



Women Writers and Dissent in 20th and 21st Century American Literature

Curriculum Unit 00.04.02

by Leslie Fellows

Objectives

My primary goal is to introduce tenth-graders to the literature of women's dissent. I am focusing on American authors because tenth-grade English covers American literature in my school's curriculum. It is my hope that as a result of my unit, students -- both male and female -- will be able to understand how and why female authors have criticized our society, especially the way women are treated. I also developed the unit so that students will be able to explore the role that women's literature has played in debunking female stereotypes.

By the same token, students will be able to understand why women writers question traditional female roles, particularly the role of taking care of men yet being subordinate to them. Students will be able to recognize how destructive and restrictive those traditional roles -- and stereotypes -- can be to both girls and women. Students also will be able to examine the ways in which women have used literature to explicitly and implicitly assert their need for freedom, equality, identity and power. And, finally, students will be able to identify how feminist literature aims to change our patriarchal society by pointing out its flaws.

A second objective of this unit is to honor the myriad contributions women of various ethnic and racial backgrounds have made to literature and to our collective awareness as human beings. We will do that by studying the texts of female authors who, though well-known, are not generally represented in classroom anthologies. For example, we will read Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston, Sandra Cisneros, Amy Lowell, Tillie Olsen, Susan Glaspell, Adrienne Rich, Sylvia Plath, Alice Walker, Maxine Hong Kingston, Marge Piercy, and Erica Jong, among others.

Yet a third goal is to help students prepare for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), which they take during the spring of their sophomore year. To that end, I will use many CAPT-oriented prompts for students' written responses and class discussions. The reason why it is necessary to tie most of the literature we read in with CAPT preparation is because last year only 2 percent of students in my school passed the Language Arts portion of the CAPT. Overall, Language Arts is a weak area for my students, most of whom have difficulty with reading comprehension, critical thinking and the mechanics of writing well-organized essays, in which they use examples from a text to support the points they make. My students also have trouble making connections between what they've read and their own experience. By the same token, they have problems relating a text to other texts, or to movies and other art forms. Each of these skills is necessary for passing the

CAPT.

My students' strengths lie in the fact that most possess a high level of creativity. In addition, many are very sociable and/or kinetic, which can be a liability but also an asset if used in meaningful classroom activities. For example, I have found that my students like to take parts and read plays aloud, an activity that is a good way to channel their energy and creative impulses. As a result, I have designed lesson plans that include cooperative learning and creative projects, such as having students dramatically read the play, "Trifles," by Susan Glaspell. Other creative activities involve having students write their own dramas, poems or personal essays about issues in the literature we read. I have also planned a visual arts project in which students can use a choice of media to portray one of the themes we discuss, such as freedom, self-expression and the struggle to find one's identity.

All of the lessons, though, do not contain creative elements, since I must also address students' need to improve their analytical and expository writing skills -- not only so they can pass the CAPT, but also because these skills are essential for academic success at higher levels. As a result, a good portion of our lessons will use the literature we read as a springboard to exploring each of the four CAPT Language Arts dimensions: initial understanding, interpretation, connection, and taking a critical stance.

This unit comprises a selection of poems, short stories, plays and chapters of novels. I did not, however, choose just any texts written by women writers. That's because not every female author deals with themes of dissent or protest, just as not every African-American author writes about slavery or racism. Therefore, in the spirit of the Yale seminar that inspired this unit, the only texts I have chosen are ones that carry powerful messages of dissent. They are also texts that I consider to be great literature and would therefore use for units with other focuses.

I also have chosen literature that is easy to understand on a literal level. I have done so because my students tend to have problems with comprehension and also because many of them are used to the genre of adolescent literature, if they read at all. I want to expose them to good literature, but I feel I must do so in a non-threatening and gradual manner, or I will run the risk of losing their interest. I base this assumption on my experience in the classroom, where I have found that it is difficult for my students to maintain interest in literature they don't immediately grasp. What's more, without first securing students' basic understanding of what a text is about, there is little hope of going beyond its surface meaning and using the higher-order thinking skills required to pass the CAPT. Basic comprehension also is a precursor to unearthing the often subtle themes we will encounter -- the dual messages and hidden meanings.

