

A Hazard of New Professions: Mrs. Mandel and the Business of Class

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When asked to explain Mrs. Mandel in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), Fulkerson proudly claims to have invented her (143). Her placement in the Dryfoos family must have been a novelty at the time for William Dean Howells to endorse his boast. To the parvenu Dryfooses she serves the function of surrogate mistress of the household—hostess, guardian of the daughters, chaperone, housekeeper, governess, social secretary, travel companion, personal assistant. More than the sum of her duties, she, in Fulkerson’s words, “runs the whole concern socially and economically” (144). The idea perhaps never really caught on, because her profession lacks a proper name to this day. Yet the demand for her kind of talent was such that Edith Wharton found similar employment for two characters in *The House of Mirth* (1905)—Carry Fisher and Lily Bart—although she also shied from naming the profession.¹ This paper studies the occupation of Mrs. Mandel, the first of her kind in American Literature, to examine the specific socio-cultural conditions that inspired her creation and her relevance to the discussion of these socio-cultural issues in Howells’ novel. The character satisfies an urgent need of the expanding upper class in late nineteenth-century America, where the nouveau riche, in their attempt to find social acceptance, created a prospective market for cultural guidance. Howells turns this potential commodification of class knowledge into a fictional career opportunity for destitute genteel women. The vocation offers the novelist a chance to dramatize the power relations between money and taste, adding another dimension to the novel’s major conflict between capital and labor. Mrs. Mandel further supplements a range of female characters who illustrate the many facets of the

1. In the novel, Carry Fisher “set off so many newcomers on the social stage” (96) that her income enables her to take a small house in a prosperous suburb (194), while Lily’s stint “as the regulator of a germinating social life” (214) to Mrs. Norma Hatch was supposed to tide her over until she receives her aunt’s legacy.

Woman Question in the novel, providing a practical solution to the preservation of the domestic paradigm. In keeping with the innovative spirit of the Progressive era, the novelist applies business practices to the assistance of social adjustment and the promotion of cultural values, relegating what had traditionally been the duty of the lady of the house to paid experts. Despite the limited success of the experiment in speeding up assimilation, Howells suggests that the professionalization of class culture benefits all the related parties and fulfills a positive social function.

Howells' panoramic novel about New York follows the venture of Basil March, who leaves his insurance job in Boston to take up the editorship of a new magazine in the metropolis. The relocation puts March in touch with a wide array of characters at work and in other daily activities, enabling the novelist to survey a multitude of contemporary urban problems and give voice to their causes and possible solutions. Among the characters with a representative problem is Mrs. Mandel, a straitened gentlewoman hired by the Western millionaire Dryfoos to help his family navigate New York society. The dislocated parvenu, himself another type, moved his family to New York to provide his children with more socio-cultural advantages. He funds the new magazine, originally envisioned by March and the manager Fulkerson to run on a cooperative business model, so as to put his son Conrad in the accounting office and train him to become a businessman. The religious Conrad, however, would rather help the poor than make money, devoting himself to charity and showing little interest in social life. The rustic daughters, on the other hand, do not appreciate Mrs. Mandel's advice enough, resulting in the elder one losing both her heart and her pride to Beaton, a frivolous artist working for the magazine. Meanwhile, the liberal-minded March clashes with his employer because he refuses to fire the translator Lindau, whose socialist views displease the anti-union Dryfoos. After both Lindau and Conrad get caught up in a violent streetcar strike and die, Dryfoos sells the magazine to March and Fulkerson at a low price and takes his family, along with Mrs. Mandel, to Europe, where the elder daughter Christine marries a nobleman.

Mrs. Mandel's profession filled a need that grew out of the social changes taking place during the rapid development of industrial capitalism in late nineteenth-century America. The shift of economic power into the hands of Robber Barons brought changes to class structure and social life. With the arrival of the nouveau riche, the fashionable society dominated by old families came under pressure to acknowledge their new peers. The anecdotes of the Gilded Age abound with the maneuvers of Old Money and New to (re-)define high society. In the early 1870s Ward McAllister organized the Patriarchs' balls and created the List of four hundred to determine who belonged to the ballroom of social leader Mrs. Caroline Schermerhorn Astor, only to have the snubbed Mrs. Alva Vanderbilt throw a fancy dress ball in 1883 that upstaged all other events and forced Mrs. Astor to make the first advances ("Ward McAllister" 2016; Broyles 2013). Such episodes dramatize the tension in contemporary ethos between the exclusive, educated, conventional patricians embodied by Mrs. Horn in *Hazard*, and the conspicuous, philistine, aberrant intruders like the Dryfooses. Yet the flashy newcomers, eager for acceptance, still had to follow the social examples of the old guard and raise their game, as shown in the case of Mrs. Vanderbilt. Admittance to

