

REVIEWS OUTSIDE THE USUAL PLACES: DAILY NEWSPAPER
REVIEWS OF EDITH WHARTON IN EDWARDIAN BRITAIN



Stephanie Palmer

ABSTRACT

*The accessibility of digitized newspapers creates an opportunity to trace middlebrow taste. This article does so by analyzing how the style and substance of newspaper reviews began to diverge from magazine reviews late in the nineteenth century. Newspaper reviews became short, chatty, personal, and targeted toward the leisured reader. Self-consciously, reviewers mourned unhappy endings, complained about long factual expositions, and criticized plots on the grounds of implausibility. This shift in critical discourse is seen when comparing British newspaper and magazine reviews from the mid-nineteenth century to reviews of Edith Wharton's early short story collections, *The House of Mirth*, and *Ethan Frome*.*

KEYWORDS: *reviews, newspapers, middlebrow reading, Edith Wharton, Ethan Frome*

“She ought to marry to get comfortably settled, but somehow she misses her way to the Court of Love,” wrote the *Leeds Mercury* of Lily Bart in its review of Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth* (1905).¹ With a pithy and witty style, the review evokes how Wharton’s novel deals with familiar novelistic material (social climbing through marriage) with unusual elegance and surprising narrative outcomes. Yet this interesting review is not preserved for posterity in Cambridge University Press’s *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*

<https://doi.org/10.5325/jmodeperistud.14.1.0070>

JOURNAL OF MODERN PERIODICAL STUDIES, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2023

Copyright © 2023 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

(1992), nor are any of the other British daily newspaper reviews of Wharton's works that, today, are readily accessed in such digital databases as Gale Cengage's *British Library Newspapers* or Findmypast Ltd.'s *British Newspaper Archive*. The emergence of these databases calls into question such stock phrases of literary criticism as "reviews were mixed" or "was reviewed widely in the usual places" because for the first time, close or distant readings of a broad swath of reviews have become tantalizingly accessible to researchers: it is no longer easy to generalize about such an array of reviews, and one can no longer be certain more historical reviews are not imminently due to appear. Adrian Bingham has argued that newspaper databases have changed historical research as the ease of perusing newspapers opens new questions for historians;² for the same reasons, literary criticism is shifting as well. In this essay, I argue that British newspaper reviews of the Edwardian period differed significantly in tone and content from those of literary magazines, and literary critics should examine them for evidence of changing and newly variegated tastes in reading. In the specific case of Edith Wharton, British newspapers began to cater to a middlebrow reading experience of her fiction before the author herself pivoted toward middlebrow aesthetics in the 1920s.

"Middlebrow fiction" is a term invented in 1920s reviewing culture to refer to realist fiction aimed at a broad public, often with a feminine subject matter, such as a bit of romance, or a focus on domestic life, and a tacit endorsement of middle-class values. Ann Ardis argues convincingly that middlebrow reading and writing dates from the 1890s, before the term "middlebrow" became a feature of magazine reviewing.³ In the explosion of critical work since the 1990s on the transatlantic middlebrow, scholars disagree over whether the middlebrow is a reading practice, a formal or generic quality, or a critical construct created by reviewers and critics in order to separate the truly intelligent and artistically successful from mere fodder for uneducated common readers, who were primarily women.⁴ Scholars who define the middlebrow as a reading practice disagree over whether middlebrow reading is reverential, as readers eager for uplift seek out serious fiction, or emotional, as they enjoy identifying with characters, following exciting plots, and searching for vicarious experience and emotional truths.⁵ Nicola Humble memorably associates the middlebrow with a leisured reading posture—whereas the scholar "engages with his reading from a bodily position of alertness, hostility, separateness from the text," the "leisured reader lolls, relaxing into his book and chair, spine curled,

virtually foetal, fleeing into the body with the comfort of sleep or womb rather than in monastic disavowal of its needs”—and she emphasizes that all readers are leisured readers at some point in their lives.⁶ It is this type of reading practice that the newspaper reviewers of this period anticipate among their wide readership, and the reviews of Wharton are a fine window into their assumptions about reading.

It might surprise scholars to hear that local newspapers in towns and cities across Britain published book reviews, because today people generally turn to national newspapers or magazines for their ideas about what history, biography, travel writing, science, or literature to read. In the nineteenth century, however, provincial newspapers published original reviews of literature, history, travel books, and science. Press historians have generally argued that daily newspapers published very few reviews, but searches on the new databases turn up reviews in significant numbers.⁷ Since these were often published before reviews came out in weekly magazines or newspapers like the *Athenaeum*, the *Speaker*, or the *Spectator*, and long before reviewers printed their judgments on the pages of monthlies or quarterlies, one can assume that newspaper reviews played a large role in helping readers select which books to order from circulating libraries or purchase themselves. The reviews were an expected and respected ingredient of the provincial daily press during its golden age, before the national dailies could be shipped to the provinces in time for breakfast, and thus before the concept of a national paper was a firm reality.⁸

The “concentrated and immersive consumption” afforded by digitized databases—what Victoria Clarke likens to a kind of binge researching newly available to the twenty-first-century researcher—reveals shifts over time and between newspapers and magazines in reviewing rhetoric.⁹ The genres of the newspaper book review and periodical book review began to diverge between the 1870s and the 1910s. In the 1870s, there was little qualitative distinction between a book review in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and provincial papers like the *Wrexham Advertiser*. In both venues, reviewers discussed a novel's structure, its style, the quality of its characterization, and its topical significance. By 1900, fewer provincial titles discussed art or literature. Their newspaper reviews were short, chatty, and personal, and designed to help readers select which books would give them a combination of pleasure and edification. Self-consciously, reviewers complained about long factual expositions in historical fiction and criticized plots on the grounds of implausibility. They were casual on issues of morality

such as divorce and overt on issues of social class. In this way, newspaper reviews began to shape the emerging middlebrow taste. We can see the distinction if we compare British newspaper and magazine reviews from the mid-nineteenth century to reviews of Edith Wharton's fiction up to and including *Ethan Frome* (1911).

