

The New Criterion

Features

October 1997

Louis Auchincloss at 80

by [James Tuttleton](#)

A consideration of the author upon publication of his book *The Atonement & Other Stories*

The publication of *The Atonement and Other Stories*, a collection of twelve new interconnected tales by Louis Auchincloss, was scheduled by Houghton Mifflin to coincide with his eightieth birthday on September 27. [1] This is indeed an occasion for celebration. For one thing, the round age of eighty offers a natural opportunity to reflect on an American literary career that has spanned a half-century. Since the deaths of Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling—as Jackson R. Bryer remarked some years ago in *Louis Auchincloss and His Critics* (1979)—Auchincloss now stands out as our most distinguished and versatile man of letters. In addition, the new collection also shows that, despite his advanced age, our greatest novelist of manners is (in his command of plot and characterization, and in the felicity of his narrative style) still a master of the shorter form as well.

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This article originally appeared in *The New Criterion*, Volume 16 October 1997, on page 33

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