

SP. 401

FALL 2010

Write about question 1, 5 and another question of your choice. All three questions (together) should be a page to a page and a half, typed, double-spaced.

QUESTIONS: *The Yellow Wallpaper*- Charlotte Perkins Gilman

1. What connections do you see between Rosenberg's article ("Hysterical Woman...") and Gilman's fictional story?
2. What are the possible meanings of the title and the color of the wallpaper? Why did Gilman use first person narration? Why is the female protagonist unnamed throughout the text?
3. How would you describe the narrator's voice in this text? How does that voice evolve over the course of the novella? How does the fragmented style of the narrative influence you as a reader?
4. How does Gilman engage with traditional ideas of femininity (the "cult of true womanhood") and masculinity in this story? What do the house and wallpaper symbolize? What does the woman/women in the wallpaper represent?
5. What is the meaning of the last scene? Has this woman, through her madness, liberated herself as an individual from the control of her husband or has she experienced the ultimate victimization?
6. Gilman was very much an activist writer and authored texts in many different voices (the social scientist, the journalist, the utopian writer, the Gothic writer). What is she advocating in this story? What are the risks of this narrative strategy for a politically oriented writer?
7. What contemporary issues does *The Yellow Wallpaper* evoke? Why do you think it has become one of the five most popular readings in college courses in a variety of different disciplines?

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