Edith Wharton lived the first half of her life (38 years) in the nineteenth century and the final half (37 years) in the twentieth century. As she explains in A Backward Glance, she “was born into a world in which telephones, motors, electric light, central heating (except by hot-air furnaces), X-rays, cinemas, radium, aeroplanes and wireless telegraphy were not only unknown but still mostly unforeseen” (6-7). A woman who valued the past, she also appreciated many modern conveniences. She loved the motorcar, utilized the convenience of both telephone and telegraph, had electricity and central heating installed in The Mount in 1901, and saw the first airplane fly over Paris seven years later. However, one major new invention that she was never able to come to terms with aesthetically was the motion picture, or the "cinema," as she called it.

Despite her personal dislike of the medium, several of Wharton’s most popular novels were filmed during her lifetime, including The Age of Innocence (twice, first as a silent movie, then as a sound film), The House of Mirth, The Glimpses of the Moon, and The Children (as "The Marriage Playground"). Wharton realized substantial income from the sales of these works to film companies, but she apparently never viewed any of them, nor is there evidence that she expressed the slightest interest in seeing them. Shortly after her death one additional film was made: "The Old Maid," with Bette Davis and Miriam Hopkins. Following its release in 1939, no feature film of a Wharton work would appear until the unsuccessful version of "The Children" in 1990—a hiatus of over fifty years.

Wharton may have entered a movie theatre only once in her lifetime. Although in his 1975 biography, R. W. B. Lewis notes that "Edith Wharton herself appears never to have entered a movie theater" (7), the Lewises’ 1988 edition of Wharton’s letters establishes that the author did see one silent film on a trip to Spain in 1914 with her friend Walter Berry. Wharton describes the event in a letter from Spain to Bernard Berenson:

The other day Walter insisted on going to the Cinema at Bilbao, & I was so glad he did, for the stupendo dramma di 3 mila metri was called: "Comment on visite une ville au galop" [How to visit a town on the run]. But he only smiled as the panting travellers spun by, & said, when it was over: "Well, we ought to start by 9 sharp tomorrow." (Letters, 325)

The earliest mention of film in Wharton’s fiction occurs in Summer (1917), most likely based on that experience in Spain three years before. In Summer, Charity’s attendance at a silent movie in Nettleton on the Fourth of July represents an exhilarating expansion of her narrow world:

... for a while, everything was merged in her brain in swimming circles of heat and blinding alternations of light and darkness. All the
Two of Wharton's "jazz age" novels, *Twilight Sleep* (1927) and *The Children* (1928), contain numerous references to the cinema. Wharton's portrayal of films in her fiction a decade later became more negative; movies for her had evolved into trendy, mindless experiences to be avoided by serious, intelligent people. In *Twilight Sleep*, the Marchesa, who is excited that an acquaintance is appearing in a film for a great deal of money, justifies the artistic value of making films by equating the process with the production of bathrooms:

"And besides, is it ever degrading to create a work of art? I thought in America you made so much of creativeness—constructiveness—what do you call it? Is it less creative to turn a film than to manufacture bathrooms? Can there be a nobler mission than to teach history to the millions by means of beautiful pictures?" (295-96)

The author's tone clearly implies that for her the cinema was neither beautiful nor noble—and that it could not be seriously considered as "a work of art." Wharton's final word on film appears in the preface to *Ghosts* (1937), her last collection of stories. Here she scathingly denounces both "cinema" and "wireless" radio as the "two world-wide enemies of the imagination." She further laments: "To a generation for whom everything which used to nourish the imagination because it had to be won by an effort, and then slowly assimilated, is now served cooked, seasoned and chopped into little bits, the creative faculty... is rapidly withering, together with the power of sustained attention..." (2). This criticism has a contemporary sound; one need only substitute the concept of television today for the cinema and the radio she despised.

Wharton always preferred the word over the picture. As a child, Edith Jones loved to hear great language beautifully spoken. Wharton remembers in a late memoir, "A Little Girl's New York," that the two events in which I took an active part were going to church—and going to the theater. I venture to group them together because, looking back across the blurred expanse of a long life, I see them standing up side by side, like summits catching the light when all else is in shadow. (362)

She explains that in the Old New York of her youth, the Reverend Dr. Washburn of Calvary Church had helped her to discover "the matchless beauty of English seventeenth-century prose" (362). Similarly, theater-going, for Wharton, was "largely a matter of listening to voices" [emphasis Wharton 363]. For an author who was extremely sensitive to words, church-going and the theater were incomparable aural experiences, whereas the cinema was probably judged to be lacking because it was essentially a visual medium. If, in fact, Wharton only saw one silent movie (or even several silent movies), then the medium of cinema for her was only a visual experience, without any enhancement of sound. In that same memoir Wharton expresses personal abhorrence at the thought of sitting in an audience, which may account for her disdain for film: "[S]omething in me has always resisted the influence of crowds and shows, and I have hardly ever been able to yield myself unreservedly to a spectacle shared by a throng of people" (362). Cinema produced for the masses forced a viewer to interact with the "sallow candy-munching" people that Wharton evokes at the movie showing attended by Charity Royall in *Summer*. By contrast, the live theater witnessed during her youth, primarily the great classics of the stage, is rapturously described as "something new, a window opening on the foam of faeryland" (363).

Wharton's thoughts on how actors should perform their roles also suggest why she did not favor the cinema. She asserts: "I am involuntarily hypercritical of any impersonation of characters already so intensely visible to my imagination that anyone else's conception of them interferes with that inward vision." After "five minutes" of watching the actors in a play, she felt the strong desire to "get up on the stage and show them how they ought to act" (363). The even more exaggerated performances of actors in silent films must, understandably, have been anathema to Wharton.

