, the publication, in this same year, of Christopher Tiedman's A Teatrise on the Limitations of Police Powers in the United States (which articulated laissez-faire principles and attacked socialist evils), the Haymarket bombing, and the railroad strikes of 1887 (Thomas 19).

Within this shaky industrial reality, the conditions of life and political position of the American people is understood by Richard Hofstadter, and Sedgwick III in the following way: Farmers and workers of industry were living a great economic tragedy and their struggles against money and monopoly were futile; captains of industry were arrogant, cynical, and cautious in business and politics; and they confidently justified their corruption with their belief that their actions would bring great dimension and good to the country[5]; the middle-class was left in an apprehensive and fearful state in face of the growing of the

[5] "Exploiting workers and milking farmers, bribing Congressmen, buying legislatures, spying upon competitors, hiring armed guards, dynamiting property, using threats and intrigue and force, they made a mockery of the ideals of the simple gentry who imagined that the nation's development could take place with dignity and restraint under the régime of laissez-faire"(Hofstadter. 164).

trusts and of labor and populists movements, and watched the explosive increase of the mass' poverty and of slums with a mix of disgust and shocked sympathy. Meanwhile, the remaining cultural gentry found business and money-making sordid and politics dirty[6], and were increasingly antagonistic both to the socio-economic elite of wealthy businessman and to the working classes, especially to the immigrant worker, whom they linked to the urban misery and political corruption of the time[7] (Wrobel 57).

As Hazard deals with this new and political-economic panorama, its characters are not only upper middle-class citizens concerned about the maintenance of their aristocratic status (as Mrs. Horn and Isabel March are), but mainly politically-oriented middle-class characters now placed in an uncomfortable position between the wealthy businessmen and the working classes. So that, in addition to a German socialist, the novel presents Colonel Woodburn, a Southerner trying to prove in a book that only slavery could solve labor problems; Fulkerson, a "representative of the business sense of the North believing "in free speech and all that, but [wishing to see the socialists] shut up in jail and left to jaw each other to death" (74); Miss Vance, a member of New York's highest circles corresponding to working women and promoting a strike of button-hole workers; Jacob Dryfoos, a real-state speculator describing his business transactions as "dog-eat-dog;" Conrad Dryfoos, a humanitarian who regards rich men as bad, but on Christian terms; and Basil March, the center of conscience of the novel, and to Harmon, a typical American liberal who

[6] According to Hofsdater, the most sensitive members of the cultural gentry made their careers in other ways, escaped abroad, and plunged into academic. But he also mentions the appearance in politics of some men of that class; "scholar-in-politics" as he calls them, who were disgusted to see rich Americans representing the country political type. Theodore Roosevelt, who had "leisure class background and tastes', when decided to enter politics, heard from his genteel friends, that politics were a "cheap affair run by saloon-keepers and horse-car conductors shunned by gentlemen."

[7] By the late 1850, an estimated three quarters of New York's population lived in slums (Kasson 78), and at the turn of the century, 77% of New York's inhabitants were first- or second-generation of immigrants (Sedgwick III 55).

occasionally identifies with the economic doctrines mentioned above but is unable to decide for any of his mixed affiliations and rejects them all. March's general feeling about those theories is a mixture of curiosity and dissent, as it can be noticed in the description of the members of the magazine he gives to his wife:

> I don't believe there's another publication in New York that could bring together [...] a fraternity and equality crank like poor old Lindau, and a belated sociological crank like Woodburn, and a truculent speculator like old Dryfoos, and a humanitarian dreamer like young Dryfoos, and a sentimentalist like me, and a nondescript like Beaton, and a pure advertising like Fulkerson . . . (281) .

Indeed, just as Basil does not agree with Lindau's ideas, he says that Woodburn's theories are "impracticable" and listens to his talk with "patience;" thinks Fulkerson's standards are "low [because they are] merely business standards" (310), sees Miss Vance as a mixture of "society girl and saint;" and pities people like Dryfoos for being the American hero.

> I don't know just the point he's reached in his evolution from grub to beetle, but I do know that so far as it's gone the process must have involved a bewildering chance of ideals and criterions. . . . He must have undergone a moral deterioration, an atrophy of the generous instincts, and I don't see why it shouldn't have reached his mental makeup. He has sharpened, but he has narrowed; his sagacity has turned into suspicion, his caution to meanness, his courage to ferocity. That's the way I philosophize a man of Dryfoos'experience, and I am not very proud when I realize that such a man and his experience are the ideal and ambition of most Americans. I rather think they came pretty near being mine, once (193).

March does not agree with the other characters' theories, but admits the need of a government devoted to the general interest and not to special interests; nonetheless, he is not really involved with the poor to look for a new theory. Instead, when commenting on

the chaos of the city, he denies moral responsibility and escapes such reasoning by ironically arguing with Isabel that it is useless to share all they have with the poor and to settle down among them (57), and that there is not any real suffering among them because they have got used to it. Both Isabel and March laugh at his saying that "when people get used to a bad state of things they had better stick to it; in fact they don't usually like a better state so well, and I shall keep that firmly in mind" (60). It may be interesting to note that in 1887, Howells admitted that he couldn't imitate Tolstoy's renunciation of luxury and superfluity: "I don't see how it helps", he wrote to his father, "except that it makes all poor alike, and saves one's self from remorse" (qtd. in Crowley *The Unsmiling...* 86).

Basil's failure to finish his sketches about life in New York City can also be interpreted as a sign that he is not sufficiently sympathetic with the suffering he witnesses in his customary strolls. Basil refuses to sentimentalize about his views of the city and limits to view it with an aesthetic point of view only. He sees the dirtiness and multiplicity of cultures not as a member of it; but as an appropriator who investigates the people without really getting involved with them. As Alan Trachtenberg says, Basil and Isabel are free to let themselves go beyond the city's "line of respectability" they had mentally drawn, but they do not want to identify with the strangeness of the city (qtd. in Parrish 108).

March expresses the theory that Americans live in "an economic chance world" whose implications to America's theory of equality are tragic. Competitive capitalism and its old-economic individualism produce "sharply divided classes of rich and poor" and result in a struggle for survival governed only by chance and compatible to the law of the jungle. Economic individualism has transformed America into a land of "survival of the fittest," where the winners are those who have the strongest economic and political power. As noted by Taylor, constantly, thousands of workingmen can be unexpectedly fired and

condemned to survive without any support of the employer or the state (97). March complains to his wife:

> But what I object to is this economic chance world in which we live and which we men seem to have created. It ought to be law as inflexible in human affairs as the order of day and night in the physical world, that if a man will work he shall both rest and eat, and shall not be harassed with any question as to how his repose and his provision shall come. Nothing less ideal than this satisfies the reason. But in our state of things no one is secure of this. No one is sure of finding work; no one is sure of not losing it. I may have my work taken from me at any moment by the caprice, the mood, the indigestion, of a man who has not the qualification for knowing whether I do it well or ill. (380)

For Taylor, through March's voice, Howells suggests the replacement of the capitalist competitive struggle for survival by a collective economic thinking; by Utopian socialism in which government should control production in the interest of all representing the will of the majority expressed by suffrage. But, as Brook Thomas says, Howells does not dictate rules for an equitable social order because he perceives that a balanced exchange among individual members of society is virtually impossible in an economic world of chance. Indeed, some lines later, March blames the conditions of a selfish consumeristic society for the suffering of the people, but he also admits that he will teach his children "the superstition that having and shining is the chief good, . . . for fear they may falter in the fight when it comes their turn and the children of others will crowd them out of the palace into the poorhouse" (381). As Charles Harmon says, March is attached to the public ideal of equality, but also to the private project of self-development (192).

March seems to be part of a bourgeoisie whose attitude toward the proletariat can be characterized within the Communist Manifesto's terms, as "Conservative, or Bourgeois Socialism," i.e.:

> A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society. . . . The Socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting from them. They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. . . .
>
> A second and more practical, but less systematic, form of Socialism sought to depreciate every revolutionary movement in the eyes of the working class, by showing that no mere political reform, but only a change in the material conditions of existence, in economical relations, could be of any advantage to them. By changes in the material conditions of existence, this form of Socialism, however, by no means understands abolition of the bourgeois relations of production, an abolition that can be effected only by a revolution, but administrative reforms, based on the continued existence of these relations . . . (43).

