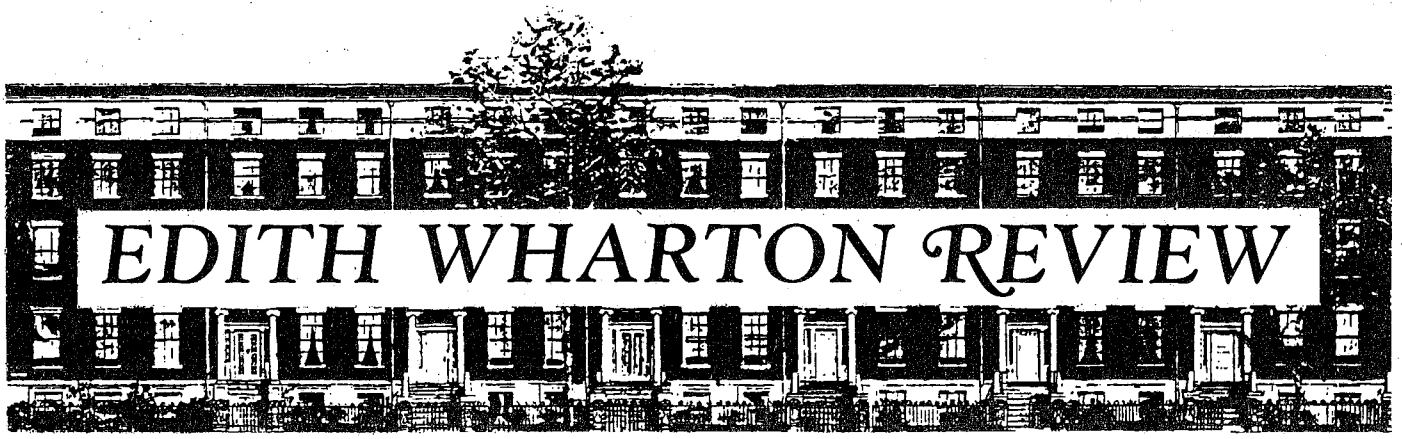

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In this issue

Conference News

American Literature Association in San Diego

The Second National Conference of the American Literature Association will be held in San Diego May 31 - June 2, 1990. The Edith Wharton Society will present two sessions on the program moderated by Annette Zilversmit, Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus.

The first will have "The Trilogy of Affirmation: Age and Authenticity in *The Mother's Recompense, Twilight Sleep,* and *The Children,"* Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; "The Nanny's Recompense: Wharton's *The Buccaneers* and 'All Souls'," Gloria C. Erlich, Princeton Research Forum; and "Japan and old New York: Edith Wharton's *The Mother's Recompense* and Nogami Yaeko's *Machiko",* Keiko Beppu, Kobe College (Japan).

The second session will present "Gentlewomen Prefer Blondes: Wharton's *The Mother's Recompense,"* Dale Bauer, Miami University, and "The Perfect Jew and *The House of Mirth:* A Study in Point of View," Irene C. Goldman, Ball State University.

The conference will be held at the Bahia Beach Resort, San Diego. Registration fee is $25.00. For information contact Alfred Bendixen (Executive Director of the American Literature Association and Conference Director), Department of English, California State University, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90032.

Wharton Society in Paris

The Edith Wharton Society will hold its first international Edith Wharton Conference, "France in the Art and Life of Edith Wharton," in Paris, France, June 27-30, 1991. It will be held at the Mona Bismarck Gallery of the American University of Paris. European, Asian and American scholars and writers will speak and hold panel discussions on the significance of French and European culture for Wharton and her fiction.

Tours of Wharton's Paris will be conducted and the conference will end with a day in St. Brice-sous-Forêt, the site of one Wharton's country homes, The Pavillon.

Some additional small papers will be accepted. The deadline for one to two page proposals is January 15, 1991 and participants will be notified by February 15, 1991. Send abstracts to: Katherine Joslin, Conference Director, Western Michigan University, Department of English, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5092.

Official brochure of conference with program, registration, and accommodations will be sent to all Wharton Society members in the fall.

Wharton Session at NEMLA

Carol J. Singley, American University, chaired "Edith Wharton: Mothers and Mother Figures" at the 1990 NEMLA (Northeastern Modern Language Association) Conference in Toronto. Participants were Monica M. Elbert, St. John's University, "Maternal Repression and Primal Landscape in *Summer";* Kathy A. Fedorko, Middlesex County College, "Mothering the Self in *The Age of Innocence";* and Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Role Reversal in Edith Wharton's Late Fiction." Carol Baker Sapora, Villa Julie College, is secretary of the section on Edith Wharton.

Wharton Panel at Michigan State

The 27th Modern Literature Conference and Michigan State University's Women's Studies Program presented a session, "Feminist Perspectives on Edith Wharton." Participants were Elizabeth Ammons, Tufts University; Kristin O. Lauer, Fordham University; Margaret McDowell, University of Iowa; and Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lev Raphael organized and chaired the invited panel.

1987 Colloquy at Saint-Brice

As part of the international celebrations of the 125th anniversary of Edith Wharton's birth, Les Amis Du Vieux Saint-Brice headed by Jacques Fosse hosted a one day colloquy of speakers and events in St. Brice and at the Pavillon Columbe in 1987. The papers given that day have been published as a special monograph, "Edith Wharton: Colloque Du Cinquantenaire."

The Contents include "Allocation du President de L'Association des Amis du Vieux Saint Brice," M. Jacques Fosse; "Greetings from Edith Wharton," Annette Zilversmit, Long Island University; "France in the Work of Edith Wharton," Millicent Bell, Boston University; "The Revival of Interest in Edith Wharton," Eleanor Dwight, New School; Edith Wharton à Saint Brice, Leon Edel; "La Femme Dans l'oevre d' Edith Wharton," Diane de Margarie, translator of Wharton, "Edith Wharton et quelques ecrivain francais," Roger Asselineau, Sorbonne; and "La Liaison non dangereuse de Henry James et Edith Wharton," Lyall Powers, University of Michigan.

Copies are available from M. Jacques Fosse, Le president de l'association, Les Amis du Vieux Saint-Brice, 48, rue de Paris, 95350 Saint-Brice-Sous-Forêt. The cost is 100 francs francais (france de port.).

Edith Wharton Rings "The Lady's Maid's Bell"

Ellen Powers Stengel

A paradoxically lucky thirteen – such was the number of years separating the publication date of Edith Wharton's first short story and that of her first bona fide traditional ghost story. Portentous delay notwithstanding, Wharton soon learned to ring on the theme of the supernatural the many changes that would peal throughout more than one-fourth of her eighty-seven short stories. But when Wharton wrote "The Lady's Maid's Bell" (collected in *The Descent of Man, and Other Stories* in 1904), such mastery was not yet hers (*Ghost Stories,* 13-37; for previous studies, see McDowell, *Edith Wharton* 85-86 and "Ghost Tales" 143, 144; and O'Connor 22). Indeed, certain unruly implications resound in "The Lady's Maid's Bell." Its title riddled with apostrophes, its discourse hampered by Wharton's awkward attempt to reproduce the rhetoric of the servant class, "Bell" is muffled from its inception. Nevertheless the tale is provocative, mixing unreliable narration – Alice Hartley is convalescing from typhoid – with unambiguously supernatural elements. Intriguingly, Wharton – here and in seven other of her twenty-two supernatural tales – posits the preternatural as the Great Extension of the servant/master relationship. Such an eerie linkage came easily to Wharton who herself depended on her servants not only to manage the petty details of her household but also to furnish her sole constant source of affectionate companionship. To Wharton, no one was more real than the woman who removed her shoes at night; to Wharton, nothing would have been more terrifying than, say, that same woman continuing her duties – after death.

Just that sort of all-too-faithful retainer manifests herself in "Bell" as a means to interpret the text: Emma Saxon, the ghost of Brympton Place, is a Revenant – one of the two major figures in supernatural literature (the other is the Double). The Revenant story typically features (1) a theme dealing with the human relation to time and history; (2) a content expressing a threat external to the self and often involving appropriation of the self to the external force; and (3) a plot involving an unmasking of the source of victimization and oppression. Revenants include not only the traditional ghost and the vampire but also other figures demonstrating externalized dislocation in time, such as visions of the afterlife, personifications of Death, haunted objects, mummies, and zombies (Wharton wrote stories utilizing all these figures except the last). In "Bell" as in all of Wharton's Revenant stories, real space is invaded by a presence from another time – unreal time – and immortals trespass where mortals alone should dare to tread. Such trespasses textually displayed prompt a reading that with synchronic (that is, space-based) heuristics (that is, tools of analysis) measures the real as the thesis of a dialectical process and that with diachronic (that is, time-based) heuristics clocks the unreal as the antithesis of that same dialectical process. The Revenant story as a dialectical process then demands the synthesis which a dialectically-based heuristic can provide.

The Revenant of Brympton Place beckons us, inviting deployment of the most famous heuristics ever to analyze supernatural literature: Freud's synchronic concept of "the surmounted" and his diachronic concept of "the return of the repressed," together composing his theory of "the uncanny." In explicating the first term, Freud asserts that

> each one of us has been through a phase of individual development corresponding to . . .[the] animistic stage in primitive men, that none of us has passed through it without preserving certain residues and traces of it which are still capable of manifesting themselves, and that everything which now strikes us as 'uncanny' fulfills the condition of touching those residues of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression.

These "residues" of "the surmounted" can be "transposed onto . . . fiction" to yield "the uncanny" if and only if "the setting is one of material reality" (240, 249, 251). Against such a background the surmounted – timeless when its "wishes, fantasies, memories, or affects" are con-

stituted by what Jung would label "archetypal" or "archaic remnants" (47, 49, 67) — stands out in high relief

Cannily Wharton sculpts a background credible yet uncanny: Brympton Place, a "country place on the Hudson" (14) just upriver from New York City, is the convertible real estate: as a contemporary mansion, it is the scene of the proprieties — of society etiquette ("Mr. Ranford called. The footman said the three [Ranford and Mr. and Mrs. Brympton] were very merry over their tea in the library"; 30); of servant protocol ("I had asked no questions of the groom, for I never was one to get my notion of new masters from their own servants"; 15-16). As a Gothic backdrop, it inspires fear. As both, it founds the dialectic of "Bell." The antitheses are initiated as Mrs. Railton hires Hartley for her niece, Mrs. Brympton, in an ostensibly innocuous transaction that nevertheless includes a disturbing proviso: Hartley should be aware that the "'house is big and gloomy . . . a vault'" offering "'a lonely life'" (14-15). Such ominous prospects are hardly dispelled by Hartley's first sighting of Brympton Place, looming out of the darkness like the House of Usher:

> It was a dull October day, with rain hanging close overhead, and by the time we turned into Brympton Place woods the daylight was almost gone. The drive wound through the woods for a mile or two, and came out on a gravel court shut in with thickets of tall black-looking shrubs. There were no lights in the windows, and the house *did* look a bit gloomy. [15]

The space of the surmounted thus surrounds narrator and reader, locating us in a dark, gloomy, rainy woods in the failing light of October (high season, of course, for hauntings). No midnight, no storm — but a sufficient number of what Wharton has identified as "primeval shadows" (8) gather.