Like Henry James, Wharton desired successful stage adaptations of her stories and novels. Moreover, in her early years, she herself worked on several dramatizations, including a translation of Hermann Sudermann's *Es Lebe das Leben* in 1902 for the actress Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Wharton also collaborated with the celebrated dramatist Clyde Fitch on a dramatic adaptation of *The House of Mirth*, but it failed soon after the Broadway opening in 1906. In later years Wharton worked on drafts of a
dramatization (never produced) of her short story "Confession." In the final decade of her life, three of Wharton's best novels were dramatized for the stage by other writers: *The Age of Innocence* by Margaret Ayer Barnes in the late 1920s, starring Katharine Cornell; *Ethan Frome* by Donald and Owen Davis in 1935, starring Raymond Massey and Ruth Gordon; and *The Old Maid* in 1936, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for Zoë Akins, and starred Judith Anderson and Helen Menken. Both *The Age of Innocence* and *The Old Maid* were then made for the cinema (in 1934 and 1939, respectively), primarily from these theatrical adaptations, rather than the original texts.

Unlike the films based on her work, Wharton took an interest in these theatrical versions, which she read but never had the opportunity to see. She wrote several letters detailing manners, customs, and period clothing for the benefit of the productions. In her 1936 foreword to the published play version of "Ethan Frome" by Owen and Donald Davis, she enthusiastically sets aside her concerns regarding actors physically inhabiting the characters that she had originally conceived in fictional terms, as well as her distaste for "that grimacing enlargement of gesture and language supposed to be necessary to 'carry' over the footlights":

> It has happened to me, as to most novelists, to have the odd experience, through the medium of reviews or dramatizations of their work, to see their books as they have taken shape in other minds: always a curious, and sometimes a painful, revelation.

She further specified her "admiration for the great skill and exquisite sensitiveness with which my interpreters have executed their task . . . [It is] an unusual achievement" (viii)—praise only accorded to an adaptation of her work for the theater.

Like these stage successes, all of the Wharton works filmed in her lifetime were drawn from her bestselling novels. The first to be filmed was also her first and greatest success, *The House of Mirth* (1905). Metro Pictures Corporation made a silent film version in 1918, starring Katherine Harris Barrymore, which Albert Capellani directed from a scenario he co-authored with June Mathias. Although the film does not survive, William Larsen, whose ground-breaking 1995 dissertation studies the adaptations of Wharton's works for the screen, has discovered from a published synopsis in *Picture Play* that the novel's ending was radically changed for the movie: Lily takes chloroform, but "in the final shots of the film Selden arrives with a doctor, who announces that Lily will survive the overdose. Clutching Lily in his arms, Selden kisses her as he tells her that all will work out well for them both: she is safe now from danger and they will remain together" ("A New Lease on Life," 59). Larsen notes that this silent version "clearly affirms the happy marriage ending which was the conventional resolution to the nineteenth-century sentimental domestic female novel and the male pastoral novel that Wharton was writing against in *The House of Mirth*" (59-60). The cinematic revision also actualizes William Dean Howells's comment to Wharton after viewing the 1906 play of *The House of Mirth*: "What the American public always wants is a tragedy with a happy ending" (qtd in Lewis, *Edith Wharton*, 172). The 1918 film version delivered exactly that.

A cinema version of *The Glimpses of the Moon* (1922) quickly appeared in 1923, directed for Paramount by Allan Dwan from an adaptation by E. Lloyd Sheldon. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote film dialogue titles, but apparently his script was not used. Major silent film stars Bebe Daniels, Nita Naldi, and Maurice Costello were featured.

*The Age of Innocence* (1920) was first filmed as a silent in 1924, directed by Wesley Ruggles, with Beverly Bayne as Countess Olenska and Elliot Dexter as Newland Archer. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novel—the only Wharton work filmed three times—was later filmed twice more with sound: in 1934 and 1993.

Unfortunately, all three of these early silent movies are considered lost films, and although major performers and directors were involved, it is difficult to evaluate their quality or their faithfulness to the original texts. However, the first sound film based on a Wharton work does survive: *The Children* (1928), filmed in 1929 by Paramount and released under the title, "The Marriage Playground." Directed by Lothar Mendes, it features rising star Fredric March in the leading role (the actor made his film debut in another 1929 feature). This version imposes a happy ending in which Martin Boyne (middle-aged in the novel, but portrayed by the 32-year-old March) marries the very young Judith Wheater. The novel has a far darker and more realistic ending in which Boyne is left alone, observing Judith from a distance dancing with young men her own age. The review in *Variety* indicates the successful reception of the changes from the original novel, while recalling Wharton's distaste for being awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1921 "for uplifting American morals" (Lewis, Letters, 445):

> A peach of a picture, well above the satisfaction-giving average . . . and the kind that leaves a sense of full-hearted human pleasure with it. Can be booked in safety and exploited with confidence. It's packed with children, assumingly impudent, touchingly
warm youngsters who will carry a tremendous appeal to the great home-keeping, family-loving American public. In the midst of the children... is Fredric March... [A] couple of pictures like this one and March... will romp toward pronto. Miss Brian is splendid... [It is a production characterized by quiet, unostentatious elegance. (qtd. Quirk, *Films of Fredric March*, 52)

Although a 35-millimeter print of "The Marriage Playground" survives in the archives of the film department of UCLA in Los Angeles, its inaccessibility (except to film scholars) effectively renders this another "lost" film for Wharton scholars and the general public.

It would be interesting to know what Wharton would have thought of the 1934 film version of *The Age of Innocence*. Released by RKO Radio Pictures, it stars Irene Dunne (Countess Olenska), John Boles (Newland Archer), Julie Haydon (May Welland), and a fine supporting cast, including Laura Hope Crews and Lionel Atwill, under the direction of Philip Moeller.

