

THE MYTH OF PERSEPHONE, DEMETER, AND HADES IN MARION
MAINWARING'S COMPLETED EDITION OF EDITH WHARTON'S THE
BUCCANEERS

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"The awful immortality of life!
The white path winding deathlessly to death!"

- Persephone
"The Pomegranate Seed"
Edith Wharton (1912)

INTRODUCTION

In the last years of her life, the American novelist, Edith Wharton, began writing her novel, *The Buccaneers*. At the time of her death in 1937, she had completed twenty-nine chapters. The incomplete manuscript along with Wharton's plot synopsis was published posthumously in 1938. With the aid of this synopsis, Marion Mainwaring undertook to complete Wharton's novel by appending twelve chapters of new material and inserting a few passages into the original manuscript to anticipate plot points in her own appended narrative but overall making very few changes to Wharton's text.¹ The combined texts were published in 1993. Wharton often employed classical allusions and metaphors in her work. Mainwaring, in her edition, continues the motifs begun by Wharton, particularly Wharton's use of the myth of Persephone, Demeter, and Hades to characterize the heroine, Annabel St. George (Nan), who, with a fractured sense of self, remains childlike and struggles with her identity in an oppressive marriage to the wealthy Duke of Tintagel.² The purpose of this paper is first to explore Wharton's employment of this conceit, in particular how Nan plays Persephone both in her marriage to the Duke and in her relationship with her paramour, Guy Thwarte. Wharton's treatment results in multiple Persephones, two figures of Hades, and at least two Demeter figures.³ Secondly, I will examine Mainwaring's extension and more explicit use of the Persephone-Demeter-Hades theme as a means of providing unity between the two manuscripts. Mainwaring's version not only elaborates on the multiple presentations of these figures but even deviates from Wharton's synopsis in ways that further support a fragmented Persephone and double Hades and Demeter figures.

For this examination it will suffice to set down the main points of the Persephone myth, though the major sources do differ from one another.⁴ While picking flowers, Persephone (Proserpina) is abducted by her uncle, Hades (Pluto), the god of the underworld, in some versions following an arrangement made by Zeus (Jupiter), who is Persephone's father and Hades' brother.⁵ Demeter (Ceres), Persephone's mother and the goddess of crops and agriculture, searches for her daughter, but when she cannot find her, she causes the earth to stop producing. Eventually Persephone is allowed to return to Demeter but can only remain with her for a short time, since she has bound herself irrevocably to her new husband by consuming pomegranate seeds in the underworld.⁶

Wharton's preoccupation with the Persephone myth has been well studied by both scholars of literature and psychoanalysis. Many attribute this persistent theme to biographical factors, such as Wharton's difficult relationship with her mother, while others explain Wharton's interest in Persephone as cultural or ideological, tracing it to the emergence of the Persephone myth in American writing during the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century.⁷ Persephone figures, though not always explicitly identified as such, appear in many of Wharton's short stories and novels, spanning the length of her career, including "The House of the Dead Hand" (1904), *The House of Mirth* (1905), *Custom of the Country* (1913), "The Bunner Sisters" (1916), and *Summer* (1917). Two works of Wharton's bear the name "Pomegranate Seed," one, a dramatic

poem and retelling of the Demeter-Persephone myth (1912); and the other, a short story (1936) concerning a newly remarried widower and his relationship with his deceased wife. While much study has been done on these two works and the other works of Wharton's, which contain Persephone figures, very little has been done on the Persephone theme in *The Buccaneers*, despite its being one of the most explicit treatments of this pervasive theme in Wharton's corpus.⁸ Moreover, virtually no study has been conducted on Mainwaring's continuation of the Persephone theme in completing Wharton's manuscript.⁹

Much of the examination of Persephone in Wharton's work focuses on the female writer. Candace Waid, for instance, uses Persephone as a touchstone for reading the figure of the woman writer, who, as she points out, is often portrayed by Wharton as crossing the boundary between life and death (Waid 1993: 3). Waid's observations on the underworld are especially relevant to my discussion below.¹⁰ Critics often connect the topic of writing in Wharton's work with gender issues and women's relationships with men and other women.¹¹ My examination deals only marginally with writing but is concerned with similar issues that writing addresses: self knowledge, ambivalence, life and death, and dreams and reality. Wharton sensed a world of "real happenings" and another unrelated, but just as real, reality, which was the source of her storytelling.¹² In order to distinguish between these two worlds more clearly, I will refer to the latter as the world of dreams. Like many previous critics, I am also interested in how a reading of Persephone in *The Buccaneers* uncovers a fuller understanding of Wharton's commentary on women's relationships with their mothers, husbands, and lovers. My study will focus primarily on Wharton's casting of the figures of Persephone, Demeter, and Hades in *The Buccaneers* and how Wharton's positioning of these figures indicates an evolution of reconciliation between the conflicting worlds she so often depicts.

The ambiguous casting of classical figures in the characters of Wharton's work is not unique to *The Buccaneers*. In Wharton's short story, "Pomegranate Seed" both the characters of Kenneth Ashby and his second wife, Charlotte, have been read as Persephone figures; Charlotte has also been interpreted as a Demeter figure.¹³ In both cases, each character plays Persephone when affected by Kenneth's dead wife, who is drawn as a female Hades figure. The fact that Wharton uses the same language, imagery, and figures to narrate what seem to be opposing characters and worlds suggests that they are not so different from one another and that elements of each one can be found in the other. About the Persephone myth, Burkert writes, "At bottom, the myth does not speak of a cycle either: things will never be the same as they were before the rape. What the myth founds is a double existence between the upper world and the underworld: a dimension of death is introduced into life, and a dimension of life is introduced into death" (Burkert 1985: 161). This is precisely what structures *The Buccaneers* and the experience of the heroine, who, as a liminal figure, stands between two worlds and finds death and life in both.

THE PERSEPHONE-DEMETER-HADES MYTH IN WHARTON'S THE BUCCANEERS DEMETER

The Buccaneers tells the story of five girls from three wealthy families, who fail to find success in the elite social circles of New York. The St. George family engages a savvy and resourceful governess, Laura Testvalley, to finish their younger daughter, Nan. In view of the family's social struggles, Laura suggests to Mrs. St. George that she take Nan and Nan's sister, Virginia, to try a season in London. Their friends, Lizzy and Mabel Elmsworth, follow suit, and all land in England for the purpose of conquest (hence the title of the novel) with Laura leading the charge.¹⁴ Nan's good friend, Conchita, who marries into the English aristocracy first, paves the way for them. Nan, the youngest of the five girls, has the most artistic taste and romantic sensibility of them all. Being the least fashionable and the least pretty, she makes an unlikely match with the most sought after royal in England, the shy and awkward Duke of Tintagel (Wharton 1938: 358).