Forebodings of the surmounted mark the reality of "Bell." Particularly laden by the "feeling of gloom" (22), worrying over that certain "something about the house" (23) is Hartley's discourse. But lest her narration be dismissed as incredible, Hartley carefully cites outside sources which confirm the ghostly rumors. Hence she hies to town to have at her disposal the word out on the servant grapevine — that "'nobody could stay in the house'" (23); "that it was always the maids who left" (25). Even the weather collaborates at portents. So frequently does it rain at Brympton Place that "the drip, drip, drip seemed to be dropping into my brain" (24-25). When the rain forbears, the snow does not: "It was a very still night, earth and air all muffled in snow. I . . . lay quiet, listening to the strange noises that come out in a house after dark" (34). Ultimately, all these elements of material reality concede dominance of Hartley's consciousness to the "animistic residue" — that is, to the timeless sway of the affect of fear. Thus shaken is her former assurance that "'I'm not afraid of solitude'" (15), that "I wasn't afraid of feeling lonely in the country" (17). In its place following the apparitions of Emma Saxon is the heavy "weight" (22) of knowledge that the surmounted can neither be suppressed nor locked away. Twentieth-century skepticism, then, yields space to this reality. Even painstakingly elaborated detail — physical and psychical — now enlists in the service of the animistic. Thus starting with Hartley's first ascertaining the supernatural character of her visions of Emma, we hear, for instance, how Hartley is "cold all over," her heart "thumping in the top of my head" (29). In fact, the more bizarrely rendered its manifestations, the more realistically depicted are the affective responses to the Revenant. By Emma's second apparition, we find Hartley's reactions ever more plausible: "My heart shriveled up within me, and my knees were water" (32). By the time the third apparition is preternaturally anticipated as well as experienced, paradoxically homely detail paints the response: "My hands seemed to be covered with glue — I thought I should never get into my clothes" (34-35). This technique of realistically portraying these atavistic reactions further topples the modern defense against the supposedly surmounted. The discourse, succumbing to the power of regression, effectively demonstrates how Freud's synchronic heuristic measures reality.

Another Freudian heuristic, the "return of the repressed," describes the defenses as well as the supernatural elements of the text. If, as in Norman Holland's useful definition, repression is a "defense mechanism . . . which excludes from consciousness inner realities" (364), we need to determine the exclusions operating both within and upon the discourse. After all, the defense mechanism, the antithetical turn of the wheel of the dialectic, must first be tripped before it can be checked. We can thereby harness the diachronic thrust of a heuristic which *"recurs."* Freud's italics decode the tenacity of this particular defense — against consciousness of death. Repression of the awareness of mortality, dating back to "the infantile complexes," in the literary tale of "the uncanny" transmutes "material" to "psychical reality," often supernaturally overcoming death with its "return" (241, 248,249). According to Ernest Jones, one of Freud's most prominent disciples, "'the idea of the sexual assault that is both wished for and dreaded'" often determines literary representation of "the return" (qtd. in Richardson 425). And as Peter Brooks has elucidated, the return may occur on a textual level, repetition indicating a repressed element. Tracing the "daemonic" is diachronic movement, "indeterminate shuttling or oscillation which binds different moments together as a middle wich might turn forward or back" but in any case advances the dialectic into the supernatural (288).

In "Bell," the two most diachronically insistent repetitions both involve the Revenant, Emma Saxon. In one set of repetitions, "word presentations" are repressed; in

another set of repetitions, "thing-presentations" (Freud qtd. in Wilden 212-14) are repressed. That is, the first set of repetitions allows the other servants and Mrs. Brympton to keep from Hartley information about Emma and the conditions surrounding her death and her mistress's bereavement. The second set disregards Emma's condition as Revenant. That each kind of repression causes the other is evident when Emma's first apparition is perceived by Hartley but not by Agnes though the two maids are together at the time. Hartley sees Emma but has been denied the information which would define her as a Revenant; Agnes overlooks Emma because she is busily engaged in supressing her memory, what with delivering instructions that the door to Emma's former room – "'nobody's room'" – remain locked (16). But Agnes should not be blamed for acting as her mistress's lackey, for it is Mrs. Brympton herself who leads the conspiracy of silence by such means as the locked door and the "strange" arrangement for relaying messages which negates the existence of the usual bell system. When Hartley discoveres that there is in fact a bell system, and even

> a special one ringing from my mistress's room to mine . . ., after that it did strike me as queer that, whenever Mrs. Brympton wanted anything, she rang for Agnes, who had to walk the whole length of the servants' wing to call me. [18]

Now the discourse with repetition alerts us to the repression of the word-presentations of the Revenant: "that wasn't the only queer thing in the house," for "another odd thing happened" (18).

Most frequently repeated are the incidents during which the cook, Mrs. Blinder, tries to impose her namesake implement upon the proceedings: she pleads amnesia and exigent cooking tasks whenever Hartley presses her for information about Emma (18-19; 29). What is more, the cook is excessively grateful for Hartley's return from town and strangely surprised at Hartley's failure to give notice but refuses to account for the disproportion of her responses:

> "Oh, my dear," says she, taking my hand, "I'm so glad and thankful you've come back to us!"
>
> That struck me, as you may imagine. "Why," said I, "did you think I was leaving for good?"
>
> "No, no, to be sure," said she, a little confused . . . she hurried away, and left me staring. [24]

Due to this censorship campaign, Hartley had already "made up my mind to ask no more questions" (18). In short,

> I thought of speaking to Mrs. Blinder or to Mr. Wace [the butler], the only two in the house who appeared to have a inkling of what was going on, but I had a feeling that if I questioned them they would deny everything, and that I would learn more by holding my tongue and keeping my eyes open. [28]

But Hartley cannot keep this reiterated promise to herself. Again and again she tracks clues like the dog to which she later compares herself (32). More than Emma she haunts her own discourse, but in a worthy if futile cause: it would take supernatural means to penetrate the wall of silence circumscribing her every move.

But Hartley possesses only temporal powers; the mechanisms of repression successfully defend against her attempts to bring the truth to consciousness. By means of the Brymptons' stratagems and the servants' evasions, virtually the whole household represses the recognition that Emma Saxon has indeed returned. Nevertheless the latent knowledge is manifested in the "white" face of Mrs. Blinder (18), the "red and savage" visage of Mr. Brympton (25), the "death flutter" later possessing the features of Mrs. Brympton (36). In fact all diachronic elements of "Bell" ring out the return of the repressed Revenant – only to repress the reasons for her return. Like Hartley struggling against the silences of Brympton Place, the reader must be induced from the montage of events juxtaposed to Emma's four appearances – her "thing-presentations."

Emma first appears as Agnes familiarizes Hartley with the layout and routines of Brympton Place, both below and above stairs. During the tour, Hartley notices a woman to whom, quite improperly, she in introduced neither then nor later (17-18). Therefore, she files away for future use the observation that the woman "gave me a long look as she went by" (16). And though Hartley later uncovers the mysterious woman's identity, she never discovers the reason for that perplexing look. Discovery in this instance is left to the reader who in retrospect can discern the conjunction between Emma's look and the spontaneously affectionate first meeting between Hartley and Mrs. Brympton:

> She spoke very pleasantly, . . . asking me . . . if I wasn't afraid of feeling very lonely in the country.
>
> "Not with you I wouldn't be, madam," I said, and the words surprised me when I'd spoken them; but it was just as if I'd thought aloud.
>
> She seemed pleased at that . . . [17]

Thus through the fire in the gaze of the Revenant the torch of affection has been passed from former to present lady's maid. Also sparked are the reader's speculations as to just what the relationship between Mrs. Brympton and Emma had – has – been. We know through Mrs. Railton that her niece Mrs. Brympton "'is an angel. Her former maid, who died last spring, had been with her twenty years and worshiped the ground she walked on'" (15). In turn we learn from Mrs. Blinder –

as authoritative below stairs as Mrs. Railton above – that the maid bore credentials as unquestionable as her mistress's (apt praise for a Revenant). Indeed, the "'mistress loved her like a sister'" (19). From two very divergent sources, then, the fastness of the bond between Mrs. Brympton and Emma has been confirmed. That the connection may have been at least unconsciously more than sororal is also indicated by its power to survive death – for example, through its reincarnation in Mrs. Brympton and Hartley's relationship: some transmigration of affections apparently has occurred. Corroborating this is the absurdly instantaneous intimacy shared by the mistress and her new maid. There is on Hartley's part toward her mistress "some other feeling that I couldn't put a name to." And everyone in the household knows that the feeling is mutual. Agnes, for one, "told me one day that, since Emma Saxon's death, I was the only maid her mistress had taken to." The "warm feeling" Hartley then experiences (30) verifies further the return of homoeroticism in defiance of the repression of the text.

The second apparition underscores another sexual relationship which has been repressed. That is, Emma appears this time to thwart the seduction of Mrs. by Mr. Brympton. Again only through tracing the diachronic line can the connection between sexual and supernatural events be revealed, for Hartley represses her own libidinized role in the whole polymorphous tangle. When hypothesizing the state of the union between husband and wife, she reports that "I turned sick to think of what some ladies have to endure and hold their tongues about." This protesting too much is somewhat tempered by her admission that Mrs. Brympton was "perhaps a trifle cold"; Hartley even empathizes slightly with Mr. Brympton, perceiving the source of the Brympton's marital trouble – that "to a gentleman as free as Mr. Brympton I dare say she seemed a little offish" (21). All in all, then, the discourse carefully defends against an attraction to both husband and wife. The defense is breached only when the eponymous object rings, leaving the narrator "terrified by the unusual sound, . . . jangling through the darkness." But if repressions are defeated on one front, they triumph on another: Emma, repression materialized, has been unleashed. We along with Hartley recognize the sound of "the door of the locked room . . . softly opening and closing," then the sound of "a footstep hurrying down the passage" (25). All too clear also is Emma's purpose – to prevent connubial relations. Substantiating this is the extremeness of Mr. Brympton's reaction to Hartley's appearance – paranoid because he apparently has just been subjected to a vision of the Revenant: "'*You*!' he said, in a queer voice. *'How many of you are there, in God's name*?'" Also verifying the effect of the Revenant's appearance is Mrs. Brympton's confusion of Hartley with Emma (26). Thus only Emma's and Hartley's, not Mr. Brympton's, intentions have been consummated. Homoeroticism, if it is strong, will hardly brook a heterosexual union. And it operates as so strong a repressive force there that on the level of the discourse it need only manifest itself as an auditory – not a visual – phenomenon.

But entirely visual is Emma's third apparition, its intensity spurred by Emma's emergent role as what Peter Penzoldt had dubbed a "missioned ghost" (32-47): she wants Hartley to intervene in the Mr. Brympton-Mrs. Brympton-Mr. Ranford triangle. Hence ensues a lengthy episode (31-34), disastrous on two accounts. Aesthetically, the scene fails. Wharton loses control of tone – it is difficult to be horrified of a ghost who traipses through snow, chilling lack of footprints aside, and leads the intended recipient of her message around "like a dog" and past such prosaic places as blacksmith shops (32-33) – and cashes in the terror accumulated in the reader's response to this point. Emma's manifestation is also disastrous in that the inevitably tragic sequences of the triangle are by no means averted. Along her futile way, however, Emma expends much ectoplasmic energy conducting Hartley to Mr. Ranford's yard, where "she stood under the elm and watched me" (33), and imbuing the destined end of her peregrinations with desperate significance. But Ranford's entry upon the scene breaks the spell, leaving Hartley forlornly ignorant of Emma's purpose: "She was gone, and I had not been able to guess what she wanted. Her last look had pierced me to the marrow; and yet it had not told me!" (33-34). The reader, on the other hand, hardly finds it so taxing to decode the episode: Emma wishes Hartley to warn Mr. Ranford away from trysting with Mrs. Brympton at a time calculated by Mr. Brympton to catch the would-be adulterers *in flagrante delicto*. In addition, as the plot and *les liaisons dangereuses* thicken, Emma expresses for Hartley "the infantile complex," Freud and Jones would say, that both desires and fears "sexual asssault." That is, Mr. Brympton's sexuality threatens (it produces "dead children"; 14); that of the effete Mr. Ranford, smiler and reader (21), does not. Therefore, only the last-named suitor's attentions can meet with the approval of the ghostly homoerotic censor. And just as Emma constrains her beloved mistress's heterosexual relationships, so Hartley represses the desires of the text, intruding this distracting episode, defending its undecipherability. The discourse's actual penetrability, however, permits for the reader, at any rate, "the return of the repressed."

