

British-American Parallels in the Artistic Representation of the Upper Classes of Society

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Abstract—In the focus of the article is the comparative study of the society code used in the upper classes of Great Britain and the USA. Though claiming to be democratic, free and deprived of class system permeating British society, Americans, nonetheless, assimilated the society code and introduced into it its own cultural characteristics that help identify an American upper class person/character. The study of the American novel by Amor Towles *Rules of Civility* and the British novels by Julian Fellowes, Jeffrey Archer and Charles Jennings has proved that the society code is shared likewise by British and American upper classes and constituted by a core of verbal and non-verbal characteristics, though, there exist differences in the use of socially marked words determined by American culture. The core of non-verbal ‘signs’ of the in-group members is made up of the words describing items of clothing and manner of behavior that unambiguously indicate the social status of the speaker. The verbal core includes school identifiers, words denoting drinks (champagne) and adjectives.

Index Terms—Society code, upper classes, Great Britain, the USA, comparative study, verbal and non-verbal characteristics, literature.

I. INTRODUCTION

In our earlier published article “The Society code in American culture” [1] it was stated that despite a unique way of American culture formation with democracy and freedom underlying it, America adapted the society code elaborated in France three hundred years ago and introduced into it its own cultural characteristics. Among the books which could be regarded as American adaptations of the European society code are Lapham’s *Rules of Influence: A Career’s Guide to Success, Status, and Self-Congratulation*, Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, George Washington’s *110 Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation* and others, which serve as the manifestation and evidence of the society code’s refracting the code of the epoch and guiding Americans to social growth, material prosperity and multiplication of their wealth.

Published in 2011 in the USA, the novel *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles [2], the title being the allusion to George Washington’s *110 Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation*, allows us to draw parallels between American and British manifestations of social privilege, thus identifying the British-American core of ‘signs’ and cultural characteristics of American social identity, which has never been done before and determines

the novelty and topicality of this research, especially in the light of globalization processes.

II. ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The research is based on the novel *Rules of Civility* written by the American writer Amor Towles, born in 1964, a graduate from Yale College and M.A. in English from Stanford University. Writing became his profession in 2016 when he got the highest praise and the title of the best edition of 2011 from the Wall Street Journal for his first novel *Rules of Civility*, later translated into 15 languages, and in 2016 the title of the best book of the year for his second novel *A Gentleman in Moscow* from the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Review, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the NPR (National Public Radio), translated into 20 languages.

This book gave us an impulse to further the comparative study of American and British upper-class speech and contrast the results with already achieved and verified. It should be pointed out that it was extremely important to take into account the biography, education and the occupation of the writer because a representative of the social classes under study can reflect like no one else all the nuances and subtleties of their verbal and non-verbal culture.

For a comparative study we drew on the latest British books of the XX1 century— Jeffrey Archer’s *A Prisoner of Birth* [3], *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less* [4], Julian Fellowes’s *Past Imperfect* [5], Charles Jennings’s *People Like Us* [6], which served the purpose of the paper.

III. THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARALLELS

A. The Appearance of the Upper-Class Character

The British-American parallels reflect verbal and non-verbal characteristics that become indices of social class and explicitly serve social markers in the novel. The first introduction of the characters is made with the descriptions of their appearances and clothing. Both the American and the British novels demonstrate the same socially valuable identifiers of privilege and class:

<i>American upper-class:</i> perfectly tailored suits, royal colors, pearls, a cashmere coat, a crisp Windsor knot, a shearling coat, dressed like a hero, like an admiral	<i>British upper class:</i> tailored suits, colourless, pale, featureless dress of women, an old-fashioned tailcoat, a black top, dressed like in TV dramas, corduroy trousers
1) ...but there was no mistaking the elegance of the clientele. The men wore tailored suits and accented their breast pockets with	1) “...they wear manifestly hand-tailored suits, never quite fashionable, emphasizing the traditional British pear shape of

