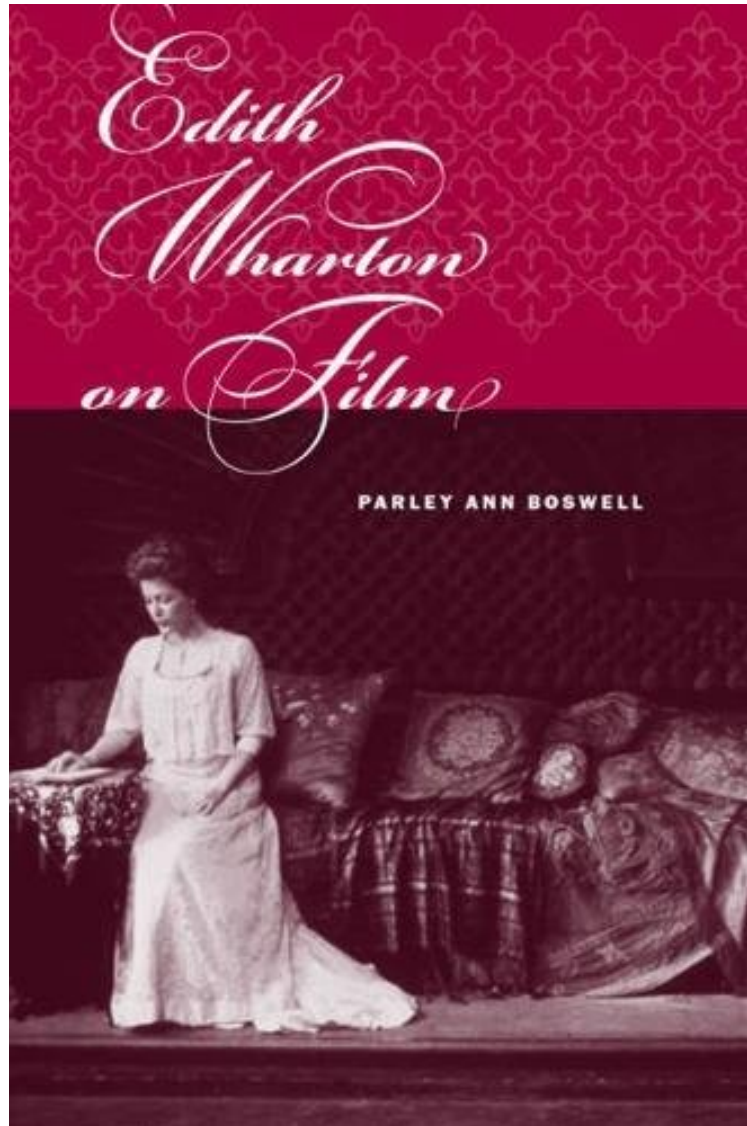


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Edith Wharton on Film

Parley Ann Boswell

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Parley Ann Boswell : Edith Wharton on Film before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Edith Wharton on Film:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. this book is a good choice--well-written, well researchedBy CarolFor anyone interested in the early history of film in America, this book is a good choice--well-written, well researched, and stylistically inviting. Furthermore, if one's interest is particularly in the works of Edith Wharton, this book is an excellent resource and provides a fresh insight into Wharton's struggle with the changes that were taking place in the US (and elsewhere), in cultural and social arenas.

Edith Wharton (1862-1937), who lived nearly half of her life during the cinema age when she published many of her well-known works, acknowledged that she disliked the movies, characterizing them as an enemy of the imagination. Yet her fiction often referenced film and popular Hollywood culture, and she even sold the rights to several of her novels to Hollywood studios. *Edith Wharton on Film* explores these seeming contradictions and examines the relationships among Wharton's writings, the popular culture in which she published them, and the subsequent film adaptations of her work (three from the 1930s and four from the 1990s). Author Parley Ann Boswell examines the texts in which Wharton referenced film and Hollywood culture and evaluates the extant films adapted from Wharton's fiction. The volume introduces Wharton's use of cinema culture in her fiction through the 1917 novella *Summer*, written during the nation's first wave of feminism, in which the heroine Charity Royall is moviegoer and new American woman, consumer and consumable. Boswell considers the source of this conformity and entrapment, especially for women. She discloses how Wharton struggled to write popular stories and then how she revealed her antipathy toward popular movie culture in two late novels. Boswell describes Wharton's financial dependence on the American movie industry, which fueled her antagonism toward Hollywood culture, her well-documented disdain for popular culture, and her struggles to publish in women's magazines. This first full-length study that examines the film adaptations of Wharton's fiction covers seven films adapted from Wharton's works between 1930 and 2000 and the fifty-year gap in Wharton film adaptations. The study also analyzes Sophy Viner in *The Reef* as pre-Hollywood ingénue, characters in *Twilight Sleep* and *The Children* and the real Hollywood figures who might have inspired them, and *The Sheik* and racial stereotypes. Boswell traces the complicated relationship of fiction and narrative film, the adaptations and cinematic metaphors of Wharton's work in the 1990s, and Wharton's persona as an outsider. Wharton's fiction on film corresponds in striking ways to American noir cinema, says Boswell, because contemporary filmmakers recognize and celebrate the subversive qualities of Wharton's work. *Edith Wharton on Film*, which includes eleven illustrations, enhances Wharton's stature as a major American author and provides persuasive evidence that her fiction should be read as American noir literature.

About the Author Parley Ann Boswell is a professor at Eastern Illinois University and the coauthor of *Reel Rituals: Ritual Occasions from Baptisms to Funerals in Hollywood Movies, 1945-1995*.