One of the first allusions to Nan as a Persephone figure is a bouquet of flowers, which Nan has picked from the hotel border for Laura as a peace offering following a rude welcome (Wharton 1938: 53, 56-57). Nan's apology echoes an earlier scene in which she apologizes to her mother, whose only concern is that Nan not disturb her hair, following which she "[raises] a

nervous hand to her crimped bandeaux" (Wharton 1938: 11). This scene is invoked later when Wharton uses similar language to describe the actions of Nan's mother-in-law (Wharton 1938: 295). Both Nan's natural mother and mother-in-law are weak and detached mother figures for Nan. Wharton chooses instead to cast as Demeter the reliable, competent, and understanding Laura Testvalley. One night as Laura watches Nan sleep, she thinks to herself, "She might have been my own daughter" (Wharton 1938: 90). In this way, Wharton from the very beginning establishes Laura as a surrogate mother and clear Demeter figure.

As Demeter, Laura eventually becomes the rival of the first Hades figure, the Duke of Tintagel, as they both grapple to keep Nan in their respective domains and to shield her in their own ways. Laura, though British, possesses the spirit of her Italian revolutionary pedigree, which manifests itself in her education of Nan. The incongruity of Laura's breeding and profession is also reflected in the tensions present in many of her actions. For instance, she simultaneously wishes to keep Nan with herself while paving the way for Nan's eventual marriage. Before the Duke proposes to Nan, he seeks the counsel of Laura. In response to Laura's warning that Nan, being still a child, may change at her first contact with life, the Duke replies "But I should make it my business to shield her from every contact with life" (Wharton 1938: 227), an intention that reinforces his associations with death. This is not dissimilar to Laura's compulsion to protect Nan: "She had developed a tenderness for Nan St. George, and an odd desire to shelter her from the worldly glories her governess's rash advice had thrust upon her family" (Wharton 1938: 222). When the Duke, who seems to epitomize these "worldly glories" seeks Laura's advice about marrying Nan, Laura's impulse is "to catch [Nan] fast and hold her tight" (Wharton 1938: 226). As a governess, she reminds the Duke that arranging marriage for her pupils is not included in her duties, yet it is she who orchestrates the invasion of England, which results marriages for the girls in Nan's circle of friends. As a Demeter figure, there is no place for Laura once her pupils have married, and she makes it a point not to "hang about" them (Wharton 1938: 262). Ultimately, however, Laura will be instrumental in facilitating Nan's abandonment of the Duke and involvement with Guy. Repeatedly, she will be torn between keeping Nan close and letting her go. Such is the fate of a Demeter, who embraces her daughter with arms of life only to have to send her back to the gloom of death.

Early on in the novel the imagery that surrounds Laura is that of life and nature. She is the one, who has "sown in a bare field a sprinkling of history, poetry, and pictures, and every seed [has] shot up in a flowery tangle" (Wharton 1938: 235). The love poetry Nan has studied and grown to love will be one of many incompatibilities between Nan and the Duke. While Laura is the protectress of Nan's girlhood, she has also given her a taste of the kind of knowledge that will eventually spark a connection with another aristocratic Englishman, Guy Thwarte. In fact, Laura warns Nan that not everyone appreciates the poetry they read together, making it a sort of secret knowledge only the two of them, as well as Guy, share and understand. This poetry and Guy's love represent the pomegranate seeds of the myth, which Persephone consumes, thereby tying herself to the underworld. This secret knowledge between Nan's Persephone and Laura's Demeter also evokes the Eleusinian mysteries, secret rites practiced by worshippers of Demeter, which involved the revelation of secret knowledge to the participants and a promise of a better afterlife (Burkert 1985: 289). For Wharton, words possessed an enchanting power, and she aligned them with the fruit of the underworld:

I never for a moment ceased to be conscious of them. They were visible, almost tangible presences, with faces as distinct as those of the persons among whom I lived. And, like Erköning's daughters, they sang to me so bewitchingly that they almost lured me from the wholesome noonday air of childhood into some strange supernatural region, where the normal pleasures of my age seemed as insipid as the fruits of the earth to Persephone after she had eaten of the pomegranate seed.

(Wharton 1990: 1075-76).

The alluring poetry of Laura's teaching will nurture in Nan a nature already prone to dreams and imagination, in other words, a nature already curious and tempted by the offerings of a second underworld, where she will find the fruition of her dreams in her relationship with Guy.

PERSEPHONE

The setting of Annabel's first meeting with the Duke is a "wild" background of rugged cliffs on a rough coast. Initially, because of the weather, Laura has made Nan promise that she will stay confined to the garden, reinforcing Laura's maternal hold and desire to keep Nan in her flowery domain. The gray weather is depicted as a threat to this young Persephone, but when the sun comes out, Nan cannot resist exploring. She comes across the Tintagel ruins, the ancient estate of the Duke's family. With the arrival of the Duke, the fog too rolls in (Wharton 1938: 175), which is significant not only because it blots out the sunlight associated with Demeter's maternal domain, but also because of its obscuring quality. The romance of the setting blinds Nan to what a married life with the Duke will be, namely a tamed existence conducted in the orderly estate of Longlands, a decided contrast to the uncultivated setting of the Tintagel ruins. These ruins perfectly suit Nan, who is regarded by the Duke's people as a "savage" (Wharton 1938: 309). The play of sunlight and cloud in Nan and the Duke's meeting calls to mind Ovid's version of the Persephone myth, in which Persephone is depicted as reluctant to be in the underworld.¹⁵ Ovid ends the story with her return to the upper world, comparing her to the sun which has emerged victorious from the clouds (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*: 5.570-71).

The appearance of fog and rain in the text frequently marks significant points of the Duke's actions regarding Nan. Before proposing to Nan, the Duke seeks Laura for advice at Runnymede, the house hired by the St. Georges and the Elmsworths. When he arrives the house seems "empty," and "the bright awnings were gone, and a cold gray mist hung in the cedar-boughs and hid the river" (Wharton 1938: 218). This reminds the Duke of the day he met Nan at the ruins and sets the scene for the Duke's struggle with Laura over Nan's future. The Duke also eschews light and warmth, as seen when Laura offers to light a fire and the Duke tells her that he dislikes over-heated rooms (Wharton 1938: 233). In another pivotal scene, a couple of years into their marriage, when Nan is expecting the Duke's baby, the couple quarrel on what Wharton describes as a "raw and cloudy day" (Wharton 1938: 257). The argument concerns the care of the Duke's tenants, which ends in Nan's leaving the grounds in the middle of a storm against the Duke's wishes. Subsequently, she falls and miscarries.