The movie also features attractive settings, beautiful costumes designed by Walter Plunkett, and a musical score composed by Max Steiner (both Plunkett and Steiner would work together again five years later on "Gone with the Wind"). William Larsen has discovered that screenwriters Victor Heerman and Sarah Y. Mason originally wrote the script for Katharine Hepburn, but because of a contract difficulty, the part of Ellen Olenska went to Irene Dunne ("A New Lease on Life," 133). The New York Times review was respectful, but unenthusiastic:

In an ideal world, Mrs. Wharton's distinguished novel would fill the screen with tragic emotion as it filled the stage six years ago in the impassioned acting of Katherine Cornell. For Philip Moeller's screen drama... has been managed with all possible dignity and sincerity. Yet the photoplay at the [Radio City] Music Hall leaves the spectator curiously cold and detached from the raging emotions of the story. In Mr. Moeller's garrulous and faintly ponderous production the tragedy touches you cerebrally rather than emotionally.

"The Age of Innocence" of 1934, although not a great film, is a highly interesting one. Very much a product of the mid-1930s, it reveals surprising choices in both the screenplay adaptation and in its direction. For example, the narrative opens in the present-day and returns to that setting at the end, rendering the story an extended flashback as told by Newland to his grandson (not his son, as at the conclusion of the novel). The elderly Newland and his grandson now live in a violent world (suggested by a jarring, wildly paced montage sequence immediately following the opening credits), which is set in opposition to the order and supposed harmony of the Old New York of the 1870s. Additional contrast is provided by the information that the grandson, a young man in his twenties, is currently involved in a love affair; however, unlike his grandfather's romance in the "flashback," Dallas's affair is a public scandal. While much less faithful to the original novel in many aspects than the 1993 Scorsese version, the 1934 "Age of Innocence" is respectfully realized, and features appealing performances by Irene Dunne and Julie Haydon. This rare film is unfortunately not available for viewing, although a special screening for the conference, "Edith Wharton at Yale," sponsored by the Edith Wharton Society, took place at Yale University in April 1995.

Little is known about the 1935 version by Universal Pictures of Wharton's short story "Bread Upon the Waters," released under the title "Strange Wives." The original Wharton story contains direct references to films and to Hollywood; for example, "the world's leading movie star," Halma Hobee (15), almost certainly refers to Greta Garbo. "Strange Wives," directed by Richard Thorpe with a screenplay by Gladys Unger, is also a lost movie which cannot be properly evaluated as a translation of Wharton to the screen.

The best-known Wharton work on film (due in part to its cast and perhaps to its current availability on videocassette) remains *The Old Maid* (1924). Released as a film in 1939, two years after Wharton's death, the Warner Bros. movie stars Bette Davis (Charlotte Lovell), Miriam Hopkins (Delia Lovell), and George Brent (Clem Spender), under the direction of Edmund Goulding. Larsen has determined that the film began shooting in March 1939 with Humphrey Bogart as the male lead, but the producer and director disliked the result and recast the role of Clem Spender with George Brent ("A New Lease on Life," 207-08).

"The Old Maid" screenplay by Casey Robinson is based on the play by Zoë Akins that premiered on Broadway in 1935. The time period of Wharton's novella, subtitled "The Fifties" (i.e., the 1850s) is reset a decade later in the 1860s, perhaps due to the tremendous popularity of the then-bestselling novel *Gone with the Wind*. The film received both critical and popular acclaim. The New York Times reviewer enthused: "'The Old Maid' must be reckoned another fine theatrical property to come unimpaired to the screen [note source of film as the play, not the novel]... Miss Davis has given a poignant and wise performance, hard and
austere on the surface, yet communicating through it the deep
tenderness, of the brokenhearted mother" (qtd. in Ringgold 97). The film, which is often effective, might best be
classified as a melodramatic "weepie"—a three-handkerchief
women's picture. Margaret McDowell compares the adaptation
and the resulting film to the original Wharton novella in her 1987
essay "Wharton's 'The Old Maid': Novella/Play/Film." In
addition, Larsen's details the extensive problems that "The Old
Maid" screenplay, director, and producer faced in adapting
Wharton's story to meet Hollywood's strict code requirements
of the 1930s.

By the time that "The Old Maid" was released, Wharton was
dead. It seems clear that she never experienced or considered an
improved cinema—represented by the 1934 "Age of Innocence"
and the 1939 "Old Maid"—whether based on literary sources or not.
Her knowledge of and her prejudices against the medium
must have been based on the often outrageous overacting and the
obvious, grimacing melodrama of early silent movies. Rapid
advances in film technology and rising standards in the quality of
acting, direction, and production in her lifetime were apparently
ignored by the author. After her death, most of Wharton's fiction
was considered old-fashioned, and for many years the popularity
of her novels, with the exception of Ethan Frome, waned.
 Appropriately it became the first Wharton work to be dramatized
for the small screen of television. The 1911 novella with a
principal cast of three trapped in an isolated wintry farmhouse
setting adapted well to the intimacy of the new medium,
appearing on February 18, 1960, as the "Dupont Show of the
Month." It stars Sterling Hayden (Ethan), Julie Harris (Mattie),
and Clarice Blackburn (Zenobia), with narration by Arthur Hill.
The adaptation is by Jacqueline Babbin and Audrey Gellen, with
direction by Alex Segal; the producer is David Susskind.
It would be almost a third of a century more before Ethan Frome
finally appeared as a major motion picture in 1993.

