

THE FACADE AND THE REALITY: WORLD'S
FAIRS CELEBRATE PROGRESS AND UNITY
WHILE AMERICAN NOVELISTS
REVEAL SOCIAL DISPARITY
AND INDIVIDUAL
ISOLATION

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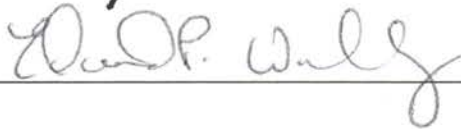
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Introduction

Individuals and nations struggle to establish their identity within society or within international communities. Most often this identity and its accompanying sense of security rely on the ability to create an outward appearance that shows financial success. This struggle to secure and maintain identity often consists of controlling entrance of new members, manipulating the lives of current members, and excluding those with different backgrounds or ethnic heritages. Nations blazon their wealth, art, industry, and territorial possessions to prove their ability to control future growth and establish national supremacy. Individuals use outward evidence of wealth to flaunt their membership in the upper levels of society. The most common expression of a person's ability to control life and place in society is the family home. A house indicates success, stability, family unity, and a moral base. However, nations and individuals focus on their facades to hide personal insecurities and social disunity. During the nineteenth century, America competed in world's fairs, and people built ornate homes, developed complex social designs, and tried to ignore the undercurrents of change. Because the issue of change and its effect on identity belongs to nations and individuals, a dual approach can help to show how national

change and individual lives mingle. Homes represent individual and social attitudes, and related national events reveal social and national interests. Houses in literature, then, reveal one aspect of the changing society in nineteenth-century America.

Houses in life and literature have long been an important component of American identity. Throughout American literature, authors have used houses and house imagery to carry or reinforce major themes in their works. They have intertwined houses with the psychological mazes of the human mind and with questions of human morality. Poe's William Wilson and Roderick Usher are inseparable from the buildings that represent their tortured and often dual personalities. Melville's Bartleby retreats into the blankness of his walls and his homelessness as he gradually resigns from society, both personal and professional. Hawthorne's Dr. Heidegger resides within a shadowed room that mirrors the science versus humanity conflict of past and present. Hester Prynne's isolated home embodies her separation and the strength she develops because of her enforced moral isolation. Thoreau's cabin on Walden Pond reinforces his philosophy about mankind's relationship with nature. Interior scenes such as the Quaker kitchen in Uncle Tom's Cabin reveal the aura of serenity, safety, and peace epitomized by hearth and home.

Before the Civil War, Americans sought personal fulfillment in the exploration of the human mind and its limits. The imaginative union of man and nature was a step toward personal growth and philosophical understanding of the individual's place in society. In part, Americans believed they could achieve this oneness because they had conquered and settled the wilderness of the new world. The resulting rural society of the farmer and his family epitomized happiness. Literature during the first half of the nineteenth century often represented the family hearth as the source of peace, inner strength, and the source of moral values. Symbolically, the houses in the works of Thoreau, Whittier, and Stowe provided havens against confusion and even evil forces. Houses symbolized personal soul-searching in the works of Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville. In literature, houses provided security or offered convenient symbols of a person's need to explore the inner universe to find a place in the external world. A person often discovered, through house and room imagery, the why's and wherefore's of personal existence and felt secure in understanding and relying on the unchanging moral values in a stable world strengthened by the traditions of hearth and home.

As Americans explored the nation's territory and developed its cities, houses continued as symbols of stability, progress, and affluence. Historically, frontier

log cabins and personal monuments to success, such as Monticello and Mount Vernon, represented a desire to appropriate and improve one's place and space. Covered wagons crossed the prairies and mountains and served as temporary homes for Americans who sought their dreams as landowners and homeowners. The wagons held the furnishings that linked the past to the future. Determined to control their place, settlers built homes of native materials or burrowed underground in sod houses if no lumber were available. Building a home meant permanence and ownership of space, thus insuring personal identity and control over the often hostile environment. After the railroads linked the eastern and western coasts, Americans moved across the continent and settled the frontier in increasingly larger numbers. Settlements became towns, and towns grew into cities.¹ Importation of European building styles and furnishings completed the process of expressing success through the size and design of a house. With the growth of technology, American society grew more diverse and American authors recorded this evolution of a nation.

As American literature moved from Romanticism to Realism and Naturalism, house imagery adjusted to present the social changes facing individuals who attempted to identify their roles in the new America. Authors used house imagery to show the gradual separation of the individual from an evolving society. Eventually, conflict arose from

society's desire to unify and to control its diverse elements and the individual's need for stability and the power to have choices or fulfill ambitions. Morality seemed less clear-cut, and people began to measure their worth in wealth, possessions, and social standing instead of personal growth traditionally fostered by family unity and tradition.

However, examination of the changing image of houses in American life and literature requires a framework for focus. Popularity of nineteenth-century world fairs suggests that they showcased society as America saw itself. Therefore, fairs and expositions serve as microcosms of contemporary life and concerns.² The role of fairs and expositions as mirrors of social, artistic, commercial, and industrial change has roots in early, open town markets, jousting tournaments, or trading posts in isolated, barely chartered territories. However, the more formally structured national exhibits of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries began in London in 1851. In 1876, America fully held an international exposition to celebrate the nation's centennial.

Three fairs, the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, the 1893 Columbian Exposition, and the 1915 Pan-American Exhibition provide the necessary chronological and geographic boundaries for study of a time of major social changes in American. Chronologically, these fairs occurred between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War I.

Geographically, the fairs moved from east to west in the same pattern as America focused on its own national growth, settled its own frontier, and, by way of the Panama Canal, tied its east coast to its west coast. Each fair reveals changes occurring in American society, and literature published during this time reveals author awareness of the effect the changes had on individuals.

America's involvement in and holding of World's Fairs illustrates the interests, personality, and concerns of Victorian America. Exhibits, visitors, art, architecture, and location of the three American fairs offer an historic portrait of Victorian America. The Philadelphia Centennial celebrated America's independence and revealed the domination of American economic and cultural identity by the eastern states. The more formally designed Chicago World's Fair in 1893 showed the strength of the westward movement and the dominance of American architectural design in the new era of skyscrapers and urban building. Design of the fair shows the growing importance of imposing order. The central White City was an idealized vision, but the arrangement of the exhibits showed the acceptance of social, ethnic, racial, and gender separation as distance from the White City implied a scale of social worth. Finally, the Pan American Exposition of 1915 combined the westward movement with the completion of the Panama Canal and illustrated the dominance of technology over individual life

and vocation. These fairs showcase continental growth and the beginning of America's expansion into international marketplaces. Because of the rapid financial and urban growth, the individual became less important within the evolving pattern. Increased social division appeared within and among the fairs. The 1876 destruction of Centennial City and its unruly elements and the 1893 establishment of an entertainment area for the less cultured visitors acknowledged class or socio-economic differences. Other divisions included women's suffrage, ethnic differences, rural interests as opposed to urban power, labor and management separation, and competition between artistic and technological advances.³ Throughout all the fairs, a sense of national pride surfaced as prejudice against immigrants, who were courted as cheap labor and simultaneously isolated and denigrated because of language and cultural differences. The fairs showed that America, as a nation, was not sure of its place in international society just as individuals grew increasingly uncertain of their place in American society. This uncertainty appeared in American literature through a person's need for identity and place embodied in house imagery and illustrated in the fairs held by America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The connection between the novelists' use of house imagery and world's fairs lies in the changing nature of American society and the individual who must secure his own

place in nineteenth-century industrial, materialistic, and expansionistic America. Between 1876 and 1915, the most dramatic shift occurred in the composition of a society that changed from a predominantly agrarian society to an urban society dependent upon factories and mercantile growth. No longer could a person work the land governed only by nature's daily or seasonal clocks. The time clocks and profits of industry came to control business, agriculture, and individuals.⁴ Railroads expanded across the continent, and people followed the tracks to assert control over the frontier. Financial centers shifted westward following the population growth. European immigrants came to America to find a new life and some moved westward following the trains. Others remained in the East and increased the populations of the already burgeoning cities. Vast fortunes were made in industry and spent conspicuously if not always wisely. Americans focused on outward signs of progress and success and sought ways to discover and then to impose a sense of order on their industrialized and chaotic society. Inward peace and self knowledge, if sought, seemed more appropriate as a product of science, order, and financial growth than a product of the typical hearth and home of de Crevecour or Jefferson. America became so ensnared in change that the individual felt less valuable and less in control. In nineteenth-century literature, houses began to represent the effect of a changing society on the individual

and the attempts of people to identify their places or to create new ones in this society that changed too rapidly for the individual to find or establish roots.

Victorian American writers within the time frame of these fairs use houses symbolize the uncertainty of the individual in a changing America. Individuals must decide whether to adapt to change, to move westward, to reject tradition, or to succumb to economic or social forces that curtail individual freedom. Victorian American house imagery in literature also shows the dangers of a rootless existence in a sterile world that wears a facade of tangible wealth and hides a potential loss of human feeling. Study of the fairs shows the increased social divisions in America, and the historical context of the fairs supports the view of American society that American authors incorporated within their novels. House imagery is the medium through which authors convey their concerns about the individuals who increasingly have lost control of their choices in life because of the changes in social values.

The Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 showcased America as a country still tied to its past. The design of the grounds and buildings showed no discernible unified pattern, and many buildings showed on European influence illustrating that America had not yet developed its own architectural style. Americans continued their love affair with machines and gained an increasingly materialistic vision. The nation

looked to the future while closing its eyes and mind to the underlying, developing problems. These problems included labor disputes, disparate wealth accumulation, rural to urban movements, and loss of individuality because of these changes. America, in 1876, believed itself to control the future as it controlled its Corliss engine; however, the rapidity of change allowed little time for individuals to adjust.

Further changes in American society appeared at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Roughly in the center of the country, this fair illustrated the westward movement of America's economic base. Fair organizers mixed idealism with practicality. Central exhibits were housed in a white city that blazoned a unified design. Temporary building materials that created the facade revealed the shallowness of its idealistic vision. A deliberately designed midway showed that the Chicago planners accepted the public's desire for unrefined entertainment even as they promoted the midway's spurious scientific and educational value. Overall, this fair offered surface unity and sub-surface diversity. The marvels of the Philadelphia Centennial seventeen years before were overshadowed by the new technical advances. Instead of standing poised on the edge of the future, the Chicago Fair indicated that the future had arrived. The frontier had been conquered and the city skylines rose ever higher as if man had conquered and

now controlled his environment. This seeming control and unity, however, covered the increased social divisions as labor unrest grew and greed continued to govern men's actions. The individual had less control of his or her life. Money still conferred power, but now the money was no longer centered in the traditional cities of the East Coast. Literary power now came increasingly from the west and writers of Realism and Naturalism dominated.

When the 1915 the Panama-Pacific Exposition opened in San Francisco, the nation had moved from the optimistic Philadelphia celebration on the East Coast to the centrally located, insubstantial Chicago White City to the westernmost, management-oriented celebration of the opening of the Panama Canal. America crossed the continent with its fairs, and the Canal opening provided a sense of closure to the westward movement. Manufacturing magnates controlled assembly line production, and machines governed progress and the individual more clearly than before. Increased transportation and mobility further isolated individuals and families. Everyone wanted a home and the dream seemed more attainable, yet economic growth depended on the power of corporations that controlled their workers. America, apparently, had fulfilled the promise of progress of earlier fairs.⁵ However, authors showed that the individual was excluded from the promise.

Movement of the three fairs westward and their unfulfilled promises of a bright and stable future reflect in the novels written between 1876 and 1915. Although critics have discussed the relationship of society and literature to the American landscape, few have specifically applied the image of houses to the effects of change on the individual.⁶ The dominant images of houses and restless movement in the works of James, Howells, Wharton, and Norris show the progressive loss of individual identity and control. Characters grow increasingly isolated from society and traditional morality. Victorian America was a time of change, and individuals discovered they had little control over these changes. The architecture and design of the fairs provide a microcosm of this social change in nineteenth-century America. In Philadelphia, the architectural design was varied yet borrowed heavily from previous European fairs. At Chicago, the White City and its surroundings offered architectural and social control. At San Francisco urban development under the control of its planners further separated individuals as America faced potential involvement in a European war. The promises of the fairs remained unfulfilled as did the American dream of houses as places of security and identity.

It would be the authors of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century literature who would reveal the human misery that became a by-product of the efforts to

place a facade over America's social problems. People began to lose their identity when their lives were controlled by others who often measured value in terms of wealth. A woman without a home was often a victim. Cities supposedly held golden promises but undermined personal values in the interest of greed. Belief in the West as an area that offered adventure and opportunity fell prey to urban growth and control. Optimism based on independence of the human spirit often changed to pessimism as hopelessness surrounded the separated classes of American society. Authors such as Henry James, William Dean Howells, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Franklin Norris, and Upton Sinclair wrote novels that exposed the problems of nineteenth-century America. Other authors, such as Willa Cather, Kate Chopin, and Edith Wharton, targeted the changing roles of women. The works of these authors revealed the surface of civilization that covered the conflicts within. After 1893, the facade of unity expressed through the White City crumbled under the weight of labor strikes, financial panics, and class divisions. By 1915, the security of the home as accepted a century before was lost. The false promise of the fair stands revealed in American literature written between 1876 and 1915.

Notes

¹ When Friedrich Ratzel toured major cities of America in 1873 and 1874, he described the positive and negative aspects of rapid urban development, particularly the debris left behind by exploitation of natural and human resources. He visited New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco, among other cities and published his travels in 1876 as Sketches of Urban and Cultural Life in North America which Stewart Stehlin translated and edited in 1988.

² An overview of the history of world's fairs appears in Kenneth W. Luckhurst's The Story of Exhibitions and Richard Altick's The Shows of London besides the texts by Badger, Benedict, Cawelti, and Rydell cited in later chapters of this study.

³ Ellen Garvey has an interesting study that explores advertising as it commodifies elements of American society. She also explores the language of advertising as it enters both the parlor and American fiction and assigns specific roles as it promotes acceptance of gender and racial stereotypes. This growing assignment of value to persons coincides with the increasing mercantilism of the fairs.

⁴ Michael O'Malley describes the conflict that arose between agriculture and industry over the establishment of standardized time zones. He then describes this time-based

society as planting "a wedge between men and women and the natural world" and as establishing "new priorities for organizing society" and for "patterning daily life" (309).

⁵ Jack Larkin's The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790-1840, Thomas Schlereth's Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life 1876-1915, and Harvey Green's The Uncertainty of Every Life 1915-1945 describe the changing nature of life in America. These works focus on leisure activities, mobility, work patterns, houses, and economic change. Many of these areas connect directly to technical advances introduced at the fairs.

⁶ The following is a list of works that connect society and literature to the landscape. Alfred Kazin's A Writer's America: Landscape in Literature, Howard Horwitz's By the Law of Nature: Form and Value in Nineteenth-Century America, A. Carl Bredahl's New Ground: Western American Narrative and the Literary Canon, Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden, and Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude's The Countryside in the Age of Transformation.

Chapter I

The 1876 Centennial Exposition: Diversity and Industry

In 1876, the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia purported to celebrate the nation's past yet displayed little from Colonial history. The world's largest steam engine drew huge crowds, indicating interest in the future. The agricultural palace that reflected the interests of the still predominantly agrarian society also drew large crowds, reflecting the nation's desire to retain the traditional. Developers of the exposition provided various methods of transportation - streetcar, carriage, steamboat and railroads - for the visiting crowds. Some of the most popular exhibits included the railroad display, the elevated monorail, and vertical elevator, all denoting the developing interest in travel and the need to commute to and within urban work centers. Thus, Americans looked forward to a prosperous future governed by readily available and affordable transportation even as potential conflicts smoldered under the surface of a seemingly peaceful society.

The planning and operation of the fair reveal such contemporary concerns as labor unrest, women's suffrage, and growing consumerism. Exhibits of Native American artifacts reflected interest in the inevitable westward movement and the even more inevitable growth of settlements into cities.

Labor saving devices for the home drew crowds and showed the growing development of America's female work force outside the home. Exhibits of new patents and technology presaged the interest that would quickly increase during the following decades. The architecture of the fair was varied, and the art retained European influences, but both began to focus on the daily lives of ordinary men, women, and children.

America's participation in international fairs was, at first, tentative and sporadic.¹ However, the lure of new markets whetted America's desire to take its place among other nations as a manufacturing and cultural identity, led the country into more full participation in world fairs, and inspired America's own international exposition in Philadelphia in 1876.

In 1866, one year after the end of the Civil War, Professor John L. Campbell, a professor of mathematics, natural philosophy, and astronomy at Wabash College in Indiana, proposed "a great international exposition in the United States, testimony to the renewal of American unity" (Jones 139). Three years later, in 1869, the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia suggested Independence Hall as the most appropriate site for the Centennial celebration. In 1873, a year of financial panic in the United States, Congress passed a bill that created the Centennial Commission. President Grant, agreeing with the Franklin

Institute, announced Philadelphia as the site of the celebration and set the dates from mid-April to mid-October, "from the month of Lexington and Concord to the month when Columbus landed" (Jones 140). The exposition opened, however, on May 10, 1876, and closed the following November 10th.

Opening day ceremonies at the Centennial² represent in miniature the significance of this fair as it reflects the beginning of changes that would deeply affect American society. Politicians visiting the fair illustrate the chaos of Grant's administration and foreshadow the disputed Hayes-Tilden election. The foreign dignitaries show the international response to the exposition. Authors who participated in the ceremonies were revered but would not strongly influence future literary movements.³ Even the seating arrangements, particularly those of the women committee members, illustrate the divisive nature of the Women's Suffrage Movement. Saloons, restaurants, curbside eating places, and the inevitable pickpockets, confidence games, and rowdies outside the fairgrounds represent the almost raucous element that appeared to take advantage of the crowds of people attending the fair. This area came to be called Centennial City and presented a marked contrast with the exposition's ideals. One of the more famous displays in Centennial City was a "museum" that housed for viewing "wild men of Borneo, . . . wild children of

Australia, the fat woman, . . . and pure and unadulterated man-eaters" (Rydell 34). Because of the nature of its citizens, the dangerous fires that occurred and, an unfortunate incident involving two ladies of the evening and a Centennial exhibitor, this area was soon identified as undesirable and as contradictory to the aura of inevitable prosperity and urbanity surrounding the fair and its exhibits.⁴ The attempt to close or control this area shows a refusal to accept or to see the growing dissatisfaction with the differences in individual power of choice between the wealthy and the working class and/or poor. Finally, two months before the Centennial ended, the Philadelphia authorities demolished Centennial City.

When the time approached for the official opening, the crowd good-naturedly jostled each other as the visitors watched the special guests arrive and take their places on the decorated grandstand and in the reserved seating. These special guests included an interesting mixture illustrating contemporary interests. Politicians included Secretaries Fish and Bristow, who were seeking the Republican nomination for president. Military notables, symbolizing the Civil War that had ended a decade before and the ongoing Indian wars in the West, included Generals Phil Sheridan, William T. Sherman, Winfield Scott Hancock, Irvin McDowell, and Admiral David Porter. Cyrus Field and J. Pierpont Morgan represented business and industry, and foreign diplomats

from countries such as Austria, France, and Turkey mingled with the crowd of dignitaries. Sitting to one side in a group were the members of the Women's Centennial Committee. Dressed mostly in white, they attended the event but did not sit with the other honored guests. The author Longfellow sat on the stand, as did, eventually, Frederick Douglass.⁵ Despite a shortage of seats for the noted guests and the journalists, the ceremonies opened with Maestro Theodore Thomas conducting "The Washington March." The hymn for the Centennial was written by John Greenleaf Whittier at the urging of Bayard Taylor.⁶ Sidney Lanier wrote a cantata entitled "Centennial Meditation of Columbia." This impressive array of important American artists reinforced the nation's need to display their respected and, thus safe, representatives of American culture.

President Grant's speech was brief and succinct as he compared the progress of the past 100 years with the present state of America. He pointed out that America had expended her energy, during the past 100 years, on providing the necessities for establishing a nation - such necessities as conquering the land and building homesteads, then establishing the cities that followed the transportation advances. He then added, "we yet have done what this exhibition will show in the direction of rivaling older and more advanced nations in law, medicine, and theology; in science, literature, philosophy, and the fine arts. Whilst

proud of what we have done, we regret that we have not done more" (Brown 127). Although Grant does list past successes and achievements, he focuses on the future, particularly America's position in relation to European and other world nations. America's honored guest at the opening ceremonies was Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil, who excited the interest and applause of Americans because of his courteous and unassuming manners. Other visitors and exhibitors garnered interest but primarily because of their exotic differences. The Japanese were described as industrious and intriguing, but the French were universally described as rapacious in their financial dealings. One "foreign" exhibit that enticed visitors was the American Indian villages. This exhibit, however, was quietly dismantled and never reestablished when the news of Custer's defeat at Little Big Horn reached the population of the eastern United States. Intended to promote national unity, progress, and international markets, the fair effectively ignored the native Americans, courted the countries within the same hemisphere, and competed with the European nations.

President Grant and Dom Pedro together turned the handle that started the giant Corliss engine (Fig. 1,2). Amid the cheers of the crowd and the sound of escaping steam, the engine moved the walking beams which began "rising and falling until the cogged flywheel gathered momentum, setting a shaft in motion" (Brown 129). As fair

goers watched, the Corliss engine "energized the seventy-five miles of belts and shafts driving shining rows of machinery--lathes and saws, drills and looms, presses and pumps that increasingly characterized the American workplace" (Schlereth, Victorian 1). The "athlete of steel and iron" awed visitors as its silent operation foreshadowed America's continued growth and dominance of the industrial sector (Rydell 15). The Corliss engine provided the energy for all the exhibits in Machinery Hall. In spite of pride in American machinery and its capabilities, the planners of the Centennial placed on view only the clean-lined, external mechanism. The steam boiler remained hidden from both sight and sound in a nearby building. This segregation of the dirty, noisy portion from the relatively pristine and quiet public display reflects the determination to exhibit only the best elements of progress, even suggesting the almost utopian future that could arise from America's industrial growth. Machines would improve life, not degrade it. Surely the future would be bright with such machines to improve an individual's life. The Corliss engine remains an enduring symbol of the Centennial and America's hopes for a bright, mechanized future.

As President Grant and Dom Pedro set the Corliss engine into motion, they also set in motion the 169 days of the Centennial's life. During the six months that the fair existed, visitors enjoyed the exhibits and sights amid the

park designed by Hermann J. Schwarzmann, who "in less than two years . . . moved 5,000,000 cubic yards of earth, planted 153 acres of lawns and flower beds, and transplanted more than 20,000 trees and shrubs, thereby transforming 284 acres of fields and ravines into a lovely sylvan park" (Schlereth, "Philadelphia" 206). This combination of man-created nature and a variety of architectural styles and mechanical wonders typified the American fascination with and acceptance of "the machine in the garden." Detailed planning of the exposition indicated the Victorian American idea that cities could be planned and organized in an orderly fashion and set the stage for the planning of successive fairs (Fig. 3). Americans also believed that people could impose order on their lives in the same way that they could landscape nature into their cities.⁷ The wilderness of America was not only tamed but also considered a commodity for development and use without any interest in or desire for conservation. The unsettled, unspoiled areas of America were now accessible because of improved, expanded means of transportation. To the nineteenth-century American, the ability to travel easily from one part of the country to another opened the country to tourist travel as an accepted right of those who could afford it.

While many visitors to the Centennial had used the main form of long distance travel, overland transportation by rail, or steamboat or horse-drawn streetcar, the hundreds

of carriages displayed at the Carriage Building indicated the prominence of carriages as the principal mode of everyday travel. Whatever their method of transportation, Americans were fascinated with the concept and the energy of rapid and extensive transportation implicit in the variety of modes of transportation, both horizontal and vertical. The ability to move freely and rapidly had become an important part of the American identity. Mobility was seen as the key to progress; immobility meant stagnation. Those who lived in the past or in rural areas were seen as denying or not participating in America's progress. Permanence of location became a choice not a necessity in this new America, and the Centennial celebration prominently displayed the nation's capability for future continental expansion.

New and old forms of transportation were not the only exhibits of interest to fair visitors. They delighted in seeing new inventions, historical displays (few as they were), and unusual presentations from American and foreign life. New inventions at the Centennial included an electric lamp, an automatic baby feeder, a gas-heated flat iron operated with a foot bellows, a wheeled stool in which babies could learn to walk, the new typewriting machine, on which a visitor could have a letter written for a mere 50 cents, and Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, which "attracted less notice than the package of magic tricks on

sale nearby" (Brown 133). Visitors to the newspaper pavilion could read for free a newspaper from one of the 10,000 pigeon holes that held papers from every state in the union. Many fair goers enjoyed cheese samples given away at the cheese factory; others paid a 50-cent fee to watch Old Abe, the eagle mascot of a Wisconsin Civil War regiment as he ate live chickens and flapped his wings for the crowd.

Historical exhibits at the Centennial were very limited. Visitors could view "a pair of false teeth once used by George Washington," remnants of revolutionary War uniforms, and the design and contents of a 1776 New England kitchen (Schlereth, "Philadelphia" 207). The colonial kitchen was on display within a New England Log House. Women wearing colonial costumes showed, used, and explained homemaking devices of the previous century. The huge fireplace with its turkey cooking on the spit amazed visitors who did not always understand the simplicity of the cooking tools used (Burns 266). The primitive household tools seemed far removed from the world of the nineteenth-century homemaker with her access to modern machinery and technology that would revolutionize her life. Fairgoers displayed little interest in the exhibits from the past; they were far more interested in the future of America as a contributing member of international society. Even at this early world's fair, Americans could observe changes that would affect their central source of stability, the home.

The primary buildings of the Centennial included the Main Exhibition Building, Agricultural Building, Machinery Hall, Horticultural Building, Art Gallery, Woman's Pavilion, The United States Government Building, and Judges Hall. In design, contents, and exhibit arrangements, the buildings of the Centennial reflected the often conflicting ideas of life in Victorian America.

The Machinery Hall and its exhibits reflected the growing number, influence, and importance of factories in America in 1876. Machinery Hall covered four times as much ground as St. Peter's, but its long barnlike pavilion was quite ordinary once its mighty skeleton had been covered and its main distinction lay in the "plunge and clatter of its machines [that] marked American progress" (Larkin 240). Machinery Hall housed the marvelous Corliss engine that President Grant had set into motion. Visitors watched with pride in American progress as the "pair of monster Corliss steam engines with their fifty-five-ton flywheels supplied the power for all the exhibits in the fourteen-acre building" (Lynes 278). As the mighty pistons rose and fell, visitors watched the engine power "the looms that spun silk handkerchiefs and wove carpets, the mechanisms that drilled rock, made cigars, and turned out galoshes" right in front of the people (Larkin 242). The power of the engine awed and fascinated visitors. The future, which included harnessing such power, could only bring prosperity and ease for

everyone. Fair visitors did not question the coming changes in economic control or the effects of industrialization. They merely marveled and hungered for the products. A consumer society was born.

If the Corliss Engine demonstrated the power and fascination of mechanization in American society as a whole and the attempt to control and utilize this power, so too did the power of the machine enter and invade the daily, domestic life of American women, illustrating that women also wanted control of their world and willingly sought and obtained the education (engineering, design, and operation strategies) necessary to master and utilize the new technology. Women, led by the organizers of the Woman's pavilion, participated in the mainstream of American life even if their building was separate and paid for by their own fund-raising efforts.⁸ (Fig. 4) Many of the displays were designed "to economize household labor" (Andrews 176). Exhibited by the women and built by the women designers and engineers were

a machine for washing blankets, two mangling machines, a locked barrel-cover to prevent loss of sugar and flour, gas-heated irons, a frame for stretching and dyeing curtains, dusting racks, a dishwashing machine, which not only cleans but dries, a bedstead with drawers, a combination traveling-bag and chair, a mattress, designed to

float and resist turning over which served as a life saver, [and] surgical and dental appliances for home use. (Andrews 177)

These items show the far reaching interests of women reformers who advocated the role of women as scientific engineers of the domestic setting and certainly reveal the activities of particular interest to women of the time. Whether or not the inventors were homemakers, they did operate beyond the traditional domestic sphere of the home. With these labor saving devices women could move out of the home and establish their place in this new world of political and economic power. Yet, it would be decades before women achieved political equality in spite of their increased involvement in the American fairs. As the fair shows, the role of women was changing, and Victorian authors such as James and Howells incorporated the "new woman" in their novels. Penelope Lapham and Henrietta Stackpole are two young women who represent changing attitudes and the difficulty of women being accepted in a new social context.

Memorial Hall with its granite steps, bronze eagles with outspread wings, and its glass and iron dome "topped by a colossal figure of Columbia" housed art exhibits from around the world as well as the United States (Fig. 5). The 75,000 square feet of wall space for display of paintings and the 20,000 square feet of floor space for display of sculpture had seemed adequate when the building was

designed; however, an additional annex at the rear of the structure was needed to house the entire exhibit (Lynes 278). The art displayed at the Centennial reveals Victorian concerns with style, subject matter, and, most importantly, the size of art. Many contemporary art critics and visitors to the Centennial accepted the prevailing idea that the bigger the painting the better, the more unusual the better. In art, as in other areas, the artists from the past excited little interest. The main attraction, which shows another aspect of an art, advertising, that would later become prevalent, was the "universally popular ensnarer of men, Cleopatra in extreme dishabille--done in wax and animated" which Howells describes as

attended by a single cupid, whose ruff, as he moved his head, shows the jointure of his neck; a weary parrot on her finger opens and shuts its wings, and she rolls her head alluringly from side to side and faintly lifts her right arm and lets it drop again--for twelve hours every day. Unlike many sculptures this has no vagueness of sentiment, and it explicitly advertises a museum of anatomy in Philadelphia. (93)

It is not surprising that Howells later writes about the crassness of a newly-rich businessman who plasters advertising of his product throughout the landscape. The overt advertising bonanza of the Centennial also appears in

contemporary issues of the New York Times. In the Classified Section of the May 11, 1876, issue, readers discovered they could purchase copies of Whittier's "Centennial Hymn" and copies of a conveniently issued volume of the Centennial Edition of Whittier's Poems. Also available was the Revolutionary Times, which included sketches of America a century ago, and copies of "America's Centennial Grand March." One advertisement on this same page posed a question about the mystery surrounding the date for opening day selected for the Centennial. The advertisement continued with the response that the opening day selection might remain a mystery but that there was no mystery about public interest in Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machines. The closing day edition, November 10, 1876, contained advertisements by the Elastic Truss Co., which claimed to have won the "highest award granted any exhibitor by the Centennial Exposition," and the Electro Silicon, a silver polishing compound, which received a Premium Award. While using special occasions or awards won as a means of advertising products is not so unusual, this activity does illustrate the merchandising that developed out of a celebration originally planned as a patriotic event. As in the twentieth century, advertisers were more concerned with reaching an audience of patriotic consumers than with refinement of taste in subject or advertising medium.

Memorial Hall contained other works of art newly introduced to the fair visitors; however, many of these were already considered out of date by contemporary critics. In spite of the sometimes shocked reactions at foreign displays of flesh in art and the apparent commercialization of some American exhibits, the art galleries at the Centennial and other fairs inspired the inception and expansion of "new metropolitan museums of art" (Schlereth, Victorian 1). Certainly the exhibits created an interest in art in those newly rich members of the middle class who were looking for additional ways to spend money and needed to learn what to purchase and display in the way of the latest and most exotic art available, particularly from European artists. Americans did not seem to have confidence in their own ability to produce "real art" and assumed only Europe could supply their needs.

An additional contribution, and a more lasting one than most of the art exhibited in Memorial Hall, came from the British Pavilion. English architect, Richard Norman Shaw, introduced the architectural style which he named "Queen Anne." The quaint, yet new, design featured the tall chimneys that Americans expected to find on Elizabethan country homes and "steeply peaked roofs and frequently an octagonal corner tower" (Lynes 278). Along the outside of the house ran sheltered balconies or porches that were furnished with wicker furniture and rugs woven of straw. In

this way, the outside and the inside merged as living space yet offered a quality of comfort not usually possible outdoors. The rest of the outer design included "roof lines [that] were frequently broken with high gables" (Lynes 278). This departure from the traditional design of houses further illustrates the Victorian American fascination with the unusual and the ornately decorative.

The external design allowed the builder and/or the home owner to indulge personal taste in decoration, dependent only upon the imagination and the carpenter's ability to use the scroll saw and the spindle lathe. The open interior of the Queen Anne design flowed from a large central hall with a fireplace and staircase to the upper floors. The central hall could serve as living space, and the flexible design allowed adaptation for almost any economic group. Larger homes built according to this design required three or four servants to maintain them. However, the smaller or scaled down homes for the less than wealthy served a more relaxed and informal life style. The basic plan of the Queen Anne style and its flexibility in regard to future additions made it a popular and economically accessible home. "The Centennial made Queen Anne everyman's dream of a dwelling for about thirty years and filled towns with such houses from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, and from Minneapolis to Dallas" (Lynes 281). Out of the Centennial exhibit came a popular home design that allowed Americans to

exercise their propensity to use technology in building and combine it with their love of the exotic in internal and external decoration. In their novels, both James and Howells illustrate how focusing on external and interior decoration dominates their characters' beliefs about themselves and others.

As the architectural style of the Centennial exhibition was basically no style at all, it reflected the changing face of American architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century. The mixture of plain houses based on function and need and the overly ornate decoration imposed on the basic frame had its source in the rush to take full advantage of machinery's contribution to art. In a futile attempt to create some kind of a unified building style for the Centennial, two different competitions were held to design the grounds and buildings; however, the official report, according to Tallmadge, explains, "Owing to the difficulty of harmonizing the various designs submitted, the management discarded them all and selected their own engineers" (163). Many contemporary reviews of the Centennial's physical description praised the lawns and flower and tree gardens and focused on the amount of earth moving, filling, fertilizing, and drainage involved in the process of creating the fair grounds. However, the planners made no serious attempt at an artistic landscaping plan

because their primary interest lay in the engineering feats rather than artistic unity.

The architectural design, or lack of unified design, of the Centennial was a product of the changes occurring in the world of American architecture. The "shingle" house with its spacious, open plan was organized for "comfort and practicality" with "ample porches and high pitched gabled roofs" as the basic format for the architecture that developed in the late 1870's and 1880's (Mendelowitz 251). The simple functional designs of homes were also repeated in the design of barns, meeting houses, silos, factories and warehouses that essentially carried forward the utilitarian style of the Puritan past (Mendelowitz 251). With the advent, however, of machines and the interest in engineering and building, American architecture underwent changes. No longer were homes built by owners or a local carpenter who followed a basic pattern. The buildings became the responsibility of builders or carpenters, engineers, and architects.

Mendelowitz cites three important architectural events in the nineteenth century that contributed major changes. The first important architectural event was the construction of the Crystal Palace in 1851 by Sir Joseph Paxton (Fig 6). Sir Paxton built this building for the World's Fair by using glass and a cast iron frame that he prefabricated and then bolted together. In this building "almost a million square

feet of glass covered 17 acres of floor space," and the entire structure could be dismantled for rebuilding at another site or dismantled for scrap to use in several later buildings (Mendelowitz 246). Although this new building technique had no immediate impact on architecture, it did excite public interest, and New York later built its own Crystal Palace for its fair. According to Mendelowitz, "The principle of strength through precision replaced the ancient one of strength through mass" (246-47).

The second important event was the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 (Fig 7). With this structure, engineers spanned the river with a suspension bridge that utilized steel instead of the standard masonry (246). Mumford describes the construction of the bridge as the point at which "the architecture of the past, massive and protective, meets the architecture of the future, light, aerial, open to sunlight . . . both a fulfillment and a prophecy" (104). Besides representing a structural innovation, the bridge also shows the importance of travel and transportation of people and goods.

The third major architectural event, the construction of the Eiffel Tower in Paris in 1889, anticipated the concrete and iron girders of the skyscrapers that would line the horizon of American cities before the end of the century (Fig 8). The Eiffel Tower also fulfilled a need for a permanent structure symbolizing Parisian pride. Americans

in 1876 developed no such permanent and representative structure but never ceased to try. The enduring symbol of the Philadelphia Centennial was the Corliss engine. America had to wait until the Ferris wheel dominated the landscape at Chicago. Even then this particular engineering marvel did not endure except as a popular ride brought to county and state fairs by touring carnivals.

In nineteenth century America, the role of the architects changed as they became more designers than builders or engineers. The engineer or builder became more concerned with implementing new technology in construction and responding to the physical needs of the rapidly growing society. Three groups helped define the nature of building between 1865 and 1913. The first group consisted of the "undisciplined builders" who did most of the construction work of the time. The second group was "the architects trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition" who produced the more refined product. The third group developed new forms of construction designed by "a few imaginative designers" who merged the "new engineering technology with the disciplined taste of the Beaux-Arts architects" (Mendelowitz 248). As architecture evolved, whether for homes, cottages, villas, tenements, or mansions, the owner and builder had less control over the finished product than did the architect or the engineer. This removal of responsibility for building a home further separated individuals from the sense of place,

engendered by personal design and creation, that can provide identity and stability. Homes, increasingly, became status symbols, symbols of one's ability to buy an artist and his designs.

In the eastern part of the United States the residential buildings were the relatively uninteresting brownstone-front row houses of New York, the brick rows of Philadelphia and Baltimore, and the wooden "three-deckers" of Boston. These rather staid residences resisted the rapidly growing desire to overlay homes with decoration. However, some houses, particularly those located toward the West, certainly utilized the latest in machine decoration and were built and designed in response to technological, financial, and demographic changes immediately preceding and following the 1876 Centennial Exposition.⁹

While many of the newly rich transportation and merchandising families did build extremely large and ornate homes, usually vacation retreats, the rapidly growing towns of the West responded more eagerly to the new trend in architecture which united the roles of carpenter, engineer, and architect so that homes became the product of a group of specialists rather than the singular identity of builder and owner. Many architectural plan books published between 1870 and 1890 maintained the optimistic premise that future home owners should build their houses anticipating prosperity. Samuel B. Reed's House-Plans for Everybody, for example, is

based on the belief that a house plans has a direct relationship to the "character of its inhabitants" (Handlin 365) The broad range of prices from \$250 to \$8,000 implied that "as a person's fortune increased, he would be able to live in progressively more sumptuous houses" (366) Most architects and engineers anticipated the expected expansion in size and decorations and began to build accordingly. As individuals prospered and added to their homes, they also increasingly added more machine-made decorations to display their wealth. Since the mid-nineteenth century also saw the beginning of the savings and loan companies, the availability of money to build homes coupled with the new house as a symbol of wealth and self-worth further increased the market for homebuilders, designers, and engineers.

As the field of architecture expanded in response to the technology displayed at the Centennial, American began to believe that owning a home represented a fundamental piece of the American dream. House imagery appearing in nineteenth century literature at the same time provides insight into the relationship of individuals to their homes. Other areas of American life also reveal the changes that stemmed from the Centennial Exposition. In the world of art, the subject matter and form also revealed the changing attitudes and concerns of Victorian America. Of particular interest is the changing role of agriculture and the plight

of urban America as revealed in the use of houses in contemporary art.

The art displayed in Memorial Hall and its annex continued the pattern of the Centennial as a time and place in American cultural history when the nation revealed its almost provincial uncertainty and concern about its place in the international display of wares. The international nature of the exhibit was a mixture of the past and the future and urbanity and frivolity. At Fairmount Park fifteen rooms held the more than one thousand American paintings that illustrated America's interest in the new rather than in the old. Included in the retrospective group were Copley's John Adams, West's Death of Wolfe, Morse's Lafayette, and ten offerings by Stuart. In addition to these paintings were genre studies such as Eastman Johnson's Old Kentucky Home, which had also been displayed at the Paris Exhibition, Winslow Homer's Snap the Whip, Walter Shirlaw's Toning of the Bell, John F. Weir's Gun Foundry, and William M. Hunt's Bootblack. Also included among the smaller paintings exhibited were over one hundred of Catlin's Indian scenes, reflecting the artistic interest in the rapidly settled Western plains. Landscape paintings, however, drew the most interest and won the majority of the prizes given at the Centennial. Overall, the art display at the Centennial lacked any unity of concept or ideal except that bigger is better and more is best. Larkin summarizes

the artistic mood as adhering to "an international standard in accordance with which a work of art must first impress by size alone, must then reveal the most polished manufacture" and finally present "a torturing of materials up to their limit of endurance" by their very intent to shock, overlay until identity itself disappears under an encrustation of "water lilies and garter snakes" (Larkin 242). Not until after the Centennial did recognition come for artists who did not work in the traditional form of the large landscapes. The later artists painted scenes of life with all of its gaiety and struggles with daily activities. For example, Thomas Eakins, whose work The Gross Clinic had been rejected by the Centennial committee, painted "baseball games, oarsmen, pugilists, [and] wrestlers" as well as the rejected scenes of surgical operations (Morison 91). In Boston and Prout's Neck, Maine, Winslow Homer painted scenes from country life including deer hunting, sailing parties, fishermen, and children's games and presented each scene with "exceptional simplicity of vision and vigorous technique" (Morison 91). Western scenes by Frederic Remington brought the life of the cowboy into equal popularity with the eastern seacoast subjects of Homer. While few of these works incorporated houses into the scenes, their reality as they depicted daily life of ordinary people reinforces the concepts of literary realism as offered by James and Howells.

