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A Taste of Quality:
Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's and The Century

by

Sharon Hamilton, B. A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
17 August 1994
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A Taste of Quality:
Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's, and The Century
submitted by Sharon Hamilton, B. A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of English

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September 6, 1994

Abstract

Through an investigation of the interrelationship between business, ideology and literary production, this thesis explores the historical influence of four nineteenth-century, American, mass-market periodicals known as "The Quality Group." Employing sociological and historical perspectives, my analysis of Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's and The Century traces the means through which they acquired their cultural status and the effect of that position within the literary marketplace. This thesis concludes with an assessment of the significance of marketers of quality to the maintenance of high standards in literary production.

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Marketing Quality

Like artistic production, in that it is generated in a field, aesthetic perception is necessarily historical, inasmuch as it is differential, relational, attentive to the deviations (écarts) which make styles.

Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction

In late nineteenth-century America Harper's New Monthly Magazine, The Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's Monthly (later The Century Illustrated), and Scribner's Magazine were collectively known as "The Quality Group." Through an investigation of the interrelationship between business, ideology, and literary production, this thesis explores how these magazines became representatives of "quality" and, in turn, how that status created and perpetuated a standard of elite taste which influenced the development of American literature.

Before proceeding with my approach to this thesis topic and the breakdown of my argument, I would like to situate my inquiry in the context of the work previously done in this area. The primary historical overview of these periodicals (and one which I draw upon extensively) exists in Frank Luther Mott's pulitzer-prize, five-volume A History of American Periodicals. While this collection represents a

comprehensive source of factual information, it avoids analytical complexities. Among encyclopedia entries the most scholarly appear in the Greenwood Press' series of "Historical Guides to the World's Periodicals and Newspapers." Although these resumes tend to be slightly more interpretive than those provided by Mott, the space allotted to each severely limits the capacity for criticism. And despite the significance of these magazines to American literary history, in the field of literary studies no serious critical work has yet been done.

The main questions explored in this thesis can be summarized through a quotation from the Greenwood Press' American Literary Magazines: the 18th and 19th Century:

In the late nineteenth century Scribner's Monthly (later Century Illustrated) became a focal point of American culture. Along with its rivals, Harper's and Atlantic Monthly, it is a bellwether of the entire Gilded Age and a benchmark for the growth of American culture into this century.

(Robbins 364)

My thesis examines why these magazines were considered a "focal point of American culture," how their position as bellwethers of taste influenced literary production, and the manner in which these magazines became a benchmark for the growth of American culture into the present century.

In exploring these issues, I shall focus on the

interactions between editor, author, reader, and text which resulted from a field of literary production which recreated itself on a monthly basis. My concerns will range from the editorial policies of key figures associated with the history of these magazines (such as W. D. Howells and Henry Mills Alden), to the unlikely ideological relevance of dinner parties in the construction of cultural value. Divided into six chapters, the first half of my thesis addresses how these magazines acquired their cultural legitimacy, while the second half explores the practical significance of that authority within the literary marketplace.

The first three chapters deal with the symbolic authority these magazines acquired through their collective epithet, their cover-price, and the construction of their audience. Following these discussions, I indicate how the characteristics which thus combined to create their reputation for quality, allowed them to influence taste beyond the pages of their magazines and to conduct business without seeming to disgrace art. I conclude with an overview of how these magazines transformed in accordance with the tastes of a new century. Throughout, I examine how their unique historical influence related to their cultural distinction. In these magazines, for twenty-five to thirty-five cents, along with the material contents a construction of "quality" could be bought and held.

Chapter One: "The Quality Group"

Cultural identity is inseparable from limits, it is always a boundary phenomenon and its order is always constructed around the figures of its territorial edge.

Stallybrass, The Politics and Poetics of Prose

As Stallybrass and White indicate, "cultural identity is . . . always a boundary phenomena": it depends upon the establishment of margins and edges, in a word, distinctions. They arrive at this conclusion through their belief that "a body is actively produced by the junction and disjunction of symbolic domains and can never be legitimately evaluated 'in itself'" (192). Since hierarchies of valuation depend upon comparisons, any analysis of the historical influence of Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's, and The Century would have to begin with what made them seem different. The primary factor which allowed these magazines to stand apart existed within their descriptive epithet: "The Quality Group." In this chapter I will discuss both how they acquired this title and the extent to which it reinforced their cultural authority.

Within the periodical market this appellation confined "quality" to a limited physical space: four magazines. The appearance of such defining epithets within the late

nineteenth-century (whether declared by the periodicals themselves or as part of a general critical and social parlance) developed out of the unprecedented expansion of the field as a whole. Increased literacy, technological advancements, and rapid urban expansion each contributed to a statistical explosion:

Newspapers flourished, books at low prices multiplied, the platform was active; but of all the agencies of popular information, none experienced a more spectacular enlargement and increase in effectiveness than the magazines.

(Mott vol. 4: 2)

The rapid growth of this field resulted from the inventions of the linotype and the rotary press and the development of a papermaking process which employed wood instead of cloth.

The effect upon American culture created by this sudden expansion appears in The Dial of 1 October 1892:

Periodical literature, as a whole, exerts so great an influence, and enters so largely into our culture, that it demands a considerable share of the attention of any review having charge of literary interests. (204)

In the August 1892 edition of the Andover Review, Helen Emma-Blair referred to this impact in even stronger terms.

There can be no doubt that periodical literature has a most important mission, which it is steadily

fulfilling, exercising an almost incalculable influence upon the intellectual and moral development of the individual, upon home life, and upon public opinion. Its great increase and improvement may be regarded as one of the most important signs of the times. (154)

It is important to note that the periodicals being referred to in the Dial and Andover reviews were not the "little" magazines. These articles concern the rise and influence of the mass-market general interest literary magazines of which the magazines in the "quality group" were examples.

I am drawing attention to this distinction since the abundance of scholarly work on the "little" magazines, in contrast to the lack of work done on the mass-market periodicals, creates the unfortunate impression (unsubstantiated through reference to period reviews) that only the former occupied a position of cultural significance. In the second half of this thesis I address in more detail the specific ramifications of the rise of the mass-market literary periodicals; at this juncture, however, my primary concern relates to the number of these new magazines.

The technological advancements which made periodical production easier also made it cheaper and as a direct result, while there were only 3,300 periodicals published in 1885, by 1900 there were no fewer than 11,000. Within the

climate of competition created by the insurgence of these periodicals into the marketplace, each depended upon the creation of a unique market niche. Before the twentieth-century development of the specialized magazine (Sports Illustrated, Vogue, TV Guide, and so forth) these general interest magazines relied less upon a specific field than they did upon a particular label: journal, review, monthly, weekly. Further differentiation existed within descriptive epithets; hence the proliferation of adjectives such as "family," "illustrated," "critical," "inexpensive," and "first-class." In the marketplace these labels created necessary distinctions.

Acquiring "Quality"

Since the survival of any given magazine depended upon its ability to differentiate itself from other periodicals, these descriptive epithets acquired an importance bordering on the essential. In Harper's, The Atlantic, The Century, and Scribner's the label of "quality" was created and perpetuated as part of a common critical and social parlance in association with the material conditions of their production: their publishers, and contributors.

Each of these magazines immediately acquired the symbolic authority of its publishing house: The Atlantic from Phillips and Sampson, The Century from The Century Co., and Scribner's from Charles Scribner and Company. Since

each publishing house possessed its own cultural legitimacy these "names" contributed to the reputation of the magazines they published. As namesakes of their publishing houses, Harper's, Scribner's, and The Century each directly associated itself with an entire field of literary publication. The particular significance of the publishing house associated with The Atlantic Monthly will be discussed in my fifth chapter, "Toastmaster."

The exception to this general situation existed in Harper's Magazine. Neither its publishing house nor the initial magazine possessed an association with quality. The transformed perception of this magazine (which receives greater attention in my third chapter), confirms the theory that the activities of the publishing house influenced the public association (or lack thereof) of cultural authority with the magazine.

Literature appearing within these magazines contributed to the reputations of their authors. Since the founding contributors to both The Atlantic and Scribner's Magazine provided an immediate source of recognition and a tone of moral and cultural authority they will be dealt with in more detail later. The names of these men were, however, well-known in the nineteenth-century (as some of them are still now): Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes, Emerson, and Holland. In addition to the names of these contributors, the texts which appeared later in other physical domains (books, excerpts in

newspapers, and reprints in other periodicals) reinforced the original authority of the site of their first appearance. Hence, the names of authors, and the names of the publishing houses, combined within the material object to reinforce the authority of its label.

Suggesting that the initial contributors to these magazines and the names of their publishing houses established their cultural authority does not quite explain the origins of the specific appellation which described them. Mott suggests that this title may have originated with the magazines themselves:

At the beginning of the twenty-year period 1885-1905, the leaders in the field of national illustrated monthlies devoted to the publication of literary miscellany were two New York magazines, Harper's and Century; and at the end of the period, though more or less battered by competition of many kinds, these two, with the addition of Scribner's, were still leaders in what they liked to call the "quality magazine" class. (vol. 4: 43)

Two points in Mott's passage deserve special attention. First, The Atlantic is not included among the magazines which liked to "call themselves" members of the "quality magazine class." That The Atlantic does not appear in this context (and yet appears in Mott's own summary of "the big

four") testifies to the extent of its particular symbolic authority. Secondly, it is important to note that Mott only mentions the possible origin of the quality epithet this once. Generally, in his history as in encyclopedic overviews this title simply appears affixed to these magazines like a label dropped sacrosanct from heaven.

Hierarchically Higher

I am emphasizing the tendency of "quality" to appear as an unqualified synonym for Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's, and The Century since its unquestioned usage contributed to an authority which extended from practical differentiation to cultural determination. Paul DiMaggio addresses the central question behind this occurrence in his exploration of cultural boundaries in theatre, opera, and dance. He asks, "why do some tastes and dispositions serve as a basis of vertical distinction whereas others are dishonoured or neutral with respect to status?" (21) In accordance with DiMaggio's inquiry it is worthwhile to ask how and why the "quality" epithet came to bear such a role.

The significance of this epithet in literary history relates, as I have suggested, to its transformation from description to fact. For example, the entry under Scribner's Magazine in the Greenwood Press's 1990 encyclopedic series of "Historical Guides to the World's Periodicals and Newspapers," begins: "Scribner's Magazine,

one of the big four--with Century, Harper's, and Atlantic Monthly--of the quality popular journals of the late nineteenth-century was first issued in January 1887" (458). Scribner's is conflated with its epithets. Grammatically undifferentiated from the title of the magazine, "The big four" and the "quality popular journals" simply materialize as tangible aspects of the magazine's history. Unqualified, these appellations acquire the same legitimacy as "January 1887."

Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of an "authoritative discourse" indicates why a descriptive epithet might (as in this case) be conflated with fact. He argues that "the degree to which a word may be conjoined with authority--whether the authority is recognized by us or not--is what determines its specific demarcation" (343). The "quality" label conforms to his description of a "word conjoined with authority," both in its obscure origins and its unquestioned usage:

The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse. It is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal. It is given (it sounds) in

lofty spheres, not those of familiar contact.

(342)

In the manner of a sacred text, the "quality" label perpetuated its own inviolacy: "Taboo-like" this epithet "could be profaned" (Bakhtin, 342)

Mott illustrates the sacredness of the "quality" label in the overview of The Atlantic which appears in his second volume. In this testimony, he chastises potential critics of the magazine with the term "irreverent," and he confirms the Atlantic's symbolic status through words with religious overtones, such as "beneficiary" and "divine election." The entire passage reads:

There have always been some irreverent ones to dispute the primacy of the Atlantic Monthly among American literary magazines, but throughout all of its nearly eighty years of existence it has not lacked readers who have believed it the beneficiary of a kind of divine election to leadership in American letters. (493)

Arguing that "the Atlantic may be said to have enjoyed a perpetual state of literary grace," Mott directly indicates the effect of an authoritative discourse upon literary development when he concludes: "for a large section of the American public, whatever the Atlantic printed was literature" (494).