Emma's final appearance imposes the ultimate censorship – death. Moreover, the suggestive scene that results in the delicate Mrs. Brympton's demise is bowdlerized by the narrator's naivete. In spite of Hartley's repressions, the discourse alerts us to Mr. Ranford's thwarted seduction, both at the time of the attempted adultery – the by "slight noise inside" – and later at Mrs. Brympton's funeral – by Ranford's leg injury (36-37). But the

discourse's innuendoes and our knowing inferences cannot determine the denouement like Emma's and Hartley's collaboration. It is Emma, after all, whose manifestations paralyzes Mr. Brympton long enough to allow Mr. Ranford's escape:

> I heard a slight noise inside . . . he [Mr. Brympton] heard it too, and tore the door open; but as he did so he dropped back. On the threshold stood Emma Saxon. All was dark behind her, but I saw her plainly and so did he. He threw up his hands as if to hide his face from her; and when I looked again she was gone. [36]

True, the terror generated — whether by fear of the Revenant or of exposure of the love affair or both remains moot — also kills Mrs. Brympton. But for the repressive Revenant ("All was dark behind her . . ."), unleashed to exert her sway over time, that outcome is preferable to the co-optation of her object of desire by threatening, potent heterosexuality. And it is Hartley who as a censor stands on the threshold of the text, denying to erotic drives the surface of consciousness, forming a new cathexis of desires upon the conquest of time. The victory, granted, is Pyrrhic, given the post-modernist reader's ability to analyze just what it is that is so repressed that it can return only as a Revenant. This timebound qualification aside, however, we note the ascendency of the supernatural repressed in the story's dialectical process.

But then in "Bell" the supernatural needs the real to initiate what Jacques Lacan would call a "dialectic of intersubjectivity," one which psychoanalyzes both terms of the dialectic. The analysis would daunt us if it were not for a heuristic also furnished, as the phrase above, by Lacan. Here is what Lacan christens "the Schema L":

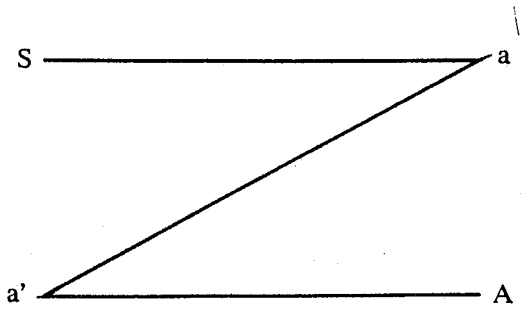

Fig. I

In this version of his famous Schema, Lacan represents the subject (S) in relationship to the Other (*l'Autre,A*), for

> the subject has to emerge from the given of the signifiers which cover him in an Other which is their transcendental locus: through this he constitutes himself in an existence where the manifestly constituting vector of the Freudian area of experience is possible: that is to say, what is called desire.

We can see that the fertile intercourse of subject and Other engenders the entire scheme and even a definition of the unconscious — as "the discourse of the Other." Unfolding in any one text of the unconscious, then, are "the four corners of the schema, which are: *S,* his [the subject's] ineffable and stupid existence; *a,* his objects; *a',* his *moi* — that is, what is reflected of his form in his objects; and *A,* the locus from which the question of his existence may be put to him" (106-08).

Schema L can help us to examine "Bell" if we superimpose upon Lacan's figure the characters and other elements of the text:

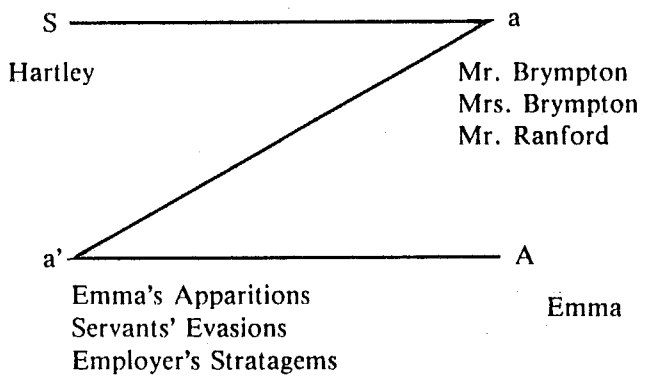

Fig. II

That is, the real relationships in the story, particularly Hartley's reconstitution of the *menage a trois,* serve as the objects of — to use Holland's useful summary again — Hartley's "wishes, fantasies, memories, or affects." These object choices are traced diachronically upon the text as the evasions and apparitions of the supernatural. But the Other who serves as the locus of all signifiers here is the Revenant, Emma, who manages the forms of the subject's representations — she constitutes the apparitions and motivates the evasions — and libidinizes the subject's object choices. In turn, though the text is generated by the subject's encounters with the Other, the object choices lead the subject to the places and times of confrontation.

To perceive the destination of this text's dialectic, therefore, we must trace the lines of the subject's consciousness to the "wishes, fantasies, memories, or affects" upon which it has cathected its desires. The text of Hartley's unconscious invites us to read the apparitions of Emma in particular as the reflections of Hartley's desires for all three points on the sexual triangle — Mrs.

Brympton, Mr. Ranford, and Mr. Brympton. Although these desires are repressed, the stronger the force of the repression of the desire, the more dominant its expression in the text. Arousing tyrannical repressive forces but also the powers of sympathy is the homoerotic vector running between the lady and the two lady's maids — the quick and the dead. The arc of their attraction, like the eponymous bell with its shape suggesting the Freudian/Lacanian image of potency, signifies the three women's interconnection. And the emergent subject underpinning the interconnections is Hartley, who — like her counterpart, Emma, before her — wants both to have and to be Mrs. Brympton.

Consequently, the servant exhibits for her mistress such affects as wish-fulfillment, desire, and empathy. The yearning to cross classes, to possess the elegance and beauty of the love object shines through: "She was a delicate-looking lady, but when she smiled I felt there was nothing I wouldn't do for her" (17). Certainly Hartley does not shy from lying to Mr. to protect Mrs. Brympton nor from facing down her fears of the supernatural (28-29). Even more revealingly, she does not recoil from her mistress's growing "more and more dependent on me" (30). Rejoicing rather in her tightening bond, Hartley revels in her beloved's moments of intensified sexuality: for example, she notes with vicarious satisfaction that after a winter walk with Mr. Ranford, Mrs. Brympton is "quite fresh and rosy, so that for a minute, before her color faded, I could guess what a pretty young lady she must have been, and no so long ago, either" (20). Vicarious satisfaction, we know, stems from identification, and identification from empathy. No wonder then that even in the most petty of contexts, Hartley champions her heroine. For instance, when she overhears the Brymptons in the heat of argument, she conspires to award her mistress the last word even if by servile means ("I rattled the toilet things"; 24). In progressively more serious matters, she is even more staunch in her mistress's defense: though she suspects a liaison between Mrs. Brympton and Mr. Ranford, though — what is worse — she begins to surmise her own role as their go-between and dupe, she stoutly maintains, "I would have staked my head on my mistress' goodness" (27). Even Emma's tell-tale tracks to Mr. Ranford's door, far from shaking Hartley's faith in her idol, convince her that "some dreadful thing hung over" the lovers (33) (like a wronged husband, the text forbears to add). Her faith persists beyond the last minute, contradicting her assertion that Mr. Brympton's wrath at his wife's adultery blinded her to what she is doing and why: "I don't know what I thought or feared; but I sprang up and caught him by the sleeve" (36). For Hartley, Mrs. Brympton, even prostrate (26) or dying (36), is her ideal. Hartley's text, then, is a loving elegy to her mistress and to a way of life beyond her reach, to a reluctantly relinquished drive toward polymorphous — here homoerotic — consummation.

Another object choice inserts the subject into the erstwhile romantic triangle, now a polygon: Hartley also is attracted to Mr. Ranford with a desire which sublimates into more acceptable heterosexual form her homoeroticized drive toward her mistress. The young man after all is on the level of the discourse nothing but a pale reflection of Mrs. Brympton. For the discourse does not second its narrator's approval: effete and bookish, Mr. Ranford is depicted in an almost girlish relationship with his would-be lover ("the two were forever borrowing books of one another"). He is described with sketchy detail--he is "a slight gentleman of about thirty"--and distracting cliche--he has a smile "like the first warm day of spring" (21). In other words, he is a safe object for the cathexis of desires otherwise repressed. Thus the servants, projecting fantasies upon him, prefer him to Mr. Brympton. So does Mrs. Brympton, threatened by her own husband's hulking masculinity (21). Indeed Mr. Ranford is useful--useful for dispelling supernatural miasmas, such as that caused by the third apparition of Emma; useful for bringing, with his "handsome and cheerful" mien, servant girls chilled by snowy hikes with Revenants back to the warm land of the real (33-34). But his utility only extends so far; appearing as a cripple at his mistress's funeral, an object of pity instead of desire, he has been effectively castrated by the discourse. In a text powered by repressions, even his brief pretension to heterosexual force must be effectively neutered.

But one irresponsible force survives the cuts of the discourse: from his first appearance, Mr. Brympton is portrayed with a repulsion downright sensual. Through Mrs. Railton's parenthetical asides — "'well he's generally away'" (14) — and pregnant pauses the heterosexual threat crashes: "'you've only to keep out of his way'" (15). The discourse betrays its attraction. Granted, we hear much about his suspect qualities — the drinking and, even more reprehensible, the bullying which deservedly lowers him in his servants' regard (19-20; 21; 31). Nevertheless, on the level of the discourse all is forgiven, for even the details which supposedly indicate his repulsiveness relative to Mr. Ranford in their vivid colors eclipse those which depict his ultimately wan rival (20). Again and again, first explicitly, now implicitly, Hartley lets slip Mr. Brympton's point of view: he is "pleasure-loving" while Mrs. Brympton, in a word, is frigid (21). In fact, "white, and chill to the touch" around her husband, "fresh and rosy" around her love, Mrs. Brympton with her actions refutes the narration's accusations against Mr. Brympton of unreasonably jealousy (24; 29-30; 36). The subject herself by her intense repulsion reflects a strongly cathected object choice. Thus when Hartley asserts that the typhoid and its ravages have, fortunately, armed her against the vile cross-class seducer, we detect a sour note of the woman scorned:

> He . . . looked me over in a trice. I knew what the look meant . . . Then he turned his back on me, . . . and I knew what *that* meant, too. I was not the kind of morsel he was after. [20]

When she regrets her mistress's physical servitude to such a monster--"I turned sick to think of what some ladies have to endure" (21)--we begin to think the lady's maid protests too much. Our suspicions are confirmed as a powerful fascination is repeatedly betrayed. Hartley blames all her household's problems on Mr. Brympton, even going so foolishly far as to attribute to a sexual rather than a supernatural cause the former maids' abrupt departures (23); willfully to lie to him (28); disproportionately to regard his early return from the Indies as ominous though she professes ignorance of the reason for his return (that is, to trap his wife and her lover; 35-36).

But all this tarring paints an ironically heroic image; darkly glowering, Mr. Brympton seizes control of Hartley's discourse, right up to his domination of its very late sentence (37). Thus by his obsessively marked position in the discourse, his status as an overwhelming object choice in the Schema L, he italicizes an achievement of "Bell": though the real and the supernatural conspire together by synthesis to manage the desires of the text, some of those desires — thanks to the dialectic, thanks to the operation of the Revenant — escape restraint. Homoeroticism and heterosexuality from the gaps in the text together allow Wharton and the reader to celebrate a polymorphous drive beyond closure.

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Minutes of Wharton Society 1989

The Edith Wharton Society held its annual business/dinner meeting at the Roma Restaurant on December 28 during the 1989 Annual MLA Conventiona in Washington, D.C. Over thirty members attended. Alan Price, president of the Society, arranged and chaired the meeting. The Honorable William Tyler was the guest of honor. Alfred Bendixen reported on the success of the first national conference of the American Literature Association in 1989 and announced the two Wharton session to be held at the 1990 conference in May in San Diego. Katherine Joslin gave a progress report as conference director on the all-Wharton conference in Paris for 1991. (Details of these conferences are in this issue.) Carol Singley, the in-coming president of the Edith Wharton Society, announced the panel she will chair on Wharton at the 1990 NEMLA in Toronto. She also announced plans for the Special Session she is organizing for the 1990 Annual MLA Convention in Chicago entitled, "Race, Gender and Ethnicity in Edith Wharton." (The program and plans for the 1990 business/dinner meeting of the Wharton Society will be forthcoming in the fall issue.)

A report of the Executive Board's meeting held earlier in the day was given. Attending were Alan Price, Katherine Joslin, Judith Sensibar, Gloria Erlich, Claire Colquitt and Annettte Zilversmit. Gloria C. Erlich and Claire Colquitt will become the co-presidents for 1991 of The Edith Wharton Society. Added to the Executive Board were Jean Frantz Blackall and Susan Goodman.