the social circle, aside from money and status, depended heavily on abiding by the customs and etiquette prescribed by the establishment. Indeed even though McAllister stressed pedigree in his social register, he made a name for himself as an authority on the social graces. In truth, the lack of social manners was an even more convenient excuse than lineage for the crème de la crème to reject the likes of the uncouth Cornelius “Commodore” Vanderbilt, who spat tobacco juice wherever he liked even when invited to New York’s finer homes (Renehan 162). Either to follow the example of Mrs. Vanderbilt or to avoid the blunders of the Commodore, the social climber needed guidance from those with the right tastes and proper knowledge.

Recent discussion of social class in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* has focused mainly on middle-class relations with the working class. Amy Kaplan’s influential study on the novel investigates the bourgeois strategies to comprehend and contain the underclasses, concluding that its realism is “a process of imagining and managing the threats of social change” (47). Her *Hazard* chapter in *The Social Construction of American Realism* elucidates how contemporary discourses likened the city to “a new frontier or foreign territory to settle and explore and regarded its inhabitants—usually immigrants—as natives to civilize and control” (45). The genteel consciousness achieves this, Kaplan argues, by banishing the struggling poor and the new immigrants from the “‘knowable community’—a network of mutual social recognition that unites diverse members” (47)—to “the peripheral category of ‘useless information’” (48). Her argument conveniently divides urban population into white-collar settlers and destitute locals, without taking the moneyed classes into consideration, possibly because the latter do not feel threatened by the blurred class lines between the struggling middle class and the oppressed under classes, nor do the patrician attitudes toward “the other half” differ from those of the bourgeoisie. New York high society is absent from her reading—the only exception being the death of Conrad Dryfoos by a stray bullet from the streetcar strikers, which she uses to illustrate how the violence from the suppressed background penetrates into the complacency of the respectable foreground. Later critics have mostly followed Kaplan’s line of thinking: Linnie Blake recognizes that the cultured bourgeoisie stand apart from the poor and the capitalists, yet the novel’s urban imagination revolves around the split between “the city’s ‘respectable’ and ‘squalid’ areas, its American and immigrant inhabitants, its refined bourgeoisie and its potentially revolutionary working classes” (8). Samantha Bernstein meanwhile groups the middle and the upper class together into a genteel class, but then analyzes how picturesque aestheticism “both expresses and mitigates what is perhaps the primary ethical dilemma of middle-class liberalism: how one should view those less fortunate and to what degree one ought or is able to sympathize with them” (280).

Nevertheless, from the privileged New York perspective, another conflict between insiders and outsiders—defined by genealogy, geography, and hierarchy—was also taking place. The upper-class natives saw a pressing need to understand and accommodate the superrich newcomers whom they could not simply disregard by blending them into what Kaplan calls “the tamed cityscape” (53). As the highborn matron Mrs. Horn acknowledges reluctantly, “people with their kind of money . . . must of course be received sooner or later. You can’t keep [the Dryfooses] out. Only, I believe

I would rather let someone else begin with them” (237). Kaplan possibly has good reasons to equate New York Old Money with the Marches when discussing social control of the proletarians, but the snobbery of McAllister and Mrs. Horn is another form of social control aimed at the culturally uninitiated, regardless of income. These socialites are what Pierre Bourdieu calls “the aristocracy of culture,” who distinguish themselves by a hierarchy of cultural practices. Such honorary titles, “awarded by the [domestic or scholastic] educational system—and [cultural] pedigrees, measured by seniority in admission to the nobility” (2), are especially relevant in a democratic society where none can really claim a birthright to class identity. Bourdieu also has a term for Mrs. Astor’s and Mrs. Horn’s snub—“symbolic violence,” the generally unperceived form of violence used to maintain the social hierarchy in favor of the dominant classes (Schubert 184). Mrs. Mandel’s efforts to civilize and tame the arrivistes are at once a lesson in high culture and an exercise of symbolic violence. Her position as both an envoy of the dominant culture and employee of the vulgar rich complicates the power relations, though, and supplements the conflict between capital and labor at the center of the novel.