Mott's defence of the "quality" status of The Atlantic

indicates that its epithet took on a cultural significance much beyond practical distinctions or the claims of magazine owners. It became a factor in determining their cultural authority. Recognized by this epithet, within a scheme of vertical distinctions these magazines represented "quality" and all other periodicals were judged accordingly. In the boundary formation of nineteenth-century cultural classifications, the epithet of these magazines aligned them with "the best."

The historical propensity to employ these magazines as a basis of comparison, appears in Mott's organization of his chapter on the "General Monthly Magazines" in volume four of his series. He begins this chapter with a discussion of Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's, and The Century. This placement suggests an unquestioned primacy. The elite status he thus literally establishes is further reinforced through the use of dividing subtitles. The first of these reads: "DOWN A NOTCH OR TWO OR THREE."

Under this separate heading Mott addresses the histories of no fewer than twelve periodicals. He devotes to these twelve little more space than he allotted for his discussion of the four "quality" monthlies. The entries for each of these magazines provide only the most cursory factual information (the founders, date of publication, name changes, and so forth). These magazines are differentiated from the "quality" group in order of presentation, the space

allotted, and the amount of information provided. Lacking titles of distinction they are classified, simply, historically, as "other."

Mott ends this categorization of the "General Monthly Magazines" with a section bearing the title, "MONTHLIES AT FIVE CENTS OR LESS." I will discuss the specific relevance of this monetary distinction in my next chapter. At the moment, my interest relates to its use in the arrangement of this chapter. Mott presents a structure of discriminating classifications. The "quality" monthlies are separated in space and by subtitle from those monthlies which are "down a notch" and those which, according to their price, are down many notches. This organization illustrates the practical and symbolic distinction of the "quality" label. It became a standard of vertical discrimination in which the unchallenged primacy of these periodicals became the basis against which to judge all others.

The extended significance acquired by this appellation relates to what Pierre Bourdieu defines as the essentialism of aristocracies:

Aristocracies are essentialist. Regarding existence as an emanation of essence, they set no intrinsic value on the deeds and misdeeds enroled in the records and registries of bureaucratic memory. They prize them only insofar as they clearly manifest, in the nuances of their manner,

that their one inspiration is the perpetuating and celebrating of the essence by virtue of which they are accomplished. The same essentialism requires them to impose on themselves what their essence imposes on them--noblesse oblige--to ask of themselves what no one else could ask, to 'live up' to their own essence. (Distinction 24)

Recognized as the aristocrats of the magazine trade, in questions of taste the "quality" magazines possessed the cultural authority associated with noblesse oblige; they were required to live up to their own reputation for excellence.

Through the tacit social acknowledgement of superiority contained within their descriptive epithet, Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's and The Century became a material representation of what literary quality should look like. The claim of high standards embodied in their epithet not only distinguished them from other periodicals, it became the characteristic under which they were marketed. Since cultural identity is a boundary phenomenon, the influence of these magazines within the literary marketplace depended upon the characteristic which made them distinct: as representatives of "quality," their position of cultural authority was validated everytime someone took one off the shelf.

Chapter Two: "Higher-Priced Monthlies"

"In the long run a fifteen-cent magazine will be
but a fifteen-cent magazine--no more, no less."

Frank H. Scott, The Critic (May 26, 1894)

A newspaper battle at present ongoing in Britain illustrates the ideological significance of cover-price in determining "quality." The "so-called quality" newspapers, the Times, The Independent and The Guardian have been engaged in a price war. In The Globe and Mail's summary of the situation it employs subheadings such as, "Duking it out for the fickle hearts of 'Quality' readers," (Drohan D1) and "Selling papers like Cans of Beans" (D5). The relevance of these headlines to my discussion exists in their similarity to a debate concerning cover-price which occurred in the late nineteenth-century as part of a general institutionalization of elite taste along class lines. A skirmish between the "higher-priced" and the "cheap" periodicals dictated that thirty-five cents could not be lowered to ten.

Founded in 1850, 1856, and 1870 respectively, Harper's, The Atlantic, and Scribner's each appeared in the periodical marketplace before the development of technological processes which enabled lowered production costs. In the eighteen-nineties when the first of the lower priced ten and

fifteen cent periodicals began to appear, these three magazines were still being sold at the expensive rate they had borne throughout most of their history: thirty-five cents. They each retained that price although the technology that transformed the production costs of the field as a whole applied equally to them. The maintenance of this high cover-price indicated a broader ideological significance. As with their descriptive epithet, their cover-price maintained the distinction of "quality."

The association between "quality" and cover-price relates to a historical precedent. According to Mott: "As long as the general magazine was sold for thirty-five cents a copy, it was on the aristocratic level, for it had to be aimed, of course, at the monied and well-educated classes" (vol.4: 2). I have already discussed the role of aristocratic essentialism in maintaining cultural boundaries. Here, I would like only to emphasize the self-regulating nature of this distinction:

In identifying what is worthy of being seen and the right way to see it, [the holders of the titles of cultural nobility] are aided by their whole social group (which guides and reminds them with its 'Have you seen. . .?' and 'You must see. . .') and by the whole corporation of critics mandated by the group to produce legitimate classifications and the discourse necessarily

accompanying any artistic enjoyment worthy of the name. (Bourdieu, Distinction 28)

The interaction of people who ask "have you seen. . .?" and "you must see. . ." depends upon a perception of exclusivity. Asking "have you seen. . .?" does not carry the same cultural signification as "everybody has seen." Within a democratic environment in which anyone could buy a periodical, the price of the "quality" magazines supported this sort of exclusivity by acting as a symbolic, and to some extent literal, barrier.

The practical significance of the association between these magazines and a monied upper class relates to Paul Dimaggio's discussion of the institutionalization of taste in nineteenth-century America:

The relation between art and society was transformed during the last half of the nineteenth-century. Urban elites across the United States developed institutions that defined certain kinds of aesthetic culture as sacred, separated them from profane performance and exhibition, developed distinctive audiences and forms of organization, and articulated ideologies legitimating elite taste. (22)

Through the price on their cover the "quality" magazines retained a connection with the class of people manipulating cultural boundaries.

In addition to class-based exclusivity, cover-price was also tied to notions of literary worth. F. R. Leavis pithily summarizes the close ideological relation between price and constructions of literary value in his contention that "'value' is, or should be, a notoriously tricky word" (288). He suggests:

To value a thing is to put a price on it. This use of the word is in resonance with the quantitative, or mathematically treatable, meaning it has for scientists. But value judgements in literary criticism are not quantitative, and, if they are capable of 'verification,' it is in a sense of the word very different from what it means when it is used by philosophers contemplating the scientific process of establishing the validity of scientist's constatations. (288)

As Leavis indicates, to value something is to put a price on it. In a literal sense, the price on the front of the "quality" magazines did just that.

Reflecting these assumptions about the connection between valuation and price, in 1894 when the first ten and fifteen-cent monthlies began to appear, Frank H. Scott (president of the Century Co.) said to the members of the Quill Club:

I know there has been of late a movement toward

cheap magazines. These are possible, they may be desirable, but they will not be the same. You cannot get twenty-five cents' worth for twelve and a half cents, nor the value of thirty-five cents for a quarter. (The Critic, 365)

Scott's reference to these new magazines through the price on their cover implied a built-in cultural classification: the worthlessness of anything "cheap."

A Higher, Furer Literary Standard

In 1895 an article appearing in The Independent, and its rejoinder in McClure's, illustrated that the cultural classification implied by cover-price had become an issue. Their exchange demonstrated that the guarantee of quality implied by price was by no means certain. The first of these contending articles appeared in The Independent on 27 June. This impassioned editorial began with this announcement: "with July The Cosmopolitan and McClure's will reduce their price to ten cents" (11). In response to this information its editor asked: "what will be the effect on the higher priced magazines, like Harper's, The Century and Scribner's [?]" He suggested the possibility that these magazines might lower their rates, but he concluded with the belief that "they will not find it wise to reduce their price to a like figure" (11).

The Independent provided three reasons why the

"quality" magazines would not be tempted to lower their price. First, it indicated that the "higher priced" magazines could not "enlarge their constituency beyond the comparatively cultivated class that appreciates them" (11). Secondly (in a somewhat paradoxical manner) it suggested that any price reduction would be futile since even if they reduced "to ten cents the millions would not buy them" (11). Finally, and most definitively, this article argued that the "quality" magazines would not find it wise to lower their price because they would "wish to maintain that higher, purer literary standard which succeeds in securing the best, but not the most numerous readers" (11).

In the August 1895 issue of his magazine, S. S. McClure attacked the Independent's linkage of cover-price to the quality of both readership and content. Heading his defence under the same caption The Independent had used for its editorial, "Cheap Magazines," McClure directly challenged the cost-related segregation of one class of periodical from another. His counterattack began: "We present our compliments to the scholarly editor of 'The Independent,' and will he be so good as to listen to a few remarks from us?" (287). The remarks which followed outlined possible explanations for the price disparity between the higher and the lower priced periodicals. He explained that the cost of the cheap magazines resulted primarily from technical revolutions in the art of engraving. These magazines used

halftone pictures to replace costly wood engravings. Since a halftone plate produced with the aid of a camera could be bought for under twenty dollars, as opposed to the \$200 to \$300 cost of an engraving on wood, the savings in illustration costs alone accounted for the reduced cost of the ten and fifteen-cent magazines.

Before continuing with McClure's defence of the "cheap" magazines it is worth taking a moment to look specifically at the issue of magazine illustrations since the questions raised concerning the new half-tones were part of the same overall debate which related cultural legitimacy to cover-price. In his address to the Quill Club, Frank H. Scott emphasized the fine, delicate nature of engravings done in wood as opposed to the "experimental" process of producing illustrations through the combination of "three crude colors" (365). Expressing the hope that the art of wood engraving would not "die out and disappear" (365), he indicated the literal cost that his magazine paid on behalf of cultural preservation: \$200 to \$300 dollars. In effect, his argument demonstrated that the thirty-five cent cover-price of his magazine was necessary to the protection of tradition from the destructiveness of new experimental processes.

Through similar comments The Independent revealed that a magazine's choice between wood engravings and half-tone illustrations was not merely economic, but a contentious

issue of taste. The connection between half-tone illustrations and low taste appears in its portrayal of a ten-cent monthly: "Munsey's Magazine is profusely illustrated with half-tone pictures from photographs, of scenery, buildings, half-dressed women and underdressed statuary, and has achieved a circulation said to reach half a million" (11). This sentence rhetorically links half-tone illustrations with both the implied tastelessness of "half-dressed women and underdressed statuary" and the cultural devaluation related to mass production on the scale of "half a million."

But as McClure pointed out, even the "high-priced monthlies" employed the half-tone with more regularity than the engravings on wood. Based upon his survey of the number of half-tones appearing in Scribner's, The Century, and Harper's during the month of July 1895, he argued that "there must be some merit besides cheapness in a method of engraving that is employed for more than six-sevenths of the pictures in the high-priced monthlies" (287). His indication of the number of half-tones appearing in the higher-priced monthlies demonstrated, more effectively than any other argument could have done, the significance of the attacks made against them. Since the "quality" magazines employed half-tone illustrations, their self-declared cultural preservation of the wood-engraving represented a symbolic stance. As magazines of "quality," they portrayed

themselves as the protectors of art from the intrusion of cultural upstarts.

Having dismissed the cost of illustrations as a possible reason for the price difference between the higher and lower priced monthlies, McClure asked: "Perhaps the cheap magazine spends less for literature?" In answer to this self-imposed question, he wrote: "Hardly." In bold-faced caps, McClure then proceeded with the next portion of his response, which read: "THE REAL REASON."

This "real reason" addressed the issue of cultural legitimation which, as McClure realized, had been the main issue all along. Not wishing his readers to overlook The Independent's primary assessment of why the "higher-priced" periodicals would not wish to lower their cost, McClure quoted the passage from their attack which referred to the maintenance of a "higher, purer literary standard." To this accusation McClure countered, simply: "We confess that we are befogged" (287). He explained his perplexity at their censure through the following question:

Will [the editor of The Independent] kindly tell us where any editor can secure a higher, purer literary standard than is maintained by such writers as [the lengthy list of contributors which follows includes R. L. Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, W. D. Howells, Sarah Orne Jewett, Edward Everett Hale, A. Conan Doyle, Joel Chandler

Harris, J. M. Barrie, and Charles A. Dana]. (287)

Based upon this evidence he asked, "Do not these enumerations in themselves dispose of 'the higher, purer literary standard' myth?" (287).