Although as an American writer Edith Wharton might seem like an outsider to British literary culture, she is an eminently appropriate writer to focus on when tracing changes to British reviewing culture. Like many American women writers, she drew both admiration and notoriety in Britain and the United States for combining critical acclaim with ample royalties. Wharton was born into an elite New York family, but she lived on an income small in comparison to others of her class. She wanted to publish high-quality books with prestigious imprints, but she also desired a mass readership with its concomitant earnings. She did not simply wish to cater to the tastes of the masses or middle-class readers, but to lift their taste and moral standing to appropriate heights.¹⁰ Therefore, Wharton's books were positioned at the border of popular and erudite taste, much like the newspaper review itself. While there were authors, artists, and designers who embraced their middlebrow status, Wharton was not one of these: the term middlebrow is one she would not have appreciated. She did, though, take an interest in the reviews of her work, believing the British reviews to be more learned and cogent than the American ones.¹¹ Her longtime British publisher Frederic Macmillan sent her clippings from the British reviews (clippings that are no longer preserved in the Macmillan archives at the British Library).¹² Evidence for Wharton's appreciation of the newspaper review is thin, then, but it is possible to speculate that Wharton would have perused these reviews carefully had they been made available to her.

CULTURAL HIERARCHY AND THE NEWSPAPER REVIEW

Although literary critics generally overlook newspaper reviews, they may be more important than we recognize. They were timely and had reach. For example, the initial British critical response to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's *The Gates Ajar* occurred in the newspapers. The novel was published in Britain in June 1869, eight months after it had been published in the United States and had won a large readership. Thus, the novel was known as a popular novelistic work of theology before it reached British

shores, but not one likely to win critical praise. Among other newspapers, the *Newcastle Courant*, *Taunton Courier* (Somerset), *Bristol Mercury*, *Leicester Chronicle* and *Leicestershire Mercury*, *Wrexham Advertiser*, and *Glasgow Herald* all published reviews of the book in June and July 1869, while the *Athenaeum* published one in December and *Blackwood's* in October 1871.¹³ A comparable fictional title from the 1860s, George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861), was widely reviewed in the daily newspaper press before reviews appeared in the weekly or quarterly journals, even though it was an eagerly awaited novel by one of the country's most highly regarded novelists. The novel was published April 2, 1861, and six reviews appeared in daily papers collected on *British Newspaper Archive* before the *Athenaeum* and the *London Review* managed to publish their reviews on April 6.¹⁴ For both Phelps and Eliot, reviews appeared in columns entitled "Literature" or interspersed with other news items; they were not reserved for Sunday or a special literary supplement. This organization, although merely typical of its day, made the reviews seem newsworthy.¹⁵ The newspaper uptake of Wharton's first story collection, *The Greater Inclination* (1899), was also fast. The major American reviews appeared between April and July 1899.¹⁶ In Britain, reviews appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser*, the *Scotsman*, and the *Western Morning News* in June and early July 1899 before appearing later in July and August in the weeklies the *Academy*, the *Outlook*, the *Saturday Review*, and the *Athenaeum*.¹⁷ The fact that newspaper reviews came out so quickly after publication suggests they were the first source of guidance about a book apart from publisher ads. It should also be noted that provincial newspapers had wide circulations beyond specific cities across the North or Midlands and were much cheaper than magazines.¹⁸ Their timeliness and reach undoubtedly gave them influence.

In the mid-nineteenth century, newspapers published book reviews with a similar style to that of magazines and only a subtly different content. Both groups of periodicals aimed their reviews of fiction at educated readers; they reported on a book's topical significance and judged its success at characterization and structure as well as its likelihood to cultivate readers morally. The levels of diction in newspapers and magazines were similar. The *Taunton Courier* review of Phelps's *The Gates Ajar* can serve as an example. The review is fairly short, only twenty-nine lines long in a narrow column, and it has a folksy, didactic tone. It introduces Phelps to readers in a facilitative manner by saying she was the daughter of a theologian at Andover Theological Seminary and calls the novel her first "grown up book."

The reviewer expected readers, however, to have large vocabularies and tolerance for long sentences:

The two principal characters described are Winifred Forceyth and Mary Cabot; the one a pure and noble woman, who, having passed through the valley of affliction, has lifted herself above all clouds of sorrow and doubt, whose being is permeated by the divinest spiritual influences, and whose external life is a perpetual effluence of holiness and beneficence; the other a warm-hearted, passionate girl, thrown by a sudden and deep grief into despairing gloom, until guided by her companion to the sunny heights from which she beholds, not in brief glimpses, but with an assured and steadfast vision, the glories of the world beyond the grave.¹⁹

As we can see in the above passage, today's cultural division between a popular press that writes simply and brightly and a highbrow press did not exist for most of the nineteenth century; the passage discusses a piece of popular fiction in a highbrow tone and diction. A distinction between the popular press and the highbrow press was created with the emergence of New Journalism, with titles like *Tit-Bits* and the *Daily Mail*, in the 1880s and '90s.²⁰ If one compares the *Taunton Courier's* diction to that of Bristol's *Western Daily Press's* review of Wharton's third story collection, *The Descent of Man and Other Stories* (1904), we can see the new influence of popular press strategies on the reviewing. In both cases, the fiction received sustained attention. *The Descent of Man* received fifty lines. Yet the diction and syntax had changed:

Most of the new types are apparently American and Mrs. Wharton relegates them to their proper level and place with immense judgment. Then the ideas upon which the stories are based are all fresh, so fresh, indeed, that the stories would only be possible of the most modern people.²¹

Not only are the sentences shorter and less prolix, but they praise a similar brightness and timeliness in Wharton's storytelling itself. Both reviews and fiction were invested in capturing the new experiences of modern life in bright, terse, almost jocular prose. Both Wharton and the anonymous journalists responded to the pressure of the times in shaping their rhetoric, whether literary or journalistic.