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<p><i>untouched handkerchiefs. The women wore silk dresses in royal colors and chokers of pearls</i> [2, p. 47].</p> <p>2) One silver-haired magnate in a perfectly tailored suit leaned against the rail with both arms like an admiral at the helm [2, p. 106].</p> <p>3) Tinker in a cashmere coat, clean shaven, a crisp Windsor knot poking over the collar of a custom-made shirt [2, p. 8].</p> <p>4) He was wearing a denim shirt and a shearling coat [2, p. 27].</p> <p>5) ...when I had first seen tinker in the coat, it struck me as a bit of a pose – a born and raised New Englander dressed like the hero in a John Ford film [2, p. 30].</p> <p>6) Wallace skipped up the museum steps dressed in a pale gray suit with a white cotton handkerchief peeking squarely from his breast pocket [2, p. 181].</p>	<p><i>the well-bred male</i>” [6, p. 45].</p> <p>2) As she went by, she appeared to be nothing more than a great pile of fag ash: <i>colourless hat, grey hair, pallid complexion, white gloves, and yards of pale, featureless dress, bleached almost white</i> in the hot afternoon sun [6, p. 25].</p> <p>3) “He had the sort of tailcoat that looked too old to be hired, and a black top hat which he wore with a degree of frank, baronial confidence...” [6, p. 25].</p> <p>4) “...they wore tweeds and ties and headscarves: the sort of clothes I’d only seen in period TV dramas” [6, p. 5].</p> <p>5) ...mob of smart folk in brown felt Frank Sinatra hats and pricey overcoats, escorting their –frankly –horse-like women from bar to paddock and back again [6, p. 81].</p> <p>6) It brought out just enough of those people: red-faced men with wrecked teeth and yellow corduroy trousers...[6, p. 9].</p>
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Of interest is the use of two synonymous nouns ‘tuxedo’ and ‘dinner jacket’ that have cultural connotations attached to them: the first is marked as chiefly used in North America, while the second is British.

American Upper-class: tuxedo (chiefly North American)	British Upper-class: dinner jacket
<p>1) The cold New Year’s air emanated from the fabric of his <i>tuxedo</i> [2], p. 21.</p> <p>2) But on closer inspection, you could tell the <i>tuxedo</i> was custom-made, and his black pearl shirt studs looked like they’d been landed down a generation or two [2, p. 170].</p> <p>3) I saw now that Dicky had plucked a small bouquet of flowers from the cutting garden and stuffed them into the breast pocket of his <i>tuxedo</i> [2, p. 168].</p>	<p>1) Stephen admired the <i>elegant dinner jacket and large floppy bow tie</i> that his guest wore, while he fingered his own <i>little clip-on</i>, surprised that Jean-Pierre Lammans, who had such obvious savoir faire, could also have fallen victim to Prospecta Oil [4, p. 83].</p> <p>2) I met a bloke who’s taught for a term at one of these institutions (a Lancing man, actually: bespectacled, donnish, seven feet tall, voice like a church organ) who explained that the first thing <i>homunculi</i> in his charge had to do on arrival at the school was to sort out their <i>tweed jackets</i>. ‘They all had to dress like little middle-aged men, and had <i>these bristly little jackets made for them</i> [6, p. 55].</p> <p>3) A dazzling <i>cravat of white silk</i> was wound round his neck and tucked into the brocade waistcoat beneath [5, p. 140].</p>

The adduced examples suffice to show similarity in the appearances of socially privileged characters, however, reveal some cultural differences. In both cultures the upper-class representative is described as wearing perfectly tailored suits – custom-made (Am.) /hand-tailored (Br.), with handkerchiefs peeking from the pockets, and ties; royal

or featureless, and pale dresses (of women); in both male and female cases clothing is made of good quality materials – cashmere, silk, cotton (about a handkerchief or a shirt). In Julian Fellowes’s novel we come across the following observation on this account: *Suddenly posh suits were once again more of a recognizably different cloth and cut, while country clothes, tweeds and cords and all the rest of that tested uniform, pulled themselves from the dusty wardrobes where they had lain unloved since the 1950s. The toffs were visually different again, a tribe to be known once more by their markings, and it made them happy to be so* [5, p. 156]. This quotation shows that the appearance of the ‘tribe’ has retained its primary, old-fashioned look in the XX1 century because of the social meaning it once acquired.

As for ties, the narrator from *Past Imperfect* notes that white tie was not just a costume; it was also a way of life that was already dead. “White tie belonged to the ancient bargain between the aristocrat and those less fortunate that they would spend much of their day in discomfort in order to promote a convincing and reassuring image of power. After all, splendor and glamour had been inextricably linked to power for centuries...” [5, p. 76].

