

Houses in Edith Wharton's *The Buccaneers*

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イーディス・ウォルトン『バガニーア』（1938）に描かれる住居と庭園は虚構のものだが、これらの舞台は作者が40年以上続けたイギリス全土に及ぶ広範囲な旅行で得た見聞によるものであり、彼女が深い意義を認めていた文化的習慣と社会的関係を示している。本稿では晩年を迎えた作者が国際的テーマへの取り組みの中でこれらの住居と庭園を如何に機能させているかを調査する。事実、まさに現代と見なすべき時代が到来していたが、ウォルトンは未完の絶筆でヘンリー・ジェイムズやその他のアメリカ人作家が同時代に取り扱っていた社会現象には批判的であり、距離をおいていた。イギリス地方住居に関する歴史的連想に基づいた描写はモダニズムが過去と断絶する状況と直接対応している。過去と現在との間に横たわる相違は作家・民族誌家を自称するウォルトンを非常に有利な立場に置くこととなったのである。

The houses and gardens in Edith Wharton's *The Buccaneers* (1938) belong to the realm of fiction, yet these locales clearly evolved from the author's extensive travels through Great Britain over a period of nearly forty years and signify cultural habits and social relations that she deemed significant. This article explores how these houses and gardens function in Wharton's treatment of the International Theme during its twilight years. In fact, writing her final, uncompleted novel in the full light of the age of Modernity afforded Wharton a critical distance from the social phenomena that Henry James and other American novelists of manners had treated as contemporaneous. At the same time, because the historical associations of the English country houses about she wrote were in direct contrast to Modernism's rupture with the past, the distance between these two praxis provided Wharton with a highly desirable vantage point as a self-proclaimed novelist-ethnographer.

Edith Wharton's diaries from the late 1920s and 1930s, now housed in the Lilly Library of Indiana University, reveal the close ties that Wharton maintained with the United Kingdom during her later years. Entries document ambitious tours of the West Country, Wales and Yorkshire; frequent stays at Hidcote Manor, from which Wharton was able to explore the Cotswolds or visit the Kenneth Clarks in Oxford;¹ meandering motor trips through Kent and Sussex; idle mornings at Lamb House and busy evenings in London. Wharton's British sojourns clearly demarcate an incubatory period during which the landscapes, houses and characters of *The Buccaneers* gestated. In imaginatively transmuting English town and country houses, most notably Stanway in Gloucestershire, into fictional settings in her final, uncompleted novel, published posthumously in 1938, Wharton created ethnographical sites that signified essential British cultural habits and social relations.

What, then, do English houses and interiors in *The Buccaneers* signify, and how was Wharton's representation of these environments influenced by her actual experience of English country life during both the Edwardian era and the age of modernism? In other words, if, as Linda Hutcheon has argued, "the *langue* of architecture is in some ways no different from that of ordinary language. . . .

¹ R.W.B. Lewis notes, "In the spring of 1931, at scarcely twenty-eight, Clark was appointed keeper of the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford, which housed the richest small collection of art in the country" (*Edith Wharton: A Biography* [New York: Harper & Row, 1975], 498).

[embodying] certain culturally accepted values and meanings,"² what is the semiotics of the architectural and design vocabulary in the novel?

One may not be going too far in speaking of Honourslove, the ancestral estate of Sir Helmsley and Guy Thwarte on the edge of the Cotswolds, as the true protagonist of *The Buccaneers*, and indeed the house upon which it was modeled, Stanway, has been the subject of considerable anthropomorphism. The Jacobean country home of Wharton's closest English female friend, Lady (Mary Elcho) Wemyss and Lord Hugo Elcho, member of Parliament, Stanway was described by Vita Sackville-West as "a house that spent its summers in a 'deep slumbrous green' [and] that never failed to capture its visitors. . . ."³; and Lady Cynthia Asquith (the Elchos' daughter, married to the son of former Prime Minister Herbert H. Asquith) admitted she loved Stanway,

precisely as one loves a human being, loved it as I have loved very few human beings. I could never go away without a formal leave-taking. 'How are you?' I would ask on return, gazing up at the gabled front to absorb its beauty like a long, lovely draught, and I fancied that it smiled back a welcome.⁴

Wharton's friendship with Lord and Lady Elcho quickly developed in 1908 when she was a guest at Clivedon, the William Waldorf Astors' imposing country house on the Thames. A letter to Sally Norton dated 3 December of that year details her enjoyment of "a large & very charming party" that included, in addition to the Elchos, the Duchess of Manchester (the former Consuelo Yznaga); Arthur James Balfour, British Prime Minister from 1902-1905, who had been Lady Elcho's lover since the early days of her marriage;⁵ Lord Ribblesdale, Prime Minister Asquith's brother-in-law; and Wharton and James's friend Howard Sturgis. Wharton observed that "It was easy & pleasant, & we all got on well with each other,"⁶ so well that she was then invited to Stanway for a weekend house party in her honor. Wharton cherished memories of this weekend in December not only because of her love of Stanway itself, but also because it was on this occasion that she encountered two male friends who would later belong to her inner circle, Robert Norton and John Hugh Smith.⁷

² Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), 25.

³ Jane Brown, *Vita's Other World: A Gardening Biography of V. Sackville-West* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 164.

⁴ Cynthia Asquith, *Remember and Be Glad*, qtd. in Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere, *The Souls* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984), 102.

⁵ R.W.B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton* 243.

⁶ R.W.B. and Nancy Lewis, eds., *The Letters of Edith Wharton* (New York: Scribner's, 1988), 167.

⁷ Lewis, *Letters*, 363. Lewis's biography of Wharton provides detailed backgrounds of both these members of her inner circle. Wharton claimed that John Hugh Smith was "the most brilliant young man I have met in England," and immediately subsequent to their December weekend at Stanway she and Hugh Smith "met up again at Cirencester, Abingdon, and Queen's Acre" (244-45). Her friendship with Norton developed more slowly, but both men remained extremely close to Wharton until her death almost thirty years later.

"Stanway was one of the most beautiful, though not the largest, of English aristocratic homes, and the Edwardian world glimmered there as perhaps nowhere else,"⁸ observes R.W.B. Lewis, to which Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere add, "It could said that Stanway was the home of the Souls."⁹ This group who gathered at Stanway round Lady Elcho included H.G. Wells, J.M. Barrie, Harry Cust, Violet, Duchess of Rutland, Wharton's friend Lady Desborough, Lord Curzon, and, as high priest, Balfour himself; however, in *The Buccaneers* Wharton could not allude to their contribution to the house's ambiance because of the earlier historical setting of the novel. Instead, she dwelled upon the house itself.