Not only the implied answer, but even the asking of this question, posed a threat to constructions of quality. The battles which took place over the issues of cover-price and half-tone illustrations in The Independent and McClure's, and in the comments made by Frank Scott, were skirmishes along boundaries of ideological certainty. As Mary Poovey suggests, "any image that is important to a culture constitutes an arena of ideological construction rather than simple consolidation" (9); "those issues [which] are constituted as 'problems' at any given moment are particularly important because they mark the limits of ideological certainty" (12). The literal and symbolic relationship between high costs and taste on an aristocratic level was challenged by McClure's assertion that a ten-cent monthly might also possess, as he bluntly put it, "comparative quality" (287). Uttered by the editor of a "cheap" magazine, the phrase "comparative quality" possessed border challenging potential. As he made clear, the "real reason" the quality magazines would not lower their cost was not financial. It was ideological. Price created a boundary of distinction.

Culture for Less

In January 1887, Scribner's Magazine both challenged and confirmed the ideological relationship between cultural authority and cover-price. In contrast to the thirty-five cent Atlantic, Century, and Harper's, in 1887 the founders of Scribner's determined to see if they could establish a "quality" magazine for twenty-five cents--culture for less (see figure 1). As Mott relates it, the supposition of its founders was that a periodical could sell itself at a slightly lowered price, and still be associated with the aristocratic essentialism of "quality":

The hypothesis on which the Scribner house bet its half million was that readers of the upper middle class, at which the magazine was aimed, would be happy to save a dollar a year even at the sacrifice of thirty to a hundred pages per issue, if the content was attractive and on a good cultural level. (Mott vol. 4: 718)

Bearing the cultural authority associated with the name of its predecessor (which in 1881 had changed publishers and become The Century), Scribner's was immediately considered "one of the big four" (Nourie 458).

This new entrant into the "quality" bracket posed a threat to the other magazines in its class. Current Literature addressed this concern in November, 1888: "it would seem to be an impossibility for the high-priced

monthlies to maintain their rates in the face of such competition as Scribner's is already offering, and the English Illustrated, to an even greater extent, is about to offer to the 'three-deckers'" (377). In response to this competition, in 1899 Harper's lowered its price to twenty-five cents. The Atlantic and The Century remained at thirty-five.

Each of the "quality" magazines declined in circulation during the nineties, but by the end of the century Scribner's possessed the highest circulation of the four. It thus illustrated the falsity of the argument that even if the "quality" magazines lowered their price the masses would not buy them. The masses did. However, the lowering of Scribner's cost also served to confirm class-related cultural barriers and an ideological locus of literary valuation since in a market burgeoning with successful "cheap" magazines, none of the "quality" group ever lowered its price below twenty-five cents. None of them ever cost ten.

Chapter Three: Massing Elites

It was a distinction to be printed in Scribner's and something of a distinction even to read it.

Malcolm Cowley, "Epitaph for Scribner's"

Harper's Frederick Lewis Allen indicated in his magazine's fiftieth anniversary issue that in their heyday Harper's, Scribner's, Century, and The Atlantic had occupied a position on the "library tables of the solid and respected citizenry" (30). He thereby illustrated that the perception of these magazines was not only that they were bought and held, but bought and held by people with distinction:

In that golden age of what we now think of as the old-fashioned family magazine, illustrated with exquisite line engravings, Harper's was rivalled for preeminence only by the younger Century and the still younger Scribner's--with the Atlantic Monthly as a somewhat more austere competitor for a place on the library tables of the solid and respected citizenry from coast to coast.

(Allen 30)

Separate from the "masses," the "quality" magazines portrayed their readers as aristocrats of a moral and literary high ground: the "better class."

The average circulations of these periodicals

fluctuated between 100,000 and 200,000 readers. They were mass-market magazines. However, "quality" discriminates. The distinction of a superior status depends upon exclusivity. Scribner's Frederick Lewis propounded this distinction in his magazine's fiftieth anniversary issue:

Today as yesterday, the quality magazines have an opportunity to further the cause of a really vital American literature--an opportunity such as no magazine can have which is dependent for its fortunes upon the conventional-minded millions.

(24)

By portraying their audience as an elite rather than a mass, these magazines separated themselves ideologically from tastes associated with the "conventional-minded millions" and occupied, instead, an arena of elite taste: a position which augmented their cultural authority and allowed them the opportunity "to further the cause of a really vital American literature."

Of the magazines in the "quality" group, Harper's supplies the clearest overview of how the mass-market "quality" magazines managed to sell themselves as representatives of an elite audience and, in turn, the effect which this had on literary production. Its history proves the most illuminating on the subject since its own declaration of intended audience changed radically between the mid and the late nineteenth-century. While it later

rhetorically aligned itself with the sensibility of cultivated readers, it began as a magazine unabashed about its intention to mass as many readers as possible.

Under the heading "A Word at the Start," in June 1850 the publishers, Harper and Brothers, indicated the aim of their new magazine: "The design of the publishers, in issuing this work, is to place within the reach of the great mass of the American people the unbounded treasures of the Periodical Literature of the present day" (1). Later in this "Word at the Start," the publishers detail where they intend to find these "unbounded treasures of Periodical Literature":

The Magazine will transfer to its pages as rapidly as they may be issued all the continuous tales of DICKENS, BULWER, CROLY, LEVER, WARREN, and other distinguished contributors to British periodicals.

(2)

In an era before the existence of international copyright laws, these "treasures" of the British periodicals were to be "transfer[ed]" by the Harper brothers into their new monthly. As Mott comments, "'Transfer' is probably the most delicious euphemism in all the apologetics of literary piracy" (vol. 2: 384).

Throughout this introduction to their periodical, the Harper brothers emphasize its accessibility. Actively deriding exclusivity, this new monthly wished to be all

things to as many people as possible: "The MAGAZINE is not intended exclusively for any class of readers, or for any kind of reading" (2). For the convenience of these readers they offer to gather together the best of the material found "scattered through scores and hundreds of magazines and journals" (1). Arguing that this magazine belongs in the "hands of all who have the slightest desire to become acquainted with it" (1), they express the hope that through this policy their new periodical will achieve "a popular circulation, unequalled by that of any similar periodical ever published in the world."

Displaying a light buff cover (designed in an imitation of the English periodical Bentley's) the 144 page initial instalment of this monthly achieved immediate success (see figure 2). From an initial edition of 7,500, within six months it reached 50,000. By the beginning of the civil war its circulation hovered around 200,000. As Mott points out, this was an "unprecedented circulation for a three-dollar magazine" (391). The high numbers massed by this magazine earned it a reputation for inclusivity and competitiveness which were not at all in keeping with its later associations with "quality."

Since Harper's initial association with competitiveness affected both its association with the "masses" and its own practical evolution in another direction, it is necessary to say a few words about the magazines competing with Harper's

at this time. Its primary competitors were the established literary monthlies which supported American authors. Philadelphia's Graham's, Godey's, Sartain's, and Peterson's each suffered from the introduction of Harper's into the marketplace.

Indeed in 1852, not long before its own demise, Graham's provided a valedictory upon the passing of Sartain's. This address asked of the reading public: "Will there never be pride enough in the American people to stand by those who support a national literature!" (Tassin 234). In contrast to these monthlies, "with the single exception of Julian Hawthorne's Garth in 1874, no other American broke the succession of English fiction serials [appearing in Harper's] until the eighties" (393). The defence made by Harper's for the lack of American literature in its pages was based upon the claim that there were no Americans worth publishing.

Graham's condemnation of this attitude appeared most succinctly in an editorial statement which appeared in that magazine in March 1851. It began: "Harper's is a good foreign magazine" (280). This article continued with a defence of American authors:

GRAHAM, at least, thinks he has a class of young writers now, who ask no odds in a fair encounter: Lowell, Read, Legare, Godman, Whipple, Fields, Bayard Taylor, Stoddard, Hosmer, Street, Boker,

Tuckerman, Hawthorne, Conrad, Moorhead, and others of the young men, with a fair sprinkling of young countrywomen. (280)

Arguing that its own American staff-writers equalled in ability "any corps of writers engaged for any other magazine in the world" this editorial summarized the attitude of Harper's critics both in its own defence of the quality of American writing and in its disparagement of reprinting British serials at the expense of native talent.

Democratic Consumerism

Harper's initial statement of inclusivity, the circulation it achieved, and its elimination, through competition, of some of Philadelphia's best monthlies, placed it within a Victorian debate concerning the threat to culture posed by the buying power of the masses: "democratic consumerism" (Keating 4). In his social history of the English novel, Peter Keating argues that the late nineteenth-century witnessed an increased concern with the role of the "masses" in society. He suggests that the social psychologist Gustave Le Bon was expressing a widely-held belief when, in 1895, he wrote: "the divine right of the masses is about to replace the divine right of kings" (3).

Victorian sage Matthew Arnold embodied one of the most persistent associations between cultural dissipation

and democratic consumerism in Culture and Anarchy when he characterized the social perplexity created by the emergent "masses":

That vast portion, lastly, of the working class which raw, and half-developed, has lain half-hidden amidst its poverty and squalor, and is now issuing from its hiding-place to assert an Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes and breaking what it likes,--to this vast residuum we may with great propriety give the name of Populace. (105)

According to Arnold, the threat to culture which this populace represented existed in the contrast between the tastes of the "children of light or servants of the idea" (101) and the "innumerable multitude" with their "natural taste for the bathos" (112).

This cultural association between the "masses" and a "natural taste for the bathos" still exists. I might suggest that the stigma attached to anything "mass" might even account, to some extent, for the fact that mass-market periodicals have received scant academic attention, whereas the so-called "little" magazines have been subject to thorough critical analysis. The ideological connotations of the word "mass" remain familiar now and the implications of

this word possessed an even greater significance in the nineteenth-century:

Masses was a new word for mob, and the traditional characteristics of the mob were retained in its significance: gullibility, fickleness, herd-prejudice, lowness of taste and habit. The masses, on this evidence, formed the perpetual threat to culture. (Williams 298)

Since the word 'mass' carries the negative significations of herd-prejudice, of low taste, and standardization, it might be wondered how any "mass-market" magazine came to bear the label "quality."

The first factor in Harper's evolution from a general magazine to a "quality" magazine developed out of the atmosphere of protest surrounding the iniquity of publishing unbought manuscripts. A magazine called the Corsair exemplified this kind of backlash. An editorial appearing in this "pirate" satirically declared:

We shall convey to our columns the cream and spirit of everything that ventures to light, in France, England and Germany. As to original American productions, we shall, as the publishers do, take what we can get for nothing, holding, as the publishers do, that while we can get Boz and

Bulwer for a thank-ye or less, it is not pocket-wise to pay much for Halleck and Irving.

(Tassin 235)

In response to this type of criticism, by the late fifties Harper's began to pay for most of their British material in the form of "advance sheets." These advance sheets provided Harper's with both serialization and book rights, but more significantly, this practice also provided a moral high ground from which to attack the publishing practices of other periodicals.

In the ninetieth anniversary issue of Harper's, Bernard DeVoto indicates the symbolic high ground which this shift in the magazine's policy created: "The editors were experimenting with and were soon to adopt a revolutionary practice of paying English writers, whereas the established custom was to pirate them" (110). Itself one of the worst of the literary pirates, as DeVoto's comments reveal, Harper's "revolutionary" practice of paying English authors separated this magazine from the baseness of its previous actions. From the criticized Harper's acquired the superior position of the critical.

