

the novel's hybrid discursive forms reinforce themes of racial ambiguity and passing that upset normative social structures. The next chapter, on William Dean Howells's *An Imperative Duty*, broadens that discussion of racial ambiguity to consider what constitutes whiteness, an indeterminate and malleable category in 1890s America. Focusing on a character's painful discovery of her African-American bloodlines, the chapter ultimately links the definition of whiteness to issues of national identity. The final chapter, "The Haunted House behind the Cedars," brings together many of the thematic threads of the volume. Invoking such gothic conventions as doubles, haunted houses, and vampires, the chapter investigates the instability of racial identity in the work of Charles W. Chesnutt. According to Edwards, Chesnutt counters racist convictions with "the exceptional body: the body that confounds hermeneutic notions of selfhood and rational conceptions of identity based on binary logic" (109).

*Gothic Passages* concludes with an epilogue on "Twentieth-Century Gothicism and Racial Ambiguity." Though short, the epilogue suggestively charts the literary history of racial ambiguity in the twentieth century. In a closing meditation on Faulkner's *Light in August*, Edwards reiterates one of the central points of his volume: "identity is not what one is but what one passes for—a vision of identity that has often been articulated in gothic terms" (114). Edwards convincingly proves this point in a volume that, though compact, covers considerable ground. Moreover, Edwards does an admirable job of balancing complex theoretical discussions with detailed literary analysis. All in all, *Gothic Passages* not only encourages us to revisit the gothic themes of nineteenth-century American literature but also inspires us to reevaluate the intertwined literary and cultural histories of gothicism and race.

Monica Borg and R. K. R. Thornton, eds.  
*Ernest S. Dowson: Collected Shorter Fiction*  
Birmingham, UK: Birmingham University Press, 2003. Pp. 162. US \$17.50  
Reviewed by Arnd Bohm

It will not detract from the care and effort that have gone into this edition to see it as a labor of love. The English author Ernest Dowson (1867–1900) is virtually forgotten today, except for one or two poems in anthologies and bits that linger in the air, notably the haunting verse "They are not long, the days of wine and roses." Indeed they were not for Dowson, who seems to have had many reasons to be unhappy; one biographer laconically notes that he was killed by alcohol. Dowson's main success came through his poetry. He eked out a meager living with translations and with a small body of prose, including the nine short pieces collected here.

Although the strains of fin-de-siècle world weariness are evident enough, the short stories are also punctuated by vitality and intensity. As the editors note, Dowson took special care about matters of style, and his language reflects the craftsman's attention to detail. Deft use of adjectives makes the scenes and portraits of individuals vivid: "The air was heavy with the smell of flowers, full of soft vibrations—the *frou-frou* of silken skirts, the rustle of posturing fans" (112). Dowson was drawn to the moments that come in the plot just after the denouement, when the intensity of the climax still lingers but the characters' fates have been determined and can no longer be changed. A dominant theme is that the main character is compelled to recognize how wrong it would be to traduce erotic love for the sake of a conventional marriage. What distinguishes the stories from tawdry romance are the turns toward renunciation, toward accepting the emptiness and sterility of bourgeois norms. In "Statue of Limitations" a man spends too long abroad, surviving "doggedly on quinine and hope," only to commit suicide on the return home rather than face the woman he had hoped to win with his acquired capital. Whatever is left of chivalry is yielding to the power of money. In "An Orchestral Violin" the virtuoso consumes a fleeting recollection of the girl who once had saved him from the street and who had been his dearest companion: "Over the memories it has excited I have smoked a pleasant cigar—peace to its ashes!" (71). The most experimental text, "The Dying of Francis Donne: A Study," works with free indirect discourse to take the narrative to the very brink of death.

The editors have collated such editions and manuscripts as survive. The preface is balanced and does not attempt to overstate Dowson's significance, while pointing to issues that remain pertinent today, such as the deformations created by artificial social norms and the difficulties that arise when gender roles are being renegotiated. The endnotes could be a bit more informative in places, since not every reader will be comfortable with French passages and settings. But on the whole the editors and the press are to be commended for bringing Dowson's short prose to our attention in this elegant volume.

Yasuko Tanimoto

*A New Reading of "The Wings of the Dove"*

Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004. Pp. 97. \$20.00

Edward Wasiolek

Despite the title of this volume of fewer than one hundred pages by a Japanese professor of English Literature at Shinshu University Nagano, Japan, there is little new in the volume. It reads like a study guide, proceeding in a systematic reading of passages through the novel, with commentary on key scenes and principal characters. Although the readings are by and large