Portrait of Edith Wharton in Bourget's "L'Indicatrice"

Adeline R. Tintner

In reading a volume of Bourget's *nouvelle, Les Détours du Coeur* (a form in which he was an acknowledged master) in connection with an ongoing study of the relation of Edith Wharton and the French writer, I came across a tale, "L'Indicatrice," (1905) in which the main character, a rich American woman staying in a hotel in Paris, is the prey of a young thief.[1] His mistress, the temporary maid of the American, is to coordinate the plan to rob her employer of her valuable jewels, chief among them pearls. The maid, who has been brutally treated by her lover, is so impressed by the goodness of her employer that she reveals the plan to her and they both avert the disaster. The American lady wants the young woman to go back to America with her but, at the last minute, she decides to stay with her lover, for she is incapable of leaving him. As the story proceeds it becomes clear that the American woman is a portrait of Edith Wharton created by the French novelist and essayist who, at this time, 1905, had renewed and made permanent his earlier friendship with Mrs. Wharton formed when he had visited the States in 1892 to write his book *Outre-mer.*

These are the telling details. When Adele, the young woman posing as a maid in order to be an informer or "indicatrice" (a "finger" woman for Jules Bélière, her lover-thief,) enters the Hotel Beausite where Mrs. Edith (sic!) Risley is stretched out on a chaise-lounge, we are treated to a full description of the interior and its creator. "She had during this winter transformed her hotel suite into a kind of 'home' ("transformée en une espće de *home*") (DC, 210). "All the things around her carry the imprint of her gracious personality whose charm would alone have explained why the confederate of Bélière had hestitated so many weeks" to start the plans for the robbery. "Edith was one of these Americans who seem to carry over to the area of refinement that strong will that the men of their country carry over into the area of money-making. There were in the *salon* bits of antique material spread over pieces of furniture, and chic bibelots placed on tables. Orchids bloomed in vases. Two paintings, one by Maës representing a little girl eating a wafer near her cat, the other a halberdier by Bronzino, were placed on two easels. The mistress of this improvised sanctuary had fought over them with cheques as ammunition in a resounding auction sale a few days before. Books in English and German, Italian and French, abounded in the library. This other sign attested to the cosmopolitanism of this exquisite creature whose fragile beauty was as if devoured by an excess of intelligence and sensiblity." Edith Risley, the substitute for Edith Wharton, had very pale ash blond hair. "She had eyes of a clear brown, and a complexion of a flower, scarcely colored and of a delicate shade. In her dressing gown, of a supple lavender silk trimmed with lace, with the slenderness of her figure, her frail arms appearing from the light loose sleeves, her hands with their tapering fingers and her slender feet, she resembled one of the infantas of the Prado Museum. Although one has mocked, and rightly so, certain Americans for the ancestral snobbery, it is no less true that a great number of them seem just as smitten with less democratic atavisms. Edith was a member of the Van Alstyn family. She was descended from an *emigŕe* originally from the low countries in the 17th century who passed for a bastard of one of the last Spanish governors. Edith's friends, all of whom had, in the classic manner of Yankee millionaires, galleries crammed with more or less authentic masterpieces, called her *The Velasquéz.* She was also, in spite of the advantages of a too full existence, or perhaps because of it, one of those women one finds overseas who wants everyone around her to also be spoiled, to also lead a full life, so that she becomes profoundly, intimately kind. It signified a goodness, a benevolence always active, going for important little things . . . which creates above all an atmosphere of sweetness. This grace of the heart has been — O irony! — the cause for Mrs. Risley's having chosen the mistress of the Apache (the thief) to work for her. Her usual maid, a German woman, in her service for ten years, had been called away . . . Mrs. Risley had hastily chosen a replacement, and had picked Adele at first sight under the pseudonym of Aurélie Brissaud. 'I believe in sympathy or antipathy', she said, 'and I yield blindly'" (DC, 212). Mrs. Risley was supposed to have visited her old governess on which basis the robbery was to have taken place while she was out. Her regular German maid was called Müller. Mrs. Risley wants Adele to come back with her to the United States since she pleases her so.

Adele feels guilty about this and tells Mrs. Risley, who has been kind to her, about the planned robbery. At that moment there is a turning of the knob of the door. Adele tells Mrs. Risley to speak out and the latter says, "'Who is there?'" "She found herself again the daughter of a race of energy in the presence of a real danger." She tells Adele, "'You have saved me from this man and I will save you in my turn. You will come with me to America, change your name, and he will not follow you.'" But the next day she reads a note from Adele telling her she has gone back to her lover. She asks Mrs. Risley to pack her trunk and to include a photograph of herself. "She put in her portrait, and in an envelope, five bills of a thousand francs each. Those who know her will recognize that trait, but will they recognize the finger girl of thieves, the mistress of a professional Apache, in this other trait? For Adele sent back the 5,000 francs in the same envelope. This disinterestedness in such degradation . . . together perhaps with remorse, rendered insupportable a crime committed against a benefactress."

Before 1906, when she began her rental of the first Rue de Varenne apartment, Edith Wharton stayed at hotels as Mrs. Risley did in the story. Her benevolent tyranny over the objects in the hotel suite was well-known, so the fact that the whole apartment "carried the imprint of her gracious personality" is a trait in her Bourget recognizes when he gives to her the same dominant "will" found in the workers in Wall Street. Her money allowed her to outbid all others in any sale or auction in which she had an interest, as Mrs. Risley did. Nicolas Maës has been chosen as an artist to represent the Dutch School in which maids and servants are treated with compassion and tenderness, and Bronzino is chosen to show Mrs. Risley's, like Edith's, taste in a painting appreciated only by the *cogniscenti* in 1905. Edith was considered *the* cosmopolitan figure in American society, with her international education as a child, her international travels as an adult, and her leisure which she did not waste but combined with it a working career as a novelist and short story writer. The books in Mrs. Risley's library in her hotel apartment ("English and German, Italian and French") attest to this cosmopolitanism, as does a peek into Wharton's own library. Her hair is of the right color, although Wharton seems to have been more "russet-gold."[2] The Rhinelanders, Edith's family, were Huguenot *emigrés,* according to Lewis (L, 10). Mrs. Risley's forebears are the Van Alstyns descended from a Spanish governor of the Netherlands. We know that Wharton had "brown skin" as reported by Theodora Bosanquet, James's amanuensis, who also attested to her "fairish-bright hazel eyes,"[3] that is, brown, agreeing with "clear brown" here. Her skin, Bosanquet repeated later, was "browny-yellow" (M, 540). This brown and dark complexion may have made the Spanish connection a reasonable fiction for Bourget to apply to Wharton. Charles Du Bos records that Bourget calls her *le Velasquéz.*[4] The attention to Mrs. Risley's kindness refers to that trait everyone recognized in Edith Wharton. Just at this time she was negotiating with Scribner's to bring out an American edition of Howard Sturgis's *Belchamber,* and her monetary kindnesses to Fullerton and James are well-known, so that the 5,000 francs Mrs. Risley puts into the envelope for Adele, her maid, amounted to a customary gesture of Edith Wharton's; as Bourget writes "those who know her will recognize her traits." Müller, the German maid of ten years in Mrs. Risley's service, surely stands for Gross, Edith's maid, also German, who was with her until her death. Wharton's dressing gowns with sleeves that revealed her good arms seemed to be always in the range of pink or lilac. Bosanquet describes visiting her at her hotel, dressed in "a very elegant pink negligée wearing her cap of ecru lace trimmed with fur." She wrote, "her arms are very much displayed, coming from very beautiful frills of sleeves, and they were good arms . . . just the right plumpness and ending up in hands most beautifully manicured" (M, 540). "I believe in sympathy or antipathy" is a characteristic the reader of Edith Wharton's letters will recognize as a truth about her personality, and the description of her fictional *alter ego's* wish to have "'everyone around her to also be spoiled, to also lead a good life' as she was leading one, 'again signifies a goodness . . . going from important to little things.'" This portrait of Edith is a kind of recompense for Bourget's earlier portrait which everyone assumes was that of Edith based on the three weeks he saw much of her at Newport in 1892 when he was preparing to write *Outre-mer,* the book of his impressions of the United States. In that book he describes the "American intellectural tomboy," based on Edith. She "has read everything, understoods everything . . . there is not a book of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Renan, Taine which she has not studied, not a painter or sculptor of whose works she could not compile a catalogue . . ." (L, 69). "One would say that she has ordered her intellect somewhere, as we would order a piece of furniture, to measure, and with as many compartments as there are branches of human knowledge." Before her he longs to cry "May she make a blunder, may she prove not to know! In vain. A mind may be mistaken, a mind may be ignorant but never a thinking machine!" (L, 70). Over ten years later he has learned to appreciate her humanity, her kindness, and her generosity, characteristics which dominate her portrait in this story.

After building up my case to show that the character of Edith Risley is really a portrait of Edith Wharton, I was pleased to find, in reading Charles Du Bos's letter to Percy Lubbock included in his *Portrait of Edith Wharton,* this passage: "It must have been about the same time that Bourget wrote a short *nouvelle,* of which the title now escapes me – you must remember that I am writing here far from all my books: the *nouvelle,* was not much,

but Bourget himself told me that he had thought of Edith in writing it: it bore upon the relation of a rich American woman with her maid, who had become the accomplice of a robbery at her expense, and it had at least the merit of bringing out most accurately that side of Edith's character which struck all who knew her — her inexhaustible and delicate kindness, understanding, pity and mercy for those who were in any way dependent upon her" (PEW, 98). We now have Bourget's word for it. What I have done is to identify the story come upon accidentally and to spell out for the first time the actual parallels between the two Ediths and the details of the plot. The story contains so accurate a picture of Edith Wharton that one recognizes it without having Bourget's admission that he planned her to be the model behind his character. Unlike Henry James, whose transformations of Edith into his fictional characters are more acidulous,[5] Bourget's Mrs. Risley is an act of pure homage to his model.

New York City

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1. "Indicatrice," a tale included in the collection of short stories by Paul Bourget, *Les Détours du Coeur,* n.d. [1908?], this story is dated 1905. Future references indicated by DC and page number. Translations from the French are by me.
2. R.W.B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 92. Future references indicated by L and page number.
3. Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Master* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), p. 365. Future references indicated by M and page number.
4. Percy Lubbock, *Portrait of Edith Wharton* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1947), p. 96. Future references indicated by PEW and page number.
5. See my "The Metamorphoses of Edith Wharton in Henry James's *The Finer Grain," Twentieth Century Literature,* Volume 21, December 1975, No. 4, pp. 355-381.

Correspondence

Dear Editor

I came across a review of Edel's *Henry James Letters IV,* written by Louis Achincloss. The following sentence has always bothered me:

> "His [James's] sympathy with the desperate Fullerton, the distraught Edith and even with poor, neurotic Teddy Wharton, soon to be shed for having bored his brilliant spouse, shows how far the author of *The Awkward Age* had come toward toleration of the sexual improprieties he had once condemned."
>
> *N.Y. Times Book Review,* April 15, 1984, p.3.

Is this a cheap shot or what? In any case, I wondered if other Wharton scholars had seen this, since I am not aware of anyone commenting on Auchincloss's explanation of the divorce.

Judith Funston, Michigan State University

Dear Editor

To expand upon Jessica Hornick's letter in the most recent *Newsletter,* Susan Gubar is not alone in calling Wharton a regionalist, so does Brian Lee in *American Fiction 1865-1940* (Longman, 1987). Although he considers *Age of Innocence* in conjunction with James, Wharton is listed, and *Ethan Frome* discussed in a chapter entitled Regional Novelists, and Wharton is paired with Sarah Orne Jewett.

Equally dismal is word from a student who takes an American novel course from me by correspondence through university extension. She lives in Bishop, largest city in Inyo County, California (which isn't saying much: Inyo includes Death Valley, and Bishop has some 3500 inhabitants), and the town library does not have *Ethan Frome* among its holdings. She had to get it through interlibrary loan. We Whartonites have our work cut out for us.

