

Wrapped Up in Books: The Inner Life of Newland Archer in The Age of Innocence

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Abstract:

Few in the world value books more than writers do. They have an understanding of literature that it is hard for a non-writer to grasp – an awareness of the importance of words and stories, and their place in society. Therefore, when a writer has one of his own characters read a book, it generally means something. To pass over such a detail, to ignore the clues carefully placed, is to deprive oneself of the full meaning of a work. Every action, item, and movement in a novel contributes to the end, to the purpose and meaning of the work. A character in a novel might toss a book aside, think nothing of having an empty library, or merely note a title in passing. But to the writer, and so also to the reader, these actions are of great significance. This paper looks at *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton and analysis the reading material of its hero, Newland Archer, in order to come to a better understanding of this character, Wharton's narratives in general, and of Wharton herself. Newland Archer is a character who is in significant ways defined by the books he acquires and reads. Each book has been picked with such care it is possible to get a good idea of what type of person Archer is merely by looking at what he reads. It is therefore important to ask what his reading list says about him and why Wharton would have invested so much time in building this list. Wharton has made Archer's library his autobiography.

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Learn English from *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton using the LingQ language learning system to learn from content of interest. It surprised him that life should be going on in the old way when his own reactions to it had so completely changed. It was Newport that had first brought home to him the extent of the change. The afternoon sunlight still lingered upon the bright lawns and shrubberies, and up and down Bellevue Avenue rolled a double line of victorias, dog-carts, landaus and "vis-a-vis," carrying well-dressed ladies and gentlemen away from the Beaufort garden-party, or homeward from their daily afternoon turn along the Ocean Drive. Newland Archer Quotes in *The Age of Innocence*. The *The Age of Innocence* quotes below are all either spoken by Newland Archer or refer to Newland Archer. For each quote, you can also see the other characters and themes related to it (each theme is indicated by its own dot and icon, like this one:). Note: all page numbers and citation info for the quotes below refer to the Dover Publications edition of *The Age of Innocence* published in 1997. Chapter 1 Quotes. The timeline below shows where the character Newland Archer appears in *The Age of Innocence*. The colored dots and icons indicate which themes are associated with that appearance. Chapter 1.