Mrs. Mandel’s ambiguous position in the class hierarchy possibly explains why most studies ignore her and her function in the novel. Even Donald Pizer’s comprehensive examination of “the complex fictional architectonics of the work—that is, the way in which its many plot lines, large dramatis personae, and distinctive narrative voice communicate [Howells’ social beliefs]” (1)—overlooks Mrs. Mandel and the social isolation of the Dryfoos family. Nonetheless, the plot involving Mrs. Mandel actually highlights what Pizer calls “the money nexus” (7) in social circles and complements the impact of New Money on the existing social order. Howells had been well aware of the plights of the socially-inexperienced nouveau riche as early as *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), where the Lapham family had to resort to etiquette books and the advice of salespersons in preparation for the Corey dinner. What had only been a selling point for publishers and clothiers in the early novel becomes in *Hazard* a job opportunity that could benefit both those with money and no breeding, and those with breeding and no money. Mrs. Mandel, “a perfect lady [who] had seen better days” (143), had wished to support herself by her pen, but, with little promise in that pursuit, agreed to become the Dryfooses’ live-in etiquette advisor. Her career path replicates that of the protagonist Basil March, who transforms from a Boston insurance manager and amateur writer into a New York magazine editor: thwarted literary aspirations, financial insecurity, and persuasion by Fulkerson to switch to equally respectable yet more gainful employment with Dryfoos.

As an impoverished upper-middle class woman, however, Mrs. Mandel has far fewer options than March. In fact, the opportunities offered by Howells to the other single women in the novel are not available for Mrs. Mandel either: the truly talented Alma Leighton trains to become an illustrator, her mother takes boarders, Margaret Vance becomes a nun, while Madison Woodburn marries. Fulkerson therefore indeed finds an ingenious solution to the lack of career choices for upper-middle class women who are even more restricted by propriety than the common working woman. His invention especially addresses a major issue of the contemporary debate over women’s

work—the unemployment of single gentlewomen. Although the misery of women factory workers and the exploitation of prostitutes were also hotly debated, for many Victorians the placement of unmarried middle-class ladies *was* the Woman Question: “do we *want* women to work, or do we want them to stay home?” (Helsing 110) Fulkerson’s arrangement enables Mrs. Mandel to stay home, even if it is somebody else’s home, and work at the same time. Generally, educated middle-class woman would become governesses, a vocation sharing similar advantages; but she would occupy an awkward, isolated position between master and servant in the household. Mrs. Mandel’s duties, on the other hand, make her almost a member of the wealthy family: the invalid mother and grown-up daughters rely on her to carry out many social functions, such as receiving visitors for the mother and supervising the social life of the girls. Her elevated status in the household and the additional respect of the family certainly suit an upper-middle class lady much better.

The unconventionality of Fulkerson’s solution and Mrs. Mandel’s profession further explains the scholarly oversight of this character. In her discussion of “The Unanswerable Woman Question,” for instance, Patricia Schulster investigates “the very confused, conflicted, and fluctuating experience of womanhood in America” (116) but pays little attention to Mrs. Mandel. Schulster merely sees the lady as a stand-in for Mrs. Dryfoos, who “perverts standards of domesticity” (118) as a dependent, irresponsible, invalid wife and mother. Mrs. Mandel does not fit into Schulster’s discussion because, on the one hand, she attends to the family for pay, so the critic cannot evaluate her within the domestic paradigm; on the other hand, her job does not send her outside the household, so she does not fit the image of the independent career woman either. From Fulkerson’s point of view, though, Mrs. Mandel is a clever response to Schulster’s unanswerable question because she manages to negotiate the conflicts if not resolve the confusion. Her intermediate situation is the best part of the job—it enables her to make a living out of True Womanhood. Not only does she “[take] all the care of housekeeping off the old lady’s hands, and [go] round with the girls” in place of a dutiful wife and mother, but she also knows “just how much polish they can take on” (144) to introduce them to the upper-class lifestyle which, Howells maintains, embodies the (possibly outdated) moral and cultural ideals of the republic (Schulster 130).