Similar to the manner in which the "quality" magazines illustrated their preservation of culture through payment for woodcuts (as opposed to half-tones), a notice in Harper's concerning the serialized instalments of Thackeray's The Virginians stressed the amount of money they

had paid for the text in contrast to those American magazines which had pirated it:

[The Virginians] is printed from early sheets received from the author in advance of publication in England; for which the publishers pay Mr. Thackeray the sum of two thousand dollars. With the full knowledge of this arrangement, the proprietors of the New York Tribune, who have been leading advocates of an international Copyright Law, and profess the warmest regard for the interests of British authors in this country, have begun to copy this story from our Magazine in their paper. (Mott 386)

The Harper policy of paying for advance sheets shifted its ideological construction: from being a "good foreign magazine," a threat to culture, it began to be perceived as a protector of culture, a magazine of "quality."

The Sensibility of Cultivated Readers

As Poovey suggests, ideology consists of both "apparent coherence and authenticity, on the one hand, and its internal instability and artificiality on the other" (3). In other words, constructions of "mass," like constructions of "quality," depend upon apparently accepted, but internally divisive, categorizations. That ideology appears concrete but is in fact internally mobile, means that the

boundaries between "mass" and "quality" are not fixed. Accordingly, in the history of Harper's, payment for "advance sheets" generated a change in the mobile categorizations which characterized the magazine and its readers.

The second consequential event in the transformation of Harper's ideological make-up occurred in 1869 with a change in its editorship. In the centennial issue of Harper's magazine, Frederick Lewis Allen described the new editor, Henry Mills Alden:

[Alden] was a poet, and a man of sensitive and discriminating taste; one should add that he was a gentleman, for one should emphasize the fastidiousness and attention to propriety that characterized Harper's and its leading rivals during those gilded decades and brown decades.

(32)

This portrayal of Alden as a "gentleman" and as an editor of "sensitive and discriminating taste" provides a fitting tribute to the man who realized the potential of portraying his readers in a similar vein.

In September 1902, Alden discussed the construction of his magazine in a regular Harper's department, the "Editor's Study." He summarized the unique role of the magazine in literary production through the contention that a periodical appeals "to the most essential interests of that culture

from which it is itself nourished" (647). Since Alden recognized the dynamics of magazine production, he also realized its capacity for change. His own summary of magazine-making emphasizes its tendency to evolve:

There is no explicit theory of magazine-making, any more than there is an explicit theory of history. Such a scheme as a magazine has, with its scope and limitations, is disclosed only in its evolution. (646)

In emphasizing the fluidity of periodical construction, Alden argued that: "literature and art are not taught in a magazine, but are there represented fresh from the mint" (647).

The significance of his suggestion that magazine literature appears "fresh from the mint," relates directly to the idea that literary production in the periodicals responds to minute changes in public perception on a monthly basis. Magazines depend upon the expectations of their readers. Alden's realization that magazines market both literature and the way in which their audiences are perceived, resulted in both a change in his magazine's content and an emphasis upon the quality of its readership. In contrast to the "unbounded treasures" of British literature offered to "the great mass of the American people," Alden offered literature of a different sort to an audience of "better class" readers.

Indicating that "for the most part the organic unity of a first-class magazine is determined by the wants and reasonable expectations of cultivated readers" (646), Alden transformed his magazine and its audience. For example, in his "Editor's Study" of April 1903, Alden again addressed the position of the Harper reader within the process of literary production:

Literature must keep pace with this culture, the manifestations of which are so varied and intimate. For ourselves, we conceive the design of this Magazine to have reference mainly to this, and that it is best accomplished by a direct appeal to the sensibility of cultivated readers.
(817)

It is not coincidental to find, on these two separate occasions, Alden's combined portrayal of both the influence of his readers upon the literature produced and his portrayal of those readers as "cultivated."

Suggesting that "it is the world that changes with us, not we with the world," in the same editorial Alden revealed the literary corollary of the construction of his audience as readers of taste:

[if] the eager reader ever misses articles of this high order,--that is, if he would have more of them than he finds in these pages,--it is only because writers do not or cannot meet our

requirements. We can only hope that our hunger and thirst for the better thing may stimulate writers to efforts for its production. (816)

He thus argued that through Harper's attempt to meet the demands of a cultivated readership, it promoted a "hunger and thirst for the better thing," thereby stimulating writers to a higher standard of production.

This shift in the construction of Harper's readership corresponded to new policies in its publishing practices. During this period, the number of American authors appearing in Harper's increased dramatically: Stephen Crane, Booth Tarkington, W. D. Howells, Henry James, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Richard Harding Davis, Lefcadio Hearn, Edna Millay, and Mark Twain, numbering among the Americans who now appeared. Mott characterizes the magazine under Alden's fifty-year editorship as "the mecca of literary men and women of two continents" (vol. 2: 403), and Allen suggests that "it was Alden who was chiefly responsible for the growing dignity, distinction, maturity, and range of Harper's during the latter years of the nineteenth-century (30). From "corsair" to "quality" the evolution of this magazine's content corresponded to portrayals of its audience.

A Coincidence of Individuals

A possible explanation of the phenomenon which allowed

Harper's to achieve literary distinction resides in a sentiment propounded by Jose Ortega Y Gasset. In the Arnoldian tradition, his 1932 work Revolt of the Masses indicates that only the intellectual man (the seeker of sweetness and light) sees the world with "eyes wide open" (42). Whereas, "the mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified and select" (45). In order to avoid the implications of declaring a group of individuals a "mass" he proposes the concept of a massed minority. He explains this paradoxical theory thus:

To form a minority, of whatever kind, it is necessary beforehand that each member separate himself from the multitude for special, relatively personal, reasons. Their coincidence with the others who form the minority is, then, secondary, posterior to their having each adopted an attitude of singularity, and is consequently, to a large extent, a coincidence in not coinciding. (43)

In other words, a group may be defined not as a mass, but as a coincidence of individuals.

Through this redefinition of "mass," Gasset illustrates Raymond William's assertion in Culture and Society that "there are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses" (300). In his summary of Harper's history in its ninetieth anniversary issue, Bernard

DeVoto reflects the fact that what matters is not the mass, but the way in which we see it:

It is the audience that counts. Its tastes and interests have shifted as the currents of American life shifted but it has always consisted of the educated, the discriminating, and the liberal--in a worn but realistic phrase, the intellectual aristocracy. Harper's has always been edited for such people and always will be. (112)

In unmistakable terms, he argues that this magazine edited on behalf of "the intellectual aristocracy" was a "main support and in some degree a begetter of the second great period of American literature" (111).

DeVoto's comment that "it is the audience that counts" should be emphasized since the audience of the "quality" magazines was a begetter of national literary tastes in two major ways. First of all, this was a mass audience. Considering that each of the "quality" magazines reached between 100,000 and 200,000 readers, even allowing for some overlapping in readership and drawing an estimate from the lower end of the scale, that still means that these four magazines catered to at least 400,000 readers. They influenced taste on a national basis. The widespread influence of these magazines was effected through their paradoxical combination of mass-marketing and aristocratic essentialism.

Secondly, as I indicated through my chapter on the cover-price of the "quality" magazines, this mass audience probably consisted primarily of a monied upper class. Corroborating this supposition, in a retrospective of Harper's original audience, John Fischer indicated that initially it had been aimed "at what was then the only potential audience for a national publication--the so-called educated class":

In those days before universal public education, this small group alone had the ability, the leisure, and the money to read much of anything. It was in effect, the governing class of the country--those people in the professions, industry, and government who largely decided the issues and set the taste for the rest of the country. (15)

In accordance with my price-related discussion in the last chapter, Fischer's comments illustrate that the class of people who were determining new cultural boundaries during this period were also the ones who bought the "quality" magazines.

In 1958, Harper's instituted a study in order to discover just who read their magazine. This investigation, "Self-Portrait of the Harper Reader," was based upon a survey conducted by the independent research firm of Erdos and Morgan. According to the survey's findings, eighty-

eight per cent of Harper's readers had attended college, over half had done post-graduate work, nearly forty per cent held post-graduate degrees. Of these people, only two per cent were farmers; the rest dwelt in urban environments. On average, these readers were professionals and earned nearly twice as much income as other Americans. In addition, this survey reported that Harper's readers had "invested twice as much in musical instruments as in TV sets" (16). This study indicates the concrete self-perpetuation of the construction of this magazine's audience as an elite. The statistics concerning Harper's readers indicate that its mass of readers are a minority.

Fischer's conclusion based upon this information was that in contrast to "publications which offer a bland diet, guaranteed never to irritate an ingrown prejudice or to stimulate the mental gastric juices," the needs of a better class of readers were being met by the contents of his magazine. He argued that unlike the fare "set forth in overwhelming plenty by television and the other mass media" his magazine was "intended for the minority who feed on a different meat, and have a hard enough time finding it elsewhere" (18). In the tradition begun with Alden, Fischer's portrayal of his readers relates directly to the standard of literature his magazine requires itself to publish - noblesse oblige.

In the dynamic interaction of periodical literature

"fresh from the mint," it is the audience which counts. During the transformation of Harper's from "corsair" to "quality," the construction of its audience shifted in tandem with a change in its contents. With an average circulation of 200,000 throughout its history, the numbers in this mass did not change. As the educated class, the people in the mass did not change. Constructions of the mass did: from "any class of readers" this audience became "an upper class of refined tastes." From rhetoric emphasizing inclusivity, Harper's shifted to rhetoric of exclusivity; from a general magazine it became a "quality" magazine. It became a distinction even to read it.

Chapter Four: Toastmaster

One cannot fully understand cultural practices unless 'culture,' in the restricted normative sense of ordinary usage, is brought back into 'culture' in the anthropological sense, and the elaborated taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of food.

--Bourdieu, Distinction

The Atlantic Monthly was founded over dinner. In a letter to his niece, Mr. Phillips (the prospective publisher of this new monthly) related the details of the dinner which took place at Parker House, on Tuesday 5 May 1857. His letter begins:

I must tell you about a little dinner party I gave about two weeks ago. It would be proper, perhaps, to state that the origin of it was a desire to confer with my literary friends on a somewhat extensive literary project, the particulars of which I shall reserve until you come. But to the party: my invitations included only R. W. Emerson, H. W. Longfellow, J. R. Lowell, Mr. Motley (the 'Dutch Republic Man'), O. W. Holmes,

Mr. Cabot, and Mr. Underwood, our literary man.
 Imagine your uncle as the head of such a table,
 with such guests. The above named were the only
 ones invited, and they were all present.

(Scudder 410)

This relationship between literature and food (either literally or metaphorically) contributed to the "quality" status of this magazine. In the anthropological sense of the word, The Atlantic defined taste.

Throughout this thesis I have indicated the factors which contributed to the distinction of the magazines in the "quality group": their epithet, price, and construction of audience. These characteristics contributed to the cultural legitimacy which allowed these periodicals to simultaneously market both literature and the aesthetic perceptions which shaped literary production. The particular authority of The Atlantic relates to its history of associations with food. The existence of the magazine depended upon a dinner party. Thereafter, dinners encouraging the interactions of Boston literary men influenced the contents of the magazine (and the men chosen as its contributors). These concrete results of The Atlantic dinners were paralleled in significance by ideological considerations. The Atlantic's dinners reinforced its literal and symbolic affiliations with cultural authority.

Bourdieu argues that there is a relationship between the "elaborated taste for the most refined objects" and an "elementary taste for the flavours of food" (1). He explains this connection as the "antithesis between quantity and quality":

The taste of necessity, which favours the most 'filling' and the most economical foods, and the taste of liberty--or luxury--which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating, etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function. (6)

This anthropological connection between the luxury of good food and the luxury of refined taste illustrates the significance of The Atlantic's affiliation with dinners and diners.

The First Dinner

As I have already mentioned, the first of the literal dinners in The Atlantic's history founded the magazine. In The Atlantic's fiftieth anniversary issue (November 1907), Charles Eliot Norton's reminiscence about "The Launching of the Magazine" emphasizes that the initial reception of the magazine depended upon the brilliant coterie gathered at Parker House:

No magazine could have had a more brilliant and prosperous start, or one which gave promise for

continued success. At the outset it depended largely for its cordial reception by the public upon the contribution of writers already eminent, the great writers of the middle of the century.