However, one can’t but notice the difference: the British upper-class character wears tweeds and corduroy trousers, made of the materials originally from Scotland and West of England correspondingly, an old-fashioned tailcoat and dinner jackets, and also a black top, while in the USA the upper-class man wears a tuxedo, an American counterpart of a British dinner jacket, which originally came from Tuxedo Park, the site of a country club in New York where it was first worn in the 19 century. ‘A tuxedo’ is an index of class and prestige. Like other words denoting items of clothes both in Great Britain and the USA, it has become stereotypical and is often employed in books and films as a social index. That is why the characters are compared with heroes from films or TV dramas.

The authors’ commentaries on shoe shops deserve a special remark. In *Rules of Civility* the narrator emphasizes a special social role of John Lobb’s Shoe shops that sell luxury brands of shoes for men. Though he does not use the word ‘luxury’, we understand it from the context: “there was nothing more extravagant than a John Lobb shoe. The duke of Windsor got his shoes there. Errol Flynn and Charlie Chaplin got their shoes there. It was the very pinnacle of cobbling. The final say in the great winnowing of commerce. At John Lobb, they didn’t just make shoes. They actually stuck your foot in plaster and kept the cast in storage so that whenever you wanted, they could make you another perfect pair” [2, p. 145].

Similar references to socially prestigious shoe shops and brands can be found in British novels, which add to social markings of the classes in question.

B. Social Class Identifiers: Manners

Behavioral indices of class are powerful means of characterization that immediately spot the speaker and convey information often hidden from the eyes that is upbringing, education, and social status of the personage. The elitist schools and Universities inculcate pride, confidence, arrogance, and distance in their in-group, creating a ‘tribe’, a distinctive and closely-knit group of people sharing the code of belongingness elaborated by

them. The behavioral attributes of the ‘privileged’ are the same in Great Britain and the USA and can easily be discerned both by those who belong and those who are out of the group. In the table the examples demonstrate the similarities in the manner of behavior.

American Upper-class:	British Upper-class:
CONFIDENCE, DEMOCRATIC INTEREST, WELL-MANNERED, WELL-SPOKEN, WELL-DRESSED, UNDERSTATED PRESUMPTION OF FRIENDLINESS, A ‘SHADOW’ OF AN IVY LEAGUE DEGREE, SELF-IMPOSED, DISTANCE, STYLE, PERFECT TASTE	BARONIAL CONFIDENCE, CONDESCENSION, PRESCRIPTIVE, POSTURING, SNIGGERING, PREENING POSH, BLEND OF PRIDE AND TERROR, NOSE-IN-AIR SNOBBERY, SOCIAL PARANOIA, VULNERABLE, ARROGANCE, GRACE
1) He had that certain <i>confidence in his bearing, that democratic interest in his surroundings, and that understated presumption of friendliness</i> that are only found in young men who have been raised in the company of money and manners [2, p. 18].	1) ...he had on the sort of tailcoat that looked too old to be hired, and a black top hat which he wore <i>with a degree of frank, baronial confidence</i> ... I cleared my ears and waited for <i>the baronial man to say something equally class-ridden</i> [6, p. 25].
2) And all the time, the outward appearance so artfully maintained was that of a gentleman: <i>well-mannered, well-spoken, well-dressed—well honed</i> [2, p. 242].	2) ...addressing me in a tone of friendly <i>condescension</i> , or as a father would talk to his earnest but none-too-bright son [6, p. 40].
3) Tinker answered relying on the ellipses of the elite: He was <i>from Massachusetts</i> ; he went to <i>college in Providence</i> ; and he worked for a <i>small firm in Wall Street</i> – that is, he was born in the Back Bay, attended Brown, and now worked at the bank that his grandfather founded. But with Tinker it was as if he was genuinely afraid that <i>the shadow of an Ivy League degree might spoil the fun</i> . He concluded by saying he lived uptown [2, p. 21].	3) Rebecca, the Debrett’s woman, just like her peers, was sternly <i>prescriptive</i> about everything on no more than a glass of wine and a packet of Marlboros [6, p. 41].
4) From the way the two <i>conversed</i> , you could tell that they knew each other well but maintained a certain <i>self-imposed distance, like high priests from different orders of the same faith</i> [2, p. 157].	4) They were so much like characters out of Waugh that I didn’t see how they could even exist in the world as I understood it. They were <i>posturing, sniggering, preening posh</i> . I felt that not only could I not understand them, they couldn’t understand me either [6, p. 125].
5) One must be prepared to fight for one’s simple pleasures and to defend them against elegance and erudition and all <i>manner of glamorous enticements</i> [2, p. 128].	5) I still preserved that all too familiar <i>blend of pride and terror</i> , that is so characteristic of late teens, when <i>nose-in-air snobbery goes hand in hand with social paranoia</i> . Presumably it was this contradictory mixture that made me <i>so vulnerable to attack</i> [6, p. 33].
6) I began to suspect that <i>the perfect taste</i> on display at tinker’s apartment was Anne’s. She had just that <i>combination of style and self-confidence</i> that one needed in order to bring modern design into high society [2, p. 123].	6) He was one of those who manage to combine almost <i>total failure with breathtaking arrogance</i> ... [5, p. 101].
	7) There was something in his aimless and depressive <i>grace</i> that told of his awareness of the truth [5, p. 137].
	8) Dagmar nodded, with a certain <i>irony</i> in her expression [5, p. 178].