The publication of Lewis's biography in 1975 and Cynthia Griffin
Wolff's A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton in 1977
stimulated new interest in televising both Wharton's life and her
works. Twenty years after Ethan Frome appeared on television,
the Public Broadcasting System (funded by the National
Endowment for the Humanities) produced a three-part series on
Wharton in 1981, consisting of one segment on her life and two
dramatizations of her fiction. Wharton scholars, including
Lewis, McDowell, Elizabeth Ammons, and Blake Nevius, are
billed as consultants. The first part of the series, "Looking Back,
is loosely based on sections from A Backward Glance and the
Lewis biography. It features Kathleen Widdoes as Wharton, John
Collum as Walter Berry, John McMartin as Teddy Wharton,
Richard Woods as Henry James, and Stephen Collins as Morton
Fullerton. Directed by Kirk Browning, the teleplay by Steve
Lawson envisions Wharton returning to The Mount in Lenox as
an older woman as she confides to Berry the momentous events
of her life. The House of Mirth, directed by Adrian Hall, was this
novel's first film treatment since the 1918 silent movie. Written
by Hall and Richard Cummings, the adaptation stars Geraldine
Chaplin as Lily Bart and William Atherton as Lawrence Selden,
with members of the Trinity Square Repertory Company. The
final installment is Summer, written by Charles Gaines and
directed by Dezo Magyar. Filmed in New England, it stars
Diane Lane (Charity Royall), Michael Ontkean (Lucius Harney),
and John Collum (lawyer Royall). According to a 1937 profile of
Wharton that appeared in the Paris edition of the New York
Herald, Summer had previously been under consideration to be
filmed by an unnamed company, but the studio heads deemed it
"too immoral" for the public. The 1981 television version is the
first and only dramatization of this novella.

In 1983, three of Wharton's ghost stories—"The Lady's Maid's
Bell" (1902), "Afterward" (1910), and "Bewitched" (1925)—were
filmed for the "Shades of Darkness" series by Granada Television
of England. All three were seen in America as part of "Mystery,"
a presentation of WGBH/Boston. The first two, well-directed and
performed, sensitively and faithfully realize the tone of the
original stories. They rank as the finest screen adaptations of
Wharton's works to date.

In the 1990s, Hollywood rediscovered Wharton, coinciding with
and perhaps because of an increasing interest in women's issues
and a resurgence in the popularity of period films. No longer
considered old-fashioned, Wharton's works were recognized to be
timely and dramatically compelling; her vivid evocations of a past
era defined by manners and mores were also found appealing. A
1992 article, "Hollywood Hears Her Roar—The Year of the
Woman," in The Washington Post, begins: "How about that Edith
Wharton? Dead since 1937, and all of a sudden her books have
become hot film, TV and video properties." Wharton's
posthumous cinematic revival followed a string of films based on
the novels of E. M. Forster. With the film releases of "Ethan
Frome" and "The Age of Innocence" in 1993, Wharton was
clearly the classical author of the moment (a position currently
held by Jane Austen).

"The Children," an international co-production of Isolde Films in
1990, stars Ben Kingsley (Martin Boyne) and features a rare
screen appearance by Kim Novak in the role of his fiancée, Rose
Sellers. Directed by Tony Palmer and scripted by the playwright
Timberlake Wertenbaker, the 1993 film version is far more
faithful to the 1928 novel than the early Hollywood version, "The
Marriage Playground" (1929), which had substituted a happy
ending for the original one. The reviewer for Variety liked the principal performers but felt the film "cries out for a brisker pace and sharper cutting... A beautiful, sad love story might have been made from this material, but 'The Children' comes across as uninvolved and dated. I'll be a hard sell..." (n.pag.). The 1993 version failed both critically and financially and did not receive an American theatrical release.

Released in February 1993, the first and only film version of Ethan Frome stars Liam Neeson (Ethan), Patricia Arquette (Mattie), Joan Allen (Zezenia), Tate Donovan (the Reverend Smith), and Katharine Houghton (Mrs. Hale). Ethan Frome had been announced for filming as a motion picture at least twice previously. In 1948 Warner Brothers planned a film version starring Bette Davis as Mattie and Mildred Natwick as Zezenia. Davis wanted Gary Cooper to play Ethan, but he declined. The studio then cast British actor David Farrar in the title role, but the film was eventually shelved (Stine, Mother Goddam, 228). In April 1987, Variety Magazine announced a movie version to be directed and adapted by Adrian Hall of the Trinity Repertory in Providence, Rhode Island; he had previously done The House of Mirth for television. This project, too, was never realized. Unfortunately, the 1993 film version, produced by American Playhouse Theatrical Films and Miramax Films, was not a success. The New York Times reviewer, although noting it to be "a fairly faithful adaptation... with the best of intentions," felt that "in place of a nearly perfect novella is a sad and solemn little film that never has a life of its own. This 'Ethan Frome' is not dead exactly, but rather in a state of suspended animation waiting to be roused, which never happens... Ethan Frome deserves better than this." The film did not remain in first run theaters long but did appear the following year on nationwide television for American Playhouse.

Following the appearance of "Ethan Frome" in early 1993, Columbia Pictures released Martin Scorsese's The Age of Innocence in the fall of that year amidst tremendous publicity and reviews noting the director's change of pace from previous subjects of mob violence, crime, and New York's Little Italy to the very different world of Wharton's Old New York. The New York Times reviewer began: "Taking The Age of Innocence... Martin Scorsese has made a gorgeously uncharacteristic Scorsese film. It would be difficult to imagine anything further removed from the director's canon... Yet with a fine cast... Mr. Scorsese has made a big, intelligent movie that functions as if it were a window on a world he had just discovered, and about which he can't wait to spread the news... 'The Age of Innocence' isn't perfect, but it's a robust gamble that pays off." In interviews in Mirabella and Premiere magazines, Scorsese explained that he had been drawn to the story, its characters, and to the violence under the surface of that 1870s world with its different kinds of punishment and bloodletting. The film, with a screenplay by Scorsese and Jay Cocks, starred Michelle Pfeiffer (Countess Olenska), Daniel Day-Lewis (Newland Archer), Winona Ryder (May Welland), and a strong supporting cast, especially Miriam Margolyes as Mrs. Manson Mingott, who received a British Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for her performance. Despite several Academy Award nominations, the film received only one Oscar—Best Costume Design (Gabriella Pescucci).