A diary entry for July 16, 1932 indicates that on that particular day Wharton returned to Stanway for the first time in over two decades, yet later diary entries and her correspondence with Mary Wemyss during the 1930s suggest that during the final years of her life Wharton made amends for this dereliction.¹⁰ She returned again in July 1933, and her correspondence with Lady Wemyss thereafter is laced with references to Stanway. Two years later Wharton wrote, "How can I tell you, on this little 'scrap of paper,' all that those peaceful days at Stanway did for me. . . . Thank you again for everything, dearest Mary, there is healing in the air of Stanway, & I feel so much better for my quiet days with you there."¹¹ On 3 December of that year she sent her "many greetings to you all & to the perfect Stanway," writing the next month, "I cannot wait longer to tell you how much I enjoyed your delightful chronicle of Stanway," and concluding "Affectionate greetings to Stanway, and my best love to you."¹² Not long before both their deaths

Although Lewis states that Wharton met Robert Norton at Stanway in December 1908 at the same time she was introduced to John Hugh Smith, Shari Benstock contends that Wharton met Norton in 1905 and in fact introduced him to John Hugh Smith in autumn 1908. See *No Gifts from Chance: A Biography of Edith Wharton* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), 196.

⁸ Lewis, *Edith Wharton*, 243.

⁹ *The Souls*, 103.

¹⁰ Lewis notes that in her visit to England in July 1931 Wharton renewed her friendship with Mary, Countess of Wemyss, "whom Edith had first known at Stanway as Lady Elcho. Edith had caught only passing glimpses of her old friend in the years since her husband had been elevated to the earldom of Wemyss, but from this moment forward the two aging women grew very close to each other. Although Lady Wemyss now had to support herself with two canes, she remained in youthful spirits, impulsive and charmingly scatterbrained" (*Edith Wharton*, 500).

¹¹ Edith Wharton to Mary Wemyss, 12 July 1935. Wharton's correspondence with Mary Wemyss during this period suggests a growing intimacy not only with Stanway but also its mistress. An early letter from October 1915, consoling Lady Elcho on the death of one of the two sons she lost during the War, is addressed to "Dear Lady Weymss," and as late as 12 July 1934 Wharton still observes this formality, writing "Dearest Lady Wemyss"; however, a postscript encourages her correspondent to "[p]lease drop the Wharton in writing to me. I'd so much rather be just Edith." This appeal seems to have brought direct results, for a year later, in a letter dated 3 December 1935, Wharton begins "Dearest Mary," and all of her subsequent correspondence exhibits the same familiarity. All these letters are in the Stanway archives.

¹² Edith Wharton to Mary Wemyss, 23 January 1936. A letter from Wharton to Lady Wemyss dated 14 July of that year opens, "I am still yearning back to Stanway, though the kindness of the Clarks in taking me in during my brief London visit has made my two

in 1937, Wharton wrote to Lady Wemyss about Lord Balfour's multi-volume biography, again sending "[b]est greetings to all at Stanway" and her "devoted love" to its proprietress.¹³

It is clear, then, that her attachment to Stanway and its inhabitants profoundly influenced Wharton's attitudes toward England during the time she was formulating, and then working upon, *The Buccaneers*. Having been away from the house for twenty years, she must certainly have seen Stanway as embodying an irretrievable past rendered as remote as the pyramids by the age of modernism. Thus, in transforming Stanway into Honourslove in *The Buccaneers*, Wharton created an ethnographical space that in effect captured what she revered in English character, values and taste, as epitomized by Stanway and its gracious owners. Anticipating the phenomenon of the historic English country house as tourist site, Stanway, as Honourslove, becomes an archaeological exhibition. Correspondences in the houses' geographical locations, distinguishing architectural features, interiors, and, to a lesser degree, landscape designs constitute an indoor/open air museum of conspicuous leisure.

Like Stanway, Honourslove is set on the edge of the Cotswolds, at the foot of its hills, and numerous details of the house's environs suggest this particular part of Gloucestershire:

Red Farm, where the famous hazel copse was, Ausprey with its decaying Norman church, Little Ausprey with the old heronry at the Hall, Odcote, Sudcote, Lowdon, the ancient borough with its market cross and its rich minster—all were thick with webs of memory for the youth whose people had so long been rooted in their soil. (109)

This panorama, which is in fact not visible from Stanway, underscores Honourslove's intimate ties, as an aristocratic seat, with the surrounding countryside. Although the lower terraces from which this view is possible do not correspond with the physical setting of Stanway,¹⁴ the "blue reaches" beyond the

or three days here unexpectedly pleasant." Kenneth and Jane Clark's house was on Portland Place. Correspondence of Mary Wemyss, Stanway archives, Stanway, Gloucestershire.

¹³ Edith Wharton to Lady Wemyss, 7 November 1936, Stanway archives. In a letter to Gaillard Lapsley, dated 2 April 1936, Wharton confided that during her final years Lady Wemyss, whom she had known to be "a lovely and captivating creature: tall, queenly, impulsive, self-deceptive, scatterbrained, and given to mystical visions of hopeful or fearful variety" (Lewis, *Edith Wharton*, 244), had become somewhat feeble-minded. She observed, "Lady Wemyss is here with Wilky, & I gave her your message about Elcho. If a faint glimmer reached her as to Elcho's identity, I can hardly say as much about yours; though she did, suddenly, & long afterward, tie you with fluttering fingers to the Navarros, but the knot, I imagine, was soon untied. The poor inner room seems emptier than ever, & if anything were ever needed to teach me to value the precious gift of the *vie intérieure*, it is the old age of some of my English great lady friends, with minds unfurnished by anything less concrete than the Grand National!" (qtd. in Lewis, *Letters* 593).

¹⁴ In her unpublished M.A. thesis titled "Edith Wharton's Methods of Revealing Character Through a Design Vocabulary," Lorraine C. Frankle suggests that "by adding a terrace to one side of Honourslove and breaking the sheltering hills" of Stanway to provide this view, Wharton was able to create, in the hamlet below, "a visible symbol of [the Thwarte

terraces suggest the actual landscape between Stanway and Broadway, five or six miles away. Both "Odcote" and "Sudcote" suggest Hidcote, and Lowdon bears a marked resemblance to Stow-on-the-Wold, with its market-cross and minster. Closer to home, Honourslove is described as being "approached from the village by a drive under ancient beech-trees" and lying "like so many old dwellings in England ... in a hollow, screened to the north by hanging woods, and surveying from its many windows only its own lawns and trees" (106). The visitor to Stanway today will immediately recognize this as the approach to, as well as the physical situation of, the house.

The exterior of Honourslove and architectural features of its surrounding buildings are also strikingly parallel to their actual counterparts. Wharton describes Honourslove as an "irregular silver-gray building" with a "honey-coloured" front,¹⁵ suggesting Stanway House, which is faced in mellow golden ashlar, the stone that distinguishes its gatehouse (c. 1630), fourteenth-century tithe barn, cottages, and twelfth-century church. This latter physical setting is enlisted by Wharton when Guy Thwarte turns "the flank of the house" and passes "under the sculptured lintel of the chapel" (268). The southern doorway of St Peter, the church originally belonging to the abbey of Tewkesbury that adjoins Stanway House, features geometric ornament cut into the chamfers of its inner jambs, surmounted by an arch over the outer jambs that was remade in the sixteenth century.¹⁶ The façades of both houses correspond even more closely. Annabel looks up at Honourslove's "long honey-coloured front . . . with the great carven shield above the door, and the quiet lines of cornice and window frames" (136-7). Similarly, David Verey describes the front of Stanway as presenting "an unbroken range of triple mullioned and transomed

family's] emotional, historical, and physical ties to the area" (Harvard University, June 1993), 73.