(580)

In addition to the reputations of its founders, Norton confesses that his own part in establishing the reputation of The Atlantic in a tradition of American literary excellence was to lose the trunk which contained the British manuscripts planned for the first edition, thereby necessitating the use of American contributors.

As Norton's reminiscence indicates, from the start this magazine possessed the symbolic legitimacy of the most eminent names of the day. Before continuing with my general discussion of the ideological significance of The Atlantic dinners, I wish to devote some space to a discussion of the men at this first meeting. Since the names of most of the literary men remain well-known, my particular emphasis concerns the name which is, perhaps, the least recognizable: that of the publisher, Moses Dresser Phillip.

Francis H. Underwood's initial choice for the publication of his planned literary magazine was the firm of John P. Jewett and Co. This firm was distinguished as the publisher of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Underwood outlined the plan of this magazine, and its prospective publishers, in a letter to American author

Thomas Wentworth Higginson on 21 November 1853:

Dear Sir,--Messrs. J. P. Jewett and Co. of this city propose to establish a Literary and Anti-Slavery magazine -commencing probably in January. The publishers have energy and capital. and will spare no pains to make the enterprise completely successful. They will endeavour to obtain contributions from the best writers, and will pay liberally for all they make use of. Politics and the "Humanities," though, of course, prominent as giving character to the Magazine, will occupy but a small portion of its pages. Current literary topics, new books, the Fine Arts, and other matters of interest to the reading public will receive the most careful attention.

(Perry, "Editor" 661)

Owing to problems of fiscal management, however, J. P. Jewett and Co. failed to establish this magazine.

Underwood's next choice fell upon a publishing firm of equal distinction (and better finances): Phillips, Sampson and Co. (see figure 3).

Edward Everett Hale described the cultural impact of this publishing firm by declaring that "the publishing business in Boston felt the wave of their impetuosity" (152). Appearing in 1843, this "new-born firm among booksellers" (Hale 152) differentiated from other Boston

firms through their determination to publish American authors, not merely to import British ones. Until their entry into the book trade, the majority of manuscripts printed by Boston firms tended to be technical manuals, legal pamphlets, medical texts, and religious tracts:

The loyalty of the Boston lawyers to their business, of the doctors to theirs, and of the ministers to theirs, had made it necessary that there should be printers and shops where books could be bought and sold. So the importers of books had become, in a languid way, the publishers of books. (153)

In contrast to these "languid" book publishers, Charles Sampson and Moses Dresser Phillip desired to be a "publishing firm." "They did not want to import books. They wanted to make them and sell them" (Hale 153).

Before the appearance of Phillips and Sampson, Hale suggests that if a man wanted one of the established Boston firms to publish a book for him, he had to pay for his plates and his printing and would be confined to the "gilt-edged retail 'trade' of Boston and Cambridge" (155). With its business extending beyond Massachusetts, even to California, Phillips and Sampson did not conform to this emphasis upon local trade. Active participants in a marketplace which made and sold books, this new publishing firm addressed the unsatisfied needs of both American

authors and readers. They represented the potential of an American literary marketplace.

In 1857, it was this firm which Underwood solicited with the idea for a new magazine. By the time Underwood approached a partner in the firm, Mr. William Lee, he had already engaged the interest of such prominent Boston intellectuals as Lowell, Longfellow, and Holmes and "he represented strongly to Mr. Lee the possibilities of a magazine which should have at once a staff of writers of a character so eminent" (Scudder 410). In turn, Mr. Lee discussed the feasibility of the project "in his daily lunch with Mr. Phillips" (410). Former Atlantic editor Horace Elisha Scudder, felt that among the arguments employed by Mr. Lee the most effective may have been the prospect "of the association [Phillips] should thus form with a distinguished group" (410).

Corroborating this supposition, Phillip's letter concerning the founding dinner dwells upon the details of the distinguished company he shared. He placed himself firmly among the elite group invited:

We sat down at three P. M. and rose at eight. The time occupied was longer by about four hours and thirty minutes than I am in the habit of consuming in that kind of occupation, but it was the richest time intellectually by all odds that I have ever had. Leaving myself and 'literary man'

[Underwood] out of the group, I think you will agree with me that it would be difficult to duplicate that number of such conceded scholarship in the whole country beside. (Scudder 411)

He concluded: "Though I say it that should not, it was the proudest day of my life" (412).

Phillips emphasizes that this distinguished group of writers were "the only ones invited." Through the device of an illustration he physically renders the appearance of the circle of diners around the dinner table:

The exact arrangement of the table was as follows:--

Mr. Underwood

Cabot	Lowell
Motley	Holmes
Longfellow	Emerson

Phillips

(Scudder 411)

Indicating that "Mr. Emerson took the first post of honor at my right, and Mr. Longfellow the second at my left," he created an impression of a small, closed, circle of interaction.

The particulars Phillips provided concerning this dinner illustrate both its practical and ideological significance. It provided an occasion for the planning of a new magazine with some of Boston's most eminent men and it established a symbolic detail in The Atlantic's history.

The dual nature of this dinner corresponds to Foucault's argument that details are essential to the construction of ideology. Particulars make it possible to "measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities, and to render the differences useful by fitting them to one another" (197). Through the appearance of Phillips' letter in most overviews of the magazine's history, it occupies a significant position in establishing perceptions of the magazine. Its details indicate the particular association it reinforces: the exclusivity of the magazine.

Dining with the Atlantic People

As with the initial dinner, the subsequent Atlantic dinners participated in constructions of its "quality". After all, discernment in matters of taste is not limited to a single realm. This constant affiliation with dining contributed to an ideology of legitimating taste extending beyond the pages of the magazine. The importance of this association reveals itself through the fact that in Tassin's history of The Magazine in America, he felt it important to include the detail that "the Atlantic was always feeding itself" (175).

The extent to which The Atlantic was always feeding itself is easily demonstrated. It held birthday dinners for its longtime contributors: for example, John Greenleaf Whittier's seventieth birthday in 1877; Dr. Holmes'

seventieth birthday in 1879, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's seventieth in 1882. It sponsored a large dinner when its publisher changed to O. Houghton and Company in 1874, and spawned two informal dinner clubs for contributors and potential contributors, the Atlantic Club and the Saturday Club. Understandably, the magazine's fiftieth anniversary issue contains Arthur Gilman's retrospective twelve-page article concerning "Atlantic Dinners and Diners." Typical of this ubiquitous relationship between The Atlantic Monthly and food, Longfellow's diary contains several entries concerning his attendance at the Saturday Club and the Atlantic Club dinners. Characteristic of these entries, on 21 December 1857 he wrote simply, "dined with the Atlantic Monthly people" (Scudder 447).

Charles Kadushin argues in his article "Networks and Circles in the Production of Culture," that the individuals involved with literary production are not themselves "instituted." Rather, he suggests that their interactions are "pegged to" or "draped around" other more formally instituted structures:

The lines of influence or interaction tend to follow other more formal relations, whether it be common occupational status or some relationship to a formal organization such as an intellectual journal, a theatre group, a gallery or even a bar or cafe. (771-2)

Following the example of the founding dinner, a tradition of dinner meetings among Atlantic contributors provided occasions for the sort of interactions among literary men which contribute to cultural production.

Regular informal dinner gatherings among contributors began in December 1857. Lowell, Dr. Holmes, and Emerson were each present at the initial encounter. The location chosen for this dinner was Porter's Tavern, in the Harvey D. Parker Hotel on School Street, Boston. Arthur Gilman indicates the appropriateness of Porter's Tavern as the site of this dinner through a description of its location: it was "in Cambridge, situated not too far from Harvard Square and the College,--a suitable walk for a literary man before or after dinner" (648). This distinguished location became the site of the Saturday Club Dinners which were held on the last Saturday of each month.

In 1883, Dr. Holmes presented a poem commemorating this first of such dinners to a group of physicians gathered in New York. A stanza from his tribute reads:

Good was the dinner, better was the talk;
Some whispered, devious was the homeward
walk;

The story came from some reporting spy--
They lie, those fellows--O how they do lie!
Not ours those footsteps in the new fallen
snow--

Poets and sages never zigzagged so! (649)

"Good was the dinner, better was the talk" is a phrase which is echoed in Gilman's recollection of an Atlantic dinner he attended in 1874: "The dinner was a good one, of course, and the speeches also were good" (650). After indicating what was said by such attendees as Dr. Howells and Mark Twain, Gilman suggests that "the most brilliant speeches were those made quietly, as guest met guest and chatted informally" (651). These dinners provided occasions for such interactions among Boston's literary men: a productivity and an exclusivity reflected in the pages of their magazine.

In the collected first volume of the Atlantic, "of the 122 assignable contributions, 3 are by untraced writers, 90 of the remaining 119 by New Englanders, 16 by New Yorkers, 10 by writers from abroad, 2 by Southerners, and one from west of the Alleghenies" (Mott vol. 2 496). Mott suggests that the preponderance of submissions from New England can be explained by the fact that the Atlantic's first editors did not look much beyond the Boston literary circle for their contributions. It seems likely that the exclusive social structure of Boston's literary elite contributed to the perpetuation of this sort of provincialism in a magazine which claimed to represent the nation.

In his "Recollections of an Atlantic Editorship," W. D. Howells responded to the common accusation that The Atlantic

relied too heavily upon New England contributors. by contending that there was little produced outside Boston which was worth publishing:

There was long a superstition, which each of the editors before me had tried to enlighten, that the Atlantic was unfriendly to all literature outside of Boston or New England, or at the farthest, New York or Philadelphia. The fact was that there was elsewhere little writing worth printing in it; but that little it had cordially welcomed. (600)

An alternate perspective is provided by the poet Edmund Clarence Stedman in a letter from New York to Barnard Taylor in Pennsylvania. Dated 8 January 1871, this letter acknowledges the cultural authority exerted by The Atlantic while decrying its New England emphasis:

The Boston house, naturally, drive apace every steed that wins a heat. But when a man's growth is slow, though sure, they don't make much of him unless he is "in their midst." (449)

As a writer outside the New England authors' circle of cultural production, Stedman concludes:

They never ask me for anything, and have declined what little I have sent them. I have this week hit upon a magnificent subject for a three-page poem . . . but when done I shall not have the courage to send it to the Atlantic. (450)

Stedman's frustration illustrates that while the Atlantic's practice of exclusivity contributed to the productive interaction of its contributors, it also resulted in an unfortunate tendency to overlook those not "in their midst."

An Invitation to the Feast

As a final note concerning the link (literal and metaphorical) between The Atlantic and food, the standard of etiquette required of a dinner party influenced its editorial practice. Its fourth editor, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, characterized this attitude in a letter to a potential contributor. Dated 26 April 1887, and addressed simply "dear madam," this letter asks:

Why should we print in a magazine revelations which we wouldn't dream of confiding to the bosom of an utter stranger at an evening party? In what respect does the stranger differ from the public which we are so ready to take into our inmost confidence? (Greenslet 149)

Exhibiting an anthropological propensity to demonstrate good taste in both senses of the word, The Atlantic acquired a level of elite marketing which made its name synonymous with culture.

Characteristic of period reviews The Dial of 1 October 1892, reads.

Between the review proper and the magazine, the

"Atlantic" occupies a place by itself, and stands more for culture than any other American monthly. Its lighter features are characterized by taste and its serious features by both taste and scholarship. (204)

As this review makes clear, The Atlantic occupied a place by itself in defining the tastes which influenced the development of American literature.

The Atlantic itself provided the most fitting commentary upon its historical association with dinners and diners in a January 1902 editorial titled, "On Reading the Atlantic Cheerfully." Suggesting that the "ideal magazine-reading mood" was that of "well-bred people listening to after-dinner conversation" (3), Bliss Perry invited the readers of The Atlantic to join in the feast. Reflecting the motive which encouraged Mr. Phillips to attend the founding dinner, he emphasizes that those who wish to come are the only ones invited: "People who do not like good company, who prefer to dine exclusively with Cheerless Persons of Their Own Sort, are not under the slightest obligation to attend" (4). Directly equating his magazine with food he declares that the "magazine means to spread each month a hospitable board" (4). In the sociological construction which allies "an elaborated taste for the most refined objects" with an "elementary taste for the flavours of food" The Atlantic clearly demarcates both.

