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Ideological Ambivalence of Male towards Female in Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes*

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

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Abstract

Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, focuses on the relationship between male and female characters and ambivalent attitude of the males towards females in the American society. On the one hand, females' power and talent have been presented through their artistic abilities but on the other hand they have been presented as being incapable of making decisions about their career and are bound to think for the welfare of their children and husband at the expense of their desire. All the married women have been depicted as more or less supportive and submissive to their husbands, and they are shown as being incapable of making any personal decisions sidelining their husbands. Even Alma who is portrayed as modern and unmarried girl, receives a big blow when on the one hand everybody accepts her as a talented girl but on the other even her near and dear ones advocate that her talent will be materialized only at the expense of marrying a boy.

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I. W.D. Howells and His Works: A Critical Assessment

A prolific and versatile author of novels, plays, essays, poems, short stories, reviews, literary criticism and travel pieces, William Dean Howells was born on 1st March in 1837 at Martin's Ferry, Ohio. His father, William Cooper Howells, was of Welsh descent and his mother Mary Dean Howells, was of Irish and Pennsylvania Dutch stock. He was an outstanding example of self-education.

At fourteen Howells became a compositor on the *Ohio State Journal* at Columbus and later editor for the same. After writing a biography of Abraham Lincoln, he was appointed US consul in Venice, Italy. His four years in Venice were the equivalent of a university education for Howells. They gave him not only an acquaintance with the riches of Europe, but enough time to read, write and improve his knowledge of languages. During his consulship, in 1862, he married Elinor Mead from Vermont, whom he had previously met in Columbus. Their stay abroad inspired the writing of *Venetian Life* and *Italian journeys* which were published in 1866 and 1868 respectively.

Returning to America in 1865, Howells intensified his pursuit of a literary career. After a few months of free lancing in New York, a break came when he was offered the post of editorial assistant on *The Nation*. Even this, however, was merely the prelude to one of the most important steps of his life. There he was associated with the *Atlantic Monthly*, as assistant editor and later as editor-in-chief. Then he moved to New York City to write columns for *Harper's Monthly*. His associations with *Harper's Monthly* made him into the kings of critics in America. He made *Harper's Monthly* into a weapon against literary romanticism. He felt that such works created false views about life. He hated the romantic literature of such popular writers

as Frank Stockton and such historical romance as *Ben Hur* by Lew Wallace. He further wrote that such novels make one forget life and all its care and duties. As editor, he was able to help younger novelists like Hamlin Garland and Stephen Crane.

William Dean Howells created the first theory of American realism. He had many important followers. Under him realism became the "mainstream" of American literature. The quality of Howells's realism finds effective illustration in what are generally considered his best novels: *A Modern Instance*, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. In these he largely concerns himself with everyday people and realistic translation of their experiences. However, his picture of humanity omitted the rougher aspects of life, and his standards of good taste did not permit the revelations of sex and violence which punctuate the writing of the twentieth century. Because of these omissions, the characters of his novels have been accused of being commonplace, but it is certain that modern realism owes a debt to Howells.

Howells's realism may be summarized in the dictum that everything real in human nature is valuable and that nothing unreal has value. His ideal novelist-realist is a moralist too, tasteful and cultivated, who uses the helps of a realistic approach to enrich the process and not to pervert the result. Since he put his realist theories into practice in his novels, his characters are very complex and unromantic. The author blames society for their troubles. Like most Americans in 1880s, he realized that business and businessmen were at the center of society, and he felt that novels should depict them. The good realist should be interested in the common feelings of ordinary people. On the other hand he felt that author should not make society look more ugly than it is. He is a social witness in his novels.

Novels and shorter fiction continued to pour from Howells's pen with excursions into poetry and drama. In literary criticism also he achieved what some

historians consider his finest work, reaching its peak with *Criticism and Fiction* in 1891. He wrote in *Criticism and Fiction* that character is more important than plot. Howells's characters give an appearance of acting. They fall in love, marry, take jobs, lose jobs, get into trouble, get out of it, but their experience passes over him.

Howells's later years were rich in honors. His last two decades brought satisfying recognition to a man who despite varying estimates of his literary significance, had always refused to compromise on matters involving principle. Harvard, Yale, Columbia conferred degrees upon him. Oxford bestowed a doctorate of literature in 1904, and leading institutions sought his services as lecturer and teacher. For many years he was president of the *American Academy of Arts and Letters*. Before his wife's death in 1909, he frequently traveled abroad with her, afterwards his companion became his daughter Mildred. Howells died on 11th May in 1920 at his home in New York.

Since William Dean Howells is a prolific and versatile writer, he has written novels, plays, poetry, travelogue and criticism. But mainly his novels have given him recognition as a great American writer. His criticism has also helped him to become a renowned writer and critic.

Howells put his realist theories into practice in his novels. The theme of *A Modern Instance* (1882), one of his earlier novels, shocked the public. It was about divorce, a subject which was not talked and written about openly. His characters are very complex and very unromantic. The author blames society for their troubles. This is a position he took in many of his novels.

Howells's next novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), is about an ordinary, uneducated man who becomes rich in the paint business. It describes his unsuccessful attempt to join Boston's "high society" "Old-fashioned heroes" and "unnecessary

sacrifices" were common elements in the pretty pictures of life he created for young female readers. Another character Mr. Sewell expresses Howells's own opinions. He attacks such romantic nonsense.

Howells's works differ from French realists because French realists filled their novels with murder, crime and guilty-sex while Howells does not include such things in his novels. Rather his novels deal with more smiling aspects of life. However, *in A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) Howells seems to turn away from the smiling aspects of society. It is the story of a man who little by little, learns about the terrible suffering of poor people in society. It also deals with the women of late nineteenth and early twentieth century society in all of their forms.

Howells has also written 'utopian' novels about an ideal society with perfect justice and happiness. These included *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894) and *Through the Eye of the Needle* (1907).

The city has long viewed as both the setting and the subject of American realistic fiction including Howells at the turn of century. Late nineteenth century writing however, suggests a more problematic relation between urban life and realistic representation. The confrontation with the unreal city as the site and sign of change informs the realism of William Dean Howells *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890). It is one of the first major novels about New York City.

Allen F. Stein says "major portion of Howells's work examines marriage in America" (501). Indeed in Howells's works the extent to which a character is worthy of respect is usually in direct proportion to the success his marriage enjoys (or is likely to enjoy if he is a newly wed or soon to marry). At the conclusions of his novels, the rupture of a marriage engagement or the failure of a business turns out, typically, to be good news to almost everyone involved. He also discusses the

interrelationship between men and women of American society of late nineteenth century.

William Dean Howells is equally concerned with large social problems. He shifts his attention from the impact of marriage on the individual to its impact on society generally. He also believes that marriage enables one to deal with disorder. He presents marriage in his novels as a key means of mitigating the threat of the confusion that lurks both in the external world and within oneself. For Howells, ultimately marriage offers above all, a means of liberation from the prison of self. This is the burden of perhaps the most explicit characterization of marriage to appear in Howells's work. He also uses autobiographical elements in his novels. For example, *The Worlds of Chance* does evoke Howells's own past.