Art that most clearly represents the changes in American society includes the lithographs and woodcuts printed and distributed in the decades preceding the Centennial, during the exposition, and in the decade following the celebration. Currier and Ives lithographs were very popular, particularly those by the first woman to serve on their staff, Fanny Palmer. The building that contained only works of photography drew a tepid response as recorded by a reporter for the Atlantic Monthly who said, "a photograph can never be a work of art, for art requires the direct intervention of the human hand and soul" (Tallmadge 162). It is interesting that technology was so readily incorporated into architectural design and decoration but photography would not be accepted as an art form until the twentieth century. Since art displays at world expositions offered the wealthy a place to view potential purchases, it is not surprising that the still somewhat uncertain millionaires of Victorian America eschewed this mechanical form of artistic representation in favor of the more ornate works.

Works painted or engraved between 1854 and 1881 show an interesting shift of focus regarding the houses presented in the works. In the earlier works, the representation of the home symbolized security and prosperity, usually in an agrarian setting. The later works displayed an ambivalence about the home as security and shows that prosperity was not

available to everyone and that not everyone had a snug and "vine-covered cottage" in the present or would have on the future.

An oil on canvas by Francis William Edmonds entitled Taking the Census illustrates a traditional indoor scene around the hearth (Fig. 9). Parents and well-fed smiling children, neatly dressed in subdued colors, sit and stand near the hearth as the courtly-appearing old gentlemen records the census information. The uncluttered mantel holds a clock and above the mantel hangs a picture of George Washington, symbol of patriotism and a great tradition. The house is neat and spare, with comforts but no obvious frills. This domestic and tranquil scene may be the epitome of America's family values rooted in the traditional vision of the home as repository and source of these homely values.

In 1871 Currier & Ives published the lithograph, Peace and Plenty, which offers another view of the simple life of rural America (Fig. 10). In this outdoor scene, the overall mood is one of serenity and satisfaction. The wide country lane that runs in front of the dwelling is bordered by trees, fences, and plentiful livestock. The farmer's wagon is full of harvested crops and the general air of prosperity is clear. The house has two levels and three chimneys and a well-cared-for appearance. The woman on the porch holds a child as the man stands at the gate welcoming the man driving the wagon. This rural scene seems designed to

advertise the prosperity and goodness of life in the country. The house is close to the road and readily accessible, as if it contributes more than mere shelter and is actually the inevitable reward of a hardworking country lifestyle. The house and farm buildings are plain in style and dominate the picture.

Continuing the motif of the Currier & Ives work is another lithograph, Gift for the Grangers, printed in 1873 (Fig 11). In this work the value of rural life is more explicit. In the center is a portrait of a prosperous, husky, shirt-sleeved farmer with a large, simply designed farmhouse behind him. Underneath his portrait appear the words "I Pay for All." Surrounding the farmer are smaller drawings of rustic life with simple farm houses and simple work and leisure activities. The farmer and house seem central to the rewards of country life. Large houses in the background sit upon hillsides as if looking over the fruits of man's labor. These houses represent the source of strength for the farmer in the center and reappear in the felicitous activities surrounding the center scene. Underneath this prosperous grouping is a drawing of another house, dilapidated and run down, with signs reading "sloth" and "ignorance" nailed to the broken-down fence in front of the unkempt and devastated yard. The contrast reinforces the idea of hardworking farmers and illustrates, through the use of house imagery, the dangers of failure to recognize

their contributions to society. The dilapidated home could be the loss of agrarian strength or the ultimate deterioration in the nation with the loss of rural values and labor.

A wood engraving appearing in Harper's Weekly Magazine on December 16, 1876, shows state exhibits of agricultural goods at the Centennial. This work by Theodore Davis is entitled The Centennial--State Exhibits in Agricultural Hall (Fig. 12). This work presents several apparent contrasts among fair goers and their interests. The displays of crops as presented by the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Ohio, and California illustrate the coast- to-coast range of agriculture and the agricultural bounty of these states. At each display stand, men and women in rather plain dress reach out to touch the products or point to them providing explanations to the children observing the display. The children in the work are plainly dressed and carry lunch pails, suggesting these are children of working class families. Walking, somewhat isolated from the others, is a modishly dressed, seemingly urban couple who have their eyes averted from the display or from the more modestly dressed rural visitors or exhibitors. This couple, representing the more affluent, urban areas, suggests a separation that has already begun in American society, a movement away from Jeffersonian agrarian beliefs toward an industrialized

society that lost sight of the contribution of the individual.

Five years later, in 1881, an oil on canvas by Thomas Hovenden, titled The Old Version, presents a quite different view of the hearth and homestead (Fig. 13). In this work, an old couple sit in rockers while he reads from the Bible and she listens. The furnishings are sparse - a clock on the wall to measure the passing time, a corner cupboard with a single teapot, a religious painting on the wall, figured carpet, and a footstool upon which to rest the feet. This serene painting also projects a sense of something no longer vital, as if the peace within the home is quietly slipping away because of lack of vitality. The old couple seem left behind, alone and isolated, no longer a viable part of a growing nation. The past, represented by the couple and their home, is dusty, dreary, and almost forgotten.

In another work of the Centennial year, Sol Eytinge shows the changing social conditions of the nineteenth century and the still sentimentalized vision of hearth and home. Eytinge's wood engraving, The Hearth-Stone of the Poor, appeared in Harper's Weekly Magazine on February 12, 1876 (Fig. 14). The scene obviously occurs on the street of a city during a snowstorm. Six children huddle around the steam venting from the sidewalk grate. Sharing its warmth with a half-starved dog, the poorly dressed children have no

other home. One girl shares her blanket with a much younger child, and one boy carries on his back his bootblackening equipment. Walking behind this group, a man and woman and their two children create a strong contrast. The man and woman do not appear to see the huddled children, although their clean, bright-faced children try to call attention to the group. The father, smoking a cigar and wearing a top hat, marches straight ahead, ignoring the pitiable sight. This engraving shows that although the industrial harnessing of steam obviously fuels the printing plant, the steam also provides warmth; however, the cold, snowy urban streets serving as the hearthstone reveals the negative impact of industrialization and progress. Of course, the affluent couple's refusal to acknowledge the huddled group of poor children illustrates the separation of classes that has grown more evident in the nineteenth century with the growth of industry and the growing disparity in wealth.

The art of the Centennial decade certainly offers an interesting perspective on the changing society of nineteenth-century America. On the one side, artists illustrating the reality of everyday life focused on individual activities as they represented change. On the other side, "cosmopolitanism became the common denominator of mainstream architecture and painting" as American visitors at the fair seemed inclined to accept the idea that size denotes worth and that European schools of art were

preferable to "dismally provincial and painfully homespun" works by American artists (Burns 190). However, once again, art created by machine, photography, held no allure for American critics. At the same time the spare and utilitarian lines of the machine inspired critics such as Howells to judge America's "engineering superior to her art" (Larkin 242). The art displayed during the Centennial and published during the same time represents clearly the confusion of America as the nation remembered the past in celebration but certainly did not revere that past in any artistic representation.

As the year of the Centennial celebration drew to a close, Americans prepared to leap forward into a future replete with technology to improve daily lives. Americans at the Centennial had reveled in new experiences and tried to forget the troubling events of the year and even the decade. The nation survived the impeachment proceedings against Secretary of War William W. Belknap and heard the apology of President Grant as he attributed the scandals in his second administration to "errors of judgment, not intent" (Schlereth, "Philadelphia" 201). In 1876, the first Prohibition Amendment was introduced, thus explaining the ban against alcoholic beverages at the Centennial. The Greenback Party held its first national convention, and the controversial Hayes-Tilden campaign and election filled the daily newspapers. Boss Tweed was extradited back to New

York from Spain, and news reached the East that General Custer had been defeated by the Sioux at Little Big Horn. During the summer of 1876, twenty Molly Maguires were executed in the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania, and names like Astor, Belmont, and Vanderbilt crowded the financial and social news. The vast differences between the lives of the newly rich and the poor working class had become more evident.

The growing schism between the working class and the prosperous factory and mill owners is clearly evident at the Centennial. Fund-raising through subscription resulted in major blocks of voting and decision making shares being owned by large companies. As Rydell lists, "Out of 22,776 total votes, the Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Railroad had 11,400, the LeHigh Valley Railroad 2,400, the A.P. Railroad 1,420, Thomas W. Price, 1,000, John B. Ellison and Sons 900, and Lippincott Publishing Company 500" (18). While the promoters of the fair encouraged and needed nationwide participation, obviously the wealthy had more control over the fair than did any other group. Companies did encourage their employees to buy shares. Owners believed financial involvement by employees promoted an understanding of the benefits derived from progress and the overwhelming ideal of progress closely tied to patriotic duty through support of the Centennial project. The equation for progress was material gain equals human dignity, and the planners

advertised the fair as a meeting place for all Americans to unite and overcome financial depressions, heal Civil War disruption, and extol the virtues of material growth. Ironically, the working class American could not be assured of seeing this panorama of American progress. Laborers worked six days a week and the fair closed at 6:00 p.m. daily and was closed all day Sunday. Efforts to change this schedule to accommodate workers failed.¹⁰

Recognition, however, of the importance of worldwide competition in manufacturing made many employers aware of the need to expose their employees to new technology, especially American technology. Several companies organized excursions to the fair during the week and even invited and paid for families to accompany the worker. Yale Lock Company sent 120 employees, and owners of Baltimore cotton mills sent 4000 women (Rydell 33). Some of the largest employer-paid excursions were organized by railroad and coal mining companies. Recent labor unrest and the turmoil engendered by the Molly Maguires certainly fostered this generosity. Thousands of workers and their families received free transportation to the Centennial, free entrance, and even free meals to pacify labor and prevent or, at least, slow and control the developing interest in unions. At the very least, the Centennial expeditions offered a day off; at the most, from the perspective of the factory owners, the fair offered visions of material

progress attainable through hard work, competition, and national unity. Social divisions based on income were an undercurrent of the 1876 Centennial celebration.

During the first 100 years of the nation's life, the population had grown from 4 million to 40 million people. During the next 4 decades the population would increase to 76 million people. From 1776 to 1876 the number of states increased from 13 to 38, and the ratio of urban population to total population increased from 3.4 percent in 1790 to 16.1 percent in 1860 to 31.1 percent by 1900. While the number of states increased as a result of westward expansion and development, the populations of the cities increased tremendously, in part because of increased immigration and industrialization. The total number of immigrants into the United States between 1820 and 1907 was 25,985,237, the peak period occurring between 1872 and 1902. The rapid advance of the railroad systems during this time period certainly accounted, in part, for the number of changes in American demographics. In 1880 there were 93,000 miles of railroads, and in 1920 there were 253,000 miles. Transportation had become easier, faster, and more accessible during the decades following the Centennial year.

Other changes illustrate the character of American society during this time period. The Lyceum as a form of intellectual entertainment declined in favor of musicians and humorists as the primary sources of entertainment.

Celebrities or speakers who spoke luridly about the details of a notorious life drew large audiences. In agriculture, the National Grange movement enjoyed rapid growth as rural concerns led to involvement in politics to fight for rural economic survival particularly against high rail rates and even the suggested changes in time zones to accommodate transportation schedules (Brown 300). Manufacturers needed more organized time schedules for rail deliveries, and farmers strongly opposed the suggested time zones that were imposed by the urban factory owners. Ultimately, the individual lost to the urban, manufacturing power base.

Visitors to the Centennial celebration focused on the future and did not expect or want too many reminders of their past. The rapidity of the social, financial, and technological changes ultimately affected the role of the individual in the final three decades of the nineteenth century. Given the attention paid to architectural developments and the pursuit of material gain, not surprising that writers of this time period used house imagery to illustrate the patterns of change affecting Americans. Authors such as Henry James and William Dean Howells used houses and their relationship to characters, though not necessarily their owners, in their works to symbolize the same concerns in American society revealed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876.

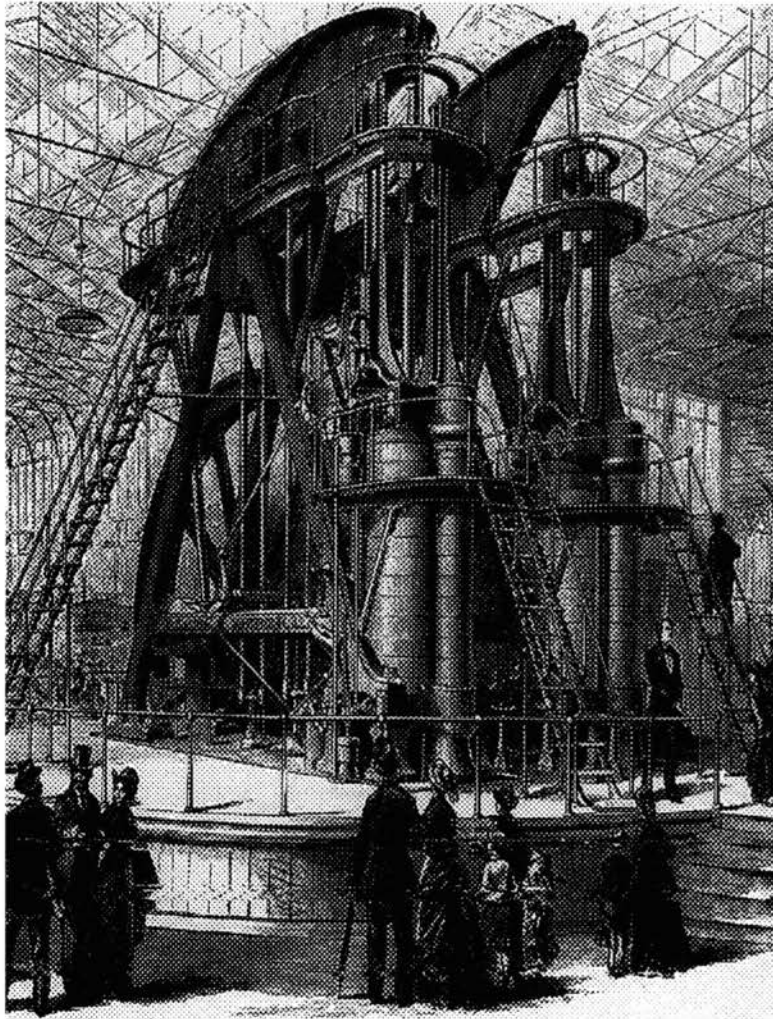
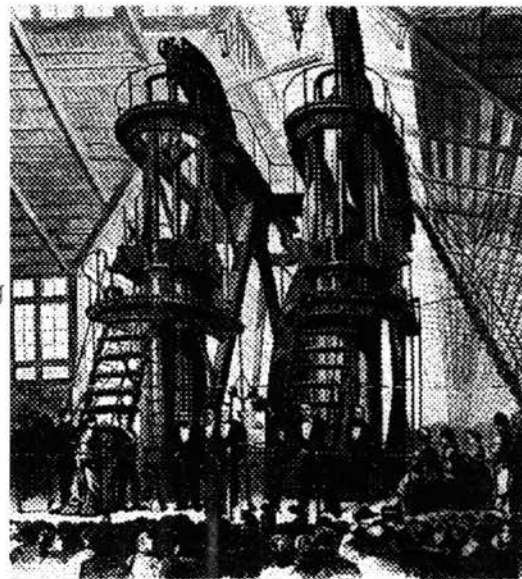


Fig. 1
The Double
Corliss
Engine at the
Philadelphia
Centennial
Exposition
(Jones i)

Fig. 2 President Grant
and Dom Pedro of Brazil
on opening day preparing
to start the Corliss
Engine (McLanathan 323)



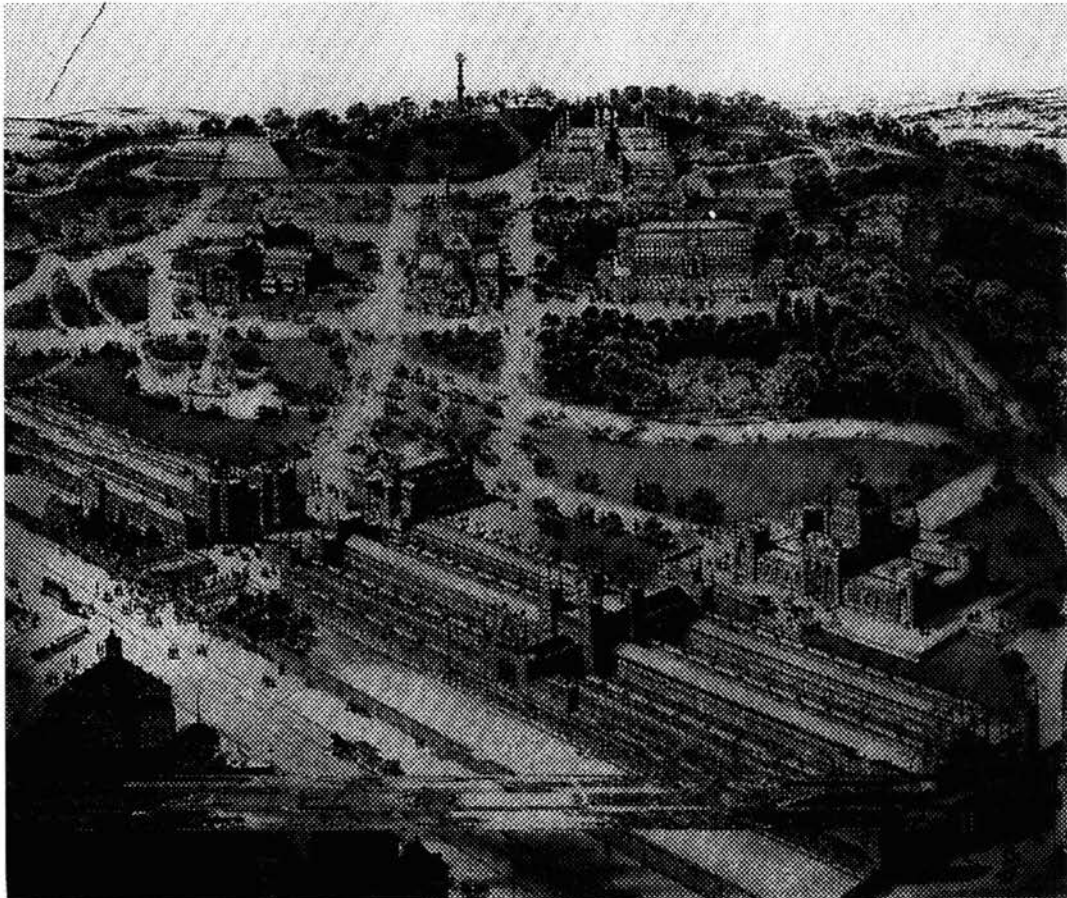


Fig. 3 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition 1876. A.L. Wiese lithograph (detail) (Larkin 241)

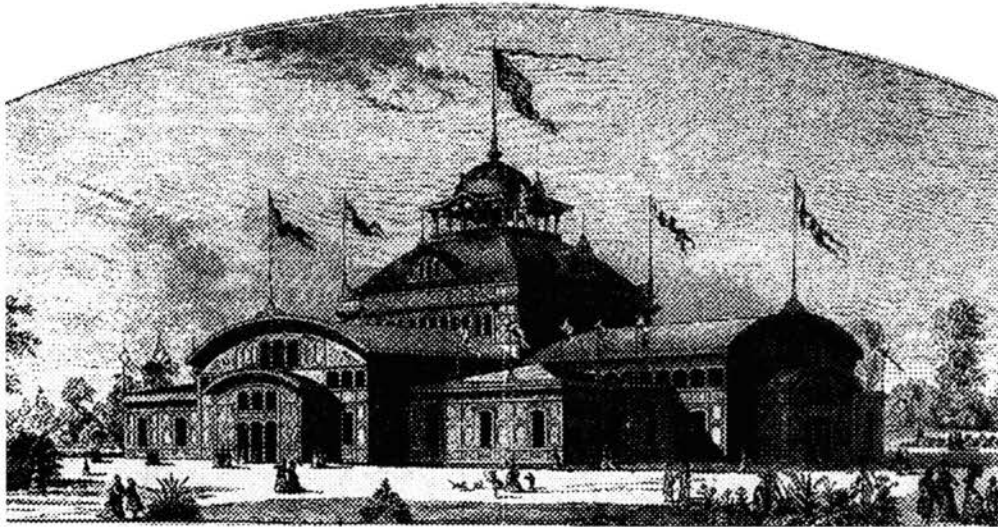


Fig. 4 Women's Pavilion at the Centennial Exposition (Weimann 6)



Fig. 5 Memorial Hall at the Centennial where the greatest (in size) art exhibition ever seen in America was held. (Lynes 278)

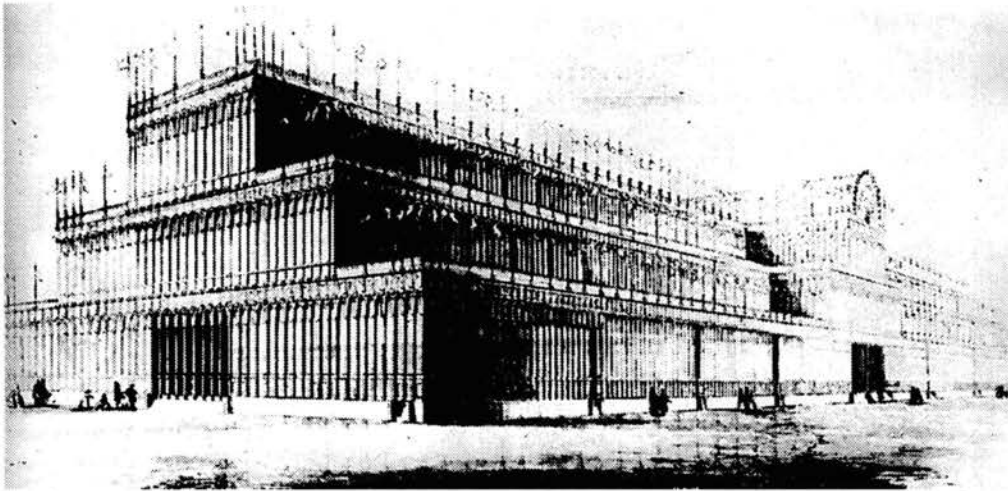


Fig. 6 The Crystal Palace at the 1851 World's Fair in London (Ferriday Plate LV)

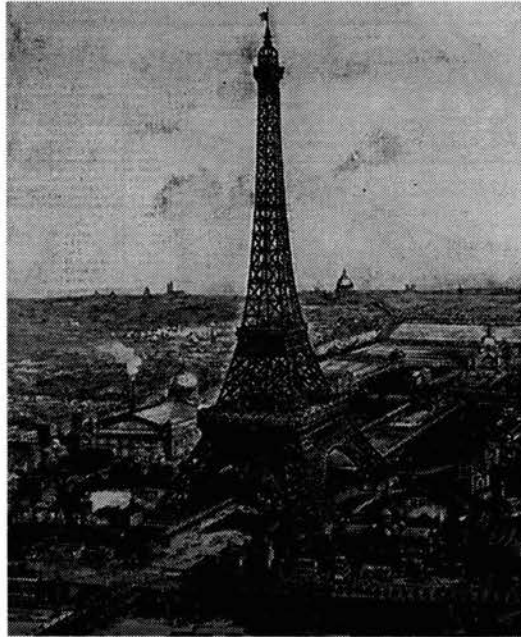


Fig. 7
The Eiffel Tower
at the Paris
Exposition
(Holt Plate 19)

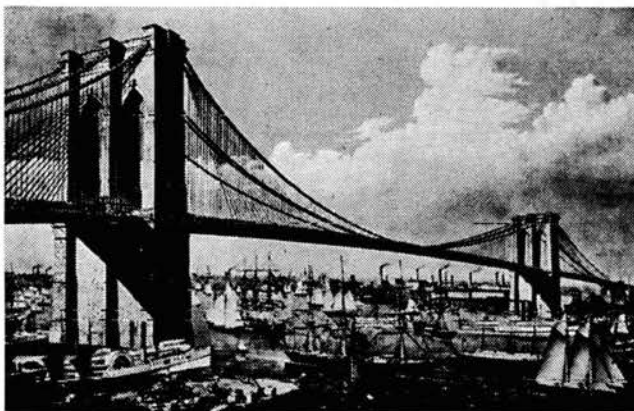


Fig. 8 The Great
East River
Suspension Bridge
(Brooklyn Bridge)
Currier & Ives 1877
(Mendelowitz 246)



Fig. 9 Francis William Edmonds Taking the Census (1854) oil on canvas (Burns 184)



Fig. 10 Peace and Plenty 1871 lithograph by Currier & Ives (Burns 95)

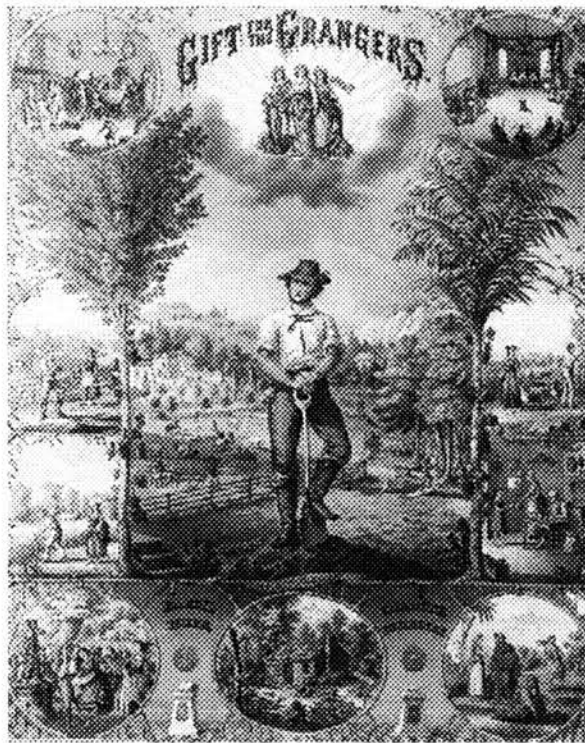


Fig. 11
Gift for the
Grangers
 1873 lithograph
 (Burns 115)

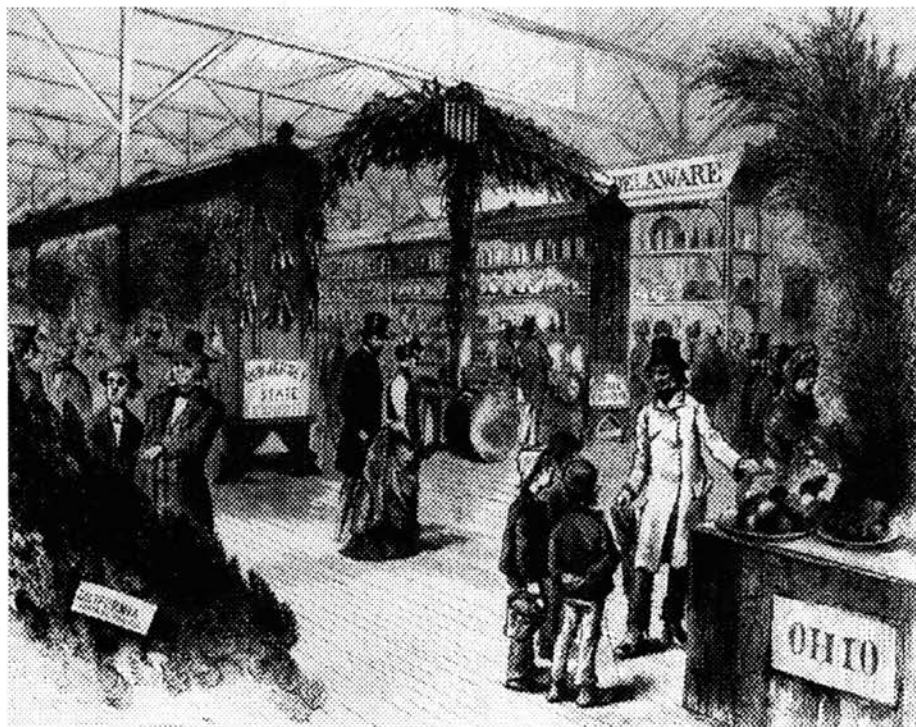


Fig. 12 Theodore Davis. The Centennial: State
Exhibits in Agricultural Hall wood carving.
 (Burns 209)

Fig. 13 Thomas Hovenden
The Old Version 1881
Oil on Canvas
(Burns 204)



Fig. 14 Sol Eytinge The Hearthstone of
the Poor 1876 wood carving (Burns 327)

Notes

¹ In her article, "America at the World Fairs, 1851-1893," Merle Curti discusses America's participation in world fairs, focusing on government support, number of competitions won, and European reaction to American cultural exhibits.

² The official name was United States International Exposition, but this cumbersome title was quickly shortened to the Centennial.

³ Authors not invited to participate included Walt Whitman, who was considered obscene, Western poet Joaquin Miller, who was considered uncouth, Bret Harte, who was considered too controversial, and Mark Twain, whose sense of humor was too uncertain and his satire too close to truth for politically-oriented planners to consider. Overall, the "laws of decorum" worked against the authors of Western literature.

⁴ Planners for the Chicago World's Fair encouraged the development of a midway because of the additional revenue generated (Cawelti 323)

⁵ The seating of Frederick Douglass was accompanied by confusion as this noted Black writer and orator was at first denied entrance into the area (Brown 120)

⁶ After the disappointed planners had been turned down by Longfellow, they enlisted the help of Bayard Taylor to encourage Whittier to write the Centennial hymn. When Taylor approached Whittier, Whittier asked to see the hymn that Taylor had already written. Taylor agreed readily to share the work he had begun because he wanted Whittier's cooperation. Whittier's final version was remarkably similar to the version Taylor had shared with him. Taylor wrote and delivered his own ode at the Fourth of July celebration at the Centennial (Brown 126).

⁷ Frederick Law Olmstead had designed Central Park in New York City in order "to provide a wholesome, moral environment that would spiritually elevate the discontented poor" (Barney 356). The designer of this project, Olmstead exhibits a recognition of the supposed benefits of nature in the urban slum settings that were beginning to foment labor unrest. The overcrowded tenements needed a relief valve, and city officials hoped city parks would fulfill this need.

⁸ This building, although paid for and designed by the women, represented the first time women were given separate space at any international exhibition.

⁹ Jonathan Hale describes the developing architecture as changing "the emphasis from grace to social gesture" where the goal was to "influence the observer through symbols" and as the "symbols changed over the years . . . to

later generations the emblems, now meaningless, often appeared hideous or foolish" (122).

¹⁰ Rydell explains a "poor man's day" was instituted with reduced rates to enable the working man to go to the fair if he could get a day off from work.

Chapter II

Americans in Europe: Houses and Power in The Portrait of a Lady

Visitors to the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial looked forward to the twentieth century and anticipated a future of progress and growth. Nineteenth-century America sought an identity of its own yet found itself reluctant to break with traditional ties to Europe. The Centennial, however, gave America an opportunity to boast of its industrial growth in an atmosphere where new developments could compete on an equal level with the arts. As a relatively new nation, America, at times, still seemed to rely on European ideas as the arbiters of culture. Like many who are uncertain about their place in life, Americans wanted the respect of other nations but still felt somewhat young and gauche relative to older cultural and social traditions. As a result, the new nation leaped to invent, develop, and implement more mechanical and industrial marvels than anyone else. This impetus, born in provincialism, helped America push industrial progress beyond known boundaries and began the creation of a consumer society. Americans eagerly moved to the cities to join the search for riches promised by industrialization. People left farms and even countries to make their fortune, spend their fortune, and join the elite,

particularly the European elite whose doors stood open to welcome wealthy and artistic Americans.

The ability to travel and live in Europe and its capitals enhanced a person's status. Only those Americans with money could afford this luxury. European travel, however, was not the only eagerly sought action of the industrial rich. Buying or building a heavily-decorated, lavish home offered external evidence of personal success and the accompanying riches. Of course, being a householder had for years been the mark of an independent and successful person. Traditionally, however, these homeowners, usually from rural backgrounds, had built small residences and added to them as family size and financial strength increased. Often these established homes were built in the country, and the town or city grew to surround them and incorporate them into the metropolitan expansion. Newly-rich Americans of the nineteenth century established highly-decorated homes as their immediate goal, not the long-term result of slow but steady material expansion. The mood of American society as seen at the Philadelphia Centennial celebration of 1876 expressed excitement about the immediacy of change and future national growth with little thought of the possible consequences to individuals.

The role of the house as the center of a nurturing family grew less important in this time of explosive change. Artists who had portrayed homes as places of simplicity and

peace gave way to architects and engineers and builders who promised to design and erect large, highly ornate homes for the newly wealthy. Americans bought homes with designs reminiscent of European manors, castles, chateaux, and villas. All of which were similar to the variety of architecture represented at the Centennial.¹ Americans adopted exotic and, at times, bizarre styles from other times and places, as if they could not identify their own style. This random borrowing of architectural design created a hodgepodge of design and decoration. Time-saving inventions for the home, such as machines for food preparation, sewing, laundering and ironing, were displayed at the Centennial and their existence presaged intrusive inroads into traditional domestic life. Changing the rhythm of household management and separating home care techniques from traditional assignments, considerably altered the role of women in the home and in society.² Women no longer were the sole providers of values and education. Women traveled more extensively, developed economic interests, and sought more control of their own lives. Often, this control took the form of purchasing power, which gave the illusion that money conferred on wealthy men and women a monopoly over human lives.

The dangers inherent in a society determined to purchase commodities and display wealth lavishly seemed of little concern during a time of rapid national economic

change. Prodigious spending on architectural design and decoration and on modern conveniences had the potential to separate families and isolate individuals. Attempts to impose order by keeping statistical records, managing time, labor unions, and even social reform held little chance for success. Social class division happened too rapidly and financial disparity grew too wide. The individual and the nation lost perspective, particularly the ability to synthesize the past, present, and future. The only way to alleviate the status quo, the uncertainty of the times, existed in the ability to travel, to move to another place to seek stability beyond the "civilized" eastern United States. As Janet Bowen explains, "The landscapes of transportation and domestic architecture flow together, suggesting that moving and staying are but opposite expressions of the desire to secure a place for oneself" (7). Houses as places of stability and journeys as ways to find the self, both individual and national, were employed as apt symbols of this time.

Houses as buildings and as homes offer authors powerful and accessible symbols to express a variety of themes. A neat, vine-covered cottage is the romantic dream home of a young couple beginning a new life. A log cabin in a newly-cleared wilderness represents the strength and courage necessary to conquer an unknown land. A brick manor symbolizes the stability of generations of success whether

in agriculture or in business. A tumble-down shack amid an overgrown yard shows the results of being a slovenly, lazy owner. Dark, shuttered mansions echo with reminders of a family's failure or death. All of these images connect houses to the people who inhabit them or covet them, and the houses are external evidence of dreams attained or lost.

One American novelist who used houses, in conjunction with a journey, as symbols in a work of literature published after 1876 is Henry James.³ In his work, The Portrait of a Lady, he presents a naive, young American on a journey that provides insight into her own nature and the nature of the world. James' character, Isabel Archer, visits various houses as she moves toward her future, and her family home and the homes she visits in Europe and Italy represent America's past, the incipient changes within the present, and the underlying concerns, interests, and attitudes of late nineteenth-century America. As Isabel Archer travels on her symbolic journey, she is uprooted from her past and controlled by the power of money wielded carelessly by those who accept that money and possessions are more valuable than the individual. Probably best known for his international themes featuring the American in Europe, James effectively uses house imagery to illustrate the ills that can accompany newly acquired wealth without a sense of responsibility for its use. Because the main characters in The Portrait of a Lady are American, this house imagery applies directly to

the problems of burgeoning wealth in America and its effect on individuals.

In describing the series of houses where Isabel lives and visits, James connects money and its power to the house and the inhabitants. Janet Bowen explains that to James architecture is the perfect symbol for the fluidity of interior and exterior being, home and homelessness, and private and public life during the final decades of the nineteenth century in America. A building is both shell and kernel, facade and that which creates Internal space. It charts in its structure, the constant fluctuation between unified personal existence and contentious group relations that is the hallmark of the modern urban society Better than any other cultural artifact, the building embraces the tensions and tenants of a culture. (4)

Early in The Portrait of a Lady, James carefully describes Isabel's house in Albany as a residence lacking a definite architectural style. At one time, probably because of increased family size, two houses were joined to create a larger residence, creating two front doors and a tunnel connecting the two sides of the residence. Built during Colonial days, the house now displays a variety of additions that destroyed any unified architectural identity. The numerous rooms upstairs, the abandoned office with its

library of books, even the piazza to the grounds at the rear, recall days of prodigious entertaining and large family gatherings. This house is reminiscent of the pre-Civil War and pre-industrial tradition of home as the source of family and individual security.

The house, however, is now for sale. Isabel, according to James' description, enjoys the house and appears content with its enveloping dimness and worn appearance. She does, however, exhibit a waiting restlessness that hints at her expectation of change.⁴ When she hears Mrs. Touchett, Isabel at first believes her to be an expected visitor but not necessarily a female visitor. She seems to await the traditional suitor who will change her status as a woman alone. This early in the novel, James shows that Isabel has two options: live alone or marry. Neither of these choices necessarily allows her to control her destiny. When Mrs. Touchett appears, Isabel's contented facade quickly dissolves with her words, "Have you come to look at the house? [in order to buy it]" and "The servant will show it to you." Her languid, disinterested air suggests Isabel's unwillingness to involve herself in the mercenary transaction of selling the house. Mrs. Touchett's question, "How much money do you expect for it?" is impertinent, and Isabel verbally waves it aside with her response, "I haven't the least idea" (35). This first meeting between Isabel Archer and Mrs. Touchett establishes the relationship

between these family members. Houses and money intertwine as images throughout the relationships. This house, according to Mrs. Touchett's beliefs, should be sold or torn down to make room for shops. Isabel sincerely hopes the house will not be torn down, yet her response is vague and she reiterates her lack of interest in its financial value or even her own financial situation. By the end of the discussion, Isabel has agreed to go to Europe with her aunt, Mrs. Touchett. Her impulsive agreement arises from the emotion she feels when Mrs. Touchett describes her Florentine palace as a "house in which things have happened" (36). Mrs. Touchett has decided to take Isabel with her to Europe and to Gardencourt, but what she will do with her is uncertain.

Henry James describes the Archer house as a relic because belongs to the past. Isabel has existed there in a state of suspension. She will remain until the house sells, and then she will move to her expected future as a wife in yet another house. Her interest in the house's fate is fleeting. The past does not affect her and the future does not, yet, excite her. Like the Americans visiting the Philadelphia Centennial, Isabel prefers to ignore the past. Mrs. Touchett, also, exhibits no interest in the past; for her the house is merely a source of additional finances. She has already left her American roots behind and settle in Europe. For Mrs. Touchett, America's past cannot compare to

the tangible, tradition-rich European setting which she can purchase with her American dollars.

Having established the Touchett belief that houses are symbols of wealth, Henry James describes Gardencourt with language replete with words that directly connect money to the house itself. Mr. Touchett surveys the "rich red front of his dwelling" and the view "repay[s]" him with its imposing structure which the "shrewd American banker" has purchased, history and all, "at a great bargain" (17-18). Mr. Touchett can "count off" with pride the preceding owners.

A thirty-year resident of England, Mr. Touchett, has retained his "American physiognomy" with perhaps a softening due to experience. He reflects the very English quality of the home he has purchased. The focus on the outward structure of both the man and the house foreshadows the inward emptiness of a house and a man who must reside in the expensive residence without a family to give it energy and light. Gardencourt is an excellent example of what American money can purchase in an English setting; however, as Elizabeth Sabiston explains, "The point is not that it is an English country house, but that it represents a fusion of two cultures in that it is owned and modified by Americans" (34-5). The purchase, redecoration, and renovation of the house has not made it into a home. The family only visits, and the primary resident is ill and approaching the end of

his life. The son and heir to the house, Ralph, is frail. His life has been an odd mixture of American and English influence, and his ill health prevents him from active participation in life. Given this combination and the example of his father before him, it is not surprising that Ralph Touchett equates money with purchasing and renovating that which it pleases him to observe and enjoy. The Touchetts have purchased a ready-made tradition with their home. This indicates that they left their past in America but wanted a history, even if they had to buy it. In fact, this suggests that instead of staying in America and patiently awaiting a developed past of personal traditions, this family would rather hurry the process by spending money to achieve quickly the appearance of having roots in English society. James suggests here that wealthy Americans do not truly understand gracious tradition and should not rush to purchase what should evolve slowly. By focusing more on future industrial progress, the Centennial celebration implied this same concept of rushing into to the future and buying the facade of tradition.

Lockleigh is the only truly English-owned residence in the novel, and James uses it to continue the theme of houses and their inhabitants' awareness of the power of money. When Isabel visits Warburton's home, she knows about Warburton's numerous houses because Mr. Touchett had discussed with Isabel the radical ideas of some of the

younger members of the English aristocracy. The tone of the conversation indicates that the young radicals talk about change but do nothing. They do not have the energetic spirit for the political change that Americans had generated previously. During her visit to Lockleigh, Isabel, as she talks with the young ladies of the manor, assumes that Warburton will give up his house or houses in the interest of social reform. The Molyneux sisters, however, understand the giving up of their brother's houses as occurring "on account of the expense" and suggest that he "might let one or two of his houses" to compensate for future economic loss (75). What Isabel perceived as altruism the sisters perceived as continued economic benefit from the houses. James describes Lockleigh "as a stout grey pile, of the softest, deepest, most weather-fretted hue, rising from a broad, still moat" like a "castle in a legend" (75). Isabel's romantic perception weakens when she enters Lockleigh because "Within, it had been a good deal modernized--some of its best points had lost their purity" (75). Obviously, money has increased the comfort of this English manor, but the lavish expenditure of the Touchett restoration at Gardencourt does not exist. Although the overt display of wealth clearly evident at Gardencourt does not appear at Lockleigh, the connection of money and the possession of houses remains a pattern.