In this direct invitation to a feast Perry blurs the distinction between the intellectual and gastronomic. His editorial reveals that The Atlantic's position as a determiner of literary tastes in the nineteenth-century related to its metaphorical associations with exclusivity, and the literal gatherings of its contributors (both within the magazine and without). In defining the cultural boundaries which influence literary production, The Atlantic exercised the sanction of a host:

To add more leaves to such an infinitely extensible dining table is, of course, a pleasure. Yet it will do no harm to sit closer, too, with an amiable disposition to be pleased, if possible, with one's fellow guests, and to make all needful allowance for a most fallible Toastmaster. (4)

The modesty of this "most fallible Toastmaster" nevertheless accorded him the position at the head of the table. As with the magazine he represented, he occupied the ideological position of authority.

Chapter Five: "Quality" in the Marketplace

"I am tempted to begin by saying that Business is the opprobrium of Literature."

W. D. Howells, Scribner's (Oct. 1893)

According to Mott, the period between 1885 and 1905 was the era during which "editors locked up their ivory towers and came down into the marketplace" (vol. 4 2). This age of transition complicated the previously existing boundaries in the cultural goods business. The rise of weeklies and ten-centers along with the addition of "supplements" and "Sunday editions" to the daily newspapers blurred the already mobile distinctions between paper and periodical. Further confusion developed with an increase of news content in the magazines. Moreover, with the rise of periodical advertising, the magazine not only entered the marketplace, but the marketplace entered the magazine.

The influx of so many changes in the marketplace reinforced the necessity of boundaries. In other words, presented with innovation, the protection of previously established standards acquires paramount importance. In her article on "Reward Systems in Art, Science, and Religion," Diana Crane suggests that there are "'gatekeepers' who evaluate the innovations produced by members of the community" (719). These 'gatekeepers' receive societal

approval. They are accepted as the preservers of artistic legitimacy and standards of valuation.

The cultural authority acquired by the "quality" magazines allowed them to act as gatekeepers. They were perceived as the guardians of good taste from the profit-oriented concerns of the marketplace. This role had three immediate effects upon their own business practices. First, it augmented their position of ideological superiority in relation to other periodicals. Secondly, it enabled them to derive profits from disinterestedness; and lastly, it facilitated the introduction of advertisements into the periodical pages. In each of these practices the "quality" magazines demonstrated a capacity to conduct business without seeming to disgrace art. Untainted by the opprobrium of business, these magazines guaranteed literary value.

Men of Letters and Men of Business

In October 1893, Scribner's Magazine addressed the issue of cultural production in an article entitled "The Man of Letters as a Man of Business." As the editor of the Atlantic Monthly from 1871 to 1881, a member of Harper's editorial staff from 1886 onwards and a frequent contributor of criticism, reviews, editorials, poems, short stories, and novels to each of the "quality" magazines, the author of the Scribner's article was both a man of letters and a man of business: W. D. Howells. From his vantage point as both

artist and literary publisher, Howells reached the conclusion that in the relationship between business and art, the workings of business receive the greater attention:

At present business is the only human solidarity; we are all bound together with that chain, whatever interests and tastes and principles separate us, and I feel quite sure that in writing of the Man of Letters as a Man of Business, I shall attract far more readers than I should in writing of him as an Artist. (430).

The particular relevance of his comments to the periodical market relate to the fact that in late nineteenth-century America, authors wishing to achieve financial success depended upon the magazines.

The relationship between business and aesthetics in the magazines was, on the most basic level, a practical one. The magazines were where authors wanted to be published:

The book, except in very rare instances, makes nothing like the return to the author that the magazine makes, and there are but two or three authors who find their account in that form of publication. (Howells 432)

Howells indicates that even Mark Twain (who had achieved great financial success with his unserialized books) eventually "turned to the magazines too, and now takes their mint mark before he passes into general circulation" (432).

The importance of the periodicals to the artists' pocketbook extended to his reputation. Indeed, Howells indicates that this is the primary aspect of the artist's reward:

The young author who wins recognition in a first-class magazine has achieved a double success, first with the editor, and then with the best reading public. Many factitious and fallacious literary reputations have been made through books, but very few have been made through the magazines, which are not only the best means of living, but of outliving with the author; they are both bread and fame to him. (433)

Since the periodicals provided artists with "both bread and fame" they combined considerations of artistic valuation and monetary profit.

As Howells contends, while magazines are ephemeral in form, their symbolic and financial influence was long-lasting:

I am impatient of the antiquated and ignorant prejudice which classes the magazine as ephemeral. They are ephemeral in form, but in substance they are not ephemeral, and what is best in them awaits its resurrection in the book, which, as the first form, is so often a lasting death. (433)

The magazines provided a source of income and of legitimacy.

The extent to which the "quality" magazines were seen as the creators of literary value is indicated by Caroline Ticknor in her discussion of Hawthorne and His Publisher:

Every young writer was ambitious to join his name with [the Boston intellectuals] in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' and in the lists of Ticknor and Fields, who were literary publishers in a sense such as the business world has known nowhere else before or since. (293)

Ticknor suggests that authors were ambitious to appear in the Atlantic, and by extension in the lists of its publishers Ticknor and Fields, since "their imprint was a warrant of quality to the reader, and of immortality to the author" (293).

Deriving Profits from Disinterestedness

Howells discussed the source of the main paradox in the relationship between the market and aesthetics in his suggestion that although "business is the only human solidarity" the alliance between business and art involves a tacit social uneasiness: "Even in the midst of the grotesque confusion of our economic being, people feel that there is something profane, something impious, in taking money for a picture, or a poem, or a statue" (429). With specific reference to periodical literature, he maintains that this feeling of impiety extends to the

practice of paying an author a set price per word:

"Usually, the price is so much a thousand words, a truly odious method of computing literary value . . . it is as if a painter sold his picture at so much a square inch, or a sculptor bargained away a group of statuary by the pound" (434).

According to Bourdieu, this feeling that business profanes art results directly from the belief systems involved in the process of "consecration":

The fields of cultural goods production are universes of belief which can only function insofar as they succeed in simultaneously producing products and the need for those products through practices which are the denial of the ordinary practices of the 'economy.' ("Production" 138)

In the field of cultural production, value exists in representation. Works cannot directly acquire monetary profit without lowering their cultural classification. Bourdieu refers to this type of economic disavowal as the "means of deriving profits from disinterestedness" ("Production" 132).

A retrospective of "American Periodicals" in the 1 May, 1900 edition of the critical semi-monthly, The Dial illustrates this connection between valuation and economic profit:

Most [American Periodicals], it is true, seek simply the mysterious pathway to the public's pocket. Their founders and conductors are ready to do anything to gratify what they think is the public taste, or lack of taste. (Nelson, 350)

According to this interpretation, profitability relates to the gratification of the public's "lack of taste." It follows, therefore, that a periodical wishing to be perceived as catering to the public's taste, and not lack thereof, would participate in the marketplace while seeming to remain in an ivory tower.

The 1 October, 1892 edition of The Dial equates The Atlantic Monthly with disinterested marketing: "During its entire existence it has not derogated from a high ideal, and it has a reward beside which pecuniary profit seems trivial" (204). Published according to this "high ideal," this article suggests the power of legitimation possessed by the "quality" magazines.

In "The Man of Letters as a Man of Business," Howells summarizes the ideological supremacy of the "quality" magazines in the field of literary production through his assertion that they "guaranteed" high literary standards. He indicates that although a book may come to its buyer "without the warrant of a critical estimate" such a situation "is never the case with a magazine of high class" (433). Of the readers who patronize the "quality"

periodicals, he says that "their taste has no doubt been cultivated by that of the disciplined and experienced editors" (432) and of these editors he claims that these magazines require "a well-trained critic, who is bound by the strongest ties of honour and interest not to betray either his employer or his public" (433).

His comments illustrate the arguments made throughout this thesis concerning the dynamic interactions between editor, author, and reader which were involved in the publication of periodical literature. The "quality" labels, cover-price, and construction of audience each contributed to a self-reflexive, and self-perpetuating, construction of elite taste: "a warrant of quality" (433).

Magazine into Marketplace

Through their apparent distance from the monetary concerns of the marketplace, these magazines not only established a location which guaranteed the quality of a work of art, but also, through the same distancing, created a venue for the first periodical advertising. Since advertisements have become an inseparable aspect of magazine publishing the history of their acceptance into monthly magazines through the example of the "quality" group deserves some attention.

The early attitude of the monthlies towards advertising patronage was personified by that adopted by Fletcher Harper

in the pages of Harper's. Excepting only the invariable notices for books published by its firm, according to George Rowell's reminiscences in Forty Years an Advertising Agent: 1865-1950, "Harper's not only did not seek advertisements, but actually refused to take them" (179). Rowell recounts that he remembers listening "with staring eyes" to Fletcher Harper as he recounted that "he had that week refused an offer of \$18,000 for the use of the last page for a year for an advertisement of the Howe Sewing Machine" (23). It was, Harper argued, "a degradation of literature to allow [his] monthly collection of belles lettres to be bound on one side by the announcements of trades people" (Calkins 108). Reflecting Fletcher Harper's attitude towards the announcements of the trades people, The Chicago Magazine declared "We respond to the wish of a contemporary that we might be able to dispense with advertising as an avenue of public patronage; but at present the law of necessity must overrule the law of taste" (Tassin 307).

The attitude of these magazines began to change in 1870 with the introduction of advertising in Scribner's. From the beginning Scribner's possessed a degree of cultural legitimation in the name of its editor and co-founder: Dr. Josiah Gilbert Holland. In 1870, when Holland and businessman Roswell Smith decided to form a new periodical with the backing of Charles Scribner's publishing house, "Holland was already famous in American literary circles"

(Mott vol. 3 458). His reputation as a writer of moral essays had been established in the Springfield Republican. In this publication he wrote a series titled "Letters to Young People Married or Single." This series was successful enough to be reissued by the Scribners in book form. Moreover, Holland was well-known as the poet of Bitter-Sweet and Kathrina. As Mott observes, "the sales of the latter [exceeded] that of any other American long poem except Hiawatha" (458). The name of this founder undoubtedly helped offset the negative repercussions of an advertising section in the back pages of his magazine.

This first monthly to actively solicit advertisements, not only established their presence in the periodical pages, but recognized the need for innovations in attention-getting techniques and the employment of men specializing in this nascent form of commercialism. During its initial years of publication, spread throughout the advertisements on Scribner's back pages, there appeared a series of amusing drawings. In his article "Magazine into Marketplace," Earnest Elmo Calkins indicates the influence of this early technique upon modern magazine advertising:

The pictures were of a serial nature--ancestors of our comic strips--and A. B. Frost's inimitable negroes were among the popular characters. It was a device that has its counterpart today, for most magazines jump their stories and articles to the

penultimate pages for the same utilitarian purpose (108).

The impetus behind such revolutions in advertising was accentuated by Scribner's introduction of advertising managers into its organization.

The first of these men was Frank N. Doubleday (who later established the book publishing firm which still bears his name). Although his position was that of a "business manager," Calkins suggests that he was "doubtless its advertising manager as far as [Scribner's] required one, until magazine publishers began to develop their field in a serious way" (112). Scribner's first official advertising manager was Rowland Mix. In the eighties and nineties, Mix and his contemporaries (James Rogers of Harper's and George Hazen of the Century) dominated the business of soliciting magazine advertising. Calkins relates that they were known as the "Three Musketeers of magazine advertising" (112). Their dominance in the field lasted until the rise of the aggressive marketing of the cheap monthlies: the magazines established by innovative businessmen such as McClure, Munsey, Curtis, and Hearst. After its name change to The Century in 1881, Scribner's averaged one hundred and thirty-four pages of advertising in an issue of four hundred pages, leading the "little" magazine The Philistine to comment in June 1895: "The Century, it is said, will insert a page or two of reading matter between the Italian art and the ads"

(Mott vol. 3: 475).¹

In 1887, after keeping a promise that they would not reinstate a magazine under the Scribner's name for at least five years, Charles Scribner's Sons established Scribner's Magazine. Advertising patronage of this new magazine (with its familiar name) was double that of the original magazine. The types of advertisements accepted by this magazine during its initial year (as exemplified in the issue from June 1887) included publishers' notices, and (among other things) announcements for "Peerless Antidust Oversleeves," "Fireworks," "Rare Cacti From Mexico," "The Lady Washington Lace Covered Braided Wire Bustle," and "Dr. Scott's Genuine Electric Belt" (see figures 4-6).