¹⁵ *The Buccaneers*, 106 & 136. Although Frankle contends that Wharton would have resolved the discrepancy between references to Honourslove as both "silver-gray" and "honey-coloured" in subsequent drafts of the novel (74), these varying descriptions were likely quite deliberate. *Gloucestershire: A Shell Guide* (London: Faber, 1952) states that the "honey-coloured stone of the Cotswolds has been described as the noblest building stone of warm light-taking grey in all England" (62). Elsewhere in this guide David Verey describes the particular quality of Cotswold stone:

There is no doubt that much of the beauty of the Cotswolds lies in its stone churches and other old buildings made out of oolite. It can shade from yellow, through cream to deep brown. The variations in colour are due to an iron mineral called Limonite, so that in some areas where the rock is richer in this iron (more ferruginous) we can get deeper yellows and browns. . . . (68)

In *The Pattern of English Building*, Alec Clifton-Taylor writes:

Nothing is more striking about Cotswold buildings than the visual accord which they achieve with the landscape in which they are placed. . . . In the Cotswolds the buildings themselves, even the barns, are of such high quality that at every turn it is they that we notice first. The landscape here plays second fiddle: it is the background, the mise-en-scène, the frame. That is why, for those who cherish our building heritage, the Cotswolds occupy a special place. . . . (*Gloucestershire 2: The Vale and the Forest of Dean*, series editor Nikolaus Pevsner [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970], 68-9).

¹⁶ David Verey, *Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds*, series editor Nikolaus Pevsner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 415.

windows, pairs below each of three of the four gables, with one in the interspace, and the bay window under the fourth gable. There are no enrichments other than the Georgian entablature of the entrance doorway."¹⁷ In addition, both the fictional and actual houses are distinguished by fluted chimney stacks that can be sighted from a great distance."¹⁸ That the scenes set at Honourslove in the 1995 BBC mini-series of *The Buccaneers* were actually shot at Stanway was certainly not adventitious.

The descriptions of the interior of Honourslove also yield a treasure-trove of correspondences with Stanway as well as functioning as a sign system for Wharton's moral and aesthetic judgements. For example, Annabel and Guy's discovery of their mutual understanding of "the *beyondness* of things" (137), marking the beginning of their spiritual odyssey, is played out on the terrace just beyond the hall, one of Stanway's most distinguished architectural features. In marked contrast to the traditional arrangement of a Tudor house, with its overgrown center hall attacked by Wharton and Ogden Codman, Jr. in *The Decoration of Houses* as an archaic inconvenience remaining from feudal times, the rooms of Stanway "are in a long s-facing range, abutting on to the rear of the hall, thus making an L-shaped plan, with the great bay window of the hall on the extreme end of the front."¹⁹ The warm, honey-coloured stone walls of this dramatic hall are adorned by old tapestries, also included in Wharton's description of Honourslove.²⁰

One of the most salient correspondences between Stanway House and Honourslove, however, is the mingling of predominately eighteenth-century furniture with Pre-Raphaelite, "aesthetic" artwork and decoration that distinguishes both interior settings.²¹ In the case of Stanway this curious mixture of periods and styles resulted from some unobtrusive changes made to the house by Lady Wemyss and her husband, Lord Elcho. We have already noted that the influence of the Edwardian "Souls" upon Stanway's "personality" postdated the historical setting of the novel; however, both houses contain artwork from the earlier Pre-Raphaelite period. Readers of *The Buccaneers* will recall that through the Pre-Raphaelites Wharton introduces an historical allusion into the novel.²² Laura Testvalley's cousin

¹⁷ Verey, *Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds*, 415-16.

¹⁸ *The Buccaneers*, 267-8.

¹⁹ Verey, *Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds*, 415.

²⁰ On page 345 of *The Buccaneers*, Wharton writes, "He [Guy] and Annabel, at the day's end, had drifted out again to the wide terrace. They had visited the old house, room by room, lingering long over each picture, each piece of rare old furniture or tapestry, and already the winter afternoon was fading out in crimson distances overhung by twilight.

²¹ Abdy and Gere note that "Mary Elcho had been brought up in Clouds, a modern, 'aesthetic' house, idealistically planned to the smallest detail; yet she did not seek to alter Stanway. A few evidences of her taste are there, some William Morris fabrics covering chairs and special papers in the bedrooms, but she wisely let Stanway keep all its unselfconscious beauty, which remained intact even when the house was filled by her sociable children, their many guests, and her numerous chow dogs" (102).

²² In her completed version of *The Buccaneers*, Marion Mainwaring extends Wharton's inclusion of Rosetti into the realm of historiographic metafiction, first having Annabel, Miss Testvalley and Sir Helmsley pay a call upon Rosetti at Tudor House on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, and then having Annabel shelter with the Testavaglias in Denmark Hill, southeast London, after her escape from the Duke and Folyat House. To these references

is Dante Gabriel Rosetti, and Sir Helmsley's study contains, along with Sieneese predellas and "bold unsteady water-colours and charcoal sketches by Sir Helmsley himself," a "small jewel-like picture in a heavy frame, with D.G. Rosetti inscribed beneath" (117). In decorating Sir Helmsley's study, Wharton appears to have been influenced by at least one painting in the collection of Sir Hugo and Lady Mary Elcho. Lorraine Frankle has observed, "At Stanway there is no Rosetti, but there is a similar portrait of a young woman of soulful aspect, painted by Burne-Jones and hung in a small room covered in William Morris wallpaper."²³

In addition to the little Rosetti madonna that hangs over the desk in the study—a painting which Sir Helmsley himself copies, so well that Miss Testvalley promises to show his watercolor to her cousin—there is also "a portrait of a tall thin woman in white, her fair hair looped over a narrow diadem," who looks forth "from the dim background, expressionless, motionless, white." The portrait is of Guy's mother, beautiful but unpaintable, according to Sir Helmsley; "even [Sir John Everett] Millais found her so" (117-18). Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere have observed that "Lady Elcho is best known to posterity through [John Singer] Sargent's masterpiece, *The Wyndham Sisters*,"²⁴ an oil painting from 1899 that now hangs in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In this painting, the three daughters of the Honourable Percy Wyndham, who were immediately dubbed "The Three Graces" by the Prince of Wales, are dressed in white gowns and posed against a dark background, suggesting yet another reworking by Wharton of the actual into the fictional.

The landscape at Honourslove is presented in less detail, though Wharton does write of the flags of the terrace, "the shady banks of the Love" with a "little glen far below," gardens leading "to the chapel, hooded with ivy at the gates of the park," lavender-borders, "hundreds of feet of rosy brick hung with peaches and nectarines," and an "old fig-tree heavy with purple fruit in a sheltered corner" (135). Considering the author's passion for horticulture, attested to by the gardens of Pavillon Colombe and the Château Sainte-Claire, whose terrace may have suggested that of the fictional Honourslove, as well as her non-fictional writing and letters to friends such as Louis Bromfield, gardens do not generally play a pronounced role in Wharton's fiction, so that even these descriptions are

Mainwaring adds that John Ruskin, "also of Denmark Hill, had become the apostle of Dante Gabriel and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" (374).