By focusing on Isabel's view of Gardencourt and Lockleigh, Henry James can show that houses reflect their owners. He also shows that Americans visiting or living in England and Europe have an inordinate respect for the Old World. James, as an American living in England, did not lose his interest or pride in American events and progress. On July 6, 1876, in a letter to Arthur Sedgwick, James asks, "Have you been to Philadelphia and what do you think of it [the Centennial]?" (Edel 56). Again, on July 29, 1876, he wrote to William James saying, "Your letter, with its superior criticism of so many things, the Philadelphia Exhibition especially, interested me extremely" (Edel 57). Several times in letters written between 1876 and 1883, James reveals his constant interest in American attitudes and politics and compares them to England's imperialism. For example, in a letter to Lord Roseberry, James refers to England as the "illustrious invalid" and America as "an extensive (and expansive country) . . . not so much a country as a world" (Edel 380). Through Isabel's perception of the houses, James can show that Americans cannot purchase the past and the attempts to do so in this novel show a lack of vitality in those American characters who try to deny their own country in the interest of pursuing European traditions rather than their own.

The Archer home in Albany and Gardencourt and Lockleigh in England are three places Isabel Archer lives or visits

that incorporate a past into a present but have little to recommend them as residences to Isabel. The power of money, its use or its lack, have created structures that do not attract this adventurous young woman who seeks to affront her destiny. Marilyn Chandler describes the tragedy of this young American:

Certainly there is no heroine in nineteenth-century fiction to whom more palatial doors are opened than to Isabel Archer. But what Isabel most poignantly and pointedly lacks is a real home and the particular kind of social and moral formation that comes from deep and prolonged engagement with a particular house on a particular spot of ground. (95)

Isabel seems dimly aware that money does not create a place for her to live; however, she has not learned yet to discriminate between the facade of a past and the development of a past through family history in a valued family home. She quickly agrees to leave the Albany house to travel with her aunt. Gardencourt is a possession of a dying man who, although proud of its heritage, is more proud of his ability to purchase the past; Lockleigh is a true English castle but seems too rooted in the past with little hope of an exciting, prosperous future. All three houses show the effects of money spent or lack of money to improve possessions or lifestyle. These residences appear to be in

much the same state of suspension as Isabel when James first introduces his young heroine. James suggests that Europeans do not have the excitement and prospects for growth that young American businessmen will face in the nineteenth-century.

When Isabel travels to Italy, the houses there also reflect the same symbolically important connection to the power of money and the effect of this power on inhabitants and owners. This power in Italy is, however, much more subtle and seductive to this inexperienced young woman who has not yet learned to see behind the facade of a beautiful building to the sterile family life within.

Mrs. Touchett's villa in Florence pleases Isabel with its "wide, monumental court" and "the brightness of a garden where nature itself looked as archaic as the rugged architecture" (212). James again intertwines monetary images with the description of this residence when he describes "the high, cool rooms where the craven rafters and pompous frescoes of the sixteenth century looked down on the familiar commodities of the age of advertisement" (212). Mrs. Touchett has furnished the Palazzo Crescentini with the finest modern appurtenances her money can buy. On the other hand, Mrs. Touchett resides in the villa because she "found compensation for the darkness of her frontage in the modicity of her rent" (212). Mrs. Touchett controls her money and weighs expenditures carefully. She has, probably,

received her husband's advice and had time to learn personal fiscal responsibility as this responsibility applies to spending the money on inanimate objects. Her weakness lies, as it does with the other characters, in the relationship between having and spending money and responsibility for its effect on other people. One of the strongest connections between this house and money is the conversation between Mrs. Touchett and Ralph when they realize Gilbert Osmond is courting Isabel. Mrs. Touchett asks, "Will he be so disinterested [in money] when he has the spending of her money?" (235). She continues later in her talk with Serena Merle: "Mr. Osmond has nothing the least solid to offer," and "He has nothing in the world . . . but a dozen or two early masters." Madame Merle quickly responds, "The early masters are now worth a good deal of money" (236). This conversation reveals that Mrs. Touchett bases the utility of money on its ability to buy modernity as carefully as possible. For her, money and art seem weakly linked. She does, however, equate money with her own independence and understands the concept of money marrying money. Madame Merle's quick response reveals her understanding of Gilbert Osmond and his desire to have money in order to own and decorate his home. Her attitude certainly belies Osmond's carefully cultivated indifference to the importance of money.

Ralph Touchett best describes the symbolism of Gilbert Osmond's home when Ralph tells Isabel "you're going to be put into a cage" (288). The cage is the "house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation" Isabel realizes she has accepted. The Palazzo Roccanera where Gilbert and Isabel reside in Rome is seen by Ned Rosier as a "domestic fortress" (307). Isabel's money has purchased an architecturally fine habitation decorated throughout with Gilbert Osmond's collections of paintings, porcelains, statues, and miniatures. Although Isabel assures others and herself that Osmond's collections are exquisite and not a product of her money, she soon realizes that she and her money have purchased the house and become part of Gilbert's possessions.⁵

These houses in James' The Portrait of a Lady represent to their owners and to Isabel Archer the power of money to purchase, symbolically, the past and, literally, to furnish a house with beautiful objects. By connecting these houses to the acquisition of money, James also illustrates a potential misuse of wealth when it is used or given with no acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Nineteenth-century America faced very similar difficulties with the rapid accumulation of wealth by industrial magnates creating a situation where control of money equaled control of people. It is this rapidly growing segment of American society that the world's fairs

celebrated because their wealth came from industrial development in the New World. Their inventions, powerful machines, and technology evened the competition between Americans and Europeans in the marketplace.

The names of Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, John Jacob Astor, Andrew Carnegie, and J.P. Morgan evoke images of the wealth and glitter that typify the rising fortunes of individuals in this period. As commercial enterprises developed and incorporation and consolidation of power increased, the promise of wealth lured more and more immigrants to the new "promised land." Not everyone succeeded in obtaining wealth or the power it could bring to the individual. Actually, as the century progressed, a larger proportion of money became consolidated in the hands of a smaller percentage of the population. Because the proportionately small number of wealthy entrepreneurs and corporations wielded such power over the lives of the working class, political and social changes seemed imminent or, at least, desirable. This relationship of power, money, and the individual as revealed through house imagery is a theme that Henry James explores in The Portrait of a Lady. For the characters in this novel, money is the primary source of power. James illustrates that the cold, selfish and irresponsible use or pursuit of money adversely affects individuals, particularly Isabel Archer. Power, as used in the context of this novel, can be broadly defined as

having control over one's own life and environment. This control can also extend into the lives of others. Inherent power over others is the responsible application of that power. By endowing some characters with wealth and power and other characters with a desire for wealth, Henry James reflects some of the growing concerns of late nineteenth-century American society and uses house imagery to reinforce the intrusive nature of wealth used selfishly without regard to its effect on individuals.

Although June Howard focuses primarily on naturalistic authors, she clearly describes the social changes occurring in the nineteenth century. Howard contends that because of social changes brought by commercial growth "both the structure of society and the text of everyday life were profoundly affected" (32). America's world fairs clearly illustrate the growing importance of a commercial base for growth, and novelists reveal the effects of the social changes brought about by this rapid industrial expansion.

Following the Civil War, America began a stage of convulsive change and growth. Westward expansion, increased communication and transportation, technological advances, and, according to Brian Lee, "unprecedentedly rapid and massive urbanization" (4) created a climate for almost unbelievable individual financial success. Lee continues, "that by 1883 there were approximately four thousand people in the United States worth at least one million dollars"

(5). As the economy expanded, the "unstable money supply" increasingly revealed the advantages of incorporation (Trachtenberg 82). Of course, the disadvantages include less contact with employees and less involvement with their concerns and situations.⁶ Thus began a more sharply delineated separation between labor, the individual, and corporate management because of a need to consolidate in order to protect the money, the source of power. Thus, company efforts to send workers to the Philadelphia fair show a dual purpose. The workers who saw the future of American industry at the exhibit halls would see themselves as part of developing industries. In addition, the holiday atmosphere of the Centennial and the progress it displayed indicated that everyone would benefit from the happy future the fair promised. However, although the American myth of the self-made man still prevailed on the surface, the distant corporate entity grew more powerful. As Trachtenberg explains, "the Gilded Age was dominated by images of personal power, of force, determination, the will to prevail" (84). The reality, however, existed in the corporations that were established to maintain the wealth and power created by individual entrepreneurs. Henry James as an American author knew and was concerned about changes taking place in his home country.

The role of the novelist in this social and economic upheaval is crucial to an understanding of the concerns of

this time. As Eric Sundquist points out, "very real political and industrial forces . . . bring literary art more conspicuously into the world of business by making it resemble or become a business itself" (15). As the literary profession depended upon the free enterprise system, authors struggled to support themselves with literary output. According to Michael T. Gilmore, "Henry James himself participates in this kind of commodification by turning the life-story of Isabel Archer into 'the portrait of a lady' and offering it for sale in the literary marketplace" (51). Depiction of the individual at the mercy of almost faceless economic, corporate, and social power becomes evident in nineteenth-century American novels. Quite often, characters, such as Howells' Silas Lapham, must make moral choices after having been blinded by the power of money. In other novels, such as James' The Portrait of a Lady, the relationship between power and money is more complex and mirrors growing concerns about economic and social changes in America suggested by the Philadelphia Centennial's celebration of the nation's future progress.

Henry James describes Isabel Archer in the Preface to the New York Edition of The Portrait of a Lady as "a certain young woman affronting her destiny" (8). He surrounds her with characters who have or know the power of money yet do not always use it wisely or well. Two sets of characters have a strong impact on Isabel Archer. The

Touchett family members and the team of Madame Merle and Gilbert represent two ways that power and money interconnect and affect the young American girl, Isabel Archer. Two additional influences on Isabel are Casper Goodwood and Lord Warburton, her rejected suitors, both of whom are wealthy and want to "do" something with Isabel, who wants only to maintain her independence. Isabel must confront and then surmount the power that money has to control life and people before she can successfully affront her destiny.

The Touchetts have money, and it confers upon them the power and freedom to live as they please. Their lifestyle, however, isolates them from one another, and they appear to lack a sense of personal, moral, or social responsibility. In addition, all three freely interfere in the lives of other people. Mr. Touchett says young people should be involved in social reform, but he does nothing himself. Mrs. Touchett "rescues" Isabel, but offers her no social guidance. Ralph endows Isabel with wealth, but only for his own pleasure in seeing what she does with it. Although the Touchetts mean well, they do not accept responsibility for their interference in Isabel's life.

Early in the novel, the Touchetts reveal their awareness of money and what it can accomplish. Mr. Touchett has purchased a lovely estate, and on this estate he indulges in the leisurely life of the English aristocracy. However, Mr. Touchett illustrates his own uneasiness or

moral discomfort because he has abdicated the traditional responsibilities as husband and parent in the household. He recognizes that he became so involved in purchasing and caring for English tradition, as represented by Gardencourt, that he failed because of his pride of possession. As the three gentlemen discuss ways to alleviate their boredom, James illustrates that the young men are aware of "the increasing seriousness of things"; however, they maintain a personal distance from worldly concerns. Lord Warburton expresses his reaction to Mr. Touchett's advice to become involved in social reforms:

I'm very sure there will be great changes, and that all sorts of queer things will happen. That's why I find so much difficulty in applying your advice; you know you told me the other day that I ought to "take hold" of something. One hesitates to take hold of a thing that may the next moment be knocked sky-high. (22)

With these words, James indicates the wealthy young men are not uncaring, merely uninterested in active participation in life. Warburton and even Ralph prefer the security and safety of their leisurely lifestyle in their lavish homes. They prefer to ignore the social problems created by disparate wealth. Americans in the nineteenth century also tended to ignore the consequences of a society with wide economic diversity. At the Centennial, the Centennial City

was the world of the "less refined" element of society and an eyesore to the planners. At the Chicago Columbian Exposition, the Midway entertained visitors, but organizers of the fair promoted the White City as the future of urban America and ignored the growing labor unrest that plagued the nation.

When the topic of the young American niece is introduced, the men first question her matrimonial plans and then ask whether her independence is "in a moral or in a financial sense?" (24). With this question, James establishes the importance of money, its purchasing power, and its separation from morality. While it might be problematical to suggest that the Touchett men and Lord Warburton represent corporate America, the suggestion of the relationship between their attitudes and capitalist philosophy does indicate a similar view about the use of money. Money can be used to institute social reform, but the men and women who have money must choose to use their wealth responsibly.

James shows the power of money as a source of freedom when he describes Mrs. Touchett's visit to America: "She intended to go to America to look after her investments (with which her husband, in spite of his great financial position, had nothing to do) and would take advantage of this opportunity to enquire into the condition of her nieces" (35). Because she has money of her own, Mrs.

Touchett can travel freely, establish a separate household in Italy, and whisk her niece Isabel into the leisured life of rich Americans in Europe. Money gives her the power to live as she pleases and "do" something for Isabel, who does not "know anything about money" (35). Mrs. Touchett, however, also displays an uncaring attitude toward Isabel after bringing her to Europe. When questioned by Ralph about what Mrs. Touchett "mean[s] to do with her [Isabel] in a general way," Mrs. Touchett replies, "I mean to get her clothing" (46). When pushed for additional details, she exclaims, "My duty" (46). Having brought Isabel to Europe and having provided material comforts, such as a temporary residence, clothing, and entree into certain social circles, Mrs. Touchett is satisfied that she has fulfilled her responsibility.⁷ With her money, Mrs. Touchett changes Isabel's life; however, she accepts no responsibility for the results of her action. Mr. and Mrs. Touchett know well the power of money and, according to their whims, wield it freely and carelessly in their relationships.

The conversations of the Touchetts support Michael T. Gilmore's contention that in The Portrait of a Lady "human beings are viewed as serviceable objects" and this viewpoint "corresponds to an economic and social reality that was becoming more and more prevalent in the late nineteenth century with the rise of monopoly capitalism. The essence of capitalist production is the buying and selling of labor

power" (62). The Touchetts see people as commodities that provide diversion from boredom or as objects that require their disinterested philanthropy. William H. Gass calls The Portrait of a Lady "James's fully exposed case of human manipulation . . . of what it means to be a consumer of persons" (209). Gass also states that James focuses on human beings who are used and that "it is by no means true that only the 'villains' fall upon her [Isabel] nor is it easy to discover just who the villains really are" (209). Mr. and Mrs. Touchett are not true villains nor true benefactors. They are merely careless about Isabel as a person, and their actions reflect a calloused attitude about people as individuals. To them, Isabel is like their houses, an outward symbol of their purchasing power.

Ralph Touchett does not seem as coldly disinterested as his parents; however, he too treats Isabel Archer as a commodity. Ralph Touchett's endowment of a legacy on Isabel raises some interesting questions about his motivation as well as his use or abuse of power. Michael Gilmore argues that one meaning of commodity is "the denial or suppression of another person's autonomy by using that person for purposes of one's own" (51). By providing money for Isabel's use, Ralph can "watch Isabel rise above the mere limitations of society and nature" (Warner 358). The deceptive sense of freedom he gives her turns into a trap

for Isabel because she is not prepared to soar in a materialistic world.

Ralph Touchett's well-meant gift of money to Isabel through his father's legacy indicates his own careless yet good-hearted belief that money will empower Isabel. Ralph desires to "put it into her power to do some of the things she wants" (160). He believes the money will "make her free" (160), and he willingly accepts that Isabel may marry a fortune hunter. Ralph and his father do not know that Isabel has already met and been drawn to someone who understands better than they the power they have agreed to place in Isabel's hands for Ralph's amusement.

When Ralph Touchett convinces his father to leave a large legacy to Isabel, neither man fully understands her concept of independence. James describes Isabel's beliefs about herself: "It was one of her theories that Isabel Archer was very fortunate in being independent, and that she ought to make some very enlightened use of that state" (55). This philosophy, vague and nebulous as it seems, is the basis on which she "resisted conquest" by the English Lord Warburton and resisted "the disposition to let the young man from Boston [Casper Goodwood] take possession of her" (104). Holland believes that Isabel's rejection of Casper Goodwood is also a refutation of the world of business he represents. Holland says, "So complete is his association with the realm of business that in a later scene with Isabel, his very

idiom makes the world of business the dividing line between himself and the intimacy of Isabel's feelings"(32). In this way, James allows Isabel to reject the materialistic and controlling aspect of her American past. Of course, her determination to make "enlightened use" of her independent state with her inherent need to accomplish something good also makes her vulnerable to the machinations of Madame Merle, who fully understands how to use people and their money for her own purposes. This rejection of business and its terminology in favor of the romance of art reflects America's participation in and hosting of world's fairs. The nation's early involvement in fairs prior to 1876 was haphazard and often poorly planned and organized. America never quite filled its exhibit space and rarely competed effectively in any area other than technology and invention. Even at the Philadelphia Centennial, Americans did not feel adequate to accept Europe's challenge in the area of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Americans rejected their own vitality and accept Europe's domination in art.

Money and the power of money, as perceived by Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond, define the individual's role in society and allow him or her to indulge in the acquisition of material objects. This desire to own or control people and possessions extends into control over the lives of others, such as Pansy and Isabel. Osmond and Merle show the callous disregard for others that wealth or the desire for

wealth can engender. Although the Touchetts abuse the power of their money in a kind yet disinterested way, Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond coldly and deliberately intend to own Isabel and her money. The Touchetts are careless but not cruel. Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond are selfish. The relationship between Merle and Osmond symbolizes the next stage of capitalist philosophy. If corporations in power cease entirely to recognize labor, in terms of those who work in factories and mines, as individual men, then perhaps corporations will return to the pre-Civil War concept that men are objects and, therefore, can be sold or traded at will.

James's contrasts between Europe and America are evident in the characters of Osmond and Warburton. In his analysis of the novel, Christof Wegelin says that James does not usually compare Europe and America to the detriment of either world. However, Wegelin does acknowledge that Osmond and Warburton "represent the danger inherent in the European emphasis on order" (78). Wegelin describes this world of order by saying that "James's images of America are rarely without the vital energy which constitutes the needed impulse for living fully, yet this energy . . . has potentialities for harm. Its promise may be broken. It, too, may turn tyrannical; it, too, may corrupt" (78). Wegelin's article emphasizes James's awareness of the instability of American society. That the 1893 Chicago

World's Fair did emphasize order provides additional support to James's belief.

When Isabel meets Serena Merle, Isabel sees the ease with which Madame Merle controls herself and her surroundings. The mystery of Madame Merle, whom Isabel mistakes for a European, not a compatriot, intrigues Isabel. Isabel admires Serena Merle's artistic accomplishments and believes her to be "a woman of strong impulses kept in admirable order" (154), and in the days they spend together, Isabel finds "herself desiring to emulate" Madame Merle's command of her own affairs (165). Although Isabel senses that Madame Merle is "too flexible, too useful, too ripe and too final," Isabel is too inexperienced in the world of wealth and power to understand Serena Merle's manipulative nature. Madame Merle's utility as a social decoration in the homes she visits seemingly gives her freedom; however, she knows and covets the power that money can bring. When she discovers Isabel's new wealth, Serena Merle becomes the fortune hunter feared by Mr. Touchett and acknowledged as a risk by Ralph. Madame Merle seduces Isabel by introducing her to Gilbert Osmond and his daughter Pansy. Because Isabel believes her money "became . . . a part of her better self [and] gave her importance, [and] a certain ideal beauty" (193), she becomes susceptible to the idea that when she marries Gilbert "she was not only taking, she was giving" (197). Isabel does not know that her money is

Madame Merle's "present of incalculable value" to her former lover, Gilbert Osmond, and the means by which Madame Merle hopes to retain a place in his life. Marilyn Chandler describes Serena Merle's transactions as "highly refined forms of prostitution to ensure the maintenance of herself and her daughter" (111). Thus, the gift generously and carelessly given Isabel by Ralph so that she will be free becomes the means by which Isabel is trapped and powerless. Because Isabel finds herself in an intolerable position, she returns to Ralph to discover the truth about her legacy. As Gass explains, "the differences between Gilbert Osmond and Ralph Touchett are vast," but they are also thin "because both men use Isabel for their own purposes" (214). After Ralph's death, Isabel must attempt to control her life, the life so carelessly created by Ralph's abuse of his power conferred by wealth and Madame Merle's manipulation of Isabel's desire to do something positive with her life and her money. As the fairs show, having money implies the ability to act freely since decisions about control of the fair rested with the financial leaders who organized the fairs and raised the necessary finances. Yet, James suggests throughout this novel that wealth carries with it social responsibility, at least it should in American society.

Robert Long argues that Isabel is not entirely innocent when she agrees to marry Gilbert Osmond. She too wields the

power of her money. Long describes her marriage as having "much to do with her pride in her separateness from others. . . . To stand apart playing the role of providence with another's life, is the apotheosis of Isabel's pride" (118). Isabel mistakenly believes she has made a free choice. Her choice, however, is another indication of the intricate relationship between power and money and Isabel's inability to understand that relationship. Isabel believes she is "giving" to Gilbert when actually he is "taking" her in the sense of possessing Isabel as he owns Pansy and, in some respects, Madame Merle. Holland believes that in the marriage of Isabel and Osmond "proprietaryship, the propriety of money, domestic economy, parental control, tradition and aristocratic forms and values are held juxtaposed . . . and their interconnections are being examined" by Henry James (41). Thus, the marriage of Isabel and Gilbert reiterates the theme of power and money within contemporary society, and the collection of objects purchased and displayed by Gilbert connects the imagery and themes of houses and the power of money. In much the same way, the exhibits of the fair create desire to possess the goods displayed and a marketplace to fulfill that desire. The inability to gain these material goods creates frustration and a society divided by the ability to purchase the coveted products.

Although Isabel acquires the purchasing power of wealth, she does not fully understand the manipulative

nature of financial power. Although Cheryl Torsney denies any intent to create a political allegory, she does state "Isabel Archer's struggle for power over her destiny is nothing if not political" (86). Torsney adds

In The Portrait of A lady Isabel Archer and Lord Warburton on one side and Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle on the other act out the conflict James senses between the idealistic expansionism that won Britain (and later America) her empire and the crass imperialism that allowed her to keep it. (91)

By placing Madame Merle and Osmond on a side opposing Isabel, James shows the abuse of power leading to self-aggrandizement and exploitation of others. Both of these issues were of concern to nineteenth-century American authors and particularly to Henry James, who closely followed Great Britain's expansionistic policies and applauded her involvement in world affairs. James seems to have feared that England might sink into apathy while America exploded with the power of its growth.

When Isabel admits that her marriage to Osmond is a mistake, she also admits her own culpability. She knows that "her money had been a burden" she tried to transfer to another (358). In her night vigil in Chapter 42, Isabel also faces the knowledge that her husband "would have liked her to have nothing of her own but her pretty appearance"

(359). Isabel, in her relationship with Gilbert, has become a possession to be displayed just as Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt displayed "'the Electric Light'[a dress] in white satin trimmed all over with glittering diamonds (Lee 5). Wealth as a means of satisfying a desire for conspicuous consumption was yet another way money led to the abuse of power. Gilbert's desire to possess and display Isabel is only one example of how

the tensions and ironies created by conflicting social and political ideals throughout this period are clearly reflected in America's proliferating literature, and especially in the novel, dealing as it does with the interactions of individuals within society. (Lee 6)

In order to control her own life, Isabel, like the Touchetts, must recognize that responsibility for others accompanies wealth. By the end of the novel, Isabel understands that although money can bring power and freedom, these things cannot forestall the pain of betrayal and separation. The money meant to set Isabel free binds her to a cold, calculating man determined to possess her, control her, and display her in his house as part of his collections. Whether or not he ultimately succeeds or Isabel ultimately takes control by using her wealth and new insight is a question that remains unanswered when the novel ends. In the same way, America had to face the inevitable

consequences of rapid industrial growth and a top-heavy financial hierarchy foreshadowed by the fairs.

Mrs. Touchett, however, never gains insight into the abusive power of wealth. After Ralph's death, James reinforces the importance of money in Mrs. Touchett's life. Ralph's mother, now alone, faces her life "without enthusiasm but with perfect lucidity" (41). The life of separation lived by the Touchetts has prepared her for her isolation: "Mrs. Touchett was not an optimist, but even from painful occurrences she managed to extract a certain utility She was better off than poor Ralph, who had left all the commodities of life behind him" (481-82). Mrs. Touchett systematically enumerates all of Ralph's bequests, and she never looks beyond the financial aspects of her life or his. Money exerted its power over her just as she used her power to uproot Isabel from the Albany house and bring her to Europe. Mrs. Touchett remains closed away from human contact because of her narrow dependence on wealth.

When Madame Merle returns to America at the end of the novel, she parallels Isabel's return to Rome. William Stafford sees this mutual return as a tacit admission by Isabel of a then-held conviction that "'things' outside one's self do indeed determine what one can do, what one can be" (121). Isabel's acceptance of an idea that she earlier denied acknowledges that with material possessions--things,

money--come responsibility. Isabel learns and accepts that "to survive, accommodation is necessary" (Wiesenfarth 20). Isabel chooses to return to her marriage to Osmond, to their house, and to Pansy to create a home and family for her young step-daughter.

Whether Henry James intended his novel The Portrait of A Lady to represent the economic and social upheaval in America, the Touchetts and Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond do suggest the extreme attitudes that money and power can engender if they are misused. James's wealthy American characters, the Touchetts, Casper Goodwood, and even Isabel, are "refusing to submit to the creative discipline of the spirit" (Wegelin 78) because they represent monetary power carelessly used. The social divisions occurring in America as a result of the large amounts of wealth garnered by ruthless entrepreneurs and the resultant incorporation of businesses were a major concern during the nineteenth century. The power of money to control lives and isolate individuals further increased social divisions. By removing his characters to a European setting and by using images of houses intertwined with the power of money, Henry James joins his themes with American concerns. If Isabel represents the next generation of Americans, the ambiguous ending makes clear that James did not know how America would deal with its internal changes. Isabel's return to Rome suggests that she will accept the responsibility that

accompanies her legacy. That this will not be a pleasant or an easy task for Isabel or America remains clear. As an astute author concerned with political, social, and economic changes in his world, Henry James creates in The Portrait of a Lady several characters who succumb to the alluring and desensitizing aspects of money and the power it brings. These characters deliver a subtle message about the danger of avoiding life and its reality, especially in a world where control of wealth implies the right to control individuals.

One compelling reason to substantiate the contention that James does address concerns about changes in American society is his inclusion of Henrietta Stackpole and Casper Goodwood as contrasts to the Americans who blindly embrace Europe as their new home. Stackpole, as a journalist, represents another kind of American woman, one who has entered a traditionally male vocation and succeeded. James does not present Henrietta Stackpole's focus on her career as an option for Isabel Archer or even for American women in general. Although Henrietta is a rootless and restless American, she has with a relatively clear vision about herself. At least when she marries Mr. Brantling, she admits that part of her willingness to change lies in her acceptance into new social circles. She knows that this acceptance demands that she conform and put away her past allegiances. The difference between Henrietta and Isabel is

that Henrietta chooses to forsake her country for a man who "appreciates intellect" but does not "exaggerate its claims" as she believes happens in America (470). Henrietta Stackpole represents the American who sees the problems of her home country but chooses to leave rather than effect a change. James does, however, at the end of the novel add another possible future for American society as seen through the vision of Henrietta Stackpole. She tells Casper Goodwood, who is searching for Isabel, "just you wait!" (490). With this admonition Henrietta expresses a belief that the future will bring change, but not necessarily rapidly or easily.

Casper Goodwood, as the nineteenth-century American businessman, does not want to wait to gain his desires. He wants Isabel Archer; however, his raw power frightens her. In addition, she sees in him a lack of fineness. She assigns to his desires and his interest in his cotton-factory an almost bumptious intrusion into her memory. She believes that for Goodwood business can compensate for loss of love:

If he extended his business--that, to the best of her belief, was the only form exertion could take with him--it would be because it was an enterprising thing, or good for the business; not in the least because he might hope it would overlay the past. This gave his figure a kind of

bareness and bleakness . . . ; it was deficient in the social drapery commonly muffling, in an overcivilized age, the sharpness of human contacts. (405)

Isabel Archer has assumed that Goodwood is only driven by his desire to be rich and successful and that this will isolate him from other people, including herself.

Goodwood's money fails to gain him Isabel but only because this American is too raw, too newly rich, and too discordant to appeal to Isabel Archer. The qualities that carried the financiers of America to success were the same traits that set them in conflict with the refined, artistic spirits of Europe and America. What saves Goodwood from being a caricature of the unpolished American is his reluctant acceptance that he cannot have Isabel Archer. His new house and his forceful, business-like personality do not entice Isabel. Nineteenth-century America with its garishness and power-hungry nouveau riche does not lure Henry James; instead, it ultimately repels him as it does Isabel Archer as represented by Casper Goodwood.

In James' The Portrait of a Lady, house imagery provides readers with an overview of concerns that existed in nineteenth-century Victorian America. The growing divisions in society based on the inequitable distribution of wealth created underlying tensions that had the potential to isolate and separate individuals from each other.

Increased control by wealthy corporations threatened to disallow individual choices about life. The home as the source of moral values was invaded by the desire to acquire physical objects that signified wealth. Change threatened the security Americans usually equated with domesticity. Houses as symbols represent more than individual confusion; they also illustrate national and cultural uncertainty. As the American population shifted westward, additional changes threatened to engulf the nation and to raise doubts about America's future. Over all the concerns lay questions about the individual's reaction to change. House imagery in nineteenth-century novels offers some insight about these concerns, especially as the world's fairs established a foundation for the source of the concerns.

Notes

¹ The importance of house design and construction can be traced in several texts on the development of American architecture. The following works show the connection of house construction to social change, particularly economic influences: Doucet and Weaver's "Material Culture and the North American House, the Era of the Common Man, 1870-1920," Davis's "American Expositions and Architecture," John Maass's The Victorian Home in America, Wayne Andrews's Architecture in America, John Burchard's The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History, and Spiro Kostof's America by Design.

² Inventions that supposedly released women from the drudgery of housework actually increased expectations and standards. For example, when the vacuum cleaner was invented and entered the market and homes, the task of carpet cleaning grew more onerous. Traditionally, a woman might remove all the rugs from a home and beat them outside during spring and/or fall cleaning. With the advent of the machine, rugs could be cleaned more often. Of course this then allowed for "wall-to-wall" carpeting that could not be removed and cleaned annually and had to be cleaned much more often. The machine created more work, thus effectively

tying the woman more closely to the home and taking the decision of when to clean away from her.

³ In his work Henry James and the Structure of the Romantic Imagination, Daniel Mark Fogel focuses on the journey motif in James's novels. He uses two images, the journey and a harbor, that connect to houses in his discussion of The Portrait of A Lady. On her journey, Isabel chooses between Goodwood and Osmond. Described as a harbor, Goodwood represents the safety of the traditional hearth. The home of Osmond, however, leaves Isabel "wealthy, confined, unhappy but aware" (Fogel 54).

⁴ Isabel is awaiting a visit from Casper Goodwood, her suitor, whom she dismisses after receiving the offer from Mrs. Touchett.

⁵ Beyond the basic contrast between American and European traditions, James expresses the effect of the contrast on his young American heroine. His "interest now lies not in the definition of the contrast but in a more direct fictional exploitation of its effect" on Isabel Archer (Bowden 54). James uses the artistic to symbolize the definition of characters. Mr. Touchett is inseparable from his house just as Rosier's identity rests in his collection of bibelots. Gilbert Osmond is a sterile, oppressive, and incommunicative as is his house.

⁶ The fact that some factory employees received a day off to attend the 1876 Centennial or an expense-paid family

junket to the fair illustrates that some corporations were aware of restlessness among labor groups. The problem in 1876 was, however, still not a serious concern of management. Ensuing decades would bring increased focus on labor problems.

⁷ William Dean Howells reinforces this nineteenth-century American attitude toward charity in his novel The Rise of Silas Lapham. His characters in search of social acceptance, the Laphams, discover that charity is the giving of money without personal involvement. Writing a check for the appropriate amount satisfies social obligation.

Chapter III

Houses and Social Disparity: The Unfulfilled American Dream
in The Rise of Silas Lapham

Of the four novelists discussed in this study, William Dean Howells has the most direct connection to the fairs that provide the framework for a study of social changes, growth, and national interests in nineteenth-century Victorian America. Howells attended both the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial and the 1893 Columbian Exposition and published an article about his week-long visit in Philadelphia. As an astute observer of American life and a leading proponent of realism in American literature, Howells incorporated details of his observations into his writings. However, Howells does more, than record facts and scenes with explicit photographic detail. His characters must face the changes and concerns of a society that through the rapidity of industrial, financial, and demographic expansion often undermined traditional moral values of society and family and then isolated individuals because of the resultant disruption.

William Dean Howells began writing The Rise of Silas Lapham in 1884, nine years after the Philadelphia Centennial. During that time, Howells watched the developments that occurred after America had displayed its

best in an international arena. Silas Lapham, as a newly-rich American, participates in America's nineteenth-century Progressive Age. Unlike James' Isabel Archer, Silas Lapham is not manipulated by the wealth of others. Lapham creates his own dilemma by believing that his wealth will buy for his daughters a degree of social status above his rural, lower class background. Howells combines his observations about America's future, as he saw it at the Centennial, with the underlying dangers of a too optimistic acceptance that industrial progress will fulfill America's idealistic visions.

By portraying Silas Lapham as a product of American technology and ambition combined, Howells shows the class separations in America, the movement away from traditional values often associated with the hearth and homes of rural America, and the promise of successful western development for Americans. Like the buildings at the Centennial, the houses in this novel are varied yet reveal Victorian America's attempts to ignore public dissatisfaction with social disparity.

Howells describes, in his article "A Sennight of the Centennial," his visit to the Philadelphia Centennial celebration. His eyewitness account of the fair's positive and negative aspects with humor is overlaid with pride in America's accomplishments particularly compared with exhibits from other nations. In all areas, from the

courtesy of the fair employees and even railroad attendants to the arrangement of the displays, Howells found America to be superior in most respects except one. As he views the paintings on display, Howells delights in the works of the English artists while commenting on the good quality of American work that he says "showed a distracting variety of influences" while it had "made vast advances on the technical side" (95). It is this variety of influences combined with technology that Howells notes in many aspects of the fair. On the afternoon that he toured the State buildings, Howells noted the diversity of the building styles but expressed his strong approval of those buildings that most clearly represented the native land. He had mild praise for the Ohio building because it consisted of stones from Ohio, and for the same reason he approved of the West Virginia building. However, he gave his most extensive praise to the Mississippi house that was "wholly built of Mississippi woods, the rough bark logs showing without, and the gables and porch decked with gray streamers of Spanish mosses" (100). With the same underlying feeling, Howells praises the Canadian structure because the exhibitors constructed it of native materials and because no Canadian visitor "could look at this great lumber lodge without thinking of home which the profuse tiles of the New Jersey house or the many-shingled sides of the Massachusetts building could never suggest to a native of those States"

(100). Although Howells acknowledges the diversity of the American states and understands the difficulty of creating a representative architectural style, he does applaud attempts to establish an American identity in both art and architecture. He apparently approves of the more native styles, even if somewhat rough in appearance, to any style that merely copies the artistic facade of another country or culture. In his novels, Howells approves most heartily of those of his characters who display the same traits.

In the discussion of the technology showcased at the centennial, Howells reveals his own respect for the advancements of the machine age. He balances his depiction of the Corliss engine and its unceasing and unremitting power with the apparently easy job of the man who tends the machine. The man's duties allow him time to pursue leisurely his reading with only an occasional foray to oil the machine. This scene hints of a future life of ease when machines will perform all the heavy labors of workers. He also describes the quiet conversations of the workers at the fair exhibits just before the engine starts. The machine's operations govern the beginning of the workday as it stops the interaction of the fair workers and calls them to work. This activity foreshadows the governance of factories and even individual lives by mechanized schedules. Howells, however, does not depict this as a negative; in fact, he revels in "the thousand creations of American inventive

genius with its exhilaration and impressiveness" and shares with delight his feeling of "joy" when he places "his hand over an air-blast" (105). In several ways, Howells' enjoyment of the Centennial appears again in the character of Silas Lapham. Silas delights in progress, speed, economic expansion, and architecture as a signs of his, he hopes, new status in life as a successful businessman. Lapham is drawn to watch the powerful equipment pound the earth as it prepares the ground for his new house. The rhythmic sound of power almost mesmerizes him, and he revels in the sight of the machine that will begin his journey to social acceptance.

While Howells clearly enjoys the artistic and the beautiful exhibits shown at the Centennial, he also reveals a sense of uneasiness with some aspects of the fair. He wishes that they had not established the Women's Pavilion as a separate unit but that the women had integrated their products among the others. He enjoys his Sunday when the Centennial is closed and the railroads no longer disturb the natural peace of the Pennsylvania countryside. Howells deplores the "shopworn" air that surrounds many booths as if to suggest that the countries of these displays are more interested in making money than entering into the spirit of international sharing of native dress, artifacts, and inventions. Howells also views with approval the "city" that has grown up around the Centennial grounds as an

example of American enterprise and willingness to enter into the spirit of celebration. Overall, Howells' description of the Centennial is one that expresses approval yet does not deny the fair's problems. This ability to view the world with an open mind and fair treatment is characteristic of Howells' novels.¹ Although he presents the "smiling aspects of life," he also considers the potential difficulties inherent in refusing to acknowledge problems. Alan Trachtenberg describes Howells as altering "the notion of realism to fit his own role, the role of fashioning serious fiction as an anodyne for the rifts he observed in the social fabric, the growing tensions between old and new ways of life" (191). As both an observer and active participant in American life, William Dean Howells synthesizes American society into his novels. He is especially adept at using his novels to reveal aspects of life that the Centennial attempted to ignore as it presented its facade of unity and progress to the world.

In The Rise of Silas Lapham, for example, Howells addresses several concerns he has about American society, and he uses some of the same techniques and symbols he discussed in the article "A Sennight of the Centennial." Of course, the most central and most powerful symbol of this novel is the Laphams' new house. For them, the house represents their financial ability to live equally with the Coreys. Other houses in the novel also effectively

represent contrasting views of Boston life and American life. For example, the dingy apartment of Zerilla and her mother contrasts with the house in Vermont where Silas began his financial rise and completed his moral rise. Although the Lapham farmhouse is shabby, this homestead inculcated values of hard work and honesty in the children. The Millon apartment merely provides shelter and a meager existence because of the inhabitants' lifestyle. The design and decoration of each house and the family life and personal conflicts of the inhabitants reveal certain prevalent attitudes of Victorian America.

The houses in The Rise of Silas Lapham offer effective contrasts among three classes or levels of society: the upper class of the Coreys, the middle class Laphams, and the lower or working class Deweys. These class designations are, of course, arbitrary and simplistic. The Coreys, for example, are upper class because they represent a goal to which others aspire. The Coreys seemingly embody a leisurely and comfortable lifestyle. They feel secure in their self-evaluation that they are the arbiters of social standards. Their polished manners, extensive education, and European experiences separate them from a need to concern themselves openly with daily expenses of survival. They see their status as based on their having achieved the pinnacle of social standing. Howells' presentation of the Corey family clearly represents the Boston Brahmins of the

nineteenth century. Active business pursuit no longer motivated the blue blood families. For them, the path to success was through inherited money, not earned money. During this change from "an entrepreneurial into a hereditary upper class," the newly rich like Silas Lapham are seen as the "corrupters of American life, vulgarizers of culture . . . and displacers of the established elite" (Jaher 199). As representative of the established elite, the Corey home reflects gracious living not sullied by a day-to-day need to amass or display wealth outwardly or profusely. They know how to behave and need not question whether their acts are socially appropriate. Their status comes from a connection to "old money" not whether or not they still have that money. Although they do express the need to justify their position, they believe they have the right, by virtue of social standing, to judge those who are not of their inner circle. Because money and time determine membership in their ranks, they have a restricted view of life. In this outlook, bound by exclusivity, lie the seeds of atrophy.

The middle class, to which the Laphams belong, constitutes that group of people who do not work for others and do not, as a rule, work the land. This group, as represented in the novel, seeks a higher position, believing that money is the key that opens the door to the world of the elite. Raw with the newness of their wealth and crude

in their manners, they have not had the time to acquire the polish of generations of education and social blending with others. They are usually too busy amassing wealth to pay attention to "manners." The families, wives and daughters in the case of the Laphams, not having been born with money, do not fully understand its advantages. For example, the Lapham women hesitate to relocate because they cannot walk to the local establishments where they normally shop. They have not yet realized that they can and should purchase a personal carriage or should hire a carriage to take them about Boston. They are unaccustomed to life in the city where wealth brings ease and comfort to daily life.

The widow and daughter of Jim Millon, Mrs. Dewey and Zerilla, represent the lower class or working class. Zerilla works in Mr. Lapham's office. Their income, supplemented by Silas Lapham, is enough for them to survive on a day to day basis but not enough for them to escape their rather dingy lifestyle. Their house is an apartment they do not own and cannot afford to decorate with anything other than the cheapest of items. Rather than spend money on improving their apartment through decoration, Mrs. Millon is more apt to spend money for alcohol. She represents the type of situation that encouraged temperance groups to promote the prohibition of alcohol on the grounds of the Centennial in Philadelphia. The prohibitionists were powerful enough during this time to insist that no alcohol be served on the

Centennial grounds. Of course, like Mrs. Millon, the population who wanted to drink found that the Centennial City outside Fairmount Park would satisfy their needs. The controllers of the Centennial celebration apparently would have agreed with Persis Lapham that this element of society should be removed from sight and memory.