However, the notion that any part of “the woman’s role in keeping the family—and by extension American society—on the right and moral path” (Schulster 130) can become a marketable skill in the capitalist system undermines the values that sustain this market, because it conflicts with the supposed selflessness of the Angel in the House and the separation of the private and public spheres. That the emplacement comes from Fulkerson, the mastermind behind the cooperative magazine and its advertising genius, perhaps conveys Howells’ reservations about the new vocation, although the ironic similarities between the labor market and the marriage market also lay bare the sexual politics of the cult of domesticity. Eric Cheyfitz notes how Miss Woodburn inspires Fulkerson to realize the ideals of friendship in the conflict between March and Dryfoos, which furthermore inspires him to propose in order to always have her moral support and sympathy. Both of them play the expected social roles in what Cheyfitz calls the “romance of self-realization” (58), which for Miss Woodburn is to

realize the status of married woman. Schulster, on the other hand, compares her unfavorably with Alma because she makes a career out of “the life of service” (130) before and after marriage; yet, put in those terms, her livelihood differs little from that of Mrs. Mandel, while the latter has the assurance of a regular paycheck. Miss Woodburn, whose “humorous pragmatism” (112) wins Gib Prettyman’s approval and whose marriage “constitutes a hopeful commercial hybridization” (111) for the critic, might not have passed over a chance like Mrs. Mandel’s, if, as Schulster argues, she “settles for all she thinks she can have, not necessarily for what she wants” (130). Besides, both Schulster and Cheyfitz detect the perversion of the domestic cult’s ideals and how the women characters inevitably fall short; if so, then from a practical standpoint, backup and division of labor would help keep the system working. “The power of commercial pragmatism might conceivably be put to work for what Howells would consider genuinely idealistic purposes” (109), contends Prettyman in praise of Fulkerson’s magazine cooperative. If Howells cannot expect an idealistic solution to the Woman Question, then Mrs. Mandel’s employment likewise serves a culturally sanctioned purpose—her efforts, at the very least, steer the Dryfoos ladies away from shame.

Howells does not detail the pecuniary arrangements between Mrs. Mandel and her employers; nevertheless, she appears to enjoy their opulent lifestyle, dressing well enough to be mistaken for one of the Dryfoos ladies (132), and sharing their living quarters, their table and their travels. Her work furthermore places her in a position of authority: correcting the behavior and speech of the Dryfoos girls, forbidding them to write to Beaton, and expelling Beaton from their parlor. Her power comes from her cultural capital, to borrow Bourdieu’s terminology—her knowledge of the values, tastes, manners and lifestyle of the upper class.² Such cultural knowledge confers social status, which explains why the parvenus eagerly embrace it—money alone does not buy respect and acceptance. Ironically, the advantage should have belonged to her employers: symbolic capital is, after all, transubstantiated forms of economic capital, and the system of the symbolic capital reproduces the structured inequalities and power relation of the economic field. The Dryfoos sisters understand status in exactly such a light. In their eyes, “they [are] not only better than most people by virtue of [their father’s] money, but as good as any” (224), because money determines social standing, and the value of the purchased status symbols, they believe, corresponds to their place in the social hierarchy. Mela feels that she made an impression at Mrs. Horn’s musicale, therefore, “either because she was the most dressed of any person or because it had got around who her father was” (232). Yet, even if status symbols started as embodiments of pecuniary advantages, Bourdieu notes that they “deny and suppress their instrumentalism by proclaiming themselves to be disinterested and of intrinsic worth” (Moore 103). This enables cultural hierarchies to operate as if independent of economic capital: Mrs. Mandel can therefore demand the compliance of her millionaire employers

2. “Cultural capital” is defined as a “form of value associated with culturally authorised tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards” (Webb x). It is a type of symbolic capital, a “form of capital or value that is not recognized as such” (Webb xv).

with her standards of propriety and taste, not because she has more money, but because she understands how people with the advantages accrued by millions should act. Dryfoos grudgingly admits his deficiency and inferiority when Beaton begins to flirt with Christine: though his provincial traditions and perceptions do not disapprove of it, he feels an “angry doubt . . . in so many experiences of his changed life; he wanted to show his sense of [the young man’s conduct], if it was a liberty, but he did not know how, and he did not know that it was so” (197-198). Which is why he finally delegates Mrs. Mandel to handle Beaton.

