

Class #8

1. Library Resources for Oral Presentations (Mark Szarko, Librarian)
2. Discussion: *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) - Charlotte Perkins Gilman –
See Question Sheet
3. Meaning of this text in the contemporary period; relationship to other accounts of gender and madness (e.g. Susanna Kaysen- *Girl, Interrupted*, Sylvia Plath – *The Bell Jar*). Is *The Yellow Wallpaper* a “feminist” text?
4. *The Yellow Wallpaper* as “Bridging Text” between First and Second Waves of American Women’s Rights Activism
5. The Legacy of the “First Wave” of American Women’s Rights Activism (1848-1920) for Women’s and Gender Studies
 - a. Critiquing the “Lenses of Gender”—(Sandra Bem)
 1. Biological Essentialism-The notion of gendered roles/hierarchy and male domination as rooted intrinsically in biology
 2. Androcentrism (male-centeredness)- defines males and male experience as the norm and females and female experience as a deviation from that norm.
 - 3 Gender polarization- assumes male and females are opposite in nature;
This lens may be superimposed on many aspects of dress, behavior, work and sexuality.
 - b. Articulating a critique of the gender system as one of performance and power; Describing a model of a system in which the parts (social/cultural, legal/economic) work together to maintain a gendered hierarchy
 - c. Identifying contradictions within the political, economic and familial system to promote change
 - d. Establishing a model of social change that involved diverse methods, participants and goals: prefigurative and pragmatic approaches
 - e. Questions of the meaning of equality: sameness or difference?
 - f. Creating connections and affirming differences among various subgroups of women; questions of theorizing race/gender/ethnicity
6. The Years Between the Waves of Women’s Rights Activism: 1920-40-
“Unobtrusive Mobilization” or “Lull Between the Waves”? Role of Mass Media in Defining Social Movements

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

SP.401 / WGS.401 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
Fall 2010

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.