The making of the film is documented by an attractive art book, The Age of Innocence: A Portrait of the Film, by Martin Scorsese, co-screenwriter Jay Cocks, and the film's visual consultant Robin Standefer. The screenplay adaptation is included in this work, along with discussions of the filmmakers' intentions, preparations, and sources. The fact that "The Age of Innocence," an expensive motion picture, did not do as well financially as Columbia Pictures had hoped has apparently ended several announced film productions of other Wharton works, including The Custom of the Country and Glimpses of the Moon.

Most recently Wharton's final novel, The Buccaneers, left unfinished at her death and published posthumously in 1938, has enjoyed a renaissance. Several new editions of the book (with and without new endings by other authors) preceded a multi-part television dramatization by the British Broadcasting Corporation and WGBH/Boston. Maggie Wadey's adaptation followed the original novel fairly faithfully; for the unwritten ending, Wadey used Wharton's outline of the conclusion as a beginning point for a mostly new finale. "The Buccaneers," shown in the United Kingdom in five installments in March 1995, premiered in America in three installments on "Masterpiece Theatre" during October 1995 to enthusiastic reviews. The New York Times review is typical: "... ravishing television... 'The Buccaneers' is really a delicious soap opera played out by a superb cast in gorgeous costumes against even more gorgeous settings... Despite the liberties taken, I suspect Mrs. Wharton would not be disappointed."

Wharton scholars and film critics complain that writers and directors unnecessarily update the original texts, often in ways judged inappropriate or destructive to the author's intentions. One obvious change has been a tendency to lighten Wharton's tone by imposing cinematic happy endings on the original tragic ones, such as in "The House of Mirth" in 1918, "The Marriage Playground" in 1929, and the television dramatization of "Summer" in 1981, which ends optimistically on the outstretched hands of lawyer Royall and Charity as he rescues her from a fate
on the Mountain. Tony Palmer's "The Children" includes Ken Russell-type hallucinations by Martin Boyne, which may or may not have been inspired by the text. John Madden's "Ethan Frome" features consummated sex between Ethan and Mattie (definitely not in the 1911 novella), while Zenobia lies in bed listening in an adjoining room. Martin Scorsese's "The Age of Innocence"—faithful in the use of locations, interior settings, costumes, manners, and other period details—nonetheless reverses the coloring of the two main female characters, affecting textual subtleties, according to scholars. A blonde Michelle Pfeiffer plays the dark Countess Olenska, a brunette Winona Ryder portrays the blonde May Welland.

More recently the television adaptation of "The Buccaneers" adds homosexuality to the plot. As the reviewer for The New York Times wrote: "Needless to say, not all Wharton scholars and readers will be pleased. One character, for instance, who is sexually incompetent in the book turns out in the mini-series to be homosexual. Welcome, Mrs. Wharton, to the Gay Nineties."

The scene in question involves Nan's husband, the Duke of Tintagel (renamed Trevenik for television), who is discreetly shown in the arms of a groom of his estate.

How might Wharton feel about the renewed interest in her works by film studios and the recent movies that have appeared? She would probably be surprised at the level of interest, but certainly delighted at the financial windfalls from the sales of dramatic rights and film options in the 1990s. In 1934, with the American economy in the throes of depression, Wharton wrote her former sister-in-law Mary Cadwalader Jones concerning the sale of a short story to the movies: "Thank you so much for acting as my substitute in the film contract for 'Bread Upon the Waters.' I wish the sum had more nearly approached the prices I used to get!" (Letters, 577). If she were with us today, she would appreciate the income from sales of her works to become films, but, as usual, she would probably completely ignore the cinematic results.

Filmography

1918 THE HOUSE OF MIRTH (Metro, 6 reels, silent)
   Director: Albert Capellani  Screenplay: June Mathis and Albert Capellani
   Cast: Katherine Harris Barrimore (Lily Bart), with Henry Kolker, Christine Mayo, Joseph Kilgour, Edward Abeles, W. D. Fisher, Lottie Briscoe, Pauline Welsh, Maggie Western, Nellie Parker-Spaulding, Sidney Bracy, Kempton Greene, Morgan Jones
   Status: lost
   Notes: credits from Bodeen (81); also see Lewis, Edith Wharton, 7.

1923 THE GLIMPSES OF THE MOON (Paramount, 7 reels, silent)
   Director: Allan Dwan  Screenplay: E. Lloyd Shelton and Edrid A. Bingham  Presented by Jesse L. Lasky
   Cast: Bebe Daniels (Susan), David Powell (Nick), Nita Naldi (Mrs. Vanderlyn), Maurice Costello (Mr. Vanderlyn), with Ruby De Remer, Charles Gerard, William Quirk, Pearl Sindelar, Beth Allen, Mrs. George Pegram, Delores Costello, Millie Muller, Beatrice Coburn, Fred Hadley, Robert Lee Keeling, Barton Adams, Freddie Veri
   Status: lost
   Notes: credits from Bodeen (81). Film rights sold for $13,500 (Lewis, Edith Wharton, 444) or $15,000 (Benstock, No Gifts, 372). Both note that F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote the film dialogue; Benstock states Fitzgerald was paid $500 for this, but "his script apparently was not used" (372). She adds that "Appleton had flooded Los Angeles and Hollywood newspapers with advertisements to create a demand for film rights to her [Wharton's] works" (371).