Peter L. Hays, University of California, Davis

Macaws and Pekingnese: Vivienne De Watteville and Edith Wharton

Judith E. Funston

During the years 1928 and 1929 Vivienne de Watteville, a twenty-eight-year-old Englishwoman, lived in the wilderness of East Africa, accompanied only by several native porters. Her purpose, as she later described it in 1935, was "to make friends with the animals." Several years earlier, in 1923, she and her father, Bernard "Brovie" de Watteville, had travelled to Kenya and Tanganyika to collect animals for the Berne Natural History Museum. Midway through the expedition, Brovie was mauled by a wounded lion; Vivienne tended him until he died thirty hours later, herself ill with potentially fatal spirillum fever. Left alone with over fifty native porters, Vivienne continued and successfully completed the expedition, teaching herself how to shoot game so that she could provide food and collect specimens.

Although East Africa held painful memories for her – Brovie's death had left her alone in the world, her mother having died of cancer in 1909 – Vivienne vowed to return, not to kill animals but to live among them and understand them. She carried out her wishes in spite of opposition from friends and government officials, who quailed at the idea of an unarmed woman on her own in the East African wilderness. She describes her journey with its triumphs and near disasters – she extracts her own infected molar with a pair of pliers, and saves her hut on Mount Kenya from burning in a forest fire – in *Speak to the Earth: Wanderings and Reflections among Elephants and Mountains,* published in 1935. A remarkable book, it records not only de Watteville's adventures but her spiritual odyssey as well. It is also of interest to Wharton scholars because Edith Wharton wrote a preface for it.

The preface, included in the 1987 Norton reprint of the book and the 1988 Penguin paperback edition, is cast in the form of a letter, at once suggesting Wharton's warm regard for de Watteville. Although there is no mention of de Watteville in the Lewis and Wolff biographies, Wharton knew de Watteville for many years – there is evidence that the two women were neighbors in Hyeres, where one of Wharton's homes, Chateau Ste. Claire, was situated.

In the opening paragraph of the preface Wharton recalls reading de Watteville's first book, *Out in the Blue* (1927), which describes the disastrous expedition of 1923-24. Upon finishing that book – de Watteville had given her a copy – Wharton wished for "another book as enchanting as [*Out in the Blue*], but in which nobody wants to kill an animal" (v). Wharton suspects that she has made a "rash request"; but after reading *Speak to the Earth* she happily admits that her fears were unfounded and that her wishes have been fulfilled.

Speculating on why de Watteville had asked her to write this preface, Wharton attributes it to de Watteville's recognition of a shared love for nature and its creatures. Wharton too has "lived that life and stammered that language" of the love of nature, even though "[her] mountain tent was only the library lamp-shade, [her] wilderness a garden, [her] wildebeest stealing down to drink two astute and arrogant Pekingese" (v). Indeed, sharing a life and a language has created a special bond between the two women, setting them apart from all others: "as one of the initiated I was aware that those who know how to talk with the animals know also how to talk about them" (v).

Wharton continues to focus on de Watteville's writing, praising the "sunlit windswept pages" of the book, singling out high points of the narrative, and wistfully regretting that the "Angels of Fire" had driven "you out of the Paradise where you and [the animals] had lain down so happily around the Remington" (v-vi). Although Wharton clearly enjoyed de Watteville's adventures, it is her language to which Wharton responds most deeply. De Watteville not only has the ability to communicate with nature; she can convey her unique understanding of nature to the reader: "You had found – or so it seems to me – the exact language in which to tell us of these desert and mountain friendships; elusive, wary phrases, shifting and shimmering like their own forest leafage, and words held out to them like coaxing hands" (vi). Fire may have cast de Watteville from her mountain paradise, but her words, so Wharton notes, enable the reader to enter her "innocent Bestiary." In fact, the experience of reading *Speak to the Earth* is a transforming one: after finishing

the book the reader can "walk out and see through your eyes and hear with your ears the tireless message of Nature" (vi).

And if de Watteville is nature's messenger, Wharton considers herself, in closing, the reader's: "Many will say this to you, many more will think it, and wish they had the courage to tell you. I count myself privileged to have been the first to walk with you in your wild places, and to have been asked to say what I found there" (vi).

Give the bond of language and the love of animals, it is easy to understand why Wharton was drawn to de Watteville. Wharton never confronted the wilderness, to be sure, but she lavished care on gardens wherever she lived, and filled her life with passionately-loved pets. Numerous photographs show Wharton with her dogs, and the pet cemetary at The Mount in Lenox, Massachusetts testifies to Wharton's devotion to her dogs. Her feelings toward animals were intense, but not without ambivalence, as apparent in a passage R.W.B. Lewis cites from Wharton's secret diary:

> I am secretly afraid of all animals – of all animals except dogs, and even of some dogs. I think it is because of the *us*ness in their eyes, with the underlying *not-us*ness which belies it, and is so tragic a reminder of the lost age when we human beings branched off and left them: left them to eternal inarticulateness and slavery. Why? their eyes seem to ask us. (160)

Interestingly, Wharton focuses on language – here the inarticulateness of animals – as a crucial component in her relation to the natural world. In *A Backward Glance,* her autobiography, Wharton returns to the themes of language and communication in discussing her relation to nature. Wharton claims "a secret sensitiveness to the landscape" setting her apart from others, describing it as

> . . . something in me quite incommunicable to others, that was tremblingly and inarticulately awake to every detail of wind-warped fern and wide-eyed briar rose, yet more profoundly alive to the unifying magic beneath the diversities of the visible scene – a power with which I was in deep and solitary communion whenever I was alone with nature. (54)

Wharton's statement here echoes her suggestion in the preface to *Speak to the Earth* that she and de Watteville are distinguished – "the initiated" – by virtue of their ability to communicate with nature. Unlike Wharton, however, de Watteville could articulate her "secret sensitiveness." In so doing, de Watteville clearly commanded Wharton's respect.

The bond between the two women held for many years. During the early thirties, de Watteville lived in Hyeres, near Wharton's chateau. Included in de Watteville's menage was a rather personable macaw, Coco. When de Watteville planned to return to England, Coco had to remain in France because of the British laws against psittacosis, a bird disease transmittable to humans. In *Seeds that the Wind May Bring* (1965), de Watteville describes Coco's fate:

> . . . To the last Coco travelled *en prince.* Years later, when I was prevented by the laws against psittacosis from taking Coco to England, Edith Wharton the novelist found a friend who offered him a home on the Riviera. I was packing up house near Hyeres, and to save time she sent her car to take him to the station. It was then found that the laws against psittacosis had been tightened up on the French railways also, and Coco was refused a place on the train. Unknown to me, he travelled in Edith's car some eighty miles to Menton. She told me afterwards how her chauffeur, realising a long-cherised dream to visit that town, ecstatically sighed in his return: *Ah! Madame, comme j'ai BENI ce perroquet!"* (36-37)

How fitting that a macaw gives us a final glimpse of a friendship between two remarkable women.

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Edith Wharton on Film and Television

Scott Marshall

At the October 8, 1988 conference, "Edith Wharton: Woman of Letters in New York," held at Long Island University, Elaine Showalter contended that one reason why Wharton supposedly languished in both the academic and public worlds was because her works were not being filmed. Now comes news that three of her major late works are under preparation for 1990-91: *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and *The Children* (1928) as motion pictures and *The Buccaneers* (1938) for television.

The Age of Innocence

Variety Magazine in February 1990 announced that Wharton's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel would be filmed in late 1990 for release in 1991. The director is Martin Scorsese, best known for his hard-hitting urban dramas *Taxi Driver, Mean Streets, Raging Bull* and *New York, New York*. Scorsese has co-written the screenplay, along with Jay Cocks (a movie reviewer for *Time Magazine).* No casting has been announced yet.

The Age of Innocence has been filmed twice previously. The first version – a 1924 Warner Brothers silent directed by Wesley Ruggles – is considered to be a lost film. The second version ten years later (RKO Pictures, 1934) starred Irene Dunne (Ellen Olenska), John Boles (Newland Archer) and Julie Haydon (May Welland) under the direction of Philip Moeller. The film opened at Radio City Music Hall and then disappeared from view. In 1945, Loew's Corporation (MGM) purchased RKO; records indicate that the original negative of *The Age of Innocence* was delivered to Loew's New York City headquarters in July 1945. Today MGM (which is owned by the Turner Network) claims that the film no longer exists and film archives around the world have no information concerning possible surviving prints. This is all the more unfortunate as film stills indicate that the 1934 version was well-mounted and handsomely costumed.

The Children

Variety Magazine's 1988-89 Film Productions listed *The Children* in production during 1989 with an unusual cast: Klaus Maria Brandauer (Martin Boyne), Kim Novak, Joan Collins and Vanessa Redgrave. This was subsequently ammended in a later issue of *Variety* (October 25-31, 1989), which stated that the film was currently shooting with the following line-up: Ben Kingsley (Boyne), Kim Novak, Geraldine Chaplin, Joe Don Baker and Rosemary Leach. The director is Tony Palmer, who co-wrote the script with Timberlake Wertenbaker. A production of Isolde Films/Film Four International, scenes are being filmed in Paris, Switzerland, Venice and Bavaria.

The Children, which has received much recent attention and reevaluation from literary scholars, had one previous film version in 1929 when Paramount made it under the title *The Marriage Playground.* Sources conflict over whether the film was silent or sound; it was made just as sound was being developed for motion pictures (*The Jazz Singer,* generally given as the first film to have talking sequences, dates from 1927). It featured Frederic March (as Boyne?), Mary Brian and Mitzi Green, directed by Lothar Mendes from a scenario by J. Walter Reuben with adaptation and dialogue by Doris Anderson. A 35-mm nitrate print of *The Marriage Playground* survives at the UCLA Film, Television and Radio Archives in the Department of Theater Arts in Los Angeles. In addition, one 16-mm print is apparently available through Swank Distributors in Chicago.

Other Wharton Works on Film

The first Wharton work to be filmed was her first great success – *The House of Mirth* (1905). Metro Pictures Corporation made a silent version in 1918, directed by Albert Capellani and with a scenario co-authored by the director and June Mathis. This was followed by *The Glimpses of the Moon* (1922), directed by Allan Dwan for Paramount in 1923 from an adaptation by E. Lloyd Sheldon. R.W.B. Lewis in *Edith Wharton* (1975) noted that this successful film version had dialogue by F. Scott Fitzgerald and starred Bebe Daniels, Nita Naldi and Maurice Costello. Unfortunately both of these early versions are believed to also be lost films.

Little is known about Universal Picture's 1934 movie entitled *Strange Wives,* which was based on Wharton's short story "Bread Upon the Waters". This story, which appeared in *Hearst's International Cosmopolitan* in February 1934, was later included in the short story collection, *The World Over* (1936) under the title "Charm Incorporated." (The story itself had direct references to films and Hollywood – see later section in this

piece).*Strange Wives* was directed by Richard Thorpe with adaptation and screenplay by Gladys Unger and additional dialogue by Barry Trivers.

The most well-known Wharton work on film (due in part to its cast and perhaps in part to its availability) is *The Old Maid* (Warner Brothers, 1939). The movie starred Bette Davis (Charlotte Lovell), Miriam Hopkins (Delia Lovell) and George Brent (Clem Spender) under the direction of Edmund Golding. The screenplay by Casey Robinson was based on the play by Zöe Atkins that premiered on Broadway in 1935. Margaret McDowell has extensively chronicled the adaptation and the resulting film versus the original Wharton novella in her essay, "Wharton's 'The Old Maid': Novella/Play/Film" *(College Literature,* Vol XIV, No. 3, Edith Wharton Issue, 1987). The film is now available on videocassette.

Wharton on Television

According to *Variety Magazine* (July 28, 1989), Wharton's final novel, *The Buccaneers,* which was left incomplete on her death and published posthumously in 1938, is in development for presentation in late 1991 by PBS Television. The work will be presented by the Mobil Masterpiece Theatre as a multi-part adaptation with teleplay by Fay Weldon.

The first Wharton novel to appear on television was *Ethan Frome* (1911) on February 18, 1960 as the Dupont Show of the Month. Adapted by Jacquline Babbin and Audrey Gellen, the TV *Ethan* starred Sterling Hayden (Ethan), Julie Harris (Mattie Silver) and Clarice Blackburn (Zenobia Frome) with narration by Arthur Hill. It was directed by Alex Segal and produced by David Susskind. This dramatization of *Ethan Frome* may be viewed today at the Museum of Broadcasting, 1 East 53rd Street, New York City; admission $4 for non-members.

