

article. In *Worlds of KM* there is another printing mistake: “Ngaere” instead of “Nagare”. The page numbers are missing in C. R. Allen, “KM Legend” and in B. Brophy, “Don't Never Forget” (pp. 255-263). In L. Bogan, *Selected Criticism*, we do not get the publisher's name: Noonday Press. In B. Clarke, “KM's Illness” there is a printing mistake again: the number of the pages is before the date of publication and in J. M. Murry, “In Memory of KM” there is a number “1” after the year which is the number of the volume of *The Adelphi* where the article can be found. Philip Waldron, “KM's Journal” is printed twice and with a different format. Apart from all this the Bibliography is quite good and fulfills the objective of the collection.

The Critical Response to KM is a good collection of articles with no precedent. The articles are well chosen and ordered, they are from critics from many different parts of the world, and in the end we get a general view of the criticism on KM, with both positive and negative commentaries on her along the century. However, it is focused, not without justification, on some of the habitual topics on this writer and it is limiting, as expected, for it cannot deal with absolutely all the criticism on her and it is not a critical study on her reception either. In spite of this it is a useful book for it can open many ways for the study of KM.

Ana Belén López Pérez

A Spanish Gift To Edith Wharton Scholarship

Edith Wharton. *Cartas a Morton Fullerton (1907-1931)*, (Barcelona, Grijalbo Mondadori, 1995). Ed. Marina Premoli. Translation: Esther Gómez.

Vous qui nous jugez, savez-vous quel boivre nous avons bu sur la mer? (Joseph Bédier)

A recent item of interest to Anglo-American studies in Spain is the publication of a selection of Edith Wharton's letters to her friend and lover Morton Fullerton. Although Edith Wharton is not certainly unknown in Spain—in fact in the last ten years several of her most significant novels and short stories have been translated and published—, this initiative is a welcome surprise as it provides the Spanish readers with details about a woman whose literary achievements, courage, passion and love of life were indeed extraordinary.

Edith Wharton met Morton Fullerton, an American journalist for the London *Times* and a friend of Henry James, in the spring of 1907. A man of singular attraction, the author of works like *In Cairo*, *Terres Françaises* or *Problems of Power*, Fullerton was a familiar and yet oddly elusive personality in Parisian circles, culturally sophisticated, with a strong vein of dreamy idealism and a no less positively marked erotic energy and a strong sexual appeal. By the time they made their acquaintance, Wharton's emotional life was going through a difficult time and she felt weary, psychically suffocated and emotionally starved. Her husband had fallen into another nervous depression and it was evident that their marriage, wretchedly unsatisfactory for years, was reaching an end. In

Paris, as the winter weeks wore on, Wharton and Fullerton's initial attraction soon progressed to intense emotional and physical intimacy. The clandestine affair, which gave Wharton her first glimpse of love after years of frozen marriage, has been considered by Augusta Rohrbach "her next logical step in this author's struggle to live her life to the fullest." And the difficulty the writer had in wrestling a lasting physical and spiritual communion with Fullerton registers in this delightful publication.

For years, their relationship remained hidden to all, critics and friends, with the exception of Henry James and perhaps Gross, Wharton's discreet and devoted housekeeper. In 1962 Wayne Andrews published a small selection from Wharton's unedited diary, "The Life Apart," but it was assumed that the person to whom the journal was addressed was Walter Berry, Edith Wharton's intimate friend. It was Leon Edel who proved otherwise in his biography of Henry James and revealed for the first time the presence of Morton Fullerton.

But it was not only this rather intriguing episode in the life of Edith Wharton that took the critics by surprise. The very existence of these letters is a cause for astonishment; more so when it had long been assumed that the correspondence had been destroyed. Then, in 1980, some three hundred letters from Edith Wharton to Fullerton mysteriously appeared on the market. The collection was purchased by the University of Texas in Austin, and in 1985 the university's *Library Chronicle* devoted a special issue to this new holding, printing twenty-six letters. Three years later Professor R.B.W. Lewis and Nancy Lewis edited a splendid volume, *The Letters of Edith Wharton*, among which was the correspondence to Fullerton.

Edith Wharton. Cartas a Morton Fullerton (1907-1931) presents a well-chosen, though somehow small selection of Wharton's letters to Fullerton, concentrating mainly on 1908 and 1909, the period of the passion that overwhelmed her in middle-age. Together with the letters, the volume includes nine entries of her diary "The life Apart" and the fifty-two line poem over a night together in June 1909, "Terminus" —a name chosen to indicate both that the experience occurred in a station hotel and that it marked a temporary end to their relationship (Edith Wharton once read about herself in a review, and wryly recorded the comment, that she was a woman who had never known passion. "Terminus," as well as the letters and diary entries, certainly dispel this legend). Supplementing *Edith Wharton. Cartas a Morton Fullerton* are notes, an introduction presenting an evocative portrait of Wharton's affair, a chronology, and engaging photographs of key places of Wharton's life —The Mount, her library, Pavillon Colombe, Hyères— and of Morton Fullerton.

Marina Premoli's edition offers the Spanish readers and Wharton aficionados an excellent opportunity to (re)discover the writer's remarkable powers of description, her eloquence, the moods and changes of the relationship, as well as valuable insights on her forceful, vulnerable and energetic personality. Edith Wharton, one might say, was a dialectical woman: the priestess of the life of reason, as she ironically called herself once in a letter, analytical, scrutinizing..., she had also a mystical, Nietzschean side, eager "to drink fate's utmost at a draught and reach the heart of life". And this aspect, this sensual and wild side —what William James called "the feminine-mystical mind"—, was never

more evident than in the letters to Morton Fullerton, the most vibrant and openhearted she was ever to write.