1924 THE AGE OF INNOCENCE (Warner Bros., 7 reels, silent)
   Director: Wesley Ruggles  Screenplay: Olga Printzlau
   Cast: Beverly Bayne (Countess Olenska), Elliot Dexter (Newland Archer), with Edith Roberts, Willard Louis, Fred Huntley, Gertrude Norman, Sigrid Holmquist, Stuart Holmes
   Status: lost
   Notes: credits from Bodeen (81). Wharton netted $9,000 after agent's fees from the movie contract (Benstock, No Gifts, 361)

1929 THE MARRIAGE PLAYGROUND (Paramount, 70 minutes, All talking)
   Director: Lothar Mendes  Screenplay: J. Walter Ruben
   Adaptation and Dialogue: Doris Anderson
   Photography: Victor Milner
   Cast: Mary Brian (Judy), Fredric March (Martin), Huntley Gordon (Cliffe), Lilyan Tashman (Joyce), Kay Francis (Lady Wrench), William Austin (Lord Wrench), Phillip de Lacey (Terry), Seena Owen (Mrs. Sellars), with Anita Louise, Little Mitzi Green, Billy Seay, Ruby Parsely, Donald Smith, Jocelyn Lee, Maude Turner Gordon, David Newell, Armand Kaliz, Joan Standing, Gordon De Main
   Status: exists
   Notes: credits from Variety 5/30/90 and Bodeen (81). Wharton received $25,000 for the film rights from

1934

**THE AGE OF INNOCENCE** (RKO Radio, 9 reels, sound, c. 80-90 minutes)
*Director*: Philip Moeller  *Screenplay*: Sarah Y. Mason and Victor Heerman (from the novel by Wharton and the theater dramatization by Margaret Ayer Barnes)
*Producer*: Pandro S. Berman  *Costumes*: Walter Plunkett  *Music*: Max Steiner
*Cast*: Irene Dunne (Countess Olenska), John Boles (Newland Archer), Julie Haydon (May Welland), Lionel Atwill (Beaufort), Laura Hope Crews (Mrs. Welland), Helen Westley (Granny Mingott), Herbert Yost (Mr. Welland), Theresa Maxwell-Conover (Mrs. Archer), Edith Van Cleve (Janey Archer), Leonard Carey (butler)
*Status*: exists

1935

**STRANGE WIVES** (Universal, 8 reels, sound)
*Director*: Richard Thorpe  *Screenplay*: Gladys Unger (from Wharton's short story "Bread Upon the Waters")
*Additional Dialogue*: Barry Trivers and James Mulhauser
*Status*: lost
*Notes*: Wharton to Mary Cadwalader Jones, April 10, 1934: "Thank you so much for acting as my substitute in the film contract for 'Bread Upon the Waters.' I wish the sum had more nearly approached the prices I used to get!" (Lewis and Lewis, *Letters*, 577). Benstock notes that Rutger Jewett sold the story for $5,000 to the movies (*No Gifts*, 439).

1939

**THE OLD MAID** (Warner Bros., 95 minutes, sound)
*Cast*: Bette Davis (Charlotte Lovell), Miriam Hopkins (Delia Lovell), George Brent (Clem Spender), Donald Crisp (Dr. Lanskell), Jane Bryan (Tina), Louise Fazenda (maid), James Stephenson (Jim Ralston), Jerome Cowman (Joe Ralston), William Lundigan (Lanning Halsey), with Rand Brooks, Cecilia Loftus, Janet Shaw, William DeWolf Hopper, Marlene Burnett, Rod Cameron, Doris Lloyd, Frederick Burton
*Status*: Available for rental on videocassette, and in 16 mm or 35 mm
*Notes*: credits compiled from *The Films of Bette Davis* (96) and Bodeen (81). See Margaret B. McDowell's "Wharton's 'The Old Maid': Novella/Play/Film" for a full discussion of the various adaptations; also see Lewis, *Edith Wharton*, 7, 436.

1960

**ETHAN FROME** (Television—aired February 18, 1960 as the DuPont Show of the Month)
*Director*: Alex Segal  *Teleplay*: Jacqueline Babbin and Audrey Gellin  *Producer*: David Susskind
*Cast*: Sterling Hayden (Ethan Frome), Julie Harris (Mattie Silver), Clarice Blackburn (Zenobia Frome), with narration by Arthur Hill
*Status*: May be viewed at the Museum of Broadcasting, New York City.
*Notes*: First Wharton adaptation on television (Marshall, 16).

1981

**LOOKING BACK** (Television—biographical sketch of Wharton, 56 minutes)
*Cast*: Kathleen Widdoes (Edith Wharton), John Cullum (Walter Berry), John McMartin (Teddy Wharton), Richard Woods (Henry James), Stephen Collins (Morton Fullerton)
*Notes*: Loosely based on *A Backward Glance* and *Edith Wharton* by R.W.B. Lewis. The Elms in Newport, Rhode Island, was used for the exteriors of The Mount. Credits transcribed from tape by author.