For that matter, nearly all the staff of *Every Other Week* has the advantage of cultural capital over Dryfoos. March observes, at their first meeting, that “Dryfoos seemed furtively conscious of being a country person and of being aware that . . . he was to be tried by other tests than those which would have availed him as a shrewd speculator” (186). Even during this office visit, where he could wield the power of proprietor, he fails to make appropriate conversation, missing the cues to lead the talk to business, talking of private affairs that exclude March, and forcing the editor to witness his homily to his son. His unease with cultivated men leads him to be “even a little afraid of [March], as of a piece of mechanism he had acquired but did not quite understand” (243), which the editor later takes advantage of in loftily resisting the proprietor’s orders to fire Lindau. Fulkerson also uses the family’s social inexperience to propose a campaign dinner at the Dryfoos house. March feels ashamed of the manager’s impudence, but he then “hardened his heart against [the Dryfoos] father and son and their possible emotions” because he “reflected that neither of them could feel it as people of more worldly knowledge would” (248). It shows the limits of class sympathy and the complicity in symbolic violence. As Bourdieu notes, symbolic violence is especially effective and efficient because the dominant classes only have to “*let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their domination” (qtd. in Schubert 184). Margaret and Mrs. Horn easily drop their acquaintance with the Dryfoos sisters after the musicale, with the seemingly humble admission that they failed to give them pleasure, “but perhaps nobody could” (237). The slight confirms Christine’s suspicion that she might be somehow inferior to them (342). Her father likewise feels ill at ease at the campaign dinner he hosts. The literary discussion at the table excludes him, and once the topic returns to business, the two least sophisticated members of the dinner party, Dryfoos and Lindau, clash over the radical guest’s inappropriate censure of his capitalist host. While the translator inadvertently breaches etiquette, the employer’s bullying reaction also finds no moral support from the gentlemen who witnessed the contretemps. The social event brings Colonel Woodburn to conclude that “there are certain aspects of Mr. Dryfoos’ character in which he is not a gentleman” (324), and the Colonel and March do not hesitate to imply this disapproval in their ensuing interaction with the concerned parties.

Not that the arriviste easily relinquishes the dominance of economic capital, which others tactfully acknowledge without his pressing it. As proven by Mrs. Horn’s earlier quote, even the social elites acknowledge the claims of the moneyed class to society. Howells pointedly dramatizes the power struggle between those who have economic capital in their favor and those with only symbolic capital. When Fulkerson tries to

impress Dryfoos with the success of the magazine, the millionaire asks if the advertising manager “really thinks there’s something in the glory that pays” (192), to which the young man avoids giving a direct answer. Mrs. Horn also shrewdly suspects that March and Beaton show special attention to the Dryfoos sisters at her musicale because the father pays their salaries, a qualm which Mrs. March cannot help but share. Cultural advantages without the backing of wealth merely help to cast servitude in a more dignified light. March is forced to recognize the dependence of his respectability on another’s capital when Dryfoos dictates that the editor must fire Lindau because of the translator’s anarchist views. If March daunts Dryfoos for speaking to him “as if [he] were the foreman of a shop” and Lindau “a drunken mechanic” (305), he nevertheless realizes, “as every hireling must, no matter how skillfully or gracefully the tie is contrived for his wearing, that he belongs to another, whose will is his law” (306). In the end, even his righteous indignation is problematic, and it all comes down to a matter of breeding: he admits that “in his heat he had hardly done justice to Dryfoos’ rights in the matter” (302), while the chivalrous Colonel Woodburn can only comment that “a high-spirited gentleman like Mr. March . . . could not submit to dictation of the nature” (323) from the boorish Dryfoos. Dryfoos also concedes that “he had no business to speak to [March] as he did, and he withdraws everything” (312); indeed he claims to merely object to “hav[ing] a man callin’ me a traitor and a tyrant at my own table” (388). If the parvenu acknowledges a breach of decorum, his rowdy guest was the one who started it.

March wins his point on office protocol, but, by reducing the issue of freedom of expression to table manners, Dryfoos relegates March’s moral high ground to cultural superiority and symbolic violence. Still, if one bores deeper, moral principles and social etiquette are merely different expressions of economic power—both luxuries that a dependent employee like March can hardly afford. Although theoretically economic and social capitals could be interchangeable and thus equally valuable, it only works if the parties involved acknowledge any such conversions. Bourdieu maintains that “[the] formal presentation of the principle of social capital is that of altruism” (Moore 104), which awards people with honor, which can lead to economic benefits. March’s sense of honor in this case conflicts with his financial security, however, so that his sacrifice of economic gains for symbolic gains testifies to the risks of “misrecognition”—Bourdieu’s term for the systematic denial of the economic origins of symbolic capitals (Moore 104)—especially when economic and cultural hierarchies are out of sync. With his fortune in the balance, the editor drops the ethical argument with relief, following the resignation and death of Lindau. His “eccentric flash of courage . . . brings no comfort, no answers, no strength of purpose,” Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson argue (303), which is also why critics have often found the protagonist an inadequate central consciousness.³ Despite the dubious moral message, Howells has no doubt that cultural