²³ Frankle, 77. Wharton was in fact personally acquainted with Edward Coley Burne-Jones's son, the painter Sir Philip Burne-Jones, having been introduced to him by Mary St. Helier at Portland Place in 1908, just before her first visit to Stanway. See Lewis, *Edith Wharton*, 242 and Benstock, 194. Abdy and Gere note,

The two children of Burne-Jones, Mrs Mackail and Philip Burne-Jones, were frequent guests [at Stanway]. As a painter Philip was overshadowed by his father; he was a charming and gentle man much given to hypochondria. . . . He gave Mary Elcho an exquisite watercolour of Henry James's story *The Madonna of the Future*, indicating perhaps the feeling of futility he had about his own art. (*The Souls*, 111)

²⁴ *The Souls*, 108. The sisters of Sargent's canvas, which was painted in the drawing-room of their home on Belgrave Square, are Lady Elcho, Mrs. Tennant (Pamela), and Mrs. Adeane (Madelaine), daughters of the Honourable Percy Wyndham. Sargent arranged the women so that their mother was looking down upon them in the background from the portrait George Frederick Watt painted of her in 1877 (100).

noteworthy. Still, the scene could just as easily belong to the south of France, and what strikes the reader who has had the privilege of visiting Stanway is certainly not the resemblance of the garden at Honourslove to this property; rather, one cannot help noticing how little this fictional garden resembles its actual counterpart.

Today officially known as Stanway Baroque Water Gardens, the "remnants of an early eighteenth century garden,"²⁵ the house's landscaped park immediately predates the pernicious influence upon garden design that Wharton attributed to Brown and Repton in *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*. Lord Neidpath, Earl of Wemyss, has suggested that Charles Bridgeman may have had his hand in its design.²⁶ However, the pyramid folly at the top of the hill behind the house, with its cascade down to the water garden, is attributed to Stephen Switzer, who coined the term "forest style" to describe the country retreats of his day and developed an elaborate system of hydraulic engineering for creating ornamental fountains and cascades as in the water garden at Stanway.²⁷

In imagining what about Stanway's garden so appealed to Wharton, one might consider Jane Brown's argument that, as early as the time of her landscape design for The Mount, her Massachusetts home, Wharton's tastes "had veered from the French to the English," resulting, according to Brown, in "no less than a designed disaster."²⁸ Reserving judgment on the merits of the garden design of The Mount, we can see that the hostility expressed toward English gardens in *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* belonged to Wharton's early writing and was specifically directed at Capability Brown and Repton. An explanation for Wharton's growing attraction to English gardens can be found in Diane McGuire's observation that in England "architecture and architectural spatial concepts had been reintroduced and had replaced the romantic landscape style of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." McGuire adds that "In the development of the architectural, structural style of the English garden that so greatly influenced [Beatrix] Farrand, it is clearly

²⁵ "Stanway Baroque Water Gardens," Garden History, Visit and Travel Guide, <http://www.gardenvisit.com/g/stanw.html>.

²⁶ Lord Neidpath has also observed, in support of Wharton's views, that Capability Brown, who apprenticed under Bridgeman, destroyed a lot of the latter's valuable work at Stowe, where during the 1710s and 1720s Bridgeman was garden designer of the English Baroque park, of which Sir John Vanburgh was the architect. Personal interviews with Lord Neidpath, Earl of Wemyss, 12 February 2002 and 10 Feb. 2003.

²⁷ Switzer published *The Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener's Recreation* in 1715, which became the first volume of his *Ichnographia Rustica* in 1718. Switzer's works included *The Practical Fruit Gardener* (1724) and *A Compendious Method for the Raising of the Italian Broccoli* (1728). The most relevant of his works to Stanway, however, is *An Introduction to a General System of Hydrostaticks and Hydraulicks . . .* (1729, 2 vols.), a comprehensive document on hydraulic engineering. Having been trained by George London and Henry Wise, Switzer drew on recent discoveries in physics in detailing methods for creating reservoirs, aqueducts, basins, ornamental fountains, water organs, and cascades.

²⁸ As support for her argument that Wharton's assumptions about French, and especially Italian, gardens resulted in this designed disaster, Brown recalls an anecdote told in Percy Lubbock's *Portrait of Edith Wharton*, in which Ambassador Joseph Hodges Choate remarked from The Mount's terrace, "Ah, Mrs Wharton, when I look about me I don't know whether I'm in England or in Italy" (qtd. in Jane Brown, *Beatrix: The Gardening Life of Beatrix Jones Farrand 1872-1959* [New York: Viking, 1995], 80).

seen that the models are the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian villas and their gardens written about by Charles Platt and Farrand's aunt, Edith Wharton.²⁹

However, with the exception of Honourslove, the aesthetic qualities of the other English houses and gardens in *The Buccaneers* are not met with unqualified approval. Quite the contrary. Take, for example, Allfriars, the palatial country home of Lord and Lady Brightlingsea, two of whose sons marry American parvenus, including Nan's older sister, Virginia. Though the St George sisters have "never seen anything as big as the house at Allfriars except a public building," and their first glimpse is "of Inigo Jones's most triumphant expression of the Palladian dream," Virginia shivers and remarks that "it's just like a gaol" (119). One is here reminded that the Villa Trissino in Meledo, one of Palladio's most influential works, affected the design of Sir John Vanbrugh's Blenheim Palace, the magnificent lake, plantations of trees, and lawns of which were the creation of Capability Brown.³⁰ Somewhat ironically, these lawns were cleared and replaced by Charles, the ninth Duke of Marlborough, whose first American Duchess was Consuelo Vanderbilt.

Consuelo Vanderbilt's union with "Sunny" Marlborough can be viewed as the most relevant international marriage to *The Buccaneers*. In light of Wharton's equation of the Gothic with barbarism, Consuelo's recollection that "Marlborough proposed to me in the gothic room where the atmosphere was so propitious to sacrifice" seems apt.³¹ There are obvious correspondences not only between Consuelo's scandalous divorce from the ninth duke and Nan St George's projected elopement from the Duke of Tintagel but also between the Palladian Allfriars, the setting of Virginia St George's marriage to Lord Seadown, the eldest Brightlingsea son, and Blenheim. As an ethnographical space, Allfriars, with its big domed hall and Vandyke salon, represents a faded splendor, and its worn armchairs, moth-eaten trophies of the chase, and disintegrating tapestries set it apart from Honourslove, which Nan finds "warm, cared-for, [and] exquisitely intimate" after "the shabby vastness of Allfriars" (136). The reader cannot help sensing a correlation between the neglected condition of the house and the fading traditions its walls embody.

Even more heavily encoded with ethnographical implications is another of the large country houses in the novel, Longlands, the Somerset home of the Duke of Tintagel. Part III of *The Buccaneers* opens with Nan, now Duchess of Tintagel, gazing out the windows of the Correggio room, which overlook what is "known as the Duchess's private garden, a floral masterpiece designed by the great Sir Joseph Paxton, of Chatsworth and Crystal Palace fame" (239). This garden, in direct defiance

²⁹ Diane Kostial McGuire, Introduction to *Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872-1959): Fifty Years of American Landscape Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1982), 6-7. McGuire adds that Farrand, "at an early age, became a true and lifelong anglophile. It is a point of fundamental importance to an understanding of her artistic development because it is the Englishness of formal garden design that is at the center of her artistic development" (7).