1981

**THE HOUSE OF MIRTH** (Television, 95 minutes)
Cast: Geraldine Chaplin (Lily Bart), William Atherton (Lawrence Selden), Barbara Blossom (Mme. Regine), Bree (Old Man), Timothy Crowe (Lord Dacey), Barbara Damashek (Nettie Struther), Virginia Donaldson (Alice Wetherall), Tim Donoghue (Ned Silverton), Elaine Eldridge (Mrs. Bart), Monique Fowler (Evie Van Osburgh), Elizabeth Franz (Grace Stepney), Peter Gerety (Jack Stepney), Bradford Gottlin (Percy Gryce), Ed Hall (Paul Morpeth), Judith Harkness (Miss Corby), Richard Jenkins (George Dorset), David Jones (Mr. Bart), Melanie Jones (Mrs. Bry), David Kennett (butler), Richard Kneeland (Simon Rosendale), Marjorie Lee (Duchess of Belmont), Marguerite Lenert (Mrs. Peniston), Howard London (lawyer), Mana Manente (Gerty Farish), George Martin (Gus Trenor), Barbara Meek (Mrs. Haffen), Barbara Orson (Judy Trenor), Julie Pember (Mrs. Peniston's maid), Margo Skinner (Cary Fisher), Lois Smith (Bertha Dorset), Norman Smith (Wellington Bry), William E. Smith (Mr. Wetherall), Amy Van Nostrand (Gwen Van Osburgh). With the participation of the Trinity Square Repertory Company.

Notes: Some scenes filmed in Newport, Rhode Island. Credits transcribed from tape by author.

1983

THE LADY'S MAID'S BELL (Television, 53 minutes)
Series: Shades of Darkness Production: Granada Television of England, in association with WGBH, Boston (shown as part of the "Mystery!" series)
Director: John Glenister Screenplay: Ken Taylor
Producer: June Wyndham Davies
Production Manager: Roy Jackson Photography: Tony Caldwell
Designer: Tim Farmer Music: Paul Reade Sound: Harry Brookes Editor: Alan Ringland Makeup: Julie Jackson
Costumes: John Fraser Casting: Malcolm Drury Research: Nicky Cooney
Cast: Joanna David (Hartley), June Brown (Emma Saxon), Norma West (Mrs. Brympton), Ian Collier (Mr. Brympton), Charlotte Mitchell (Mrs. Blinder), Roger Llewellyn (Mr. Ranford), Harry Littlewood (Mr. Wace), Diane Whiteley (Agnes), Clive Duncan (Bob Burling), Malcolm Raeburn (Ted Roberts), Bernard Atha (pharmacist), Alick Hayes (Vicar)

1981

SUMMER (Television, 87 minutes)
Director: Dezzo Magyar Teleplay: Charles Gaines
Producers: Daniel A. Bohr and Dorothy Cullman
Executive Producer: Jack Willis
Photography: Michael Fash, B.S.C.
Art Direction: Leon Munier
Costumes: Carr Garnett
Music: Lee Hoiby
Casting: Bonnie Timmermann
Editor: Janet Merwin
Sound: Vincent Stenerson
Hair and Makeup: Steve Atha
Associate Producer: Walter Rearick

Cast: Diane Lane (Charity Royall), Michael Ontkean (Lucius Harney), John Cullum (Lawyer Royall), Ray Poole (Reverend Miles), Edith Meiser (Miss Hatchard), Jackie Brookes (Verena), Kevin Martin (Liff Hyatt), Kevin O'Connor (Bash Hyatt), Kathryn Dowling (Annabel Balch), Lauralee Bruce (girl in jewelry shop), Pippa Pearthree (Ally Hawes), Jarlath Conroy (gaunt man), Robin Tilghman (Charity's sister), William Preston (old man)

Notes: Filmed in Temple, New Hampshire, and Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire. Credits transcribed from tape by author. Looking Back, The House of Mirth, and Summer were Special Presentations in the Humanities under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

1983

AFTERWARD (Television, 53 minutes)
Series: Shades of Darkness Production: Granada Television of England, in association with WGBH-Boston (shown as part of the "Mystery!" series)
Director: Simon Langton
Screenplay: Alfred Shaugnessy
Producer: June Wyndham Davies
Executive Producer: Michael Cox
Production Manager: Keith Thompson
Photography: Tony Caldwell
Designer: Alan Price
Music: Patrick Gowers
Sound: Ray French
Dubbing: John Whitworth
Editor: Anthony Horn
Makeup: Lois Richardson
Costumes: Anne Salisbury
Casting: Priscilla John
Research: Nicky Cooney
Cast: Kate Harper (Mary Boyne), Michael J. Shannon (Edward Boyne), Penelope Lee (Alida Stair), John Grillo (Harold Parvis), Meg Ritchie (Trimble), Rolf Saxon (Robert Elwell), William Abney (Inspector Yates), Merelinda Kendall (Agnes), Arthur Whybrow (Mr. Craig), Eric Francis (Cooper)

Notes: Credits transcribed from tape by author.

1983

BEWITCHED (Television, 48 minutes)
Series: Shades of Darkness Production: Granada Television of England, in association with WGBH-Boston (shown as part of the "Mystery!" series)
Director: John Gorrie
Screenplay: Alan Plater
Producer: June Wyndham Davies
Executive
Producer: Michael Cox Production Manager: Roy Jackson Photography: Doug Hallows Designer: Peter Phillips Music: Geoffrey Burgon Sound: Ray French Dubbing: John Whitworth Editor: Alan Ringland Makeup: Julie Jackson Costumes: Esther Dean Casting: Malcolm Drury Research: Nicky Cooney Cast: Eileen Atkins (Mrs. Rutledge), Alfred Burke (Reverend Hibben), Ray Smith (Sylvester Brand), Gareth Thomas (Owen Bosworth), Alfred Lynch (Saul Rutledge), Mary Healey (Loretta Bosworth), Martyn Hesford (Andrew), Mary Jo Randle (the girl)
Notes: Credits transcribed from tape by author.

SONGS FROM THE HEART (Television—biographical sketch of Wharton, with scenes from her fiction, 56 minutes)
Director: Dennis Krausnick Screenplay: Mickey Friedman from his play Producer: John MacGruer/Downtown Productions Photography: Arnold Beckerman Editors: Mickey Friedman and John MacGruer Sets: Matthew Larkin Costumes: Joan DeGusto Music: Lawrence Wallach Cast: Gillian Barge (Edith Wharton), with Margaret Whitton, Henry Stram, Kathleen Mahoney-Barrett, John Talbot, Caris Corfman, Peter Whittrock, Michaela Murphy
Notes: Available on videocassette. Primarily filmed at The Mount, Lenox, Massachusetts, and other Berkshire County locations. Credits compiled by author.

