**Trapped in the Double Identities as Consumer and Commodity:**

**Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth***

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**Abstract**

As one of the most prominent female writers of American literature, Edith Wharton began her career as a professional writer with this all-time classic, *The House of Mirth*. Born and bred in the upper class, living and writing in the new New York at the turn of the century, Wharton vividly and insightfully portrays the tragedy of a young and beautiful lady, Lily Bart, who gradually declines from the splendor of the upper class and finally comes to her demise sad and alone. A common motif as it is in many of Wharton’s works, gender discrepancy and the materialization of women are most evidently embodied in *The House of Mirth*. Most critics have regarded Lily Bart’s tragedy as rendered by the commodification of women. Few, however, have noticed that the existence of Lily Bart’s anther identity as a consumer, which conflictingly yet harmoniously co-exist with her identity as a commodity. This thesis, therefore, aims to analyze how both these identities account for Lily Bart’s tragedy.