In the same way of March, Hazard's bourgeois characters (captain of industry, upper-middle class who live on inherited money, and middle-class), talk about the problems of the working classes, but, with exception of Miss Vance and Conrad, do not consider themselves morally responsible for them, do not perceive the necessity of fight between the proletariat and the captains of industry and do not help the proletariat to improve its condition.

This is best seen in their different responses to the strike of six thousand street-car workers that happens in the end of the novel. Beaton gets angry for having to walk five blocks and wants to see the strikers shut; Jacob Dryfoos and Fulkerson say the roads "were merely asserting their right to manage their affairs in their own way" (355) and think the strikers should be put down with an "iron hand." But while Fulkerson is actually interested in the novelty of the strike, Dryfoos is strongly revolted against the "pack of dirty whelps" who want to rest from work, get drunk and rob houses (363). In the celebratory dinner, they had already amused themselves with their report on the way Dryfoos fired all his laborers who tried to form a union "to keep up wages and dictate employers" (295). Contradicting these three characters, Lindau's, Miss Vance's and Conrad's hearts, using

Conrad's expression, are with the strikers, whom they pity for "risking all they have for the sake of justice" in a strike that is useless before the power of the companies. However, Lindau's radicalism and the others religious beliefs fail to solve the social conflicts dramatized by the strike (Thomas). In Vance's view, they are "heroes" in a hopeless cause (366); and Lindau, who is clubbed when protesting police brutality in a riot involving the strike, dies as a consequence, and is indirectly responsible for Conrad's death. Their deaths can be regarded as an indication that Lindau's utopian socialism and Conrad's humanitarianism are too foreign to American reality; and it is interesting to note that Miss Vance, who is also at the side of the strikers, is presented as a sort of an idealized and mystical figure whose mind has gone beyond earthy reality. She becomes a sister whose looks exalt spirituality (406) and is described by Isabel as "a strange being, such a mixture of the society girl and the saint" (377).

With regard to Basil's attitude, he does not put himself in the place of the roads or the strikers, but in the place of the public whose rights are completely ignored. "The roads and the strikers" he says, " are allowed to fight out a private war in our midst . . . and to fight it out at our pains and expense, and we stand by like sheep and wait till they get tired. It's a funny attitude for a city of fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants" (356). In addition to that, Harmon argues their belief that Howells created March to express his own liberal economic philosophy precisely with the moment when March and Tom discuss about Lindau's death in the riots involving the streetcar strikers. March, answering Tom if Lindau died in "a bad cause," says that yes, he died in "the cause of disorder," because those who "renounce the American means as hopeless and let their love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence . . . are wrong." By "American means" he means conquering anything they want by voting, provided they "don't buy and sell one another's votes" (393). As Harmon points

out, at the same time that March rejects Lindau's radicalism and defends the ideology of individual freedom ("in spite of the boy's perception that the maintenance of such freedom depends upon the near enslavement of many"); he questions democracy through that conditional clause, letting pass an attitude of skepticism toward political codes of the American constitution" (191).

In the end, it seems that March shares Tom's general ideas towards Lindau and the country social problems, which Tom translates as the following: "I don't like the way he talks about some things. I don't suppose this country is perfect, but I think it's about the best that there is, and it don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time" (260). March is proud to have him saying so, maybe because, using Harmon's words, like all liberals, March does not believe in the American social structure but instead of wanting to change it, he is dedicated to its reproduction (192).

Indeed, to Michael Anesko and Berthoff, Howells demonstrates an unwillingness to show remedies to social inequality; to Kazin, the characters of his social novels testify against the established order but do not revolt against it; and according to Crowley's and Harmon's critical reviews of the novel written in 1996 and 1997, respectively, critics also say Howell's fiction enforces the status quo. They have read Hazard "as evidence of Howells' bourgeois and/or reactionary" tendencies and of his attachment to pre Civil-War culture of moral correctness, hard-work and consistency; which made him incapable of adapting his characters minds to a post Civil-War culture of secularism, consumerism, pleasure-orientation and unpredictability. But Harmon also points out that, like himself, some critics see Howells's clinging to genteel values as the "expression of his ironic awareness that" those two kinds of culture were inextricably inseparable (186).

Critics like Crowley, Anesko, and Nettels mention Basil's autobiographical character; for Howells gives him "his own antecedents, tastes, ambitions, witty style, and moral principles, as well as his divided sympathies toward aristocratic tastes and democratic feelings (186). At the same time that Basil praises his social distinction, he congratulates himself upon the "democratic instincts" that make him sympathetic to the "good causes" and do "full justice to the good qualities" of less refined people (24). Isabel also resembles Howells when the narrator says that "as a woman she was naturally an aristocrat, but as an American she was theoretically a democrat" (253). While this characterization of the Marches leads to Howells's self-definition of being a practical aristocrat and also to the fact that the whole nation is democratic in their traditions but not in principles and practices (Nettels 142); it is also true that it carries the ironic narrative distance that, for Nettels and Crowley, Howells maintains throughout the novel. Howells's irony perhaps consists in the novel's (subtle) critique on the Marches' awareness and acceptance of such a contradictory position, and also on the upper-classes lack of real involvement with the "socially and financially destituted," using Wetmore's expression. The narrator says, for instance, that the couple did not "suppose that they were selfish persons," and believed that "if it had ever come into their way to sacrifice themselves for others, they thought they would have done so, but they never asked why it had not come in their way" (24). In spite of Howells's ironic criticism on the Marches, we cannot say that he is looking down on them because, in the development of the narrative we also know that the Marches are aware of their isolation and contradictory position and that just like Howells, they are ironic about them too, mainly Basil. Walking through the city, for example, March, "professe[s] himself vulgarized by a want of style in the people they met," and demands of Isabel: "Take me somewhere to meet my fellow exclusives, Isabel. . . . I pine for the society of my peers"

(261). Their self-irony puts themselves closer to the narrators' irony, and reflects the fact that like Howells, they are liberals who are "dedicated to the reproduction of a social structure that they cannot truly respect" (Harmon 192).

Harmon, explains that March is a liberal by taking the connection between irony and liberalism traced by the philosopher Richard Rorty, who states that the desire to be rich or powerful or aesthetically distinguished can never be reconciled with the desire for social justice. "According to Rorty, people who recognize that they are irremediably attached to diverging ethical ideals become what he call 'ironists'; they become people who are 'never quite able to take themselves seriously' because they are 'always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves' " (190).

Final Remarks

To conclude, in Hazard, Howells transposes the new conditions of life generated by the realignment of the country's economy in the hands of self-made industrial capitalists (Dryfoos) and corporations (railroad), and questions to what extent free capitalist enterprise was responsible for the threat of American individualism and equality of opportunity, for the increase in the barrier between rich and poor, and for the moral decay of men as well. It also questions each man's limit of responsibility for economic inequalities.

Considerations about these questions are all presented by the privileged consciousness of March, who recognizes that unlimited free agency legitimates the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a few millionaires, the

control of the subsistence of whole groups of workingmen, as well as the disregard with the hardships of the population. March sees the need of a collective way of thinking while however, disclaiming the propertied and well-established with any need of feeling guilty, and of compromising with sharing their goods. He defends people's right for "shining" and comfort, perpetuates the liberal ideology of free agency, the political thinking of the conservatives; and he believes that no new political thought and revolution will change the struggles between capital and labor and the economic disparity of classes. The "need of failures, or frauds, or hard times," as he proudly listens from Tom, have always existed and will always remain. Such fatalistic attitude to social inequality is, for Bercovitch, typical of American liberalism, which "sustains itself by deferring, rather than resolving contradictions" (qtd. in Thomas 318). Although March pities people like Dryfoos being the ideal of man in the country, he does not blame Dryfoos's political thinking, but his truckling and tricking, his getting his money on "speculation and all a schemer's thrift from the error and need of other" (168); and March's antipathy to him, one could say, also comes greatly from his social rudeness.[8]

[8] It is interesting to note that like Dryfoos, who "since 55 voted for every Republican President" (274), Howells remained always loyal to the Republican Party.