The most dominant house image in The Rise of Silas Lapham is that of Silas Lapham's new house. However, Lapham's progress from the farm house to the Nankeen Square house to, almost, the new house and the return to the farm house traces Silas's struggle to identify successfully his place in Boston society. His financial success story as he relates it to Bartley Hubbard seems, at first, a typical "rags to riches" fable. At least Hubbard has prepared himself to hear such a tale. As Lapham relates his past, he remembers most clearly his mother's domestic struggles to care for the family of six boys and his father's physical trials to provide a living from the New England farm. Lapham describes the exodus of the sons as they move west and become successful.² Silas is the only brother who went west only to return to the family home. As he says, "I hung on to the old farm, not because the paint mine was on it, but because the old house was--and the graves" (7). Lapham returns clearly because of strong emotional ties to family and to tradition, not because of the monetary value of the homestead. As he explains, the farm has no market value as

a farm. This comment reflects the changing status of rural America as New England farms were less valuable because of the countryside's decreased value. In this farmhouse, Silas grew up with the dreams of his father and the pious strength of his mother. The picture of the family standing in front of the farmhouse that Silas shows Bartley evokes memories and family pride. Behind the house is where Silas first tries out the paint and discovers its value and from there begins to make his fortune. The farmhouse is both his past and the impetus for his present. Not surprisingly, the farmhouse is also his future. This rural home will, eventually, become his refuge. Although he keeps a picture of his past in the office of his successful business, Silas Lapham is determined to move forward financially and socially. At the 1876 Centennial, American planners and exhibitors shared this sentiment. The past was acknowledged but economic growth impelled the nation toward the promising future. Both Silas Lapham and Americans at the fair succumbed completely to the excitement of progress.

Silas's present house on Nankeen Square represents his lifestyle as it has changed since the paint manufacturing has made him rich. This house, which he purchased unaware that it is not in a socially fashionable neighborhood, best reveals the lifestyle of the Lapham family since they have changed their status from a poor rural family to a wealthy urban family. Silas and Persis still live basically the

same way that they lived on the farm. Mrs. Lapham invites the neighbor ladies to tea and Silas entertains business acquaintances at "pot-luck [as] neither of them imagined dinners" (23). They spend their money on horses, clothes, household furnishings and decorations; they travel on railroad excursions and give generously to their church and its charities. They do not, however, entertain or make friends in Boston. Their family, particularly Mrs. Lapham and the daughters Irene and Penelope, in their travels to resort areas exude a

sort of content in their own ways that one may notice in certain families. The very strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to worldly knowledge; they dressed for one another; they equipped their house for their own satisfaction; they lived richly to themselves, not because they were selfish, but because they did not know how to do otherwise. (24)

In many ways, Howells depicts their innocence as endearing and satisfying, not gauche, except in their choice of decoration for the parlor of the Nankeen Square house.

By describing the house's decor, Howells illustrates several examples of how Victorian Americans lived and some of their attitudes about life. He uses the detailed description of the parlor or drawing room to illustrate the duality of the Victorian American sense of family caused by

the changing society. One view was that of the unified family where hearth and home reigned supreme. The other view was of social standing as presented through the public face of a family. American homes contained two types of drawing rooms which reflect this duality. In one type of home the drawing room "is treated as a family apartment and provided with books, lamps, easy-chairs and writing tables. In other houses [usually rural homes] it is still considered sacred to gilding and discomfort, the best room in the house . . . more truly defined as a remnant of the 'best parlor' superstition" (Wharton and Codman 124). Often, considerable money was spent to decorate or over-decorate a room where no one was comfortable and the owner's identity was submerged in "things" never used, merely displayed. These displays, however, revealed a great deal about a family's life. Howells's description of the Lapham's drawing room does incorporate aspects of the family's past and present. The room with its "parti-colored paint," "gilt moldings," "red velvet" wallpaper, "massive imitation bronze" chandelier, and heavy curtains is overwhelmed by color, garish, and rarely used (190). The crude green carpet that "covered half the new floors in Boston" offers additional evidence that the Laphams are susceptible to outside influences when decorating. At the farmhouse, the decor probably consisted of well-used handmade furnishings suitable to simple, rural

life. When the family moved to Boston, they came unprepared for city life and style.

The parlor of the Nankeen Square house does display art that chronicles the Laphams' life and attitudes. Western landscapes represent scenes that the Laphams visited on their railway excursions. The other artwork, the kneeling figures of Faith and Prayer and the white marble group of Lincoln Freeing the Slaves, further illustrates contemporary interests.³ That they are caricatures in the Italian style shows that the Laphams are less interested in accuracy than in possession of European art. Stevenson describes the importance of house decoration to understanding nineteenth-century American thought:

When Victorians brought images of famous men and women into their parlors, they were bringing the influence of public figures into the private realm. There they served as models, especially to the young, and they represented yet another way to reconcile individualism with community values.

(7)

Silas Lapham's paint business is represented in the parlor, as is his Civil War participation. Persis Lapham believes strongly in her traditional moral values of faith and prayer and has an absolute sense of right and wrong unadulterated by the hard line business practices necessary for financial success. The placement of the Faith and Prayer images

facing outward suggests that Persis cares a great deal that the Laphams not only behave morally but also are recognized as morally upright by the neighbors. When the Laphams must return to the Vermont farm, they take little with them from the Nankeen Square house; however, the two statues remain a part of their lives and their home. The Laphams have taken with them faith and prayer as values, not mere decoration.

One very popular aspect of Victorian American decoration was the use of natural objects such as pine cones, fossils, seashells, and natural fibers to decorate furniture, chests, and picture frames. Nineteenth-century Americans also incorporated the natural world freely into their homes with lavish horticultural displays of exotic plants, both real and fake.⁴ The Nankeen Square house exhibits very few of these natural objects. This is not surprising because the house imagery symbolically portrays contemporary attitudes. Although they seemed drawn to using nature within their homes, Americans were not conservation oriented. Howells expresses this by omitting the natural decorations and focusing on other means of revealing the prevalent attitudes about the land. With the West wide open to settlement and with the abundance of natural resources, the supply from nature seemed endless and available. Silas Lapham literally spread his paint company advertisements over every available rock, open space, and rural building. For him, like many Americans, nature exists to be used,

rapaciously. Besides, railways offered excursions to large areas of still unspoiled western wilderness areas. It would be quite hypocritical for the Laphams to decorate with preserved natural objects when Silas Lapham sees nature as the source of his continued wealth and uses nature as an advertising medium. Through this attitude about nature, Howells also reveals the idea that the West was available to Americans for use and exploitation. His comments about the Native American display at the Centennial supports his recognition that the Indians did not hold permanent ownership of the Western lands. The fact that this exhibit was withdrawn after the Eastern United States heard about Custer's defeat solidified America's policy about Western settlement. The prosperity of Western entrepreneurs surfaces several times throughout the novel, and Howells continuously supports western expansion in the interest of American progress. In this way, Howells reinforces the inevitability of continental expansion and increased wealth and power due to American inventiveness and the progress promised by the 1876 Centennial.

By changing one aspect of the house's decoration, the type of artwork displayed, Howells shows another important element in the changing world of nineteenth-century America. With this difference, Howells reveals the developing family rift and uncertainty, especially between Silas and Persis. The rift begins as soon as Persis no longer has an active

role in her husband's business. Silas seemingly tries to compensate by bringing an aspect of his home and his past into his business environment. As Louise Stevenson discusses the living spaces and decoration of Victorian American homes, she explains that since "few people could afford original portraits, most families displayed photographic portraits of themselves, their official image for the world to see. . . . The group pose confirmed family unity" (4). The photograph had become an inexpensive substitute for more costly dynastic portraits. For a man of Silas Lapham's poor rural background, the photograph is the only enduring visual remembrance of his family and his home. Although these family photographs were most often displayed on the parlor table, Silas Lapham displays his family photograph in his office. This shows his close ties to the family farm, the accidental source of his new wealth. Lapham has carried into the workplace an item traditionally part of the home setting. Once the Laphams left rural New England and settled in urban Boston, part of the family home had become commercialized. In addition, Lapham appears to want to incorporate his family values from the homestead into his business. His inability to reconcile these values in the workplace creates dissension in the family and the eventual loss of his affluent life in Boston. He finds that the two worlds collide rather than merge successfully.

Part of this collision occurs because of Lapham's vocation. He is a businessman. At the opening ceremonies of the Centennial, businessmen were honored guests because they were instrumental in the planning and fund-raising for the celebration. In addition, the industrialists and new millionaires had become heroes in the Victorian world. Many of the inventions at the Centennial were displayed to show how industrial progress could improve daily life and bring wealth to the successful designers and merchants of the products.

Although a character like Silas Lapham, a businessman, is a relatively new one to the world of literature, his type of success was coveted by many, especially those who visited the fair.⁵ Lapham is a nineteenth-century businessman who is not a banker or a wealthy landowner; he is a manufacturer whose product is closely tied to technology. He accepts and uses modern technology as part of his business success. Although determined to remain independent and the sole owner of his company, he must rely on outsiders for his success. He calls in a scientist to verify his intuitive recognition of the paint's properties. He acknowledges his own lack of education yet has interest and faith in scientific or even mechanical answers to contemporary problems. He uses a typewriting girl, Zerilla Dewey, in his office. Although this technology removes his words from his immediate control, he can satisfy his moral obligation and use a

modern invention to enhance his business success. Finally, he recognizes that his business enterprise will not thrive without Western and foreign markets and for that he must hire an employee who can communicate with businessmen and markets beyond New England. He must, therefore, incorporate new people as well as new technology into his business. If he is to maintain or even increase his wealth, Silas Lapham must separate himself from the farmland and base his company in an urban area far from his roots in rural New England. The farther he is from his old home, the farther away from his mother's values he moves.

The Centennial exhibits also illustrate these opposing forces. The art exhibited by the European nations drew large crowds and universal praise because it represented an older respected culture. The American inventions excited visitors because of the future technology they promised. Because the architecture of the fair was varied and relied largely on designs from European traditions and because very few "home grown" buildings decorated the fairgrounds, visitors could not help but fall prey to the idea that the future did not include American rural homes or American architecture or art. The country scenes that did appear diminished in value compared to the Old World art and the new world technology.

Howells shows Silas Lapham as caught between the demands of business, social acceptance, and his past

traditions because Howells "understands the subtle pressures that push a man into an inescapable web of compromising entanglements (Lee 36). For example, the business decision to incorporate Rogers into the paint business because of Rogers' money, and then Lapham's decision, both emotional and business, to buy out Rogers, creates a conflict that also appears in American society. The increase in the number of railroad markets, the expansion of western settlement that created new markets for goods, the growth of manufacturing to sell to local, national and international markets created a climate of incorporation that highlighted a "change in the entrepreneurial history of earlier decades" (Trachtenberg 4). Silas Lapham, by ousting Rogers, attempts to stave off the inevitable and retain individual control of his business. In today's business climate this decision would be a prudent one. However, Silas Lapham discovers that both his pride in his own success and his sense that he has violated his traditional values contribute to his financial difficulties. When he does, finally, accept the need to take on partners, to merge into another firm, he cannot do so because he has lost money through speculation. Speculation, making money without actually working, sorely tests his New England conscience, that conscience that Persis continually prods. Silas Lapham is part of the traditional spirit of America that believes in a pastoral ideal of the husbandman working the land. Yet, he distances

himself from this ideal when he invests money by buying speculative stocks to improve his financial situation but not by investing himself in the project. This nebulous method of creating income violates the principles of both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson as accepted by idealistic Americans. Speculation also requires separation from work or labor. This reflects the growing separation of management and labor that will contribute to labor unrest in the future. For Howells, "the real conditions of American capitalism erode the moral fabric of society and help to create corrupt characters" (Lee 32). Through speculation, Silas Lapham loses sight of the source of his wealth and, in some ways, the source of his moral values. He has become, through his business practices, isolated from his own identity. The overall design of the Centennial landscape further encouraged this idea of separate interests. The arts were in one building, machinery in another, transportation and women's contributions in separate buildings, and horticulture and agriculture in individual buildings. The fair departed from the previous design of housing all the exhibits under one roof and moved to a design of separate buildings to house compartmentalized aspects of life. This suggests at least the possibility of isolating some aspects of life, that is art, from technology. This designed separation forced choices and

supported isolation of interests, the same separation that occurred in the Lapham family.

The story that Hubbard plans to publish about Lapham coincides with nineteenth-century interest in the successes of the self-made man, particularly the emerging businessman, and the accompanying corporate world. The published article shows an underlying distaste for the boasting deliberately encouraged and elicited during the interview. Thus, early in the novel, Howells reveals the question of whether money or education or manners determines class distinction. Undoubtedly the reporter has more education and a greater facility with the English language; however, Lapham makes no real effort to be other than he is, a hard-working product of rural Vermont. Hubbard, however, represents the segment of society that has already accepted the separation and ranking of individuals based on external evidence and the need of one group to feel superior to another, particularly the newly successful businessman.

The subject of language skills appears elsewhere in the novel as an example of social divisions and superficial standards. Bromfield Corey discusses the Lapham family with his son Tom and expresses his idea that "the suddenly rich are on a level with any of us nowadays. Money buys position at once" (56). In this discussion about money, Bromfield Corey acknowledges the existence of the new rich and the local and foreign interest in America's "new millionaires"

(56). He even calls them and their wealth "the romance, the poetry of our age" (56). The elder Corey, however, must present his standard of social acceptance as more than wealth based. He describes his future daughter-in-law as having "a little youth, a little beauty, a little good sense and pretty behavior," and he believes "they go just as often with money as without it. And I suppose I should like her people to be rather grammatical" (56). With this statement, Bromfield Corey reinforces the idea introduced by Bartley Hubbard that money is desirable but certain standards, education and language facility and correctness, provide society with barriers they can use to exclude the unrefined or to feel superior when money acts as a social equalizer. Tom Corey asserts, however, that "people who have been strictly devoted to business" can hardly be "grammatical." He adds, "in spite of his syntax, I rather liked him" (57). The whole question of grammar or language correctness underscores Howells' presentation of the currents of change in American society. The unrestrained growth of the wealthy business class received approbation at the world's fairs. American success in European fairs and at Philadelphia provided impetus to the growth of a new wealthy segment of American society. In addition, it was the business segment of society that promoted, controlled, and, eventually, paid for the succeeding fairs.

Bartley Hubbard and Bromfield Corey manage to maintain and exhibit a facade of superiority in spite of their admitted interest in gaining or regaining wealth. Although they say they adhere to standards not based on wealth alone, they both are impressed by Lapham's financial success, even if they are not particularly impressed by the man himself. At least the reporter erects a facade of standards other than financial in order to hide his own lack of monetary success. Bromfield Corey, on the other hand, excuses the rough-hewn exterior and acknowledges that money and the new house in the right neighborhood and memberships in the right clubs can overcome any lack of polish. The new house is entree to Corey's society, even if it does not guarantee total acceptance. Although the Coreys, particularly Bromfield, discuss additional standards such as grammar, the ultimate criteria for acceptance is the ability of the Laphams to build an expensive home in the right neighborhood. Money and the success it represents through purchasing power become the new standard for acceptance into American society.

Howells depicts the architect as an artist who can and does influence the Laphams in the design of their new home. He functions as a sympathetic bridge between their uncultured view of his art and his own esthetic sense. In this way Howells suggests that American architecture is beginning to express itself as an art.⁶ To Howells,

architecture was an expression of the artistry of the architect and the personality of the owner. When the Laphams decide to build their new house in the Back Bay area, they create a symbol of their unrealistic dreams of social advancement. Howells effectively links this symbol with his own reaction to the architecture of the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial. American architecture in 1876 did not have its own unique qualities. Many builders and architects drew on English and French influences. When Howells viewed the myriad styles at Philadelphia, he was drawn to those that best represented the native landscape. This preference reveals the honesty of a realistic outlook in art and in life. For Howells, novels should reflect life as it is including its roughness and unfinished qualities. Architecture should be a product of native landscape and fit into the surroundings honestly and without pretensions. Homes, in particular, should reflect the lives of the inhabitants. When Lapham hires an architect instead of a builder, he moves to incorporate art and practicality. The problem is that the Laphams equate their ability to buy with an ability to create a home. The architect, as artist, can suggest more aesthetically pleasing designs and decorations. The architect, however, creates another set of problems that show that the Laphams do not belong in the elite Boston society which bases acceptance on older, more European-

influenced criteria. As the fairs suggest, however, this European standard will soon defer to the power of money.

Although the architect knows the correct, most tasteful designs, he will not live in the home. The Laphams' new house will contain rooms included for show rather than for use. None of the Laphams, for example, has any idea how to furnish a library, for only Penelope reads to any extent. Silas and Irene intend to purchase books based on the appearance of the bindings not the contents.⁷ The music room is part of the interior design but will probably remain unused. The overall restrained, classical design of the staircase, the wall decorations, and the entry disappoint Silas, who would prefer a darker paneling. His idea of decoration is as heavily lavish as his own brash behavior. The house will contain, of course, all the modern conveniences that money can buy. The Laphams build a house in order to move into a social circle closed to them. The problems of class divisions have affected the Laphams and turned them away from what is comfortable and familiar. Like Howells, who especially appreciated an opportunity to escape to the countryside and get away from the bustle of the Centennial, the Laphams will, ultimately, be relieved to return to the Vermont farm. They never live in the new house because its building, in the long run, contributes to the financial fall of Silas Lapham. They are too far removed from their natural environment to feel comfortable

in a world governed by rules, tastes, and designs not their own. They fall prey to their own social ambitions and fail, for a time, to adhere to their own values. For Howells, an adherent of realism, the nation must also find its own values and arts and not rely on past traditions or European influences. Like the promises held out by the Centennial celebration, the promises of the Lapham's new home did not come to fruition. The Centennial paid little attention to the past, and Silas Lapham set aside his traditional values in favor of making more money and entering a social class in which he did not fit.

When Irene works to accept the loss of Tom Corey, she asks that her father walk with her. The pair stop in front of the new house. Howells describes the scene:

The scaffolding which had so long defaced the front was gone, and in the light of the gas-lamp before it all the architectural beauty of the facade was suggested, and most of the finely felt detail was revealed. (216)

The architect had designed the front lavishly and tastefully because Lapham had supplied the funds to do so. In this vision of the house, Howells summarizes the relationship of the house and the Laphams. The house is beautiful because it was designed by an artist and purchased with money. The defacing scaffold represents the ambition of the Laphams and their reason for building the house. The beauty presents an

alluring surface that represents the way that the characters respond to a false dream of entering society through a beautiful daughter and a beautiful home in a fashionable and wealthy neighborhood. The Laphams believed the appearance to be the truth and refused to see the reality. Like the paint, Silas' speculation, Persis' Puritanical standards, and the sentimental novels, the new house represents the falseness of Silas Lapham's attempts to rise socially. Silas Lapham has turned over his identity to the architect by allowing the architect to impose Boston standards of design. Regardless of the lack of refinement the Laphams have shown in designing their house, the new house will further displace them from their rural roots. Howells' dissatisfaction with the buildings at the Centennial resurfaces in this novel. The architects of the fair lacked assurance in America's native ability to succeed in artistic competition with the Old World. They rejected American designs and native American materials and developed an imitative landscape. Howells would have preferred a more American even more rustic presentation.

As the Laphams build their new house, Persis supports the changes in American society as proposed by the Women's Suffrage Movement. Persis is caught between her traditional role and fulfilling a new role as a contributing partner to her husband's business. Her separation from the business leads to disuse of her training and her talents. As a

mother, she wants to build the home to advance her daughters socially. However, because she is no longer an active influence in her husband's business, she is not reaching her potential as a member of society. Distanced from her husband's business life and a portion of his personal life, she does not know about their financial overextension. As a woman, she is traditionally responsible for upholding the values of family and nation; however, she is isolated from the daily activities that will change her future. Through Persis and her actions, Howells presents the conflict between home and business values and highlights the fall of Silas Lapham as he separates himself from the stable, rural morality of his past. Silas Lapham freely acknowledges that Persis is more educated because she was a schoolteacher before they married. He, at first, follows her advice about social behavior. When Persis adamantly refuses to allow Silas to donate a large amount of money to the Corey's charity, he accepts her greater social knowledge. Howells, however, presents an interesting dilemma at this point. The donation to charity is governed by social considerations rather than by the amount needed by the recipients. A large donation would benefit the charity but would make the Laphams look socially inept. A smaller donation helps the Laphams to look correct but diminishes the charitable beneficence. The Laphams's pretentious desire to be accepted socially places their donation into the category of

personal selfishness instead of caring largesse. The domesticity of Persis' role in the family and her historic role as arbiter of values have become tainted by their desire to rise socially. Although the Laphams continued to support their church and its charities after moving to Boston, the charitable impetus changes when the Laphams and the Coreys begin to interact. The desire to behave in a socially accepted manner invades and alters the previous generosity. Social acceptance governs their charitable donations, not need. Shrewdly, Silas recognizes from her behavior that Persis wants to build the new house. Her insistence that the donation conform to socially accepted limits reveals that she cannot bring herself to ignore the Coreys and the opportunity they present for social advancement for Irene Lapham. She reluctantly accepts her own willingness to nurture the social potential. Like a well-dressed family that walks down the street and deliberately ignores the poor children huddled over the steaming grate, Persis and Silas Lapham have distanced themselves from their past.

Although Howells focuses on the need to retain traditional values of honesty, fairness, and hard work, he uses Persis Lapham to illustrate that a too-strong adherence to the past joined with her personal jealousy creates conflicts. Persis, as the wife and mother, should teach and uphold honesty, charity, and faith. In this novel, however,

Persis is relatively isolated from Silas and does not exert a great deal of influence because she is no longer involved with the paint business. Her business is now to spend money and enjoy a life of leisure for which she is not prepared. The influence she does have regarding the Rogers' incident separates her even more from sharing her husband's daily life. Ironically, she pressures Silas about not behaving morally when he bought out his former partner. She believes that Silas did not treat Rogers fairly, and she reminds him that he took advantage of his former partner. At the same time, Persis resents her husband's sense of indebtedness to Jim Millon's wife and daughter. She does not accept that Silas has a moral debt to the family because Jim Millon took a bullet meant for Silas during the Civil War. Persis believes that Mrs. Millon should have given the daughter Zerilla to a respectable family to raise. Her idea that the best solution for the widow and daughter is to break up the family unit contrasts with her moral outrage over Lapham's financial treatment of Rogers. For Persis Lapham, charitable impulses spring from personal jealousy and her desire to behave in accordance with socially acceptable standards. She cannot separate business decisions and obligations from the personal sense of debt that Silas Lapham feels.

Part of the dilemma that Persis faces arises from her changed role in her husband's life. At the beginning of

their married life and during the business rise, Persis worked alongside her husband. When they moved to Boston, she no longer participated in the business and lived a separate life bound by home, children, shopping, dressing, and excursions to the shore to escape summer heat. For Howells, this loss of a woman's influence in daily life creates an unhappy division in the family and in society. As he states in his Centennial article, he would prefer that the women's interests and exhibits not be housed in a separate building isolated from the rest of the exhibits. If women are isolated from daily life, they cannot support their husbands. When problems arise, the women must sometimes face them alone. As a result of her isolation and eventual misjudgement, Persis must, like Isabel Archer, sit in a darkened room and face her own lack of faith in and lack of support for her husband. As Howells describes the problems of family disunity and the problems that wealth contributes, Persis cannot find her way to solving her daughters' problems or her husbands' financial difficulties:

But it is the curse of prosperity that it takes work away from us, and shuts that door to hope and health of spirit. In this house, where everything had come to be done for her, she had no tasks to interpose between her and despair. (204)

Because of their wealth, Persis feels displaced and cannot find solace in her traditional household duties. Since she

is no longer involved in the business, she has no direction or purpose except to feel her own despair and discover her own moral weakness rooted in her pride. The Lapham wealth has created a division in the family just as wealth has begun to create social divisions in American society.

Although the home of Bromfield Corey and his family exhibits a classic, enduring design that denotes good taste, the Coreys are as confused or displaced by the changing nature of American society as are the Laphams. Mr. and Mrs. Corey follow accepted patterns of social behavior as if these codes offer stability. Although they recognize that change is occurring, their codes have not prepared them to adapt. In fact, the entrance of the Laphams into their lives presents questions which the Coreys cannot easily answer. They ask themselves how far, socially, they must go to repay the personal debt they owe Mrs. Lapham. Bromfield Corey tries to discover what constitutes a socially acceptable person during this time of increased numbers of newly wealthy Americans. As they try to maintain their upper class status, the Coreys accept that European influences have created some of their financial problems.

The view that Europe held the seeds and fruits of culture is explicit in Bromfield Corey's life. He had traveled and lived in Rome during his youth, and he and Mrs. Corey acknowledge they could live there like royalty were it not for their children and the need to live amid Boston

society. Howells shows that the influence of European artistic ideas has a negative, almost enervating, effect on Bromfield Corey. Americans traditionally expect hard work to amass wealth and to keep it. Corey's father, a merchant trader, had lived by this standard and expected this from his son. Bromfield Corey notes that Tom has this driving force. He respects his son's energy and determination even as he accepts his own weak contribution of his paintings to the world of art that he purports to embrace. Corey, however, does question what standards determine whether or not a person should be accepted into society as he defines it. His conversation explains the sense of almost bewilderment that the elder Coreys exhibit when faced with the question of entertaining the Laphams socially and the growing interest that Tom has vocationally and romantically with the paint manufacturer and his daughters. Bromfield Corey has an ambivalent reaction to the potential Corey and Lapham union. As Tom's parents discuss Tom's decision to enter the paint business, Mr. Corey says, "If money is fairly and honestly earned, why should we pretend to care what it comes out of, when we really don't care" (82). He acknowledges that the amount of money a person has indicates social acceptance. His is a pragmatic approach to what he sees as determination of social class. However, Mrs. Corey's response that "it isn't the paint alone" shows that her standards are more stringent than the standards of her

husband or her son (82). Mrs. Corey's attitude toward the Laphams is a parody of a woman's traditional role in the home. Instead of inculcating values of self-sufficiency as a prelude to entering the world, she propounds values that build barriers and isolate her and her family from those who would create disturbances in the secure world of upper class Boston. Her determination to exclude potential change in her world equals the Centennial planners' blindness as to who could afford the journey to Philadelphia and who had the ability to leave the workplace and join the national celebration. The average working person was effectively excluded by price and the Sunday closing of the fair.

The elder Coreys seem torn by confusion about Tom. In some respects, Bromfield is proud of Tom's determination to do something, yet, ironically, he calls Tom selfish for not continuing to live off the family money. They do not admit that if Tom does remain idle they will all have to be cautious about expenses. They are not wealthy enough to live as they choose, but they do not want Tom to work in trade, in Lapham's paint company. Mrs. Corey acknowledges that they would be much more comfortable financially if they did not have to "live respectably in Boston" (84). To emphasize the European influence on Bromfield Corey, Howells describes him as he "cuts his orange in the Neapolitan manner, and ate it in quarters" (304). Corey does this as he and his wife discuss the unsuitable and uncultivated

Laphams. The European attitude expressed by the Coreys separates them from the working populace such as the Laphams and certainly from the immigrant workers and poor people of Boston. They must live governed by the expectations of Boston society, and, in contrast, the Laphams have lived their life among themselves and with their past traditions. They make themselves happy and do not worry about how others live or what others think about their lifestyle. At least, they did not worry until they became involved with the Coreys and visited the Corey home for the dinner party. This event brings together most of the diverse cast of the novel and provides Howells with an opportunity to create a setting much like the diversity of the Centennial. The only segment of society excluded are the poor and the immigrants. They are represented only as subjects of charity.

The dinner party scene at the Corey home unites the families in a common social setting. Before the occasion, various members of the families had met in different settings. Bromfield Corey met Silas Lapham at the latter's place of business. Mrs. Corey met Mrs. Lapham and the two daughters at the vacation resort and at the Lapham's home during a social call. Tom Corey has, of course, met the entire Lapham family in a variety of settings: the business office, the Nankeen Square house, and the construction site of the Lapham's new home. The only other dinner guest the Lapham family has met is Mr. Seymour, the architect of their

new home. All the other guests are either members of the Corey family or people the Coreys believe would accept the Laphams socially. By placing these characters in a single setting, Howells can display, through their conversation, his views about contemporary problems of American life. These problems have already permeated the novel, and this central chapter offers evidence that the problems discussed are products of not only the characters' development within a contemporary context but also of pervasive changes occurring in American society and individual reactions to these changes. The topics of conversation include the Civil War, the poor, architecture as art, family connections to the West, and money. All of these topics are elements of American society during the Centennial celebration. Howells allows these issues to surface in the Corey home in order to present a stronger contrast among the diverse segments.

The problems of poor and working class American citizens arise in reference to the social work of Miss Kingsbury, who works with immigrants. Unlike Mrs. Corey and Mrs. Lapham, Miss Kingsbury knows the people of Boston who need her. Amid some good-natured raillery, she admits her need for interpreters while performing her social work; however, she says Bromfield Corey, although qualified, would ask the Italians to pose for a painting and forget his true purpose with them. The discussion about charity within the

context of dinner-party conversation illustrates Howells' belief that

charity is not the answer to the workers disadvantage position The particular ills that fall upon the lower classes are the result of a social system which will not be remedied by charitable gestures from a well-meaning aristocracy. (Eble 104)

Bromfield Corey, as a member of this aristocracy, subscribes to the idea that the poor do exist and probably do have miserable lives. However, this does not make him very uncomfortable because he has insulated himself. Earlier in the novel, after having conversed with a street vendor in Italian, he seemed unaware that he had even done so. Corey has lived his life as a dilettante who has avoided the reality of life around him. His visit to the Lapham office and his walk down the street serve as examples of his ability to see only what he wishes to see, not what really exists. He resides within his library in his wife's family home and feels secure about philosophizing without actually having to face the changing world. For example, during the discussion about the empty houses of the rich contrasting with the needs of the poor, Bromfield Corey seems unconcerned that he would ever be a target of the hypothetical dynamiting and takeover. After all, only the vacant houses would be the targets; he lives in his house.

He insulates himself within his library and feels secure as if his admitting that the poor and wretched exist satisfies charitable requirements. During this discussion about the dissatisfaction of the working class, Silas Lapham remains silent. He cannot articulate his knowledge that working people do not covet rich homes, for they are too busy trying to live. Also, the discussion reveals an attitude that labor problems are directly linked to foreign workers not American laborers. While Lapham wants to explain "that he had been there . . . ; that he didn't envy any his good luck, if he had earned it," Charles Bellingham explains what he knows about the workers in Omaha. He quotes his brother-in-law as saying,

it's the fellows from countries where they've been kept from thinking about it [Mr. Sewell has referred to "it" as "the hopeless comfort the hard-working poor man" sees around him and must bear] that are discontented. The Americans never make any trouble. They seem to understand that so long as we give unlimited opportunity, nobody has a right to complain. (172)

This comment effectively ends this discussion as Mrs. Corey changes the subject from these, to her, "profitless abstractions" (172). Ironically, Lapham later notices a contradictory statement about the value of opportunity when "James Bellingham spoke of a man known to Lapham for his

business success and great wealth as not a gentleman" (173). This dichotomy between the philosophy of available opportunity and the treatment of those who succeed reveals the contrast of an ideal and a reality. While these members of Boston society might pay lip service to America as a land where Americans can succeed if they work hard, they do not grant to the successful businessman automatic acceptance as a member of their class. This barrier resembles the encouragement of factory owners to their employees to attend the Centennial in 1876. The words did not translate into the ability to perform. The workers were rarely given time off for a holiday such as the visit would entail. The Centennial, of course, was closed during the only regular day off that workers had, Sunday. The members of the dinner party, with the exception of the Laphams and Mr. Sewell, seem determined to ignore the sordid facts about the poor and end the conversation with an accepted panacea, that opportunity exists and that should suffice. Like the banners and flags that flew during the Centennial celebration, the facade or easy acceptance of the American dream holds out a promise, but that promise has economic and social barriers.

Another topic of discussion during the dinner party is that of war. In this area, too, most of the guests seem determined to ignore past reality and opt for the heroic myth. Like the conversation about what poor people think

and feel, the discussion about the war is more philosophical in nature except for Silas Lapham's perspective. Lapham has powerful memories, perhaps because the results are still a part of his life as he continues to financially assist the family members of his comrade-in-arms Jim Millon. For Lapham, the war is not a distant memory but a continuing reality. He knows the aftermath of war. Bromfield Corey had not participated in the Civil War although he was involved with the Red Shirts in Italy. Charles Bellingham was a soldier but was stationed in the West and read about the battles waged in the rest of the nation. The strongest contrast in the views about war occurs when Bromfield Corey says, "You can paint a man dying for his country, but you can't express on canvas a man fulfilling the duties of a good citizen" (179). For Corey, the war is an occasion for good art and as such is heroic. For Lapham, however, the vision of war remains in the form of Jim Millon who "didn't go into the thing from the highest motives" yet took a bullet meant for Lapham and "died hard" (180-181). The overall discussion about the heroics of war and the need of an appropriate occasion for heroic behavior condenses into Lapham's description of Millon's death as "all desperate and savage" (181). Howells has depicted an attitude very similar to the attitude present during the Centennial. The past is supposedly to be celebrated and remembered, yet the future is far more important. The past is romantic and the

future represents progress. To a certain extent, Lapham's tie to the past is a moral millstone while the other guests' comments about the past have romanticized the uglier aspects and created a lament for the loss of heroic behavior.

The references to the westward expansion and settlement during this dinner party are another aspect of the glossing over of what could be considered a lack of refinement in American society. The Bellingham daughter has married a Westerner; in fact, Charles Bellingham replies to Mrs. Corey's invitation to meet the Laphams by saying, "Since Leslie's affair we're rather bound to do it. And I think we meet these practical fellows too little. There's always something original about them" (181). This comment reveals that practical people have not been a part of their social world. In addition, the phrase "Leslie's affair" indicates a form of discomfort, as if her marriage to a Westerner has placed the family in an awkward social position. Silas Lapham has heard of the son-in-law and admires his success in manufacturing. Again, the social world of the Coreys seems one that is insulated from the rest of American society, which is responding to the idea of progress and the wealth that accompanies hard work and the ability to create fortunes when given opportunities. The pattern that emerges in this scene is one that also appeared at the American world's fairs in Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco. Americans want progress, wealth, and national importance.

However, the nation began to accept the promise of outward and material success and ignore the decrease in meaningful individual contributions and the loss of individual identity in a society that accepted the facade of the material as evidence of personal value.

Traditionally, if one person has a great deal of money or status that arises from inherited money, the subject of one's wealth is usually not broached in polite company. The idea seems to be that the upper class lives well without constant concern with money and certainly without discussing its acquisition or expenditure. Refined living is the tangible evidence of wealth with an overlaying facade of generations away from the source of wealth to soften the roughness of business competition. The Coreys no longer have the financial resources of their ancestors. This has been established earlier in the novel. Their conversation at the dinner party, however, shows their interest in money. Bromfield Corey refers to the cost of the house that Silas Lapham is building by asking "Does he bleed your husband, Mrs. Lapham? He's a terrible fellow for appropriations" (169). He follows this comment later with his opinion that "architects and musicians are the true and only artistic creators" because they do not imitate but "create form" (170). Mrs. Corey also juxtaposes art and wealth when she describes to Silas Lapham the paintings that adorn the Corey home. When Silas asks her to identify the portraits, she

names the well-known artists such as Newton and Copley rather than naming the people in the portraits. For her, the painter is more important, perhaps, than the real people portrayed. The pride that Mr. and Mrs. Corey exhibit in the classical architecture of their home and the fine paintings they own establishes their right, according to Mrs. Corey, to belong to the upper class. Of course, throughout the dinner party Silas Lapham is bewildered by his surroundings and the discussions. He knows that he can buy fine art and a completely furnished library. In fact, he announces this ability without any hesitation. For him, the ability to acquire is important; for the Coreys, the inheritance of fine furnishings offers a standard for social acceptance. While Silas Lapham listens to the conversations around him and the repeated references to money, he is proud that he has earned his money through hard work "and every cent of that was honest money,--no speculation--every copper of it for value received" (183). The main contrasts at the dinner party ultimately revolve around money and the facade of gentility and class separation it creates and supports. This contrast is reinforced during the discussion about the sentimental novel and its negative impact on its readers.

Discussion about the influence of romantic novels parallels several ideas already examined. The romantic novels portray life unrealistically and create expectations doomed to bring unhappiness such as one sister sacrificing

her love because another sister loves the same man, the love story of Tom, Irene, and Penelope. Falk describes another meaning to the novel's role as illustrated by Howells. He says, "The popular novel, with its 'monstrously' disproportionate emphasis on love and self-sacrifice, turns out, surprisingly enough, to be the literary equivalent of the greedy and heartless stock market, which produces wealth out of all proportion to labor or merit" (41). This capitalistic excess of wealth coincides with the excess of refinement expressed by the Coreys and their family. The drive to acquire wealth equates to the drive to show that refinement is the product of time and, in the case of Bromfield Corey, an excess of European influence and artistic endeavor. The problems with novels, as discussed at the dinner party, is also similar to the advertising that Lapham does with his paint. Both display a garish and discordant sense of reality that can, in the case of the paint, intrude on the landscape, and in the case of the novels, skew reality. The paint slathered on the landscape hides its natural beauty in the interest of merchandising a product that produces wealth. The novels slather excessive emotions and tears and melodramatic behavior that cover the reality of life and human needs. The individual, like the observer of the landscape, finds himself or herself separated from natural behavior and feelings and suffering as a result. The young couple, Tom and Penelope, must

struggle to escape this separation from their own feelings and each other. Silas Lapham must struggle to escape the path that ultimately leads him to financial ruin. His paint cannot save him from making moral mistakes; only his personal sense of right and wrong can do this. Like the builders of the diverse and fake architecture of the Philadelphia Centennial, Silas Lapham has built a personal and moral house far from the soil of his native Vermont and its traditional, clear values of right and wrong.

The importance of areas beyond New England's geographic boundaries runs as a motif throughout this novel. The West, in particular, holds special importance as a place of opportunity and even potentially as a place will serve as a panacea for society's problems. Although Silas Lapham did not find success in Western states, his family members did. Tom Corey has been to Texas, and his family suggests that journey as the reason that Tom is so egalitarian in his feelings about the Laphams. It is a clipping, presumed to be from Tom Corey, about Texas that leads Irene Lapham into her dreams of romance. When Irene's romance fails to materialize, Mrs. Lapham suggests that Silas take their disappointed daughter on a trip to see new people in order to heal her broken heart. Silas agrees that he might do so since he has to travel "out West on business" (227). The trip west is a cure for Irene as well as another example of

how Silas Lapham sees the West as a place for business opportunity.

Tom Corey believes that his sojourn in Texas has had a strong impact on how he sees himself and his place in the world. As he explains to his father, "I suppose that in a new country one gets to looking at people a little out of our tradition; and I dare say that if I hadn't passed a winter in Texas I might have found Colonel Lapham rather too much" (57). Tom adds, "I've seen much younger men all through the West and Southwest taking care of themselves" (59). Through the experiences and viewpoint of Tom Corey, Howells can express the tantalizing idea that the West can nurture the seeds of America's future progress and vitality.⁸ Although Howells did not particularly adhere to a belief in Manifest Destiny, he does recognize that the younger generation can escape the closed society of the East. Tom Corey sees his Western experiences as opening his mind to opportunities that Boston society considers unrefined. Howells further expands the ideas that the West offers escape from a life bound by social strictures based on traditions from the past. Tom and Penelope's mobility arises from business expansion and their feeling that their marriage will cause discomfort for Penelope and the Corey family. Because of these factors, they must separate themselves from their homes. Their happiness depends on following business opportunities and escaping the rigid

class structure that has developed in New England urban areas. Howells does not accept that their love will surmount all problems. He suggests that their enterprising spirit and adaptability will ensure their future. They will nurture these qualities by leaving Boston. By expressing the potential for individual identity and success in areas away from tradition-bound New England, Howells shows America's ability to blur class distinctions through personal achievement and acceptance. In 1893, at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, America's and Howells' faith in western expansion will bring the world to the White City, not to New York.

Throughout The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howells uses house imagery to express his view of late nineteenth-century America. The buildings and interior decorations reflect the individual lives and aspirations of the characters as well as the lives and hopes of Americans. During his visit to the Philadelphia Centennial celebration, Howells delighted in evidence of American superiority in technology and machinery. He deplored American dependence on European influence in the area of art and architecture. Howells also saw the incipient social problems that arise from an inequity in wealth and social standing. Howells chronicles "the world of property, money, travel, and professions, then, looked for something deeper, searching for the moral dimension beneath the social veneer" (Milne

97). Although he promoted the inclusion of the smiling aspects of life in realistic literature, he did not present an entirely optimistic view of America in this novel. Through the success of Silas' brothers and Tom Corey, he does offer the potential that a mobile society provides for those with the spirit and the energy to move westward. Silas and Persis Lapham are too tied to their past as represented by values they learned in rural Vermont.