By the time Wharton's novels and short story collections began to appear, daily papers were published in most towns and cities. Morning papers aimed at middle-class readers had to compete with half-penny evening papers aimed at the working classes.²² Newspaper reviews adopted the simple and bright tone of the popular press and they referred to the reading of novels as a leisure activity, not a tool for educational uplift or the cultivation of appropriate spiritual feeling. Important commentators pointed to this shift as evidence of cultural decline. Writing in the 1882 *Fortnightly Review*, Grant Allen mourned that British critics were not encouraged to spend the time necessary to pass a valid and independent judgment on new books, and he criticized the weeklies for choosing haste rather than due consideration.²³ Indeed, over the next three decades, all reviews grew shorter and shorter. Allen blamed the public, but he reserved the greatest contempt for the newspaper press. Wharton herself complained about reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic who catered to the uneducated reader by reducing criticism to a precis of the contents and avoiding plot spoilers.²⁴ In later decades T. S. Eliot and Q. D. Leavis launched similar complaints, linking newspaper reviews to advertising.²⁵ For example, Leavis bemoaned the power and circulation achieved by "the big newspapers," which published "offhand judgments" that celebrity critics "throw out, in the nature of pontifical statements rather than criticisms, and an enterprising publisher will reissue a novel with a band or new dust-jacket exhibiting the caption."²⁶

With Andrew Hobbs, I read the newspapers' orientation toward a less scholarly audience as a form of democratization, a welcome development in the public sphere. This quality is exactly what makes these reviews so illuminating for the researcher because their digressions and asides signal attempts to win over a wide reading public, one wider than was possible in the 1860s, before the days of publicly funded primary schools and public libraries. The reviewers put themselves in dialogue with a new style of readerly orientation. As a result, researchers can glean when novels struck reviewers as pleasant or boring, easy to read, or difficult to fathom. Reviews offer insight into how a wide circle of readers *might* have read a text, even as they are no substitute for knowing how a particular reader actually *did* read a text. Granted, as Hobbs argues, reviewers, like all journalists, seek to frame prose fiction for a particular type of reading and reader, to select which aspects of the story they believe to be important to that reader.²⁷ As such, they have the capacity to interpolate that reader. However, Charles Johanningsmeier's work on librarians, a similar group of culture brokers, makes it clear that however a culture broker might hope to shape common

readers, common readers exerted pressure back, by, for example, reading and requesting more of Henry James's realist fiction than his difficult modernist titles.²⁸ In the reviews discussed below, it appears that middlebrow readers were similarly slipping from the reviewers' grasps.

BEYOND HENRY JAMES

In Wharton's reception, the changing nature of newspaper reviews is evident in content as well as style. The provincial dailies were the first reviewers to drop the subject of her fiction's resemblance to Henry James. Wharton critics have long struggled against the tendency to consider Wharton a mere disciple of James in her style and subject matter. As James W. Tuttleton, Kristin O. Lauer, and Margaret P. Murray have demonstrated, "between 1899 and 1905—from *The Greater Inclination* up to *The House of Mirth*—Mrs. Wharton was sometimes praised but usually criticized as a writer in the school of Henry James." Since James was entering his major phase of moral complexity and stylistic involutions at the time, "she was thus caught up in, and at times victimized by, a controversy not of her own making" and her very originality, autonomy, and candidacy for canonicity were at stake.²⁹

The first three reviews of her first story collection that are available on the *British Newspaper Archive* do not mention James at all.³⁰ They praise her mastery of the art of condensation, admire her subtle analysis of mental states, and identify her fiction as polished studies of the American social scene, especially its "feverish money-getting life."³¹ In contrast, an early reference to James appeared in the journal the *Academy*:

She is clearly of the school of Mr. Henry James. Her subjects are chosen similarly to his—dramas of sentiment, of the soul; excursions into the obscure recesses of psychology. But there are exceptions, and it must be said that though she is subtle she is much less subtle than Mr. James, and—may we utter it?—possibly more articulate.³²

This reference is not critical of Wharton, and B. Rouser writing in the *Outlook* considers James's influence to be for the good as well.³³ But such comments work as faint praise suggesting that Wharton was using James to lift herself above the current of popular American fiction.

Subsequent Wharton titles were also treated to disparaging references to James from the London weeklies, but not from the newspapers. When her first

novel, *The Valley of Decision* (1902), appeared, reviewers noted that it was a novel set in the Italian Enlightenment instead of modern New York and would require a tack on the part of readers looking for more stories of modern life. The *Saturday Review* wrote that she had “found her own style after a period of imitativeness which was in no sense servile, but which prevented a free and characteristic expression of her great talent.”³⁴ When her third story collection appeared, largely returning to modern social situations, entitled *The Descent of Man and Other Stories*, newspaper reviews focused again on the modernity of her style and subject matter. The *Bristol Western Daily Press* review praised her femininity as a writer: she “obviously delights in her sex and throughout her writing displays her womanliness with charming delicacy.”³⁵ Although Wharton strenuously denied she was a feminine writer and avoided being publicly identified as a woman writer or a writer for women, reviewers treated her differently. The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* assured readers that it was no disparagement to compare her to Henry James or Robert Louis Stevenson.³⁶ In contrast to these positive and sympathetic newspaper reviews, the *Athenaeum* continued to press the James comparison in disparaging terms: “several times we have been haunted by what is perhaps a mere fancy, that hints of Mr. Henry James are to be found . . . both in motive and manner.”³⁷ The critic becomes a detective spotting a similarity that the author, by virtue of claiming original authorship, wishes to hide. Some two months later, a critic at the *Academy* congratulated himself (or herself) for not mentioning James: “let the present reviewer account it to himself for righteousness that he has omitted all allusion to the particular King Charles’s head of Mrs. Wharton’s reviewers in general, not from a wish to be singular, but from a sense of justice.”³⁸ Despite the self-congratulations, the journal had introduced the James comparison five years earlier. The *Academy* was known for being severe about bad fiction to the point of academicism.³⁹ In its references to Wharton’s discipleship to James, it lives up to that reputation.