It is significant that his characters are everywhere plagued by uncertainty and indecision. Taking action is either difficult or impossible for them, and the result, often is that the ultimate issue of a Howells's novel is no more than someone's hesitant formulation a moral judgment. We normally think of politics as the most comprehensive public expression of the condition of a society as a whole. But Howells's novels are almost notoriously barren of contemporary political issues. He made skillful and forthright use of the institutions of journalism. He knew that the newspapers and magazines are the daily report of the state of our societal soul. William Dean Howells objects strongly to economic and social injustices in his novels. He advocates reforms of society and urges that men treat each other as equals. He deals directly and immediately with the family. Thus William Dean Howells's works deal with society and social affairs in a broad way.

A Hazard of New Fortunes is an excellent novel about the lives of a middle class family in the late nineteenth century. The novel starts with the house hunt of

Basil and Isabel March. Basil March started his work as the editor of the magazine *Every Other Week*. Fulkerson was the promoter of the magazine. He had engaged an artist, Angus Beaton to serve as art director. Mr. Dryfoos had undertaken to finance the magazine in order to give his son Conrad a chance to enter business as the ostensible publisher of the periodical. Foreign articles and reviews were to be handled by an old German socialist, Henry Lindau.

In *A Hazard of New Fortunes* William Dean Howells explores a number of themes through the interaction of the major characters in the novel. One important issue of the novel is the role of the women. So, much of his focus revolves around the women in the novel and the interaction of these women with each other and with men. It also deals with American society which was dominated by the patriarchy at that time.

Women were still viewed as second best to the males. They were still supposed to be married off, cook, clean, have children and take care of the family. Because of this, they were viewed as not having much power. *A Hazard of New Fortunes* presents women who abide by the old values in contrast to women who have begun to adopt the values that eventually lead to full suffrage for women, more education opportunities for women, and more career choices for women. In the novel Alma Leighton is presented as women of future. Everyone in the society knows Alma is talented but many feel that because she is a woman, she will never get recognized for it.

Mrs. March is another example of male ambivalence because she sometimes knows what to say and do to influence her husband. She tells him what she likes and dislikes. She helps him by providing support and confidence in his choices. The final decision to move was made by her and a few other important decision were also

suggested by Mrs. March. But she is also portrayed as a woman who will feel difficulty in shopping.

In the novel William Dean Howells is aiming to reach realism. We do not find any ghosts, talking animals, or magical things anywhere in this story rather we find every day things like house hunting, marital spats and business. His characters are very flawed and selfish like any person, one may meet while walking on the street Mr. Dryfoos is characterized as a hard old man while Mrs. Dryfoos is a lonely sad old woman. Similarly Conrad is a compassionate young man, Christine is a shrewd young woman, and Mela is a frivolous young lady.

In the novel Howells places women in the work place at a time when it was very uncommon to do so. Miss Alma Leighton is an artist and she and her mother moved to New York. So she could advance her skill. But it is shown that she could not achieve anything much as a male artist would have achieved. Women also play a very large role in this novel. Howells shows almost every type of women that any of the men might have encountered. He shows a strong domestic power through Mrs. March, while also showing power and artistic ability through Alma Leighton. Although women are shown having certain qualities and abilities, the male characters think they are not equal to them.

William Dean Howells was one of the most remarkable figures in American realism. He became one of the most successful novelists to attract many critics to ponder over his works. Since *A Hazard of New Fortunes* is one of the most representative novels of William Dean Howells, it has been able to draw attention of many critics from its very publication. Some critics have simply ignored the novel by pointing it as full of facts while others have praised it for its vivid presentation of

American life and its society during the late nineteenth century. Commenting on *A Hazard of New Fortunes* John Crowley writes:

A Hazard of New Fortunes is an impressive panorama of American life towards the end of the nineteenth century. People from Boston, the west, the south and Europe all converse in New York to enact a comedy of manners or tragedy, depending on their fortunes that compares in its scope and masterly dissection of society. Howells's light irony touches upon the eternal divisions between the haves and the have nots, male and female the socially secure and the unclassed. (107)

Crowley here clearly explains that the novel presents realistic description of both the cities. He also means to say that there is a large gap in society between the different groups of people including male and female. In his view Howells has made satire upon these divisions.

But Matthew R. Davis mentions:

William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* illustrates the difficulties of aligning men in brotherhood following the civil war and amidst the economic upheaval of the last decades of the 19th century. However, the various characters seek to create successful relationships centered in the concept of equal or universal brotherhood in response to the labor crisis, economic concerns. (177)

Davis says that the novel concerns with economic and social disparity precipitated by the civil war and made manifest in the strikes and unrest of the nineteenth century. He also tries to show the attempt of some characters trying to create successful relationship in the society.

Talking about the text Patrica J. Schulster analyzes:

William Dean Howells presents all sides of the woman question and reaches no concrete conclusions. Instead he waves the conclusion and contrasts endemic to the question, for he views no single choice as fully palatable or ideal. He shows the realistic, negative elements and effects of all of the choices facing women [...] the women in the novel represent the multifaceted, confusing and conflicted microcosm of American female society. (115)

Here, Schulster shows the dilemma of William Dean Howells himself. In her view the presentation of women characters shows the different conditions of women and their relationship with the male character. She also explains about the different choices faced by women. Similarly, Arthur Boardman more closely observes concerning Howells, as a spokesman for American domestic realism through the novel. He writes:

A Hazard of New Fortunes deals in social protest. In the novel Howells objects strongly to economic and social injustices, advocates reforms of society, and urges that men treat each other as equals. In a sense, though he suggests that social reforms are needed, he cannot envision society reformed. (58)

Arthur Boardman takes the novel protesting against economic and social injustices prevalent in the society and advocates for reforms in the society. But in his view Howells does not give any clear picture of reformed society. He says Howells wants people treat each other equally without having bias against anybody.

Lionel Trilling, commenting upon most accurately the principal issue of Howells's most important novel: *A Hazard of New Fortunes* is probably the first

treatment of the theme which become almost obsessive in our fiction in the 'thirties' the intellectuals risking his class position by opposing the prejudices of his class" (519).

Augusta Rohrbach analyzes the novel with autobiographical notes and she writes, "In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Basil March bears a striking resemblance to Howells. March like Howells, wears at least three hats: one as literary editor, another as author, and a third as family man" (638).

The above mentioned critics have different views on the novel. No critics have the views of ideological ambivalence inherent in male towards female but this research tries to explore it.

The area of my research is to explore the ideological ambivalence inherent in male towards female in Howells's novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. Although the novel is observed from several angles by different critics and reviewers, they fail to address adequately the theme of ideological ambivalence inherent in male towards female.

The present study claims that the ideological ambivalence is inherent in male towards female. Every human being whether male or female perceive the society and its people in his or her own way. Women also play a great role in the novel. Howells shows almost every type of women. He shows a strong domestic power through Mrs. March. But at the same time she is so much dependent on her husband that she cannot earn herself for her own as well as her children's survival. So she shifts from Boston to New York with her husband. She also persuades her husband to join Fulkerson's offer to join his magazine enterprise so that he can earn more and their life would be secure and comfortable. Howells has also shown females power and artistic ability through Alma Leighton. But her talent is doubted by everyone. Similarly, Mr.