For three dollars this last item promised that its electro-magnetism would treat a variety of ailments from "Male and Female Weakness, Nervous and General Debility, Rheumatism, [and] Paralysis" to "Diseases of the Spine Kidney, Liver and Heart." It might naturally be asked at this point how the periodicals in the "quality" group maintained their dignity and associations with distinction when they included such advertisements. One reason was that, through the actions of Collier's and The Ladies Home Journal, they did not contain such advertisements for long. As "family" periodicals Collier's and The Ladies Home Journal relied for their audience upon constructions of "integrity." Accordingly, in 1904 they began a campaign

against false advertising (particularly with regards to patent medicines). The efforts of both contributed to the creation of the National Food and Drug Act in 1906.

In addition to the eventual phasing out of advertisements for patent medicines in the pages of the "quality" magazines, in 1903 an article in Current Literature directly indicated how a perception of the "quality" magazines as national educators facilitated the presence of advertisements in their pages:

No one who realizes the immense influence for good which these periodicals wield in the education of the nation would desire for one moment to deprive their enterprising owners of the smallest fraction of the profits which may accrue to them. (9)

Moreover, by the end of the century the ideological sanction of advertisements in the "quality" magazines was influenced by a perceived threat to the existence of these magazines. This threat to the high-priced magazines appeared in the guise of ten and fifteen-cent monthlies.

In 1888, Current Literature portrayed the financial situation in straightforward terms:

Should Harper's and the Century be constrained to lower their subscription rates, some retrenchment of expenses will probably be deemed necessary: at least until it can be ascertained how and to what extent an increased revenue may be obtained from

advertisements. (377)

This article continues with an emphasis upon what exactly was at risk: "This retrenchment is likely to fall, in the first place, upon the departments of illustration, and afterwards, if need be, upon the honorarium of contributors" (377). In this situation wherein the quality of the quality magazines was threatened, advertisements were portrayed as a potential saviour--the necessary purveyors of increased revenue.

The evolution of magazine advertising inherited the original sanction granted the "quality" group so that the modern magazine most commonly associated with the excesses of its advertising department is also considered one of the most distinguished repositories of taste: The New Yorker. Since the shift in attitude towards magazine advertising which allowed for the combination of the marketplace and literature began in the pages of a "first class" periodical, it established the increased revenues of periodical advertising without denigrating its cultural authority. It seems appropriate that the magazines which paved the way to high standards of literary production through their embodiment of disinterested marketing, also made this more practical contribution to the financial health of magazines in the marketplace.

Chapter Six: "Quality" in Transition

So SCRIBNER'S is going the way of almost all the other general monthly magazines. McClure's, Everybody's, Appleton's, Hampton's, Lippincotts, Munsey's, Hearst's, International, The Metropolitan, The Century--There used to be dozens of them, highbrow or lowbrow, quality group or popular group.

Epitaph for Scribner's (May 24, 1939)

With the changes ushered in by a new century, the magazines which had been associated throughout the later half of the nineteenth-century with quality, began to be associated with conventionality. The rise of literary modernism challenged previous ideologies of literary aesthetics: with Ezra Pound the young moderns iconoclastically declared, "make it new." In this atmosphere of experimentation, the aristocratic good taste preserved and perpetuated by the "quality group" lost its appeal. Literature fit for the most refined dinners and diners seemed anachronistic in a modern age.

Each of the "quality" magazines dealt with the upheavals introduced by this new literary era through changes to their format. Both Harper's and The Atlantic transferred their emphasis from literature to politics, the

"quality" label accompanying them into their new realm of publishing practice. Still published today, they have remained magazines of distinction. In contrast, both The Century and Scribner's failed to compete in the new era. Through the forfeiture of their distinction they lost their status within the marketplace: instead of being two among the "big four," they became just two among many. The evolution of each of these magazines revealed a locus of taste construction: success or failure indicated the degree to which their position as "quality" periodicals adapted to a new age.

Two of the Best

The principal change to Harper's format came in 1925, under the editorship of the man who had succeeded Alden in 1919, Thomas Bucklin Wells. According to the centennial retrospective appearing in Harper's:

Wells realized that because of the change that had taken place in the American scene it was no longer practical to appeal to a class or group that was supposed to combine wealth, discrimination, and literary taste. (Allen 32)

From an aristocracy of wealth, Wells proposed to appeal to an aristocracy of intellect; he proposed to edit the magazine for "thoughtful and discriminating people of whatever income bracket, who appreciated fine quality" (32).

The construction of this audience was such that it was still associated with the refined tastes of an elite. The distinguishing characteristics of this new elite mass were simply more democratically defined; the new emphasis was placed more upon intellect than income.

The content and appearance of the magazine under Wells reflected its shifted focus. In the nineteenth-century Harper's he embodied luxury. It looked like a magazine read by the leisured classes. In his ninetieth anniversary retrospective, Bernard DeVoto describes Harper's under Alden as "lush and lavish" (111), and during what he refers to as the magazine's "glorious age" (1880-1915) he says that it could "be two hundred pages long, publish as many articles in one issue as it does to-day and in the same issue publish an equal number of stories and parts of two serials" (111). Under Wells, the former luxuriousness of the magazine was withdrawn. After the war, having studied extensive surveys of Harper readers, he changed the appearance of the magazine and revitalized its contents.

In September 1925, this new Harper's appeared in the marketplace. Its illustrations, previously one of its most popular features, had been removed entirely. Wells felt "that illustrations were no longer necessary in a high-quality magazine" (Mott vol. 2: 404). He explained that within the highly commercialized art business that only the larger "women's magazines" could afford the most elaborate

illustrations. Since Harper's could no longer afford illustrations "of the type for which Harper's and the Century were famous" he proposed to eliminate them. Wells' decision concerning Harper's illustrations reflected both the new image of intellectual gravity adopted by the magazine, but also the protection of its locus of "quality." Since each aspect of a magazine contributes to an impression of the whole, inferior illustrations would have adversely affected a superior status.

Drastically reducing the amount of fiction, this new Harper's appeared in a plain orange cover. Analysis of current affairs predominated:

The old inhibitions were swept away, and Harper's became a journal of diversified opinion, written by the leading thinkers of the new day--Charles A. Beard, James Truslow Adams, Count Keyserling, Bertrand Russell, James Harvy Robinson, Harold J. Laski, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and so on.

(Mott vol. 2 404)

The present-day Harper's lacks a plain orange cover and with the advent of photographic journalism, illustrations here returned, but its reputation as a "quality" journal of ideas has remained essentially unchanged.

By the time of the changes made by Wells in 1925, Harper's had embodied both a physical space in which to look for quality literature and an ideological standard by which

to judge other periodicals for seventy-five years. In 1950 it celebrated its centennial. Today, after one hundred and forty years, it is still being published. In 1940, Bernard DeVoto summarized its resilience in remaining within the boundaries which define taste:

Whatever changes there may have been, for ninety years it has been edited for exactly the same audience, has maintained the same editorial standards, and has existed on the highest level of journalism. (112)

Associated with discerning editors, intelligent readers and superior literature (whether fiction or critical essays), Harper's locus of taste construction continually generated and reinforced the cultural classification of "quality."

Stressing Harper's cultural status in his closing remarks, DeVoto repeatedly describes this magazine as "the best":

From its first issue on to to-day it has always been one of the best American magazines, which is to say one of the best magazines in the world, and it has frequently, by universal acknowledgement, been the best. (112)

His use of the phrase "The best" indicate Harper's position in a locus of taste construction. Its label of legitimation remained intact. Although it is no longer primarily a literary magazine, it continues to be a mass-market magazine

which promotes the literary essentialism implied by its defining epithet. Today, Harper's remains one of the best.

As with Harper's, the Atlantic Monthly preserved its "quality" status through a shift away from an emphasis upon literature towards a more political tone. The format change undertaken in the Atlantic was foreshadowed by Bliss Perry, who was its editor between August 1899 and July 1909.

Ellery Sedgwick III says of Perry that he "was uncomfortably aware that the blood ran thin and cold in the New England literary tradition" (54). By accepting political commentary from Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, J. J. Chapman, E. L. Godkin, and Woodrow Wilson, he made some initial steps in moving the focus of the magazine away from the declining New England literary tradition. Still, his inroads in this direction were small, and as Sedgwick III says of Perry's editorship, "dissatisfied with waiting for a Keats or a Whitman who never materialized, Perry was glad to turn the burden over in 1909 to Ellery Sedgwick" (54)

Sedgwick was editor of the magazine for almost thirty years, from August 1909 to June 1938. Under his editorship The Atlantic changed its emphasis from belles-letters to current affairs. A journalist himself, his primary interest was contemporary and political. However, his understanding of The Atlantic's "cultural traditions" led him to make changes to its format gradually; he was "aware that too sudden a change would alienate its traditional constituency"

(Sedgewick III 54). Accordingly, he "continued largely to represent the genteel tradition in literature that was the attenuated legacy of the vigorous old New England idealism" (54). Within the field of current affairs, by contrast, he "generated considerable innovation" (54). He placed an emphasis upon controversial topics, debates expressing opposing views, and first-hand reportage (this facet of the journal was especially impressive during World War I). Sedgewick guided The Atlantic into a new publishing arena and into a new century.

The success with which The Atlantic maintained its "quality" status into the new era appears in the exacting summary of the magazine provided by Jean M. Parker in American Mass-Market Magazines. Despite changes in editorship and fluctuations in circulation, Parker says of The Atlantic:

[It] has never relinquished its standards for quality fiction and nonfiction, and what was said about the first 30 years of the Atlantic is applicable after 130: the Atlantic contributions are at least equal to and generally better than those found in other literary and general-interest magazines (36).

Thus characterized by its standards of quality, its distinguished editors and authors, and its long tradition of

literary superiority, The Atlantic remains firmly ensconced within the ideological boundaries demarcating excellence.

Victorians in the Jazz Age

In contrast to the successful evolutions of Harper's and The Atlantic, both The Century and Scribner's disappeared from periodical publication in the 1930s. In his retrospective of the magazine, Fred Robbins suggests (in a phrase reminiscent of Emma Helen Blair's "Excursion Among the Periodicals") that at one time the Century "had an almost incalculable influence on American society" (368). Its period of greatest influence had been during the 1890s. During that time, lavishly illustrated and possessing a circulation of 200,000, it could afford to pay well for contributions from the best-known authors: Mark Twain, Henry James, W. D. Howells, Stephen Crane, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Kate Chopin and Sarah Orne Jewett.

As a magazine of "quality," the Century possessed an influential amount of cultural authority; however, its literary conservatism indicated the limited approach of its editors towards what they would consecrate: "The Century held to the highest aesthetic and moral ideals of its time and as such reflects much of the best as well as some of the worst of American literature and American society" (Robbins 368). Under the editorship of Richard Watson Gilder from 1881 through 1909, this magazine "remained nervous about its

readership, practising the sort of self-censorship common in late Victorian America" (Robbins 366). Having failed to change in keeping even with its own time, it could not achieve distinction in another. In 1929, The Century became a quarterly. In 1930 it merged with the Forum and disappeared.