Interestingly, *Ethan Frome* has been announced for filming as a motion picture at last twice previously. In 1948 Warner Brothers planned a film version starring Bette Davis as Mattie and Mildred Natwick as Zenobia. Davis wanted Gary Cooper to play Ethan, but he declined. The studio then cast British actor David Farrar in the title role, but by the time he arrived in Hollywood, the film was shelved and the studio paid off his contact. More recently, *Variety Magazine* (April 8, 1987) announced that *Ethan Frome* would be filmed in the late fall in New England by independent producer Michael Fitzgerald with direction and adaptation by Adrian Hall of the Trinity Repertory in Providence, R.I. Nothing more is known about this project, which seems to have fallen through.

Twenty years after *Ethan Frome,* Public Television (funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities) produced a series of three presentations in 1981 based on Wharton's life and work. Wharton scholars, including R.W.B. Lewis, Elizabeth Ammons, Margaret McDowell and Blake Nevius, were billed as series consultants.

The first offering, entitled *Looking Back,* was loosely based on Wharton's autobiography, *A Backward Glance* (1934) and Lewis's 1975 biography, *Edith Wharton.* It featured Kathleen Widdoes as Wharton, with John Collum (Walter Berry), John McMartin (Teddy Wharton), Richard Woods (Henry James) and Stephen Collins (Morton Fullerton). Directed by Kirk Browning, the teleplay by Steve Lawson envisioned Wharton returning to The Mount as an older woman, along with Walter Berry, and remembering the momentous events of her life that occurred there. The production was filmed at The Elms in Newport, R.I. instead of The Mount in Lenox.

The second part of the series was a version of *The House of Mirth,* directed by Adrian Hall (who in 1987 was to have filmed *Ethan Frome).* Written by Hall and Richard Cummings, the adaptation starred Geraldine Chaplin as Lily Bart and William Atherton as Lawrence Selden, along with members of the Trinity Square Repertory Company.

The final installment of the series was *Summer* (1971), written by Charles Gaines and directed by Dezsö Magyar. It starred Diane Lane (Charity Royall), Michael Ontkean (Lucius Harney) and John Collum (Lawyer Royall). Filmed on authentic-looking New England locations, this production was perhaps the best of the three; its adaptation was faithful to the original, the direction was sympathetic and the cast gave sensitivity shaded performances.

In 1983, three ghost stories by Wharton were filmed for British television's "Shades of Darkness" series. All three were seen in America as part of "Mystery," a presentation of WGBH/Boston. The stories filmed were "The Lady's Maid's Bell" (1902), "Afterward" (1910) and "Bewitched" (1925). "Afterward" already had an English setting; the other two were changed to have English settings also. In "Bewitched", this change – which also necessitated other tinkering with the plot line – resulted in a largely unsuccessful adaptation. Fortunately, both "The Lady's Maid's Bell" and "Afterward" were well adapted, well directed and had superb performances from their casts. These two stories, along with the television version of *Summer* two years earlier, rank as the finest adaptations of Wharton's work for the screen to date.

Songs from the Heart, an interweaving of Wharton's autobiographical writings with scenes from her fiction, was filmed in 1987 at The Mount in Lenox. The film, produced by Downtown Productions, had a screenplay by Mickey Friedman and direction by Dennis Krausnick. It featured Gillian Barge as Wharton. *Songs from the Heart* is available on videocassette.

Films in Wharton's Life and Work

The news that three major novels are in film production raises again the question of films in Wharton's life and her work. R.W.B. Lewis wrote in *Edith Wharton* (1975): "Edith Wharton herself appears never to have entered a movie theater" (p. 7), an interesting thought given her predilection for certain technological advances such as the motorcar and telephone. And she made a great deal of money from this new medium that she may never have directly encountered. Lewis records that for the film rights of her work she received at least the following: $15,000 for *The Age of Innocence,* $13,500 for *The Glimpses of the Moon* and $25,000 for *The Children.*

The Letters of Edith Wharton (1988), edited by R.W.B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis, recently brought to attention the fact that in August 1928 Wharton declined to take part in a proposed film, "Woman Marches On", "to portray the accomplishments of American women in various fields since 1900" (p. 515). Appleton's, through her editor Rutger B. Jewett, had written to ask Wharton to allow herself to be filmed at one of her French homes. Wharton refused due to fatigue, but also because she didn't care to be associated with some of the women to have been profiled (others included in the film were Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Florence Sabin, Mary Pickford and Kathleen Norris (*Letters,* p. 516).

Wharton was friendly with at least one film star of her time: John Lodge, the son of Bay (George Cabot) and Bessie Lodge. Wharton knew John from his earliest years and apparently served as a grand-motherly figure in his life. A photograph of Wharton and her pet Pekingnese Lindy in her garden with John appears in *Edith Wharton — A Woman in Her Time* (1971) by Louis Auchincloss (p. 162 — Lodge is unidentified by Auchincloss). The young actor appeared in several major films under prominent directors: *Little Women* (1934, directed by Josef von Sternberg) and *De Mayerling A Sarajevo* (1940, directed by Max Ophuls), among others. A biography of Lodge, who later became Governor of Connecticut (not the only movie star to jettison a lukewarm film career for a more lucrative one in politics) is currently in preparation.

Perhaps more telling is the appearance of the new medium of film in Wharton's fiction. This first occurs in *Summer* (1917) when Lucius takes Charity to a silent film in Nettleton on the Fourth of July:

> . . . for a while, everything was merged in her brain in swimming circles of heat and blinding alterations of light and darkness. All the world has to show seemed to pass before her in a chaos of palms and minarets, charging calvary regiments, roaring lions, comic policemen and scowling murderers; and the crowd around her, the hundreds of hot sallow candy-munching faces, young, old, middle-aged, but all kindled with the same contagious excitement, became part of the spectacle, and danced on the screen with the rest. (p. 139)

The lure of the movies snares the beautiful but troublesome Lita Wynant in Wharton's novel, *Twilight Sleep* (1972). A Hollywood director, Serge Klawhammer (Wharton is not subtle with some names), seeks a dancer to perform in his epic, "Herodias", and Lita is interested (p. 86). This problem figures occasionally throughout the story; at one point Pauline Manford refers to it as "that cinema nonsense" (p. 159).

In a late short story, "Charm Incorporated" (1934 - originally published as "Bread Upon the Waters" and made into a film, *Strange Wives,* the same year), Jim Targatt finds that his wife's brother Boris is going to marry Halma Hoboe, "the world's leading movie-star" (p. 15). Targatt, who has been supporting Boris, is delighted: *"She'll* have to pay his bills now" (p. 4). Boris later divorces Hoboe in Reno and receives three million dollars as settlement. He then marries Miss Mamie Guggins of Rapid Rise, Oklahoma, an oil heiress. Poor Targatt only receives a cigarette case from Boris in return for all of his earlier assistance.

Conclusion

We will never know how Wharton would have reacted to one of her own works as a film, but her introduction to the play version of *Ethan Frome* by Owen and Donald Davis (1935) gives some idea. Written at Ste. Claire in Hyéres during 1936 not long before her death, Wharton wryly acknowledged:

> 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. (p. viii)

She went on to add that for her a successful version would indeed be an "unusual achievement."

(The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Mr. Nathan Hasson at Masterpiece Theatre, WGBH/Boston for information on the upcoming versions of *The Age of Innocence, The Children* and *The Buccaneers).*

Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, New York

The World of Wharton Criticism: A Bibliographic Essay

Alfred Bendixen

The *Edith Wharton Newsletter* began providing bibliographic information in the Fall 1985 issue, which contained an annotated "Guide to Wharton Criticism. 1974 - 1983" produced by a dozen contributors. My bibliographic essays in the Fall 1986 and Spring 1988 issues continued to chart the directions in which Wharton criticism moved from 1984 through 1987. In the past few years, the world of Wharton criticism has become more diverse and more difficult to map. It is now harder to make generalizations about the current state of Wharton criticism, but some trends have emerged. *The House of Mirth* now seems clearly established as the single most important of Wharton's books, but first-rate attention is increasingly being paid to books that have often been neglected in the past. Feminist criticism dominated Wharton scholarship during most of the 1970s and 1980s and continues to influence most of the original work being done on Wharton. But feminist scholars now employ a wider range of critical methodology, often bringing in the insights of Bakhtin, post-structuralism, the new historicism, and various Marxist and psychological approaches. Before 1987, most of the interesting research on Wharton appeared as articles in scholarly journals or in books devoted wholly to Wharton. In the past few years, however, some of the most original and most valuable work on Wharton has appeared as chapters in books dealing with a wide range of different subjects. Wharton was apparently not deemed important enough to merit a chapter in the recently published *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (1988), but a number of critics are now seeing her literary achievements as central to our understanding of realism, naturalism, and modernism. The past two years have also witnessed the publication of an important selection of Wharton's letters and the start of a heated controversary over the quality of R.W.B. Lewis' biography.

The long-awaited publication of *The Letters of Edith Wharton,* edited by R.W.B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis, (NY: Scribners, 1988) was greeted with applause by most of the popular reviewers. The Edith Wharton Society also celebrated the publication of the *Letters* by arranging a conference at Long Island University on October 8, 1988. The conference, which drew an audience of over 100 scholars from throughout the United States and Canada, featured a plenary sesssion with three distinguished feminist scholars (Elaine Showalter, Wendy Martin, and Joyce Warren), a question and answer session with R.W.B. Lewis and Nancy Lewis, and eight panels at which a total of 24 scholarly papers were presented. Readers of the *Letters* will be particularly interested in the highlights from the Lewises' question and answer session that appeared in the Spring 1989 *Newsletter.* The *Letters* do not substantially change the portrait of Wharton provided in R.W.D. Lewis' prize-winning biography, but they offer vivid insights into various aspects of her private life: we gain a much fuller understanding of Wharton's capacity for pleasure and pain as we read about her affair with Morton Fullerton, her delight in travel, her commitment to the refugees of the first world war, and her passionate devotion to good books and good friends. They also establish Wharton as one of the distinguished participants of the great age of letter writing.

The publication of the *Letters* also led two of R.W.D. Lewis' former research assistants to raise serious questions about the quality of his work. In a letter to the *Times, Literary Supplement* (December 16-22, 1988, p. 1394), Marion Mainwaring, who had served as his researcher while also working on a biography of Morton Fullerton, accused Lewis of distoring her research and introducing numerous errors of fact. The most important of these errors concerns the identity of Morton Fullerton's blackmailing mistress. Soon thereafter, Mary Pitlick (*TLS,* December 30, 1988 - January 5, 1989, p. 1443) provided an even more savage attack, charging that Lewis had made other factual and interpretative errors. Pitlick claimed that in editing the published *Letters* and writing the biography, Lewis had looked at and drawn from only a fraction of the available material. Her most serious assertion is that Lewis was wrong in stating that Wharton suffered from a devastating nervous breakdown during 1894-1896. According to Pitlick, there is biographical evidence in the unpublished letters that should substantially change our view of her early years and ultimately challenge the currently accepted assumption that writing fiction enabled Wharton to escape the illnesses of her early life. Pitlick had served Lewis as a research assistant and had the original contract to edit Wharton's letters. When she did not produce a

manuscript after a number of years, the Wharton estate and the publisher apparently rescinded the contract and asked the Lewises to produce the *Letters*. Although she does not have a contract with a publisher, Pitlick believes that she still has authorization from the estate to produce a more complete edition of Wharton's letters and is still gathering material for such a volume. She is also working on a new biography that will focus on Wharton's formative years.