Dryfoos is from aristocratic family but he is also vigilant and suspicious about the behaviour of his wife and two daughters. Basil March, Dryfoos, Fulkerson and Beaton are major characters in the novel whose behaviours and attitudes towards their wives, daughters and other female characters portray the inherent ideological ambivalence in male. They talk about women's rights and duties but we can sense male ideology working behind it. Of course, they show their sympathy towards women in the novel but they are not free from male chauvinism. In this way the study explicates the ideological ambivalence inherent in male characters towards female in the novel.

This study tries to show how the theoretical framework of the feminist thinkers has been experimented in this fiction. The situation of the female characters as they talk in theory, should have been presented through the characters in the fiction. To observe the presentation of such ambivalent feeling in male characters, I will try to limit this study to the activities of the main characters. But some other activities of the other characters will not be ignored for the understanding of the novel.

The present work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to William Dean Howells and his works, a brief outline of the novel *A Hazard of New fortunes*, criticisms on the novel and an introductory outline of the present study.

The Second chapter is about theoretical modality. It deals with general development of feminist criticism, importance and relevant feminist theorists and their views about literature, society and its people.

Feminism is applied, as from the beginning women were suppressed and oppressed from the freedom of personal experience. From primitive age, patriarchy had made its own assumptions. Through Adam and Eve's story, women were regarded

as having an Eve's nature as destructive and fickle minded. The image of Eve, a woman who had brought a downfall of human kind had in many ways become the image of all women. This was so because men created all women's nature and quality, their position in the society, their norms and values.

From these assumptions men made women's position as secondary. Men's mentality was set with the false concept that even if women are given freedom to limited extent but they should not be highly educated, well-earned and well famous than the men.

I am using Mary Wollstonecraft's theory as she had first raised her voice in support of women's emancipation as well as of women's education. I am also using Simon de Beauvoir's theory of portraying women as the second sex by men and patriarchal society.

On the basis of the theoretical modality outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter will analyze the text at a considerable length. It will sort out some of the extracts from the text as evidence to prove the ideological ambivalence inherent in male towards female. This part serves as the core of this study.

The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research. On the basis of the textual analysis in chapter three it will conclude the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters.

II. Male's Othering of Female: A Feminist Study

Feminism generally is a theoretical discourse advocating women's rights based on belief in the equality of the sexes. Feminism, thus may be defined as:

a movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex-equality. In all human relations: a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burden, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom.(Billington- Greig 50)

Feminism is thus a doctrine redefining women's activities and goals from a women-centered point of view and refusing to accept the cult of male chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex, a submissive other. It seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex, and defend equal rights for women in a political, economic, social, psychological, personal and aesthetic sense.

Feminism represents one of the most important social and economic revolutions of modern times. So it can be said that feminism is a struggle of women for the liberation of their way of lives. It rejects the patriarchal society. It also analyzes the works of male writers to judge the representation of women in their works. Though most of male writers have portrayed women as a secondary place in their works, while some others have raised their voice for equality and rights of women. It is concerned with against the marginalization of all women, that is, with against their relegated to a secondary position, a submissive 'other' a second sex. Feminism advocates for gender equality and freedom. It is a doctrine that holds a belief in sex equality and opposes the sex hierarchy. Women were made voiceless and

alienated creatures by the society in the traditional way of understanding because they were supposed to be odds with the traditional male model of knowing. Feminism, in this sense, is the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men and the struggle to achieve this aim.

Feminism can also be understood as women's attainment of social, economic and political rights and opportunities equal to those possessed by men. Feminism is a model for a social state, an ideal or a designed standard of perfection not yet attained in the world. Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks equal rights for women, giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their own careers, destinations and life patterns as Hans Berten writes, "Feminism seeks to change the power relations between men and women that prevail under [. . .] Patriarchy a term that referred to the complete domination of men in western society" (96).

When we trace the women's subjection by men, we find that they have been subjugated from the very beginning of human existence and civilization. It was considered that male was always superior to female. Male tried their best to keep female under their control and the world was on their side. The myth, the religious belief, the writing, the norms and values were created in favor of male. The cause of human suffering has been credited to Eve not Adam. It is common knowledge that Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and many others wrote unfavorably or simply incorrectly about women because of their male biasness. The world has been questioning in the ability and chastity of women time and again but men are not. It is enough ! More than enough suppression that has been produced by so- called male ideology which is highly necessary to be challenged. Those people who can't help objecting such biased ideology are called feminists.

Feminism came into existence with questioning their place in patriarchal society. Different types of restrictions on the fundamental rights of women have existed throughout history in all civilization. If we view the history chronologically, women were taken as inferior to men by different thinkers as Valerie Bryson citing William Thompson says, " Whatever system of government [. . .] under every vicissitude of man's condition he has always retained woman his slave" (33). Aristotle declared that the female is female by virtue of certain lack of qualities and Thomas Aquinas believed that woman is "imperfect man". Similarly Alexander Pope believed that every woman is at heart a rake." (396). Feminism, in this context, is denial of control men had on women through which men had always been able to subjugate women into their concerns.

Feminists are always engaged in an explicitly political enterprises working to change existing power structures both inside and outside academia. They argue that masculinity and femininity are not predetermined by the body itself, but are constructed with culture. The female is a matter of culture. Some feminists depend upon this distinction as a key to combating 'essentialism' or a deterministic view that 'biology is destiny'.

Feminist literary criticism tries to explain how power imbalances due to gender in a given culture are reflected in or challenged by literary texts. Feminist literary criticism is actually a part of discourse of the new feminists emerged in Europe and America in the late 1960s to revive political and social issues with women's actual participation in western culture." Women's Liberation Movement" has its origin in the eighteenth century and there has been a continuation agitation for women's rights social, economical and cultural and the freedom and the equalities of

sex in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Mary Wollstonecraft is one of the earliest agitator to advocate the women's liberty of will and fair sex.

Women were regarded inferior from the beginning of the civilization. It was said that male was always superior to female. Male tried to put women under their control. All the world was on the side of male.

But the situation did not remain the same. Women become conscious of their secondary situation and began to question it. They fought to choose their husband. In early nineteenth century England, wives were taken as slave, and were sold by their male counterparts. Women were taken as weaker sex to the superior physical and economic power of free and independent males. However, women were paid less attention than male and they have not been allowed to study or go to school as the male. They were not given the systematic training. So Mary Wollstonecraft first raised her voice in support of education and emancipation of women. She was the first major feminist theorist and with her publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* feminism gained momentum. In her famous work Mary Wollstonecraft has opposed the view of patriarchy. She writes:

For instance, the severest sarcasms have been leveled against the sex, and they have been ridiculed for repeating 'a set of phrases learnt by rote,' when nothing could be more natural, considering the education they receive, and that their highest praise is to obey, unargued the will of man. (396)

Here Mary Wollstonecraft says that there are different stereotypes leveled against the women. They are supposed to obey their males. They are supposed to be praised while being submissive which is bad for the women themselves.