Like The Century, by 1914 Scribner's was associated with literary conservatism. Scribner's editor at this time was Robert Bridges, a man who had been an associate editor since its founding in 1887. Tellingly, of the format adopted by Bridges, Mott says: "he continued the traditional policies of Scribner's without much change" (727). In an era characterized by the ascendancy of Hemmingway, Fitzgerald, and Wolfe, among others, Bridges stuck primarily to the writers associated with the magazine since its inception: Galsworthy, Wharton, and Van Dyke. Since the only editor prior to Bridges was its founder, Edward Livermore Burlingame, by continuing Scribner's traditional format Bridges was carrying the Victorian era into the Jazz Age.

An attempt was made to revitalize the magazine in 1930, under the auspices of its new, young editor Alfred Sheppard Dashiell. With this twenty-nine year old at the helm, writers personifying the new age began to appear within Scribner's pages: Hemingway, Wolfe, Sherwood Anderson, Erskin Caldwell, Ruth Suckow, William Saroyan, James Boyd

and Willian Faulkner. Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night was serialized in Scribner's in 1934. However, its circulation dropped away as its core of old subscribers left, and new readers failed to replace them. Dashiell left Scribner's for the Reader's Digest in 1936.

In his "Epitaph for Scribner's" in The New Republic, Malcom Cowley attributes the demise of Scribner's to a "business paradox." He suggests that the spirit of commercialism which destroyed most of the general monthlies was also responsible for the death of Scribner's: "They became so commercial in spirit, so timid and deferential toward those in power, that they lost their audience, their profits and their reason for existence, all at one stroke" (77). He contends that "among the general magazines, Scribner's had stood somewhat apart"; it lost that distinction when it became "a general magazine in the sense of being a composite picture." Borrowing from an assortment of other magazines, Scribner's lost its elite cultural classification and its successful position in the marketplace:

As soon as it began to imitate the new mass-circulation magazines, it had to have a mass circulation. It had to be judged by standards of strict business accounting. It had to make a profit on pain of death (Cowley 77).

Unable to make a profit on pain of death, Scribner's disappeared.

Its name was sold to the Commentator in 1939 and in November 1939 it appeared as Scribner's Commentator. Mott stresses that Scribner's Commentator "was in no sense a continuation of Scribner's Magazine" (vol. 4: 732). He emphasises this distinction since, according to him, Scribner's had been "a credit to the name it bore" (vol. 4, 732). Under its new name Mott contends that Scribner's name was disgraced. This opinion is based upon an incident reported in the New York Times on Wednesday October 7, 1942. Headed "Three Men Indicted as Agents of Japan," this article revealed that the publisher of Scribner's Commentator, Joseph Hilton Smyth, had been indicted under the Foreign Agents Registration Act for accepting money from the Japanese to publish propaganda in his periodicals.

Regarding this situation, Mott concludes: "When a respectable magazine dies it should emulate Stevenson's hunter and lay itself down with a will, and not pass its name on for another periodical to disgrace" (vol. 4: 732). This anger at the ignomy offered to the name of Scribner's indicates its status as a label of cultural legitimation. At its demise it still possessed a title which, taboo-like, could be profaned.

Becoming "Smart"

Demonstrating an aristocratic essentialism of their

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PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
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PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

own, four new mass-market periodicals founded in the early twentieth-century adopted ideological boundaries familiar to constructions of taste in the "quality" magazines. Known as the "smart" magazines, these periodicals were The Smart Set, Vanity Fair, Esquire, and The New Yorker. While these periodicals disassociated themselves from the Victorian literary traditions of the previous "big four," they retained their associations with aristocratic essentialism, monied readers, and elite taste. This transfer of cultural authority from quality to smartness relied upon their iconoclasm.

Appearing in 1900, the first of these "better class" magazines provided the appellation which was to distinguish all four: "the smart set." The indeterminacy of the title (who are the smart set?) reinforces its cultural authority since the assumption behind it is that its readers are immediately members of this elite group, this set. Moreover, the word "smart" reinforces both a previous historical association between a monied upper class as the original purveyors of magazine literature and its new interpretation according to associations with wry cleverness.

The Smart Set's cover illustration portrayed a man and a woman in evening dress. In the centre of the page, a man is shown bowing to a woman. Each looks assured and

self-possessed: aristocratic. Its subtitle read, "A Magazine of Cleverness." In the left-hand corner, a masked satyr impishly manipulated batwinged-hearts on strings. Across the top of the page, in huge red lettering, its title appeared, The Smart Set: a new label of literary exclusivity. In the upper right-hand corner was its price: twenty-five cents (see figure 7).

A similar mixture of mockery and authority appears in Robert Benchley's 1920 tribute in The Bookman to the founding editor of Vanity Fair, Frank Crowninshield. In this homage, Benchley indicates that Crowninshield would print "practically anything"--"so long as [the author] says it in evening clothes" (432). This flippant reference to literature in evening clothes captures the correlation between cultural authority and the expectations of a high brow audience even as it satirizes them. It is interesting, too, that this magazine aligned itself (as The Atlantic before it) with exceptional dinner parties. An advertisement for this magazine appearing in the March 1917 edition of The Smart Set declared, "Six Months of Vanity Fair will Enable you to Ignite a Dinner Party at Fifty Yards" (see figure 8). This magazine, like its predecessor, associated itself with a realm of legitimating taste extending beyond the pages of the magazine into metaphorical social life.

The self-applied aristocratic status of the four

appears in the iconograph of The New Yorker's figurehead, Eustace Tilly. A caricature of a regency gentleman, Tilly superciliously observes a butterfly through his monocle. This figure simultaneously represents and deconstructs notions of aristocratic essentialism. This duality captured the new ideological construction of "good taste": smart not smarmy (see figure 9). As "smart" magazines their site of discourse preserved the cultural authority associated with "quality." However, the playful ambiguity of this new label of legitimation allowed a repudiation of the conventionality associated with running a magazine according to the etiquette of a dinner party. In these magazines the Algonquin Hotel and its Round Table displaced Porter's Tavern and the Saturday Club, but the basis of discrimination remained the same: as with the "quality" magazines before them, these magazines continued to influence the development of American literature through an association in their pages with only the best.

As a historical footnote, the relative nature of the two labels, "quality" and "smart" revealed itself most clearly through Scribner's attempt, just before its demise, to transform a "quality" magazine into a "smart" magazine. Under its final editor, Harlan Logan, the magazine imitated elements of the four established "smart" magazines. He made the Scribner's foreign affairs department "Straws in the Wind" over into the "semblance of the New Yorker's 'Talk of

the Town' (Mott vol. 4 731). In 1937, he hired former Smart Set editor and theatre critic, George Jean Nathan to provide reviews for the magazine, and in the style of Vanity Fair, full-page colour lithographs of modern art were incorporated into the magazine. From a circulation of 40,000, it increased to 100,000. With this new format Logan began to reverse Scribner's financial losses. However, he had arrived too late to completely reverse the damage done by his predecessors; his efforts ultimately failed to turn a profit. Indicative of its success in almost becoming "smart," when the magazine folded in 1939, its subscription list was bought by Dave Smart the owner of Esquire.

Decline and Fall?

In both categories . . . writers have met the high standards imposed by the magazine.

Jean M. Parker, "Atlantic Monthly"

Through the example of the four "quality" magazines, the concern of my thesis has been with how business, ideology, and literary production combine in the creation and perpetuation of elite taste. Since these magazines sold themselves as representations of "quality," their existence and continued success depended upon their ability to portray themselves, their editors, and their literary contributions as synonymous with a warrant of excellence. It meant the necessity of maintaining the ideological authority of a high cover-price, the construction of an elite readership, and even the extracurricular necessity of throwing a good dinner party. In other words, in accordance with their defining epithet they became marketers of quality: they sold both literature and the aesthetic perceptions which shaped literary production.

The aristocratic essentialism of their position required them to live up to their own high standards. In turn, the reputation they possessed as guarantors of literary excellence associated them with disinterested marketing, thereby endowing the works which they published

with both symbolic and literal value. Their ability to thus consecrate texts made publication in their pages a desirable goal of American authors. It encouraged authors to meet the demands required by the cultural authority of the magazine. Of course, it might be suggested that the situation of these magazines resembled that of the chicken and the egg: did their cultural authority produce literary value, or did the literature they published produce their cultural authority? My response to this question exists in the argument that the two factors work in tandem, each creating and perpetuating the other.

My analysis of Scribner's and The Century revealed the relationship between literary standards and a reputation for quality, since the two magazines which lost their distinction simultaneously forfeited their role as purveyors of literature worth reading. They were no longer able to attract the best that there was to offer, or new readers desirous of buying what they had. And finally, through my discussion of the "smart" magazines, I indicated that the elite taste which the "quality" magazines had embodied in the previous century was carried into the literary requirements of these magazines in the twentieth. The ability of this new generation of mass-market periodicals to provide a national arena for the literary experimentation of young American authors influenced the development of literary modernism.

My exploration of the marketing of quality in this thesis lends itself to related avenues worthy of further investigation. While I have indicated the significant role that Harper's, The Atlantic, Scribner's and The Century played in nineteenth-century literary development, the scope of my research did not allow for specific investigation of the authors and the literary trends supported in the pages of these magazines. I would suggest that, in particular, W. D. Howells' critical essays encouraging literary realism, which appeared in Harper's at the end of the century, would provide an interesting study in conjunction with the literature published by the magazine during that period.

In general, the entire unexamined field of nineteenth-century American mass-market periodicals would reward further research. Again, as a particular example of the kind of study which might be undertaken, it would be worthwhile to explore Mott's contention that the type of gritty journalism (commonly referred to as "muckraking") which McClure pioneered in his magazine influenced writing styles beyond the pages of reportage and into the texts of fiction.

Closer to the concerns of the present undertaking, it would be interesting to investigate how modern gatekeepers of literary excellence acquire their cultural authority in conjunction with the lessened role of the print media and the dominance of electronic communications. Assuming that a

field of production which demands and perpetuates high standards of quality has not disappeared altogether from literary publication, it might be asked simply, where it is, and how it works. The methodology of modern literary production would be accentuated through further investigation of the four nineteenth-century, mass-market magazines which influenced the development of American literature through their cultural distinction as repositories of quality.

Endnotes

1. Although Scribner's was the "veritable cradle" (Calkins 108) of magazine advertising, the advertisements appearing in this magazine were not kept in bound editions and have not been preserved in microfilm collections. They can only be seen in the remaining unbound originals. Of this loss Earnest Elmo Calkins had this to say:

It is a pity the old librarians did not know enough to preserve the advertising pages when they bound their magazines. They destroyed records more veritable and revealing than old diaries or crumbling tombstones. The editorial matter may show what people read, but the advertising pages show what they did. (114)

As the magazine which established the tradition of periodical advertising the lack of solicitude shown towards preservation of the whole magazine is particularly acute.

In Harper's, the same lack of attention towards preservation of the advertising section was shown, with an even more disturbing result. Owing to the supplementary nature suggested by separate pagination and its proximity to the advertising section binders of Harper's Monthly excluded a series of book reviews headed "Literary Notes." These notes were published in Harper's from between 1886 and 1899. The effort of finding the notes and republishing them in chronological order was undertaken by Clayton L. Eichelberger in the 1970s. They appear in his Harper's Lost Reviews. It is somewhat ironic that in separating the "quality" magazines from their advertisements (after one of these had been instrumental in establishing their presence) that in the process an important element of their literary history was, thus, almost lost.

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Figure IX

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Decline and Fall?

In both categories . . . writers have met the high standards imposed by the magazine.

Jean M. Parker, "Atlantic Monthly"

Through the example of the four "quality" magazines, the concern of my thesis has been with how business, ideology, and literary production combine in the creation and perpetuation of elite taste. Since these magazines sold themselves as representations of "quality," their existence and continued success depended upon their ability to portray themselves, their editors, and their literary contributions as synonymous with a warrant of excellence. It meant the necessity of maintaining the ideological authority of a high cover-price, the construction of an elite readership, and even the extracurricular necessity of throwing a good dinner party. In other words, in accordance with their defining epithet they became marketers of quality: they sold both literature and the aesthetic perceptions which shaped literary production.

The aristocratic essentialism of their position required them to live up to their own high standards. In turn, the reputation they possessed as guarantors of literary excellence associated them with disinterested marketing, thereby endowing the works which they published