Though the adjectives and nouns describing the manner

of behavior of the elite emphasize similar social signs (well-mannered, well-honed, confident, proud, with self-imposed distance and arrogant), it is hard to avoid the feeling that the British upper-classes are much more class-stricken and conscious which finds its reflection in a much longer list of adjectives, conveying different shades of socially marked posture. This fact is justified by the history of two countries and the protest of those who founded America as a country juxtaposing Great Britain in its essence. Hence, ‘the democratic interest in surroundings’.

C. School Identifiers

Education is a most significant resource for class division, which ‘formally perpetuates the old division into *us* and *them*, keeping that old, stultifying, inefficient class friction alive’ [6, p.69]. And the group of the *tribe* can identify themselves by appellatives. In Great Britain the appellative ‘old school chum’, or ‘school chum’ marks belongingness to the tribe. According to dictionaries, this appellative originated in the XV11 century from slang word ‘school-mate’. In Great Britain this word is socially marked and often used in speech portrayals representing socially privileged classes, in contrast to the appellative ‘mate’. In Amor Towles’s novel it also serves the same purpose.

American Upper-class: SCHOOL CHUMS	British Upper-class: SCHOOL CHUMS A BLOKE, A CHAP
1) He clearly believed too many of the stories he’d heard from <i>school chums</i> about summer escapades with older sister’s friends [2, p. 156].	1) ‘You’re right, <i>although it could just be one of his old school chums</i> ,’ said Craig as he joined them in the kitchen [3], p. 514].
2) Instead, you’d say you were on your way to Paris to see some <i>school chums</i> and purchase a painting or two [2, p. 195].	2) Just <i>blokes</i> in invisibly slender boats, sweating and grunting, watched by an audience of bored girls and other <i>blokes</i> , many of whom ...are seizing the chance to be free for a day and drink too much... [6, p. 93].
	3) This was divot time: something I’d been told about by a <i>bloke</i> who claimed to have gone out on the polo ground at Windsor to stamp a divot and found himself next to the Queen... [6, pp. 103-104].
	4) ...I cowered in my seat while the charmer pacified the maniac, saying, ‘No, no, don’t do that. <i>He’s a good chap</i> ,’ and offering the maniac a drink [6, p. 6].

As the adduced examples demonstrate, the appellative ‘a school chum’ is used both in American and British upper-class speech portrayals, though, in Charles Jennings’s novel we also find the appellative ‘a bloke’, which is registered in the dictionary as a British informal word, originated in the XIX century from Shelta [7], and the appellative ‘a chap’, which is marked as dated, informal and a friendly form of address between men and boys and dating back to the XV1 century [8]. The examples adduced in the dictionary make us believe that these appellatives are used irrespective of a social bond between the speakers, but may indicate a social

background of the one who uses the word.

Speaking about the privileged classes in two countries, in Great Britain they are called ‘the aristocracy’ or ‘the nobility’, ‘the class’ (...where his money allowed him to mix with what he called “class” [4, p.121]), the ‘Sloanes’ (How do you distinguish between the merely conspicuously well-to-do and authentic Sloanes? [6, p.23]), the Debrett’s [6, p.167], the grandes, all with different shades of meaning, while in the USA there is an acronym WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) denoting the elite.