³⁰ See James S. Ackerman, *Palladio* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), 177; and David Green, "Blenheim: The Contribution of Achille Duchêne and the Ninth Duke," in *Blenheim: Landscape for a Palace*, ed. James Bond and Kate Tiller (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2000), 127. Dorothy Stroud has argued that "Blenheim is surely the most outstanding of all Brown's works" (see Intro. to *Blenheim*, 1).

³¹ Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan, *The Glitter and the Gold* (Maidstone, Kent: George Mann, 1973), 40.

of William Robinson's dictum to "attend to nature, to natural forms in landscaping and to the loveliness of the plants themselves,"³² is in fact a Veblenian monument to conspicuous consumption: "Beyond an elaborate cast-iron fountain swarmed over by chaste divinities, and surrounded by stars and crescents of bedding plants, an archway in the wall of yew and holly led down a grass avenue to the autumnal distances of the home park."³³ The Correggio room itself exhibits a similar aesthetic of misused wealth. "Large and luxurious," with dark green velvet walls "framed in heavily carved and gilded oak," it is an interior exercise in conspicuous display:

Everything about its decoration and furnishings—the towering malachite vases, the ponderous writing-table supported on winged geniuses in ormolu, the heavily foliated wall-lights, the Landseer portrait, above the monumental chimney piece . . . all testified to a sumptuous "re-doing", doubtless dating from the day when the present Dowager had at last presented her lord with an heir.³⁴

³² Alastair Service, "Sir Reginald Blomfield: An Edwardian Architect," (book review), *Journal of Garden History* 6.2 (April-June 1986: 181).

³³ *The Buccaneers*, 239. The stars and crescents of bedding plants described by Wharton remind one of William Robinson's aversion to the "bedding-out" system in English gardens in which carpet beds of plants of uniform height gave the appearance of tufts of carpet. In her 1984 introduction to *The English Flower Garden*, Deborah Nevins argues that Robinson's book "was written as a polemic against what Robinson referred to as 'the ugliest gardens ever made.' What he was raging about were the stylized formulas of the Victorian garden, and particularly its bedding-out technique" (Nevins, Intro. to William Robinson, *The English Flower Garden*, 15th ed. [Sagaponack, N.Y.: Sagapress, 1984], xiii-xiv). That Robinson, a close friend and mentor to Wharton's niece, the landscape gardener Beatrix Farrand, himself had a very low opinion of English gardens, with the exception of humble cottage gardens, is important to our understanding of Wharton's ambivalent attitudes toward garden design in England. See Henry Mitchell, "Foreword to the 1984 Edition" of *The English Flower Garden*, vi.

³⁴ *The Buccaneers*, 245. Significantly, Nan, embodying the invigorating energy of the New World, finds the Correggio room, its walls smothered in kitsch, "stupid" and "oppressive," with the exception of the paintings that give the room its name:

on three of the velvet-panelled walls hung the famous Correggios; in the half-dusk of an English November they were like rents in the clouds, tunnels of radiance reaching to pure sapphire distances. Annabel looked at the golden limbs, the parted lips gleaming with laughter, the abandonment of young bodies under shimmering foliage. On dark days, and there were many, these pictures were her sunlight. (245-6)

At first Nan was surprised that her mother-in-law could have lived in this boudoir surrounded by scenes that would have embarrassed her own mother, but "gradually she understood that in a world so solidly buttressed as the Dowager Duchess's by precedents, institutions and traditions, it would have seemed more subversive to displace the pictures" (246). She later admits to Guy Thwarte that one day she took down all the family mementoes from the closely covered walls,

"illuminated views of Vesuvius in action . . . landscapes by the Dowager Duchess's great-aunts, funereal monuments worked in hair on faded silk, and photographs in heavy oak frames of ducal relatives, famous horse-races, Bishops in lawn sleeves, and undergraduates grouped around sporting trophies", leaving only the Correggios, but that her shocked mother-in-law immediately insisted that every single picture be

Commenting on Edwin Landseer's painting "The Monarch of the Glen," Wharton's close friend Kenneth Clark observed that it "epitomizes the self-satisfaction of the Victorian ruling class—masterful, courageous, aggressively masculine, dominating the whole environment."³⁵ Though Wharton's imagined portrait suggests that the canvas, like those Landseer painted of Queen Victoria and prominent families of the nobility, depicts a Tintagel ancestor (probably the late Duke) rather than wildlife, it serves the same purpose. That the present Duke is no such masculine authority in itself relates to this signification. Just as Allfriars has become shabby, Longlands has experienced a corresponding decline, not only in hegemonic, but also aesthetic, standing.

One might think that the Duke's country house near Tintagel Castle, which itself belongs to his domains, would be less aesthetically compromised simply because of its romantic site, and indeed Nan immediately responds to the "rich low murmur of the past" whispered by this castle built upon the cliffs of Cornwall: "Though the walls of Tintagel were relatively new, they were built on ancient foundations, and crowded with the treasures of the past" (249). On close examination, however, the reader discovers that this "new" Tintagel, unlike Honourslove, reveals a disturbed relationship between the aspirations it embodies and the spiritual lives of its ducal inhabitants:

Hitherto Longlands, the seat in Somersetshire, had been imposing enough even for a Duke; but its owner [the present Duke's father] had always been troubled by the fact that the new castle at Tintagel, built for his great-grandfather in the approved Gothic style of the day, and with the avowed intention of surpassing Inveraray, had never been inhabited. The expense of completing it, and living in it in a suitable state, appeared to have discouraged its creator; and for years it stood abandoned on its Cornish cliff, a sadder ruin than the other, until it passed to the young Duke's father. To him it became a torment, a reproach, an obsession; the Duke of Tintagel must live at Tintagel as the Duke of Argyll lived at Inveraray, with a splendour befitting the place; and the carrying out of this resolve had been the late Duke's crowning achievement. (167-68)

Although the Gothic style in which the castle was executed had been the architectural fashion of its day, Wharton elsewhere forcefully expressed her opinion on "the obsolete complications of Gothic house-planning and structure," and once again her objections were overtly grounded in ethnographical considerations. *The Decoration of Houses* suggests that Gothic architectural details resulted from attitudes fostered by "centuries of feudal life, with its surface of savagery and violence and its undercurrents of treachery"; furthermore, the "exaggerated estimate of the importance of [these] details" is "very characteristic of an imperfect culture." The exotic architectural conventions of the Gothic castle signified a barbaric desire for security and isolation "long after the advance of civilization had made [such]

returned. Now it occurs to Nan that the only way to enjoy the real beauty of the Correggios might be "to send them back where they belong" (285).