At the end of the novel, they cannot resurrect the desire to re-enter the competitive field of business. Silas accepts that his decision to deal honestly has cost him his chance to recoup his financial losses. Silas and Persis found themselves isolated in the city of Boston because of their class differences, and they now are isolated from America's industrial growth because of past traditions. Silas Lapham has become, to a certain extent, a displaced person. He does not belong with the Coreys because of his rawness. He cannot do business with Rogers or the Englishmen because of his moral sense. He cannot face Boston society because he believes they will consider him a fool. Lapham, however, does have a home to which he can return. Because of the Vermont farmstead, he will not suffer the same fate as other American protagonists such as Lily Bart and McTeague. The Coreys have been enervated by their own social customs as influenced by their time spent in Europe. They, like Silas and Persis, cannot adapt as

necessary to fulfill America's promising future as an industrial nation. They remain isolated from the changes in American society. Bromfield Corey accepts that his son inherited the family energy for making money. Although he deplores the loss of his son, he accepts that Penelope and Tom will never be comfortable in a Boston rife with social dissension because of growing class separations. Tom and Penelope represent the future growth of America as they go west to find their future. William Dean Howells has effectively shown that the changes occurring in American society will separate classes, hold out promise for those willing to move west, and isolate individuals one from the other. Although the Philadelphia Centennial provided a vision of a prosperous industrial future for Americans, the underlying problems of separation of sections of society and a movement away from the traditional rural values of the past were present. Through his novel The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howells combines the optimistic outlook with realistic evidence of both sides of American life. The houses represent the dreams, the past, the present, and the future of industrialized America and its citizens.

Notes

¹ Several critical works offer supportive examples and discussions about Howells's awareness of social inequalities and his own "political ambivalence" (Young 45). Kermit Vanderbilt's The Achievement of William Dean Howells, Mildred Howells's Life in Letters of William Dean Howells, Joel Porte's "Manners, Morals, and Mince Pie: Howells's America Revisited," and George Arms's "The Literary Background of Howells's Social Criticism" offer in-depth discussion and examples of Howells's response to the changing social milieu of nineteenth-century America.

² The brothers' vocations include farmer, minister, doctor, mill owner, and lawyer/judge in the Midwest. For them the move west was successful.

³ Howells commented unfavorably on similar works he saw at the Centennial. He described a certain bronze statue of Emancipation as "a most offensively Frenchy Negro who has broken his chain, and spreading both his arms and legs abroad is rioting in a declamation of something" ("Sennight" 93).

⁴ One of the most frequently visited exhibit halls at the Centennial was the Horticultural Building with its exotic displays of plants from all over the world.

⁵ Two works explore the role of business in literature. In The Businessmen in American Literature, Emily Stipes Watts traces the development and changing image of the American businessman from the Puritans to the middle of the twentieth century. Arun Mukherjee in The Gospel of Wealth in the American Novel discusses the images and language of novels about businessmen as they influence attitudes about business by focusing on Dreiser and his contemporaries.

⁶ Howells had first-hand knowledge of and experience with architects as he built more than one home and his brother-in-law was an architect.

⁷ Louise Stevenson explains that books had become symbols of a society that looked beyond the material to the ephemeral. She adds, "catalogs advertised parlor suites in a price range within the means of almost every middle class family, the price of library suites started at the high end" (24).

⁸ Howells has already shown that Bromfield Corey represents a generation influenced by European travel with enough money to enjoy the experience without needing to make money. Bromfield Corey's European outlook and manners place him squarely as an elitist who would prefer to avoid any change in his lifestyle.

Chapter IV

The 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition:

The White City and America's Facade of Unity

When President Grover Cleveland pressed the golden telegraph key that turned on the electric lights at the Columbian Exposition on May 1, 1893, America's future seemed glorious. This fair, situated in America's heartland, "measured progress and found it highly satisfactory as well as inevitable" (Patton 40). Americans could travel across the continent by rail, compete in worldwide industrial markets, and impose order through science and education. The Chicago World's Fair showed the world that industry and nature can co-exist to the benefit of the nation, business, and the individual. The frontier had truly ended as Chicago foresaw its future in terms of metropolitan ascendancy. No one who attended the fair could argue against that assessment.

Visitors who attended the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago entered Jackson Park through one of the seven transportation routes available to them. Whether they used one of the three most popular, a coach ride down Michigan Avenue, the Illinois Central Railway with its terminal behind the Administration Building, or a steamer on Lake Michigan, all were impressed by their first view of the

White City of this Chicago World's Fair. After visitors arrived at the fair, they could see the sights by water on water launches, gondolas, or small boats serving as taxi cabs. Everywhere visitors looked, they saw magnificent white buildings unified in the Beaux Arts style yet expressing artistic individuality through decoration. Daniel Chester French's sixty-five foot Statue of the Republic with its flowing toga, globe, and eagle dominated the buildings and the Court of Honor near the center of the White City. (Fig. 15,16,17) At night, electric lights blazed, increasing the ethereal quality of the vision. Within the buildings were the gigantic steam engines, Westinghouse dynamo, and latest technology that assured Americans that the future, as depicted by the White City, was not only attainable but near. This fair, however, had opened during the 1893 financial panic and amid several violent labor strikes. The elaborate, temporary facade of the White City did not quite hide the national difficulties. The symbolic unity of the architecture could not cover the growing divisions in American society. Change was happening almost too rapidly, and Americans tried to convey a sense of unity that did not exist. The planning and design of the fair, the role of women at the fair, the educational purpose of the Midway exhibits, and the national Congresses reveal the divisions that plagued American society during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

When the decision was made to plan an 1893 fair that would celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the New World, five major cities vied for the site of the fair - New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., St. Louis, and Minneapolis. New York and Chicago became the final competitors. Chicago advocates in a furious campaign promoted the competition as one of East versus West and rural versus metropolitan. Westerners saw the New York site as too close to European influences, and they perceived the West as demonstrating the vitality of America's Western heartland. The known corruption of New York City politics was an underlying theme during the Chicago campaign. The crowded conditions of the urban East were contrasted with the spacious landscapes of the West and the leading Western city of Chicago that had risen from the ashes of the Great Fire of 1871 to rebuild as a model city. Arguments that New York was more accessible to foreign visitors and the other heavily populated areas of America were refuted with the acknowledged vastness of the railroad systems extending across the nation. The importance of transportation as technology that enabled people to attend the fair cannot be overestimated. Because of America's railroad systems, Chicago was accessible to all Americans and to foreign visitors and exhibitors who would arrive from either coast.

New York ultimately lost its bid for the fair because conflicts within the Republican party and with Tammany Hall

undermined the considerable financial and political efforts of William Waldorf Astor, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Grover Cleveland, William Rockefeller, Jay Gould, Elihu Root, and August Belmont to bring the celebration to New York City (Rydell 42). Chicago's efforts, led by Lyman Gage and supported by Phillip Armour, Charles Yerkes, Gustavus Swift, Cyrus McCormick, George Pullman, and Marshall Field, achieved success based on the ability of these men to organize more quickly and lobby Congress five weeks before New York's representatives arrived. Also, Gage could, and did, swiftly muster an additional \$5 million in pledges within twenty-four hours to secure the Columbian Exposition for Chicago.

One argument that contributed to the successful fund-raising efforts and that found support in areas surrounding Chicago was the importance of the location of the Columbian Exposition in political terms. During the competition for the fair's site, the fair "was seen to be a potential unifying symbol for the West," thus placing the "balance of political power" in the hands of Westerners (Badger 48). Seventeen years earlier at the Philadelphia Centennial, Western authors had been considered too rough and too uncertain in their behavior to participate in the formal celebrations. Western exhibits at Philadelphia were minimal and, in the case of Native American exhibits, withdrawn from display. By 1893, manufacturing and industrial growth had

given Westerners a sense of their own influence and economic and political power. Chicago won the competition and would host the 1893 Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair.

In spite of the overt motives of Western political unity, utopian visions, education opportunities, and artistic leadership, the underlying motivation was the desire to profit from visitors and provide at least two years of construction money flowing into Chicago. American technological progress and financial stability were powerful motivators during the 1890's as financial panics created uncertainty throughout the nation.

The site finally selected for the fair, Jackson Park, a marshy area one and a half miles alongside Lake Michigan, was not the first choice of the planning commission. However, it was the first choice of Frederick Law Olmsted one of the premier landscape architects of the time.¹ The final decision to use Jackson Park rested on its lake frontage, its location only eight miles south of Chicago's business district, and the Illinois Central Railroad line along the west edge. This made the area accessible for visitors and contributed to the extensive use of canals and basins within the landscape design. The landscapers decided to incorporate within their idealized White City a natural, almost Edenic, concept. The union of city and nature mirrored the City of Chicago that had arisen following the

fire. The city had developed large areas of suburban development that successfully removed wealthy and middle-class citizens from the enclosure of metropolitan Chicago.

Chicago's promoters traded heavily on Western dynamics of their city in order to host the world's fair. Deciding against holding a competition, the Committee on Grounds and Buildings elected to solicit five major architectural firms to design the fair buildings.² Ironically, after winning the prize by extolling the West as an artistic center, the planners promptly turned to Richard M. Hunt of New York; McKim, Mean, and White of New York; George B. Post of New York; Peabody and Stearns of Boston; and Van Brunt and Howe of Kansas City to design the major buildings of the fair. The committee also selected five Chicago firms but assigned to them the design of only five of the major buildings. The Chicago firms agreed readily but the Eastern architects needed persuasion. Although Chicago was home to several excellent and innovative architectural firms, the planners apparently had fallen prey to the prevalent idea that the Eastern architects were more worthy to design the fair buildings.³

This belief mirrors similar ideas present at the Centennial celebration. In 1876, America still looked to Europe as the center of creative arts, particularly architectural styles. In 1893, the Westerners looked east for polish and refinement in the arts. This uncertainty

about artistic identity also appears in the Victorian American identity. No clear American architectural design had emerged except in the skyscrapers rising in cities like Chicago. American authors also reflected these ideas about European and even metropolitan supremacy in the field of the arts. James's Isabel Archer moved to Europe. Surrounded by Americans and expatriates, she allowed their belief in the excellence of European ideas to overshadow her innate American independence. She succumbed to manipulation by the wealthy, who believed Europe was more refined than America and that American provincialism made Isabel subject to their actions. In Howells' The Rise of Silas Lapham, the Coreys and their guests make the rustic Laphams feel insecure and out of place. At the Corey dinner party, even the tentative suggestion that the Western life created a more egalitarian viewpoint was treated as a novel idea with little substance when compared to the polish of Boston society. Westerners were tolerated, but at a social distance. Americans had not yet decided on an identity. For this reason, rural and urban, north and south, east and west, men and women, white and black, and labor and owners all existed as potential and actual sources of conflict and division in a country seeking to show its unity.

One way that the planners of the Chicago World's Fair sought to present a unified celebration was through the design of the fair. Even here, however, an obvious

separation appeared. They divided the fair into two sections: the White City and the Midway Plaisance. The decision to create these two divisions represented a significant departure from the plan of the Philadelphia Centennial celebration in that its architecture was, in general, unified in design and the planners purposely included a portion of the fair to be given over to entertainment. One significant point of agreement was the planners' competitiveness with European fairs, which manifested itself in the overriding concept that bigger meant better.

The original architectural directors, John Root and Daniel Burnham, expected the fair to provide a showplace for Chicago's well-known architectural school. Root, after a visit to France in 1889, returned to Chicago determined to "display modern technology with style and panache" (Lowe 150). Root's untimely death in 1891 led to a shift in design focus. Guided by Daniel Burnham, the committee recognized and accepted the Eastern financial and architectural influence. Once the decision had been made to hire the Eastern architects, the planning commission agreed the design of the fair and its buildings would be free of artistic restraint; however, in the interest of harmony as "an essential element of the Grand Court," the Board of Architects agreed on the classical style with a fixed "height of the cornice of these buildings at sixty feet"

above the ground (Burg 78). The architects decided upon formality as their key theme, and classic Roman and Greek architecture dominated the designs. The finished Court of Honor with its lagoons, towering statues, classical design, and white facade dazzled visitors but certainly did nothing to promote a uniquely American architecture.

Because the buildings were not meant to be permanent, the builders used a plaster-like material called staff, which was a combination of fibers mixed with plaster of Paris and spread over lathe.⁴ This material allowed the construction crews to work more quickly and contributed to the unified effect. One dissenting voice among the architects was that of Louis Sullivan. Given the responsibility of designing the Transportation Building, Sullivan created a massive golden door that violated the agreement to create white buildings. (Fig. 18) Sullivan later expressed his belief that the White City of the Chicago World's Fair lived on for decades to the detriment of truly American architecture.⁵ To an extent he was correct as hundreds of government buildings, both local and national, copied the classical designs of the White City. Although he found this deplorable, the influence of this ephemeral city was an important aspect of national identity. Not surprisingly in a time when Chicago was creating a city of skyscrapers and functionally designed buildings, the planners of the fair ignored these structures that truly

foreshadowed the future of American architectural design and urban development. They looked instead to the European past and tried to compete at that level rather than daring to use America's own creations. For the Americans who designed the fair buildings, the competition was the Crystal Palace of London, St. Peter's in Rome, and the Eiffel Tower of the Paris Exhibition. To compete meant to create a building that covered acres, not one that rose several stories skyward.

Visitors to the fair who wanted to see the Eiffel Tower rivaled in size had to go to the Midway Plaisance. Towering above the exhibition halls and the entertainment avenue was the huge wheel constructed by George Washington Gale Ferris. (Fig. 19) This popular and enduring symbol of the Chicago World's Fair actually consisted of two wheels that turned on a steel shaft one yard in diameter and forty-five feet in length. Hanging between the two wheels were thirty-six cars that could hold sixty people in each car, 2160 when fully loaded. During many special celebrations of the fair, one car held a group of musicians who entertained the visitors. Powered by a 2000 horsepower engine, the wheel turned a complete revolution every ten minutes, with frequent stops so that patrons could see the panorama spread below them. This steel marvel symbolizes many important aspects of the fair as they reveal attitudes of nineteenth-century Americans. The Ferris wheel was big, and bigness was still

an important point of competition with other international fairs. The Ferris wheel looked fragile because of its webbed appearance; however, it could, supposedly, withstand winds of 100 miles per hour. Riders on the Ferris wheel could, literally, rise above the earthly, and earthy, crowds of the Midway and gaze upon the vista of the White City with its blue waters and white buildings and statuary. In the distance was the growing and bustling city of Chicago. The view from the top of the wheel minimized any dirt, squalor, or indication of the differentiations of American society. All looked pristine, colorful, and unified, just the way visitors wanted the world to be. This Ferris wheel represented the dualities of the fair and American society. Distance can create a sense of separation from social inequities and provide a sense of escape from the earthly struggle of class divisions.

One way that people can ignore the dissatisfaction within a society is to create and then accept a facade that covers the divisions. Just as the buildings of the White City wore a surface of staff, the organizers of the fair created an intellectual veneer to justify the existence of the Midway Plaisance. The 600 foot wide and one mile long midway was justified as an educational portion of the fair and classified as an ethnological exhibit under the supervision of Professor Putnam of Harvard. Placement and design of most midway villages and exhibits strongly

supported class and racial differences and placed them under the umbrella of scientific accuracy. The White City, with its Utopian vision of harmony, served as an effective contrast to the noisy crowds of the midway. This contrast denoted that art and progress were attainable and could even convert potential troublemakers within society by guiding them to goodness and acceptance through beauty and harmony. By visually expressing this idealistic goal, the placement of the exhibits in relation to their closeness to the White City supported a sense of order that sanctioned the categorizing and isolating of people according to national and racial differences. The visitors to the Chicago World's Fair could see the progress of humanity classified and defined by place within and outside the civilized world as accepted by nineteenth-century Americans.

The villages closest to the White City included those of Germany and Ireland. These were the countries closest to Americans in culture and civilization. The "Mohammedan" world, including West Asia and East Asia, occupied the next step away from the White City. The farthest villages from the White City were the Dahomey village of Africa and the village of the North American Indian. The other villages and exhibits showed the degree of acceptance of a nation or a people by the American hosts. For example, as at the Philadelphia Centennial, the Japanese exhibit received favorable reviews by fair goers as representing a nation so

progressive as to be called "the Great Britain of Asia." Their "filial piety, connubial affection, parental tenderness" and "love for home that so preserves the unity of the Japanese people" appealed to visitors (Rydell 50). This appeal had its base in the belief that hearth and home and family were still the center of stable American life. Also, because the Japanese were not a significant part of the American population, they were more readily accepted as almost civilized. Americans were not so accepting of the Chinese exhibit primarily because of conflicts over Chinese immigration. The Chinese government chose not to send an official group of representatives but leased fair space so that enterprising Chinese-Americans could exhibit Chinese culture. In contrast to American perception of Japanese progress toward civilization, the Chinese were described as greedy, cunning, pessimistic, and threatening. Yet, both countries's exhibits were located in the Midway Plaisance and not close to the White City. The Chinese exhibit was located less favorably between entertainment areas, thus placing the Chinese as clearly separate from the evolution toward civilization symbolized by the White City.

The exhibit visited the least often was the Dahomey village. In an exhibit of huts housing men and women of Dahomey, fair visitors could see war utensils and hand-carved domestic products. During the last months of the fair, signs appeared asking visitors not to question the

Dahomey "about their former custom of cannibalism" (Burg 219). The degree of civilization practiced by these people needed no further explanation.

As an ethnology display, these villages conveyed several subtle messages. The "civilized" peoples were white. The "less-civilized" peoples were brown, yellow, or black. In varying degrees, the non-white people were progressing toward the civilized condition; however, they had not arrived. Interestingly, two American groups received the ultimate separation from the fair's White City. Frederic Putnam arranged living displays of several American Indian tribes. He organized the exhibit so that no clear distinctions were evident as to differing tribal cultures. Putnam believed the Dakota Sioux, Navajos, Apaches, and several Northwestern tribes would have a "grand opportunity to see and understand the relations of different nations and the material advantages which civilization brings to mankind" (Rydell 63). In addition, Putnam located the Indian exhibit on the midway squarely among those races considered savage, and this visual association degraded and trivialized the Native Americans. To further add entertainment value, one display included Sitting Bull's cabin with a sign posted in front that read "War Dances given Daily" (Badger 109). To further emphasize the isolation of Native Americans, Sioux chiefs observed the opening day ceremonies from atop the Administration

Building. Separated by distance and excluded from the events, the Indian tribes had no flag among the others displayed that day. In one other way, the Indians were trivialized as a people at the Chicago World's Fair. One of the popular entertainment venues was the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show held outside Jackson Park. During the show, the Indians were portrayed as the enemy defeated by the Western settlers and the American cavalry. The recent Indian wars in the Plains served to continue the beliefs that Indians were an ultimately ineffectual threat to civilization and progress inherent to America's continental and, finally, international expansion.

Another segment of the American population effectively ignored was the African-Americans. Although eight million blacks lived in the United States, African-Americans participated only to a very limited extent in the planning or the exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair. Although Frederick Douglass attended the opening day ceremonies at the Philadelphia Centennial and sat on the podium, at Chicago no such recognition occurred. Chicago planners did not encourage African-American exhibits. The only African-American appointed to serve on the planning board was an alternate. A sincere effort to include work by "colored people" came from Mrs. Potter Palmer, President of the Board of Lady Managers. Mrs. Palmer encouraged the appointment of black women to state Boards of Women Managers but achieved

success only in New York. There, J. Imogen Howard compiled an impressive amount of data about the work and contributions of Black women. She expanded her collection to include data from states other than New York and organized the information into a book, and the New York Board displayed it in the Woman's Building. The National Board of Lady Managers supplied a glass case for a small collection of African-American products that included items such as "ecclesiastical embroideries from a New York church, gold and silver jewelry from West Africa, paintings on canvas, glass, satin and chamois, and a few volumes of verse" (Weimann 269). The only other representation of the African-American community came in the form of a Colored People's Day and, of course, the not so subtle connection between the African villages and the African-American society.⁶

The placement of exhibits on the Midway under the auspices of the Department of Ethnology lent an aura of educational value to the Midway Plaisance. This placement also sent a message about the evolution of nations and races. The nineteenth-century need to impose order on a rapidly changing world resided in the fostering of several notions about people. First, a civilized nation was a nation that had progressed in industry and technology. The industrially advanced nations were white. Uncivilized and savage nations had no technology and, apparently, no

recognizable culture based on family unity and integrity. These nations were subject to conquest through war. Nations not conquered by war were conquered by civilization. Europe and America acknowledged the value of certain cultures even as they attempted to control the natural resources and money-making opportunities of other countries. The more closely their culture resembled American culture, the more civilized and accepted they were. Finally, civilization then became identified by racial distinctions. African-Americans were not an integrated segment of society because they had no place in or near the White City. The racial and ethnic divisions apparent at the Chicago World's Fair created an acceptance of segregation based on scientifically demonstrated placement of people. This problem is one that carried into the next century for several decades. However, the acceptance of this idea provides further groundwork for evolutionary separation of individuals based on factors other than racial differences.

The exhibition of people in villages establishes a distance between subject and audience. The villages were isolated from the audience and controlled by the midway managers. The "social distance" creates a subtle distinction that encourages a particular way of categorizing people as controllable or controlled because of slow or arrested evolutionary development (Benedict 43). The retained image is that some groups, and even some

individuals, must remain separated and isolated from society's mainstream. Determination of who remains isolated lies in the hands of those who control the society. Ethnological gradations reinforce ideas of superiority that accompany nationalism. Any group or nation with a strong sense of national destiny feels ready to spread its progress beyond its own borders. Therefore, control of this nature occurs in colonial expansionism as well as in urban social strata governed by wealth or family heritage.

Once a scale of humanity is demonstrated and accepted as logical and orderly, it is but a small matter to accept that the same scale exists within a society, even a unified and harmonious one. This validates the idea that the elite, the middle class, the poor, the immigrants, the laborers, and women appear as elements on a scale of values. Thus, separation of classes and individuals was validated at the Chicago World's Fair. The role of the women at this fair demonstrates the difficulties of combating this stereotyping of society's members.

The role of women at the world's fairs hosted in America changed considerably in the seventeen years between the Philadelphia Centennial and the Columbian Exposition. Yet, in some ways, the similarities are striking. At both celebrations the women's exhibits appeared in a separate building. Also, the planners at both fairs hesitated to ally themselves too closely to the Suffrage movement. The

women's exhibits and the Women's Pavilion in 1876 were more like postscripts than important communications about the contributions of American women. In 1893, however, women accepted and fulfilled the responsibility for a women's building that displayed not only past and current contributions but also the future commitment of women to progress and American national identity. The women of the Chicago Columbian Exposition displayed their political strength, artistic gifts, and sense of social responsibility.

One of the major controversies surrounding the role of women at the fair was whether women would have a separate building to house their exhibits. Ultimately the difficulty of identifying and separating women's products became an insurmountable problem. Because women constituted a larger part of the work force, they certainly contributed to the development and manufacture of many products. For example, in The Rise of Silas Lapham, Persis Lapham helped Silas during his early production of his paint product. Zerilla Dewey contributed her labor to the management of the paint company. Penelope Lapham Corey quite probably assisted her husband when he moved away from Boston and pursued his career. Business was not the only area to benefit from involvement of women in nineteenth-century American life. Jane Addams established Hull House to help those in need. Professions such as medicine, law, and architecture now

included women, albeit reluctantly, in their ranks. Because of women's involvement in all aspects of American life, the Board of Lady Managers of the Chicago World's Fair decided to build an exhibition hall that focused solely on the progress of women since the discovery of America.

The plan could not remain so clearly defined because the building had to be opened to judged or competitive exhibits for several reasons. One of the difficulties occurred because the products of women could not receive clear classification. For example, if a product was developed by a woman with some contribution from a man or if a product was developed by a woman who worked for a man, then the item was exhibited as the man's work. As a result, many products exclusively created, designed or invented by women were denied exhibit space in the other buildings. These women begged for an opportunity to display their works at the fair, but their only viable path was through the women's building. To solve the problem, the Fair Director had to grant exhibit status to the Woman's Building, thus creating another problem, using women judges. The fair commissioners believed that if women served on the judging committees, exhibitors especially foreign ones, would be offended. The final decision granted women fifty-seven judges on the awards committees. The establishment of women as jurors was an innovative action that led to the significant involvement of women at all subsequent fairs,

both national and international. Bertha Palmer summarized the importance of women's involvement in the fair: "Machinery had liberated woman from the drudgery of household work; she was in turn liberating herself from the misconceptions of medicine, science, and society about her role and ability" (Burg 105). In principle, the fair planners and commissioners granted women important duties at the fair; however, the battle for equal acceptance was constant.

When Empress Theresa of Brazil opened the Women's Pavilion at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, American women felt a sense of pride in their accomplishment. This building was funded and designed almost as an afterthought. The Women's Centennial Committees had worked assiduously to raise money and recruit artists for the Centennial. They then were told there was no money available to build a women's building. If the women wanted a building, they must find their own funding. The resultant construction of this building followed the efforts of "a characteristic American institution: the private voluntary association whose purpose is some civic or common cause" (Schlereth 4). This association that created the Woman's Pavilion labored against the prejudices of those planner who saw them as allied too closely with the suffrage movement and its more radical members Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. The ultimate result of the 1876 Woman's Pavilion was the

increased awareness of women in the work force and the artistic and industrial arena of nineteenth-century America.

By the time the Chicago World's Fair opened, the role of women in America had altered but not without controversy even among women. Two examples illustrate well these changes. The first is a statement from Elizabeth Gillespie, the forceful individual who motivated the women in 1876. After she successfully engineered the building and furnishing of the Women's Pavilion, she stated, "We never thought of employing a woman architect . . . and thus made our first great mistake" (Weimann 3). In spite of the artwork, the household inventions, the publication of the only daily newspaper, The New Century for Women, and the six-horsepower engine operated by Miss Emma Allison of Grimsby, Ontario, the women of the Philadelphia Centennial did not feel they had effectively displayed their involvement in American life. Women comprised twenty percent of the American work force, and the machines and inventions in the Women's pavilion indicated changes in the traditional sphere of domesticity. Still, Mrs. Gillespie regretted that women had not displayed fully the involvement and resources of talented women in American society. Determined that their building would truly illustrate women's progress, the Lady Managers of Chicago asked for designs only from women architects.

The second example was a comment made in 1891 during the planning stages of the Woman's Building for the Columbian Exposition. Enid Yandell, a sculptor commissioned to work on the Woman's Building, met Mrs. Julia Dent Grant at a reception. In summary, the two women represented two opinions about the changing role of women. Mrs. Grant expressed strongly her belief that "every woman is better off at home taking care of husband and children" and avoiding the "battle with the world [that] hardens a woman and makes her unwomanly" (Weimann 163). Mrs. Grant added that women were suited, if they worked, for positions as governesses, teachers, or child care workers. Miss Yandell, however, offered the example of a family of several sisters and one brother or a father with several daughters. The need to provide for these females, she explained, would prevent or postpone masculine entitlement to financial success. Her question, "Are they less gentlewomen for helping earn a living, lessening the providing of food for care of so many mouths by adding to the family funds?" finally evoked from Mrs. Grant, "In that case . . . they ought to go to work" (Weimann 163). Women in American society found themselves increasingly involved in the work force but still tried to fulfill traditional roles. Those women who broke tradition not only had to contend with masculine obstructions but also had to explain themselves to other women. The barriers to free expression of ideas and

free choice of lifestyle were erected by both men and women in nineteenth-century America society.

The murals that decorated the Woman's Building expressed this social division. At one end of the building, a Mary MacMonnies mural entitled "The Primitive Woman" focused on women and children "ministering to the male upon his return from the hunt" (Badger 121). This mural, with its continuous landscape background, drew praise because of its muted colors and its depiction of traditional female activities. (Fig. 20) Mary Cassatt's mural "Modern Woman" on the opposite wall drew sharp criticism because of its vibrancy and its theme of artistic independence. (Fig 21) Critics, both men and women, labeled the work undignified, cynical, inappropriate and garish. Furthermore, "the dominance of greens, blues, and purples, and the frankly realistic character of the design" made the mural "too different," almost un-American (Weimann 317). These critics illustrate the divided opinions about the role of women and what type of art best represents a woman's contribution to society.

Unlike the women of the Philadelphia Centennial, where the Women's Pavilion exhibited a large number of machines invented and operated by women, the Columbian Exposition Lady Managers tried to meld household skills, art, and social responsibility. The Woman's Dormitory was built to accommodate women who were exhibitors at the fair and to

encourage attendance by working women who could not afford expensive hotel rooms in Chicago. (Fig. 22) Although this plan acknowledged that some fair attendees would be single and independent working women, they were provided with chaperones to protect their reputations while they attended the fair or worked at the exhibits or state buildings. Thus, though these women came to Chicago to see evidence of their progress, attitudes toward them remained protective and paternalistic.

One of the key points to any argument regarding women's roles was the need for women to protect the values of the nation through the home and family unit. However, like other aspects of the Chicago World's Fair, conflicting ideas surrounded visitors. On the one hand, the Woman's Building proudly recounted the progress of women as they moved more fully into society by contributing to the arts, professions, social work, literature, technology, office work, and factories. (Fig. 23) The contents of the building showed that women had become an inextricable part of American life beyond the home. Yet, the existence of the Woman's Dormitory implied women needed protection. Also, the Lady Managers arranged for a Children's Building at the fair. (Fig. 24) Here, mothers who worked the exhibits or state buildings could leave their children in the care of others. Even women visiting the fair could leave their children so the parents could view the sights uninhibited by children

who would not appreciate the educational value of the displays. The provision for child care and the availability of housing exclusively for women contrasted with the independent lives of women and showed an uncertainty about women's changing roles.

This building proved very popular not only as a nursery but also as an exhibit about the latest scientific methods and equipment important to child care. The physical education court, with its "trapezes, parallel bars, vaulting horses, rings, wands, and Indian clubs," proved equally popular for children and spectators who looked on the gymnasium from a gallery above (Weimann 337). Playtime was orderly and beneficial.

Two additional exhibits also illustrate the conflicting messages of this fair. On the second floor of the Children's Building, Miss Huntington exhibited her techniques for teaching the daughters of immigrants household duties and homemaking skills for their personal benefit and to train them for domestic service. Wearing caps and aprons, twenty-five little girls, members of the "Broom Brigade" demonstrated bed-making, sweeping the corners, cooking, and clothes washing (Weimann 340-41). On the other hand in another area of the building, young boys learned woodworking and agricultural skills. These two programs eventually evolved into today's kindergarten, home economics, and industrial education curricula. However, in

1893, this gender specific education contrasted with the ideas presented in the Woman's Building. Compounding this contrast in women's roles is the belief that these programs were especially suitable to train immigrant children, thus placing them at a different, unskilled social level. The Children's Building, designed by Alexander Sardier, was erected next to the Woman's Building, designed by Sophia Hayden. While the Board of Lady Managers fought to exhibit women's progress, they supported traditional female roles.

In addition to revealing the conflicts about women's progress, all these buildings seemed to tacitly accept that women no longer remained at home. Families could not rely on unmarried daughters or sisters who helped support the large, extended Victorian families. Single women sought work, and married women who also worked needed child care services. The traditional and ideal family had begun to undergo dramatic changes. Women had achieved progress in the new industrial and technological America. Divided attitudes about change were clearly evident, especially to those attending the Women's Congress.

The Chicago World's Fair offered a series of meetings between May 15 and October 28, 1893. This World's Congress Auxiliary presented various topics of particular interest to nineteenth-century Americans. The overall mandate was to review "progress already achieved" in respective fields and define "outstanding questions of the era" (Burg 236).⁸ The

Congress of Women revealed the continuing struggle of nineteenth-century women to achieve total acceptance in their society. As presented by various speakers at the Congress of Women, the definition of the role of women in American society was not a unanimous one. California lawyer Laura DeForce Gordon saw men as warriors and women, by necessity, as peacemakers through homemaking skills. She contended that because of civilization's advance, women were released from this obligation. Women's suppression by men was a relic, and women had demonstrated their ability to define themselves and their role. Progress had changed the world; women had also changed. Ellen Herontin believed the basis of women's equality lay with financial independence. Mary Greene advocated the need for further increases in educational and professional opportunities along with suffrage and legal protection of property and personal rights. Cara Reese discussed the changing financial relationship of women and their place in society. As women entered the work force and contributed money to the family, men often accepted, even sought, the increased standard of living, thus encouraging women to seek positions in the work force. Not all speakers at the congress agreed with these changes in woman's roles.

Hanna K. Korany of Syria described a woman's role as wife, mother, and family educator as enhanced by education but persisted in her belief that the factory and office were

inappropriate venues for women. Juliet Corson believed that striving for equality with men endangered the virtues exemplified by a wife and homemaker. Charlotte Holt, a Chicago lawyer, did not attribute to women alone the difficulties of achieving sexual equality. For Holt, women were as oppressive as men, and not all women were suited to be mothers, wives, or homemakers. Her balanced view was supported by Caroline Sherman, who asserted women could decide their own fate and their own role in life and could act as a positive influence on society.

Bertha Palmer, as final speaker of the two-week women's congress, expressed her view that men's incompetence often sent women unwillingly into the work force. She also noted that current experiences and conditions would not return women to the home. She said that "evolution and progress" would lead, inevitably, to the "fullest development" of women's self-fulfillment (Burg 247). Progress and evolution, then, not only justified racial and national prejudice but also explained internal changes within American society. Inclusion of women in all aspects of society was a natural result of change according to Mrs. Palmer, and this conclusion cast an aura of scientific validation over women's new and unsettling roles.

To nineteenth-century Americans, the movement of women out of the traditional, domestic sphere was not the only area of unsettling change. In spite of the overt unity and

harmony created by the White City, underlying conflicts continued to occur. Two areas of tension caused special concern. Disputes between labor and management continued to occur with increasing frequency, and movements of rural workers to the city created additional problems. The primary source of both of these conflicts was the increasing inequities in wealth distribution.

One of the most violent episodes of labor conflict occurred in Haymarket Square on May 4, 1886. On that day, a peaceful workers' meeting ended in a bloody aftermath. Although the first speeches of this meeting were calm in tone and content, the last speaker, reportedly, spoke more violently, particularly against law enforcement. When the police ordered the crowd to disperse, a bomb exploded. Sixty-seven people were wounded and seven police officers died. Eight anarchists were convicted of murder and sentenced to death. This violent confrontation between the law and workers triggered a national fear of the anarchists who were accused of the crime. Fear of anarchy as a pervasive and destructive intrusion into the world of harmonious prosperity spread distrust and uneasiness. Although calmer voices tried to prevail, strikes were a feared activity. Not only did they interrupt the profit flow but also they sometimes led to death and destruction. During the building of the Chicago World's Fair the impact of labor's demands was felt. Laborers who constructed the

buildings demanded the employment of union workers, eight hour work days, and a minimum wage. Agreeing to the eight-hour day and overtime wages, the directors asked for, and received, a guarantee against any kind of strike during construction. In spite of the agreement, strikes by the electricians, carpenters, and iron setters plagued the progress of construction and contributed to its high cost.

Another example of labor difficulties connects with the Chicago World's Fair and shows the difference between the ideal society of the fair and the reality of labor conflicts. Within the Transportation Building in the White City, was a model of Pullman, "the ideal workers' town" created by George Pullman (Patton 42). This industrial suburb contained homes with "an indoor water supply, gas fixtures for light and cooking, and an indoor water closet" (Schlereth 97). The rent, however, could be as high as two weeks pay. Although the rent was high, one of the main problems arose from the tight restrictions placed on those living in Pullman. They were subject to regulations that governed tenants' lives and restricted many of their choices. For example, a tenant could not purchase his home under any conditions. The Pullman company governed workers' lives on the job and in the home. When the 1894 depression hit the United States, the company cut wages but refused to reduce the rent on company housing. The resulting Pullman Strike was violent. When George Pullman requested

government law enforcement, the Haymarket incident was still a fresh memory. He received assistance and the battle was "one of the most bitter confrontations in American labor history" (Schlereth 97). Conflicts with laborers were backed by government, both local and national. Often workers were isolated into company towns or poorer sections of the city. They had become a class in a, supposedly, classless society.

Again, under the guise of education, the Chicago World's Fair offered a solution to the problem of the lower classes. First, the midway, as a part of the fair, included strictly entertainment sections. Second, the public relations' battle about whether to open the fair on Sunday was settled based on the educational value of the exhibits for the working class, who could attend only on Sunday. Because the city was the source of social problems, the fair offered the opportunity "to save its toilers, its poor and degraded" by offering "innocent and uplifting recreation" and a chance for "self-improvement" (Burg 90). Entertainment at the fair became a source of enlightenment and education for the lower classes.

One of the characteristics of Victorian American society that shows clearly in its world's fairs is the desire to establish an order to the world. This need for control stems from the attempt to create stability in an industrial society that changed rapidly. The ordering of

exhibits and classifying of departments reveals a nation's value system and provides a pattern for its "ideally constructed world" (Benedict 4). For example, at the Philadelphia Centennial the organizational base was minerals. This is not surprising in a society that believed in using and controlling natural resources for individual profit and societal benefit. The Columbian Exposition had as its base agriculture. Although farming was growing more mechanized, the governing idea was the transport and processing of farm products. In the rural areas, "new agricultural technology, improved roads, regular mail service, and new transportation systems" were elements of progress that changed rural life (Cronon 365). Yet, many farmers felt exploited by metropolitan monopolies that placed them at an economic disadvantage. They felt isolated and separated from the political and financial power of urban America. The farming communities often shipped their products at the convenience of the processors.⁹ High interest rates, increased rail costs, and bank foreclosures all adversely affected the family farms, which gradually gave way to large commercial farming enterprises by the end of the nineteenth century.

As farms failed and industry grew, large numbers of rural people moved to the cities to find jobs in manufacturing centers. Agriculture, now that the frontier was civilized, became an important component to controlling

the land and feeding the growing American population. Young people of rural America flocked to cities to escape the hard, profitless labor of farming. There, they could earn more money and enjoy the pleasure and entertainments of urban culture. The city dwellers, especially the wealthy and the middle class, moved equally swiftly to create suburbs where their families could enjoy the beneficial qualities of rural life: fresh air and a clean environment. Railroads, which had helped to settle the West, also served to create the suburbs of Chicago. For example, Riverside, designed by Olmsted, was a rural escape from the "squalor and danger" of the crowded city (Cronon 347). Nothing epitomized this vision of escapism so much as the design of the White City. Suburbs and Beaux Arts architecture suggested attainable ideals and hid the disruptive potential of covering social problems.

Throughout the White City, a vision of an idealized merger of the urban and the rural reinforced the Utopian future. Within classic buildings resided massive machines encased in huge glass-enclosed structures resembling solariums. Although the use of staff allowed designers freedom to manipulate the outer design, the inside of the building maintained its functional presence. Jonathan Hale argues that this facade, or wrapping, is a symbol of a building's connection to the community, and he calls this facade "diplomacy . . . a way a utilitarian building takes

its place in the world" (122). Through this same architectural connection, the "Victorian house shifted the emphasis from grace to social gesture" (Hale 122). The outer covering becomes, to observers, a symbol that ultimately loses its meaning and beauty, particularly to the generations that follow and do not read the symbols in the same context. Buildings and pathways were situated in gardens and grass, tree-line parks. Displays nestled among foliage, and those displays difficult to hide with greenery were arranged into pleasing geometric patterns to "introduce harmony into mechanized chaos" (Doenecke 541). The motif repeated throughout the fair showed visitors that a nation could unite industry and nature into a harmonious vision of the future. While promoting this unity, the fair could, and did, ignore the increasing urban problems of low wages, filthy living conditions, and debilitating working conditions. Those who succumbed to the promise of the city would be further alienated from their rural past and the middle and upper class citizen who had moved to falsely ruralized suburbs. Specifically the march westward did not fulfill the American dream of success and security for the individual. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 attempted with its unified architectural design of the White City to create a vision of America's future. In the design of the White City, man-made, temporary buildings co-existed with nature's serene beauty. The fact that man had also created the

gardens and lagoons seemed a matter of mere detail that served to show America's ability to order the world. Under the apparent unity, however, can be found signs of divisions in society that ultimately isolated individuals.