BLUNTNES AND CANDOR

Newspaper reviews often phrased their analysis and judgment in blunt terms. This means that researchers can discern frank enjoyment or disgruntlement with the fiction that highbrow reviewers of arts and letters magazines often glossed over. In this way, newspaper reviewers were comparatively in deeper dialogue with common readers. Virginia Woolf theorized reviewing as a conversation first with the author, then the reader, and

finally, the publisher, but newspaper reviews were in conversation first with the reader.⁴⁰ Even more interestingly, newspaper reviewers dealt with questions of poverty and female agency that reviewers of arts and letters magazines shied away from; newspaper reviewers were also comparatively loose in their regard for questions of morality.

All sorts of reviewers enthusiastically praised *The House of Mirth*, a novel about social climbing in turn-of-the-twentieth-century New York, but reviewers of weeklies and daily newspapers differed in their treatment. In an early review, the *Spectator* wrote that the book rises above most society novels in that it manages to convey the venality of the set yet create tragedy by evoking a character who excites some sympathy, so that you care about her fate.⁴¹ In contrast, the *Leeds Mercury* wrote bluntly that Lily Bart is “an adventuress,” but she “appeals to our sympathy.”⁴² The *Manchester Courier* complained that “the story suffers a little from the American tendency to over-diffuseness,” and admitted that, “It would have been less praiseworthy but we would wish a happy ending.”⁴³ Amy L. Blair’s analysis of readers who misread the novel as a “how to” manual about social climbing (which was contrary to Wharton’s intentions) suggests that many readers would concur with the *Manchester Courier*’s request that the novel somehow find a happy ending for Lily, who mysteriously fails to win back her father’s lost fortune with her face.⁴⁴ While the *Spectator*, the *Academy*, and countless other highbrow critics of Wharton focus on the novel’s tragedy, this reviewer wanted happiness. Cultural brokers associated with shaping middlebrow taste, like Hamilton Wright Mabie in Blair’s study, sought to control such readers, but the anonymous *Manchester Courier* reviewer seems rather in this instance to be agreeing with readers who want pleasure, happy endings, and success for social climbers. The *Manchester Courier* and the *Leeds Mercury* came from opposing sides of the political establishment; the *Leeds Mercury* was established as a Liberal paper in 1718, whereas the *Manchester Courier* started life as a Conservative paper in 1825 (Manchester’s liberal-leaning newspaper was the *Manchester Guardian*, which is now based in London). Yet the subventions and support from political parties had become less important to a paper’s future than sales and advertisement revenues by the 1880s, and in the reviews of *The House of Mirth* the political bent unattributable to either political party upholds the right of the social climber to climb.⁴⁵ This is not a conservative or left point of view, but a middle-class point of view.

When Wharton published *Ethan Frome*, some of the most astute British reviews were from morning newspapers. This novel's subject matter of poverty and desolation made early Wharton critics consider it a misstep, an escape from her proper subject of wealthy New York.⁴⁶ Newspaper reviewers embraced it, however, because they were less inclined to subscribe to ideologically motivated notions of an author's proper subjects—as we saw in their relative disinclination to compare Wharton to Henry James. Reviews in the weeklies were careful and flattering; the *Saturday Review*, the *Bookman*, and the *Academy* praised the book's possibilities of psychological study, Wharton's style, and the sombre tone of tragedy that pervaded the slender book.⁴⁷ Yet the weeklies overlooked some aspects of Wharton's accomplishment, such as the fact that the lovers were poor and that this was a tale of illicit love.

The *Bookman* review is short, primarily a summary of the situation in which Ethan finds himself. It links the ending of the story to tragedy and says merely that "Poverty makes Ethan helpless; money might have saved two lives, if not three, but there is none."⁴⁸ This sentence refers to Ethan's midnight quandaries over whether he should scrape together the money to buy a passage west for Mattie and himself and abandon Zeena and the farm. But the review refers to the controversial, vulgar possibility of divorce or marital abandonment only in the most circumspect of ways. The *English Review* compared the short novel to Greek tragedies and praised the economy of her style: "every stroke tells; every detail . . . has its essential place in the structure."⁴⁹ Wharton's decision to let Ethan and Mattie live on in a grumbling, sinister way is a particularly cruel and particularly modern way of ending the story, which these reviewers found aesthetically appropriate to the times. Yet the only reference to the poverty of the characters is an oblique one: the reviewer proclaims the novel the best love story in contemporary English since Hardy was at his best. The reviewer openly apologizes for what he or she construes as the mere banality of Wharton's subject matter: "The situation is obvious enough—but nothing is banal when it comes under Mrs. Wharton's hand."⁵⁰ The *Saturday Review* similarly argued that Wharton's novel bordered on topics and characters too sordid to be considered literature: "She has marred her work with no motive we can discover. With Mrs. Wharton it could not have been the mere craving for the exaggerated terror which in art must always defeat itself. The end of Ethan Frome is something at which we cover the eyes. We do not cover the eyes at the spectacle of a really great tragedy."⁵¹ In the *Saturday Review's* eyes,

great fiction should be bittersweet, not bitter, and by making her lovers live on, Wharton strays into the arenas of the gothic (“the mere craving for the exaggerated terror”) or topical New Woman fiction (in which bald facts of social injustice are named overtly and perhaps make the fastidious reviewer cover his or her eyes). These reviewers disliked too much emphasis on social injustice or love. They shielded their social conservatism behind discussions of style and tragedy.⁵²

Daily newspaper reviews were in sharp contrast because they focused on poverty. The *Glasgow Herald* wrote movingly of the spiritual and material barrenness of Ethan Frome’s farm, a salient point despite the fact that the newspaper believed the story was set in the American West.⁵³ The *Manchester Courier* found the novel “a slight book,” but interesting for its success at reconciling two opposing and unsatisfying ways of depicting the poor:

The tendency of those who used to write “the simple annals of the poor” was to dignify their tragedies to an extent that lifted them out of the bounds of the limitations of poverty. Latterly a newer school of writers has emphasised the sordidness of their lot to an extent which has almost blotted out its heroic element. Mrs. Wharton’s Ethan Frome seems to point to the reconciliation of the two methods, and though it is a slight book in itself, it is interesting as a sign of progress.⁵⁴

The earlier methods for depicting the poor sound like what is now classed as sentimentality, as novels treated the poor as worthy of readerly identification and good candidates for salvation, whereas the “newer school of writers” sound like the naturalists with their gloomy prognosis about free will. Typically, conservative reviewers disliked naturalism, and thus this response might also be associated merely with a dismissal of literature that attempts to deal with the harsh realities of poverty. But the reviewer also seems to praise the novel for seeing potential in poverty. The interest of the novel lies in reading for vicarious experience, not just in its masterly structure. The placement of this review on the page of the newspaper provides clues as to how it was being packaged for readers. The review appears alongside photographs of delegates to the National Union of Conservative Associations Conference at Leeds in November 1911. The juxtaposition does not indicate that the newspaper was overly sympathetic with the plight

of the poor, but it demonstrates that book reviews were related to contemporary politics. The placement of the review in the newspaper suggests that this middlebrow reviewing might be gendered as either masculine or feminine, contrary to how middlebrow reading is usually gendered. Reading newspapers was mainly associated with the men in a household, and newspaper reviewing might also be considered not merely feminine.

Another review that appreciated Wharton's uncompromising depiction of poverty came from the liberal organ, the *London Daily News*. This newspaper declared the novel a good book, not just because of its masterful structure, but also because the reader becomes so interested in the fate of the characters. The reviewer praised the novel's evocation of passion in quiet moments and admired the "faltering, half-lyrical speech of Mattie" during the fateful drive to the train station.⁵⁵ This stray comment is notable because so many reviewers focused solely on the titular male character, Ethan Frome. It was an emergent interpretation to view the tragedy as one that affected the unmarried woman as well as the married man. While remembering Mattie for her agency leading to the fateful sledding accident is hardly remembering a feminist act, another newspaper, the *Newry Reporter*, published in a small town in northern Ireland, featured an excerpt from the novella as it was serialized in *Scribner's Monthly* that emphasizes Mattie's role in the suicide pact. The excerpt is entitled "Mattie's Avowal," and it ends with Mattie beckoning Ethan to "come" while "tugging at his hand."⁵⁶

Adrian Bingham argues that the daily newspapers shaped middlebrow taste by ensuring that books, plays, and films conformed to certain moral standards.⁵⁷ Despite this generalization, however, there exists little moralising about divorce, infidelity, or suicide in the daily newspaper reviews of Wharton. The *Leeds Mercury's* tongue-in-cheek way of dismissing Lily Bart's moral dilemmas as "She ought to marry to get comfortably settled, but somehow she misses her way to the Court of Love" suggests that the reviewer was not worried about Lily's flirtations or husband hunting. On a different note, a review of *Ethan Frome* in the *Walsall Advertiser* (published in a large market town in Staffordshire) implies that infidelity need not be a shameful topic if it is skillfully treated: "When a tale is centred round the love story of a man who has no love and little sympathy for his wife, and that man finds his affinity to be a relative of his wife's, and living under his own roof, one seldom finds the theme so delicately and yet so forcibly treated as in the book under review."⁵⁸

In the logic of this review, as long as infidelity is wisely dealt with, it is acceptable as reading matter. The declining ability to keep their fingers on the cultural pulse at the *Athenaeum* and the *Saturday Review* is evident in their evasiveness about the social criticism of the novel, yet in the modernist magazines, like *English Review*, Wharton's novels did not find any more hospitable a home. These new magazines railed against the popularity of women writers, including Wharton in particular. Norman Douglas, writing in the *English Review*, regretted "the invasion of literature by a strong feminine contingent" that, like the interviewer and yellow journalism and cheap society papers, have fostered a new kind of public, "which craves not for information, but for personalities."⁵⁹ Many of these new women writers are too heavily influenced by Wharton, who follows in the footsteps of Henry James, he wrote, thus resurrecting that old, pesky topic in Wharton criticism. At stake, too, was Wharton's Americanness, as in this period, it was habitual for highbrow cultural arbiters to associate American culture with mass culture and feminization and to rail against both.⁶⁰

In comparison, the daily newspapers seemed in tune with Wharton's fictions, its emergent as well as its dominant qualities. The daily newspapers were not in the habit of dismissing audiences who would be prone to identify with Ethan's financial position and his town's character more generally, as they depended on a wide, local audience to sell their commodities to local advertisers. Although the documentary record of who read these papers is slight, their sympathy with Ethan, Mattie, and Lily might stem from their locations outside the small circle of London cultural brokers. Wharton could be scathing, of course, about less educated readers, and she was ambivalent about the expectations new editors placed on her to complete works quickly and shape them to middlebrow taste.⁶¹ Yet Amy L. Blair emphasizes that anyone who sold as many books as Wharton had primarily a middle-class readership.⁶² Blair finds that US newspapers catering to popular taste reviewed her works from this period differently from the highbrow magazines as well, arguing more bluntly about the storyline's plausibility and faulting the author for an overly negative assessment of the upper class in the United States. Sarah Whitehead, too, demonstrates how Wharton shifted her short story aesthetics in the 1920s away from "the elevated tenor and sense of membership of an exclusive, male club found in the early tales, which appear to sit comfortably in their genteel magazine frames, and the more direct, intimate, often revelatory quality of those published in the popular periodicals."⁶³ A perusal of the *Ethan Frome* and *The*

House of Mirth reviews indicates that middlebrow reviewers had already shifted toward a direct, intimate, and revelatory style before Wharton made the transition herself.