Analysis of the Class Markers

Although up to now the analysis of class in terms of social status has been abandoned in favor of an analysis of economic classes, it must not be understood that the new conditions of life in the United States diminished the importance of status in the late century. To Thomas, the period's realignment of economic power brought a revaluation of status, but outside the economic sphere status continued to govern American life. During the eighties, the cultivated classes' hierarchy of social and ethical values (plain living and high thinking) was widely recognized and seldom challenged (Sedgwick III 53). Accordingly, in addition to its social problems, A Hazard of New Fortunes also deals with the captain's of industry's threat to the manner in which status used to control middle-class relations; and although the class markers that differentiate Hazard's characters are not so rich as in The Rise of Silas Lapham, the novel's question of social status is not unimportant in comparison with its political and economical concern. If Howells recognized its relation to the economic and political happenings of the time, in 1887, he wrote to Samuel Clemens about his wish of writing about the Cincinnati booming of natural gas industry and the transformation of farmers into entrepreneurs who have "come to New York to become part of Eastern society;" a happening he had witnessed (Crowley *The Unsmiling* ... 98).

The extent to which status still governed the sphere of life in the great industrial cities is well explained by Brook Thomas in his American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract, in which he relates literary realism with legal contract, which expanded so rapidly during the late nineteenth century that this period is seen by legal

historians as "The Age of Contract". Contract[9] was seen as a guarantee of individual autonomy, and according to laissez-faire theorists, it carried the promise that an equitable social order could be constructed on the basis of interpersonal exchanges [i.e., contractual relations], and not on the basis of status. William Graham Sumner, conservative defender of contract, in 1883 boasted, "In our modern state, and in the United States more than anywhere else, the social structure is based on contract, and status is of the least importance" (qtd. in Thomas 2). Nevertheless, for Thomas, contrary to its promise of social equality, contract legitimated social and economic inequalities mainly because for a contract to be enforceable, the people involved in it must formally sign the exchange of obligations, and in this way, in order to spare the anxiety over whether or not the parts will keep their promises, personal relations and status were greatly taken into consideration.

So that, for Thomas, contrary to laissez-faire theorists of the late century, American society's move from status to contract was not complete; and even "Sumner himself implicitly admitted status's persistence when he noted that 'in a state based on contract, sentiment is out of place in any public or common affairs. It is relegated to the sphere of private and personal relations, where it depends not at all on class types but on personal acquaintance and personal estimates'" (3). Classical liberalism replaced status by contract only in the economic sphere, but even so, the role of status in the marketplace was not completely abolished from consideration. In other spheres of action (social, domestic, political) status continued to "receive natural legitimation" (37).

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[9] "[M]utually agreed upon exchange of obligations that, as the word's roots imply, draws people together". Ordinary people of the late nineteenth century were fascinated by the "idea of contract as a mode of social organization in which people freely bound themselves to others by binding themselves to the fulfillment of obligations" (Thomas 1).

Thomas advocates the idea that, contrary to Sumner's belief that the economic success of a man dictates his social status and not vice-versa--implying that economy is what dictates the structure of class in society--,it is a mistake to think of class only in terms of economic interest, because as noted by Karl Polanyi, "[p]urely economic matters such as affect want-satisfaction are incomparably less relevant to class behavior than questions of social recognition.... The interests of a class mostly refer to standing and rank, to status and security; that is, they are primarily not economic but social" (Thomas 4).

In A Hazard of New Fortunes, questions of social mobility are more restricted to the self-made millionaire Jacob Dryfoos, and to his family's confrontation with the Boston-bred Isabel and Basil March; and with Mrs. Horn and Miss Vance, members of the city high circles and the counterparts of the Coreys. Dryfoos, backer of the new magazine, came to New York to spend his money made in natural gas and real estate and to "get his daughters into the old Knickerbocker society" (78); but similar to Silas, he does not succeed in his plan. His wealth and the social help of a native of Brooklyn could not change his daughters country ways (and character), lack of education and manners; so that the Marches, Mrs. Horn and Miss Vance found it difficult to "maintain congenital relations" with them. Nevertheless, in the end of the novel the Dryfooses go to Europe, where one of the girls marries a penniless noble man and the family gains the social success denied in New York.[10]

[10] As the analysis of class markers excludes the novel's political ideologies, the economic distinction of class (and the term "bourgeosie") will be abandoned in favor of the sociological distinction. As already seen in chapter two, even though, from an economic point of view, the businessmen are at the top of society, they are part of a group of people who have cultural hegemony, and so, they can be referred to as a particular social class –the class of nouveaux-riches-- who is not at the top of society, from the perspective of social stratification.

Again Howells writes about the hardships faced by new-businessmen in America; and both the Dryfooses and the Laphams's destiny is well explained in Howells's review to Veblen's The Theory of the Leisure Class published in the magazine Literature nine years after the publication of Hazard.

> The man who makes money in a small town goes into the nearest large town to spend it – that is, to waste it; waste in some form or other being the corollary of wealth; and he seeks to marry his children there into rich and old families. He does this from the instinct of self-preservation, which is as strong in classes as in individuals . . . The Chicago, and San Francisco, and St. Louis, and Cleveland millionaires come to New York with the same ambitions and purposes.
>
> But these are all intermediate stages in the evolution of the American magnate. At every step he discovers that he is less and less in his own country, that he is living in a provisional exile, and that his true home is in monarchical conditions, where his future establishes itself often without his willing it, and sometimes against his willing it. The American life is the life of labor, and he is now of the life of leisure, or if he is not, his wife is, his daughters and his sons are. The logic of their existence, which they cannot struggle against, and on which all the fatuous invective of pseudo public spirit launches itself effectlessly, is inter-marriage with the European aristocracies, and residence abroad. Short of this there is no rest, and can be none for the American leisure class. This may not be its ideal, but it is its destiny (qtd. in Kirk & Kirk 341).

After being offered to work as the editor of the magazine in New York, Basil and his family reluctantly leave Boston, motivated by the possible realization of his literary ambitions and by a 100% increase in his ex-insurance business salary. Although in Boston they lived in an unfashionable neighborhood, and Basil had to work to "provide well for his family," they maintained the aristocratic tastes they had formed in Europe and even though they had "not always been able to indulge [them] . . . , they felt that the possession reflected distinction on them" (22). They do not regard themselves as ordinary middle-class and as Nettels remembers, in Their Wedding Silver Journey, Isabel had eight generations of New England ancestry" (98). The children were preparing to enter

Harvard[11]and Papanti's dancing academy[12], shared their parents prejudices against the "hideous" New York, and lived in a house decorated with good pictures and many expensive books. Isabel counted with three servants, Basil accompanied critically the literary controversies, and both were amused with their sense of superiority and had to struggle with the idea of adapting their Bostonian provincialism and social recognition to New York's impersonality.

But, if initially New York's "quality of foreignness" (256) was regarded by them as a defect, it ended by being their greatest source of pleasure. They begin to prefer New York to Boston, and when Basil is in risk of losing his job, they are grieved with the possibility of going back to Boston because it "isn't like home anymore" (308). Before the "heterogeneous gaiety of New York," Isabel is afraid of Bostonians' Puritan mask, "the cast of a dead civilization, which people of very amiable and tolerant minds were doomed to wear" (267).

New York's "immunity from acquaintance," "its touch-and-go quality, [its] almost loss of individuality at times, after the intense identification of their Boston life, was a relief, though Mrs. March had her misgivings and questioned whether it were not perhaps too relaxing to moral fiber. March refused to explore his conscience; he allowed that it might be so, but he said he liked now and then to feel his personality in that state of solution" (257).

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[11] Harvard was one of the greatest Boston institution of high culture which from the Civil-War on, disseminated its "Brahmin-inflected version of elite leadership" more broadly, and whose intellectuals were "framed in terms of 'gentility' and 'geniality'" (Glazener 53). Its high status made any of its students socially distinguished.

[12] Lorenzo Papanti, expatriate Italian nobleman, privately instructed the children of the social élite (Crowley *The Rise of*).