THE CHILDREN (Isolde Films, in association with Film Four International, Arbo Film & Maram GbMh and Bayerische Landesanstalt für Aufbaufinanzierung, 115 minutes)
Director: Tony Palmer Screenplay: Timberlake Wertenbaker Producer: Andrew Montgomery Photography: Nic Knowland Editor: Tony Palmer Sound: John Murphy Production Design: Chris Bradley and Paul Templeton Art Direction: Renate Hofer Costume Design: John Hibbs Makeup: Penny Smith Co-Producer: Harald Albrecht Cast: Ben Kingsley (Martin Boyne), Kim Novak (Rose Sellar), Siri Neal (Judit), Geraldine Chaplin (Joyce Wheater), Joe Don Baker (Cliffe Wheater), Britt Ekland (Lady Wrench), Donald Sinden (Lord Wrench), Karen Black (Sybil Lullmer), Robert Stephens (Mr. Doree), Rupert Graves (Gerald Ormerod), Terence Rigby (Duke of Mendip), Marie Helvin (Princess Buondelmonte), Rosemary Leach (Miss Scope), Mark Asquith (Terry), Anouk Fontaine (Blanca), Ian Han

Hawkes (Beechy), Hermonie Eyre (Zinnie), Edward Michie (Chippo)
Notes: Filmed in Venice, Paris, Bavaria, Switzerland, Italy. Credits: Variety 5/30/90 and Isolde Films. Did not receive a U.S. release in theaters; the film did have a limited release on videocassette in an edited version (c. 90 minutes).

ETHAN FROME (American Playhouse Theatrical Films and Miramax Films, 99 minutes)
Director: John Madden Screenplay: Richard Nelson Executive Producers: Lindsay Law and Richard Price Producer: Stan Wlodkowski Associate Producer: Johlynn Dale Photography: Bobby Bukowski Music: Rachel Portman Costume Design: Carol Oditz Production Design: Andrew Jackness Art Direction: David Crank Set Direction: Joyce Anne Gilstrap Editor: Katherine Wenning Sound: Paul Cote Assistant Director: Allan Nicholls Casting: Billy Hopkins and Suzanne Smith Cast: Liam Neeson (Ethan Frome), Patricia Arquette (Mattie Silver), Joan Allen (Zenobia Frome), Tate Donovan (Reverend Smith), Katharine Houghton (Mrs. Hale), Stephen Mendillo (Ned Hale), Jay Goede (Denis Bady), George Woodward (Jotham), Debon Ayer (Young Ruth Hale), Rob Campbell (Young Ned Hale)

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE (Columbia Pictures, 138 minutes)
THE BUCCANEERS (Television, BBC Productions, c. 330 minutes)

Director/Producer: Philip Saville  Screenplay: Maggie Wadey  Executive Producer: Philippa Giles  Co-Producer: Rosalind Wolfs  Associate Producer: Nigel Taylor  Production Manager: David Mason  Designer: Tony Burrough  Costume Design: Rosalind Ebbutt  Makeup Designer: Christine Walmesley-Cotham  Casting Director: Sarah Bird  Lighting Cameraman: Remi Adefarasin  Sound: John Pritchard  Editor: Greg Miller  Art Direction: Choi Ho Man and John Hill  Music: Colin Towns  Choreography: Domini Winter  Cast: Cheri Lunghi (Laura Testvalley), Carla Gugino (Nan St George), Mira Sorvino (Conchita), Alison Elliott (Virginia St George)  Rya Kihlstedt (Lizzy Elmworth), Ronan Vibert (Richard), Mark Tandy (Lord Seadown), James Frain (Julius, Duke of Trevenik), Dinsdale Landen (Lord Brightlingsea), Rosemary Leach (Lady Brightlingsea), Greg Wise (Guy Thwaite), Michael Kitchen (Sir Helmsley Thwaite), Sophie Dix (Honoraria), Sienna Guillory (Felicia), Emily Hamilton (Georgina), Connie Booth (Miss March), Jenny Agutter (Idina Hatton), Gwen Humble (Mrs. St George), Peter Michael Goetz (Col. St George), E. Katherine Kerr (Mrs. Parmore), Conchata Ferrell (Mrs. Elmsworth), Elizabeth Ashley (Mrs. Closson), James Rebhorn (Mr. Closson), Sheila Hancock (Dowager Trevenick), Richard Huw (Hector Robinson), Gresby Nash (Miles Dawnley), Diana Blackburn (Gertrude Trevenick), Matt Patresi (Lord Percy), Vicky Blake (Rose), David Neilson (Blair), Richard Cubison (jeweller), Valerie Minifie (Miss French), Karen Ascoe (Mrs. Lindfry), Roger Brierley (Tory MP for Lincoln), Lloyd McGuire (Tory MP for Bath), Martin Milman (Mr. Firle), William Tapley (Thomas), Christopher Owen (Speaker, House of Commons), Stephen Reynolds (Hogwood), Alister Cameron (Longlands butler), Bev Willis (Fisher), Stephen Billington (Lieutenant James)

Notes: Credits supplied by the BBC. United Kingdom premiere: March 1995, in five segments. U.S. premiere: Masterpiece Theatre, October 8-10, 1995, in three parts (Part I: 90 minutes; Part II: 120 minutes; Part III: 120 minutes). Filmed in Newport, Rhode Island, and at various English country house locations.

Works Cited


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