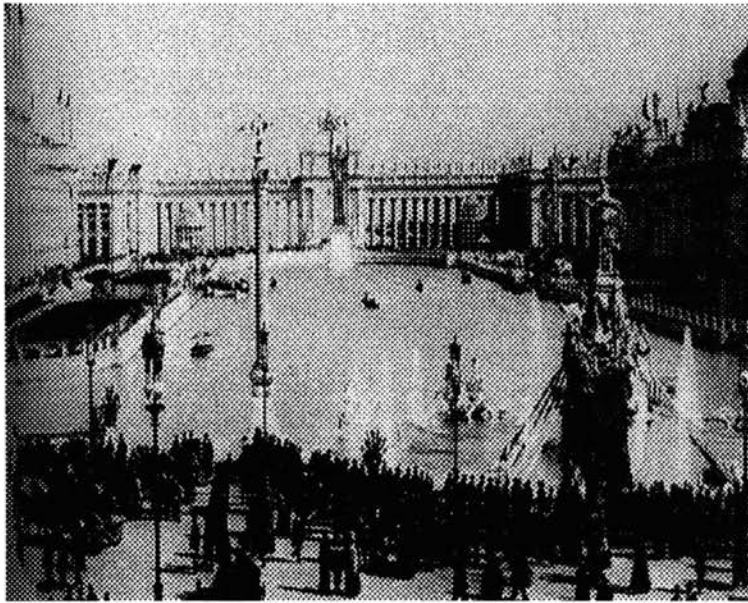


Fig. 15
The Court
of Honor
looking west
(Weimann 245)

Fig 16
Court of Honor
facing south
(Weimann 244)

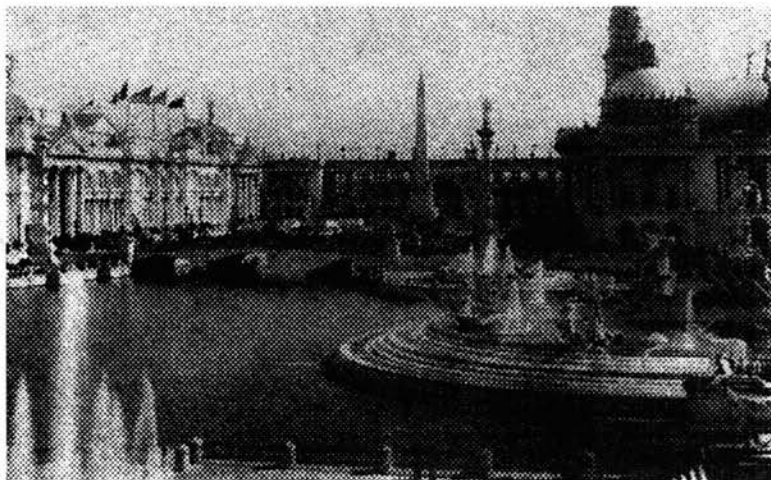


Fig. 17 Court
of Honor
looking east
(Rydell 39)

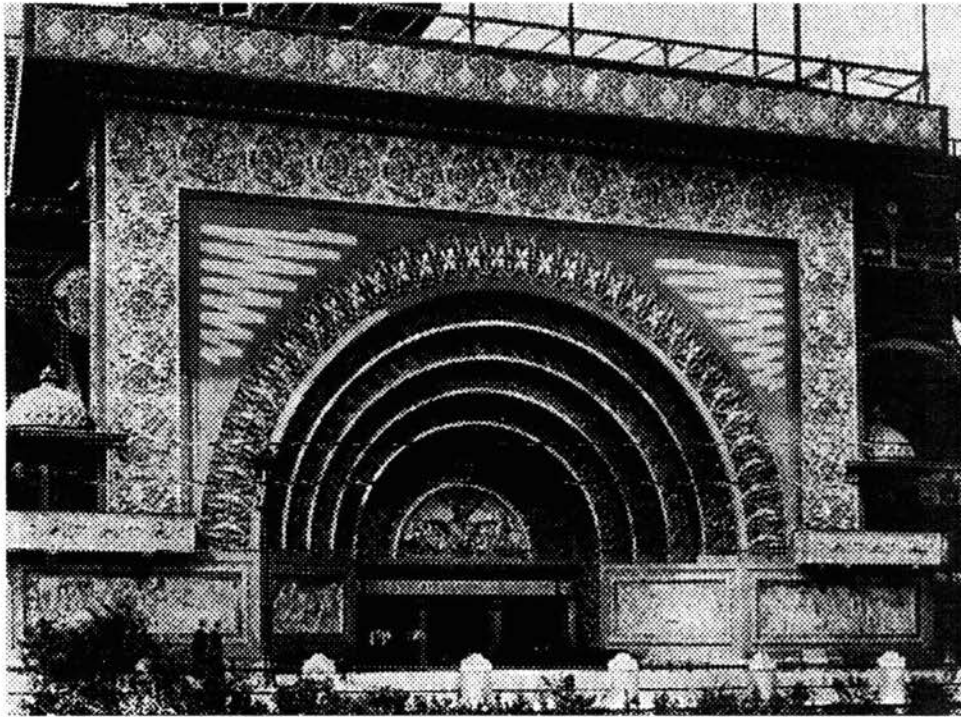


Fig. 18 Louis Sullivan's "Golden Door" of the Transportation Building (Weimann 440)

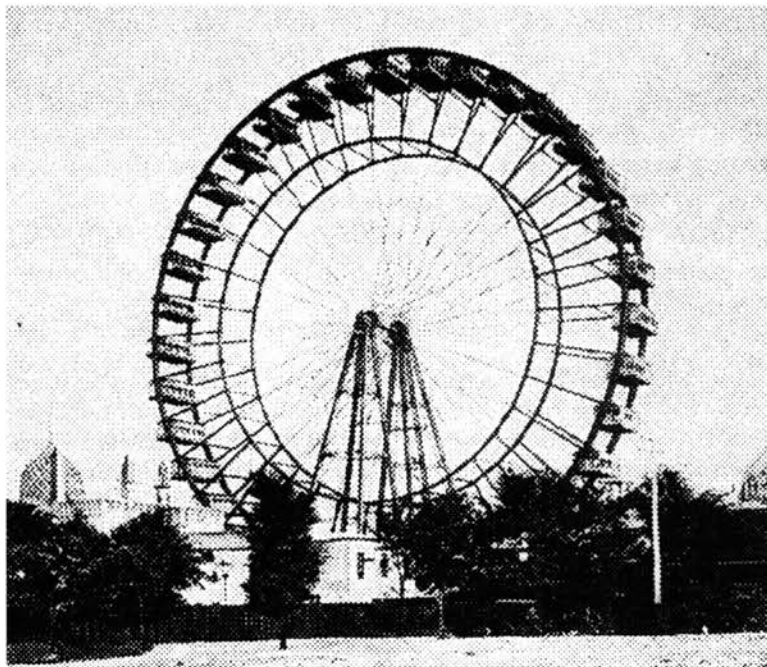


Fig. 19 The Ferris wheel towers above the Columbian Exposition of 1893 (Weimann 256)



Fig. 20 Mary McMonnies' "Primitive Woman"
(Weimann 213)



Fig. 21 Mary Cassatt's "Modern Woman"
(Weimann 256)

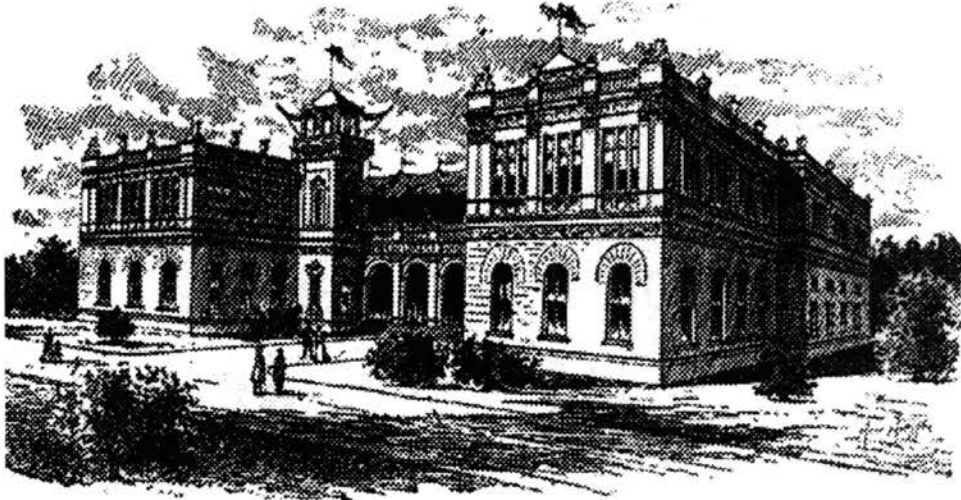


Fig. 22 Women's Dormitory (Weimann 328)

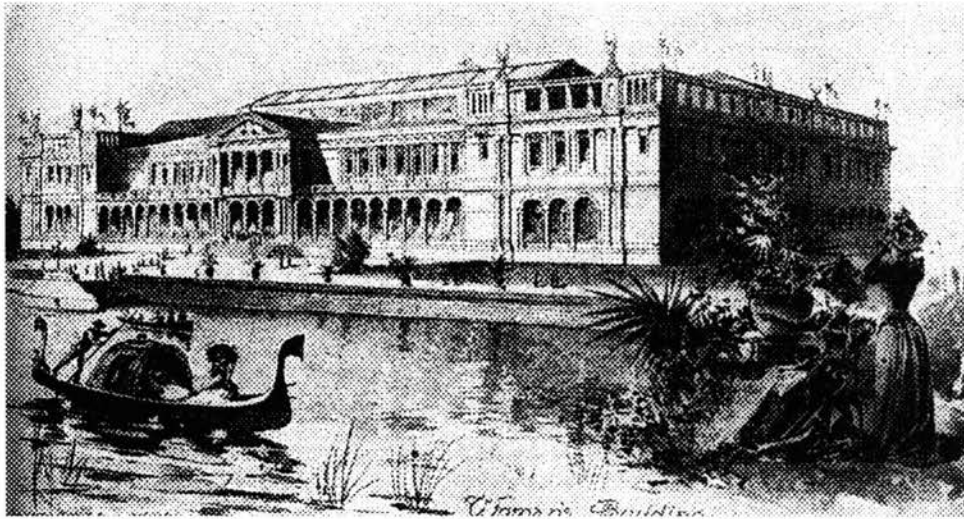


Fig. 23 Woman's Building (Weimann 277)

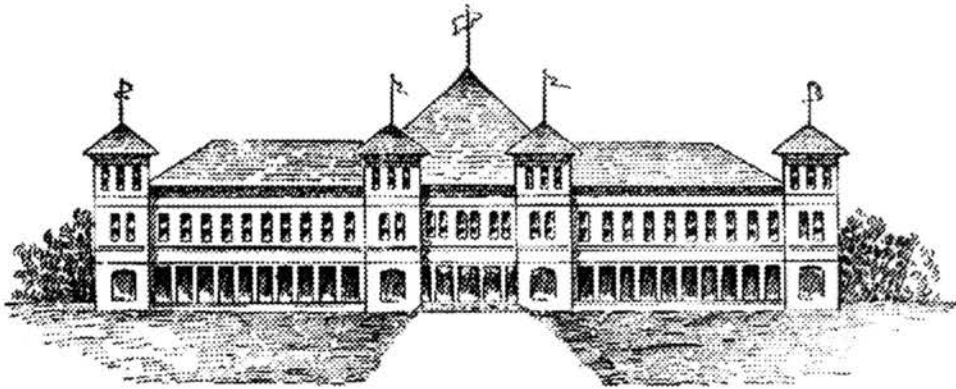


Fig. 24 Children's Dormitory (Weimann 352)

Notes

¹ Olmsted had designed the landscape of the Philadelphia Centennial site and was the artist of New York's Central Park.

² The recommendation came from Daniel Burnham, chief of construction; Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect; Wellburn Root, consulting architect; and Abram Gottlieb, consulting engineer.

³ The Spring 1994 issue of Great Plain Quarterly contains several articles about the architecture of the West. Romines's article contrasts the masculine role of builder with the feminine role of controller of indoor space in Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House novels. Murphy's article shows the integration, through house imagery, of two cultures in Willa Cather's My Antonia. H. Roger Grant discusses the combination of work place and living space in the railway depots on the Great Plains.

⁴ The one exception to the impermanent structures was the Fine Arts Building, which was built of brick, primarily to house and protect the fine artwork displayed within.

⁵ Wounded Knee had occurred only three years previously.

⁶ The most comprehensive work about Sullivan's life, work, and attitudes toward the development of American architecture is Twombly's Louis Sullivan: His Life and Work.

⁷ In Atlanta in 1895, the "first extensive display of achievements by American Blacks" appeared at the Cotton States and International Exposition. The Negro Building, designed and constructed by Blacks, displayed crafts, inventions, books, and a banking system call the Grand Fountain (Benedict 41).

⁸ Topics of these meetings included Moral and Social Reform, Temperance, Woman' Progress, Music, Literature, Education, Engineering, Government, Art, Science and Philosophy, Social and Economic Science, Public Health, Agriculture, Labor, Religion, Sunday Rest, Medicine and Surgery, Public Press, and Commerce and Finance.

⁹ The furor over standardizing time zones in order to run railroads more efficiently is an example of the conflict between farmers and the processors and marketers of farm products.

Chapter V

Houses and Society in The House of Mirth:

Lily Bart's Rootless Isolation

Edith Wharton did not visit the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition; however, her novel The House of Mirth reinforces several themes present at the World's Fair. Wharton's actual attendance in Chicago is not necessary to connect this author to the fair; her connection comes primarily through the architecture and her own attempts, through design, to impose order in life. This desire for order is an attempt to counteract the rapidity of late nineteenth-century social changes. The White City, with its Beaux Arts Court of Honor, was the subject of numerous newspaper articles in America and Europe. Paul Bourget, a French novelist, traveled to Chicago to report on the fair, and he visited Land's End, Wharton's home in 1893, following his trip to Chicago. Also, in 1893, Edith Wharton began extensive remodeling and decorating of her home. The timing of her focus on her home is significant in that the great American architectural landmark of the Chicago Columbian Exposition, the White City, appeared when this novelist was involved in personal architectural design and interior decoration.

In 1897, Wharton, in collaboration with Ogden Codman, Jr., published The Decoration of Houses, which reveals Edith Wharton's belief in "larger organic relationships, whether they be between house and garden; between garden and region, climate, and way of life; between house, street, and city; or between city and national values" (Bayley xlvi). The author's awareness of the Renaissance of American architecture, inherent in the design of Chicago's White City, appears in the first chapter of The Decoration of Houses:

The last ten years have been marked by a notable development in architecture and decoration [and] . . . our own advance is perhaps more significant than any other country. When we measure the work done recently . . . the change is certainly striking. It is therefore all the more encouraging to note the steady advance in taste and knowledge to which the most recent architecture in America bears witness. (Wharton and Codman 1)

These references to the changes and recency of an American architectural advance indicate an awareness of the buildings and the purpose of the Court of Honor at the Columbian Exposition just four years previously.

For Edith Wharton, architectural design and interior decoration depend on each other for unity. Awareness of

external size and shape should govern interior furnishing, and Wharton deplored that Americans "in the treatment of rooms . . . have passed from the golden age of architecture to the gilded age of decoration" (Wharton and Codman 196). The unity of design and color at the fair would have appealed to her aesthetic sense for order. The chaos of over-upholstered furniture, knee-bumping tables topped with a clutter of decorative odds and ends, walls filled with over-sized paintings, and windows layered with both curtains and drapes, so loved by Victorian decorators, violated Wharton's sense of order and fitness. For example, to Wharton, a room designed to entertain guests should contain little furniture because the guests are the decoration. The basic idea is the integral concept of the alliance of form and function in house design and decoration. Judith Fryer describes the design of Wharton's home, The Mount:

What emerges most clearly from this plan is a sense of *order*: the careful symmetry allows for no unexpected mingling of servants and master, no penetration of guests into private quarters, no romantic hermitages in the gardens, but rather a kind of social interaction that is carefully planned, controlled, deliberate. (Fryer 73)

Wharton's desire to impose order within her own home suggests her awareness of social chaos occurring around her.¹ The rapidity of change in America often created a

need to organize life as carefully as possible. The planners of the fair bear out this need for order and control by attempting to explain scientifically the differences among people and by categorizing these differences with observable patterns. Edith Wharton designed her home to separate carefully the people who lived in the house from those who cleaned it. This careful separation implies that even the residents can isolate themselves from one another according to their individual tastes and interests. A sense of ordered separation also permeates The House of Mirth. The novel clearly delineates the levels of American society. Each class has its own internal division until nearly all the characters are alone even when in social gatherings.

Lily Bart, Wharton's protagonist, is the most alone. She has no house and no family from which to draw her identity. She has no wealth to purchase the place she seeks. Rootless and restless, Lily Bart knows only houses that serve as mere "settings, rooms only, scenes in which to posture and pose" (Fryer 88). Lily Bart, as a decorative piece, becomes a commodity in the marketplace of Victorian American society. In contrast to Henry James who ultimately applied culpability to his characters, Edith Wharton clearly "showed her characters as the prisoners" of an "inflexible social code and dramatized the dilemma" created for her alienated characters by the code's rigidity (Seymour 236).

By using house imagery and the language of bargains and exchange, Edith Wharton describes a society that equates value and identity with wealth, violates traditional family roles, acknowledges and promotes class divisions, and isolates individuals.

The world's fairs were showplaces of a society's idealized future. They also indicated which areas of interest were of importance to the host nation. For example, at the 1851 World's Fair in London, the exhibits began with four main categories, at the Philadelphia Centennial there were seven main categories, and at Chicago in 1893 there were ten categories. The greatest growth in interest and internal categories occurred in industry, communication, and transportation with a new sub-area of electricity. The other areas of growth were in social interests such as hygiene, photography, literature, architecture, government, and trade unions. Two forces, then, showed huge advancements and interest: industry and society. These growing areas reveal "conflicts of economic and social power, in which the outcome is largely determined by money" (Poirier 219). The Chicago Fair, like the Philadelphia celebration, was primarily the product of the rich industrialists who promoted Chicago as the site and subsidized, with liberal finances, the campaign to bring the fair to the West. Therefore, they and their ideas controlled much of the planning and development. Upper

class society in The House of Mirth controlled its members and membership by using power gained through money and generations of social exclusiveness.

The organization of the Chicago World's Fair sent a dual message. On the surface, art, culture, and education were the media of progress. Underneath, departmentalization connected directly to the growing power of corporations such as Westinghouse, Krupp, and General Electric. The artistic unity barely concealed the merchandising activity of "production, distribution, and ownership" (Trachtenberg 215). Although the companies did not often sell directly to fair visitors, the displays, competitions, and resultant advertising expanded local, national, and international markets. From the staff that covered the steel framing to the sculptures that covered the buildings and grounds, the White City tried to refine the material culture that actually motivated and controlled society.

This materialism appears in The House of Mirth as Wharton uses the language of money to describe the attitude of New York society in which Lily Bart and others are commodities to be used, manipulated, and acquired.² The language of finance and merchandising permeates the novel and imposes a sense of monetary worth and market speculation on relationships. The interaction between wealth and social standing and between wealth and individual relationships govern many characters in The House of Mirth.

When Lily Bart and Lawrence Seldon discuss her role in their society he says, "Isn't marriage your vocation? Isn't it what you're all brought up for? . . . so why not take the plunge" (31) Seldon equates the wife's role with that of a speculative venture by using the language of the stock market. Lily and Lawrence then move to a conversation about the collection of rare books that is the main interest of Lily's matrimonial target of the moment, Percy Gryce. Although Lily purports to seek information about rare books in order to please Percy, she is more interested in the value of the books and why they are collectable since they are, in fact, dingy specimens of history. Of course, her purpose is to become a desirable commodity for Gryce. She plans to control him by becoming "what his Americana had hitherto been: the one possession in which he took sufficient pride to spend money on it" (65). She intends to parlay his desire to collect beautiful and rare objects into financial security for herself. Because she uses her beauty and social finesse to create interest, she participates in the "system of emotional and financial calculation on which the society is built" (Poirier 223). Lily Bart's consequent loss of this matrimonial prospect is the result of the careful machinations of a jealous woman, Bertha Dorset. Manipulation of individuals is an outgrowth of a need to control the rapidity of change. A person who controls surroundings through grand houses with gardens and well-kept

landscapes can deny the forces that change society. Bertha Dorset's actions to sabotage Lily's pursuit of Percy Gryce are her technique for controlling the people with whom she associates. She is protecting her possession, her lover, and undermining the potential power of her competition, Lily Bart. As reprehensible as her machinations seem, they are no more devious or opportunistic than Chicago's campaign to gain the site of the Columbian Exposition. Their methods of undermining New York's bid by spending more money and engaging in political maneuvering rivaled Bertha Dorset's efforts. Neither Bertha Dorset's nor Chicago's actions caused an outcry from New York society or the American public. The question of morality hardly seems an issue in either case. By this omission, Wharton shows the changing moral value system in the novel and reflects the same change that the fair presents.

Another way to control the social environment is to control access to the inner group. This process creates a demand and gives over control to those with the keys to acceptance. Edith Wharton reveals

the greed of status-seeking new-breed industrialists and business tycoons who succeeded in buying social prominence by intermarrying with the "knickerbockers" [and] casts a cool, clear-sighted glance at the false values of the modern world with a special focus on the limited

possibilities for women's lives and the loss of selfhood that success in society meant both for women and men. (Benstock 10)

Many women in this novel have no identity except through their husband's or family's money. These women, such as Judy Trenor and Bertha Dorset, wield enormous power over social aspirants. They use them to satisfy their own needs. Judy Trenor, for example, asks Lily Bart to help with social correspondence, entertainment details, and husband diversion. Bertha Dorset uses Lily to cover her own affair while on a cruise. Their behavior is often petty and capricious and shows the "subtle and pervasive corruption of values in a society which lives by the single standard of financial success" (Millgate 57). Edith Wharton was very familiar with New York society, and her knowledge of the wealthy and their techniques to control their world appear in this novel concurrently with nineteenth-century America's attempts, as seen by the layout and design of the Chicago Columbian Exposition, to control progress and enjoy it simultaneously.

Gus Trenor understands that money is the machinery of New York social life. He recognizes, however, that his work has no place in his wife's social life. She has separated herself from the mundane elements of earning the living she enjoys. Gus complains to Lily:

At the pace we go now, I don't know where I should be if it weren't for taking a flyer now and then. The women all think--I mean Judy thinks--I've nothing to do but to go down town once a month and cut off coupons, but the truth is it takes a devilish lot of hard work to keep the machinery running. (93)

Gus also explains to Lily the bargains and exchanges that constitute business and the social obligations that are a part of the business relationships. He needs Judy to invite Simon Rosedale to social events in order to use him to gain financial tips on Wall Street. Judy, however, has not cooperated. Her refusal has its basis in her control over their social activities and her need to, at times, manipulate him into spending more money to fulfill her desire to compete in their social world. He asks Lily Bart to try "to persuade Judy to be decently civil to that chap. He's going to be rich enough to buy us all out one of these days, and if she'd only ask him to dine now and then I could get almost anything out of him" (93). He knows Simon Rosedale's determination to be accepted by New York society, and Gus intends to profit from his knowledge of Rosedale's goal. This internal struggle for place and acceptance is a struggle against the ideas of social status based on family background rather than personal identity.

Gus Trenor's plan reveals his double standard. He wants to entertain Rosedale socially in order to gain financial benefits from him. Yet, he expects more than friendly, social meetings from Lily Bart in exchange for giving her money. Whatever his standard, however, he does know the business of making deals for personal gain and will exploit whatever weakness he can discover. For example, Gus Trenor complains that Judy does not understand his work, yet he takes advantage of a similar lack of knowledge in Lily Bart to insure she becomes indebted to him. He volunteers to invest money for Lily and gives her the supposed profits. When he explains that the investments lost money and that he has been subsidizing her expensive lifestyle, Gus Trenor uses Lily's ignorance to exploit her. Her lack of financial education leads to her sexual victimization. In this novel, the contemporary isolation of most women from the financial base of nineteenth-century America leads to separation from progress. In Wharton's novel and at the fairs, women's contributions were limited and circumvented by society and those in control of the fairs.

Lily Bart knows the necessity of satisfying a social debt because she has visited her friends' homes and been agreeable to their guests, performed small services, and played bridge when needed. As she explains to Gerty Farish, "You asked me just now if I could understand why Ned Silvertown spent so much money. . . .He spends it on living

with the rich" (251). Lily is trying to explain that, to a dependent single person in society. the dinners, bridge games, carriage rides, opera boxes, and private cars carry a price that she and others like her cannot afford. They must dress well and always be "fresh and exquisite and amusing" (251). Lily Bart knows that being a part of society has a price; she just cannot retire from this society regardless of the cost. The moral and financial burdens create her dilemma. When Gus encourages Lily to be friendly to Rosedale because he is a man "it pays to be decent to," Lily sees this as a socially acceptable way of repaying Gus Trenor for his financial favors (103). She believes she can act civilly to Rosedale to please Gus Trenor. "Acquitting her debt" without paying a sexual price seems an easy way out of her problem (103). Lily acquiesces because she hopes her sense of obligation to Gus Trenor might ease. She, at first, tries to ignore her debt. Although "she had absented herself from Bellomont on the pretext of having other visits to pay; she now began to feel that the reckoning had . . . rolled up interest" (103). Her financial debt drew her into a partnership with Gus Trenor, who wants to satisfy his social obligation to Simon Rosedale by using Lily Bart as a pawn. Wharton's use of the financial language of debt and payment indicates the inclusion of financial power into the world of social power. Money controls society; society controls individuals. Often this control fostered increased

competition for a place in society. In the same way, industrialists competed for markets, and monopolies and company-controlled workers' towns resulted from the control of money which then translated into control of lives.

The houses within houses the exhibition halls at the Chicago World's Fair led to fierce competition for space and location. Fair developers imposed location, size, style, and dimension to govern exhibit unity. To avoid the strict criteria of the halls, private enterprise erected separate buildings. Because of this competition, profit motives commercialized the fair and "by ritualizing the display of alluring goods, the consumer culture both symbolized and accentuated the growing emphasis on tangible realities as opposed to spiritual or poetical ideas" (Shi 87). The "bigger is better" idea governed material and social success. The houses of the newly rich, social aspirants echo this pattern. Simon Rosedale purchases the home of a failed new millionaire. He, however, recognizes that the marketing of his social rise rests with more than a house. He must be accepted in the intimacy of the home, not just as a guest at a large gathering but at a dinner party with the hostess extending the invitation. Admittance to New York society had strict requirements and Simon Rosedale is determined to satisfy these. He knows his wealth, business acuity, and outward display will gain society's attention.

He need only acquire the human entree to complete his acceptance into society.

Carrie Fisher is another character who sees most clearly the true nature of New York elite society. Her function is to aid the nouveau riche in reaching their goal of social acceptance. She understands that society is undergoing change, and she will facilitate that change because of her need for survival and her ability to realistically perceive the future. Carrie Fisher embodies the same message as the displays at the world's fair. That message is that progress brings change and survival in the midst of change means adaptability. As Reid Badger explains, "to identify with the forces of change meant to identify largely with materialism" (8). Carrie Fisher benefits materially from the changes that newcomers will bring to the New York elite. She knows they will eventually alter the composition of society and she can benefit by supporting their aspirations. She functions as their introduction to society just as Lily Bart could serve as Rosedale's.

Although she prefers not to acknowledge him, Lily Bart recognizes that Simon Rosedale will eventually become a part of New York society in spite of his differences. He is Jewish and not polished in his manners or speech. He is blunt and pursues his goal openly and relentlessly. He wants Lily Bart because he believes her beauty and social

graces will complement his own material assets. Lily Bart has watched the "slow unalterable persistency" which she recognized as part of his character. His ability to use his wealth masterfully has given him "an enviable prominence in the world of affairs" and placed "Wall Street under obligations which only Fifth Avenue could repay" (228).

Unlike Lily Bart, Simon Rosedale will not need to search for a home. He already has one; all he needs is a socially approved wife to complete his goal of entering New York society. Both Carrie Fisher and Simon Rosedale have no illusions about the refinement of New York society. They know the world is changing and that money and effort and persistence will create space for them and their proteges. They will, additionally, use people to satisfy their own social needs: Rosedale to enter society and Carrie Fisher to remain within society.

The relationship of houses to the social placement of the rich and the newly rich is the topic of Lawrence and VanAlstyne. They observe the facades and discuss the inhabitants as reflected by the buildings:

That Greiner house, now--a typical rung in the social ladder! The man who built it came from a milieu where all the dishes are put on the table at once. His facade is a complete architectural mean; if he had omitted a style his friends might have thought the money had given out. (161)

The two young men note that the house is more an indication of the extent of the owner's wealth than an appropriate and functional residence. The house is an advertisement for his wealth. The Rosedale house, on the other hand, will draw attention, but the viewers do not find it quite so ostentatious. They believe Rosedale will eventually come to purchase or build a house of better and more subdued design. The Wellington Bry house elicits more commentary on the garishness and inappropriate design of houses owned by the newly rich. The "white facade, with its rich restraint of line," they see as a pretentious effort to "imply that one has been to Europe, and has a standard" (161). The young men recognize that the home is the product of an architect who has skillfully read his client's pretensions. Although the architect in The Rise of Silas Lapham is named an artist by Bromfield Corey, VanAlstyne in The House of Mirth applauds the cleverness of the architect who can design a house to portray the inhabitants and use this ability to make himself rich. The houses reveal the character of the residents, and the comments of the young men reveal their evaluation of the connection between houses and individuals who are members of society or aspire to enter society. A pretentious home is the outward sign of the mercenary views of a society that knows that money can control life and individuals. This acceptance of the facade for the reality is what leads Lawrence Seldon to accept the surface of Lily

Bart and not recognize the rootless isolation beneath her actions. In the same way, the staff facade of the White City at the Columbian Exposition covered the growing financial and social disparity and separations.

Between 1893 and 1915, Victorian America struggled with transition. As the fairs promised, the nation had developed into an industrial and financial giant. The juxtaposition of classical architecture with the gaiety of the midway at Chicago promised a golden future of refinement and pleasure. The temporary nature of the buildings and exhibits, however, hid the lack of a foundation that provides a feeling of security in a changing world. Family, community, and church had been the supportive underpinnings of early America. By the turn of the century this ideal foundation had become as shallow as the staff that thinly covered the buildings of the Chicago fair. The close-knit family that drew, symbolically, personal strength and values from the hearth had fallen prey to economic and social changes. The early struggle for survival that had united families became a battle for social status that often divided family members. The growth of cities as financial centers separated the families further as they sought homes away from the mercantile centers. Improved and expanded transportation created an escape pattern that permeated America. Commuter lines allowed families to travel to resorts, Europe, or country homes away from the business centers and crowded

tenements. Upper class families often lived apart for weeks and united only when social events beckoned or the seasons, natural and social, changed. This drive to escape isolated groups of people as the elite could ignore the growing urban problems of overcrowding and the poverty of the working and immigrant classes.

Throughout The House of Mirth, Edith Wharton shows the changed condition of the American family. The parent-child relationships, the marriages, and the plight of the unmarried man or woman show the separation of individuals. Marriage, although sought eagerly by the single women in this novel, does not necessarily bring stability. As Wharton describes the life of wealthy New Yorkers, she presents a "critique of the marriage system" that is "not limited to the economic dependence of women but also extends to consider the loneliness, dehumanization, and anxiety of men" (Showalter 96). The Dorset and Trenor relationships are good examples. Gus and Judy Trenor have little contact with each other unless they are entertaining guests. Judy Trenor spends her time throwing lavish house parties and playing bridge. When her husband comes to Bellomont from the city, Judy recruits her friends to pick him up at the station. As she explains to Lily Bart, "I'm very glad to have him amused, but I happen to know that she [Carrie Fisher] had bled him rather severely since she's been here" (91). Mrs. Trenor apparently accepts that her husband

cheats in their marriage, but she resents Carrie Fisher's receiving money from him. Personal fidelity in marriage is less important than financial fidelity. The fact that Carrie Fisher is divorced carries no stigma except, as Judy Trenor explains, "most of her alimony is paid by other women's husbands" (91). Judy Trenor makes few demands on her husband unless she requires more money.

They lead relatively separate lives, particularly during the work week when Gus Trenor stays in the city. Mrs. Trenor provides entertainment for her husband when he comes to Bellomont; however, the town house where he must stay during the week is shrouded in dust covers, and only the den is furnished for occupation. When Gus Trenor tricks Lily Bart into coming to the townhouse alone, the scene in the den is a parody of the fireplace hearth where Lily had warmed her hands at Seldon's residence. One of the reasons that Gus Trenor is alone in the town house is that Judy wants him to remodel this house and expand the ballroom to compete with the Bry house. She withholds her physical presence to force him to concur with her project. The cold, bleak house has no true welcome for its owner and its chill envelops Lily Bart when she realizes that she owes a monetary debt for which Gus Trenor expects sexual favors as payment. In some respects, the rich marriage that has eluded Lily Bart as a sanctuary also betrays her when she believes that Gus Trenor's marriage will protect her from

his importunities. Lily Bart's blindness is Wharton's indictment "about the risks women run whenever they deviate from socially approved norms and about the responsibilities a culture such as Lily's has toward its powerless members" (Wagner-Martin 56). Lily Bart has not seen beneath the surface of marriage to the bargain that lies below. The married couples in this novel have little in common except an agreement to spend money to maintain their social status and to remain discreet in their activities.

Lily Bart's relationship with George and Bertha Dorset further exemplifies the bargain of marriage and the manipulation of others required to maintain the arrangement. Bertha Dorset has open affairs. She can do this by arranging that her husband be entertained and isolated from her activities. To this end, she invites Lily to travel with them on their yacht. When George eventually realizes that Ned Silverton is his wife's lover, Bertha ruthlessly sacrifices Lily's reputation to try to save the marriage. Her need to preserve her financial base and her acquisitive nature lead her to ruin another human being. Among the New York elite the nurturing family has been replaced with a corporation determined to entertain lavishly and maintain a facade of familial unity. Threats to this carefully created surface lead to social ostracism. This rejection is considered fatal to the young women and young men who have no family to support them, either financially or morally.

The women of this society are cold and indifferent to the feelings and concerns of each other. This mirrors many of the feelings of nineteenth-century women who had difficulty accepting the changing roles presented at the Chicago Fair as progress. Many believed that "sturdy, independent male citizens were the backbone of the country, but so, too, were Republican Mothers because they socialized the next generation to the duties of good citizenship" (Matthews 93). The arguments during the Woman's Congress at the Chicago World's Fair shows that a woman's place in society was the subject of much debate. Uncertainty about the results of change resulted in a sense of loss as well as excitement about the future. What would happen in the future was still a problem of vision. To Edith Wharton, too much change in the role of women left gaps that were often filled by power stemming from the ability to spend money and use money to manipulate people.

Lily Bart is easily victimized by society because she lacks the unity of family and home that could provide her with a base and a sense of values.³ Her memories of her father are of a "hazy outline of a neutral-tinted father" who hovered about the fringes of the "grey interludes of economy and brilliant reactions of expense" that constituted her early years (47). Until she was nineteen years old, Lily Bart shifted between a life of ease and a life of small economies always undergirded with a need for more money,

"and in some vague way her father seemed always to blame for the deficiency" (48). When financial disaster occurs, Lily and her mother must depend on relatives for subsistence. During these travels from one house to another, Mrs. Bart contemplated her daughter's beauty and saw it as their salvation, for "it was the last asset in their fortunes, the nucleus around which their life was to be rebuilt" (52). Instead of receiving such family values as hard work, economy, love, or appreciation of intellectual pursuits, Lily was taught to value beauty as a commodity. Marriage, for a beautiful woman, resulted in a bargain that allowed her to escape the dinginess of a poor existence. Lily's beauty was a possession to trade for security from want.

When the orphaned Lily moves in with her aunt, Mrs. Peniston, she has never had the security of a permanent home nor a unified family. The home of Mrs. Peniston provides neither. Although Mrs. Peniston has money, she spends it carefully and offers Lily no regular allowance with which to dress appropriately. Mrs. Peniston preferred "the periodical recurrence of gratitude evoked by unexpected cheques" that kept Lily dependent. The austere, yet opulent, home of Mrs. Peniston then becomes another form of exchange. For a home and occasional money, Lily lives with a woman who did not feel "called upon to do anything for her charge: she had simply stood aside and let her take the field" (56). Once again, Lily Bart has no family to guide

her. She has a house but no home. She is a beautiful object with no purpose but decoration of another's home or, more demeaning, fulfillment of a charitable obligation. As Howells had illustrated, society admitted the need of contributing to the needy but preferred to remain separate from their presence and unaware of their specific needs. At the world's fairs they were either excluded or trained for menial vocations.

The concept of home and family is, in this novel, one of bargaining for possessions, using people, and separating of family members. The only warmth of hearth and home occurs in Lawrence Seldon's library, Gerty Farish's flat, and the rooms of Nettie Struther. Lily can only reach for the warmth at these places but rejects it because she sees no financial security. Seldon, who at times seems to want Lily, never quite proposes because he knows he cannot provide her the luxury she seeks. He equates love and marriage with wealth. Gerty is too blinded by her worship of Lily's beauty to understand Lily's need. Even though Nettie's baby touches Lily's heart, Lily cannot see the warmth of this family home because of the dinginess of the working girl's life. Lily is pliable but not adaptable because she does not know any life but her rootless existence and search for wealth. She has never had instilled into her the value of self-identity through the creative spirit of a person who knows his or her self-worth.

Her spaces are not her own; they belong to others. Perhaps this is why she cannot bring herself to complete her quest for a husband. She cannot see beyond the temporary houses she inhabits because she has never had a permanent home from which she can draw strength. Only at the end of the novel, in her dingy room, can she own her space because she finally erases her debts to others and accepts this home as her own. That the home is a place of death does not, ultimately, detract from her ownership of her self and her surroundings.

In this novel, the divisions of upper, middle, and lower class seem less obvious, at first. The elite are well-represented and the lower, working class appear as adjuncts to Lily Bart's descent from society. These different classes are very far apart on the scale of money and refinement. Closer examination reveals that several segments of society appear and struggle for identity and acceptance in a social world that retains tight financial control. The pattern of division that ultimately isolates groups and individuals resembles the design plan of the Chicago Fair. The White City with its gleaming buildings and heavily adorned Court of Honor belongs to the Eastern male architects who designed them. They reinforce the power of the wealthy industrialists who commissioned them. The Woman's Building, even with its parade of women's progress, is situated outside the White City and placed under the auspices of the group that controlled the Midway Pleasance,

the Department of Anthropology. The midway exhibited the varying degrees of civilization, strongly suggesting color as a determining factor. Because of the location of the Woman's Building, gender was also a factor in determining social value among civilized nations. The midway had also been established as a place of entertainment and education for the working classes, who had not yet achieved a place in the idealized society of the White City. Their place was assigned at the discretion of the industrialists, like Pullman, who designed, owned and controlled model workers' housing.

The placement, then, of exhibits as they stood apart from the White City established a "scientific" hierarchy among nations and races. This accepted belief that certain groups were less civilized and less capable of progressing sanctioned a belief in the greater and lesser capabilities of certain segments of society. Once this idea is accepted, it is not difficult to believe that one group has the right or obligation to control another. Also, within each segment, divisions also seem natural and acceptable. In The House of Mirth, Wharton shows the divisions that isolate groups and ultimately those individuals who do not have the moral or familial foundation needed to survive industrial and social change.

Within the society of the New York elite, the divisions include the elder, tradition-bound families; the younger,

more festive and well-traveled married couples; the single men and women; and the newly rich. Mrs. Peniston and her home symbolize the passive and restricted traditional role of women. Her narrow outlook, the crayon portrait of her dead husband, her reluctance to travel, and the distance she maintains between herself and the outside world effectively deny progress. As she maintains the physical evidence of the past, she controls her surroundings with her money. She expresses interest in the events of modern society but retains an naive belief that scandal will not affect her. Mrs. Peniston shrouds her knowledge of life like she places dust covers on the drawing room furniture and separates herself from the reality of changing society. When forced to face contemporary attitudes, she isolates herself even further by disinheriting Lily, the source of her uneasiness about change. Denying and withdrawing are her techniques for dealing with progress. The older, established families resist change and exclude those who might force them to accept outsiders into their closely-allied ranks.

The younger married couples such as the Trenors and Dorsets wield social and financial power over those less able to defend themselves. The victims are Lily Bart and Ned Silverton. Lily has no family support and no money; therefore, she must trade her beauty for inclusion into the activities and the homes of the elite. If she offends them, she is cast out. Ned Silverton has a dual problem. He

trades his youth and attractiveness for society's recognition. When no longer wanted, he gambles until he is in debt. He is cast out, and his sisters, who have no money, feel obligated to pay his debts. They are the second problem. They have never been trained to work. They have only those skills traditionally taught to young women from fine families. There is no market for Miss Jane, who "reads aloud nicely," or Miss Annie, who "paints a little" (249). Society has no place for Lily or Ned or his sisters. Progress holds only fear and destitution for those not prepared for the future. The working world where Lily Bart and the Misses Silverton try to survive has no place for them either.⁴ Lily must try to earn money by trimming hats. She discovers her ineptness and feels the scorn of the other working girls she believes should admire her beauty and style. She cannot create with hands untrained for work. Although Lily and the Silverton sisters have artistic backgrounds, they are evaluated on their lack of functional contributions. The conversation between Mrs. Julia Grant and Enid Yandell, the artist, echoes in these problems of survival for the untrained, unprepared young women of nineteenth-century America.

Gerty Farish, who, at first, seems to have not only awareness of the needs of young working women but also the impetus to help them, fails to understand their plight. She supports a charity that provides "comfortable lodgings, with

a reading-room and other modern distractions, where young women of the class employed in down town offices might find a home when out of work, or in need of rest" (119). The existence of this particular charity reveals that women are part of the urban work force and that they need a home-like shelter. Their presence indicates the changes occurring in society and Wharton's awareness of the often displaced and isolated working women. Gerty Farish's attempts to support this charity show her personal recognition that single women often must live separate from society. She does not, however, recognize that Lily Bart is even more isolated. Lily tries to explain to Gerty:

Keep myself alive? I see myself reduced to the fate of that poor Silverton woman--slinking about to employment agencies, and trying to sell painted blotting-pads to Women's Exchanges! And there are thousands and thousands of women trying to do the same thing already, and not one of the number who has less idea how to earn a dollar than I have.

(251)

Although Gerty does see the beauty and the artistic fineness of Lily, she cannot see the isolation of this young woman untrained for life except as an object to own and to display. Lily is in limbo. The society she has known rejects her, her aunt rejects her, and those interested in social causes do not see her. Elaine Showalter describes

Lily's plight as the deprivation "of the financial and emotional supports she has been raised to expect" and her serious loss of an "environment for the skills in which she has been trained" (90). She has gradually evolved into a non-entity because she has no marketplace for her wares and no marketable products she can create. Her only options for becoming an integrated individual are to succumb to Gus Trenor's sexual bargain or Simon Rosedale's blackmail scheme.