Just like March refuses to "explore his conscience," the novel does not provide a clear answer for the dangers of too much relaxation. As Henry B. Wonham remembers, at the same time that the narrator presents Beaton, the only New Yorker of the novel as destituted of moral fiber, Miss Vance is "a mixture of saint and of the society girl"; and in describing the climate of ease characteristic of Miss Vance's meetings, he calls New York's impersonality as "wholesome":

> There was great ease there, and simplicity; and if there was not distinction, it was not for want of distinguished people, but because there seems to be some solvent in New York life that reduces all men to a common level, that touches everybody with its potent magic and brings to the surface the deeply underlying nobody. The effect for some temperaments, for consciousness, for egotism, is admirable; for curiosity, for the hero worship, it is rather baffling. It is the spirit of the street transferred to the drawing room; indiscriminating, leveling, but doubtless wholesome, and witnessing the immensity of the place, if not consenting to the grandeur of reputations or presences. (209)

Taking such illustration of New York's impersonality into consideration, it may appear that the whole system of social status that governed the inter-personal and social relations in the Laphams' Boston does not exist anymore in the New York of 1890. However, it must be also pointed out that in this same description of Mrs. Horn and Vance's house, the narrator is referring to the fashionable and aesthetic people who met there, and that Vance's house "was almost the only house in New York where this [meeting on common ground] happened often, and it did not happen very often there."

We see here that the solvent which in the streets is universal, when transferred to the drawing room, acts upon the restricted group of fashionable people and artists; and indeed, in the same passage, Beaton, the poor son of a tomb-stonecutter who has been incorporated in the highest circle, calls the rich people "stupid with no wish to be otherwise" (210),

lacking even curiosity about art. He also criticizes the Dryfooses unsociability saying that one of the girls believes New York is unsociable because nobody calls (211).

Moreover, in face of the girls' vulgar behavior at Mrs. Horn's musicale, the Marches cannot discover the reason why they were invited. After that, nobody calls them anymore, and Mrs. Horn, the landlady, says to Miss Vance "with bathed triumph:" "Now can you see Margaret . . . such people, people with their money, must of course be received sooner or later. You can't keep them out. Only, I believe I would rather let someone else begin with them. The Leightons didn't come?" (237). This reference to the Leightons, who have come from the countryside and who run a boarding house in order to pay Alma's painting classes, reaffirms the fact that to New York's oldest and most exclusive homes, things like education, manners and artistic taste remain more important than money for the acceptance of newcomers.

Hazard's class markers are also about attitude towards money, artistic sensibility, manners, conversation, housing and dressing. Although some comments about them are similar to those found in The Rise of Silas Lapham, Howells's penchant for aristocracy in Hazard is not so constantly noticeable as it was then, because here social status affairs are secondary to the critique of capital accumulations.

Attitudes Toward Money and Money-Making

The Dryfooses are even ruder than the Laphams; Mela talks openly about personal affairs, laughs scandalously, shouts, and Christine, when enraged, throws her jewelry among the breakfast dishes, and is so primitive that flashes her nails on Beaton's face "like an wild cat." As Kasson explains, their lack of emotional control was unpardonable within

the late nineteenth-century codes of behavior because the development of an industrial capitalist society extended the stress upon the suppression of any undue emotion, such as mortification, anger and laughter in still a deeper level among the middle-classes.[13] An etiquette adviser, for example, in 1885 wrote that "to get anger with an inferior is degrading; with an equal, dangerous; with a superior, ridiculous" (160). For women, any lapse of self-control was even more dangerous than for men, and if she succumbed to anger or immoderate laughing, she risked not only her dignity but her very femininity. But Mela's and Christine's greatest social sin is their confessed pride about their father's wealth; their belief that it made them equal to everybody and that people should be honored to be in their company.

Taking the social patterns of the epoch into consideration, the Dryfooses's sense of being equal to everybody is more repulsive to the aristocrats than the Lapham's sense of inferiority and submission, because these, at least had the sensibility of perceiving and understanding the genteel status. In Kasson's words, "demure emulation of the socially established is required, and not agressive-self assertion" (57). Probably this is why Beaton prefers to remain poor and alone than to "marry Christine and go abroad" (411), and why, like him, Kendricks rejects Mela and is interested in Alma. Alma has none of Christine's beauty and money, but has education enough to agree with her mother's justification that Mrs. Horn did not visit them because she is "taken up with her own set", and also to understand her criticism of Beaton's absence for his being "one of [their] kind" (97).

[13] "Instead of allowing any outward relaxation, middle-class etiquette drove the tensions back within the individual self, providing ritual support for the psychological defense mechanisms of repression, displacement, and denial necessary to cope with the anxieties of the urban capitalist order" (Kasson 165).

There are three moments in the novel in which the narrator criticizes the nouveaux-riches' pride of money and sympathizes with the aristocrats. In the following quotation about Vance's visit to the Dryfoos, the narrator puts himself in the position of the "wisest and the finest;" explicitly hinting to his readers that he shares Miss Vance's social status.

> The notion that a girl of Margaret Vance's traditions would naturally form of girls like Christine and Mela Dryfoos would be that they were abashed in the presence of the new conditions of their lives and that they must receive the advance she made them with a certain grateful humility [...] Her error was in arguing their attitude from her own temperament and endowing them, for the purposes of argument, with her perspective. They had not the means, intellectual or moral, of feeling as she fancied. If they had remained at home on the farm where they were born, Christine would have grown up that embodiment of impassioned suspicion which we find oftenest in the narrowest spheres, and Mela would always have been a good-natured simpleton; but they would never have doubted their equality with the wisest and the finest. As it was, they had not learned enough at school to doubt it, and the splendor of their father's success in making money had blinded them forever to any possible difference against them. (223)

In the next example, he moralizes about making easy money in speculation and about crediting self-importance on financial basis. This is the only moment in the novel in which the narrator judges a character.

> His moral decay began with his perception of the opportunity of making money quickly and abundantly, which offered itself to him after he sold his farm. . . . He devolved upon a meaner ideal than that of conservative good citizenship, which had been his chief moral experience; the money he had already made without effort and without merit bred its unholy self-love in him; he began to honor money . . . He never met a superior himself, except now and then a man of twenty or thirty millions to his one or two, and then he felt his soul creep within him, without a sense of social inferiority; it was a question of financial inferiority . . . (226-7) .

In the following quotation, Howells's distancing from the Dryfoos's self flattery is not as explicit as in the two examples above; but it is nonetheless, also significant. At the musicale, Kendricks wonders about

> put[ting Mela] into literature just as she was, with all her slang and brag, but he decided that he would have to subdue her a great deal; he did not see how he could reconcile the facts of her conversation with the facts of her appearance --her beauty, her splendor of dress, her apparent right to be where she was. These things perplexed him; he was afraid the great American novel, if true, must be incredible. (233)

Like Beaton and Basil, Kendricks, the "student of human nature," putting himself in a superior position to Mela, sees her as an object of study and as a comic attraction; and his attitude covers up Howells's own view about her. Kendricks's imagined story about Mela is symbolic for A Hazard of New Fortunes because, in it, Howells puts Kendricks' imagination into action. He transcribes her ungrammaticalness, her talk about intimate subjects, her feeling that people should be flattered by her company, and her exaggerated dressing. The narrator's exposition of Kendricks's thoughts and Howells's adaptation of it functions somehow as his reiteration that Mela is a perplexing creature and that her belief in the right to be in society is somewhat ridiculous. In other words, Beaton's "fictitious novel" constitutes on Hazard's humorous attack on the nouveaux-riches' sense of social distinction.

It is important to note that the criticism of the novel is not on making money and on business, but on speculation and on the over-valuation of money in relation to the "generous instincts." Different from Silas Lapham, in which Boston's sense of individuality and distinction do not allow the Coreys to assimilate the Laphams truly; in the growing commercial society of New York described in Hazard, money can secure

position in society. As March says, though cynically, "such people as the Dryfooses are the raw material of good society. It isn't made up of refined or meritorious people – professors and littèrateurs, ministers and musicians, and their families. All the fashionable people that were there tonight were like the Dryfooses a generation or two ago. . . . Money prizes and honors itself, and if there is anything it hasn't got, it believes it can buy it" (240). But again, Howells does not give them a chance of being assimilated in America, and the reader is left with a feeling that their assimilation is painful to the members of society.

Painting

In the analysis of The Rise of Silas Lapham the narrator's statement that "Lapham had not yet reached the picture-buying stage of the rich man's development" has been used as an indication of the narrator's distance to them, since he makes that observation in tone of condescending irony, implying to be superior to them. In A Hazard of New Fortunes, Wetmore, professor of painting, uses that same expression as a way of mocking the nouveaux-riches' artistic ignorance and of criticizing their belief that money can compensate their cultural poverty.