I realize, however, that the very accessibility of the texts I have chosen may cause problems. That's because many students at first see only the surface meaning and not the deeper themes. These students will comment that they find a text to be "corny," or they will complain that I am insulting their intelligence and good taste. However, if a book is at all complicated, then students will often complain that they can't understand it, and some will give up trying to. That is why in developing this unit I was very careful to pick literature I think I can "sell" to students -- works that have simple texts and intriguing subtexts.

For example, one of the works I've chosen, Adrienne Rich's poem, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," seems deceptively easy to understand. It is rhymed and has a regular meter, and on the surface seems to be a quaint poem about an old lady who does needlepoint. However, "Aunt Jennifer," is laden with subtextual messages about the domination and abuse of women. The poem also asserts the hope that a woman's creativity can help her transcend her circumstances. This poem is typical of the literature I have chosen because it is easy to comprehend on a superficial level, while giving much material for teacher and students to mine for deeper

meaning.

This unit is flexible. It can be taught to students other than tenth-graders. It is actually possible that older students might get more out of it. The unit also can be connected with other units and/or disciplines. For example, it can be used in any English class in which American literature is covered, but it also can be used in a history or social studies class in which the idea of dissent figures prominently. It can be taught by itself or as part of a larger unit in which similar issues are discussed.

For instance, this unit would combine well with one on dissent in African-American literature, since both would touch on the quest for freedom, identity and self-expression. At the risk of sounding radical, I believe that some significant connections can be made between women's issues and those of slaves, immigrants, or any other group of disenfranchised people who are searching for an identity, a voice, or a way to protest.

Background

For years, the literary canons taught in most high schools were the exclusive province of dead (and sometimes live) white men. I went to high school in the 1960s, and I read about male protagonists who did "masculine" things. They went to war (Hemingway), found a giant pearl (Steinbeck), flew airplanes (St. Exupery), and killed an old pawnbroker woman to prove that there is no God (Doestoyevsky), to give just a few examples. I remember that along the way these authors did a considerable amount of philosophizing. It was fascinating, but it was all from a male perspective.

The effect this immersion in male literature had on my still-budding consciousness was powerful, though at the time I did not fully understand the extent of it. First, I got the message that it was a man's world. Second, I bought into the values of that world. Finally, my sense of myself as a creative person with something to say was not validated. My impression was that men had adventures and wrote about them, while women stayed home and performed boring, domestic tasks that were unworthy of being written about. I didn't consider every-day life as being sacred, let alone worthy of being documented. It wasn't until I got to college that I became aware of how female writers and artists often bring the domestic and feminine into the domain of writing and art. Reading Virginia Woolf was a revelation. I am sorry that in restricting my unit to American writers that I am not able to include her work.

Fortunately, today we read and teach a more democratic sampling of literature in high school, including that of female authors. We study works by writers of virtually every ethnic group, race and sex. Maya Angelou and Richard Wright are likely to be on the same curriculum as Emerson and Thoreau. As a result of being exposed to this diversity, our students' lives are enriched and their identities affirmed. Perhaps more important, students are now presented with more points of view, which greatly broadens their perspective.

But, despite the advent of multiculturalism and gender diversity in today's high school English curricula, there is still a great need for adolescent girls (and boys) to be exposed to more texts that deal with female-related issues. Anorexia, bulimia, self-mutilation, drug addiction, and other disorders are becoming an epidemic among young women, who feel pressured to conform. What's more, at my school I have witnessed far too many verbal and physical altercations between girls, which were caused by competition over boys. Blood has literally been shed in our hallways over such issues. This leads me to think that as women -- and as a society -- we really haven't come such a long way.

In *Reviving Ophelia*, Mary Pipher discusses the fact that our society is “girl poisoning” because of the implicitly and explicitly sexist messages of today’s movies, television shows, music and advertising. I believe it is my obligation as an educator to point out these toxic messages to both boys and girls. I also want to counteract some of the negative cultural messages Pipher writes about by presenting alternative points of view. The literature I have chosen does both. Even if some girls -- and boys -- don’t connect with the ideas presented in the texts we read, they will be exposed to information they may relate to at another point in their lives. And, it is important to remember that students are being introduced to great literature.