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, published in 1792, by Mary Wollstonecraft, is one of the trailblazing works of feminism. She advocates that mind does not know sex and blames that it is society that views women in the role of domestic slaves and alluring mistress by denying their political and economic independence. She argues that the education system of her time deliberately trained women to be frivolous and incapable. According to her due to the traditional education system, women are compelled to study the sentimental novels which are not intellectual. Because of the impact of such novels women can't exercise their intellectuality but are trapped in the sentimentality. They are directly affected by the novels that they study where a boy is depicted as an active person and girl is presented as passive beauty. Wollstonecraft further writes:

Women subjugated by ignorance to their sensations, and only taught to look for happiness in love, refine on sensual feelings, and adopt metaphysical notions respecting that passion which lead them shamefully to neglect the duties of life, and frequently in the midst of these sublime refinements they plump into active vice. (398)

Rather than engaging herself into superiority/inferiority of sexes, she sought to value women's domestic responsibilities and to show that domestic duties, properly performed, were a form of rational citizenship. We find, that Wollstonecraft insisted that the differences between the sexes were a product of education and environment and not of nature. She attacked the way in which women's mind and bodies had been distorted to please men, and she demanded that boys and girls be given the same education.

The concept of feminism is further earned by an American feminist Margaret Fuller. In her well-known book *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), she has

depicted how women have been marginalized in our society. The issues of more equality and greater freedom for women are raised by John Stuart Mill in his book *The Subjection of Women* (1869).

One of the major novelists of twentieth century, Virginia Woolf, contributes a lot for the explosive development of feminism. In her famous work *A Room of One's Own* (1929), she explains that it is a patriarchal society that hinders or prevents women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities. She has basically explores the situation of woman writers. Woolf raises the question of why a sister of Shakespeare would not likely have been able to write anything. She would have had none of the material resources - breadth of human experience, money and time to do so. She would have been discouraged by everyone. But Woolf encourages the woman writers with the view that sense of identity and freedom of mind can't be captured by male rather patriarchal society. Woolf, questioning the ideology of male and their attitude towards them, writes, "Lock up your libraries if you like, but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind" (824). Virginia Woolf stands on the belief that male dominated society has its bad impact not only in day to day life but also in literature.

Virginia Woolf does not see any vital differences between male and female. She further writes:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow- creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to

making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (822)

Woolf here tries to show the condition of female in the world. She is of the view that women are not given the facilities and opportunities in their own family as the male members of their family do. Women are confined to simple works while the male members are given the chance to do anything on their will.

The path which had already been drawn by earlier feminists is continued to its destination by the help of Simone de Beauvoir's text *The Second Sex* (1949). She advocates that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature [. . .] which is described as a feminine. By this cultural process, the masculine in our culture has come to be widely identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative and the feminine, by systematic opposition, has been identified as passive, timid, emotional and other. She writes, "To pose woman is to pose the absolute other; without reciprocity, denying against all experience that she is a subject, a fellow human being" (996).

The Second Sex which deals with the great collective myths of women in the works of many male writers. Beauvoir says that the patriarchal myths have projected women as other. This notion of the otherness of woman has the effect of equating masculinity and humanity. Not only 'other' but women are also counted as a second sex. Males claim that there are so many things which they don't understand about female. Females are vast, they are something reserved, they can't be understood. So they project females as mysterious in the myth. But this is biased mentality. Women, too does not always understand man but there is no such thing as a masculine

mystery. The point is that the male is on the master side and that mystery belongs to the slave. Creating false myth, she blames, men are acting as master and dominating women as their slaves. She vociferously refuses the notion of a female essence prior to individual existence, and attacks the patriarchal myths about woman that presume that false essence.

Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* argued that there was no such thing as "feminine nature." There was no physical or psychological reason why women should be inferior to men, and yet, throughout history and across cultures, women had always been second class citizens. Even when worshipped and adored, they have had no autonomy and received no recognition as rational individuals, any more than when they have been abused and denigrated. Similarly, Fiona Tolan writes:

For de Beauvoir, marriage is an oppressive and exploitative economic arrangement which reinforces sexual inequality and binds women to domesticity. It perpetuates the belief that if the female is protected and provided for by her male partner, she is happy: she is thought to be content that her needs are provided for. (321)

Simone de Beauvoir argued that the fulfillment of human potential must be judged, not in terms of happiness, but in terms of liberty. Liberty is something more than maintaining one's existence peacefully and comfortably.

In America, modern feminist criticism was inaugurated by Mary Ellrnan's deft and witty discussion. Her work *Thinking about Women* (1968) advocates about the derogatory stereotypes of women in literature by men. Another critic Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969) is the first widely read work of feminist literary criticism. She attacks the male bias in Freud's psychoanalytic theory and some famous writers who aggrandize their aggressive phallic selves and degrade women as submissive sexual

objects. Distinguishing between sex as biological determined and gender as a psychological concept that refers to culturally acquired sexual identity, Millet writes that "the essence of politics is power and that the most fundamental and pervasive concept of power in our society is male dominance" (25). She argues that the relations between men and women are power relations: that men tend to have the power and that sexuality enforces their power. She uses the techniques of close reading to explore the discourse of such gender relations. She demonstrates how destructively the so called famous male writers wrote about women and their sexuality.

Elaine Showalter, one of the leading feminist critics in the United States, has identified three historical phases of women's literary development: the "feminine" phase (1840-80), during which women were silent experiences and used to accept male's power. Women wrote with an effort to equal those intellectual achievements of male culture. It includes the writers like George Eliot and Bronte sisters. The "feminist" phase was dated from 1880 to 1920, during which women advocated minority rights, political and social equality and protest against the dominant tradition, values and injustice of women were encouraged. It is the very phase where women realized their stereotypes of wronged woman. It includes the writers like Elizabeth Gaskell and Frances Trollope. The third phase was "Female" phase which dated from 1920 onward . It is the stage of self discovery which aims at search for independent identity. This phase develops the idea of female writing and female experience. Women begin to work as activists and revolutionary as well. It includes the writers like Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf. In her one of the most influential works, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977), she shows her consciousness from the

danger of universalism that would bury feminists critical activities in a patriarchally founded discourse.

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar start an extensive study of women writers and set up a feminist literary theory. They argue that in the past and into the present the writers creativity has been identified virtually completely with men. Their aim is to locate a place where women's writing is heard. They have tried to create canon of female's writings. They object and claim that the male chauvinism has not given any position for women. So, women have to struggle against male's oppressive reading of women. Gilbert and Gubar offer a literary of the results of women's socialized anxieties: a variety of physical and mental illness including anorexia, agoraphobia and claustrophobia. It may also be that these problems are not in fact difficult which the woman alone faces, but may be due to the unreal demands which society places on women as a whole. Societal demands for certain types of body shape and certain types of complaint behavior from women may result in behavior such as anorexia, depression and outburst of anger all of which may be classified by a therapist as aberration on the part of patient. They argue:

Inevitably, as we shall see, the literature produced by women confronted with such anxiety inducing choices has been strongly marked not only by an obsessive interest in these limited options but also by obsessive imagery of confinement that reveals that ways in which female artists feel trapped and sickened both by suffocating alternatives and by the culture that created them. (1244)

Gilbert and Gubar go on tracing the difficult paths by which nineteenth century women overcome their anxiety of authorship. They observe that women do not fit into Bloom's patriarchal model. They conclude that the woman writer from the beginning

of her life had to struggle against the effects of socialization, which becomes a struggle against men's oppressive reading of women.