> Look here, Beaton, when your natural-gas man gets to the picture-buying stage in his development, just remember your old friends, will you? You know, Miss Vance, those new fellows have their regular stages. They never know what to do with their money, but they find out that people buy pictures at one point. They shut your things up in their houses where nobody comes; and after a while they overeat themselves – they don't know what else to do– and die of apoplexy, and leave your pictures to a gallery, and they see the light. It's slow, but it's pretty sure. (212/3)

Wetmore's commentary helps to stress the aristocratic sympathies of the novel because it carriers the critique to the fact that any cultural progress from the part of the nouveaux-riche is only apparent, since it is not due to the improvement of their tastes and sensitivity, but on economic power alone. By seeing the whole account of the nouveaux-riches "psychology" through the isolated perspective of an experienced painter, the reader is invited to sympathize with his point of view.

Literature

In A Hazard of New Fortunes, as a reflection of the changing reality of the literary world, literary expertise and discussions about the social role of literature are not exclusive to the world of the genteel, it becomes also a matter of the "common people." Dryfoos, a natural-gas man and real-state speculator, is the owner of a literary magazine; Beaton, son of a tombstone cutter is responsible for the illustrations section; Fulkerson, the advertisement man whose morality is sometimes questioned is the manager of the magazine; and the miserable Lindau is encharged of the translation of the foreign section. March, the only genteel member of the magazine, in face of New York literary standards, becomes, in Fulkerson's terms, a "Boston petunia" (244) and a "shrinking Boston violet" (191); and sees himself forced to accede to the market forces of the country's new center of culture.

The conflict between genteel standards of art--represented by Lindau, Colonel Woodburn and initially by March and Beaton--, and the commodification of art--perpetuated by Fulkerson-- is to Anesko and Crowley (*The Unsmiling...)* one of the main

themes of the novel; and such conflict transposes Howells's own literary trajectory and vocational contradictions, felt mainly after his move from Boston to New York.

According to Anesko, a reading of his correspondence to Henry James, published in Letters, Fictions and Lives, reveals that his fictional work was greatly influenced by the rapid changing pressures of the literary marketplace, pressures that during the eighties and nineties also influenced the genteel monthly magazines including The Atlantic, to which Howells was editor. These magazines faced an increasing invasion of the newspaper journalism, and contrary to genteel tastes, started to adopt devices to attack a wider readership, such as publishing chatty columns about its contributors' personal affairs, advertising in newspapers, and using illustrations.

Every Other Week intended to be, using Beaton's words, "the missing link, the long-felt want of a tie between the Arts and the Dollars" (154), and it started following the "cooperative principle."[14] However, just like those magazines, it also had to adopt some marketing devices to survive New York's competition, and ended by functioning more or less according to the principle that "the final reward of art is money, and not the pleasure of creating," in Colonel Woodburn's terms (151). Its members had to adapt the contents to fashion, and to the tastes of the feminine readers, to contract a critic to write badly about the novels of an author not because they were bad, but because it was fashionable to do so; to use illustrations because they made any publication sell ("start[ing] a thing in the twilight of the nineteenth century without illustrations" was a thing of a "lunatic"-13), and to invest in advertisement, "the heart and soul of every business" (190).

[14] Every Other Week pays volunteer contributors (painters and writers) a low price for their work and gives them a percentage of the profit won in the sales of each number. The contributors risk their chance of earning money or not, as if they were having a book published. The magazine gives new artists a chance of appearing, since the greatest number of New York periodicals publish works of renowned artists.

Initially, March is against advertising, believes that illustrations diminish the reader's interest in literature, and thinks that rejecting a better article for a worse but more fashionable one is "immoral," but does not really make a strong objection to such devices. Although a defender of public opinions, he explains to Isabel that Every Other Week cannot publish Lindau's ideas because "the counting room would begin to feel it" (310) and when he hears from Lindau that, as the case of America being slave to capital, the magazine "bay infentors not to infent; . . . adfertise[s], and the gounting room sees dat de etitorial room toesn't tink," he just remains silent (276).

But if March succumbs to the forces of the marketplace, in the end of the novel, when the magazine becomes his property, he and Fulkerson start operating it within the cooperative principle again. "They reduced the number of illustrated articles and they systematized the payment of contributors strictly according to the sales of each number, on their original plan of cooperation; they had got to paying rather lavishly for material without reference to the sales" (429).

Mainly through the contradictions suffered by March, the novel demonstrates that the genteel resistance to the new reality of the literary world was fading away before the market forces. March's retake of the cooperative principle may suggest a criticism on the degeneration of the literary values of the time, and a calling for a literature based on the "aristocratic dignity" of the past, i.e., a literature based on human responsibility.[15] Howells's real concern with the subject seems to consist of pointing to both the ethical and the marketing sides of the literary world, and to the conflict between the writer's aesthetic

[15] According to Sedgwick, "The literary tastes and principles characteristic of the genteel idealists [who dominated literary criticism in The Atlantic at least until 1916] were inextricably bound with their social and moral beliefs" (58).

sense and the political demands of his social conscience. March greatly represents this conflict, because at the same time he says that "Business is business, but I don't say it isn't disgusting" (423), he also says that he is "rather glad the management of Every Other Week involves tastes and not convictions" (195). It seems to remain a suggestion that although the marketplace has exerted too much influence upon literature imperatives, writers can keep on with their own convictions in life , like Howells himself did. Edwin Cady (one of his biographers), says that nobody like Howells knew the marketplace better, and that he discovered "how to make writing pay steadily, freely, even handsomely without selling out either his artistic or civic conscience"" (qtd. in Anesko 186).

Manners

Among the novel's various examples of the Dryfooses' bad manners, the analogy that Fulkerson, Beaton and the narrator make between the girls' behavior and wild animals, Isabel and Miss Vance's definition of their manners as "dreadful," as well as the complete social isolation in which they are left, are strong evidences that their manners are the great causes of their social stigmatization.

In addition, as it has already been pointed out, their pride about their father's money and the feeling of specialty and sociability that it brings to them is maybe their worst characteristic, for it becomes the greatest obstacle for their improvement, notably for the improvement of their manners. It is around their sense of importance that we can note Howells's criticism on their manners and the extent to which he shares other characters' wish of being distant from them. In the three moments of the novel that show the Dryfooses' social encounters with genteel people, Howells gives the narrator the right of

entering their conscience to ridicule their pride and of using irony to make fun of their sense of social triumph, as he had done in Silas Lapham. During the Marches' visit to the Dryfooses, for example, Fulkerson makes "both girls feel that they had figured brilliantly in society," and when the guests are gone, the narrator ironically comments that they are left alone on the scene of their "triumph" (141). Afterwards, when out of pity for their social isolation Miss Vance visits them, Mela says to Christine that they "appeared about as well as she did," and that Vance was afraid of Christine (conquering Beaton) because she probably heard "a little about Father" (223).[16] Then, at the musicale, Christine decides to "cool with the Marches [because] it went through her mind that they must have told Miss Vance they knew her; and perhaps they had boasted of her intimacy" (231).

Conversation

In the chapter about language use in The Rise of Silas Lapham it has been pointed out how Howells' concern with the democratic use of language is manifested differently in the novel. In A Hazard of New Fortunes, Howells seems to have a greater preoccupation with language, and once more it functions as a barrier to social mobility. Presenting almost all the characters talking differently from each other, he extends the description of differences in language from the realm of "class dialect" to the realm of regional dialect--speech which classifies people with a particular geographical region.

According to Nettels, Howells called for the use of region dialect in literature because he believed that it defines the characters' culture, and brings a greater sense of reality to the

[16] The use of the capital letter helps to indicate Howells's humorous view of their pride.

fictional work; because dialect is an essential element for writers interested in local-color literature; and mainly because he saw dialect as a means by which writers could unify people of different cultures and societies. As already noted, Howells saw the use of dialect in literature as democratic, because it allows the authors to show people as equals by making readers feel strengthened with a sense of partnership for perceiving the likeness to themselves in people of different parts of the country (Nettels 87). However, this does not happen in Hazard. In spite of Howells's democratic intentions, his use of regional dialect ends by increasing the discrimination between the characters in the same extent that "class dialect" does.