Nan will eventually escape the fog, but not before she is seized by the deathly grip of "one of these awful English marriages, that strangle you in a noose when you try to pull away from them," as Conchita describes it (Wharton 1938: 300). Certainly, at Longlands the demands of ducal life will prune the tangle of Nan's education and suffocate her developing sense of self. From this setting, armed with new knowledge and experiences, Nan will look back ruefully on her courting "in a ruin and a fog" (Wharton 1938: 308). After Nan has married the Duke, the notion of fog resurfaces when Conchita confides in Nan and beseeches her for financial help. Despite being entangled in debt and love affairs, Conchita has developed a taste for her new life, asserting, "London life [is] the most exciting in the world, and once you've got the soot and fog in your veins you simply can't live without them" (Wharton 1938: 304-5). Fog represents the fashionable life of London as well as the oppression of the cold aristocratic homes, which Conchita cannot conceive of leaving, while Nan, in contrast, wistfully considers returning home to New York. Furthermore, the English aristocracy is represented as a world of the dead. Wharton essentially likens Court to a funeral (Wharton 1938: 149), with "mummies" (Wharton 1938: 144) and "corpses" (Wharton 1938: 149) in attendance. Although Nan's sister and friends adapt well to this underworld, Nan continues to resist this particular death.

Nan's romantic ideals become central to her conflict with the Duke. She fails to realize this, however, during their first encounter at the Tintagel ruins. The location of the crumbling castle, which is associated with the legends of King Arthur, lures Nan with its promise of a fairytale life and a Prince Charming: "She did not admit to herself that her first sight of the ruins of the ancient Tintagel had played a large part in her wooing . . . the idea of living in that magic

castle by the sea had secretly tinged her vision of the castle's owner" (Wharton 1938: 206). On the day that Nan and the Duke meet, they have trouble understanding one another from the start. At first Nan does not even hear the Duke's approach nor his attempts to make himself known (Wharton 1938: 178-79). The romance of the setting escapes the Duke, as he is absorbed in more practical considerations of renovation. All these are early indications of their ultimate failure to communicate. The Duke is, in fact, quite baffled by his first conversation with Nan, in which he repeatedly seems unable to respond to her obscure associations and unforeseen remarks, which stem largely from Nan's failure to recognize who he is; initially, she mistakes him for a certain Mr. Robinson (Wharton 1938: 180). Nan's ignorance of the Duke's title appeals to him; he is accustomed to being hunted (Wharton 1938: 173) and would prefer a girl "who doesn't know what a Duke is" (Wharton 1938: 170). Nan's "childish innocence" and "her indifference to money and honours" are also attractive to the Duke (Wharton 1938: 227), who, as he breaks the news of his engagement to his mother, rationalizes, "The great thing is that I shall be able to form her" (Wharton 1938: 247). It is these very qualities, however, that will make Nan intractable.

Once Nan marries the Duke and becomes part of his world, she experiences the same failure to communicate with herself as she does with him. In the first glimpse we have of Nan in her marriage, she sits writing invitations for a shooting party. Wharton describes her as writing "slowly, almost laboriously, like a conscientious child copying out an exercise" (Wharton 1938: 240).¹⁶ This scene reveals the childlike qualities Nan has failed to leave off despite her marriage, rendering her a Persephone who still, in part, belongs to the realm of the mother. At the end of the invitation, she signs her married name, Annabel Tintagel, but asks herself, "Who is Annabel Tintagel?" (Wharton 1938: 240). In Nan's case, the struggle to write is wrapped up in her search for self and identity. In pursuing this question of who she has become, she now sees Annabel St. George as a "plaintive ghost" and the new Annabel cannot speak to her, because she does not know "how to question the dead" (Wharton 1938: 241). Moreover, others do not know what to make of Nan either (Wharton 1938: 242). Later Nan, her sister, and her friends have "vanished out of recognition," as Nan compares them to the "flickering figures of the magic lanterns she used to see at children's parties" (Wharton 1938: 261). This language suggests that Nan and her sister and friends have all become ghosts, mere shades of what they once were. While writing the invitation to Guy, Nan deliberates whether to remind him in a postscript that he may know her as Nan St. George but eventually decides to leave it off, reasoning, "But what was the sense in that, when there was no longer anyone of that name?" (Wharton 1938: 263).¹⁷ In Guy's long absence, she has become a ghost to him, as well. When he receives the invitation, he observes, "The writing of a school-girl . . . and the language of dictation," but he does not give it too much thought, as Nan's image in his long absence "had become etherealized, and then had faded out of existence" (Wharton 1938: 273).¹⁸ Moreover, Nan is unable to find her identity in being the Duchess. After the Duke's mother becomes the Dowager, Nan still does not recognize herself as the "real" Duchess (Wharton 1938: 285).

Nan appears as three different Persephones in Wharton's text, each time imbued with many contradictions, which place her on the threshold between experiences. Guy's father, Sir Helmsley, captures Nan well, describing her as "on the way" to acquire a "subtler form of loveliness" and calling her "a bundle of engaging possibilities rather than a finished picture" (Wharton 1938: 233). As Nan St. George, she is given a taste of another world, which Laura introduces by raising her up in the Fleshly School of poetry (Wharton 1938: 139). Nan must eventually be groomed for her new role as the Duchess rather than be allowed to grow wild. Nan's state of being in-between and of not being fully formed complicates her cultivation, rather than simplifying it, as the Duke erroneously anticipates. When Nan marries the Duke, she becomes a second Persephone, Annabel Tintagel, a ghost with whom she cannot communicate. Nan compares this to a failure in communication between the living and the dead and comes to think that if Laura had stayed with her, together they might have rescued the old Annabel, "but as it was, there was the new Duchess isolated in her new world, no longer able to reach back to her past, and not having yet learned how to communicate with her present" (Wharton 1938: 262). In this way Nan, like Persephone, stands at a threshold, in this case between past and present.¹⁹ After a miscarriage, the "third Annabel" emerges (Wharton 1938: 259). This is the Annabel who,

when trying to explain her marriage to Conchita, suddenly feels “years older than Conchita and the mistress of a bitter lore” (Wharton 1938: 300); yet at around the same time, she will be characterized as a child in her encounters with Guy. She wants to know when people will stop speaking to her as a child but still wonders if her father will bring her home. Although, she reverts to her former girlishness in many ways, she does not, return to the protection of her father and mother. In fact, she estranges herself from her natural mother's world by becoming the very sort of woman her mother scorns. Nan, in all three identities Wharton outlines for her, stands in between worlds and, as Sir Helmsley puts it, seems ever “on her way.” Every time a new Annabel is born, she is not static but always another Persephone in progress.

TWO FIGURES OF HADES

In Wharton's works, death is not confined to the oppressive marriage. If Nan is to be tied to any man, whether her dominating husband or liberating lover, she still must experience a death of some kind. As we saw above, Wharton aligns taking part in writing and art with the underworld. Regarding the woman writer, Waid comments, “In Wharton's view, she is lured by two kinds of sirens, two kinds of women's voices, two kinds of death: the insipid world of death in life that is represented by the feminine, and the underworld of knowledge” (Waid 1991: 201). For Nan these two worlds are the life of the dutiful wife prescribed for her and the temptation of art, poetry, and dreams. On Demeter's cult at Eleusis, Burkert writes, “It is remarkable that the concept of immortality is never mentioned in connection with Eleusis. Death remains a reality, even if it is not an absolute end, but at the same time a new beginning. There is another kind of life, and this, at all events, is good” (Burkert, 1985: 289). The renewal that follows death is a central theme of the Persephone myth and guides the resolution of Nan and Guy's story.

