

hand, they are socially ostracized if they call attention to themselves. This manifestation of the double standard, of course, puts them into the danger of a double bind.

University of Toronto's Mary Nyquist's long, theoretical essay, "Determining Influences: Resistance and Mentorship in *The House of Mirth* and the Anglo-American Realist Tradition," first looks at Henry James as a possible mentor for Edith Wharton but dismisses that possibility and then examines *Daniel Deronda* by George Eliot and *Emma* by Jane Austen for signs of mentorship. As well, she looks at how these authors deal with romantic love and narcissism in their characters and compares them to Wharton's treatment of romantic love and narcissism in *The House of Mirth*. Nyquist goes on to explore femininity in these three novels and the role of males as mentors to the heroine.

In "Beyond her self," a philosophical essay using the theories of Levinas, Irigaray, Derrida and Lacan, Thomas Loebel of the University of Calgary explains that while *The House of Mirth* criticizes the upper class system of New York at the turn of the century and shows Lily as its captive, we may be past the point where this text can really scare us about the commodification of human relations. Yet, *The House of Mirth* is a profoundly disturbing novel because of what it presents as the process of self-discovery that Lily undergoes. Society stays the same but Lily Bart alters and resists commodification. Loebel thinks that *The House of Mirth* can be read as a narrative of a woman who does not really want what she has been brought up to want, who is, therefore, a misfit, who cannot live alone and therefore, dies. "Wharton's text of a capitalistic social system" he argues,

maps the power dynamics onto a gendered identity of the different sexes, inscribing marriage as the fundamental purchase transaction motivating the system.

Goods produced that can't be sold, unmarried women and men without means, are remaindered into the bargain bin and eventually excluded from the system altogether.

This ethical self-discovery is deeper than and beyond understanding and logic. Loebel expands on these themes, particularly the gap between identity and being, in this insightful essay. In conclusion, he explores Lily as "outsider," "queer." He concludes that it is difficult to see Lily as a feminist protagonist in practical political terms. "Lily can see out of her cage, but she can't seem to get out."

The fifth and final essay "A mole in the house of the modern" by novelist Lynne Tillman begins by looking at the architectural metaphor/motif in *The House of Mirth* and continues to include decoration. These ideas segue into Wharton's enclosures and what they mean to women's roles generally and to Lily's position specifically: "Lily contains within her traces and pieces of the old order and longings for the new." Freud is thrown into this architectural stew for one page and then he wanders off only to be mentioned two more times en passant. Although unfocused, this essay shows a creative mind at work.

## LINDSEY SOBERANO

### English

I hear sounds coming from a man's lips  
he is speaking to his girlfriend  
and they are beautiful sounds  
but that's all the words are to me  
as mysterious as monkey chatter

I hear a woman speaking Spanish  
to her children  
and these words are more than sounds for me  
yet less than a language  
because I can only grasp the expressions  
that I memorized from Friday night dinners  
at *mi abuelas*

As I'm leaning against the bus shelter  
a man in a white T-shirt and Jean shorts  
appears  
and something in the atmosphere dies  
like a hunter who invades the jungle  
He mumbles "English *Englisssh*"

When we board the bus  
the Hispanic woman's daughter sang  
a Backstreet Boys song  
and even her English sounded Spanish  
as the curves of her mouth struggled to bend

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