As a woman unprepared for any life other than as a decorative object, Lily Bart's "passion for gambling is a passion for giving up control, and her desire to do the right thing is a desire not to do anything at all" (Michaels 230). Without family roots and values, Lily cannot control her own life. She knows she must complete her journey to marriage, but she cannot take the final step that would cause her to suborn her identity, nebulous as it is, to the control of another. She could accept this role if someone else would make the decision. By drifting, she does not control, give up, or move forward to another kind of existence for which she is not prepared. She explains to Seldon in language that truly represents the industrial age of which she has become a victim:

I have tried hard--but life is difficult, and I am a very useless person. I can hardly be said to have an independent existence. I was just a screw

or a cog in the great machine I called life, and when I dropped out of it I found I was of no use anywhere else. What can one do when one finds that one only fits into one hole? One must get back to it or be thrown out into the Rubbish heap- and you don't know what it's like in the rubbish heap! (287).

Lily recognizes that she has no place in society and no family to which she can turn for support. She acknowledges to Seldon the extent of her separation and isolation. The cold machine of New York society has become an industry in which its single, untrained members have become victims. Like the young workers at the Philadelphia Centennial, she must socialize or work at the control of society's machinery.

The isolation of Lily Bart from her social milieu has no remedy. She is not trained for work nor can she convince herself to use blackmail to reassert her place through marriage to Simon Rosedale. The traditional cure for dissatisfaction with society or failure to succeed, moving West, is not an option either. She does travel across the continent with the Gormiers, but she can only feel joy at returning to a luxurious atmosphere. She does not see the West as offering opportunity to renew her life. Of course, at the Chicago World's Fair, Frederick Jackson Turner had declared that the frontier was, effectively, ended. The

inevitable civilization that would progress across the country, based on past history, could have influenced Wharton to deny the West as a potential home for Eastern society's victims and outcasts. Besides, those who had succeeded financially in the West were moving East to assault the social bastions of New York. This pattern would only offer Lily Bart a circular journey. Her isolation would recur because the basic condition of no home, no family, and no place were the larger problems that caused her separation from society.

Financial poverty no longer created in Lily Bart the distress of an earlier time. Now "she had a sense of deeper empovrishment[sic]--of an inner destitution . . . the sense of being swept like a stray uprooted growth . . . the feeling of being something rootless and ephemeral, mere spin-drift of the whirling surface of existence" (296). Throughout the novel, she has not had a home that allowed her to create an identity. The room where she dies is an external symbol of the sparseness she has always known but never recognized fully. She comes closest to seeing her reality after she pays her financial debts and looks at her future:

In the street the noise of wheels had ceased, and the rumble of the "elevated" came only at long intervals through the deep, unnatural hush. In the mysterious nocturnal separation from all

outward signs of life, she felt herself more strangely confronted with her fate . . . But the terrible silence and emptiness seemed to symbolize her future--she felt as though the house, the street, the world were all empty, and she alone left sentient in a lifeless universe. (298)

The diminishing sounds of travel contrast vividly with the opening description of Lily at the railway station preparing for the Trenor house party. The sounds of her final night reinforce her knowledge that other people have homes and families that wait for their arrival. No one waits for Lily. Only after she dies, is she surrounded by people who could have cared for her had they looked beyond the surface of their own society. When Seldon goes to Lily's room at the novel's end, he focuses on the "very little furniture," the "shabby chest of drawers" with its "lace cover and gold-topped boxes and bottles," the "a rose-coloured pin-cushion, and a glass tray." He found "no other token of her personality" (303). Lily Bart's isolation from her world was declared in the plain furnishings and bare walls that enclosed her body.

Women in this novel illustrate the further widening of divisions in American society. At the Chicago Columbian Exposition, the women were proud of their progress into the traditionally masculine arenas of professions, work, and social influence. Although in the Woman's Building and

throughout the fair, women's contributions to America's progress were clearly evident, change was slow. For example, Edith Wharton struggled for acceptance as an author. Her work, The Decorations of Houses, was well-accepted but some critics and even Codman, her co-author, believed that her contribution was more in the editing than in the actual developing of the work.⁵ As had happened at the Chicago Fair, often the women in The House of Mirth did not accept the changing role of American women. Lily Bart is ultimately isolated because she has no power. She is rootless because she has no home; she is not marketable because she has no skills; and she is powerless because she has no money. She refuses to become a commodity under the control of Gus Trenor or Simon Rosedale. She cannot compete, so she must remain an outsider and a victim of the machinery of society. The women of her society were as instrumental in her ostracism as were the changes in society that increased her isolation. These women chose to wield their power as wives and mothers and preferred that change not enter their closely-knit, tightly-structured social world.

In late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century America, no longer are homes symbols of family, community, social, and national unity. The emphasis on material acquisition and control, as displayed at the Chicago World's Fair, was an integral aspect of American society. The

wealthy displayed their ability to purchase by building larger and more ornate homes. They entertained lavishly and competitively as if advertising their ability to control their tightly enclosed world. Part of this conspicuous consumption included the manipulation of individuals. Determination of worth in American society was based on the ability to control others. Ideas, both explicit and implicit, propounded at the Chicago World's Fair, were basic in The House of Mirth. Wharton reveals the facade of an idealized world with a foundation of careless or self-serving manipulation. Sanctioned by the growth of industrial corporations, acceptance that certain elements of society were not deserving of a place in the White City created divisions based on color, gender, nationality, and income. Individuals were alienated and isolated within American society. National and social unity was a facade.

Notes

¹ The Mount is sold in 1911, partly as a result of Teddy Wharton's disastrous investments and partly because of the rapidly disintegrating marital relationship.

² Through this use of language appropriate to Wall Street, Wharton incorporates into The House of Mirth the "financial and industrial [business world] of modern American life that Wharton says eluded her contemporary Henry James (Habegger 264).

³ Throughout the novel, Wharton carefully uses the term "house," not "home," as Lily Bart's goal. Without family support, Lily can have no home in the traditional sense.

⁴ Susan Gorsky describes the changing role of women in nineteenth century life and literature in Femininity to feminism. Chapter 3 on education and Chapter 4 on employment reveal the limited opportunities to a character such as Lily Bart in spite of the progress of women so celebrated at the American world fairs. Mary Kelley's Private Woman, Public Stage offers additional insight and background material.

⁵ Given the scarcity of women architects available to submit designs to the women planners of the Chicago Fair in 1893, it is not surprising that Wharton was viewed as having made only a minor contribution to this work.

Chapter VI

McTeague: Beneath the Urban Dream

Visitors to the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 carried away with them a shining vision of America's future. The unified, gleaming architecture of the White City and its lagoons ringed with statuary suggested that this design would soon be a part of city life for everyone. Electric power that provided energy to light the display showed that technology would bring the harnessed power of nature to ease American life. Landscape design of the fair illustrated that Americans could enjoy the opportunities of urban life-- art, architecture, machines, department stores-- and retain the beneficial elements of nature through city parks or suburbs within streetcar reach of all city dwellers. The message delivered to American fair goers was that the last decade of the nineteenth century would surely conquer class and economic divisions and see the completion of America's continental and world destiny. In contrast to this optimistic vision, Frank Norris's novel McTeague, published in 1899, signaled a change in literary perspective and revealed the effects of believing too strongly in the Victorian American dream of unity and control over environment, both natural and man made. This naturalistic novel shows the plight of the individual who struggles to

retain his or her identity in a rapidly changing society. Changes in family structure, urban expansion, and increased mobility isolated individuals and revealed the brutality beneath the facade of progress.

The World's Columbian Exposition not only hosted a Congress of Literature but also produced several articles and novels based on fair experiences. The ideal American society promised by the White City of the Chicago World's Fair found expression in at least two utopian novels. William Dean Howells' Traveler from Altruria and Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward were rooted in the "reform impulses" and the "impact of literary realism" of the last two decades of the nineteenth century (Shi 184). Both authors believed that their literary utopian worlds held promise of an attainable future. They also believed that their contrast of the ideal with the reality of the disintegrating pre-urban life and the need for social reform would awaken a national social conscience. Other authors believed the hope embodied in the White City of the fair could best be illustrated in contrast to Chicago, the dark city. Charles M. Stevens' The Adventures of Uncle Jeremiah and Family at the Great Fair pointed to the dangers that Chicago and urban areas posed to naive, rural visitors. Even at the exposition, Uncle Jeremiah and his family fall prey to purveyors of urban vices. Children's author Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote Two Little Pilgrims' Progress and

"synthesized the sublime spirituality of the Celestial City with the temporal evanescence of the World's Columbian Exposition" (Burg 291). Marietta Holley again brought her fictitious, simplistic heroine, Samantha, to a world's fair.¹ Samantha came hoping to find a New Jerusalem and discovered it at the Court of Honor in the White City. Nearly all of the articles, guidebooks, and novels directly drawn from the fair shared the common theme that the fair exemplified the fulfillment of America's greatness and success. Despite the proximity and contrast of Chicago and its urban vices, the fair captured and held visitors' belief in the idealized vision.

If he had attended the Chicago World's Fair, Norris would have shuddered at the White City and delighted in the Midway Plaisance. He would have found on the Midway the excitement and the mystery he believed constituted appropriate material for literature. Norris' novel McTeague, published in 1899, contains the bizarre and exotic behaviors that seemed to draw fair visitors to the Midway exhibits. In this novel, begun in 1892, Frank Norris focuses less on class divisions resulting from disparate wealth and more on the effects of social and industrial change on individuals. Norris draws his presentation of Polk Street from his "ramblings in San Francisco's working-class district" which revealed a "culture fermenting with struggle, tragedy, sensuality, and grotesque characters"

(Shi 232). He describes the inhabitants of San Francisco's Polk Street, where McTeague lived, as a forgotten or ignored segment of urban populations. These city residents reveal individual and group reactions to the promises implied at the fairs and accepted by Victorian Americans but remaining unfulfilled. Idealized cities and controlled human categorization, as seen at the Chicago's World Fair, offer no solutions to men, women, and families caught amid bewildering changes that can undermine identity and destroy life. Norris' characters do not live in houses; they live in apartments or rooms. McTeague and Trina, both products of nomadic families, have no roots to give them a sense of place and identity. With each change in their circumstances, they move to smaller, dingier rooms until each is totally isolated and alone. With no traditional source of security, they revert to basic survival techniques: mindless hoarding or uncontrolled passions. Rather than target any one area as blameworthy or praiseworthy, Norris reveals the fallacies of an American society that complacently relies on changes brought by science, technology, education, social reform, and industry to fulfill America's dream.

According to Frank Norris, Realism, as a literary movement, contributed to acceptance of these fallacies in a society that wanted to believe in growth, unity, and control as the cure for social problems. Norris believed that

American Realism had lost its vigor as sentimentality and idealization of America's destiny obscured the struggles of the lost, forgotten individuals in nineteenth-century America. Realism, according to Frank Norris, dealt only with members of wealthy society and their drawing room lives. For Norris, literature belonged to "the unplumbed depths of the human heart . . . the problems of life, and the black, unsearched penetralia of the soul of man" (Norris, "A Plea" 313). His characters fought to survive in a world that progressed with no regard for individual needs or individual confusion about the fast-paced changes. Furthermore, he did not gloss over the "brute instincts and single-minded drives" of his characters (Shi 233). Norris' novel McTeague presents the lives of a lower middle class neighborhood in San Francisco. His characters cannot participate in the idealized city that the Chicago Columbian Exposition promised in 1893.

In spite of the attempts of the Chicago World's Fair planners to offer the Midway as a serious ethnological exhibit, the most popular sections did not draw crowds because of their educational value. The exotic, bizarre, gigantic, rare, and brutal fascinated fair goers. After leaving the White City, awed but exhausted tourists revitalized their senses at the exhibits of ostrich farming, Eastern dancing girls, a reproduction of Hawaiian volcanoes, a model of a Colorado gold mine, and an exhibit of boxing by

Jim Corbett. On the Street of Cairo, exhibits and shows that featured scantily clad dancing girls titillated the young and offended the more staid Victorian Americans. Unrestrained curious and merrymaking crowds sought the unusual, particularly any exhibit purporting to be the largest or rarest or the least civilized. The passionate characters in Norris' novel were more allied to the Midway than to the White City. The elegant, refined neoclassical architecture expressed America's desire to compete artistically with Europe and its traditions. Raucous entertainment areas reminded society that not everyone enjoyed the civilized facade of progress. Frank Norris presents no idealized version of American life, and the brutal and obsessive behavior of McTeague and Trina fascinates readers as it repels them.

Although Norris' contemporary William Dean Howells decried Norris' emphasis on the "squalid and cruel and vile and hateful" aspects of life and his ignoring of the "noble and tender and pure and lovely" in life, Howells considered McTeague "the inevitable consequence of expansion in fiction" (327). Norris knew and Howells acknowledged that American life was not shining and perfect and that American readers were as drawn to Polk Street as they were drawn to the exhibits of the Midway Plaisance. In his novel McTeague, Norris reverses the view of the Midway exhibits. Instead of moving toward the White City in an orderly

evolution to the ideal, his characters must turn away from the facade and contend with the dark side of American life.

Chicago, in the city itself, and the organization of the fair displays, offered an excellent example of separation of work and home life. Rail transportation carried "middle- and upper-class Chicagoans who could afford to do so" away from crowds, noise, and pollution of the downtown and factories (Cronon 347). The suburbs became the comfortable site of home, family, and domestic labor. Carefully incorporated lagoons, tree-lined promenades, and flower gardens amid the serenity of the White City expressed "a vision of what urban life could be if only the crowded and ugly parts of the city could be remade according to the genteel visions" (Cronon 348). Actual attainment of these visions was accessible only to those Americans who could afford to leave the squalor of city life and move to the suburbs. The fair ignored the tensions that grew among those who must stay in the cities or in company towns.

The design of the Chicago World's Fair's White City emphasized the idea of metropolitan growth in the United States. Architectural unity and dazzling statuary could only mean that America's cities represented the future of the nation. In addition, the organization of buildings, lagoons, transportation, and exhibits of the Midway prefigured the planning of cities with their downtown skyscrapers for work, parks for recreation, and suburbs for

living. In the model represented by the White City and the Midway, each element of society has its place in a pattern of separation that follows a "scientific" order.

In contrast, Norris' urban Polk Street in McTeague represents a mixture of living space, commercial venues, and professional offices. By using timed-structured patterns of movement to and from work, Norris establishes the different levels of society in San Francisco. The common laborers--carpenters, plumbers' apprentices, street workers, and plasterers--begin the exodus and meet the returning night shift workers. An hour later, the "clerks and shop girls" rush to their employment, casting anxious glances at the clocks that govern their workday (4). After another hour, the "employers, . . . whiskered gentlemen with huge stomachs, reading the morning paper with great gravity" and "bank cashiers and insurance clerks" follow more leisurely (4). An hour before noon, the fine ladies "from the great avenue above Polk Street" arrive to do their marketing at the shops with their "subservient provision-men" filling orders (4). The evening parade begins at six and reenacts the morning pattern but in reverse. Polk Street presents a moving mosaic of city life. Businesses and apartments share the street, usually uniting in a single address. In contrast the Chicago World's Fair seemed to promise that American progress would result in beautiful cities where workplaces belonged in the city and the ideal home life was separate

but close. The Fair suggested this as the ideal situation; Norris shows the reality of urban life that joins both worlds: work and home.

Industrialization of America had reached maturity by 1893 and affected not only patterns of rural to urban movement but also the immigrants who came to America in search of better jobs and improved lives. Infusions of immigrant workers, who came to America with traditional ideas and work ethics, brought conflicts between industrial expectations and individual work habits. Some immigrants and even native Americans "shed older ways to conform to new imperatives," while others "fell victim or fled, moving from place to place" as they sought to retain personal control over their working conditions and to improve their financial situations (Gutman 541). Characters in McTeague follow this pattern as they try to retain personal identity amid the changes that arose from urbanization and industrialization. The traditional family unit was often divided by these patterns of movement from site to site in search of improved lives.

As the daughter of German-Swiss immigrants, Trina accepts marriage to McTeague because her mother expects her to marry one of the two young men who court her. She might have resisted her mother; however, she cannot resist the strength and physical demands of McTeague. His masculine power coincides with her mother's expectations, and Trina

cannot resist the tradition of filial obedience or McTeague's brute strength. Abandoned by her parents, who leave San Francisco to find a more profitable situation, Trina loses the personal anchor inherent in a traditional family home. She turns to McTeague and seems to need his strong, sometimes brutal, control of her and her life. When McTeague loses his dental practice, she must turn elsewhere to reassert her own control over her life. With the loss of McTeague's income, Trina turns to hoarding money as it has become her only security. Her hiding of the money exemplifies her control of the flow of coins and her control over her life.

Needing stability in her changing world, Trina has no use for McTeague once he loses his livelihood. She not only reminds him of his failure as a dentist but also berates him for not finding other work. Since he can no longer contribute financially to the family, she, in essence, disposes of him, by diminishing his identity as a man and as a husband. Trina takes from him her traditional wifely support and forces him to ask her for money. She hides her original winnings from him and lies to him to increase her hoard of coins.

McTeague is the child of a rough-mannered miner who assigned McTeague hard labor and gave him even harder treatment. His mother determines that McTeague should become a professional and escape the rigors of mining camp

life. When she apprentices him to the charlatan dentist, she, in effect, abandons him to a false promise. McTeague has never felt secure within his family; therefore, he has never learned to share himself or his life with another. He cannot articulate his feelings because he has never been taught to do so. When he loses the only stability in his life, his dental practice, he turns against the possession he has never truly valued as a human being, Trina.

The traditional American belief that home and hearth were the source of piety, moral values, and unity was still a part of Victorian American. Although the women planners at Chicago wanted to illustrate women's progress and showcase women's involvement in American life, the roles of women as leaders of social reform, child rearing, and home preservation still persisted as an important part of American ideals. Families in McTeague are separated because of their belief in mobility as the source of security and success. Trina's family moves on; McTeague's mother sends him away; and McTeague and Trina struggle against each other when adversity takes their home.

The Philadelphia Centennial and the Chicago World's Fair promoted the industrial progress of America as evidence of the nation's growth and power. Americans believed they had conquered the natural world and molded it to industrial needs. They also believed they understood and then accepted the hierarchy of people and civilizations. Factories

expanded and so too did the gulf between owners and workers. In McTeague, Norris does not directly address the problems of labor; he, instead, describes those who are affected by industrial change but not, necessarily, a part of it. Specialization and industry overtook the traditional vocations of craftsmen and independent practitioners of necessary professions. Those individuals who tried to continue their work found themselves relegated to dulling, menial work or deprived of the opportunity to use their skills. Without control of their crafts, people produced carelessly or not at all. Without a creative livelihood or respect for their skills, however limited, they felt abandoned and useless, and they ultimately lost a sense of personal identity or grabbed for whatever symbol of value they could retain. They then hoarded this to keep it from those who might continue to undermine their work-oriented identity. Trina, Old Grannis, and McTeague exemplify loss of identity through the inability to create or to work at chosen vocations.

Independent craftsmen and artisans usually alternated spates of labor with rest periods as one method of exerting control over their working lives. These work habits conflicted with the regimented work days required in factories. Laborers struggled to maintain their freedom to work and to play ungoverned by the time clocks of industry. With the advancement of industry, control over work

schedules encroached into daily lives, living conditions, and personal behavior. The model town built by Pullman and exhibited at the Chicago fair is one example of industry's belief in its right to control employees' lives. Often people moved westward seeking escape and more control over individual choices. As American progress followed the westward migrations, workers again fell victim or tried to flee, thus creating either a regimented population or a highly mobile one.

Progress and civilization as displayed at the world's fairs destroyed individual sense of identity gained through productive labor. In McTeague, Trina carves the animals for the Noah's arks that her uncle sells. She cannot whittle the human figures for the Noah's arks "fast enough and cheap enough to compete with the turning lathe that could throw off whole tribes and people of manikins while she was fashioning one family" (76). Her product has little individual artistry or value because she must repetitiously reproduce the same shapes and paint with the same colors with no deviation. She becomes a virtual human assembly line with exactly the same amount of creativity as a machine. Like the machinery, she eventually wears out, breaks down, and is destroyed because she is no longer productive. The paint she uses is dangerous to people. However, she is no longer a person as she carves and paints and tosses the product aside before starting the pattern again. Her

inability to compete with the machines that create the family members who live on the ark ironically parallels her inability to retain ties with her own family and with McTeague. She can neither fashion families from wood nor fashion a family with her husband. Machines displace her as a worker, and loss of income displaces her as a wife and homemaker.

Trina McTeague, then, loses two vocational frames that, traditionally, would have offered her stability and identity. As a wife she expects to create a home with and for her husband. A sitting room/dining room combination, a separate bedroom, and a tiny kitchen comprise McTeague and Trina's new home after their marriage. The sitting room contains a melodeon, bright tidies on the chairs, and sentimental pictures that brighten the room and represent her dream of her own home. The kitchen, "a creation of Trina's" contains a "range," a "porcelain-lined sink," "a copper boiler," "flashing tinware," and a "new stove that smoked badly" (90). Trina furnishes her kitchen with the widely advertised conveniences needed by a young couple to start a new life.

As the McTeagues meet adversity, they must sell these items and move into a small, dingy room. Trina no longer has her furniture and house decorations, but she deeply mourns the loss of her kitchen. This room had been her source of joy and identity as woman and wife. For her,

entering that kitchen and cooking, cleaning, and furnishing it had brought her happiness because she "knew that it was all her own" (154). Loss of ownership of the kitchen excised an important part of her identity. She focuses what is left of her creative identity on the carving of Noah's arks and animals to sell to her uncle. She no longer cooks or cleans but instead whittles and paints the wood carvings leaving splatters on her person and the room and shavings on the unswept floor. As their fortunes continue to spiral downward and out of control, Trina clings to her wood carvings obsessively. She mechanically and mindlessly dabs the "non-poisonous" paint until she contracts blood poisoning and loses her fingers. Her source of creativity turns to drudgery and finally to emptiness. Norris describes her as "a solitary, abandoned woman, lost in the lowest eddies of the great city's tide--the tide that always ebbs" (197). Trina is neither a primitive woman tending to her husband and home nor a modern woman free to pursue her art, her wood carving skill. The modern machinery that so overwhelmingly dominated the exhibits of the Philadelphia Centennial and the Chicago World's Fair has defined precisely what type of artistic work Trina can do. Instead of bringing prosperity, industry devalues individual craftsmanship and leaves the artist alienated from the changing society.

Beyond her limited craft work, Trina has only the \$5,000 lottery winnings she has invested and refused to spend. Eventually, it is her only source of identity because her husband takes her carefully hoarded coins when he leaves. She must now physically control the money to retain any purpose in life. The options for women so proudly displayed in the Progress of Women exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair are not available to Trina McTeague. Separated, alienated, and isolated from those choices, Trina does not fulfill the "self-sacrificing Victorian stereotype of ideal womanhood" that the women's Congresses questioned. Neither is she prepared "to compete equally with a man in the world outside the home" as some congress speakers claimed. Certainly she does not represent the pervasive view that woman is "somehow the ethical and moral superior of man" (Badger 120). Trina McTeague's equality lies in her inability to cope with change and in her equal inability to compete with machine-made products that severely limit her options for material success.

Another casualty of technological and industrial growth, Old Grannis has developed a book binding technique. His bookbinding is his artistic contribution. While he creates a valuable product, books, he also lives a fantasy romance so that the two grow intertwined in his mind. The love affair of Grannis and Miss Baker seems, at first, out of place in this novel that focuses on brute instinct and

dark desires. However, their relationship is another example of the changing nature of American society as it affects individual lives. These lonely, old people have courted by not speaking but merely sharing time on opposite sides of a common wall. Miss Baker sips her tea as Old Grannis binds pamphlets with his invention. One night Old Grannis comes home and sits idly in his room. He no longer has pamphlets to bind because the book-selling company "had taken his little binding apparatus from him to use as a model" (181). Now he is "sad and unoccupied"; there is "nothing for him to do." He realizes he "sold his happiness for money; he had bartered all his tardy romance for some miserable bank-notes" (181). Old Grannis has linked his shared time with Miss Baker to his time spent using his invention. Without the machine he believes he has lost the right to court Miss Baker.

Norris' resolution of Old Grannis' sense of loss has more than a touch of irony. Miss Baker's tea time ritual and Old Grannis's binding activity both united and separated them. His selling as merchandise the activity that holds them together shows how money can potentially separate people. Miss Baker, however, overcomes the traditional, sentimentalized female expectations of ladylike behavior and goes to Grannis' room to discover why he has changed his longstanding pattern of behavior. Norris describes their resulting union as "far from the world and together they

entered upon the long retarded romance of their commonplace and uneventful lives" (185). Romance has entered this novel of naturalism. However, the romance is sentimental and unfruitful because the couple is old and no longer productive, either artistically or sexually. Old Grannis's invention, if Norris had accepted the idealism of the fair, would have represented an optimistic future of growth, not a dead end. The suggestion that romance will cure and uplift people fails as does the prevalent belief that exposure to art and culture will make poverty and overwork palatable to the underprivileged and uneducated. Both beliefs will disintegrate under the pressure of reality and finite time. Norris shows in McTeague that the efforts by fair planners at Chicago to cover the labor problems and unemployment with trips to the fair and scientific approaches to society's problems do not solve the problems of individual loss of place and identity.

Grannis has lost his invention to progress. He has money but no creative outlet, nothing to do. He gains his love, Miss Baker, but their future will be brief because time is against them. The romance of Old Grannis and Miss Baker is based on traditional past beliefs in an unchanging ideal of home and family united by the softer emotions of love and family. Their union is out of date and doomed to die away quickly because of old age. This union holds no promise of the continuity inherent in young marriages with

the hope of children to carry forward the traditions of the past. For example, when Silas and Persis, in Howells' The Rise of Silas Lapham move to the family farm in Vermont, they return to a place of security and shared beliefs. Their children carry with them these same values, and a spirit of optimism rooted in family unity and shared morality becomes part of an idealized belief that home and family provide a foundation for the future. This promise does not exist in McTeague because there is no hint of a future for the only couple in this novel who share traditional, home-based moral values. Neither McTeague nor Trina has a stable family background and their financial troubles increase their isolation.

A contemporary topic discussed at the Congress of Authors at the Chicago World's Fair focused on literature and national identity as a part of the conflict between Romanticism and Realism as literary movements. One major issue was the necessity of incorporating American tradition into literature. One argument relied on the idea "that the high authority of the past be cherished and recaptured in order to give America a model for developing the necessary forms for a cultural society" (Badger 99). Norris' response to this call for a romanticized past lies in the sentimental love affair of the old couple, Miss Baker and Old Grannis. Their romance is tame and lacks the sense of epic struggle that Norris believed essential to literature. He turned

away from the facade of idealism as presented by the Chicago World's Fair and wrote about the dark side of life.

McTeague's struggle to retain his sense of place and his identity does fit Norris' sense of appropriate literary subjects.

McTeague's loss of identity because he loses his vocational identity differs from that of Trina and Old Grannis. His disenfranchisement is not the result of industrial or technological progress but of urban development and municipal control. McTeague began his training in the traditional manner as an apprentice to a master practitioner, albeit an untrained charlatan. His mother's sending him from their mining town home is an act intended to release him from a life of danger and brutality. Instead of providing him with a sense of identity and security, his family must send him away to insure his survival. The dental practice on Polk Street is McTeague's security from mind-numbing labor. His "Dental Parlor" combines his work place and his home. There he can relax and enjoy his pleasures: "to eat, to smoke, to sleep, and to play upon his concertina" (1). The furnishings of his establishment are a mixture of dentistry books, an operating chair, "his dental engine, and his movable rack" that holds his instruments (2). Although Norris describes McTeague as massive, blond, and powerfully strong, the dentist also has the manual dexterity to make his own "'mats' from his tape

of non-cohesive gold," "blocks by folding the tape," and "cylinders for commencing fillings" (10). His methodical and careful weekly preparations for his patients parallels Trina's craftsmanship with the wood arks and animals. McTeague, however, also has hands so large and strong that he can forego instruments and pull teeth by brute strength alone.

His personal furnishings reside side by side with his vocational needs. A canary in a gilt cage, a stone pug dog, his bed, and his picture of the court of Lorenzo de' Medici, purchased because of the large number of figures in it for the money, satisfy his aesthetic needs.² When McTeague can no longer practice dentistry, he must try to survive but finds his only skill is his strength, which he cannot market because he wants only to return to his "profession." He, as much as Trina, is lost in the city he thought he knew and understood. He has no preparation for change, and after reverting to mindless brutality, tries to return to the mining camps, the only other place he feels he understands and the only other place he believes might return to him a sense of home and place necessary to regain his identity and some respect.

McTeague is also the victim of progress. As cities grew and developed and as education came to play a more important role in determining place and status in society, certain professions required licensing and educational

level. Once his background is reported to city officials, McTeague must cease to practice his craft or profession. For McTeague, dentistry is more a craft of strength than of medical knowledge. He is displaced because he has not kept up with professional standards. What was acceptable in the rough and isolated mining camps is no longer acceptable in the growing civilization of metropolitan San Francisco. McTeague is a victim of urban progress that can impose control on the environment and citizens without regard to the consequences of this imposition.

The dentist McTeague has always found security in his vocation because it is a part of his identity. Although he has no education and no professional training, he wears the title of doctor and has his roster of patients who reinforce this identity. His self awareness is inextricably tied to his professional title, dental parlors, and the gold tooth that advertises his professional status. He loses all three through the economic disaster created by governmental regulations and the greed and jealousy of Marcus Schouler. Throughout the balance of the novel, McTeague tries to regain control of his wife, his home, and his life. He fails because he does not understand the complexity of changes or the complexity of human action and reaction, even his own.

Because McTeague has never had a firm family tradition, the nomadic life of his past has taught him to seek

stability. His dental practice and his personal home have provided this. Marriage to Trina promised even more security, although he had to move out of his dental parlor, which was an integral part of his identity, into an apartment. Norris suggests early in the novel that McTeague will not change willingly. McTeague does not feel comfortable in any setting except the familiar dental parlor. At the wedding he is "dizzied and made uneasy" by the commotion (87). When he tries to buy tickets for the variety show, he is easily confused by questions and lashes out angrily. McTeague responds with uncertainty, confusion, and anger when faced with new experiences or changes in his life. His feelings about Trina vacillate between desire to possess her and rejection of her when she succumbs to his masculine strength. He pursues her but no longer wants her when he can possess her.

As Trina forces him to search for work or forces him to move into increasingly cheaper, smaller, and dingier rooms, McTeague loses what little foundation of hearth and home he has come to know. He responds by drinking more and using his strength to wrest from Trina whatever symbols of stability he can find. He attacks her fingers, for they are the source of her financial control, and finally he kills her and steals her money. McTeague can find no place of his own to serve as an anchor to his identity. Marriage separates him from the security of his dental parlor;

mobility separates him from his family; and mobility and money are Trina's methods of controlling him. McTeague can only respond to his loss of place, identity, and control with violence and then the mobility of flight. This frustration, anger, and isolation lies beneath the surface of the orderly control shown at the Chicago World's Fair as desirable and attainable.

In this novel, gold, or the wealth it represents, holds some of the same promises for its characters as the fairs held for nineteenth-century Americans. The fairs reinforced the idea that America had truly achieved independence from European influences and had matured as a nation. American technology had won awards consistently in every world's fair since 1851 in London. The nation's inventions and designs incorporated into industry and daily life far out-paced most European countries. American had lagged behind in art and architecture, but the White City was a showplace of unity of style and mastery of landscape design and manipulation. Chicago, a short distance from the World's Columbian Exposition, had rebuilt itself, showing a sure understanding of future architectural development in its skyscrapers. America's fairs of 1876 and 1893 exhibited the nation's expansion across the continent and the incorporation of civilization into the wilderness. The underlying problems of social divisions, gender disparity, and racial and ethnic biases had seemed satisfactorily resolved through acceptance

of scientific theories about evolution and through the appropriate training of the classes destined for service or labor. Further development of transportation and communication as well as the harnessing of nature's power meant that any person who did not find success on one coast could move to another and, there, fulfill his or her dream. The western frontier offered a chance for success to immigrants who came to America. All these panaceas proved, ultimately, to be mere facades. Americans still had not reached their idealized vision of society. The failure of each promise held out by the fairs further unsettled society and individuals. Each financial panic in the latter part of the century created uneasiness. The stability promised at the fairs proved a chimera that kept the population moving and uncertain. Individuals felt increasingly that they no longer controlled their environment.

In California, the setting of McTeague, gold was the initial lure to its rapid settlement. Gold strikes at mid-century brought Americans to this new promised land. When people arrived, however, the promise disintegrated, and many hopeful miners worked the mines owned by others or moved on seeking their future. They discovered the mining camps were as oppressive and brutal as the factory towns they left behind. Dreams of gold and Western promises dissolved into harsh reality, and populations continued to move and to search for stability. To a certain extent, the greed

exhibited in this novel mirrors the prevalent attitudes of Californians. Louis B. Wright describes the effect of the rapid transition in California from camp to community to city:

The economic opportunities of California brought immense wealth to men who had little concern for anything else. Their wealth brought power, and with power came pride of purse and an arrogance characteristic of the parvenu. (164)

This arrogance transforms to greed and murder in McTeague as the characters descend to savagery to steal and retain the evidence of power, gold.

The promise that progress would enable Americans to control nature was false. The belief that education and exposure to the fairs' art and architecture would edify and unify Americans was false. Cities did not bring wealth to everyone. The belief that America was a classless society was still widely held in 1876 but accepted as a facade in 1893. When all the dreams were unfulfilled, Americans, feeling lost, looked toward the Western plains and mountains and coasts. There, the vision of the future was gold taken from nature, and the Americans following that vision found nomadic lives following the mines or settled in cities quickly becoming images of Eastern urban areas. Western settlement often held a promise of individual success in a place where freedom and ultimate civilization offered a home

to the restless and those uprooted from the Eastern cities and exhausted farms.

Populations moved west, searched for gold or success, and found that the cities caught up with them. As McTeague discovered, the somewhat loose structure of Western communities that allowed him to train with a charlatan and practice without an education or a license soon replaced by municipalities governed by civilization's laws. The theme of displacement of individuals and segments of American society appeared at the fair as necessary, or at least as an adjunct, to progress. The statues of The Cowboy and The Indian placed in front of the Mines and Mining Building illustrate the relationship of progress to necessary change. Both subjects were forerunners and then victims of Western settlement.³ Methods of technological extraction and processing of ores destroyed the land that nurtured and supported the lifestyle of owners and miners. Regarding nature and the landscape as usable then disposable land seemed to lead, inevitably, to the concept of disposable people.

The massive golden door that surrounded the entrance of the Transportation Building stood as a symbol of two important characteristics of the American West. Rail transportation opened the continent from east to west and placed the frontier within reach of those already Americans and immigrants who desired citizenship. Discovery of gold

and promises of free land enticed this mobile population westward.⁴ The number of new millionaires who had made their fortunes through transportation, directly or indirectly, implicitly promised that the mobility they had created offered a path to financial security. Gold discovered in Colorado and California compounded the allure of the West. By looking at the country's past success, Americans had associated "physical mobility . . . with popular liberty and freedom," and transportation, to the American public "was the means by which the American dream could be realized" (Badger 117). It had to seem to nineteenth-century Americans that a mobile society would become rich and that improved transportation made financial success more readily accessible. Railroads transported people to the West, and streetcars offered the ease of inner-city travel. Streetcars also allowed faster travel within the cities and took workers outside the cities to live if they could afford a country home. If not, city dwellers had easy access to parks and entertainment areas. This urban travel, of course, demanded schedules and those people who used the transportation system had to adjust to the streetcar or train schedules. Therefore, transportation brought restriction, not freedom.

In the novel McTeague, Frank Norris offers readers a perspective on nineteenth-century American life that the world's fairs tried to deny. The adverse effects of

celebrating only the positive image of national growth and industrial progress are very clear in this naturalistic novel. Americans believed they had controlled nature but ignored the fact that people are part of the natural world. The drive to emulate the success of the industrialists and financiers held the false promise that money was a universally attainable goal and that achieving that goal would bring security in the changing world.

The mining camps of California, with which Norris was familiar, followed rapid patterns of birth, growth, and death based on the productivity of the gold mine. Miners from the Northeast did not expect to settle and build communities. For them, the trek to California to search for gold was much like the whaling trips that fed the economy in an earlier time. Hine describes the mining community:

Men would descend on a new strike, and in a few days it would be dug out. . . . The land, the creek, the folding hills came to be "a battlefield where primal forces and giant passions have wrestled." (73)

The land gave up its gold and the miners moved on because "a sense of place requires some hope of permanence, . . . the early miners thought of themselves as Bedouins tramping far from civilization or as sojourners on a strange planet" (Hine 73). Norris recreates this shifting, gold-hungry population and draws from it his character McTeague. Gold,

which had initiated much of the westward movement, holds a promise of security for many characters in McTeague when traditional sources fail. As life's reality overcomes each character, gold or money becomes the only security. The isolation and lostness lead McTeague, Trina, Maria, and Zerkow to focus on possessing wealth regardless of the means or the consequences.

As a boy, McTeague knew the brutality and impermanence of the mining camp. Gold was the target of a hard and hopeless life. McTeague's mother wanted only for her son to escape.⁵ For some who lived in the mining camps, gold did not draw them; it repelled them. McTeague never evinces any desire for gold as a commodity. Advertising with a gold tooth outside his dental parlor offers him more status and personal identity than the amassing of wealth. Gold, then, for McTeague is a useful tool in his dental practice. His profession has allowed him to leave the mines, the source of gold. He only returns to this home of his past when he loses his professional identity and descends to killing Trina to take her money. Like the gold advertising tooth that the McTeagues eventually use as a table in their dingy room, the gold in the ground and taken from Trina are still meaningless. They serve him as symbols of identity and control. He searches for a place and the re-instatement of personal identity by returning to his rootless and insecure past. Norris' physical description of McTeague's death

creates a barren setting, reinforcing McTeague's ultimate isolation preceding his death. He dies with his gold, his enemy, and his canary in its gilt cage. The barren landscape piled with rocks and sparse vegetation seems startlingly like the devastation of Jackson Park after the closing of the Chicago World's Fair.

Although several groups had promoted the preservation of the buildings of the White City, lack of finances and interest caused too much time to elapse to save the city for posterity. Weather and transients who camped in the ruins completed the destruction of the idealized urban landscape. Like McTeague's desert burial ground, Jackson Park soon looked barren and lifeless. The dream deteriorated and the land finally returned to as much of a natural landscape as possible after Americans had used the land and then let it revert to its natural state with no regenerative efforts. Norris' characters, like the landscape, have been the victims of progress with no source for renewal. They have no homes, no money, no craftsmanship, and no control over their lives because of outside influences.

Trina McTeague only slowly begins to rely on gold and coins as her source of security. Prudently, she gives her uncle her \$5,000 lottery winnings to earn interest. McTeague's dental practice and her woodcarving provide enough income to satisfy their needs and furnish their apartment. When McTeague can no longer function as a

dentist and loses his income, Trina begins to hoard coins and to lie to her husband. The traditional family in which the husband served as provider loses its foundation and Trina turns even more to coin as her security. She substitutes the assured possession of gold and coins for the kitchen she had lost. Trina's miserly qualities are rooted in her sudden winnings and her nomadic family. She could not chance losing her fortune; therefore, she "hoarded instinctively, without knowing why" (107). The coins she hides so carefully become her surety that if she never has any more good luck she can have something to "polish," "heap lovingly," and plunge her fingers into "with little murmurs of affection" (173). Her wealth has no exchange value, and she refuses to recirculate it even to her husband. The money he does not earn and the money she hoards becomes her only security and the measure she uses to control McTeague. By belittling his contributions to the family and lying to him and forcing him to live as cheaply as she chooses, she creates a division between them, effectively isolating them both. What remains is a struggle to own the coin, as if the holders of the coins will have security and control. This need to achieve control in their changing world by hoarding, using physical violence, and stealing is the negative aspect of the love of control exhibited by Victorian Americans in the layout of the exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair.

Trina finds her identity in her home and her pride in their new house. As the marriage crumbles and the couple must move to increasingly smaller apartments and rooms, Trina's identity becomes more dependent on her gold pieces. They provide security and even a degree of power to control her constantly shifting world. By denying money to McTeague and hoarding every penny gained through lying to him or confusing him, she exerts control over him as the money controls her. Trina transfers her pride in housekeeping to polishing her coins. Her person grows more slovenly as her money shines more brightly. She transfers to an inanimate metal the attention she cannot give to herself, much less to another human being, her husband.

The belief that money will supply identity is as nebulous and insubstantial as the myths presented at the fair. Belief that America had nearly attained the promise as symbolized by the White City had the ability to blind the populace to the reality of American life. Norris shows in McTeague the fallacy of believing a myth so long that the myth seems fact and skews reality. Norris uses the gold plate described by the scavenger maid Maria Macapa to emphasize this fallacy. Maria Macapa's story about a gold dinner service once owned by her family becomes a myth that the Polk Street residents accept, although they also freely acknowledge that she is not "regularly crazy" but a little bit strange in her conversation (12). The only person who

believes her story is Zerkow, the Polish-Jew junk dealer. Overwhelming avarice soon dominates every moment of his life and ultimately demands that he manipulate Maria into marriage in order to possess this legendary gold by possessing Maria herself. For Zerkow, the myth of gold becomes his reality, his focus in life.