3. March, though shaken out of his complacently aesthetic view of experience at the end of the novel, offers no satisfactory solution to the socio-economic turmoil he witnesses. Kaplan voices the harsher verdict that March provides a perspective limited by his genteel sentiments, although Bernstein tries to mitigate the criticism by explaining that picturesque aesthetics

capital rather than economic or moral qualities determines who can settle down in the urban community. All the other characters find a home in New York except the millionaire and his family by the end of the novel; even though Dryfoos moderates and tries to atone for his boorish, oppressive behavior, Howells has the family depart for Europe with a broken spirit—to the mutual satisfaction of the cultural elite and the unrefined sojourners.

Mrs. Mandel experiences a similar clash and reconciliation with her employers over matters of propriety, although not subject to March's kind of moral test. When Dryfoos orders her to interfere with Beaton's flirtation with Christine, she finds the assignment disagreeable because of its questionable propriety—conceding, when the painter challenges her authority, that she has no right to probe into the young people's affairs. She nevertheless obeys the old man's wishes, because the family, "all rather helpless people" (350), need her "to take the place of a mother to [the girls]" (349). Besides these sentimental reasons, Beaton's irresponsible flirtation with Christine arouses her moral indignation—a feeling shared by the readers, who also know about his concurrent interest in Alma and Margaret—therefore giving Mrs. Mandel the moral authority to confront him. Critical to the successful performance of her professional and moral duties, though, is her sophistication, as she saves her dignity by "convict[ing] Beaton of vulgarity" (350) with her tone when he sneers at her authority and citing European customs to justify her officiousness. The artist finally submits to her discipline graciously because they share the same cultural knowledge, even admitting to Dryfoos later that she acted right—and himself dishonorably. The skillful, dignified manner in which she disentangles Christine from the insincere suitor, while preserving the respectability of her employers, proves her competence and the value of her services. Compared with Dryfoos' clumsy negotiations with the painter and the violent confrontation between the ill-suited young couple, her moral and cultural superiority further demonstrates that a hired surrogate of True Womanhood is more advisable than the total lack thereof.

In fact, the real challenge of Mrs. Mandel's job is dealing with her employers rather than society people. Beaton regards her with pity and "humorous contempt," "as a civilized person living among such people as the Dryfooses" (350), and for certain their boorishness grate on her finer sensibilities. Moreover, they do not fully appreciate her services because they do not fully understand their cultural disadvantage. Dryfoos feels that "he had hired society in Mrs. Mandel, at so much a year" (227), while Christine calls her a "meddlesome minx" (361) for expelling Beaton. Mrs. Mandel takes offense at the language used to her and also alarm at the girl's outburst, but Dryfoos has no sympathy for either of these feelings and merely tells her to lock herself up to avoid

expresses middle-class sympathy and liberal guilt even if it requires a proper distance. In Howells' defense, George Bennett contends that the open ending contains "appropriate dramatic ironies in which the suspension of clear-cut significance is the meaning and the realistic resolution" (37), which nevertheless implies an authorial reservation about and ironic distance from the character. Pizer more or less echoes Bennett's proposition by commenting that March's indecisiveness reflects the nation's attitude toward social changes (10).

more hostility. Similar to March, she is caught between two quarreling sides, neither of which she fully agrees with, fighting over a matter from which she would prefer to distance herself. Her powerlessness shows again how little self-respect and dignity a hireling can keep in the face of her employer's displeasure and intimidation, while "looking forward ruefully to the moment when she must leave even this ungentle home for the chances of the ruder world outside" (396). The inadequacy and ingratitude of her employers are most obvious when Dryfoos undoes her work by encouraging Beaton to visit Christine again. His tactless way of approaching the young man disgusts the latter, though, who believes the millionaire uses the memory of his dead son and a commission of Conrad's portrait to lure him back. Yet despite his unsympathetic distaste, the painter lacks the moral principles to refuse a standing invitation to indulge his whims for female attention, and he foolishly ignores his better cultural judgment and Mrs. Mandel's incidental caution. His return to the Dryfoos parlor drags him into the depth of vulgarity, when Christine "[spits] at him like a wild cat" and he realizes that "he had got his punishment in the right way and that his case was not to be dignified into tragedy" (427). Christine comes to the same recognition of her degradation and offers a complete reconciliation with Mrs. Mandel, finally submitting herself to the lady's guidance. The career woman is vindicated both professionally and emotionally. As the Dryfooses leave for Europe, Mela is glad of her company because "[she's] about the only one that speaks French in *this family*" (428). Her inclusion into the family attests her success, as if the surrogate had become the real thing.