Lewis responded to some of these changes in the *TLS* (February 17-23, 1989). He acknowledged that Mainwaring had pointed out some errors but asserted that they were all minor matters that did not substantially affect the basic reliability of his work. He went on to address Pitlick's attack in more detail, reaffirming his claim that Wharton suffered from nervous breakdowns in the 1890s. At this stage, it is difficult to assess the full merits of Pitlick's and Mainwaring's charges, and it is not clear how close they are to completing and publishing their books, which will presumably provide more detailed information. Nevertheless, some tentative conclusions can be offered. It is clear that there are some actual errors in Lewis's biography, but so far most of these seem to involve relatively small matters of detail. For instance, the name of Fullerton's blackmailing mistress may not have been Henrietta Mirecourt, but there is no reason to doubt her existence. That Wharton suffered from some kind of nervous breakdown may be open to some question. Pitlick's suggestion that there is more information to be found about the early years of Wharton's life is intriguing, but exactly how we shall have to modify our understanding of these formative years remains unclear.

James W. Tuttleton sprang to Lewis' defense in an article, "The Feminist Takeover of Edith Wharton" (*The New Criterion,* March 1989, 7: 6-14), which begins by savagely attacking Pitlick and Mainwaring and moves on to a sweeping and unjust condemnation of feminist critics. Those of us who consider ourselves feminist critics will be annoyed by his presumption that any woman who assails a male scholar is a feminist and irritated by his distorted account of the goals and methods of feminist criticism. Moreover, his attempt to suggest that feminist scholarships has not played a vital role in revitalizing Wharton's literary reputation is simply untenable. A fuller countering of the accusations in Tuttleton's argument may be found in Annette Zilversmit's harsh letter to the *New Criterion* (May 1989, 7: 83-85). Zilversmit may have erred in interpreting Tuttleton's remarks as an attack on the Edith Wharton Society, but her analysis is acute. Mainwaring and Pitlick have also responded to Tuttleton in letters to the *New Criterion* (May and June 1989, 7). A sounder corrective to the claims of some feminist critics may be found in Julie Olin-Ammentorp's "Edith Wharton's Challenge to Feminist Criticism" (*Studies in American Fiction,* Autumn 1988, 16: 237-244), which emphasizes Wharton's realization that men can also be victims of a repressive or frivolous society. Olin-Ammentorp focuses mostly on *The House of Mirth* and Selden in this essay and in a note, "Wharton's 'Negative Hero' Revisited" (*Wharton Newsletter,* Spring 1989, 6: 6,8), in which she restores that phrase to its proper context.

The House of Mirth continues to receive more substantial attention than any of Wharton's other novels. The value of Bakhtin's insights to feminist critics is amply demonstrated in Dale M. Bauer's discussion of that novel in *Feminist Dialogics: A Theory of Failed Community* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988). Bauer provides a sophisticated and admirably detailed treatment of the ways that Lily Bart fails to find a place or a voice in a repressive community. This book shows why Bakhtin has recently replaced Derrida as the single most influential theoretical critic. Carol J. Wershoven continues to be a productive and interesting Wharton scholar. In *"The Awakening* and *The House of Mirth:* Studies of Arrested Development" (*American Literary Ralism,* 19, 19: 27-41), she perceptively explores the parallels in theme and imagery that mark the treatment of the failed search for identity in these two novels.

Some useful background information may be found in Robert A. Gates' chapter, "The Polarized City: Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* and Stephen Crane's *Maggie,"* in *The New York Vision: Interpretations of the New York City in the American Novel* (University Press, 1987). Gates emphasizes the way the disparity between poverty and wealth in New York provided Wharton and Crane with material. Catherine Quoyesser provides a long Marxist reading in "The Antimodernist Unconscious: Genre and Ideology in *The House of Mirth" (Arizona Quarterly,* Winter 1989, 44: 55-79). Relying largely on the ideas of Frederic Jameson, Quoyessser provides a close reading of the novel's opening and closing, which emphasizes the way Wharton blends naturalism, realism, and sentimental melodrama to depict the "crisis of bourgeois individualism in the age of high capitalism." The jargon is new, but there is little here that was not developed more effectively in the earlier essays of Dimock, Showalter, and Kaplan. The connection between the novel and the consumer culture that produced it is also an issue in Walter Benn Michael's new historicist interpretation of *The House of Mirth* in his book, *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature of the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Unfortunately, Michael's analysis seems strained and unconvincing.

The Age of Innocence receives intelligent attention in George Dekker's excellent book, *The American Historical Romance,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 265-271). Dekker treats Newland Archer more sympathetically than most recent critics, and he provides

a number of original insights into the way Wharton achieves a delicate balance between romance and realism, the timeless and the temporal. A very different view of Archer and the novel appears in Linette Davis' "Vulgarity and Red Blood in *The Age of Innocence*" (*Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association,* Fall 1987, 20: 1-8), a feminist treatment of the role of language and innocence in a patriarchal society. Gwendolyn Morgan provides an unusually sympathetic reading of May's role in that novel in "The Unsung Heroine – A Study of May Welland in *The Age of Innocence*" (*Heroines of Popular Culture,* ed. Pat Browne, Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, pp. 32-40).

In "Mocking Fate: Romantic Idealism in Edith Wharton's *The Reef,*" (*Studies in the Novel,* Winter 1987, 19: 469-74), James W. Tuttleton proves that he can be a stimulating critic when he does not permit himself to become sidetracked by political obsessions. Tuttleton perceptively places *The Reef* within the context of Wharton's affair with Fullerton, praises the novel's structure, and argues that Anna Leath, not Sophy Viner, provides Wharton's model of the independent heroine. Scholars will wish to compare his defense of Anna Leath with that offered by Moira Maynard in the special Wharton issue of *College Literature* (Fall 1987, 14: 285-295). *Custom of the Country* receives some attention in Joseph A. Ward's "The Amazing Hotel World of James, Dreiser, and Wharton," (*Leon Edel and Literary Art,* ed. Lyall Powers (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988, pp. 151-160). Ward suggests that the modern hotel provided these writers with a compelling image of twentieth-century life and calls *Custom* the "supreme American hotel novel."

When I tried to teach *Old New York* in my graduate seminar last summer, I learned from my campus bookstore that it was again out of print. The importance of this unjustly neglected work is demonstrated in two able articles. David A. Godfrey's "The Full and Elaborate Vocabularly of Evasion: The Language of Cowardice in Edith Wharton's *Old New York*" (*Midwest Quarterly,* Autumn 1988, 30: 27-44) exemplifies the concern with the moral dimensions of language in recent Wharton criticism. In "Prostitution, Morality, and Paradox: Moral Relativism in Wharton's *Old New York: New Year's Day* (The 'Seventies)" (*Studies in American Fiction,* Fall 1987, 24: 399-406), Leslie Fishbein's argument that Wharton's novel reflects a moral relativism is a refreshing change from those critics who have tried to box Wharton too neatly into one political or moral camp.

Several critics have produced provocative analyses of generally neglected works. Judith Sensibar provides an original and persuasive reading of *The Children* in "Edith Wharton Reads the Bachelor Type: Her Critique of Modernism's Representative Man" (*American Literature,* December 1988: 60: 575-590). Building on Eve Sedgwick's study of homosexual panic, Sensibar offers an acute analysis of the erotic immaturity of Martin Boyne and of Wharton's rereading of one of modernism's central tropes. *The Children* and *The Mother's Recompense* also received thoughtful attention in Keiko Beppu's "Wharton Questions Motherhood" (*Leon Edel and Literary Art,* ed. Lyall Powers (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988, pp. 161-169). Dale M. Bauer's *"Twilight Sleep:* Edith Wharton's Brave New Politics" (*Arizona Quarterly,* Spring 1989, 45: 49-71) begins by placing Wharton's novel within the context of contemporary debates over anesthesia, childbirth practices, social class, and eugenics and ends by insisting that Wharton provides a complex satire of a culture that is overly fond of simplistic solutions. Thus, for Bauer, the novel's apparent chaos actually reveals the unresolved contradictions and ambivalent political stances inherent in women's place in modern American culture. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar provide some new insights into *The Touchstone* in the first volume of *No Man's Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Wharton occupies a whole chapter in the second volume, *Sexchanges* (New Haven: Yale University ty Press, 1989). Judith Funston provides a perceptive essay, *"In Morocco:* Edith Wharton's Heart of Darkness" (*Wharton Newsletter,* Spring 1988, 5: 1-3, 12), showing that her Moroccan travel book offers "Wharton's most unadorned statement of her feminism."

In three separate articles, Lev Raphael argues that an understanding of the concept of shame in affect theory helps to illuminate Wharton's artistry in works that few critics have considered: "Kate Orme's Struggles with Shame in Edith Wharton's *Sanctuary*" (*Massachusetts Studies in English,* Fall 1986, 10: 229-230); "Shame in Edith Wharton's *The Mother's Recompense*" (*American Image,* Summer 1988, 45: 187-203); and "Haunted by Shame: Edith Wharton's *The Touchstone*" (*Journal of Evolutionary Psychology,* August 1988, 287-296). Each of these articles demonstrates convincingly that the characteristics of "shame" play a large role in these novels, but Raphael has not yet fully explained why "shame" was so important to Wharton.

For the most part, Wharton's short stories continue to be unjustly ignored. Nevertheless, Richard H. Lawson provides a valuable survey of Wharton's short fiction in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* volume, *American Short Story Writers, 1880-1910* (Detroit: Gale, 1989, pp. 308-323). Candace Waid has just edited *The Muse's Tragedy and other Stories* (New York: Signet, 1990). Although the selection is limited to the first half of Wharton's career (and thus to those stories in the public domain), the volume provides the fullest representation of Wharton's stories currently available in paperback and

an exciting opportunity to teach some neglected pieces. In "Framing in Two Opposite Modes: Ford and Wharton" *(Comparatist,* May 1986, 10: 114-20), Mary Ann Caws contrasts Wharton's ironic frame in "The Other Two" to that used in Ford's *The Good Soldier.*

Of the books that dealt partly with Wharton, the most important is Amy Kaplan's *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), a perceptive study that is filled with penetrating insights about Wharton's place in the American realistic tradition. Also intriguing is Josephine Donovan's *After The Fall: The Demeter-Persephone Myth in Wharton, Cather, and Glasgow* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), which sees the myth's depiction of the movement from the mother's garden to patriarchal captivity as a complex emblem of the problems facing the modern woman writer. Miranda Seymour has a pleasant chapter on the James-Wharton relationship but no new insights or information in her book, *The Ring of Conspirators: Henry James and His Literary Circle, 1895-1915* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1988). Carole Klein's *Gramercy Park: An American Bloomsbury* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987) also provides a pleasant introduction to the New York City neighborhood in which Wharton spent much of her childhood.

Steven Kunciman shares his memories of the novelist in "Mrs. Wharton" *(Yale Review,* Summer 1988, 77: 560-562). There is some useful information on Wharton's heroic wartime labors in Alan Price's "Writing Home from the Front: Edith Wharton and Dorothy Canfield Fisher Present Wartime France to the United States, 1917-1919" (*Wharton Newsletter,* Fall 1988, 5: 1-5, 8). Alan Price also discusses a short fiction in "Edith Wharton's War Story" *(Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* Spring 1989, 8). Those fascinated by Wharton's relationship with Morton Fullerton will be interested in Adeline R. Tintner's "An Unpublished Love Poem by Edith Wharton." *(American Literature,* March 1988, 60: 98-103), which reprints a five line poem by Wharton.

The publication of the *Letters* or the Library of America volume on Wharton inspired a number of reviews and general essays. Most have no real new information, but some are by distinguished critics who write with grace and wit. The most important of these are: Elizabeth Hardwick, "Mrs. Wharton in New York", *The New York Review of Books* (January 21, 1988, 26-34); Louis Auchincloss, "The Novelist in Letters," *The New Criterion* (May 1988, 6: 68-71); Alfred Kazin, "Portrait of a Lady," *The New Republic* (August 29, 1988, 40-44); Sharon O'Brien, "Edith Wharton and Willa Cather," *Contemporary Literature,* (Spring 1988, 29: 125-128); John Bailey, "From the Battlefield of Society," *Times Literary Supplement* (April 1-7, 1988, 4435: 347-348); and James Marcus, "The End of Innocence: Edith Wharton between Two Worlds," *Village Voice Literary Supplement,* (November 1988, 69: 15-17).