From the very beginning of human civilization, women are treated as inferior creature to men. It was considered that women were made for men's purpose. She was expected to serve man sexually as wife and mistress and physically doing countless jobs: taking care of the house and persons, raising the children and doing other domestic chores. The primitive society established certain restrictions and dictated certain rules over sexes; as a result male started showing leadership and practicing his dictation over female. Though there is no innate rule or characteristics that could justify the hierarchy between sexes in the social status, men took it the social status, men took it for granted that it was their right to overpower women and establish their unanimous rule in every aspect of humanity. And the cultures that developed carried out the masculine traits and continued to emphasize male interest, male ego and male objectives.

Women are also blamed for lacking responsibility and intelligence. Women cause all the troubles in the world. Eve instigated Adam to taste apple and Pandora opened the box of trouble. Men boast of their physical strength, virility and vigor but woman self rejoice in their simplicity, naivete, and forgiveness. Women are known as physically handicapped. Their physical incapability inhibits them from doing arduous task, which only men can perform.

Androcentrists charge that all troubles have behind them from the repugnant female hands. The fall of humanity was directly caused by women for example Eve, Pandora, and Helen. This might be why Pythagoras rejoices in saying, "there is a good principle which created order, light, and man, and an evil principle which created chaos, darkness and women" (Robin, 92). In societies, where androcentrism is the

order of the day women are preformed little almost none in important role. Men are doers, women mere spectators; men the hunters, women simply eaters; men the creators, women the destroyers. It is man who is considered as an exemplary human being. Women are defamed as petty, stupid, incomplete and deceptive; they are underpaid, and excluded from various activities because in this society men ruled over women.

In almost all of the past and present societies, men have been expected to be masculine and self reliant and women to be feminine and dependent. Napoleon Bonaparte once remarked about women in this way:

Nature intended women to be our slaves. They are our property. We are not theirs. They belong to us. Just as a tree bears fruits, belongs to a gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women ! Women are nothing but machines for producing children. (Morgan, 92)

Here Napoleon Bonaparte expressions show the man's egoism towards woman. It also proves that man always wants to behave like a master to the women.

Man has always been at the center of the society. Woman just moves around him in search of her identity. The female sex is secondary and is only the means of continuing the life for the globe. Man prefers to work outdoors whereas women are responsible for domestic affairs in most of the societies. The difference between man and woman is based on their innate inherited physical differences such as hormonal patterns. Fredrick Engel also looked at woman from the standpoint of her role in the economic activity of life as Simone de Beauvoir quotes him saying. "While man hunts and fishes, woman remains in the home, but the task of domesticity includes productive labor making pottery, weaving, gardening and in consequence women plays a large part in economic life" (76).

In most of the societies throughout history the male has privileged status. The female has seldom shared equally in society's esteem, praise and reward. They are treated as the inferior in almost all the societies. Though the kind of work done by the two sexes have varied from society to society, the job assigned to men has always been considered more important. In fact, sexual discrimination may have humanity's first form of social inequality practiced before people ever thought of discriminating against one another on the basis of race or social class.

Women are expected to be modeled on the image of Mary and again on the image of playmate. Each model is constructed to serve men. Because of the mixed feeling or ambivalence on the part of the man women are perceived as both beautiful and contemptible. She is sometimes treated as Mary, mother or keeper of virtue, and also as petty creature or the traitor of the garden. The stereotypes of woman conflicting representations are male created and are based on masculine value judgment. The woman created by male perspective is called male identified women in women's movement.

Thus, we can say that from time immemorial there are people who have treated woman as inferior race. They have created a body of discourse, which cast women into negative stereotypes and creates a negative attitude of male towards female. All of the good qualities such as intelligence, courage, elegance, transcendence, benevolence, rationality, manliness etc are given to male while weakness, immanence, passivity, sensuality, bestiality, gullibility, inconstancy, irrationality etc are used to define female. Such epithets further justify the negative attitude of male towards female.

But many males have realized it as a wrong done to women. So they have also raised their voice in favor of women's freedom and their right. They have showed

their dissatisfaction over the gender discrimination. Some of them even chose women as protagonists of their works. When reinterpreted in the classical works we can see some sacrificial women figures that have deserved respect among men also.

Clytemestra, Antigone, Cleopatra and others deserve mention as mythical and historical women. In this line one of the leading personalities of literature is George Bernard Shaw. Shaw was one of the greatest writers who wrote mostly about women. As a revolutionary, he tried to uplift the women in the male dominated society. He was much influenced by womanhood. He thought that woman had been the victim of man's own sense of superiority. So they had to play a wider part in the world than just bearing and rearing the children. This shows that Shaw had a wide imagination on women not only in real life but also in his plays women are raised and appreciated. Shaw was a great character creator. Through his characters he played a part of social reformer. His characters become his mouthpiece. Shaw's female characters are new. They are filled with the ideas of self sufficiency. So they fight against the patriarchal society who dominate the womanhood.

Writers like Samuel Richardson and Henrik Ibsen have spoken sufficiently for women characters. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is a strong evidence of his importance to women's independent existence. In this line the role of Thomas Hardy, one of the greatest novelists, is also very important. It is believed that Hardy was a man who spoke from woman's side. He understood women more than most of the men ever can. Hardy considered women to be equal to men. For him, men and women are like two wheels of a single cart which cannot move even an inch in the absence of even a single one. It is simply wrong on the part of this patriarchal society to consider women as an object. They are also human beings and are equal to men in almost all respects. Hardy says that women are more kind-hearted than men. He has tried to

show that women, too, are courageous and independent. Like men, women can also take courageous steps. He believes women are more practical than men. He protests against biased laws which allow the men to do anything they want but devoid the women from any such rights. Since men have always doubted about women's intelligence and capability, Hardy has also tried to show that women are conservative than men by nature. However, sympathetic male writers may appear towards women, they are bound to fall into the male centric trap and to define the world around them from misogynistic point of view.

Thus feminism is a social movement that seeks equal rights for women. It aims to understand the nature of inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. Most feminist are especially concerned with social, political and economic inequality between men and women, some have argued that gender and sex identities such as man and woman are socially constructed.

Throughout much of the history of western civilization deep-seated cultural beliefs allowed women only limited roles in society. Many people believed that women's natural roles were as mothers and wives. These people considered women to be better suited for child bearing and home making rather than for involvement in the public life of business, politics, and other such professions. Widespread belief that women were intellectually inferior to men led most societies to limit women's education to learning domestic skills. Well-educated, upper class men controlled most positions of employment and power in society.

I am using the male attitude that women were naturally suited to be subordinate companions of men and its rejection by feminist critics and writers. I am using how women were perceived by male in the past and its continuing trend to the present time though some reformations are seen. Males believed that females were

weak so they had to engage in domestic work but later feminist argued that female are not naturally weak rather they are made weak by patriarchal society by limiting their education and their access to other professions in which males are engaged. Though some male writers have written and spoken in favour of women's voice and have supported their freedom but it has not represented the whole male class. In this way I am using the ideological ambivalence inherent in male to analyze the text.