Before Guy becomes Hades, he takes on the characteristics of a Persephone upon his return from Brazil to his family home, Honourslove. It is autumn, the time when Persephone will be returning to the underworld. Honourslove is “swathed in folds of funereal mist shot with watery sunshine” (Wharton 1938: 272). This blended backdrop corresponds to Guy's presentation as a liminal figure: “Yes, I'm between two worlds yet – ‘powerless to be born’ kind of feeling” (Wharton 1938: 264).²⁰ At first Guy feels torn and perceives “how remote had become the old sense of inherited obligations which had once seemed the very marrow of his bones” and he “could not recover that lost self” (Wharton 1938: 266). The idea that Guy feels Honourslove in his bones is one he expresses to Nan and part of what draws her to him (Wharton 1938: 137, 163). As Wershoven notes, Guy differs from typical Wharton males, in his “ability to move into the future while preserving the part of tradition that is worth saving” (Wershoven 1982: 214). Moreover, she describes him as “committed to the best of the past and the challenge of the future” (Werhsoven 1982: 214). In this way, he is similar to Nan, in that he stands between times, but he does so with strength and conviction, whereas Nan feels overwhelmed by her position.

Wharton sets the scene for the arrival of a second Hades by temporarily returning Nan to a state of maidenhood. During a shooting party, which includes Guy among the guests, Nan and the Duke have a disagreement. Nan goes for a walk, but when it begins to rain, she seeks shelter in the ruins of a temple topped with an unheeded god of Love.²¹ When she first enters the temple, she feels a chill. Combined with the rain and ruins, the scene evokes the Duke's first meeting with Nan at the Tintagel ruins. Although Guy has a strong friendship with Nan, he finds himself unwanted, as Nan childishly pushes him away. Wharton repeatedly casts her as a petulant child: “childish despair,” “a child's reluctance,” “a frightened child,” “childish anger,” “childish wretchedness,” “angry child” (Wharton 1938: 318-21). Nan perceives Guy's approach as an “intrusion,” and she views him as having “forced himself upon her . . . unawares” (Wharton 1938: 319). In this way, Wharton casts Nan once again as a maiden Persephone to be carried away by a second Hades in the form of Guy. In fact, the Duke's first encounter with Nan is milder by comparison, as she is merely “surprised but not disturbed” upon seeing him in the Tintagel ruins (Wharton 1938: 178-79).

As Guy assumes the role of Hades, the Duke and the Dowager begin to embody the life and reality of the upper world. In one scene the Duke seeks his mother for advice, finding her in

her greenhouse surrounded by plants. Drawing her away from the guilty pleasures of horticulture and the warmth of her sanctuary, he has her follow him into the "icy drawing-room" (Wharton 1938: 323-24). Although the Duke still bears the qualities of a Hades figure at this point, the Dowager, surrounded by her plants in the light of the conservatory with her many daughters on her mind, is transformed into a fertile and nurturing figure of life and positioned as another Demeter figure. Like Demeter, she is also without a husband, having been widowed some years before.²² As a wife, who during her marriage would not have "on weary nights . . . dared to lock her door," she stands in stark contrast to Nan's abstinence and persistent childlessness (Wharton 1938: 329). Just as the Duke consults Laura before making Nan his bride, so, too, he consults his mother, this time regarding Nan as his wife. Although the Dowager is not fond of Nan, she reluctantly acts to preserve her son's marriage, which recalls Laura's apprehension when advising the Duke before his proposal.

The Duke and his mother, in their association with "real life," are surrounded by tradition, observances, and mundane exactions, but even so Nan feels that "the business of living [is] perhaps conducted more wisely at Longlands" (Wharton 1938: 296). We know that the Duke wants and is able to beget children. It is Nan, who refuses to try once they have lost their child, and in this way she begins to be associated with death, and much like the Persephone of Wharton's poem, "Pomegranate Seed," Nan backs away from light and life and is left to nurse a dead baby (Wharton 1912). She also seeks knowledge of a different underworld, where she might find consummation of her dreams. The Duke cannot relate to Nan's imaginative flights and love of poetry. In fact, the Duke has no interest in poetry at all and finds his greatest pleasure in tinkering with clocks.

Clocks are a leitmotif of *The Buccaneers*, and they are intimately tied with the issues of life and death that are so critical to the Persephone myth. The Duke's love of clocks and his childhood fantasy of owning a clock shop are among the first things we learn about him. The grandness of life that the Duke's title demands is singularly "out of scale" with his "real tastes" (Wharton 1938: 171, 174, 312). Such is the case in his private life, as well. Even when the Duke threatens "to order [Nan] about as a wife," Nan notes that "anger was too big a garment for him: it always hung on him in uneasy folds" (Wharton 1938: 315-16). Instead of compassion for Nan and other people, Wharton gives the Duke a misplaced warmth and compassion for clocks. Like a doctor, he is most interested in "taking their temperature" and "feeling their pulse" (Wharton 1938: 171). When he is at Tintagel, he senses that the clocks "[cry] out to him for attention" (Wharton 1938: 173-74). At Runnymede he listens to the clock "as though it were a human lung" (Wharton 1938: 223). Regarding the tenants on his estate, however, the Duke lacks the same benevolent impulses; this leads to an argument between him and Nan, which, in turn, leads to her miscarriage. After their argument, a disemboweled clock, which the Duke has been working on, lies on the table (Wharton 1938: 255), reminding the Duke of his mother's warning "Women are not always as simple as clocks" (Wharton 1938: 247, 256). At another time when the Duke speaks with the Dowager about Nan, he checks a "nervous impulse to possess himself of the clock on the mantel-shelf and take it to pieces" (Wharton 1938: 328). The Duke's interest in dismembering clocks is not entirely dissimilar to Nan's love of poetry or his mother's love of gardening (Wharton 1938: 322). Moreover, the Duke, like Nan and Guy both, is struggling to find his place, occupying a station that does not suit him and a world that engulfs him. In this way, he too has qualities of a Persephone figure. As Hersey observes, even Nan realizes that the Duke is "a product of the societal expectations which he too is struggling to escape" (Hersey 1999: 181). Time for the Duke represents the pressures of his duty, namely to marry and produce sons. As his mother speaks to him of one eligible lady, the Duke glances at the clock twice (Wharton 1938: 169). When Nan asks to have five hundred pounds (to help Conchita), the Duke strictly limits their time. The Duke's desire to control time and to take apart and put back together the instruments that measure it reflect his fruitless attempts to take hold of his own life, the most notable of which is having chosen an unformed and temperamental girl to be his wife.