³⁵ Kenneth Clark, *Animals and Men* (New York: William Morrow, 1977), 102.

precautions unnecessary."³⁶ A further implied criticism of the new Tintagel is its overtly Veblenian motive to achieve invidious distinction for its proprietors, an ambition that in fact rendered the house inhabitable for several generations.³⁷

Nan prefers to reside in the new Tintagel, for the dower-house is oppressively close to Longlands, but her real attachment in Cornwall is to the land, the sea, and the genuine Tintagel Castle. Unfortunately, an earlier chance meeting between the Duke and Annabel on a romantic foggy day set into motion events that led to their disastrous marriage,³⁸ though Nan will "not admit to herself that her first sight of the ruins of the ancient Tintagel had played a large part in her wooing" (249). Her refusal to acknowledge this causal relationship underscores Annabel's mistake in identifying the romantic locale of Tintagel Castle with its owner.³⁹ The

³⁶ *The Decoration of Houses*, 109. Wharton and Codman's observations here are in reference to the evolution of the French château, but they should equally apply to the revival of the Gothic in English domestic architecture during the eighteenth century.

³⁷ In *The Theory of the Leisure Class* Veblen argued, "Under the regime of individual ownership the most available means of visibly achieving a purpose is that afforded by the acquisition and accumulation of goods; and as the self-regarding antithesis between man and man reaches fuller consciousness, the propensity for achievement—the instinct for workmanship—tends more and more to shape itself into a straining to excel others in pecuniary achievement" (31).

³⁸ Here Wharton's own experience of a locale and her fictional representation of it dovetail. Two entries in her diary for 1928 are particularly relevant. On July 24 she noted that she and Robert Norton left London in the morning in the latter's motor car, lunched at Exeter, and "[a]rrived 4:30 at King Arthur Hotel, Tintagel[,] in dense fog. After tea, fog lifted. Wonderful hour scrambling at headland. Fog again." The following day she recorded, "Thick fog. Left Tintagel about 9:30 for Clovelly. Fog lifted. Clovelly exquisite. Walked down + up again. Drove Hobby Drive, Clovelly Court Park—arrived 4:30 Lynton. Walked in mist along headland" (Wharton, personal diary, entries for 24 and 25 July 1928, in the Lilly Library of Indiana University).

In *The Buccaneers*, Nan, on a visit to Cornwall in the company of Laura Testvalley, encounters the Duke of Tintagel under identical, if fictionally embellished, conditions. Seated alone in a corner of the garden at the inn where she is staying in nearby Trevennick, Annabel observes a sudden sea-drama:

A twist of the wind had whirled away the fog, and there of a sudden lay the sea in metallic glitter, with white clouds storming over it, hiding and then revealing the fiery blue sky between. (177)

Nan speeds toward the downs above the village to meet the gale, arriving at Tintagel Castle, whereupon Wharton effects a critical dramatic scene in the novel:

When the Duke of Tintagel reached the famous ruin from which he took his name, another freak of the wind had swept the fog in again. The sea was no more than a hoarse sound on an invisible shore, and he climbed the slopes through a cloud filled with the stormy clash of sea-birds. . . .

. . . he reached the upper platform of the castle, and looked down through a break in the fog at the savage coast-line. . . .

He had thought he had the wild place to himself, but as he advanced toward the edge of the platform he perceived that his solitude was shared by a young lady who, as yet unaware of his presence, stood wedged in a coign of the ramparts, absorbed in the struggle between wind and sea. (178)

³⁹ Wharton writes of the Duke, "He liked the idea that a place so ancient and renowned belonged to him, was a mere milestone in his race's long descent"(178). Susan Goodman has argued that Nan here repeats Newland Archer's mistake in *The Age of Innocence* in

incongruity between person and place in the Duke's relation with all his properties is in direct contrast to the symbiosis that exists between Guy Thwarte and Honourslove. Here Annabel intuitively grasps the elemental relationship that can exist between an environment and its occupants. She comes to understand that people who live in certain ancient and lovely houses "have them in their bones" and even senses that "some secret thread of destiny" attaches her to this "soft mellow place" (163; 136).

We see, then, that Wharton's movement from overt hostility toward English houses and gardens expressed in her writings from the early twentieth century to a kinder, gentler attitude at the time she wrote *The Buccaneers* was by no means an unqualified endorsement of English aesthetics, but that in the case of Honourslove she was creating an embodiment of a tradition she greatly valued. This tradition Thorstein Veblen labeled conspicuous leisure, "what is known as manners and breeding, polite usage, decorum, and formal and ceremonial observances generally":

So, for instance, in our time there is the knowledge of the dead languages and the occult sciences; of correct spelling; of syntax and prosody; of the various forms of domestic music and other household art, of the latest forms of dress, furniture, and equipage; of games, sports and fancy-bred animals, such as dogs and race-horses. (*The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 47)

Veblen argued that conspicuous leisure had gradually lost ground to conspicuous consumption because in the modern industrial system, where "[o]ne's neighbors, mechanically speaking, often are socially not one's neighbors, or even acquaintances . . . and still their transient good opinion has a high degree of utility . . . [t]he only practicable means of impressing one's pecuniary ability on these unsympathetic observers is an unremitting demonstration of the ability to pay" (71). At the outset these two forms of conspicuous waste were evenly divided in the field of pecuniary emulation and, so long as the community or social group was small and compact, one method of invidious distinction was as effective as the other. However,

when the differentiation has gone farther and it becomes necessary to reach a wider human environment, consumption begins to hold over leisure as an ordinary means of decency. This is especially true during the later, peaceable economic stage. The means of communication and the mobility of the population now expose the individual to the observation of many persons who have no other means of judging of his reputability than the display of goods (and perhaps of breeding) which he is able to make while he is under their direct observation. (71)

Thus, as communities increased in size and mobility, giving new shape to the value system of the Gilded Age, conspicuous consumption gained the upper hand as a means of repute "due partly to an increasing relative effectiveness of consumption as an evidence of wealth" (75).

assuming that one's surroundings are a reliable reflection of character, for "Ellen Olenska was not as different and exotic as her unconventional room, and the Duke is not as romantic as the ruins of Tintagel" (*Edith Wharton's Women: Friends & Rivals* [Hanover, New Hampshire: U P of New England, 1990], 141. This same view is expressed in Marion Mainwaring's completed version of *The Buccaneers*, in which she writes that Annabel "was seduced by the Celtic gloaming of Tintagel" (390).

Casting her backward glance upon the invasion of the Old World by American parvenus during the 1870s and 1880s, Wharton could see that the same forces that had stormed the citadel of Old New York also besieged London leisure class society. As the daughters of Wall Street speculators who were without attachment to the soil or to any fixed community, Wharton's buccaneers certainly represent a threat to the system of values represented by Honourslove, so that, within the prejudices of his class, Sir Helmsley's perception of them as polluting and desecrating its hallowed ground is not without some basis. In her previous fiction, especially *The Custom of the Country*, Wharton herself expressed an authorial disdain for, and alienation from, parvenu Americans, and while *The Buccaneers* was written in a mood of reconciliation, she still clearly felt a need to distance herself from the pecuniary canons of taste to which the nouveaux riches subscribed.