CONCLUSION

The daily newspapers are key means of observing and tracing changing literary tastes in Britain in the 1900s. They map a transition from a Victorian reading public that enjoyed realist fiction to an emerging middlebrow public that continued to gravitate toward realist writers like Wharton, even in the days of the avant-garde and high modernism, and they interpreted this work through less moralistic and more libidinal terms than the Victorian reviewers had used. The evidence compiled in this article suggests that newspaper reviewers were tracking this change of taste rather than ordering it from above; they were trying to cater to a reader oriented to pleasure more than instruction. Daily newspaper reviewers were less invested in cementing the reputation of male writers like George Meredith or Henry James, and therefore they were attuned to Wharton's uniqueness. Occasionally they make reference to gendered or working-class perspectives, although they were not consistently what, today, people might call progressive. They offered opinions that serve as a window into the taste for Wharton beyond London and its cultural brokers.

This golden age of the provincial newspaper would not last, however. By the 1950s, the national dailies dominated the market for newspaper readers.⁶⁴ Their literary reviews appeared in literary supplements rather than being treated as "news." Some provincial newspapers, like the *Bristol Mercury* or the *Glasgow Herald*, which had printed many reviews of fiction in the nineteenth century, ceased printing any reviews of books, plays, or films in the twentieth century. Although few newspaper historians consider the changing status of literary reviewing, they have amply traced the long decline of the provincial press, which began with the consolidation of titles at the turn of the twentieth century, continued with the computerization of the newspaper workplace in the 1980s and 1990s, and continues unabated today, when social media threatens their existing business model so severely that new models are being sought. Since the eighteenth century, provincial newspapers have justified themselves using an unchanging business model. They have made money by selling advertising space

to local businesses.⁶⁵ Yet today, people read these papers primarily online, where it is easier to filter ads away, and local businesses have other means of advertising. Newspaper historian Rachel Matthews argues provocatively that the provincial paper that survives by selling advertising space to local businesses may cease to exist. But despite their revenue base, local newspapers have always claimed a higher purpose than merely selling advertising space: they serve as a voice of a locality and a watchdog for local government. Matthews speculates that hyperlocal outlets that give localities an identity may flourish using other business models.⁶⁶

The question remains open whether local and alternative kinds of reviewing might return in some media form in the future. The new business models that Matthews envisions might make it viable to review art and literature in local venues again. Perhaps local newspapers might return to the days of the pithy, informal dialogues with irreverent pleasure readers, thus offering variety and an alternative to the national press. Such dialogues began to appear in the Edwardian period, and they were entertaining for readers and valuable for researchers. While today, literature reviews have all but disappeared from the provincial daily press, the ubiquity of digital databases of the Edwardian press means that provincial dailies' insights into literature are readily preserved and might be reclaimed by literary critics as well as historians.

STEPHANIE PALMER specializes in American literature, women's writing, regionalism, transatlantic print culture, and ecocriticism. Her most recent book is *Transatlantic Footholds: Turn-of-the-Century American Women Writers and British Reviewers* (Routledge 2020), and she has published in journals such as *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* and *Women's Writing*. She is a Senior Lecturer of English at Nottingham Trent University.

NOTES

1 Review of *The House of Mirth*, by Edith Wharton, *Leeds Mercury*, November 7, 1905, 7.

2 Adrian Bingham, "The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians," *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 2 (2010): 225–31.

3 Ann L. Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 116.

4 On the middlebrow as a construct created by cultural brokers like the *New York Herald Tribune* and the Book of the Month Club, see Joan Shelley Rubin's *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Unlike Rubin, Nicola Humble seeks to change the pejorative valence of the term, as she revivifies interest in underappreciated novels in *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bohemianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Faye Hammill similarly treats the

middlebrow as a textual, generic quality; the novels she recuperates “provoked debate precisely because they could not be understood in relation to contemporary literary categories and hierarchies” (Faye Hammill, *Women, Celebrity, and Literary Culture Between the Wars* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007], 3). On the middlebrow as a category embraced by cultural practitioners, see also Melissa Sullivan and Sophie Blanch, “Introduction: The Middlebrow—Within or Without Modernism,” *Modernist Cultures* 6, no. 1 (2011): 6. On the middlebrow as a form of authorship retrospectively attached to interwar progressive writers of domestic fiction, see Jaime Harker, *America the Middlebrow: Women's Novels, Progressivism, and Middlebrow Authorship Between the Wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007). Although many scholars have argued that the middlebrow had different trajectories in the United States and the United Kingdom, the transatlantic nature of Wharton's career makes relevant scholarship on both national contexts.

5 On the tension in middlebrow studies between reverential and identificatory, blissful reading, see Jaime Harker, “Middlebrow Studies and Its Discontents,” *Cultural Studies Review* 22, no. 1 (2016): 334–39.

6 Nicola Humble, “Sitting Forward or Sitting Back: Highbrow v. Middlebrow Reading,” *Modernist Cultures* 6, no. 1 (2011): 48.

7 Laurel Brake, “Lockdown: The Order of Things: The Functions of Book Reviews in the Nineteenth Century British Press,” Keynote Address, Book Reviews and Beyond Conference. IULM University. Madrid, Italy (online). June 2020. <https://beyondbookreview.iulm.it>; Joanne Shattock, “Reviewing,” in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, eds. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London: British Library, 2009), 1513–14.

8 Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 32.

9 Victoria Clarke, “Time, Space, and Gender in the Victorian Periodical,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 53, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 484.

10 Shafquat Towheed, introduction to *The Correspondence of Edith Wharton and Macmillan, 1901–1930*, by Edith Wharton (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 9.

11 Sheri Benstock, “A Critical History of *The House of Mirth*,” in *The House of Mirth*, by Edith Wharton, edited by Shari Benstock (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1994), 312.