Maria, after marrying Zerkow, bears a child who soon dies. When she regains her health, Maria no longer has any memory of the family gold plate. Zerkow, who has come to believe completely in her story when she is "crazy," now does not believe her denials. His avaricious dream turns into a mania that degenerates into the brutal murder of his wife and into his own suicide. His dream turns into a nightmare when he loses his chance to fulfill his greedy desires. Zerkow needs the dream of the gold plate to give his life purpose, even if that purpose is avarice. Because the dream is so essential to him, he cannot accept the truth from Maria after her sanity returns. He becomes so enmeshed in the reality of the gold in his mind that he creates an entire myth that the story of the gold is not a story from the past but is of the present and being denied to him. Through Zerkow's pursuit of the dream when faced with the reality, Norris can illustrate the devastation brought to an individual, or even a society, who believes in the ideal so strongly that the undercurrents of dark reality are obscured. Eventually, Norris suggests, the results of such

blindness can destroy. Zerkow's murderous and suicidal response to his loss of the mythical gold plate, McTeague's loss of his livelihood and his gold sign, and Trina's loss of her coins reveal the violent reaction that sudden change can elicit. Norris describes the undercurrents of an unstable society that looks to the vision of Utopia yet never achieves it. The allure of the golden door on the Transportation Building that promised a future to the mobile, poor Americans failed to function in the Polk Street, San Francisco, world of the McTeagues and their neighbors.

Norris' novels "reflect a new sense of excitement about American society" that connects "to the expansion of American power" at the historical moment when the nation believed it had achieved its destiny (Millgate 53). America had conquered its continent and had begun to look beyond its borders to a worldwide market. Rapid growth, however, can create a blind spot to the tensions created by change. Norris brings these tensions to the surface with this naturalistic view of life and society.

Norris would have argued with the ideas presented at the World Congresses on education and literature. The Department of Education presented one of the most deeply controversial topics of these meetings. The issue of specialized higher education versus a broad-based liberal arts curriculum was hotly debated. Another growing concern

was the place of "industrial, technological, and business education" important for training the populace to "live in the 'real' world" (Burg). Concerned educators feared a hierarchy of specialists and an ill-trained population that would impede America's pursuit of dominance of international markets. Norris believed that living life offered more to the populace than structured, narrow training that formed and limited individual choices and talents. His philosophy about the source of literature includes this avoidance of structure because it is too confining. For example, in 1896, he wrote "The best way to study literature is to try to produce literature. It is the original work that counts, not the everlasting compiling of facts, not the tabulation of metaphors, nor the rehashing of textbooks and encyclopedia articles" (Morgan 108). From this belief in life and its experiences on a grand, even dark, scale as the source of literature came part of Norris' ideas about naturalism as a reaction to the refinement of the realism of writers such as Howells. Norris believed Naturalism "meant placing life above literature" and expressing "man's victimization by instinctual processes and the universal energies which suggest a life force at work, indifferently using and abusing man" (Ruland and Bradbury 230). Release of these processes and energies can result from loss of individual and social control, the product of rapid change. External attempts to harness energy and use landscape do not

transfer to human beings without stripping away the civilization purportedly achieved through Victorian America's determination to impose order. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 promised a future of unity and order; Norris' novel McTeague exposed the effects of these promises on individuals. His characters, confused by the rapidity of change and isolated because they lack a traditional source of family values, cannot redeem the promises of the fair. They respond with the greed and violence that stem from lack of place and lack of identity. For them, the White City has no meaning because they are the victims of the spurious "staff" that can create an insubstantial illusion of stability.⁷ Although America had settled its frontiers and established cities on both coasts, such progress was costly to individuals who could not share in the idealized visions presented at the fairs.

Notes

¹ Samantha had already been an amazed visitor at the Philadelphia Centennial celebration in 1876.

² Within the Art Palace at Chicago was an immense display of the world's artistic offerings. Allotted wall spaces were literally smothered with paintings of varying quality. The exhibitors seemed determined to create displays based on quantity not quality. One of the popular American works, The Flagellants, was a massive canvas noted primarily for its two hundred figures. Norris assigns to McTeague the American tendency to believe "bigger is better" in art.

³ The abundance of statuary amazed and dwarfed the fair visitors. As art, the statues were of dubious quality but their numbers awed their audience. Jaguars, bears, bulls, moose, buffalo, and elk littered the white city. The wildlife frozen as man-made giants offered the perception that nature was controllable and created for man's delight.

⁴ The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, published in 1908, traces the westward movement of the center of population of the United States as moving west 519 miles between the years of 1790 and 1890. Between 1860 and 1900 the center moved west a total of 243 miles, showing the increased settlement following the end of the Civil War to

the end of the century. The same publication shows that between 1890 and 1900 the largest percentage of urban growth, 41.9%, occurred in the western division (633).

⁵ Another popular piece of art at the Chicago World's Fair was Breaking Ties, which appealed to the sentimental idea of home and family and expressed the sadness of a son leaving home. Its sentimental theme reinforced the ideal of the rural family and the home values created and sustained by traditionally close-knit families.

⁶ Staff was the plaster of Paris substance that was applied as an easily decorated surface to the buildings of the White City at the Chicago World's Fair.

Chapter VII

1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition:

Elegy for a Dream

When President Woodrow Wilson sent a wireless signal to San Francisco on February 20, 1915, he opened the Panama-Pacific Exposition from his White House desk. This long distance opening of a World's Fair was a significant change from the openings of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia. Although President Grant and President Cleveland personally attended the openings of the earlier fairs, technology in 1915 allowed almost instantaneous communication from the east coast to the west coast. As the reason for the 1915 exposition, the completion of the Panama Canal signaled the closer proximity of the two coasts by sea travel. The Canal would allow increased shipping by permitting shorter sea journeys. The feat of crossing the Isthmus signaled not only America's control of her nearby seas but also the nation's supremacy in engineering and construction. Opening of the Panama Canal symbolically united America even more than had the railroads because the shorter distance and the decreased time factor facilitated travel and transportation of goods to market. America's movement westward, begun as early as the first settlements,

was complete. The nation had conquered its continental frontiers and now had conquered the sea routes. The Panama-Pacific Exposition celebrated America's ultimate control over the environment and exalted the achievements of a society. The Exposition did not, however, celebrate the achievement of social equality or the realization of an idealized future as promised at earlier fairs. World's fairs of Victorian America stimulated trade, influenced architectural styles, proclaimed education the uplifting force of society, created amusement areas for fun and knowledge, and reflected a nation's hopes for the future. In 1915, many of the same elements appeared at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, but the overall mood seemed more elegiac than celebratory.

Two events shadowed the planning, development, and opening of the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. World War I began in Europe, and San Francisco urgently needed urban re-development following the 1906 disasters: earthquake and fire. Ultimately, the needed finances to rebuild the city created a sense of urgency that led San Franciscans to ignore increasing hostilities in Europe in favor of the city's need. Planners even turned the outbreak of war in Europe to their advantage by encouraging travelers to come to California for the vacation now denied them by war in Europe.

San Francisco proposed the Panama-Pacific International Exposition to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. Although not formally dedicated until July 1920, the Canal officially opened in August 1914.¹ By celebrating this contemporary event, the fair organizers broke with the tradition of using historical anniversaries as the central theme of the fair. However, the fair planners knew that the city of San Francisco needed rebuilding after the fire and earthquake because the renewal of the city would build confidence in the city's future. As a result of the need for rebuilding and renewal, planners were much more open about the financial rewards of hosting an international exposition, a world's fair. Dobkin cites a reporter as saying in 1915: "It was not a mere case of sentiment. We needed it [the fair] in our business . . . the plain fact remained that the old town was nearly broke" (78). After contacting the cities that had hosted previous fairs, San Francisco planners, mostly businessmen, industrialists, and railroad magnates, pushed to bring a money-generating fair to their city. These planners intended that the fair bring federal aid money and tourist money to San Francisco. The advertising campaign under the auspices of the publicity department, called the Office of Exploitation, heavily promoted California as the place for Americans and new immigrants to settle. More important, the fair planners wooed the nation's businesses to encourage the establishment

of headquarters or branch offices in the San Francisco area. This organized publicity drive acknowledged that hosting a world's fair benefitted the local metropolitan area as much as or more than the region or the country as a whole. San Francisco planners hoped to "increase the value of real estate holdings, augment population, open markets in Latin America, and attract commercial traffic via the Panama Canal" (Dobkin 79). Railroad owners, who might not have been expected to celebrate the opening of a canal that would cut into their profits, supported the advertising program to encourage fair visitors. Printing and giving away souvenir postcards, the railroad companies hoped that fair visitors would take advantage of reduced rates to come to San Francisco. Their campaign was not motivated solely by civic pride or altruism. They hoped that bargain prices would encourage visitors to ride the railroads to California, visit the Panama-Pacific Exposition, and remain as settlers. These new residents would, of course, become customers of the Western railroads.

Promotion of the Victorian era fairs was, usually, subordinate to the overt educational aims. Although businessmen served as organizers and underwriters, product advertising still had not achieved legitimacy in the marketplace or society. By 1915, however, fairs were recognized as boons to local economy, and San Francisco planners worked amicably with movie studios to develop and

distribute "newsreel footage of the exposition in hundreds of movie theaters around the nation" (Rydell World of Fairs 26). San Francisco fair promoters had discovered the value of film as a means to enhance exhibits. Topics of films that appeared in the seventy-seven theaters "bombed fair goers with films on topics ranging from immigration to city planning to state politics" (Rydell All the World's 231). This incorporation of a relatively new art form in the entertainment field shows how new technology found its place representing contemporary, social issues. While some film makers did create films about the fair, the movies at the fair foreshadowed the declining popularity of the fairs as reflections of society. Film would become the new visual representation of American society and culture.² Americans had already discovered the entertainment value of film, and now fair developers discovered their advertising value. Through this new medium, the values once represented at Victorian era world's fair now appeared in communities at the local movie theater. Films moved from an advertising form to an art form that represented the nation's beliefs and dreams. The Panama-Pacific Exposition continued the American world's fair tradition of introducing new industrial and manufacturing elements into American society while reflecting contemporary attitudes and concerns.

Increased acceptance of the value of advertising and promotion was not the only way San Francisco fair developers

subordinated idealism to profit. One of the buildings planned for the fair, but not built, was the Peace Palace, which was supposed to complement the Palace of Fine Arts; however, the plans never reached fruition. Instead, organizers used the site to build the Inside Inn. Revenue generation crowded out the idea of peace. Perhaps to the developers at San Francisco, peace seemed so much less attainable at this point in current events that organizers elected to generate needed revenue. The two-fold concerns then--renewal of the urban area and increased revenue for the city and its leading industrialists--united to form a common purpose, to make a success of the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915.

As the fair board began to focus on the planning and design of the fair, they turned to the past fairs for inspiration and for successful techniques. They conferred with Daniel Burnham, architect of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Burnham's original plan for the celebration would have included urban renewal of a city devastated nine years before. The planners and Burnham hoped to "instill San Franciscans with civic pride and create an environment conducive to social and political harmony" (Dobkin 68). The original plan failed to receive the support of the industrial and railroad magnates who saw no place for an urban transportation system or for commercial development. Implementation of an ideal city

like the White City of Chicago fell prey to industrial interests. Dreams of urban renewal met financial and industrial power and lost. Only by planning temporary construction could the organizers achieve acceptance. As long as the ideal urban plan would disappear and allow the city to return to its former chaotic development pattern that benefitted the transportation and real estate magnates, planners allowed innovations that did not threaten commercial growth.

The grounds of America's past fairs were re-shaped and created specifically for the exhibitions. Within the walls surrounding the fairgrounds were idealized cities built to advertise the nation's progress and to create interest in manufactured goods. These fairs depicted a world of peace and plenty. Man-made artificial societies controlled production of goods, flow of visitors, and nature. According to Benedict, "At World's Fairs man is totally in control and synthetic nature is preferred to the real thing" (5). Although San Francisco fair organizers looked to past world's fairs for inspiration and incorporated certain traditions, they also introduced four innovative ideas that utilized coordinated planning to make this world's fair more than a mere copy of previous celebrations. The four areas were the use of a court plan, indirect lighting, color variety, and instant age.³

Like nearly all fairs preceding this one, the Panama-Pacific Exposition was a walled city separate from the host city. However, the San Francisco organizers approved a different site plan within the grounds that did not focus on a single design for all the buildings. Instead, the architects designed three major courts and five minor courts in a compact plan that greatly decreased walking distances for visitors and protected these visitors from the winds blowing from the bay. (Fig. 25,26) Designers then focused on the exteriors, and engineers produced the large industrial sheds that held the exhibits. This resulted in a design that openly joined the functional interior with the artistic exterior. There were no attempts to decorate the inside artistically but merely to provide functional space for exhibits. Utility and fantasy joined in these designs.

To further promote the fantasy of the fair, San Francisco designers used extensive electric lighting throughout the fairgrounds. Lighting, however, involved much more than stringing electric bulbs around the outside of the building as the Chicago builders had done in 1893. In San Francisco, searchlights swept the sky at night, while lights on tall masts throughout the site bathed the walls with soft light, creating reflections in the pools within the courtyards. The softness of the lighting combined with the usually foggy evenings increased the perception of a fantasy world. Underwater lights color-keyed to individual

courts created stunning and innovative visual effects. The most notable lighting effects came from the Tower of Jewels, which was "hung with over 102,000 'Novagems,' large faceted and colored glass 'jewels' backed with mirrors and hung by wires to gyrate and flash with every breeze" (Brechin 99). As striking and dazzling as this vision was by sunlight, by night the Tower of Jewels was even more impressive. (Fig. 27,28) Red lights within the tower and smoke blowing from the various levels recreated, visually, the destructive 1906 fire. This nightly re-burning of the city reminded visitors of the conflagration and the city's ability to rebuild and renew itself. In addition, this man-made fiery tower reaffirmed man's control over the environment and natural forces. The repetition of the nocturnal conflagration and the renewal of daylight beauty must have seemed optimistic during a time when war in Europe was part of the daily news.

The Tower of Jewels was not the only source of color used at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Instead of the stark or glowing white that had become a tradition at American fairs and expositions since 1893, San Francisco planners opted for colors coordinated by Jules Guerin. Guerin harmonized "flowerbeds with adjacent walls, designed uniforms and banners, and even had the sugary Monterey sand on the footpaths roasted to a rich cinnamon brown" (Brechin 100). Dominant colors included the shades of gold that

symbolized the promises of California: gold, wheat, oranges, and poppies. The color design was a massive watercolor spread upon the city and reflecting the surrounding landscape. More than any other fair, the Panama-Pacific Exposition coordinated and united the host city and its area with the site of the fair itself. Although The Panama-Pacific International Exposition was designated as a world's fair, the design and color scheme at San Francisco seemed more integral to the region and more closely allied with America's interests than global interests. This outlook foreshadows the isolationist tendencies prevalent during World War I.

As had the planners of many fairs prior to 1915, the planners of this one turned to ancient foreign countries for inspiration. To enhance this connection to past architectural designs, the builders created an aura of instant age. They elected to use a substance called artificial travertine to cover the buildings. Instead of displaying stark white surfaces, the buildings were made to look like ancient marble through the use of this substance. Artificial travertine resembled marble but cost much less to use. By imitating the marble surfaces of ancient Mediterranean cities, planners did create a fair much more united to the earth itself by color and composition. Organizers had tried for a unified design like that of the Chicago fair and they did retain the beaux-arts style, but

instead of one color, pastels such as pinks and greens dominated the site.⁴ The fair did not dazzle with unified whiteness; it offered eclectic and exotic surroundings.

The eleven major categories of the Panama-Pacific Exposition placed art in first place, followed by education. Social economy showed American interest in improvement of life, reduction of use of drugs and tobacco, labor, all with an emphasis on "social uplift and the creation of an ideal society" (Benedict 34). Even with this laudable goal of social improvement, the exhibits reveal the contemporary problems in 1915. For example, the military displays were grouped in the transportation department showing the mobile ability of America's armies. Even without the war news from Europe, the potential for imperialistic expansion was never far from the consciousness of fair visitors and the country.

The organization and layout of the world's fairs were often adapted to changing interests and national pride. As commercial and industrial influence grew more powerful, the exhibition hall that had housed inventions and industrial displays declined in popularity. Instead, commercial pavilions appeared to house the exhibits of large companies. As amusement areas began to generate larger revenues, fair planners expanded these areas of the grounds. The orderly landscape mirrored "the growth of both nationalism and multinational corporations" and the expansion of the entertainment industry in the United States (Benedict 19).

Not just military mobility was showcased at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Railroads erected separate company pavilions outside the main transportation building. Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Great Northern, Santa Fe, and Canadian Pacific railroad pavilions showed the financial strength of these companies. Transportation, especially railroads, and mobility were still important to Americans, particularly those in the Western states. The establishment of separate company buildings at American fairs developed because private enterprise, not governments, financed the fairs. Also, American fair sites were larger and covered more territory because of the available space. Americans expected larger fairs because they still accepted the concept of "bigger is better" as part of the national identity. Other countries did not have the space to establish and maintain separate company pavilions on the same scale.⁵ America had come to dominate the world's fairs through its ability to finance privately the large exhibit halls. No longer did the country have to feel like a provincial cousin to the other nations.

By the time the Panama-Pacific Exposition opened, the entertainment section of the grounds was already an accepted portion of any national or international fair. At San Francisco this section was called the Joy Zone, was operated under the direction of showmen, and no longer was considered a part of the educational departments. (Fig. 29) The

scientific value was limited or so focused on the bizarre and the unusual that the Joy Zone, contrary to previous fairs, was, in reality, incorporated into the overall plan strictly as amusement. The villages or exhibits of unusual cultures had evolved into commercial ventures where fair visitors could view the supposed natural habitations of exotic foreigners, dine on their unusual food, and purchase hand-made native goods. These exhibits of uncivilized or half-civilized tribes still maintained a distance between the fair goers and the native populations on display. Visitors to the fair, like those to the past fairs retained their avid interest in the bizarre and the unusual. In 1915, however, no true attempt existed to suggest that these tribes were on their way to civilization. Their countries were seen, instead, as sources of cheap labor for overseas industries or as sources of raw materials now transportable to the industrialized nations.

Machinery and technology was also an important aspect of the Joy Zone as they were the source of the rides that now spread throughout the amusement section of the fair. Visitors, for a fee, could ride any number of mechanical devices that bounced them and spun them at the fair. In addition, mechanical devices recreated historic and catastrophic events. Machines no longer inspired awe as they had at Philadelphia. They no longer represented future development; now they entertained. Interested visitors to

San Francisco could see, in miniature, the Grand Canyon, Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park, and Glacier National Park. Also, fair goers could, with the aid of "an automated system of phonographs and telephones," listen to an explanation of the Panama Canal's operation as they rode a conveyer belt around a model of America's engineering feat (Schlereth 297). The Joy Zone delighted visitors and increased the profits of the fair. The popularity of the amusement area balanced the heavy seriousness of the art that appeared in the main fair area.

Not all of the fair was devoted to light shows and entertainment. In fact, this fair probably included the heaviest concentration of symbolic art of any fair. The official poster that advertised the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco was titled "The Thirteenth Labor of Hercules." (Fig. 30) This poster shows the legendary hero pushing aside the land and opening the cliffs so the Panama Canal can unite the east and west seaways. In the distance beneath the man's figure, the towers of the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915 float dreamlike on the horizon. Hercules embodies the strength of the nation that had completed the formidable task of conquering the land through engineering, machines, and labor, thus providing sea access from coast to coast.

Much of the art and sculpture of the fair reinforced the idea of a strong nation that had conquered a continent

and parted an isthmus. Male figures dominated the artwork, symbolizing the strength and energy of America as an industrial power. As the nation moved westward, expanded its technology, and exploited nature and populations, America presented an almost belligerent stance. From the western coast, the nation looked speculatively beyond its borders to increased trade with the Pacific nations, possibly through economic and imperial muscle flexing. If necessary, the trade could come as a result of acquiring territorial possessions. Apparently, Americans had no reason to believe that their drive westward had to stop at the ocean. Represented by Hercules on the poster, brawn combined with American technology had opened the way where others had failed. The path to the East lay wide open to the American industries that had already crossed a continent.

Although the dominant image at the San Francisco fair was one of strength, some works of art undercut this relatively straightforward conquering stance. In fact, this fair supplied numerous guidebooks that explained the symbolic artwork to visitors. The highly allusive nature of the art suggested that strength alone did not define American society. However, so obscure were some of the artworks that the critics had trouble explaining their meanings. Even the guides, on hand to clarify meanings for

fair goers, often had trouble answering questions about the artistic displays.

Overall, the decorative arts on the fair buildings and grounds were so obscure that they evaded interpretation even, at times, by the artists themselves. Certain motifs did appear and suggest a pattern of meaning, intentional or not. The numerous figures that appeared with wings contributed to an elegiac tone at this fair. Major works representing energy, fame, the sun, Pegasus, creation, culture, and even machinery sprouted wings or showed the beginnings of wings. These wings seemed arbitrary decorations that Starr describes as having only a tenuous relationship to "aeronautical or spiritual elevations" (147). The often mystifying use of wings suggests uncertainty about America's soaring future during a time of social disparity and industrial and labor disputes.

The female figures adorning the Palace of Fine Arts are additional examples of the obscure symbolism that abound in San Francisco. Staring intently and blindly into boxes at their feet, these women seem either curious, pensive, or openly weeping. Architect Bernard Maybeck, who designed this building, referred to the sad tone of the entire design, but he never clearly expressed the source of the sadness. The combination of obscure artwork, ruin-like buildings, traditional government-style buildings, and the unusual color scheme gave this fair a vague quality not seen

at earlier fairs. San Francisco seized on a contemporary event for celebration but beyond that milestone seemed uncertain about what the Panama Canal meant or where America should look next for celebration. This tentative approach to design emphasizes that this fair mourned, subconsciously perhaps, a loss of American traditions. By only displaying, for example, artwork produced during the past ten years, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition had symbolically marooned itself with no clear connection to the past and no clear sense of a national future.

Visitors accepted the need for the guidebooks and the explanations and interpretations as if they, too, needed to assign meaning to everything in their world. Armstrong describes the fair as having "a strong undercurrent of anxiety" because of, perhaps, fears of being unable to compete in a global arena (142). The war in Europe increased this anxiety. Pride in America's industrial expansion and social progress seemed less sure in this newly uncertain global environment. When the fair organizers, designers, and artists had to explain their symbols, they were expressing their fears that the unity of the nation and control of the future may have been an unfulfilled dream. The symbolic representations no longer held clear meaning to the fair visitors. The sadness that permeated the building decorations may have arisen from a shared sense that the

optimism that had begun at Philadelphia and peaked at Chicago had unraveled at San Francisco.

As with the other fairs, discussions about preservation of the buildings occupied many architects and city leaders. Ultimately, as with other fairs, the grounds and buildings were razed.⁶ The destruction of the fair grounds and buildings seemed man's ultimate display of power and control over the environment in a world of bewildering change. Earthquakes and fires could destroy a city, but people could both build and tear down. Losses formerly experienced through natural, even cataclysmic, events could then become rationally controlled by society and individuals. Although Starr asserts this allowed Americans to feel a "pleasurable sadness rather than fear or horror," the sense of control must have felt both necessary and tenuous as the war in Europe escalated (161). Americans could, perhaps, emulate nature and control the results of certain forces by rebuilding; however, war is a brutality conceived and carried out by nations. Americans must have felt, at the end of the Victorian era, as if their much advertised and idealized world was crumbling around them. When the Panama-Pacific International Exposition ended, the closing address of Exposition President Charles Moore emphasized the elegiac nature of this World's Fair:

We have assembled here, we builders of the
Exposition, for the last rites before official

closing. . . .We are here to perform the final act of putting out the lights . . . that must now be dimmed. Friends, the Exposition is finished. The lights are going out. (Rydell All the World's 232)

The Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 was one of the last of the Victorian era fairs. The popularity of world's fairs waned after 1915 because the sense of control and the utopian dream they embodied proved insubstantial.

While several world's fairs occurred in America between 1876 and 1915, the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 highlighted changes in American society during the Victorian era.⁷ The geographic locations reflected the nation's growth from the east coast to the west coast. As these fair sites indicate, America was settling its frontiers and filling the land with railroads and cities during these years. Industrial progress enticed immigrants to America and fueled dreams of a better life for everyone. Machines promised an easier life, but factories and crowded cities helped to create class divisions and labor disputes. People believed the American dream, and a mobile society in search of that dream developed.

Displays of prosperity and plenty at the Victorian era fairs offered "visual evidence to the equation of abundance" (Rydell World of Fairs 18). Repeated patterns of these

material rewards of industrial progress through the celebration of world's fairs created tangible goals for all Americans. When financial panic and labor unrest continued to disturb this vision, Americans felt a sense of uneasiness about whether these outward signs of their national supremacy promised security and stability. As these changes occurred in America, the fairs tried to act as cohesive forces but often failed. Literature written during the same time revealed both the optimism and the pessimism of an evolving nation. Tracing the use of house imagery used by nineteenth-century authors shows how individuals tried to cling to traditional values of home and family but often found themselves isolated and unable to understand or cope with changes in American society.

At the Philadelphia Centennial, Americans celebrated their first century as an independent nation. Ten years after the end of the Civil War, the nation reunited in peace and confidently foresaw prosperity. The Corliss engine that so entranced visitors to the Centennial celebration symbolized the ability to control mechanical power for the benefit of industry and individuals. This fair had no unified architectural design because America had not yet defined itself artistically or architecturally and still believed in freedom of choice for individuals. Americans relied on Europe to define cultural tastes and had not yet separated from this idea.

Belying the idea of America as an egalitarian society was the beginnings of social divisions based on gender, wealth, and race. Women participated in the fund-raising efforts but had to build their own pavilion as a separate project. This building contained exhibits of women's work, usually work in the home. Fair organizers wanted to distance themselves from the Suffrage movement yet found women determined to participate in the fair's activities even if segregation was the only way.

Also independent from the organizer's planning was an amusement area at Philadelphia. Planners had no intention of developing an area devoted solely to pleasure. The Centennial Exposition was supposed to display industry and show the rising middle class the material goods and good available to them in an industrialized society. However, entrepreneurs haphazardly created a Centennial City devoted to amusement and frivolity. Here, fair visitors could find food and strong drink and other pleasures not found inside the boundaries of the fair. Officials sought to destroy the Centennial City but did not succeed. At this, the first true world's fair in America, planners were determined to display only the most positive aspects of American life, yet Americans visiting the fair or living in Philadelphia resisted control by fair planners.

America in 1876 was still basically a rural society intrigued by the prospect of an industrial future. Perhaps

unintentionally, the fair separated classes by opening only during the week, excluding workers from attendance. By the end of the fair, Americans believed in a rosy future aided by machines and technology. Transportation improvements promised increased mobility and increased accessibility of the West in spite of the continuing Indian wars. Americans also began to accept their own national identity as separate from European influences. American successes at other world's fairs and the success of the Centennial celebration promised a bright future even if a certain provincialism still governed American thought.

Seventeen years after the Centennial Exposition, America celebrated the anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the New World. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago showed that population centers, political strength, and economic power had shifted west. Both the architectural unity of the White City and the officially sanctioned Midway Plaisance revealed the Victorian need to control the environment and to classify the population. Cities had become meccas for the declining rural population, and the Western lands offered freedom and places to settle and start new lives away from the industrialized eastern urban landscape. Labor disputes became full-fledged violent confrontations, and industrial corporations attempted to control profits at the expense of working class citizens. At the Chicago World's Fair, women became full participants

from its inception. The Woman's Building showed the progress of women in all areas of American life; however, there was an acceptance that home life was changing in response to the industrialization of the nation. Mobility had become an important element of American life, and families and communities had lost the unity that had been part of America's, basically, rural past.

When the fair organizers classified nationalities and races into convenient scientific categories, Americans accepted that control of people was part of an orderly progression to civilization. Instead of a unified society, Americans saw an idealized city where not everyone lived because of certain exclusions based on race, economic status, national origin, and gender. Class divisions became an aspect of American society not necessarily accepted at Philadelphia. Americans believed change and progress were desirable and inevitable, regardless of the effect on the landscape or on individuals. With the example of the Midway Plaisance, America accepted that some elements of society needed uplifting exhibits to educate them and to improve their lives as contributing members of society. Entertainment offered as science settled the question of whether a world's fair should have an area devoted to amusement. Fairs, considered as uplifting and educational showplaces in 1876, now incorporated the less formal elements of American life. The Chicago World's Fair

presented a facade of unity to America and the world but carefully hid the tensions of potential conflict in a pseudo-scientific midway.

By 1915 when the Panama-Pacific International Exposition opened, America had settled the continent and now perceived before it access to the world from both coasts. The governing design of the fair was exotic, colorful, and self-conscious. Americans accepted mobility as a fact of life.⁸ Automobiles, planes, railroads, and advanced communication reinforced individual isolation. Metropolitan areas were now prevalent nationwide, and corporations had become national powers. Americans had conquered nature through engineering and labor. Women no longer had a separate exhibition, and their art and contributions were a part of the general exhibitions. As a result, however, women lost their influence in the decision-making process of planning the fair. Concerns that had developed following the display of women's progress as contributing members of society at Chicago led to fears that women would "lose their sense of domestic duty and further jeopardize the sanctity and security of the home" (Wright 39). At San Francisco, women's exhibits were incorporated into the general exhibits and no longer displayed gender identity within a society dominated by physical strength. After gaining control of natural resources, Americans looked beyond their borders for consumers and additional resources, both natural and human.

American authors writing during the time of the Victorian era World's Fairs described the effects of the progress so proudly displayed at the celebrations. They used houses as key images that reflected the identity and ownership of place sought by individuals in a rapidly changing society. Henry James' The Portrait of a Lady depicts Isabel Archer as journeying from house to house, beginning in America and ending in Europe. Manipulated by others, she must assert her independence and choose her own destiny. Her choice is limited to the traditional role of women as mothers and homemakers. She makes her choice freely. William Dean Howells' The Rise of Silas Lapham also presents a character who must realize his identity. Silas Lapham ultimately rejects European ideas and his social aspirations, returning to his rural home and traditional values. These characters indicate that, although American society looked to progress as its national goal, individuals could choose to retain independent moral choices. Novelists suggest they must, however, break free of the new economic, industrial forces that separate individuals from their homes or use the large, decorated Victorian houses as rewards for success.

Novelists Edith Wharton and Frank Norris present the negative effects of American life in The House of Mirth and McTeague. Written between the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the 1915 San Francisco World's Fair, these novels illustrate

how an uprooted, mobile society seeks identity through a need for place represented by houses. Wealth, class structure, and urban development overwhelmed individuals and isolated them from traditional sources of strength: home and family. Alone and lost, Lily Bart and McTeague become victims of progress and change. They have no home from which to choose their direction or purpose in life. Controlled by outside forces, they are alienated and isolated from the American society they sought to join. They cannot rebuild their lives as the cities of Chicago and San Francisco rebuilt their cities after natural disaster strikes. The forces that victimize Lily Bart and McTeague are the uncaring elements that grew powerful in an industrial society that sought to control its population.

After 1915, the role of houses in American literature continued to mirror, symbolically, the increased isolation of Americans. House imagery in twentieth-century literature represents aspects of lost elements in American identity. Faulkner's houses are decaying reminders of social upheaval. Hemingway's characters restlessly travel the world in search of stability through external rituals of war and masculine pursuits. Fitzgerald's Gatsby never sees beneath the facade of mansions built by wealth to the uncaring people who reside in these houses. Steinbeck's characters, like the Joads, must leave their homes and their past and accept temporary shelter in their cars and government camps. They

are totally displaced by social and economic change. Modern American literature seems permeated with characters who are homeless and rootless. The importance of the home to American life seems an inherent part of the continued search for identity through place.

Patterns of design and decoration at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition reveal motifs that unite these national celebrations of America's progress as a nation and as an international economic power. These three fairs celebrate America's overt idealism and show how the ideal fails and the resulting loss contributes to isolation of individuals. Attempts to control nature, urban growth, and national expansion further separate individuals from traditional bases of moral strength and personal identity. Studies of single historic events can provide insight into specific motives and impacts; however, comparing groups of events united by chronology and geography, for example, can reveal patterns of change. Canonical literature published within the historic framework and using similar symbols and images can illustrate the impact of historical events on society and individuals.

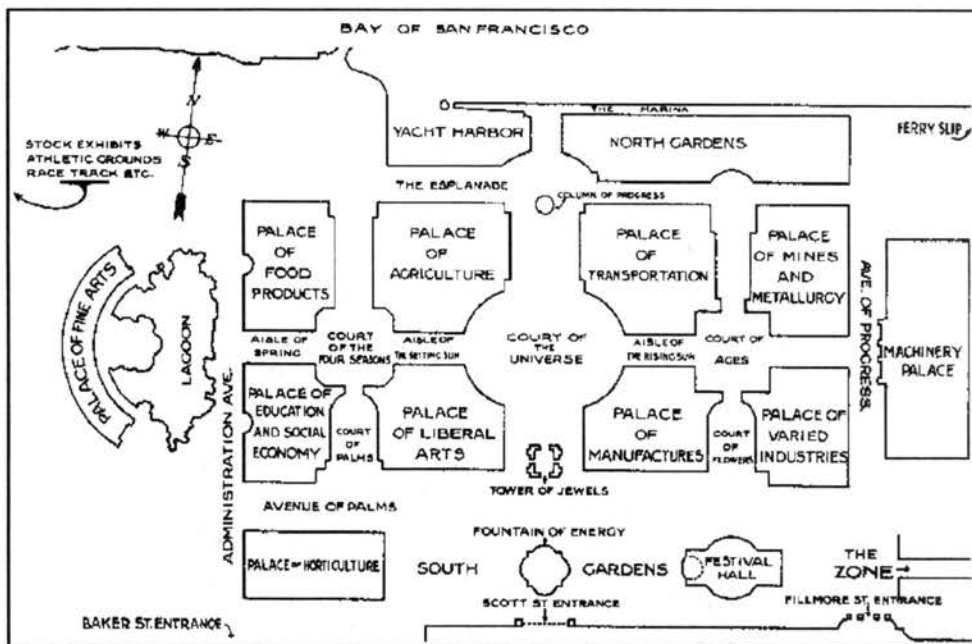


Figure 25 Drawing of the innovative court design at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 (Benedict 96)

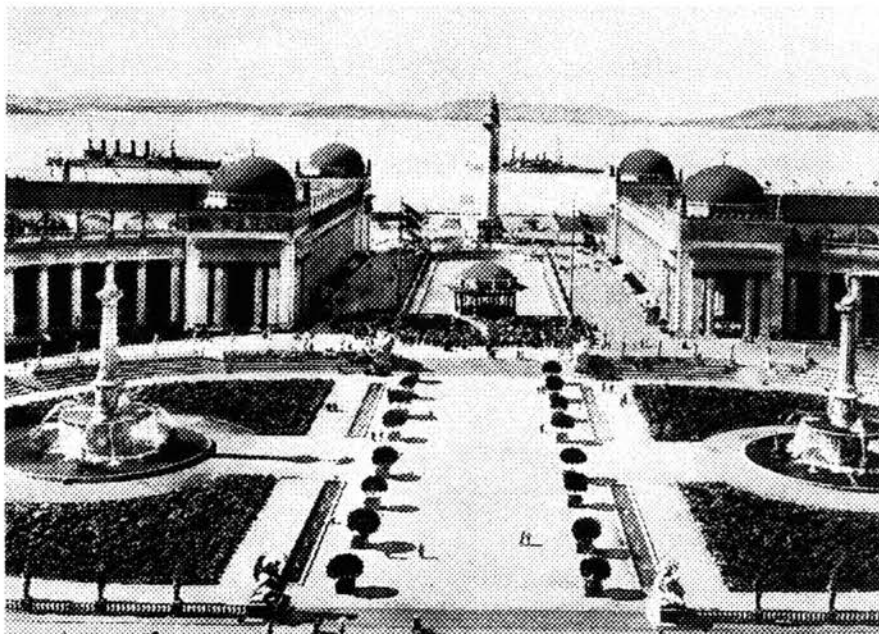


Figure 26 Court of the Universe - a major court of the San Francisco World's Fair (Benedict 159)



Figure 27 Night view of Tower of Jewels with reflection in pool (Rydell, All the World's 212)



Figure 28 Tower of Jewels (Benedict 1)

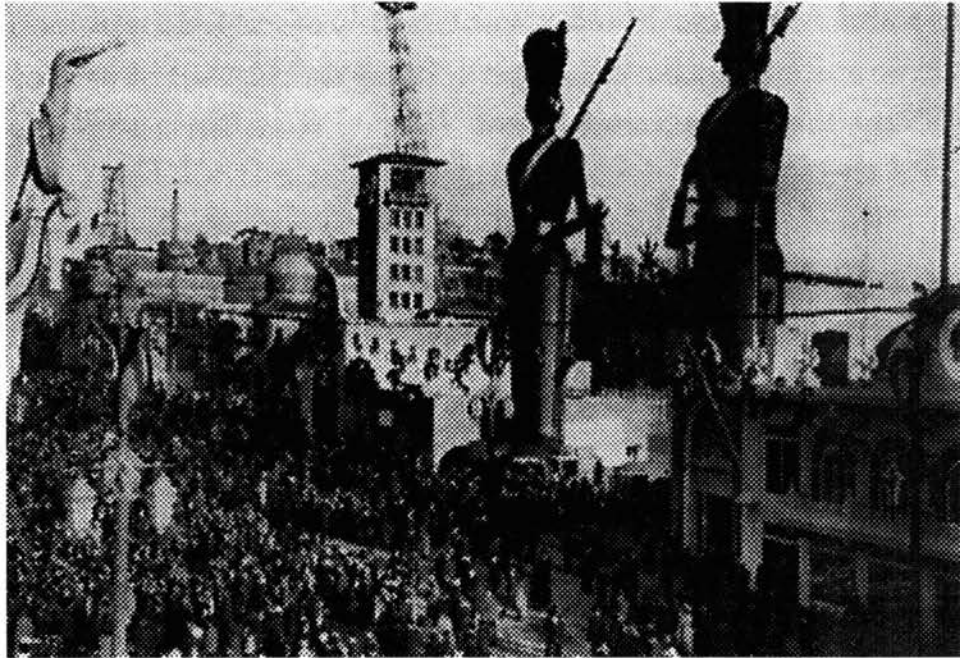
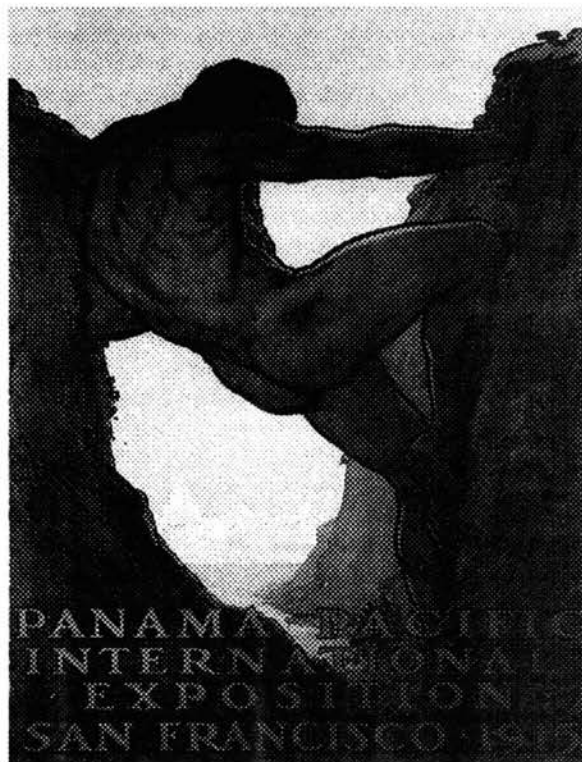


Figure 29 The Joy Zone at the Panama-Pacific Exposition (Rydell, All the World's 227)

Figure 30
Official Poster
of the Panama-
Pacific
International
Exposition
(Benedict 114)



Notes

¹ The actual construction of the canal began in 1881. The French company led by Ferdinand de Lesseps went bankrupt, and the United States finished the project. The finished canal was 40 miles long and cost \$300 million to complete.

² Movies were not a part of earlier fairs because they did not have their true beginning until after the Chicago World's Fair had closed. Edison invented the Kinetoscope in 1894 and the Vitascope in 1896. The milestone film The Birth of a Nation appeared in 1915.

³ Instant age meant a physical connection to past architecture by recreating the look of aged marble

⁴ Some critics complained about the colors combined with the architectural feature of travertine. One writer called the walls face-powder pink and complained such a color never existed in nature. Others felt the green columns lent an insubstantial air to the buildings. A third critic compared the color scheme to "Easter eggs painted by children" (Starr 160).

⁵ In keeping with the current situation, Germany and Great Britain did not build national pavilions at San Francisco.

⁶ One retained structure, the Column of Progress, remained at the end of Brown Street until it had to be removed because so many cars collided with the column. Progress in the form of the automobile finalized the destruction of the fair.

⁷ Years and sites of Victorian American fairs and expositions

*1876	Philadelphia
1885	New Orleans
*1893	Chicago
1895	Atlanta
1897	Nashville
1898	Omaha
1901	Buffalo
*1904	St. Louis
1905	Portland, Oregon
1909	Seattle
*1915	San Francisco
1915-16	San Diego

* denotes those fairs generally accepted as world's fairs.

⁸ For the first time at an American world's fair, the plans for the fairgrounds included a parking lot for those visitors who came to the fair by automobile. Even this convenience was mercenary in character as a gas station was

also built on the parking lot to sell to customers who parked there.

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