In making Honourslove the quintessential English county house of conspicuous leisure, as well as the spiritual center of her novel, Wharton linked its value system to the Marvell and Archer houses and other symbolic representations of the genteel tradition in her novels of Old New York. The difference, however, is that Honourslove endures because England, unlike its rebellious colony, has not entirely wasted its leisure class. Nevertheless, the arrival of her buccaneers in London suggests that, while far more deeply rooted in vital traditions and observances, conspicuous leisure in Britain was also under attack during the Gilded Age and already on the wane. Indeed, Wharton's embedded critique of the Duke of Tintagel's houses is that their aesthetic has been compromised by the forces of conspicuous consumption; and with the parvenu invasion of the great English country houses, national symbols of conspicuous leisure, the victory of the consumption ethic is assured.

On the other hand, Sir Helmsley and Guy are undisguised agents of conspicuous leisure. Sir Helmsley was "born with the passionate desire to be an accomplished example of his class: the ideal English squire, the model landowner, crack shot, leader and champion of all traditionally British pursuits and pleasures," though at the same time he has been driven "toward art and poetry and travel" (112). Father and son share this love of the arts and collecting, and we are told of Guy that, to his less worldly neighbors, "it was incredible that a man so tall and well set-up, and such a brilliant point-to-point rider, should mess about with poetry or painting" (110-11). Lorraine Frankle has argued that to Wharton "Stanway became the embodiment of the English solution to her question of 'how to live,'" (78) and the life represented by Sir Helmsley and Guy at Honourslove is clearly antipathetic to the values of conspicuous consumption.

Even in her mellow mood of acceptance, then, Wharton felt compelled to distance herself from her New World buccaneers precisely because they were infected by these values, with the exception of Annabel, who is herself alienated by her sister's shallow obsession with fashion as well as the overt materialism and vulgar social ambition exhibited by the other invaders. Yet even Annabel, for all her intuitive recognition of the *beyondness* of things, is set apart from the Thwartes. She may appreciate, for example, the inner brightness of Honourslove, yet the narrator reminds us that she is "too ignorant to single out the details of all this beauty" (136). Nor would her love of beauty and spontaneity have permitted her entrée into the inner sanctum of conspicuous leisure had these not been backed by her father's capital.

However, in her visits to England during the Edwardian period, Wharton had been clearly drawn to British leisure class life and deemed herself worthy of acceptance into its ranks, not as an adventurer but as a professional writer and social equal. Shari Benstock has remarked that Wharton "wanted to be recognized by English high society, needing to taste its delights, rise to its occasions, and measure herself in its regard."⁴⁰ She clearly saw her own ambitions as set distinctly apart from the crude social aspirations of the earlier buccaneers, as her attachment to the cultural milieu of Stanway demonstrates. We have already noted that, to R.W.B. Lewis, the Edwardian world glimmered at Stanway as perhaps nowhere else: "the conversation ranged brilliantly over literature, science, politics, and art, it was the Stanway constituency which made these interests fashionable in a society led by a king who rarely opened a book."⁴¹ Wharton allows her buccaneers to penetrate the holy of holies at Honourslove, but it is clear that at Stanway a young lady as shallow as Virginia St George would have received short shrift.

In writing *The Buccaneers*, Wharton was now gazing at the "Atlantis-fate[s]" of both the 1870s and Edwardian times from the vantage point of the Great Depression, with yet another world conflagration blackening the horizon. Recounting in *A Backward Glance* the wanderings that had been the highlights of her later years, she mused "when I turn from them the sky darkens" (374). In the final years of her life, then, Wharton imagined her final fictional house as the perfect embodiment of what she had come to value not only in British society but in life itself. As Annabel observes,

life in England had a background, layers and layers of rich deep background, of history, poetry, old traditional observances, beautiful houses, beautiful landscapes, beautiful ancient buildings, palaces, churches, cathedrals. Would it not be possible, in some mysterious way, to create for one's self a life out of all this richness . . . ? (305)

Yet Wharton chose as the heroine of her novel an inexperienced, culturally ignorant Anglo-Saxon parvenu, and she chose as her hero a perfect physical embodiment of the dolicho-blond type of European man.⁴²

⁴⁰ *No Gifts from Chance*, 193-4. Benstock remarks of Wharton's extended visit in 1908 that "[e]ven before arriving to the late-summer warmth and golden sunshine in the British Isles, her mood and health had begun to improve. She slept and ate better."

⁴¹ Lewis, *Edith Wharton*, 241.

⁴² Nan's role as a baffled and untrained ethnographer is underscored in the following passage: "That was England, she thought; not only the English scene but the English life was perpetually muffled. The links between these people and their actions were mostly hidden from Annabel; their looks, their customs, their language, had implications beyond her understanding" (308).

In her completed version of *The Buccaneers*, Marian Mainwaring has emphasized Guy's blond Englishness in what is now unabashedly a romance.

In their eager, long first kiss, Nan trembled with pleasure; and as Guy's lips moved from her mouth to her closed eyes she gasped, clinging to him, "Oh, I do love you...." She was dazed, yet aware of her every pulse-beat, and of every breath of the body so close to hers. She ran her hands over the strong shoulders beneath the smooth broadcloth as Guy muttered against her cheek. . . . Nan, still in Guy's arms, and with her arms about him, half lost in a fiery sweetness, could still say: "No—I'm not too young now to know what *you* would lose if we married. I know what *you* have lost."

However, Guy is not categorically one of Veblen's predatory northern barbarians, for what most distinguishes Wharton's hero from these atavistic dolicho-blonds can be likened to what in Veblen's ethnographical discourse he called the alien factor of the instinct of workmanship.⁴³ Herein lies Wharton's reworking and even subversion of the international novel.

As a "detrimental," defined by Conchita Marable as a "young man that all the women are mad about, but who's too poor to marry" (131), Guy is expected to join his lineage and ancestral estate to a substantial fortune, though clearly his father insists that it not be American new money. However, having thrown over his training for a diplomatic career, a suitable occupation for a scion of conspicuous leisure, Guy instead braved his father's wrath and "settled down to a period of hard drudgery with an eminent firm of civil engineers who specialized in railway building." Although he was here motivated by the desire to make the large amount of money "needed to save Honourslove and keep it going," the fact remains that Guy "preferred making a fortune to marrying one" (109). At the time of the action in Part II of the novel, Guy acts on this preference by shipping out to Brazil, where he will in fact substantially add to his fortune by marrying into a wealthy family while working there as an engineer.⁴⁴

Thus Wharton in effect inverts the usual pattern of the international novel by having an aristocratic Englishman go to the New World to seek his fortune, through his own labor. When Guy returns to England in Part III, his wealthy Brazilian wife conveniently in the grave, he becomes bound to the heroine and, as Susan Goodman has observed, embraces a union that, had the novel been completed, would have resulted in "the one happy marriage in all of Wharton's fiction."⁴⁵ Guy and Nan experience a spiritual love that would have been condemned by parents, embodying conspicuous consumption on one side and conspicuous leisure on the other. And when the scandal of their elopement eventually subsided, Wharton's one happily married couple would undoubtedly have returned to Honourslove.