12 Claire Wotherspoon, Manuscripts Reference Team, British Library, email to the author, October 20, 2016.

13 Review of *The Gates Ajar*, by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *Newcastle Courant*, June 18, 1869, 3; review of *The Gates Ajar*, *Taunton Courier*, June 16, 1869, 3; review of *The Gates Ajar*, *Bristol Mercury*, July 3, 1869, 6; review of *The Gates Ajar*, *Wrexham Advertiser*, July 17, 1869, 7; review of *The Gates Ajar*, *Glasgow Herald*, December 18, 1869, 3; review of *The Gates Ajar*, *Athenaeum*, December 25, 1869, 861–63; [Margaret Oliphant], “American Books,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, October 1871, 422–42.

14 Review of *Silas Marner*, by George Eliot, *Scotsman*, April 2, 1861, 3; “George Eliot's New Novel,” review of *Silas Marner*, *Northern Whig*, April 2, 1861, 4; review of *Silas Marner*, *Nottingham Journal*, April 2, 1861, 3; review of *Silas Marner*, *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, April 4, 1861, 3; review of *Silas Marner*, *Saint James's Chronicle*, April 4, 1861, 2–3; review of *Silas Marner*, *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, April 5, 1861, 3; review of *Silas Marner*, *Athenaeum*, April 6, 1861, 464–65; review of *Silas Marner*, *London Review*, April 6, 1861, 384–85.

15 Among scholars on reviews, Rubin has most starkly drawn the distinction between reviews as news and reviews as reasoned critical judgment and distinction-making. See *The Making of Middlebrow Culture*, 40–80. Middlebrow culture brokers strove to uplift taste but had to work with publishers who wanted to withhold advertising if newspapers faulted or ignored their wares and with readers who rebelled against their moral seriousness.

16 See James W. Tuttleton, Kristin O. Lauer, and Margaret P. Murray, ed., *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

17 Review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Dundee Advertiser*, June 22, 1899, 2; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Scotsman*, June 20, 1899, 2–3; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Western Morning News*, July 7, 1899, 6; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Academy*, July 8, 1899, 40, rpt. in *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, 21–22; B. Rouser, “Letters of a Book-Taster,” review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Outlook*, July 15, 1899, 777–78; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Saturday Review*, July 15, 1899, 82; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Athenaeum*, August 5, 1899, 189. When reviews are reprinted in *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, it is noted, because this volume is widely used by Wharton scholars. Newspapers often printed

material from syndicates; reviews of periodicals appear verbatim, as did some news stories, but the reviews in my examination have been overwhelmingly original.

18 A perusal of Mitchell's Press Directory reveals that the *Leeds Mercury*, *Glasgow Herald*, and *Manchester Courier* circulated across broad swaths of the British Isles, although exact circulation figures are not printed. *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory, 1881–1886*, microfilm.

19 Review of *The Gates Ajar*, *Taunton Courier*, 3.

20 Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 102.

21 Review of *The Descent of Man and Other Stories*, *Western Daily Press* (Bristol), June 20, 1904, 3.

22 Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 32.

23 Joanne Shattock, "The Culture of Criticism," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830–1914*, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71–90.

24 Edith Wharton, "The Vice of Reading," *North American Review*, October 1903, 513–21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25119460>.

25 Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 102; Adrian Bingham, "Cultural Hierarchies and the Interwar British Press," in *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920–1960*, ed. Erica Brown and Mary Grover (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 57, 64.

26 Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Pimlico, 2011), 24.

27 Drawing from the experience of being a journalist as well as Erving Goffman's notion of the frame, Andrew Hobbs discusses the importance of journalism's attempt to frame subjects for readers as well as the tendency for readers to ignore or chafe against that framing, in *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855–1900* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2019), 27–28.

28 Charles Johanningsmeier, "Henry James and American Public Libraries, 1875–1916," *The Henry James Review* 36 (2015): 45–63.

29 Tuttleton, Lauer, and Murray, eds., introduction to *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, x.

30 Review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Dundee Advertiser*, 2; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Scotsman*, 2–3; review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Western Morning News*, 6.

31 Review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Western Morning News*, 6.

32 Review of *The Greater Inclination*, *Academy*, 40. Reprinted in *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, 21–22.

33 Rouser, "Letters of a Book-Taster," 777–78.

34 "Six Months of American Literature," review of *The Valley of Decision*, by Edith Wharton, *Saturday Review*, March 29, 1902, 405.

35 Review of *The Descent of Man and Other Stories*, *Western Daily Press* (Bristol), 3.

36 Review of *The Descent of Man and Other Stories*, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, July 9, 1904, 10.

37 Review of *The Descent of Man and Other Stories*, *Athenaeum*, July 2, 1904, 13–14. Reprinted in *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, 81–82.

38 Review of *The Descent of Man and Other Stories*, *Academy*, September 3, 1904, 84.

39 John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Harlow: Longman, 1988), 6.

40 Lisa Tyler, "Cultural Conversations: Woolf's 1927 Review of Hemingway," *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 6, no. 1 (2015): 48.

41 Review of *The House of Mirth*, *Spectator*, October 28, 1905, 657. Reprinted in *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, 113.

42 Review of *The House of Mirth*, *Leeds Mercury*, November 7, 1905, 7.

43 Review of *The House of Mirth*, *Manchester Courier*, November 7, 1905, 3.

44 Amy L. Blair, *Reading Up: Middle-Class Readers and the Culture of Success in the Early Twentieth-Century United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 138–63.

45 Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 71–73.

46 Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), xxi, 60.

47 Review of *Ethan Frome*, by Edith Wharton, *Saturday Review*, November 18, 1911, 650. Reprinted in *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, 185–86, review of *Ethan Frome*, *Academy*, December 2, 1911, 700; review of *Ethan Frome*, *Bookman*, January 1912, 216.