III. Ideological Ambivalence of Male towards Female in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*

This section probes into *A Hazard of New Fortunes* from the feminist perspective. While analyzing the novel, the main focus is on the relationship between the male characters with female characters and ambivalent attitude of male towards female. Although it seems an ordinary approach, this novel represents the whole male class and their ambivalent attitude towards women in American society in particular and towards women in general during the nineteenth century.

Basil March's relation with his wife and other male characters relation with their counterparts simultaneously do two things in the novel. On the one hand it represents female's power through domestic and artistic abilities of female but on the other hand, it shows females being incapable of making decision about their career and for the welfare of themselves, their children and seek male's help for these. Most of the female characters have also followed the social laws and rules in the novel. Not only that even their talent and aptitude are doubted. In this very line, Patricia J. Schulster rightly comments on the novel saying, "in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. Howells Presents all sides of the women question and reaches no concrete conclusion" (115).

Though Basil March and Isabel March are husband and wife, Isabel March is presented as a lady influencing her husband decision and career but sometimes she seems a traditional wife following her husband orders and commands depending upon him for everything. When they are talking to one another about moving the things, her way of saying really shows how much she cares and how she is viewed in society. Looking for a house or flat to live in New York, she comes up with guidelines and even boundaries of where they can stay to make sure they were with others of their

class. When talking to her husband about the requirements for their new flat, Mrs. March says, "Only he must remember that it was not to be above Twentieth Street nor below Washington square; it must not be higher than the third floor, it must have an elevator, steam heat, hallboy and a pleasant janitor. These were essentials; if he could not get them, they must do without. But he must get them" (67).

Regarding continuing his career in Insurance Company or joining the magazine, Mrs. March tries to enforce her husband by saying.

Basil! you don't mean it! why take it! Take it instantly! oh, what a thing to happen oh, what luck ! [. . .] oh, Basil, I'm afraid, he'll change his mind! you ought to have accepted on the spot. You might have known I would approve, and you could so easily have taken it back if I didn't. Telegraph him now! Run right out with the dispatch! or we can send Tom. (18)

In the beginning of the conversation Isabel seems a powerful woman who is forcing her husband. But her later part of conversation makes her seem as a traditional wife. Here, Isabel March seems forcing her husband that he would have accepted Fulkerson's offer even if she was not in favour of it. So she is playing the role of traditional wife who is very much serious about her husband's life and career because she thinks that her whole life as well as the children's is dependent upon his income and profession.

At other place Mrs. March seems adamant and forces her husband to accept Fulkerson's offer whatever the consequences comes:

"Oh, nonsense! I guess there's not much fear of that. Now I want you to telegraph to Mr. Fulkerson so that he'll find the dispatch waiting for

him when he gets to New York. I'll take the whole responsibility, Basil, and I'll risk all the consequences". (18-19)

Mrs. March is a traditional woman and submissive wife because she does not even want to move from Boston to New York. Ultimately she agrees to move to New York saying, 'Basil ! Haven't I always had faith in you?' And don't you suppose that if I thought it would really be for your advancement, I would go to New York or anywhere with you?" (20).

Mrs. March is portrayed as foolish, narrow and provincial. She has no any independent career or profession rather she is moving from Boston to New York for her husband's work. March has seen some pretty feminine inconsistencies and trepidations in his wife. She is supportive wife in each and every step of her husband. She is more worrying about her husband and his career rather than her own. She cruelly and critically reminds her husband of his poor choice. She has followed the rules by following her husband.

Mrs. March is saying to her husband what type of the flat they should search for:

[. . .] and we must not forget just what kind of flat we are going to look for. The sine qua nons and an elevator and steam heat, not above the third floor, to begin with. Then we must each have a room, and you must have your study and I must have my parlor, and the girls must each have a room with the kitchen and dining room. (39)

Isabel March represents a traditional domestic paradigm. She has a reasonably good relationship with her husband but she demonstrates some conflict with her domestic role. Isabel quickly agrees that it's better for a woman to get married, yet her own marriage she finds difficulty and strife.

Although Isabel March does not want to move to New York, in confining herself to the proper domestic role, she gives up her own spirit to support and encourage Basil and to guarantee financial support for her children, she has followed the rules of traditional and patriarchal society. She cannot refuse to move with him.

Isabel March remains open to changes, and does enjoy travel. She ultimately subordinates self assertion to the maintenance of domestic relationships. To maintain that domestic sphere successfully, she must compromise herself, her ideas, and her wishes or screaming, behaviours which either forces her to compromise her own honesty or to act unkindly. Her speech frequently exhibits the conflict of her settlement in the domestic role.

Regarding being in Boston or going to New York, Mrs. March at first strongly refutes going New York but later she leaves this matter totally on her husband. Her saying and deeds are shaped by the condition of her husband:

In the uprooting and transplanting of their home that followed, Mrs. March often trembled before distant problems and possible contingencies, but she was never troubled by present difficulties, she kept up with tireless energy, and in the moments of dejection and misgiving which harassed her husband she remained dauntless and put heart into him when he had lost it altogether. (32)

Mrs. March way of presenting herself towards her husband shows her strength and weakness simultaneously. She says:

[. . .] she was going back to Boston herself, but she was leaving Mr. March to continue the search, and she had no doubt he would be only too glad to see the apartment by daylight. "But if you take it, Basil,"

She warned him, when they were alone, 'I shall simply renounce you. I wouldn't live in this junk shop if you gave it to me. (64)

The above mentioned remarks of Isabel March suggest that she is adamant about the types of apartment she needs. She cannot compromise living in house which is not suitable to her. She thinks that if her husband does not search the apartment she has asked then she may go in a position to leave him rather than living in such apartment which cannot meet her requirements.

Basil March shows duality towards his wife in particular and women in general. He is of the view that the wife must always succumb to the husband's wishes. She has no life outside of him and her children. He thinks women should be regarded and given certain rights and freedom but he seemed against giving total freedom to women. Howells remarks about Mrs. March, "March knew his wife to be a woman of good mind and in perfect sympathy with him, but he understood the limitations of her perspective" (87). But Mrs. March is of the view that in democracy equality for all, including women must exist.

The moral tension becomes evident when Basil tells his wife of his conflict with Dryfoos over Lindau Basil believes he must not allow Dryfoos to fire Lindau because of Lindau's socialist opinions and activities. Basil knows Lindaus has not applied his socialist philosophies to the work he has done for the magazine and views Dryfoos's command as unfounded. Once again, Isabel uses her role to wound Basil for her every word acts as a stab in March's heart. Her initial condemnation, anxiety, tears, and lack of sympathy demonstrate her true feelings of fear. Here, she disregards the moral code of justice for Lindau because of her worry about the family's future if Basil loses his job over his principle's concerning Lindau.

Basil March and Isabel March are living happily as husband and wife. Though they have very good relationship between them, her husband is not aloof from male bias. The following remark proves this, "March had seen some pretty feminine inconsistencies and trepidations, which once charmed him in his wife hardening into traits of middle age, which were very like those of less interesting elder women" (27) It is condemned if a woman shows a kind of amorphous nature that changes shape with the tide of events. This also reflects that if a man has any relation outside marriage then there is no anybody's matter of concern but if the same thing is done by a woman the whole society raises a finger against her.