As Wharton's "solution" to the question of "how to live," Honourslove functions as a place of harmony and reconciliation. For example, in decorating her fictional house, the author obliquely signifies a concession regarding the northern race aesthetics she had lambasted in *The Decoration of Houses* and her books on Italy. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose visual art and poetry play an important part in the novel, is presented as an exotic living among Anglo-Saxon philistines, yet the fact

She pressed her head closer to his, stroking his thick fair hair. "You can't give up Parliament"(382).

⁴³ Veblen writes, "Other circumstances permitting, that instinct disposes men to look with favor upon productive efficiency and on whatever is of human use. It disposes them to deprecate waste of substance or effort" (*Theory of the Leisure Class*, 75).

⁴⁴ Marion Mainwaring, in fleshing out the details of Guy's Brazilian marriage, produces a socially correct hero for the 1990s. Though the rumors are that he made an unfortunate marriage but was luckily left a fortune (282), the truth is that when Guy "learned that his father-in-law was systematically working to death the enslaved men, women, and children who mined his ore, he had cut all financial ties with Don Carlos" (297).

⁴⁵ Goodman notes, however, that Nan's chance at happiness "can at first exist only outside of marriage, and unfortunately, her lover's name, Guy Thwarte, does not sound altogether promising" (*Edith Wharton's Women*, 42).

remains that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood "took their inspiration from the 'primitive' ["Late Gothic"] masters of the fifteenth century," and to that extent "belong to the Gothic revival."⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Pre-Raphaelite art, though rooted in the imperfect culture of the Gothic, graces the walls of Honourslove, above aesthetic reproach.⁴⁷ Even the mingling of seventeenth and eighteenth-century furniture with Arts and Crafts wall decorations within its interior suggests a harmony borne of integrated historical periods as well as the special qualities R.W.B. Lewis assigns to English country life at the time Wharton was introduced to the human-like Stanway: "a graciousness, a subdued alertness to the possibilities of life, a newly candid grappling with reality, and an imaginative energy in the air."⁴⁸

Furthermore, although Wharton's long-term residency in France, coupled with the disparaging remarks about Anglo-Saxon (dolicho-blond) race aesthetics she repeatedly made in her early non-fictional writing, attest to a strong Gallic-Italian partisanship, one should recall that in *A Backward Glance* Wharton wrote that she would have in fact preferred living in London to Paris.⁴⁹ Furthermore, had World War I not intervened, her plan was to tenant Hill Hall, Mary Hunter's country home near the Epping Forest in Essex.⁵⁰

In a letter to Jane Clark written from Stanway in July of 1936, a little over a year before her death, Edith Wharton, after recounting her long journey over the "lovely endless roads toward an elusive Gloucestershire," remarked, "Well, I've enjoyed it all, & Stanway is more incredibly beautiful than ever, & I'm glad of this sunset glimpse of it."⁵¹ In her twilight years, Wharton had returned to England,

⁴⁶ See H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, third ed., revised and expanded by Anthony F. Janson (New York, Abrams, 1986), 624-34.

⁴⁷ See Diane Balmori, "Campus Work and Public Landscapes," in Balmori, Diane Kostial McGuire and Eleanor M. McPeck, *Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes: Her Gardens and Campuses* (Sagaponack, New York: Sagapress, 1985), 131-3. To this Balmori adds, "Gothic tradition provided an alternative in countries such as England whose basic tradition was more recent and did not evolve from classicism. To both the Romantic and Arts & Crafts movements, the Christian Northern-European past offered the material for a new aesthetic that would surpass the one that had evolved from the culture of Greece and Rome."

⁴⁸ Lewis describes "the eighteenth-century drawing room at Stanway, with its Tudor ceilings and Queen Anne mirrors and log fires that warmed only so much of the body as was turned toward it" (*Edith Wharton* 244). It is a perfect description of an environment of conspicuous leisure. Just before this he notes, "It was with these more pleasing aspects of Edwardian England, in any case—the England of James Barrie and Henry James, of George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, of Rudyard Kipling and John Galsworthy, of country estates like Cliveden and Stanway—that Edith Wharton came in closest contact" (241).

⁴⁹ Wharton remarks of her years in the capital prior to the move to Pavillon Colombe, "Rich years, crowded and happy years; for though I should have preferred London, I should have been hard to please had I not discovered many compensations in my life in Paris" (*A Backward Glance*, 258).

⁵⁰ Lewis describes Hill Hall as a "genuinely stately home near Epping . . . a rust-colored mansion part Elizabethan and part William and Mary, and surrounded by breathtakingly lovely country that fell away from the superbly tended grounds toward Epping Forest" (*Edith Wharton*, 347).

⁵¹ Qtd. in Lewis, *Letters*, 596-7.

finding shelter in the gardens of Hidcote Manor and Stanway from what in her autobiography she described as "the brave new world predicted by Aldous Huxley, and already here in its main elements, a world in which so many sources of peace and joy are already dried up that the few remaining have a more piercing sweetness."⁵² Her sunset glimpse of the piercing sweetness of Stanway proved exactly that: in May of 1937 she recorded in her diary that Mary Wemyss had died suddenly in a Cheltenham nursing home, a "dreadful shock." Wharton was by this time as accustomed to death as one supposes possible, posing the question of why this particular death should have so devastated her.

Part of the answer to this question is provided by the diary entries she recorded just before this time, describing the inconsolable loss she experienced in the death of her beloved Pekinese, Linky. The entry for April 14 reads "I don't remember much of anything, for my Linky is leaving me. Eleven years of such friendship, + the last link with the vanished past."⁵³ After Linky's death, Wharton wrote Elisina Tyler of the ability she had had since infancy to communicate with dogs, crying out that she and Linky "really communicated with each other, and no one had such wise things to say as Linky...." Immediately after this disclosure is the following: "Well, I was down and out, and then came Lady Wemyss's death, a friend of thirty years. And I somehow slumped...."⁵⁴ Implicit to this remark is that Lady Wemyss was in fact the last human link with the vanished past, a past embodied by the mellow, honey-gold stone house in Gloucestershire that Wharton knew she would never see again.

On 3 June, on her way back to the Pavillon Colombe from Sainte Claire, Wharton suffered a stroke at Château de Grégy, the home of her friend Ogden Codman, Jr., with whom she had joined forces at the beginning of her writing career in decrying the lamentable race aesthetics of Anglo Saxons. Wharton lingered on at the Pavillon Colombe until August, and while we cannot know her exact thoughts during those sad months, it is more than likely that her imagination drifted back at times to the halcyon days at Stanway. As *Honourslove*, it had stood as the true protagonist of her final novel. In the uncompleted pages of *The Buccaneers*, Edith Wharton, the ethnographer-novelist, had already made her peace.

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⁵² *A Backward Glance*, 375.

⁵³ On 15 April, after the veterinarian had put Linky to sleep, Wharton wrote of her dog's ghost wailing at her bedside. Subsequent entries testify to the extent of her devastation: the entry for April 16 reads "Can't remember. Oh, my little dog"; April 17 continues "Still can't remember—all the place is haunted for me . . ." (Diary for 1937, Lilly Library, Indiana University)

⁵⁴ Qtd. in Lewis, *Letters*, 606.

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