With regard to "class dialect," its undemocratic effect is most directed to the Dryfoos family. Their speech is not "very passably grammatical" as the Lapham women's was, rather, it is so much more ungrammatical and abrupt that considering their clothing, housing, and manners, their vernacular is what stigmatizes them by far. They pronounce words "wrongly", use double negatives, dropped g's, dry sentences and words which do not exist ("I *wisht,*" "I knowed"); the women's voice is hoarse, their intonation is high, they say "thin, sharp forays of assertion and denial" (225), and they babble, laugh, yell, and gurgle.

Most of the time, and differently from Silas Lapham, the narrator represents their speech without calling attention to its divergence from the standard: he signals few of their errors with italics, does not use parenthetical clauses or innuendo, and does not comment directly on them. Considering the narrator's apparent neutrality towards the Dryfooses' errors (at least in comparison to Silas Lapham), one could say that Howells renders their speech only to show their individuality with more realistic accuracy. However, there are two arguments that contradict such view.

The first argument is that the syntax and diction of the narrator are different from the Dryfooses, and similar to the Marches, Miss Vance and Mrs. Horn, characters who represent Howells's general views of society. In this way, as noted by Nettels, Howells makes the Dryfooses' vernacular the nonstandard and invites the reader to judge them as inferior, as the standard characters do (189). It is interesting to note that although the narrator does not use parenthetical clauses to disclaim responsibility for what the Dryfooses say, he entrusts this role to characters who speak standard English. March, for example, when reporting to Fulkerson about Jacob's ordering him to discharge Lindau, adds "to turn him off, as he put it" (304); and when Fulkerson tells the same story to Beaton, he uses the same clause. Beaton, when talking to Vance about lending the banjo to Christine and Mela, says that "the eldest heard that the banjo was 'all the rage', as the youngest says" (215).

The second argument which indicates that the portrayal of the dialect of the Dryfooses has social implications consists in the fact that Conrad talks according to the grammatical standard of the narrator. If we consider that Conrad has grown up among his family, was not allowed to study, and relates with poor people almost exclusively, it is quite surprising that he talks differently from his family. The only possible explanation for this "incident," and one that actually follows Howells's genteel tendencies, is that Conrad's congenital occupation is linked to religious affairs, a kind of activity that, according to Veblen, held an acceptable status among American "aristocracy." In this way, Conrad's speech functions as a great indicator that, in his fiction, Howells uses dialect as a means of classifying people in different social hierarchies.

In what relates to the use of regional dialect in the novel, the manner in which the speech of the German socialist Lindau is rendered provides arguments enough to state that

the idea that the novel reflects Howells's democratic concerns is too naive. Lindau speaks English with the most thick German accent possible, and as the narrator gives a word-by-word phonetic transcription of it all the narrative through, his dialect becomes, instead of his social, political and personal feelings, his most marking characteristic. According to Nettels, Lindau's dialect marks him as "alien," establishes his inferior status and has the effect of diminishing the importance of the ideas he really wants to convey.

Although Lindau is a cultured, sensitive man, with strong convictions and moral sense, his speech is, as Nettels puts it, "comic in its effect" and people amuse themselves imitating it. Actually, we can clearly trace the way in which his dialect is responsible for the depreciation of his image and beliefs through the way in which Fulkerson and March imitate his accent right at the moments when they refer to his person as comic, "poor," and "old," and to his beliefs as inconceivable in America. Fulkerson, who does not take him seriously, when affirming not to believe in his principles, calls them "brinciples," and right after that, he finds March's report of Lindau's reasons for living in poverty "deliciously comical" (278). March, despite his sympathies for Lindau, does exactly the same thing when telling Isabel there is no reason to worry about Lindau's influence over Tom:

> ... don't mind poor old Lindau, my dear. He says himself that his parg is worse than his pidte, you know. . . . I suppose I may continue to pity him? He *is* such a poor lonely old fellow. . . . I suspect we couldn't help [stopping him talking so] . . . It's one of what Lindau calls his 'brinciples' to say what he thinks (254).

The fact that both Fulkerson and March imitate Lindau's speech when referring to his principles, which is a key word in the novel considering its socio-economic content, carries the idea that they have no importance within the reality of instructed Americans; that his beliefs are as alien to America as his pronunciation is. Moreover, as Nettels

suggests, "dialect prevents Lindau, who voices many of Howells' convictions but sanctions violence that Howells condemned, from appearing to be Howells' spokesman" (95).

Howells's concern with regional dialect is not restricted to Lindau. He is careful to characterize, though briefly, the regionalisms of many other characters, as if to be faithful to the richness of dialects that could be found in New York City. Beaton talks with "quick, stacatto impulses" which he acquired in his years in France (92); the Mid-western Fulkerson uses a lot of slang, and as suggested by Nettels, thanks to his linguistic confidence, he does not seem vulgar in using it; the Southerner Miss Woodburn speaks a "broad-voweled, rather formal speech, with its odd valuations of some of the auxiliary verbs and its total elision of the canine letter" (99); and Mr. Woodburn talks "in that soft, gentle, slow Southern voice without our Northern contractions" (149). (emphasis added)

These dialects do not stigmatize characters as in the case of Lindau, but again, Howells's ideal of equality fails because the narrator opts for one of the dialects presented: the Northerner dialect of the Marches, and of the New York socialites Mrs. Horn and Margaret Vance, whose accent is never commented. This makes of their accent the standard one, and the most refined among all others, since, as noted by Nettels, the ideal speaker was that who spoke without leaving traces of his origin (71).

It is also to the point noting that the regional accent of the South is presented in an inconsistent way, and that it becomes another evidence that Howells uses dialect as a way of elevating or depreciating characters. While Miss Woodburn's accent is transcribed word by word from the beginning to the end of the narrative, so that critics have often complained of it as being boring (Nettels), her father's accent is only transcribed in his

first appearance in the novel and when he is introduced to Beaton. When Beaton leaves, in the same chapter , Colonel Woodburn starts talking to Mrs. Leighton with no accent at all, and he loses it forever If this inconsistency happens because he is a polite writer to whom Howells may have some sympathies, it is impossible to affirm. But it is totally possible to conclude that such incongruity strengthens the argument that the full transcription of Lindau's accent involves deep political and social meanings.

If Howells wanted to be faithful to his democratic use of regional dialect, he should portray regional differences among the speech of characters of the same social class (Nettels 71). But instead, his use of dialect is so dependent on class differences, that it is possible to see that the characters' class and regional dialect places them in different stairs in the social ladder, as the following illustration suggests.

Standard class and regional dialect No comments	Genteel New Yorkers and Bostonians	Vance, Horn, the Marches
Standard class and regional dialect, "very ladylike accent" (132)	Genteel widow who has to work	Mrs. Mandel
Standard class dialect, accepted use of slang	MidWestern Manager of the magazine, puts money above literary imperatives	Fulkerson
Standard class dialect Nonstandard accent, "soft, gentle voice" (149)	Virginians. "Girl of good sense and right mind"; a beauty. Reactionary writer	Miss and Mr. Woodburn
Standard accent "offesnive" words and expressions --*I declare*, I *presume*, to *pick* ,*mad*	Intelligent, well-educated, painter who cooks at a boarding house	Alma Leighton
Standard class dialect and comic regional dialect	Cultured German socialist	Lindau
Non-standard class and regional dialect, unpleasant voice and intonation	Country people, rude uneducated, bad taste speculator father, money is their great pride	The Dryfooses

Dressing

The clothing of all the Dryfooses are described as being an extension of their lack of elegance; but it is with relation to Mela's exaggerated dress at the musicale and to her feeling that it was causing a good impression on others, that the narrator's mocking distance makes itself noticeable.

> The concert went on to an end without realizing for her the ideal of pleasure which one ought to find in society. She was not exacting, but it seemed to her there were very few young men, and when the music was over and their opportunity came to be sociable, they were not very sociable. They were not introduced, for one thing; but it appeared to Mela that they might have got introduced if they had any sense; she saw them looking at her, and she was glad she had dressed so much; she was dressed more than any other lady there, and either because she was the most dressed of any person there or because it had got around who her father was, she felt that she had made an impression on the young men. (221/2)

In this same quotation, the narrator enters her consciousness first to signal her mistaken conception that to be sociable is to introduce oneself to others, and then his voice almost mixes with hers to stress her belief that to be finely dressed is to be exaggeratedly dressed, which according to the precepts of the time was unpardonable. Discretion was essential, and singularity was to be avoided; and women should pay close attention to these rules, because they could be judged as ladies or as vulgar according to the signs they communicated through her appearance (Kasson).