48 Review of *Ethan Frome*, *Bookman*, 216.

49 Review of *Ethan Frome*, *English Review*, January 1912, 364.

50 Review of *Ethan Frome*, *English Review*, 364.

- 51 Review of *Ethan Frome*, *Saturday Review*, 185–86.
- 52 Lina Geriguis astutely argues that the *Saturday Review* objects to disability as a resolution to the love triangle because of an ableist stance on disability as a state too horrible to depict in good fiction. I agree with Geriguis’s argument but would add that fewer newspaper reviewers decried the ending as distasteful because they were less invested in the distinction between fine and popular literature. Lina Geriguis, “‘Rich in Pathological Instances’: Disability in the Early Reception Theory of Edith Wharton’s *Ethan Frome*,” *Edith Wharton Review* 33, no. 1 (2017): 60–61.
- 53 Review of *Ethan Frome*, *Glasgow Herald*, November 24, 1911, 13.
- 54 Review of *Ethan Frome*, *Manchester Courier*, November 17, 1911, 10.
- 55 R.A. James, review of *Ethan Frome*, *London Daily News*, December 18, 1911, 4.
- 56 Wharton, *Ethan Frome*, quoted in “Mattie’s Avowal,” *Newry Reporter*, October 31, 1911, 3.
- 57 Bingham, “Cultural Hierarchies and the Interwar British Press.”
- 58 Review of *Ethan Frome*, by Edith Wharton, *Walsall Advertiser*, December 9, 1911, 3.
- 59 Norman Douglas, “Vintage: 1912,” *English Review*, December 1912, 121–33.
- 60 See Genevieve Abravanel, *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- 61 Lisa Botshon and Meredith Goldsmith, eds., introduction to *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 7.
- 62 Blair, *Reading Up*, 138.
- 63 Sarah Whitehead, “Edith Wharton and the Business of the Magazine Short Story,” in *The New Edith Wharton Studies*, eds. Jennifer Haytock and Laura Rattray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 50.
- 64 Bingham dates this shift to the interwar period (“Cultural Hierarchies and the Interwar British Press,” 55), but Rachel Matthews dates it to the 1950s (*The History of the Provincial Press in England* [London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017], Kindle, 36–68).
- 65 Matthews, *The History of the Provincial Press in England*, 15.
- 66 Matthews, *The History of the Provincial Press in England*, 268–90.

WORKS CITED

- Abravanel, Genevieve. *Americanizing Britain: The Rise of Modernism in the Age of the Entertainment Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Ardis, Ann L. *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880–1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Benstock, Sheri, ed. “A Critical History of *The House of Mirth*.” In *The House of Mirth*, by Edith Wharton, 309–25. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1994.
- Bingham, Adrian. “Cultural Hierarchies and the Interwar British Press.” In *Middlebrow Literary Cultures: The Battle of the Brows, 1920–1960*, eds. Erica Brown and Mary Grover, 55–64. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- . “The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians.” *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 2 (2010): 225–31.
- Blair, Amy L. *Reading Up: Middle-Class Readers and the Culture of Success in the Early Twentieth-Century United States*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.
- Botshon, Lisa, and Meredith Goldsmith, eds. Introduction to *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s*, 3–21. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003.
- Brake, Laurel. “Lockdown: The Order of Things: The Functions of Book Reviews in the Nineteenth Century British Press.” Keynote Address, Book Reviews and Beyond Conference. IULM University. Madrid, Italy (online). June 2020. <https://beyondbookreview.iulm.it>.
- Brown, Lucy. *Victorian News and Newspapers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Clarke, Victoria. “Time, Space, and Gender in the Victorian Periodical.” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 53, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 479–95.
- Geriguis, Lina. “‘Rich in Pathological Instances’: Disability in the Early Reception Theory of Edith Wharton’s *Ethan Frome*,” *Edith Wharton Review* 33, no. 1 (2017): 57–72.

- Hammill, Faye. *Women, Celebrity, and Literary Culture Between the Wars*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.
- Harker, Jaime. *America the Middlebrow: Women's Novels, Progressivism, and Middlebrow Authorship between the Wars*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.
- . "Middlebrow Studies and Its Discontents." *Cultural Studies Review* 22, no. 1 (2016): 334–39.
- Hobbs, Andrew. *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855–1900*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2019.
- Humble, Nicola. *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bohemianism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . "Sitting Forward or Sitting Back: Highbrow v. Middlebrow Reading." *Modernist Cultures* 6, no. 1 (2011): 41–59.
- Johanningsmeier, Charles. "Henry James and American Public Libraries, 1875–1916." *The Henry James Review* 36 (2015): 45–63.
- Leavis, Q.D. *Fiction and the Reading Public*. London: Pimlico, 2011.
- Matthews, Rachel. *The History of the Provincial Press in England*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Kindle.
- Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory, 1881–1886*, microfilm.
- Rubin, Joan Shelley. *The Making of Middlebrow Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Shattock, Joanne. "The Culture of Criticism." In *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830–1914*, ed. Joanne Shattock, 71–90. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- . "Reviewing." In *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, eds. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, 153–14. London: British Library, 2009.
- Sullivan, Melissa, and Sophie Blanch. "Introduction: The Middlebrow—Within or Without Modernism." *Modernist Cultures* 6, no. 1 (2011): 1–17.
- Sutherland, John. *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction*. Harlow: Longman, 1988.
- Towheed, Shafquat. Introduction to *The Correspondence of Edith Wharton and Macmillan, 1901–1930*, by Edith Wharton, 1–58. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Tuttleton, James W., Kristin O. Lauer, and Margaret P. Murray, eds. *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . Introduction to *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. James W. Tuttleton et al., ix–xxii. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Tyler, Lisa. "Cultural Conversations: Woolf's 1927 Review of Hemingway." *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 6, no. 1 (2015): 44–59.
- Wharton, Edith. "The Vice of Reading." *North American Review*. October 1903: 513–21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25119460>.
- Whitehead, Sarah. "Edith Wharton and the Business of the Magazine Short Story." In *The New Edith Wharton Studies*, eds. Jennifer Haytock and Laura Rattray, 48–62. Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Wolff, Cynthia Griffin. *A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995.
- Wotherspoon, Claire. Manuscripts Reference Team, British Library, email to the author, October 20, 2016.