Mrs. March is another example of power. She may not be the breadwinner of the family but she is still very smart, and knows what to say and how to influence her husband. She tells him what she likes and dislikes and helps him by providing support and confidence in his choices. The final decision to move was made by her, and a few other important decisions were also suggested by Mrs. March. She suggests her husband to accept Fulkerson's offer by saying:

"It's a very high compliment to you, Basil, a very high compliment. And you could give up this wretched insurance business that you've always hated so and that's making you so unhappy now that you think they're going to take it from you. Give it up and take Mr. Fulkerson's offer ! it's a perfect interposition, coming just at this time ! why, do it mercy !" she suddenly arrested herself. "He wouldn't expect you to get along on the possible profits?" her face expressed the awfulness of the notion. (17)

All the time Isabel March is thinking of and looking for the progress of her husband and her children rather than her own. She fears to leave Boston from which it

proves her narrowness and dependence on the domestic sphere. But on the other hand she is putting her arguments forcefully to her husband. She is showing more confidence in her husband ability rather than her own, which can be noticed from these lines:

How I hate to have you talk that way, Basil! you are young enough to try to anything-anywhere, but you know I don't like New York. I don't approve of it. It's so big, and so hideous ! Of course I shouldn't mind that; but I've always lived in Boston, and the children born and have all their friendships and associations here." She added, with the helplessness that discredited her good sense and did her injustice, "I have just got them both into the Friday afternoon class at papanti's and you know how difficult that is. (20)

This also proves that how women fear changes. They want to remain in the situation which they feel comfortable. Even if with the change, it brings progress and prosperity they are not in favour of it. In spite of being educated, Mrs. March is not employed. She has not utilized her education. However, to make Basil March happy, she takes interest in his works. She assures him that he would try to struggle to make her and their children happy. That is how Howells has created Isabel March as a fickle minded woman. All follies and mistakes are created on Mrs. March. Howells consistently portrays Mrs. March as unrealistic and subject to emotional delusion like those of popular romantic heroines, who only thought about love and imaginary things.

Elizabeth emerges quite quickly as what Bremer labels, "the invalid [. . .] always within the family [. . .] passive yet imposing upon the rest of the family" (52). She demonstrates complete dependence upon everyone else in the family and in doing

so, she actually perverts standards of domesticity, for she does not take care of her family in any way. She takes the part of the frail, helpless wife to a physical extreme. She exhibits a "passive domesticity developed into parasitic irresponsibility. She personifies Howells's belief that the threat comes not so much from women's freedom, but rather from their enslavement to an isolated trivialized domesticity. While her husband, daughters and son have dominant roles in the novel, Elizabeth Dryfoos, a sort of shadowy background figure barely makes an appearance even in the home, the one place she should dominate. She has minimal connection with her own family and almost none of all with society outside the home.

Elizabeth herself lays the blame for her deteriorating physical condition and withdrawal from society on the tradition of domesticity, on the rule that women must follow their husbands. She wishes she could go back to her original home and tells her husband, Jacob, that because of the move to follow him, she does not believe she is going to live very long. Ironically, he responds that they move for the children, though the children have not benefited in any way. Conrad works at a job he does not like and has become a disappointing enigma to his father. Elizabeth, who understands his desire for the priesthood, does nothing to mitigate the tension between father and son.

Mr. Dryfoos's relationship with his wife Mrs. Dryfoos was directly based on male domination. Mr Dryfoos did not allow his wife to talk and to go outside in the public places. Mrs. Dryfoos also felt shy to talk with other people. She spent her whole life in domestic world. Her lifestyle is explained in the text as:

None of the ladies appeared. Mrs. Dryfoos was glad to escape to her own chamber, where she sat before an autumnal fire, shaking her head

and talking to herself at times, with the foreboding of evil which old women like her make part of their religion. (286)

Similarly, Mr. Dryfoos's ambivalent attitude towards female is manifested from his relation and behaviour towards his own daughters. He let the girls do as they pleased and he let them go away to school and get them a piano. But if the girls want to go outside he thinks that they should be accompanied by her brother Conrad. Mr. Dryfoos's mentality is revealed when he says to his daughters, "It wouldn't do for you to go with any other young man. Conrad will go with you" (229).

Christine and Mela do nothing but seek wealth and position. Entire domestic upbringing of Christine has brought her to nothing but the use of material objects as self expression.

As Christine shows disrespect to her father, Elizabeth lies in bed upstairs and takes no role in assisting her husband or daughter in smoothing their relationship. She suffers because her husband has uprooted her socially. As a result of his recently acquired wealth, her domestic position the very position which has forced her to follow her husband and give him total control over her and in what manner they live has disabled her so much so that she cannot do anything for herself or others. She cries about the babies she has lost, yet she cannot take care of those children who have survived. Her tears show that she possesses only the sentimental capacity of domestic women and even those feelings exist primarily for herself. This very idea of women being sentimental and passive resembles with Mary Wollstonecraft claim that male seeks female being sentimental, passive, emotional, dependent, lack of judgment Wollstonecraft, commenting upon the same via of thought, writes:

Women subjected by ignorance to their sensations, and only taught to look for happiness in love, refine on sensual feelings, and adopt

metaphysical notions respecting that passion, which lead them shamefully to neglect the duties of life and frequently in the midst of these sublime refinements they plump into actual vice. (398)

Elizabeth always needs protection and help. As she looks ahead to yet another move of her husband's choosing to setting up yet another home far from the places she knows and loves her domestic future offers her nothing, give her no satisfaction. The isolation of the domestic sphere breeds discontent.

Christine is a representative of the modern women because she is cold, calculating and selfish. She does indeed act as a social climber, and she views marriage as one way to achieve her goal. She wants the performative social recognition that she believes will come from marrying an artist. Beaton represents less an individual to her than a means to an end, a symbol of a specific status. Christine thinking of becoming famous by marrying an artist, Beaton shows Howells's deep-rooted biasness towards female. This very way of becoming famous chosen by Christine shows male's mentality that female can't kiss the zenith of success of her own, but only by getting the assistance of male.

She possessed an acute understanding of the female's need to marry. Christine wants others to see and recognize her. In every instance, she wishes to remain the center of society's attention and believes her father's money has earned her that position. She perceives Beaton as just another way to reach the pinnacle of the social ladder because his artistic credentials make him sought after by high society.

Christine is a woman who achieves her desire at great cost to herself. She does not care, she worries less about what kind of life she will have with her husband than she does about having that domestic social ideal. Simply to have what she knows society deems essential for a woman, she accepts as a husband a man who has temper

enough to conduct duels and beat his wife. She gives up her physical well being and even some of her inheritance to pay his debts in order to claim the domestic role society demands of her. An individual woman will suffer or become utterly repugnant in attempting to embrace the role of modern woman while still adhering to the traditional paradigm of domesticity.

At the opposite end of such domesticity and especially of Christine Dryfoos, stands Alma Leighton. Independent, working and single, she actually believes she may never marry, that if she meets the right person as well and good, if not but she shall pick and choose as a man does, she won't merely be picked and chosen. The following conversation with her mother reflects the issue clearly:

"And don't you expect to get married?" Do you intend to be an old maid? demanded her mother, in the bonds of the superstition women have so long been under to the effect that every woman must wish to get married if for no other purpose to avoid being an old maid. (414)

The above conversation of Alma Leighton with her mother gives the reflection of traditional society of where a mother is worried about her daughter's marriage.