Preoccupation with time is a recurring element of Wharton's upper worlds, where the finitude of life is always foremost on one's thoughts and where reality and dreams compete.²³ In Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, Newland Archer surmises his father-in-law's preoccupation with

time and other mundane distractions has something to do with suppressing dreams and visions: "Sometimes he felt as if he had found the clue to his father-in-law's absorption with trifles; perhaps even Mr. Welland, long ago, had had escapes and visions, and had conjured up all the hosts of domesticity to defend himself against them" (Wharton 1920: 176).²⁴ Singley writes, "The remorseless beat of time's passage over which one has little control permeates the Wellands' world of convention" (Singley 2003: 62). Newland finds himself behaving similarly to Mr. Welland: "He had fallen into the way of dwelling on such conjectures as a means of tying his thoughts fast to reality. The vision of the past was a dream, and the reality was what awaited him in the house on the bank overhead" (Wharton 1920: 132).

Wharton does not always consistently present the reality of Newland's real life and the dream he experiences in Ellen Olenska. At times Ellen is his reality, while his "real" life is a dream. The boundary between reality and dream becomes blurred for Guy, as well, for whom the reality of Brazil slips away, as "accumulated associations" were "insinuating themselves through his stormy Brazilian years, and sapping them of their reality!" (Wharton 1938: 267). The mixing of worlds happens between Newland and Ellen too. Newland loses momentum with Ellen, when she begins to adopt the values of his world, thwarting his attempts to meet her, once she hears of his wife's pregnancy. Years later Newland sees the values of both the world of the old order and of the new ways (Wharton 1920: 208-209). Nan has a similar appreciation of both worlds. What she loves about England and what attracts her to Guy is the history of the ancient homes and the romance of the setting. She does not, however, care for the harsh realities of the fashionable world and the duties that her title has opened up for her. Nan is oppressed by her captivity and the same fear of the inescapability of her life, but as a Persephone figure, she is aligned with, as Louis calls Persephone, a "dynamic principle" and "the deity who embodies time and change, not the deity to whom time is subject" (Louis 2009: 26). It is because of the Duke's inability to find his way out of time that he is tied to the reality and life of the upper world, while Nan will find hope in the timelessness of death and dream.

MAINWARING AND THE PERSEPHONE MYTH

Mainwaring clearly recognizes and adopts Wharton's Persephone theme, developing it very explicitly, as one means of achieving unity between Wharton's manuscript and her own.²⁵ She does this by weaving a number of scenes into the body of Wharton's text, which pick up plot points in her completed version, most notably a thread heavily based on the Persephone theme.

In the middle of Nan's reflection on her miscarriage in Wharton's text, Mainwaring inserts a lengthy passage, in which Nan goes with the Duke to view his art collection. Among the pieces is a fragment of a throne from Naxos, which depicts the forms of Persephone and Demeter, with Persephone facing away from her mother (Mainwaring 1938: 215).²⁶ Through these images Mainwaring offers a material illustration of Nan's position. As a married woman, she is still in the midst of struggling with her Hades and still standing on the threshold of the underworld with her eyes occasionally glancing back longingly for the upper world. Like the relief, Nan is facing away from her mother figure, since her time with Laura will always be temporary and her return to the Duke inevitable.

Nan does not simply resemble the figure of Persephone as depicted on the throne; Mainwaring likens her to the throne itself, which, being incomplete, represents Nan's fragmented identity. The throne is missing a panel that depicts Juno, described by the guide as "the goddess who protected women in childbirth" (Mainwaring 1938: 215). This reflects the recent experience of Nan, who has not only lost the Duke's child by her own folly but refuses to perpetuate the ducal line; in doing so, she fails to fulfill her primary role in the Duke's world, thereby becoming less valuable to him. Moreover, the Duke's comment, "One cannot take great satisfaction in a fragment" (Mainwaring 1938: 215) evokes Laura's warning to him before his marriage that he can hardly value Nan as a "rare piece for [his] collection" (Wharton 1938: 227). These scenes are in keeping with Wharton's depictions of the Duke's attitude towards Nan, namely of wanting to possess and mold her. As the first Hades figure, he sets out to acquire her, despite having been warned of her immaturity.

During the scene in Wharton's manuscript, in which Nan thinks back on the Duke's courtship in "a ruin and in a fog," Nan also contrasts the meeting with her ideal: "Lovers ought to meet under limpid skies and branches dripping with sunlight like the nymphs and heroes of Correggio" (Wharton 1938: 308). At this point Mainwaring inserts another memory for Nan, who recalls:

The "Earthly Paradise," Guy Thwarte had said . . . The Garden of Eden, with which no other garden could compare –

*Not that faire field
Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flows
Herself a fairer flower by gloomie Dis
Was gatherd, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world . . .*

Pain had no place in the garden where Correggio's lovers lived "in unreprieved pleasures free" (Mainwaring 1993: 256-57)

Mainwaring is referring to a conversation between Nan and Guy, which Wharton sets in Nan's sitting room among the Ducal family's famous Correggios (Wharton 1938: 283). Unlike most of Mainwaring's interpolations, the passage here is not critical for Mainwaring's appended text. The lines from Milton above, however, are in keeping with a connection that Wharton makes between the Persephone myth and the Garden of Eden.²⁷

Mainwaring first explicitly flags her use of Wharton's Persephone theme in her own text by incorporating a passage about Persephone from Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary Condensed*, which Nan is reading when Guy comes to see her (Mainwaring 1993: 296). Mainwaring also echoes Wharton's scene in which Guy approaches Nan in the fallen temple, by using the same theme to depict another chance meeting between Nan and Guy. Nan leaves Longlands to stay with Laura's latest employers, who are also friends of the Dowager's. While there, Nan goes riding alone and Mainwaring paints as her setting "the whispers of approaching spring, the tender green shoots of crocuses in the reviving grass – nothing drew her from her sad reflection until, approaching the principal entrance to the park, she heard fast hoof-beats in the lane outside the wall" (Mainwaring 1993: 318). These hoof-beats, like those of Hades' horses rising from the underworld in Ovid's version of the myth (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.360), mark Guy Thwarte's approach. In this way, Mainwaring resituates Nan in a maiden's setting of wild flowers for another abduction scene and, in doing so, effectively continues Wharton's casting of Guy as a second Hades figure.

Once Nan has left the Duke and is temporarily under Laura's protection, Mainwaring revisits the moment from Wharton's version when Nan first gives Laura flowers. While staying with Laura's family, Nan swipes flowers from the kitchen for Laura's room, and in this way, she resumes her place as Laura's daughter (Mainwaring 1993: 390). Nan will not, however, remain a child again for long, nor can she become a permanent part of Laura's world. At one point she entertains the idea of teaching young children (Mainwaring 1993: 376). In becoming a governess, she would assume the role of another Demeter herself, but she has neither the experience nor the skills to carry out her plan. Laura, though mostly separate from the world of men, is not a virginal figure; she previously engaged in a short-lived affair with Lord Richard, the man who becomes Conchita's husband, but she has escaped the experience unscathed and unattached. Nan, however, is not suited to be a permanent fixture in the life of feminine independence that Laura occupies. Although Laura begins Nan's initiation into the sort of death and dream world that Guy completes, Laura is not meant to be fully a part of that dream world herself.