Housing

There are four whole chapters dedicated in the novel for the Marches hunt for an apartment in New York. Although this can be seen just a description of an American couple

looking for a place to live, there are two moments within their search that somehow shows the narrator's sympathy for the Marches' sense of distinction, which they secure with their self- irony.

Knowing that the place of residence and the house itself is fundamental to securing or diminishing newly-arrived in New York, the Marches restrict their search within the limit of respectability that Isabel traced from her observations of the city. "She found that there was an east and west line beyond which they could not go if they wished to keep their self-respect, and that within the region to which they had restricted themselves there was a choice of streets" (51). Also, it had to have "an elevator, steam heat, hallboy, and a pleasant janitor" (67).

However, because March is in charge of searching for it, or because they cannot afford the apartments they like, they end by living in an apartment that does not express their "civilization" (131), as Isabel says. The fact of not having enough money or of living in an apartment that does not fit their tastes threatens their sense of distinction and almost embarrasses them. However, as Harmon explains, thanks to their strong sense of self-importance and "resilience," they always find a way of asserting their respectability.

As soon as they arrive in an apartment for rent located within their "limit of respectability," the janitor examines them and says "as if still in doubt, 'It has ten rooms and the rent is twenty eight hundred dollars'". His doubting their inability to afford it because of their appearance wounds their "self-love," but instantly March reaffirms their genteel position by humorously saying:

> I can never recover from this blow . . . Let us go back and *écraser l'infâme* by paying him a year's rent in advance and taking immediate possession. Nothing else can soothe my wounded feelings . . . these things drive one to despair. I don't wonder the bodies of so many genteel strangers are found in the waters around New York. (49)

With regard to living among Mrs. Grosvenor Green gimcrackery, Isabel manages to maintain their sense of distinction by discovering that with irony, she can transform mediocrity of the decoration into chic and that the apartment can "increase her sense of aesthetic discrimination." So that, all she had to do was to regard mediocrity and shabbiness with the right attitude" (Harmon 189):

> [W]hen people began to call, she had a pleasure, a superiority, in saying that it was a furnished apartment and in disclaiming all responsibility for the upholstery and decoration. If March was by, she always explained that it was Mr. March's fancy, and amiably laughed it off with her callers as a mannish eccentricity. Nobody really seemed to think it otherwise than pretty; and this again was a triumph for Mrs. March, because it showed how inferior the New York taste was to the Boston taste in such matters. (87)

Final Remarks

In the same way that the social analysis of the novel suggests the perpetuation of the political ideas of the conservatives and the maintenance of the social order, the analysis of its class markers points to the perpetuation of genteel tastes and standards of social behavior.

A closer look at the narrator's attitude toward the nouveaux-riches' self flattery, overvaluation of money, rude ways and nonstandard speech reveals that he discriminates them and takes the side of the aristocrats. He explicitly puts himself in the position of the "wisest and finest," adopts the class and regional dialects of the genteel, criticizes Dryfoos's speculative enterprise and "moral decay," and presents the Dryfooses' social gaffes and deviations from genteel standards with a tone of mockery, implying to be their superior.

Moreover, while the narrator uses irony to show that the Dryfooses' sense of being equal to everybody is unreasonable, when the Marches are forced to deviate from their own standards of taste, they themselves use irony to secure their sense of distinction. Their deviations do not become a source of mockery, but a reaffirmation of their high status. Howells's idea of social equality fails because he uses class markers to depreciate some characters and to elevate some characters above others.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

Democratic Sympathies and Aristocratic Nostalgia

At the same time that the advance of capitalism, the series of scientific discoveries and the triumph of materialism made people increasingly optimistic about social mobility and about the affirmation of democratic opportunities in America, these changes produced disquietude and an aristocratic nostalgia among the genteel writers of the turn of the century. They felt, and lamented that the marketplace culture would damage their heritage of intellectual and spiritual life and create "cheap wealth, vulgarizing manners, and demoralizing principles" (Sedgwick III 54).

In spite of the celebrated democratic claims of Howells's Realism, some of his non-fictional writings, mainly the essays published by Kirk and his letters to Henry James and to his family, reveal that he was admittedly contradictory, that his personal life was guided by genteel tastes, and that he shared the aristocratic preoccupations above-mentioned. He believed that material progress brought bitter consequences to America, namely "a withering away of community and brotherhood, a brutalization of moral consciousness" (Berthoff 103), and, as noted by Tuttleton, he advocated the idea that natural impulses should be disciplined through the cultivation of the conventions of civilized life. In an article written for Harper's Magazine in 1901, he wrote that "[m]anners are one of the most

precious heritages from the past . . . Goodness of heart, purity of morals, show themselves in forms, and practically do not exist without them" (qtd. in Tuttleton 107).

Although Howells's criticism and personal life are not completely reliable sources to denominate his ideological position concerning the aristocratic and democratic traditions in The Rise of Silas Lapham and in A Hazard of New Fortunes, I hope that the present analysis provides elements enough to conclude that his undemocratic snobbery comes to the surface in them. Howells perpetuates the aristocratic nostalgia of the intellectuals by demonstrating that man is happier when the forms and manners that govern his social obligations and relationships are firmly established, for they control the social order and "democratically" guarantee the opportunity of achieving social and financial success.

The analysis of the class markers suggest that they have been used not as a way of individualizing the nouveaux-riches businessmen, but of depreciating them and elevating the aristocrats. Both in terms of plot and mainly in the narrators' attitudes toward the class markers, we perceive an inclination for the tastes, actions and codes of behavior established by the upper class, and for their defensive reaction against social change. In this way, the novels help to perpetuate social inequality, instead of equality.

With regard to plot, Howells's penchant for the aristocrats can be noticed in four particulars that are common to both novels. First, the novels perpetuate the idea that financial activity is bad and causes a moral deterioration on Silas Lapham and Jacob Dryfoos. Although in the end they realize that "money don't seem to buy anything but more care and trouble" (202), and recover the humaner feelings they had before speculating, Silas loses his financial success and Jacob becomes sick and hopeless, and does not find reward and comfort for being a millionaire.

Second, the Laphams and the Dryfooses's infatuation for the aristocrat's manners and grace, as well as their sense of inferiority and/or arrogant self-assertion, function as a justification that the aristocrats' standards are better than theirs. This is not to say that Howells writes a novel to demonstrate that the nouveaux-riches are bad and the aristocrats are good. Actually, he suggests that the aristocrat's belief that they are better for being able to exhibit their status is responsible for the superficiality of society, and he also demonstrates that even bringing some damages to society, the nouveaux-riches' place must be secured in a democracy. However, in both novels, there is a sense in which the manners and codes of behavior established by the upper classes should continue to dictate people's actions, since the Coreys, Belligham, the Marches, Miss Vance and Mrs. Horn's education, refinement, and manners imply that they have reached a higher level of civilization.

Third, the Laphams and Dryfooses's wish of entering society is not shown as wrong in itself, but because they cannot conform with the genteel standards, and because they thought they could attempt connections on the basis of their money, they are punished with social isolation, return to the country, and marriage abroad. Although Penelope marries Tom because of her genteel-like speech, conversation, and literary habit, she is left in a state of "semi-happiness" and in a kind of social limbo; and in the case of the Dryfooses girls, they are so rude that they are not gifted even with the possibility of being made love to. Also, contrary to the Laphams, they receive the sympathy of no one.

Finally, according to Nettels, Howells's fiction follows a general tendency of making the most cultured and socially cultivated characters morally superior, and in Silas Lapham and Hazard, while the nouveaux-riches' good qualities are limited to the business and familiar sphere, the genteel characters are the novels' examples of manners and morality.

Tom Corey, James Bellingham, and Miss Vance are the best characters in every sense, and they are a modern sign that a man can conciliate his aristocratic qualities with the ethical management of business. Moreover, in spite of the novel's subtle criticism on Basil and Isabel March's and Anna and Bromfield Corey's cynicism and sense of superiority, the narrator openly says that the Coreys "were not mean or unamiable people" (374).