Unlike Christine, who seeks nothing more than right marriage, Alma does not imagine marriage or the domestic paradigm as a paradigm at all. In her view an independent and working women must choose one or the other role but cannot have both.

Alma makes art her husband and instead of saying she cannot focus on art and marriage without having one suffer, she claims that uniting herself to both arts and a husband will make her a bigamist. In defending her rationale, she cannot avoid the use of marital terms to explain her desire for a creative career. Here, the portrayal of the conflict of gender identity and role limitations has been seen.

The kind of misunderstanding Alma faces because of her choice to ignore the domestic role by living as a single woman who pursues an artistic career emanates from Alma's artist peers and even from her own mother and demonstrates yet another way the domestic paradigm can wound. This failure to understand Alma's desire for freedom instead of domesticity stems from society's expectations regarding the domestic role Alma deliberately foregoes. "Men simply have certain notions of women-obscure, exaggerated or both" and as such men and women seem incapable of establishing the kind of understanding Howells believes they need to create harmonious, collaborative, equitable relationships" (Diller 376). The art teacher, Mr. Whetmore, demonstrates this theory quite effectively in his assessment of his pupil. In spite of his perception that Alma has talent, he concludes that Alma pursues her quest futilely because even when women have talent they've got too much against them. It will end in a nervous break down. Somebody ought to marry them all and put them out of this misery.

For Whetmore before marriage a woman is chained by miseries, dilemmas and inconsistencies when she is married to a man she will be free from all miseries and dilemmas. The way of thinking of Whetmore towards Alma getting married represents Howells's deep-rooted male's dogmas that a woman is incapable of leading her life alone. So, marriage can only liberate a woman from all sorts of troubles.

Whetmore views Alma as someone whose talent will bring her only misery because it will go underutilized and unrecognized. He believes she ought to slide away from her non-domestic role into the standard role of wife and mother. He also refuses to admit the seriousness of her artistic desire. She does not trust her ability to remain committed and single. He suspects that she is liable to get married any moment. He, like Alma herself, considers Alma's career and her possible domestic life

as mutually exclusive, as entities which cannot possibly endure together. She is doomed to choose one or the other but she may never have both.

Alma's artistic friend, Beaton, believes her life will never have such a choice to make because though she has a great deal of talent and if she were a man there would be no question of her future. He knows that as women she will not succeed. Howells's mouthpiece character Beaton's views about Alma reflect the male's psyche that women need the support of men, they cannot do anything alone. It becomes clear if these lines are taken into consideration:

Alma had genius, but they were sure she needed instruction. [. . .] He contended that she needed to be a man in order to amount to anything; but in this theory he was opposed by an authority of his own sex, whom the lady sketches believed to speak with more impartiality in matter concerning them as much as Alma Leighton. (92)

Alma understands that the domestic sphere requires an inferiority of women.

Unwilling to accept that inferiority, she believes that women who keep their hearts have an even chance at least of having heart. Yet she does not comprehend fully that keeping her heart and her freedom means remaining alone.

Her mother possesses that understanding and because of her contemplation of Alma's life alone.

From the very beginning, she demonstrates her shaping by those constraints, for she acquires her definition by what she cannot have the work and love which society forbids. Standing in front of Mrs. Leighton as the lady of the house, Miss Woodburn immediately assumes the submissive position, a position she already occupies because she serves as caretaker of her father.

Thus, Isabel's full support for Basil in searching a combined apartment and the comments and doubts Alma receives from all her near and dear ones on her character only for being a female, despite her talent, brings Howells's male chauvinism towards female to the fore. On the one hand Howells presents female characters strong in domesticity, but on the other hand, in making decisions and choosing their careers they are weak. All the married women have been depicted more or less as supportive to their husbands, and they are incapable of making any personal decision sidelining their husbands. Even Alma, who is portrayed as modern girl, receives a big blow when on the one hand everybody accepts her as a talented girl but on the other even her near and dear ones are of the view that her talent will be materialized at the cost of marrying a boy. Thus, Howells's ambivalent attitude towards women can be noted from the characterization of his both male and female characters in the novel.

IV. Conclusion

The novel deals with the relationship between male characters and female characters and male's ambivalent attitude towards female. On the one hand females are portrayed submissive to their male counterparts and weak in making decisions and on the other hand they are depicted as influencing their counterparts' decisions.

In the beginning of the novel Basil March and Isabel March have been presented as an ideal and traditional married couple. Isabel March is portrayed as a traditional wife following her husband and whatever she thinks and works are centered on the welfare of her husband. But she is also presented as a determined lady influencing her husband's decision all the time. It is because of persuasion and enforcement Basil March agrees to accept Fulkerson's offer to work as an editor in the magazine *Every Other Week*. Even regarding looking for a house to live in New York, Isabel March comes up with the guidelines of where they can stay, which really influences Mr. March's search for the house.

All the Married women have been portrayed as submissive cum supportive to their husbands- be it Isabel March or Elizabeth Dryfoos or Mrs. Fulkerson, and they lack decision making power boycotting their husband. Isabel March lacks independent career or profession since she moves from Boston to New York for husband's work not for her own.

When Fulkerson and Beaton are talking about appointing art editor for the magazine *Every Other Week*, Fulkerson is in favour of appointing male artist instead of female. Fulkerson choosing Angus Beaton over Alma Leighton for art editor of the magazine shows the sense of doubt about female's ability in male's mind.

To refer back of what have been mentioned earlier, this novel is appropriate for using feminism theory as from the beginning women were suppressed and

oppressed from the freedom of personal experience. From primitive age, patriarchy had made its own assumptions. Through Adam and Eve's story, women were regarded as having Eve's nature as destructive and fickle-minded. The image of Eve, a woman who had brought a downfall of humankind had in many ways become the image of all women. This was so because men created all women's nature and quality their position in the society, their norms and values. So husbands wish wives to be in their own created norms and values.

Even if women are educated and talented, their talent is doubted by the patriarchal society. Because of the changing time some men are also in favour of women's freedom and providing opportunity to enjoy their rights but they do not want women should have complete freedom to their own.

William Dean Howells has shown the life of a woman who likes neither to be dominated by a husband nor to live without a husband. Isabel March does not want to leave Boston in the beginning but later she leaves everything behind to go with her husband to live in New York for the better future of her husband rather than her personal work or joy.

Mrs. Dryfoos is silent in the novel. She does not appear at the social or public place. She has given her children broughtupness entirely to her husband. She has minor role in the novel. She could not give suggestion or instructions to her husband. She hesitates to speak with other people. She does not have confidence in herself. The portrayal of Mrs. Dryfoos is a typical representation of submissive woman. She is the deliberate product of Howells's characterization.

On the other hand, Alma Leighton, despite being educated and talented artist she is doubted by everyone about her talent and qualification.

Thus, the novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* presents women in the nineteenth century context where they were dominated by patriarchal society, however, some were radical and some were subservient to it. It discusses and contrasts women of the future, like Alma Leighton, with the very traditional woman, like Mrs. March. Mrs. March is preferred to the more radical Alma which proves the ambivalent attitude of male towards female because though male wants some freedom to women but they are not in favour of women's hundred percent freedom.

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