Mainwaring ties the Persephone myth in with Wharton's themes of reality and dream by introducing the related notions of the mythological and the unmythological, through a dream that Nan has:

That first night at Belfield she dreamed that she was at Longlands, looking at the sad girl in the Naxos bas-relief, and then suddenly she was that girl, walking through a field of weeds and outworn flowers toward a black hole into which she automatically began to lower herself, carefully gathering the folds of her simple Grecian chiton, to return to the Duke. The next instant the free tunic was a tight-laced Worth gown with puffed sleeves and flounces. "This is only a dream," Nan reasoned, immediately; "she's younger than I am, and besides, I can't speak Greek." She woke abruptly.

But Proserpine, Queen of Hades, would return to earth, and crops and flowers would grow again. Annabel Tintagel was living in the unmythological world of railways and gaslight – and the telephone – in the reign of Queen Victoria.²⁸ (Mainwaring 1993: 332)

The "outworn" flowers are indeed just that, as this theme is no longer appropriate for a grown, married woman. Here Mainwaring separates Nan from her younger self, by setting up a contrast between Nan and Proserpine. In Mainwaring's version, Nan begins to realize what she will later know for certain, namely that she no longer has recourse to what might be owed to a little girl: "I let myself fall in love with Guy by making believe that he was an 'older' man, and I encouraged him to think that I was a little girl. But I am twenty-three years old; I am a married woman who has had a miscarriage; I am going to be divorced" (Mainwaring 1993: 379). In the dream Nan's realization that she cannot speak Greek, and therefore cannot speak to the younger Nan continues the communication barrier introduced by Wharton. The difference now is that Nan finally accepts that she can never completely return to her former self.

In order to support the mythological or dreamlike aspect of Nan and Guy's connection, Mainwaring deviates from Wharton's synopsis by having the couple run away to Greece, rather than South Africa.²⁹ In this way, she plants Nan and Guy markedly in the world of mythology. When Laura warns Guy that Nan may not be received by people, because of her status as a divorced woman, he claims they will run even further, someplace "where life is different" (Mainwaring 1993: 395). Guy's solution to take them far from the realities of England is part of Wharton's synopsis. This, however, is a notable contrast to a similar scenario in *The Age of Innocence*. When Newland Archer suggests to Ellen Olenska that they run away somewhere, where labels such as "mistress" do not exist, she asks him, "Oh, my dear – where is that country? Have you ever been there?" as she deplores the attempts made by other lovers to find such a haven (Wharton 1920: 174).³⁰ The inauspiciousness of Guy Thwarte's name, however, suggests he may not be a definitively happy solution.³¹

Likewise, there may be no fully satisfactory solution for what the Duke is seeking. In completing Wharton's novel, Mainwaring also completes the fragmented throne she introduces in Wharton's portion of the manuscript. While Wharton simply lumps Mabel in with the rest of the girls and their English marriages, Mainwaring has Mabel marry a wealthy American businessman, who dies, leaving Mabel a valuable art collection containing the missing panel of the throne.³² Mabel's sister, Lizzy contrives with her husband to have Mabel offer to restore the missing piece to its rightful place, that is, with the Duke's fragment, in the hopes of forging a connection between the Duke and Mabel. Lizzy believes her sister will be a more appropriate spouse for the Duke and will appreciate his position. From the beginning the Duke wants a girl, who "doesn't know what a duke is" (Wharton 1938: 170), but later he realizes he should have chosen a woman who understands the duties of her station. Mabel could fulfill this role, but having been married and having had a child of her own, she is no longer an ingénue. She may be a better match for the Duke, but she too is far from his ideal.

CONCLUSION

By allowing multiple and opposing characters to embody each of the principal figures of the Persephone triad, Wharton demonstrates that all are participants in the process, in which every

kind of living entails a death, and every death brings new life. The tensions and contradictions that result from this dynamic do not occur only between opposing realms, but also within the individual characters. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the development of Laura. In both Wharton's synopsis and Mainwaring's text Guy's father, Sir Helmsley, proposes to Laura. Wharton's synopsis has Sir Helmsley leave Laura after suspecting her complicity in Nan and Guy's elopement (Wharton 1938: 358). Mainwaring re-works this plot point by having Laura preemptively leave Sir Helmsley, ending *The Buccaneers* in line with Wharton's *The Mother's Recompense* (Wharton 1925), in which the Demeter figure, Kate Clephane, sacrifices her claims on the past in the interest of her daughter's happiness. Laura's roles are at odds with themselves, as she is simultaneously torn between being a governess and a mother, a bride and an old maid, a proper Englishwoman and a revolutionary Italian, Hades' victim and Hades' accomplice. These tensions make Laura another liminal figure. Ultimately, Laura gives up the prospects that come with marriage and fortune, reverting back to her role as Demeter, and in doing so preserves Nan in her role as Persephone.³³

Nan and Laura are not the only characters who exemplify the ambivalence that stems from the conflict between duty and desire. In this regard, the Duke and Guy are also similar to each other. Wershoven notes that what joins Nan to these two men in the first place is her love of history and continuity (Wershoven 1982: 214). Guy, like the Duke, is devoted to the maintenance of his estate. Although Guy is drawn to Nan upon first meeting her, he is resolved to carry out his plan to leave England to make his fortune in Brazil, so that he might rescue Honourslove from his father's ruinously expensive appetites; in doing so, he gives up Nan the first time. The Duke also dutifully takes on the labors of family's property, though it does not suit him. Both men are bound to the desires of their parents to see the traditional ways preserved. They also defy their parents by joining themselves to Nan. The Duke ventures to pursue Nan, a foreign bride, although his mother has long had her eye on eligible English girls, while Guy recklessly gives up a long-intended political career in order to run away with Nan. Moreover, while in Brazil, Guy too marries a foreign bride, for whom he would have sold his birth-right (Wharton 1938: 269). She dies before he has to make such a choice.

The Buccaneers is a story of two worlds, one of tradition and continuity and another of emotion and beauty. By reading Wharton's final novel against the Persephone myth that she appropriates, her sympathetic portrayal of both worlds emerges. Wharton already began to reconcile both the old and new ways in works, such as *The Age of Innocence*, but only in her final novels does she also allow her characters to experience something like a happy ending. Nan fails to assimilate in her first contact with death and the underworld, but she will have a second chance, unlike earlier heroines of Wharton's, such as Lily Bart and Chastity Royall. Given that Wharton favored dark and tragic fates for her heroines through most of her career, the hope she makes room for in the synopsis for *The Buccaneers* caps a late and optimistic departure for her.³⁴ Perhaps in the end she came to see that the circumstances imposed by the values that seemed so imperative and inevitable in her earlier work could ultimately be overcome.