One of the tenets of Howells's realism was to claim for the narrative impersonality he so admired in the writings of the Russian realist writers. In "Criticism and Fiction," for example, he argued that the realist writer should not "moralize openly and baldly," nor "sympathize" with some characters while "point[ing] out others for the abhorrence of his readers" (16). "The novelist's main business" he wrote for The Century Illustrated Magazine, "is to possess his reader with a due conception of his characters and the situations in which they find themselves. If he does more or less than this he equally fails" (qtd. in Taylor 92). Notwithstanding, in Silas Lapham and Hazard he fails to do so. In his treatment of the class markers, contrary to Alkana and Taylor's opinions, instead of working with complete objectivity, the narrator has found many ways of interrupting the narrative in order to comment on characters' tastes and actions, and to sympathize with some characters and depreciate others. By verifying the ways in which the narrator obtrudes, directly or indirectly in the narrative, it is possible to conclude that Howells's use of each one of the class markers presented reflects class spirit and has deep social and political implications, and is not concerned with the unifying ideals he defends in his Realism.

In relation to attitudes towards money and money-making, both Silas Lapham and Hazard reflect that the aristocratic prejudice towards money-making is being "exploded everywhere," and that the incorporation of the nouveaux-riches in society is a rising

tendency. However, contrary to this tendency, the Laphams and the Dryfooses are not assimilated in society, and the novel carries a tone of regret towards the acceptance of the nouveaux-riches and of their open valorization of money. The narrator identifies with the aristocrats' view that the assimilation of the nouveaux-riches necessarily results in the decay of the values of society as a whole, when he moralizes openly about speculation and about crediting self-importance to a financial basis, when he ridicules the Dryfooses sense of being the equals of everybody in many occasions, and also when he gives voice to Bromfield's ironical remarks about his own life of leisure and to March's cynical views about the socialization of the nouveaux-riches. If Bromfield and March had presented their opinions without irony, one could accuse them of being too anti-democratically snobbish and superficial; however, we cannot help liking them because, while they betray their own complicity in the happy satisfaction of inequality, they also register a muted form of social criticism. In the end, the reader is left with the feeling that the aristocrats do have some reasons to resist the welcoming of the nouveaux –riches' overvaluation of money.

In terms of artistic taste and sensitivity, in Silas Lapham, the novel's penchant for the aristocrats' expertise in painting, architecture and literature can be perceived in the insistence with which the Laphams' and the Coreys' tastes are contrasted, and in the narrator's direct comments on the Laphams' bad taste. Through the use of irony, the narrator also criticizes Silas's equation of the value of his painting advertisements with artistic paintings, and he signals to have a higher level of refinement than the Laphams when he says that they have not yet reached the picture buying stage of the rich men's development with a tone of mockery. In Hazard, an experienced professor of painting uses that expression with the same tone of mockery to criticize the nouveaux-riches' artistic ignorance and belief that their money can buy artistic refinement.

With regard to manners, the picturing of so many examples of the nouveaux-riches' social gaffes and the genteel character's impressions on them indicate that Howells satirizes their dream of rising socially. In addition to that, the narrators of both novels find many ways of distancing themselves from their bad manners. In Silas Lapham, the narrator presents the Laphams' country ways at the dinner-party with sarcasm, accompanies the portrayal of their social gaffes, embarrassment, anxiety, and social insecurity with innuendo in a tone of mockery, and gives his own opinion about the importance of manners. In Hazard, besides presenting the Dryfooses' social gaffes with a tone of mockery, the narrator enters on Mela and Christine's minds to ridicule their sensation of being the aristocrats equals, uses irony to make fun of the sense of triumph they feel for believing to behave perfectly when they receive visits, and in the occasion of Vance's visit, he verbally puts himself in the position of the "wisest and the finest," communicating to share her status.

In what refers to language use, throughout Silas Lapham, Howells portrays the dialect of the Laphams making use of different strategies which mark their speech as inferior and signal their inferior status. Through the use of italics, authorial innuendo, and parenthetical clauses, the narrator informs their deviations from the standard in what relates to grammar, colloquialisms, abrupt way of talking, particularities of voice and intonation. In this way, he implies he does not speak as the Laphams, and as consequence, signals his distance from them. In Hazard, although those strategies are not so present, the narrator's diction and syntax are similar to the genteel characters, and he assumedly opts (in "our Northern contractions") for the most refined of the regional dialects. Thus, he makes the Laphams' vernacular the non-standard and invites the reader to judge them as inferior, as the standard speakers characters do. The tone of mockery that accompanies the descriptions

of their vernacular and the ironic attribution of Silas's sensation of triumph for talking as an aristocrat when he is drunk points to the narrator's distancing from the Laphams as well. The comic and political effect of Lindau's dialect, and the inconsistent way in which Silas's (at the dinner-party), Conrad's and Woodburn's dialects are portrayed greatly testify that Howells's use of dialect does not serve the function of characterizing the character's individual traits, but acts as a justification of their inferiority.

In terms of dressing, in addition to the direct comments on the Laphams and Dryfooses's bad taste, the narrator of Hazard uses a tone of mocking distance to criticize Mela's dressing, and the narrator of Silas Lapham makes fun of their anxiety about dressing properly. Moreover, in Silas Lapham, the narrator goes beyond the story to give his own opinion about the American's clothing in comparison to the English. As he assumes the authority to make such judgement, he implies his excellence in taste, and "defines" himself as an aristocrat, for they dictated the standards of fine dressing.

With regard to housing, in Silas Lapham the narrator shares Bromfield's open joke about the decoration of the Laphams' drawing-room; and in Hazard, when the Marches' apartment threatens their sense of distinction, they use irony and self-mockery to save their faces and to reaffirm their sense of respect. It is interesting to note that while Howells uses irony against the nouveaux-riches, the aristocrats use irony in their favor.

With specific regard to the analysis of Hazard's political and economic ideologies, the ideas defended by March, the center of conscience of the novel, also lead to an aristocratic conservatism. He protects people's right for shining and for comfort, disclaims the propertied and well established with any need of feeling guilty for economic inequities and of compromising with sharing their goods, is against speculation, and perpetuates the Republican quality of liberal economics.

Although The Rise of Silas Lapham has been analyzed exclusively in terms of class markers, it may be worth mentioning that in a brief moment, the novel questions the economic disparities between people and gives an answer similar to Hazard's. At the dinner-party, when Bromfield hypothesizes the invasion by the poor of the mansions that remain closed during whole summers, the aristocrats arrive at the consensus that, contrary to the immigrant workers, the American hard-working poor "never make any trouble [because] they seem to understand that so long as we give unlimited opportunity, nobody has a right to complain" (201). Basing his point of view on his own experience, Silas agrees that the poor man never envies the others' success, if the success is honest. As both Silas and the aristocrats, the novel's antagonists, defend laissez-faire economics (in the same way that Jacob Dryfoos and March do), there is a suggestion that the novel corroborates their ideology. In addition to that, as in the case of March, Bromfield's ironical remarks towards his own position reflect a defense of exclusiveness and just a pale form of social criticism. Bromfield and March explore their doubts about their contradictory state of wanting both social distinction and social equality to prevent their need of feeling guilty and to affirm their right for privilege.

In spite of Howells's thoughts of brotherhood and equality, the plots, the narrators' attitudes towards the characters' social characteristics and the political ideology of the novels express a longing for the values of the past and a leaning towards aristocratic exclusiveness. Instead of promoting egalitarianism, the novels' sympathies lead towards aristocratic tastes and codes of behavior, and imply that the non-cultivation of social manners will result in the ignorance of civilization, because "people cannot behave rudely without becoming at heart a savage." Instead of presenting alternative remedies to social and economic inequities, the novels present the relatively desinterested response that the

differences in social status, the economic disparity between classes and the struggle between capital and labor will always exist, because feelings like the need of comfort and of shining, envy, ambition, and power, are inherent to human nature.

Although it is not possible to say that the narrators's, Bromfield's, and March's views are Howells's views, the examples of his personal tastes cited in the analysis of the class markers of Silas Lapham, and the autobiographical elements present in Hazard, reveal that their aristocratic sympathies fit with Howells's tastes, ironic style, experiences and values. As with Bromfield and March, Howells ironically recognized that his "pessimism about social condition" clashed with his material ease, 'prejudices, passions, follies" (qtd. in Crowley 87). As a reflection of his contradictory life, much in Silas Lapham and Hazard suggests an unresolved conflict between his genteel attitudes and his democratic ideals, but the aristocratic spirit that is immersed in his portrayal of the barriers between classes contradict the ideal of equality that his Realism affirmed.

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