The correspondence also detects the aspects of Edith Wharton that Fullerton came to know well when he slyly addressed her as “Cher Ami”: The Enlightenment side of Edith Wharton, her interest in biology and in science, her close acquaintance with texts literary, artistic, philosophical, religious, and her historical imagination. Details of her travels, her professional tasks, and her Parisian social and literary life emerge in these letters, sprinkled with allusions to places, books and mythological figures that give us the scope of her great erudition, her knowledge of languages and her intimate familiarity with the classics of ancient and modern literature and with cultural history. The letter she addressed to him on June 8, 1908, with its range and variety of quotations and allusions to Milton, Dante or Goethe, is indeed exceptional in the epistolary genre, and can be read and enjoyed as it were a piece of literature. But what the letters make especially evident is Wharton’s vibrant nature, her generosity, and her refusal to bargain and calculate “as if love were a game of skill played between antagonists”. They reveal that this woman, whose public image was that of the self-contained, was in fact extraordinarily open to experience, “an incorrigible life-lover & life wonderer”, and responsive to the here-and-now of life.

The correspondence enacts the several distinct phases through which the relationship with Fullerton passed: from moments of nearness to torment and grief, fluctuating between expressions of love and desire, camaraderie, apprehension, disenchantment and suffering. The letters oscillate between two opposing geographical places, Paris and Lenox (Massachusetts), and display different narrative moods: from the friendly and the intellectual to the lyrical, from the impassioned to the wretched and the icily conventional. As R.B.W. Lewis and Nancy Lewis have noted, the process is remarkably human: “it is the disclosure of enormous emotional arousal and then of emotional bruising and grief not easily matched in our epistolary annals.”

The diary entries are equally eloquent and poignantly human. The journal is addressed to Morton Fullerton in the second person and it deals exclusively with the growth of their relationship in 1908 and 1909. Edith Wharton apparently conceived it as a narrative with a definite theme, and she gave it a title, “The Life Apart,” which she added in parentheses: “L’Ame Close.” Although aesthetically the journal cannot be ranked among Wharton’s best efforts, there is a wealth of honesty at its core, and behind some cliché-like phrases and exclamations one detects a strength and a fortitude of spirit that were strictly her own. This is particularly clear in her inclusion of Wharton’s moving diary entry that, no matter what the cost of her relationship with Fullerton, she felt triumphant satisfaction that she had “drunk the wine of life at last”, had been “warmed through and through, never to grow quite cold again till the end...”. The entries are interesting from a biographical point of view as they reveal Wharton’s contradictory feelings about the ambiguities of desire and identity, about the glory of passion and of how passion may jeopardize individual identity. Like Wharton’s correspondence, these diary entries portray these moments of her life that were “lived to the full”, moments which in later years were to spring to life again with newfound physical passion in some of her most significant heroines—Charity Royal, Kate Clephane, Helen Olenska.

Marina Premoli's edition, though perhaps of fairly limited interest among Spanish readers in general, is a true gem for all Edith Wharton enthusiasts. In these pages, carefully selected and meticulously translated, we can appreciate the startling erotic and emotional awakening of the writer, the sudden transition from "the narrow acquiescence in conventional limitations" to a world transformed into beauty and light. To borrow one of her familiar images of the house as an emblem for a character's inner life, this was an experience which, above all, illuminated "the empty rooms full of dust" which her life had been with a light that could never thenceforth be extinguished.

Teresa Gómez Reus

Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth. *The English Novel in History: 1840-1895*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth's *The English Novel in History: 1840-1895* is the third volume in the series generically entitled "The Novel in History" edited for Routledge by Prof. Gillian Beer (Cambridge). The series, which will consist of six volumes, takes an interdisciplinary approach to literary fiction and is informed by recent critical theory. The other two volumes which have as yet been published are David Trotter's *The English Novel in History: 1895-1920*, and Steven Connor's *The English Novel in History: 1950 to the Present*.

Prof. Ermarth's book has four chapters. Chapter One, "Narrative and Nature," explains new formations in narrative during the period under study by trying to locate the so-called "pressure points" at which such formations emerged. It focuses on the changes in the view of nature resulting from the secularization of knowledge. According to Ermarth, before mid-century nature is seen as "something hospitable to human aspiration," whereas fifty years later it appears, if at all, as inhospitable to human meaning. "In short," Ermarth says, "Victorian novel more from one to the other of the two constructions of nature that Thomas Carlyle announces in *Sartor Resartus*: one a nature that is the 'living garment of God', and the other, a nature that is, morally speaking, a 'dead mechanism'" (3). This evolution is explored by reference to literature, science, art, and various other disciplines.

In Chapter Two, "The Idea of History," Ermarth discusses what she calls "the construction of history as a common denominator", a convention describable as the version of the humanist (Kantian, Newtonian) conception of time which underlies Victorian narrative, whether literary, artistic or scientific. Similarly, the humanistic, egalitarian construction of society is dealt with in Chapter Three, "Society as an Entity," and its traces in Victorian narrative located and discussed. This notion of society, which originated in the Enlightenment, is made possible, Ermarth argues, by the convention of historical time explored in the previous chapter.

Ermarth has long been reflecting on the problem of temporality. In her *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992) Princeton UP, 1992) she addressed the postmodern replacement of the convention of historical time for a conception which she then referred to as "rhythmic