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¹ The afterword in Mainwaring's edition states that there are a number of interpolated passages, which "serve to reconcile discrepancies or prepare for later developments" (Mainwaring 1993: Afterword). I will note those instances pertinent to my argument. Mainwaring also moves some of Wharton's passages forward or pushes them back within Wharton's manuscript. All references to Wharton's version of *The Buccaneers* will be from the original 1938 publication edited by Gaillard Lapsley.

² In keeping with Wharton's tendency, Mainwaring (1993) adds her own allusions and excerpts of poetry.

³ With so many mother figures in *The Buccaneers*, there are arguably more than two Demeter figures, but my analysis will be limited to the two most relevant to the heroine.

⁴ See Margot Louis (2009: 26-30) for summaries and analyses of the three best-known classical sources of the Persephone myth: *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Ovid's version in *Metamorphoses*, and Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*. For more interpretations of the Homeric

Hymn, see Helena Foley (1994: 83-169). For a study of the Persephone myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Stephen Hinds (1987).

⁵ In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Athanasakis, 2-3) Zeus and Hades make such an arrangement. In Ovid's version, Pluto is struck by Cupid's bow, which causes him to fall in love with Proserpina (*Metamorphoses*, 1982, 5.365-368). Roman names are in parentheses.

⁶ The pomegranate seeds have traditionally been interpreted as representing Persephone's sexual initiation. They are also frequently associated with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden in Genesis.

⁷ Wharton's biographer, Cynthia Griffin-Wolff (1977: 25) interprets Wharton's relationship with her mother along Freudian lines. Psychoanalysts, Nancy Kulish and Deanna Holtzman (1998, 78: 63-69), treat Wharton as a case study in their examination of the Persephone myth and how it might illuminate the theories on the female Oedipus complex. Josephine Donovan (1989: 2) examines Wharton, as well as Willa Cather and Ellen Glasgow, in her application of the Demeter-Persephone myth, which she views as allegorizing "the transformation from a matricentric preindustrial culture – Demeter's realm – to a male-dominated capitalist-industrialist ethos, characterized by growing professionalism and bureaucracy: the realm of patriarchal captivity." Most recently Louis (2009: x), in her sophisticated and progressive work on Persephone, argues that Persephone "provides an ideal nexus" for movements, including "the rise of paganism (among other alternative spiritualities) and the undermining of Christianity's exclusive supremacy in Western religious thought; the struggle between asceticism and a reviving reverence for the body; the brief but culturally significant dominance of pessimism; the Modernist celebration of fertility and of the life force; and, above all, the long and still continuing struggle over whether the mythmaking imagination is to be understood as masculine and is to work chiefly or exclusively on male experience." For a survey of works in English influenced by the myth of Persephone and Demeter in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, see Foley (1994: 153-69).

⁸ The following list includes studies which read Wharton's works against the Persephone myth but do not address *The Buccaneers*. Candace Waid's (1991: 3) claims that her work is "not a study of classical motifs or allusions, or even a study devoted primarily to the importance of the Persephone myth in Wharton's work [Persephone] is a touchstone in my readings, but I am interested in it here only insofar as Persephone is Wharton's figure for the woman writer." Annette Zilversmit's (1987, 14/3: 298-300) piece on Wharton's ghost stories includes a more extended discussion of Persephone and what the myth reveals about women's relationships, but, like Erlich, only in reference to the short story, "Pomegranate Seed." Donovan's (2009:77-83) work includes analyses of both Wharton's short story, "Pomegranate Seed," and Wharton's poem by the same title. Also noteworthy among those who study the Persephone myth in Wharton's works is Sarah Whitehead's (2010, 26/1) look at the evolution of the Demeter figure in Wharton's short stories.

⁹ Scholarship on Mainwaring's completed edition of *The Buccaneers* has been scarce. William T. Going (1999, 35/3) examines Mainwaring's completion with respect to the use of Pre-Raphaelitism in the novel. An intriguing study by Lee Sigelman (1995, 29/4) sets out to establish the break from Wharton's pattern of word usage by Mainwaring by looking at the ratio of the types of words used. Eleanor Hersey (1999, 16/2: 178) includes Mainwaring's version in an examination of various attempts to complete the novel, which she argues turn the Duke into a villain, who exemplifies "everything undesirable about Victorian society," in order to paint a romantic picture of the Victorian age as a backdrop for the "assertion of late-twentieth-century gender and sexual norms." All the studies above are somewhat relevant to my own, insofar as they consider continuity in Mainwaring's completed version of the novel.

¹⁰ Also concerned with the subject of writing are Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (1998: 197-217), who read "Pomegranate Seed" as "a parable about women's ambivalence toward the power of reading and writing" (1998: 198). Judy Hale Young (1996, 33/1: 1-11) examines the same short story through the lens of the Persephone myth, specifically regarding the consequences of a woman's writing and its implications for her relationship with other women.

¹¹ The following are analyses of *The Buccaneers* that do not incorporate a discussion of Persephone. Gloria Erlich (1992: 42-45), includes Persephone in her analysis of Wharton's short story, "Pomegranate Seed," yet leaves Persephone out of her discussion of relationships in *The Buccaneers*, which she examines in the context of Wharton's relationship with her beloved nanny Doyley (1992: 159-66); like Griffin-Wolff and Kulish and Holtzman, Erlich leans towards biographical factors when discussing Wharton's use of Persephone. Susan Goodman, in the conclusion of her monograph, makes passing mention of how Persephone and Demeter appear in *The Buccaneers*, as well as other works of Wharton's, but does not undertake an in-depth analysis of the myth in Wharton's works (1990: 145-48); Goodman primarily looks at Nan's relationships with the other women in the novel, with particular attention to how they support and thwart one another (1990: 134-44). Carol Wershoven (1982, 15/2: 219) is also interested in women's relationships, arguing that Wharton's final vision urges that the alliances between women can result in positive change and contrasts this with the feelings of hopelessness in Wharton's earlier work; like Wershoven, I too am interested in Wharton's late outlook on relationships and the evolution of her vision. Avril Horner and Janet Beer (2011) include a chapter on *The Buccaneers*, which is part of a larger work that focuses on the development of the older woman in Wharton's works.

¹² Waid (1991:13) has noted Wharton's "tendency to imagine her life divided into two worlds: the worlds of Europe and America, men and women, experience and innocence, truth and the artifice of surface appearance, decoration, and the trivial realities of everyday life." Waid also draws attention to Wharton's words in her autobiography, *A Backward Glance*, in which she reveals of her writing process, "What happens [on the sheer edge of consciousness] is as real and as tangible as my encounters with friends and neighbours, often more so, though on an entirely different plane. It produces in me a great emotional excitement quite unrelated to the joy or sorrow caused by real happenings, but as intense, and with as great an appearance of reality; and my two lives, divided between these equally real yet totally unrelated worlds" (Wharton 1934: 205).