I regret that I have been unable to examine three works listed elsewhere: Shirley Foster, "The Open Cage: Freedom, Marriage and the Heroine in Early Twentieth Century American Women's Novels," (in Moira Munteith, ed. *Women's Writing: A Challenge in Theory,* New York: St. Martins, 1986, 164-174); Jeanne Boydston, "Grave Endearing Traditions: Edith Wharton and the Domestic Novel," *(Faith of a (Woman) Writer* (Westport Ct: Greenwood, 1988, pp. 31-40); Hilton Anderson, "Two Expatriate Novels of World War I", *Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association,* (1986: 34-39).

Marlene Springer and Joan Gilson have provided a useful supplement to Springer's earlier annotated bibliography in "Edith Wharton: A Reference Guide Updated," *(Resources in American Literary Study,* (Spring & Autumn 1984, 14: 85-111). Their description of 166 entries on Wharton is so valuable that Wharton scholars may wish to order copies of this issue from the publishers (RALS, English Dept., University of Maryland, College Park MD, 20742). Scholars will also be delighted to hear that a new annotated bibliography of Wharton scholarship has been prepared by Kristin O. Lauer and Margaret P. Murray and will soon be published by Garland Press. Stephen Garrison's new primary bibliography of Wharton's works (Univ. of Pittsburgh Press) is also expected to appear in 1990. The number of dissertations completed in the past five years suggests that Wharton criticism is likely to continue flourishing. I hope that scholars will continue to send me copies of their Wharton essays when they appear and inform me of any material that I may have inadvertently omitted.

California State University, Los Angeles

News and Notes of Members

• Four new full length studies on Edith Wharton are being published. (Subsequent issues will have reviews.)

Friends and Rivals: Edith Wharton's Women by **Susan Goodman,** California State University, Fresno, will appear in May 1990 from University Press of New England, Hanover, NH 03755 at $24.95.

Edith Wharton and the Art of Fiction by **Penelope Vita-Finzi,** London University, has been published in February 1990 by Pinter Publishers, London.

Edith Wharton by **Katherine Joslin,** Western Michigan State University, will appear in Fall 1990 as part of the Women Writers Series of Macmillan, London.

Edith Wharton's Prisoners of Shame: A New Perspective on Her Neglected Fiction by **Lev Raphael,** Michigan State University, will be forthcoming early 1991 by St. Martin's Press in the United States and Macmillan in England.

• As our bibliographer has noted, articles and references to Wharton are appearing more and more as part of longer studies and in collections of articles.

Edith Wharton will figure prominently in the forthcoming *The Tenth Muse: Tradition and Contradictions in American Women's Writings* by **Elaine Showalter,** from Oxford University Press.

Lyall Powers, Michigan University has edited *The Letters of Henry James and Edith Wharton.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990 . .

"Edith Wharton's Haunted Fiction: 'The Lady's Maid's Bell' and *The House of Mirth"* by **Kathy A. Fedorko,** Middlesex County College, will appear in *Haunting The House of Fiction: Feminist Perspective in Ghost Stories of American Women Writers* edited by Lynette Carpenter, Ohio Wesleyan and Wendy Kolmar, Drew University, from University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Cecilia Macheski, LaGuardia Community College, has contributed "In the Lands of Garlic and Queer Bearded Sea-things: Appetites and Allusions in the Fiction of Edith Wharton" to *Cooking by the Book: Food in Literature.* ed. Mary Anne Schofield. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State Univ. Popular Press, 1989.

J.E. Sait, University of New England (Australia) discusses Edith Wharton in "Charles Scribners' Sons and The Great War," *Princeton Library Chroncile,* (Winter, 1987) and **Martin Hutner** lists the titles and illustrations of Edith Wharton's early books done by her good friend, Updike, in *Daniel Berkeley Upkike and the British Connection. Typolilies Monograph* #5, 1988.

Two annotated bibliographies include Edith Wharton. From **Lynette Carpenter,** Ohio Wesleyan, comes *Annotated Bibliography of Ghost Stories by Women,* New York: Garland Press, forthcoming...and **Benjamin F. Fisher,** University of Mississippi, has published *The Gothic's Gothic,* New York: Garland Press. 1988.

Dorothy Warren, New York, promises that when her biography of Ruth Draper is finished it will contain hitherto unpublished letters of Edith Wharton.

• **Gloria C. Erlich,** Princeton Research Forum, has submitted for publication a book length study, "The Sexual Education of Edith Wharton."...At the Annual MLA Convention in Washington, December 1989, **Erlich** presented *"The Scarlet Letter* as Prototype for *The House of Mirth."*

• **Carol Singley,** American University, published a review of *The Letters of Edith Wharton* ed. by R.W.B. and Nancy Lewis in *American Literature,* Fall 1989....Singley presented "Moral Significance in *The House of Mirth,"* at NEMLA 1990 and at The American Culture Association Conference, 1990....She has received an American University Research Grant for 1990 to continue work on her book-length study of Edith Wharton.

• **Jean Frantz Blackall,** Cornell University, delivered "Charity at the Window: Narrative Technique in Edith Wharton's *Summer"* at the first American Literature Conference in San Diego in June 1989...Blackall is also working on a monograph or series of articles on the craft of fiction in Edith Wharton...She also proudly writes that she is supervising a Master's thesis on Edith Wharton by Yanyin Zhang from Beijing, China.

• **Claire Colquitt,** San Diego State University, contributed a book review of *The Letters of Edith Wharton* to *The Women's Review of Books,* November, 1988....Colquitt also presented "Arrested Desire in *The House of Mirth"* at the first American Literature Conference in San Diego, June 1989.

• At the same conference, **Denise Witzig,** Brown University, talked on "Letters and The Unknown Woman in Wharton's Fiction," and **Kathy Fedorko** presented "Breaking the Silence in Edith Wharton's 'The Lady's Maid's Bell' and 'Mr. Jones.'"

• **Judith Funston,** Michigan State University, gave "Looking Backward and Forward: Edith Wharton's *New Year's Day"* at the Michigan Academy of Arts and Sciences Conference, March 1990....Funston is working on *Journeys: Edith Wharton's Travel Writings,* a study the essays in *Italian Backgrounds, A Motor-Flight Through France,* and *In Morocco; "A Motor-Flight Through France:* Wharton's Love Affair with the Car," an analysis of the way in which the car shapes Wharton's observations; and "Robert Browning, Edith Wharton, and 'The Duchess at Prayer," an examination of Browning's influence on Wharton's tale.

• **Susan Goodman,** California State University, Fresno, has published "Note on Edith Wharton's Mothers and Daughters" in *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* Spring 1990 and "Competing Visions of Freud in Memoirs of Edith Wharton and Ellen Glasgow," *Colby Library Quarterly,* December 1989....Goodman is also working on a "A Select Circle of Friends: Edith Wharton's Male Coterie." She has received an Affirmative Action Grant to study Wharton's correspondence with Gaillard Lapsley.

• **Abby H.P. Werlock,** St. Olaf's College, presented "The Feminine Muse in Edith Wharton" at the Mid-Hudson MLA....Her review of *The Letters of Edith Wharton* ed. by R.W.B. and Nancy Lewis will appear in *Resources For American Literary Study,* 1990....Werlock is working on Wharton's work with war orphans in France 1914-1918 and World War I as setting in selected fiction.

• **Ellen Powers Stengel** reviewed *Felicitous Space: The Imaginative Structures of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather* by Judith Fryer for *American Literature* , March 1989....Stengel also published "Dilemmas of Discourse: Edith Wharton's 'All Souls' and the Tale of the Supernatural" in *Publications of The Arkansas Philological Association* 15.2 1989.

• **Lev Raphael's** publications include "Bound by Shame: A New Reading of Edith Wharton's *The Reef,* in *"The Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* (1990) and forthcoming "Edith Wharton, Shame, and *The Marne"* in *University of Mississippi Studies in English*....This last article is based on a paper Raphael gave at the International Society for the Psychological Study of the Arts at the University of Florida at Gainesville, 1989....Raphael will also present "Edith Wharton, Prisoner of Shame" at the American Psychological Association in Boston in August 1990.

• **Katherine Joslin** has written "Reading Wharton's Letters," a review of *The Letters of Edith Wharton* for *Review,* Vol. 12, 1990.

• **Annette L. Benert,** Allentown College, delivered "Edith Wharton on the Road: Achitectural Criticism in the Travel Books" at the Northeast Modern Language Association in Toronto, April 1990....Benert's "The Geography of Gender in The House of Mirth" will appear in *Studies in the Novel* 22 (1990)....In 1989 Benert read two papers: "Driving the Chariot of the Gods: Edith Wharton and the Limits of Science" at the NEMLA and "Hermits and Wild Women: Edith Wharton and the Function of Art" for the Susquehanna Conference on Women . . . . She is working on a major project about Wharton's work, especially before 1920, in the context of Progressive discourse and Wharton's relationship to various public issues of that era.

• **Johanna X. K. Garvey,** Fairfield University, book in progress, "Women Writers and the City: New York - London - Paris 1905 to Present" will open with a discussion of *The House of Mirth* and other Wharton fiction.

• **Helen Killoran,** University of Washington, has written "An Unnoticed Source for *The Great Gatsby:* The Influence of Edith Wharton's *The Glimpses of the Moon"* for *Canadian Review of American Studies* 21 (1990).

(continued on page 24)

News and Notes
(continued from page 23)

• **Susan Koprince,** University of North Dakota, has forthcoming a review of *Ogden Codman and the Decoration of Houses,* ed. by Pauline Metcalf in *The New England Quarterly,* June 1990.

• **Helen Gorenstein** delivered a talk on *The Age of Innocence* to a group of people at The Hamilton Free Library as part of series called Classics sponsored by the New Jersey Committee for the Humanities.

• **Elizabeth Evans,** Georgia Tech, is working on "The Art - Illustrations and Allusions - in *The House of Mirth."*

• **Teresa Gomez Reus,** University of Alicante (Spain), chaired the following sessions at the Quinto Centenario Ciudad de Alicante, Alicante, March 1989: "Boundaries and Inner Spaces: Spatial Imagery in Nineteenth Century Anglo-American Women's Texts" and "The City that Women Inhabit." The writers discussed were Edith Wharton, Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps....Reus is working on "Edith Wharton and the Concept of 'Utopia.'" She held a fellowship at Princeton University March - June 1989.

• **Keiko Beppu,** Kobe University (Japan), includes Edith Wharton as a major figure in her work-in-progress, "Iconography of The Madonna and American Novel."... Beppu's article "The Fallen Idol and Southern Women Writers (III)" appears in *Women's Studies Forum* (Kobe College Research Institute for Women's Studies) March 1990.

• **Terry Gellin** has received a grant from The Connecticut Humanities Council to explore a potential relationship/meeting between Edith Wharton and Mark Twain. Other scholars involved in Gellin's project are R.W.B. Lewis, Scott Marshall, Alfred Bendixen and Alan Gribbens.

• **Scott Marshall,** formerly assistant director of Edith Wharton Restoration at The Mount in Lenox, is now executive assistant at the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation in New York City. On May 8, Marshall will present a slide lecture for members of the organization at the Salmagundi Club entitled "Henry James' and Edith Wharton's Washington Square."

• Completed dissertations include **Helen Killoran,** "The Sphinx and The Furies: Literary Allusion in the Novels of Edith Wharton," University of Washington, 1989....**Teresa Gómez Reus,** "Women Prototypes in the Works of Edith Wharton", University of Alicante, Spain, July 1989...**Kathy A. Fedorko,** "Edith Wharton's Haunted House: The Gothic in Her Fiction." Rutgers University, 1987....**Ellen Powers Stengel,** "The Terror of the Usual: The Supernatural Short Stories of Edith Wharton." Duke University, 1987.

Seminar at Radcliffe

The Edith Wharton Restoration, caretakers of The Mount, Lenox, Massachusetts, co-sponsored a one-day program with the Radcliffe Seminars on "House and Garden: The Architectural Eye of Edith Wharton" on April 6, 1990 at Radcliffe College. Speakers included: Elizabeth Evans, Georgia Institute of Technology, "Place in the Literature of Edith Wharton"; Alvin Holm, architect, "Edith Wharton and the Decoration of Houses"; Diane Kostiel McGuire, landscape architect, "Edith Wharton's Contribution to Classical Garden Design"; and Eleanor Dwight, New School of Social Research, "The Fictional Architecture and Gardens of Edith Wharton."

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