D. Drinks: Champagne/Bubbly

Society life revolves round social events that include drinks and champagne in particular. In descriptions of upper-class parties and pastimes this drink implies high society, and in fiction of different time periods one can find abundant examples set against the background of upper-class culture. Interestingly, there are two words denoting this drink – *champagne*, originated in France, and its informal synonym *bubbly* coming from Middle English ‘bubble’ – ‘a drink containing bubbles’. The latter is oftentimes used in speech of the young generation of the upper classes, a good illustration is found in the British novels by Jeffrey Archer and Charles Jennings, in the speech of graduates from Cambridge University. This very fact testifies to the penetration of informal, slang words into the upper-class speech, though slang has always been speech characteristic of the younger generation. We find the analogous usage of the word in American upper-class speech portrayals.

American Upper-class: CHAMPAGNE / BUBBLY (INFORMAL)	British Upper-class: CHAMPAGNE / BUBBLY (INFORMAL)
CHAMPAGNE 1) Tinker poured the <i>champagne</i> into our empty glasses [2, p. 22]. 2) <i>The champagne</i> was catching up with me [2, p.117]. 3) He was grasping <i>a bottle of champagne</i> by the neck and grinning like a truant holding a fish by the tail [2, p.21]. BUBBLE - informal 4) ... Tinker signaled the waitress and ordered <i>a bottle of bubbly</i> [2, p.20]. 5) Here, no doubt, was the well-tipped source of <i>our bubbly</i> [2, p.22].	CHAMPAGNE 1) From behind me, I heard some fellow explode with satisfaction. ‘Excellent bottle of champagne!’ he shouted. ‘Excellent bottle!’ [6, p.172]. BUBBLE - informal 2) Hey, Sarah, Nick! We’re over here,’ shouted Payne, waving furiously at them. ‘Come and have <i>a glass of bubbly</i> ’ [3, p.491].

E. A Room with Washing Facilities

Socially marked are the words denoting rooms with washing facilities: last century Allan Ross, Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh [9] were the first to speak about social differences between the words ‘a lavatory’ and ‘a toilet’ in their book “Noblesse Oblige” which became the first publication to coin the terms – “U –Non-U” and officially declare that there exists the so called U-vocabulary. In this connection making parallels with American U-class culture

may prove that society code is shared not only by the British upper classes but also by the American elite to linguistically secure their dominance and social privilege.

American U-class: POWDER ROOM (euphemistic); LAVATORIUM (origin. Latin); JOHN (chiefly North American, informal. a toilet)	British Upper-class: LAVATORY, LOO TOILET-PAPER
1) Inquiring for <i>a powder room</i> ... [2, p.201]. 2) Then she excused herself to <i>the powder room</i> [2, p. 32]. 3) And what’s in here? I asked, pushing open a door. -Uhm. <i>The lavatorium</i> ? -Ah! Dicky seemed sweetly reluctant to include it on the tour, but it was a work of art [2, p.265]. 4) ... but a quarter of an hour <i>in a public john</i> was a long time even for a girl [2, p.21]. 5) I lit one and sat on <i>the john</i> to smoke [2, p.91].	1) Around this huge concrete edifice stand the older, brick and wrought-iron Edwardian railway-station structures, housing the racecourse administrative offices, tote counters, stables and an awful lot of <i>lavatories</i> [6, p. 82]. 2) Instead, farcically, our man used to piss into the collection of coffee mugs rather than use the <i>loo</i> [6, p. 68].

The comparative analysis of the words used to denote ‘a lavatory/ toilet’ has showed that in the American novel the characters use the words ‘a powder room’, in the Webster Dictionary registered as **1 US** : a small bathroom especially for guests that has a toilet and sink but not a bathtub or shower, **2** : a public bathroom for women in a restaurant, hotel, etc. [10]. We also come across a noun ‘john’ as ‘a toilet or bathroom’ chiefly American and informal [11]. One of the characters in Amor Towles’s novel used the word ‘lavatorium’, a Latin word not registered in the dictionary but originating the word ‘lavatory’. It is obviously used humorously and implies the learnedness and prestigious education of the character as not every University student can boast knowledge of Latin and Greek. Contrasting the words used in the USA and Great Britain, it should be pointed out that Americans either use words in slightly different meanings or elaborate their own words. ‘A Powder room’ has a euphemistic connotation in Great Britain whereas in America, it is not the case, according to the dictionaries [12]. The noun ‘john’ is an informal chiefly North American noun, which has a British neutral counterpart ‘lavatory’. In British upper class culture alongside with the word ‘a lavatory’ a slang word ‘loo’ is used, mainly in students’ speech. Though a noun ‘toilet’ is non-U, according to previous research, it retains a status of a U-word in the combination with paper – ‘a toilet-paper’. So, the difference in the use of the words is obvious.