¹³ Waid (1991: 195-96) reads Kenneth as the initial Persephone figure, while the story ends with Charlotte as Persephone. Singley and Sweeney (1993: 197) see Charlotte as a Persephone figure, who stands on the threshold "between two realms of gendered expectation." Young (1996, 33/1), although she argues that Charlotte is a Demeter figure, has aims similar to Singley and Sweeney, namely to explore the consequences of a woman trespassing in the masculine realm of reading and writing. Donovan's (2009: 81-82) reading suggests that Charlotte plays Demeter to Elsie's Persephone. Whitehead (2010, 26/1: 23) sees Kenneth as a Persephone figure being lured by Elsie, as Hades; Whitehead also analyzes both Charlotte and Mrs. Ashby as Demeter figures.

¹⁴ Wharton's text is replete with the language of military conquest; see Wershoven (1982: 212-13). It is noteworthy that the enterprising yet cooperative tactics of the girls more closely resemble their fathers' business strategies than the backbiting and gossip of the mothers in the novel. Their behavior illustrates their movement into the patriarchal world of marriage and business arrangements, as symbolized by Hades and the underworld. See Donovan (1989: 9-10).

¹⁵ Waid (1991:195) tells us that Ovid was a favorite source for Wharton.

¹⁶ Women's experience with reading and writing and its connection with Persephone is a recurring theme of Wharton's writing. Waid (1991: 3) has noted that women in Wharton's novels often struggle with writing and reads Persephone as Wharton's figure for a woman writer, primarily in works such as the novella, *The Touchstone*, and the short story, "Pomegranate Seed." Similarly, Singley and Sweeney (1993) and Young (1996) all examine women and writing through the figure of Persephone.

¹⁷ This scene is evocative of one from Wharton's *Custom of the Country*, in which Undine Spragg considers different ways to sign her mother's name in response to a dinner invitation (Wharton 1913: 13-14).

¹⁸ The language of ghosts and shades is a common feature of Wharton's writing. Most notably, in *The Age of Innocence*, Ellen Olenska remains in Newland Archer's memory "simply as the most

plaintive and poignant of a line of ghosts" (Wharton 1920: 126). Although Newland attempts to make his relationship with Ellen a reality, ultimately he chooses to leave her in the ghostly realm.

¹⁹ Singley and Sweeney (1993: 211) call Persephone the "very figure of ambivalence, poised on the threshold between masculine power and feminine propriety".

²⁰ The phrases "between two worlds" and "powerless to be born" are quoted from the Matthew Arnold poem, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1855: ln.85-86)

²¹ This calls to mind the arrowless Cupid, who takes "ineffectual aim" in the garden of the Blenkers, when Newland arrives in search of Ellen in *The Age of Innocence*. See Wharton (1920: 137).

²² Although Zeus and Demeter are the parents of Persephone, Demeter is generally not portrayed as Zeus' wife or consort.

²³ Singley (2003: 62) observes, "Clocks stand in contrast to the newness of electrical technologies. As a mechanism for measuring time's passage, methodical tickings have been with us for a long time, but Wharton inserts its sounds into certain scenes to suggest certain troubling facts about the kinds of time inflicting her characters' lives in ways both old and new."

²⁴ Moreover, Mrs. Welland is obsessed with people spending their time well. See Wharton (1920: 135).

²⁵ Mainwaring, it seems, has remained largely silent on her process of completing Wharton's novel. As Wendy Steiner commented in her *New York Times* review of the work, "To my taste, Ms. Mainwaring's part in this collaboration is handled all too discreetly, with no account of how she went about her fearless ventriloquism" (1993).

²⁶ Mainwaring (1993: 175) even inserts the marble into an inventory of possessions the Dowager reviews in Wharton's text.

²⁷ The passage is an excerpt from Milton's *Paradise Lost* (IV.268-272). The connection between the Persephone myth and the Garden of Eden has often been noted. Zilversmit, for example, surmises, "Wharton seems to be suggesting that this myth is a Greek and women's version of the Hebraic and masculine garden of Eden and, like the Biblical legend, dramatizes the conflicts of men and women to establish an independent and sexual life" (Zilversmit 1987: 300).

²⁸ The contrast of the mythological and unmythological worlds Mainwaring describes evokes Charlotte's thoughts in Wharton's (1931) "Pomegranate Seed": "Outside there," she thought, "skyscrapers, advertisements, telephones, wireless, airplanes, movies, motors, and all the rest of the twentieth century; and on the other side of the door something I can't explain, can't relate to them. Something as old as the world, as mysterious as life" On these technological advances, Singley (2003: 11) writes, "Trains, carriages, steamliners, electric currents, and clocks, for example, all underline the quickening pace of modern life and its pressures." For Nan, in Mainwaring's edition, technology represents, not modern urban life, but the fashionable life of London.

²⁹ Wharton (1938:3) begins the novel with a reference to Greece, comparing the hotel verandah, where Nan's mother sits, to the Parthenon. Perhaps Mainwaring is suggesting Nan's flight with Guy is a return to the matriarchal realm aligned with Nan's girlhood and Laura's teachings.

³⁰ Early outlines of *The Age of Innocence* allow Newland and Ellen to try their romance, only to have it fail. See Greeson (2003: 415-17).

³¹ Erlich similarly notes that Guy's last name is "troubling" in the context of Nan's lover (1992: 65). Steiner connects his name to the "thwarting" of their potential love early in their acquaintance by going away to Brazil (1993).

³² Mabel's storyline is fairly underdeveloped in Wharton's text. Mainwaring makes minor adjustments to Wharton's text in order to bring Mabel back in the end. It is noteworthy that Wharton forges another connection through a work of art, namely the relationship between Sir Helmsley and Laura. The binding piece is a painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who is Laura's cousin and for whom Sir Helmsley is a patron (Wharton 1938: 235-36).

³³ Erlich has noted: "Through this renunciation Laura avoids becoming Nan's mother-in-law, thereby retaining the elective character of their mother-daughter relationship. Furthermore, by sacrificing her own sexuality and going 'back alone to old age and poverty' (1992: 359), Laura

Testvalley abandons the amatory field, leaving the female sexual role to her surrogate daughter. In Wharton's oedipal world, the daughter can enter fully and lovingly into marriage only if the mother-figure has not preempted that role" (Erlich 1992: 166). Although Erlich does not use Persephone in her reading, her analysis is in keeping with the myth, especially in the way Laura must return to her realm, not knowing the pleasures of a marriage and home of her own. This scenario is more explicitly played out in Wharton's *The Mother's Recompense*, in which mother and daughter are, in a sense, rivals for the same man.

³⁴ Wharton is notorious for thwarting the happiness of her protagonists. In Wharton's last two completed novels, however, a duology, consisting of *Hudson River Bracketed* and *The Gods Arrive*, she does allow the two main characters, Vance Weston and Halo Spear, to find happiness together. Susy and Nick Lansing from *Glimpses of the Moon* are also allowed a happy ending. These, along with Nan and Guy, are among the exceptions, but their happy endings come at cost.