By idealizing the labor relations between the Dryfooses and Mrs. Mandel, Howells countenances this innovative profession. Mela's sentimental representation of their intimate connection indicates that the work arrangements meet not only the practical needs of both employer and employee but also fill a psychological void for the "motherless" family and the homeless lady. Even if this were only wishful thinking on the employer's part, the mutual love and care implied in Mela's words certainly paint a more amiable picture of capital and labor than Dryfoos' exploitative capitalism, Lindau's radical socialism, and Colonel Woodburn's benign slavery. Indeed Dryfoos, now a wearied, bewildered old man looked after by the women, appears in a more sympathetic light than the union-crushing capitalist in the campaign dinner stories and the shrewd-bargaining seller of *Every Other Week*. The reader also infers that the spouseless, childless, homeless Mrs. Mandel reciprocates some of the girls' affection—Fulkerson would hardly have assigned her to the position if she lacked a tolerant tenderness. Practically speaking, such feelings should furthermore improve her work conditions and job security. The harmony between her and the sisters also eases the labor tensions in the novel, especially following the violent streetcar strike which killed the peace-making Conrad and the rabble-rousing Lindau. Mrs. Mandel's example is even more heartening than the Marches' friendliness to the Dryfooses. After the magazine changes hands, the Marches see the former owner off to Europe, even though "[there] was no longer any business obligation on them to be civil" (427)—Mrs. Mandel supposedly should be free from such nuances when showing her kindness. One might argue that civility and kindness are part of her business; but that description better fits the good works of Conrad and Margaret. The novel suggests, instead, that the job itself,

when successful, generates mutual warmth and appreciation. Prettyman uses the magazine's return to Fulkerson's original cooperative model at the end of the novel to demonstrate how "sarcasm, cynicism, irony and disgust are tempered by the logical prospect that the power of commercial pragmatism might conceivably be put to work for what Howells would consider genuinely idealistic purposes" (109). Likewise, Mrs. Mandel's occupation, even though tainting the ideals of the domestic cult with mercenary motives, nevertheless enables defective households to function more like normal ones guided by bourgeois womanly virtues.

The novel ends with news of the Dyrfooses' "apotheosis in Europe, where society has them, as it were, in translation" (430). No doubt Mrs. Mandel does the translation, with significant modifications to the original. Christine's marriage to a European nobleman "full of present debts and of duels in the past" (430) possibly receives her blessing as well, if the lady did not actually manage it in accordance with local customs. The description implies that the aristocrat's intentions may have been as self-interested as Beaton, although the Dryfooses get a better deal for their dowry. Mrs. Mandel had married for love herself; her husband, formerly her music teacher, was a good man, but they soon went through her property. How her own marriage affects her attitude towards the debt-ridden artist Beaton and whether she views Christine's match with cynicism or gladness or both the novel does not say. Yet most of her contemporaries would agree that she accomplishes her mission to create social chances for the girls and find them good matches. If she failed to initiate them into New York society because they defied her cultural authority, their compliance finally wins them an even bigger prize in terms of high culture and social class. Howells may have reservations about such transatlantic, cross-cultural, cross-class relationships, shown through Fulkerson's joke about Christine's marriage—that Dryfoos will manage the debtors and Christine the duelists, and that the husband better not whip the panther-like wife; but the novelist takes aim more at the snobbery and pragmatism cloaked in the sentimental rhetoric of matrimony and at the social restrictions that narrow women's choices, rather than at Mrs. Mandel's complicity with and profit from these conditions. Unlike March with his literary ideals, the lady has no personal aspirations for her job. Her respect for conventional values and for the wishes of her employers confirms her professionalism. Besides, with her wealth and temperament, Christine can hold her own against European patriarchy, so her mentor can approve the match with a clear conscience. The intimate interaction between husband and wife, coupled with the additional factors of economic and symbolic capital, promises an even more complicated power relation than that between employer and employee.