F. The Use of Adjectives

Adjectives, as it was stated in our previously published articles [13], [14] serve as social indices of the speakers. As the analysis of the British upper class speakers has demonstrated, adjectives are part and parcel of the U-class vocabulary and there is an adjectival code, as it were, unambiguously indicating the status of the speaker. If we refer to Simon Heffer who defines adjectives as ‘those that

describe matter of fact and those that describe matters of perception or opinion' and his opinion that the first are 'far less offensive than the latter, and therefore more excusable' [15], p. 137, it is the second group of adjectives that constitute the vocabulary of the upper-class speech. Simon Heffer, being a journalist and having worked for years for *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Spectator*, draws a distinct line between the two groups and warns journalists against the adjectives that describe matters of perception or opinion as they obscure the meaning and create vagueness, thus promoting an indirect way of communication in contrast to the first group of adjectives. If the matter-of-fact adjectives serve a direct means of communication, the adjectives of perception or opinion create, on the contrary, an indirect and a veiled way of communication characteristic of the upper classes. Among the most recurrent adjectives found in both American and British fiction are the following: *beautiful*, *charming*, *delightful*, *elegant*, *fabulous*, *gallant*, *gracious*, *splendid*, *perfect*, *terrific*, *superior*, *generous*, *genteel*, *gentle*, *gorgeous*, *glamorous*, *polite*, etc.

American Upper-class:	British Upper-class:
1) It was pretty <i>fabulous</i> too [2, p.119].	1)...he had not positioned himself as an <i>elegant</i> gentleman, he did not feel any need to be <i>polite</i> if it did not suit him [5, p.45].
2) The library is <i>splendid</i> , she said, exhibiting her <i>superior</i> familiarity with the hollingsworths' house [2, p.171].	2)...they are <i>charming</i> , she said [5, p.81].
3) But I also answer to <i>gorgeous</i> and <i>glamorous</i> . – how about ... <i>gorgeous</i> ? [2, p. 174].	3)... they were <i>delightful</i> and we saw a lot of them... [5, p.82].
4) ...a <i>genteel</i> smile (Ibid. p.136) ...a <i>gentle</i> smile [2, p.229].	4) ...but it was a <i>gallant</i> and <i>generous</i> lie... [5, p.148].
5) A rather <i>generous</i> definition of neighborhood [2, p.184].	5) ...which I would like to describe her as ' <i>horrid</i> ' [5, p.149].
6) <i>How terrific</i> ? [2, p.155]; What a <i>terrific</i> <i>surprise</i> . <i>Terrific</i> and ... hieroglyphic [2, p.263].	6) ...Serena was not as <i>beautiful</i> as Joanna Langley ... they looked <i>wonderful</i> together [5, p.144].
	7)...this <i>casual</i> , <i>comfortable</i> <i>elegance</i> ... [5, p.159].
	8)...there was more of the <i>splendid</i> , European parade on the walls...[5, p. 160].

The examples adduced from both American and British novels do not exhaust the list of adjectives favourable with and indicative of the upper classes of society. The British novels contain a much longer list of socially marked words, which is to a degree owing to the origin and education of the writer.

IV. CONCLUSION

The comparative study of British and American characters represented in literature of the XX1 century has showed that despite the democratic course the USA chose to

steer its development three hundred years ago, it acquired and assimilated the society code elaborated by the French. The main social markings of social status, success and prestige remain the same in Great Britain and America and include similar indices: of appearance, manners of speech and behavior, forms of address, school identifiers, and use of adjectives. Having much in common with Great Britain, America, nonetheless, elaborated its own signs which serve to identify an American upper-class speaker, which are reflected in the use of American U-words, registered in dictionaries as words chiefly North American and often informal. It testifies to a less formal character of American society code, and the use of words with American cultural coloring. Though the books taken for analysis allow us to arrive at rather accurate conclusions, research along these lines will undoubtedly continue and reveal other aspects of British-American similarities and differences which have not been in the focus of the article.

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