A Hazard of New Fortunes is a story of relocation and adjustment, a challenge facing all newcomers and natives regardless of social class. Howells uses the Dryfooses to illustrate the need for social control of not only the lower classes, as most critics have noted, but also the upper classes. The creation of Mrs. Mandel's profession is a practical measure to accelerate the assimilation of the suddenly rich by providing them guidance through the labyrinth of tastes and manners. Howells basically validates this experiment, coming out of a progressivist and commercialist mindset, because it benefits all parties and addresses pressing social issues. It creates a job market for destitute upper- and

middle-class ladies, who can still exert their womanly virtues to perpetuate mainstream values in the private sphere. These lady experts furthermore develop a family-like bond with their employers in the process, a gentler relation that balances the violent conflict between capital and labor in the main plot. However, as a pioneer in the business of class conversion, Mrs. Mandel at once upholds and undermines the class ideals she represents. While she turns her knowledge of class distinctions, which are economic advantages in disguise, back into an economic resource, she exposes the pretensions of symbolic capital. Despite the symbolic violence inflicted by the cultural elites, the economic power wielded by the capitalist, in comparison, can cause real pain. Howells nevertheless favors elitist culture by mediating a sentimental reconciliation between the two sides, in which genteel values are vindicated as the better policy. The exile of the Dryfoos family, even though to Europe, successfully forces the parvenus into the background together with the poor and the foreign, bringing with them Mrs. Mandel and the entangled relation between uncultured capital and cultured labor. If the novel fails to put the urban lower classes in their place, it offers a neat solution to the vulgar rich: Money can hire Culture, and Culture can steward Money and help it find its niche.

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ABSTRACT

In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, William Dean Howells provides a new profession for the impoverished upper-middle class lady Mrs. Mandel, the duties of which are essentially acting as surrogate mistress of the bourgeois household. Her expertise meets the needs of the arriviste Dryfooses, who seek acceptance in urban social circles which their money puts within their reach but from which their manners disqualify them. Whereas recent criticism focuses mainly on the unsuccessful attempt of the bourgeois consciousness to contain the struggling poor and the new immigrants, the subplot of Mrs. Mandel continues the novelist's concern for the accommodation of the nouveau riche in mainstream culture. The lady's placement is a progressivist and commercialist solution to the contemporary restructuring of the upper classes. Meanwhile, her interaction with her employers highlights the complicated power relations between economic capital and cultural capital that underlie the main plot of the magazine venture. Her virtual inclusion into the family also softens the violent conflict between capital and labor at the center of the novel. Her career, which combines the ideals of True Womanhood and the enterprising spirit, furthermore supplements the novel's explorations of the Woman Question. In proof of his mastery, Howells manages to concentrate and broaden all the major themes in a minor character such as Mrs. Mandel in this sweeping panorama of the contemporary metropolis.

Keywords: *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Mrs. Mandel, social class, New Money, the Women Question

新職的機運： 曼德爾太太與階級文化商機

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摘 要

郝渥斯在《新富的機運》中安插了一個新的行業，讓新富家庭雇用家道中落的中上流社會仕女充當代理女主人，巧妙的同時解決了當時備受討論的婦女問題——這個階級的女性應否踏出深閨、進入職場——與上流社會面臨的巨大衝擊——如何處理言行粗俗卻亟欲躋身社交圈的暴發戶。不同於近期研究將社會階級的討論專注於中產階級對勞動階級、新移民的視角，本篇論文將焦點放在仕紳與新富之間的矛盾，探討小說家對於當代菁英社會文化發展的長期關切。書中曼德爾太太的新職乃是以進步主義與商業主義的手段協助新舊成員調適因應上流社會的結構變動。這個務實的方案同時對應到小說中勞資衝突的核心議題：雙方各自擁有的經濟資本與文化資本讓權力關係更加複雜；但是曼德爾太太與雇主最後情同家人，相較於主要情節中激烈的勞資紛爭，代理女主人的職業更是個理想化的對比。郝渥斯利用曼德爾太太這個次要角色凝聚、加廣小說中所有的重要議題，使得這本綜覽十九世紀美國社會的鉅著中主題的發展更全面周延。

關鍵詞：《新富的機運》、曼德爾太太、社會階級、新富、婦女問題

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