The demographics of the magnet arts high school where I teach make a unit on women’s literature highly appropriate. For the past eight years, the school’s enrollment has been made up of approximately 75 percent girls. (This year, the percentage of girls is 74.8.) The students are chosen by lottery, so there is no sex bias in the selection process. That leads me to surmise that more girls than boys are attracted to an arts-centered educational environment. The multicultural aspect of the literature I am using is also fitting for my school, whose students come not only from the city of New Haven but also from some 15 surrounding suburbs. The school is unique in New Haven because its student body is quite ethnically and racially diverse (55 percent African-American; 28 percent Caucasian; 16 percent Latino; and 1 percent other). These broad categories, of course, include ethnic groups too numerous to list. I have taught youngsters who are Chicano, Puerto Rican, Dominican, West Indian, Japanese-American, Jewish, and Muslim, to name just a few groups represented.

Even though girls make up the majority of my school’s student body, I nevertheless need to address the argument that a unit on women’s literature will leave out the boys. My answer to this concern is that both girls and boys will relate to the literature we read because it deals with the quest for identity, independence and self-expression. These are issues that are important to both male and female adolescents because of the unique stage they are going through in their social and emotional development. Moreover, both boys and girls should be able to relate to the universal themes (and aspects of human nature) found in the texts we read. These themes include guilt, anger, revenge, frustration, and regret. Finally, the most compelling argument for a unit on women’s literature is that the boys who are sitting alongside the girls in English class are the girls’ friends, brothers, cousins and future husbands. What affects the girls will indirectly affect them, too. Therefore, the boys should be aware of the issues and potential problems their female counterparts may face.

Strategies

The first simple, yet important, step is to define the significant, recurring terms of “feminism” and “dissent.” For the purpose of this unit, I am defining “feminism” as the empowerment of women. Unfortunately, the word “feminism,” is widely misunderstood and has bad connotations. However, the concept must enter into our dialogue in class because feminism directly correlates with the idea of dissent. Without the need for empowerment, there would be no need for women’s literature of dissent.

To define “dissent,” I looked to Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition, for inspiration. The dictionary defines “dissent,” when used as a noun, to mean a difference of opinion. When used as a verb, the word means “to withhold assent,” or “to differ in opinion.” “Dissent” is close in meaning to the word, “protest.” However, I consider “protest” to be the stronger of the two words.

In the literature I have chosen, the female authors express dissent -- and protest -- in a variety of ways. They make their points directly and indirectly, in double meanings, and sometimes with irony and even humor. For

example, in some works, such as Alice Walker's poem, "Expect Nothing," dissent is expressed as anger and disappointment. Walker ironically exhorts her readers to "wish for nothing larger than your own small heart," and to "tame wild disappointment."

It is not enough, though, to merely define feminism and dissent. Students need to be exposed to background information on the women's movement and its evolution over the past century and a half. Unlike many of us baby boomers, today's teenagers were not alive to witness the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, during which women fought for economic and reproductive rights. Many contemporary teenagers know nothing of the struggle women waged to earn the rights they now have, including the ability to vote. (When I mention in class that women had previously been barred from voting, students look at me incredulously.) So, I will incorporate historical elements into my unit by interspersing readings on women's history, from the suffrage movement in the mid-1800s through the second and third waves of feminism. We will explore topics such as how and when the women's movement started, who were its leaders and who made up its rank and file. We also will look at the movement's philosophies, goals and tactics, as well as the role the movement played in shaping American culture and society.

The primary texts from which I will extract readings and information include *History of Women in the United States* by Nancy F. Cott, *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* by Kathleen C. Berkeley, and *The Body Project, An Intimate History of American Girls* by Joan Jacobs Brumberg. These books will give us insights into how women were viewed in the past, which will help us understand many of the works we will read. For example, during the Victorian era, when one of our texts, "The Yellow Wallpaper," was published, "respectable" women were considered to be angels of domesticity. Knowing this is essential to interpreting the meaning of the story. Another benefit of adding an historical component to my unit is that my students take a U.S. history class at the same time they take my class. Knowing more about women's history should give students an added perspective on U.S. history, and visa versa.

Kathleen Berkeley's book is particularly helpful because it contains a timeline of the major events of the women's movement -- from the first Woman's Rights Convention in 1848, to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 (voting rights), to the first National Women's Liberation Conference in 1968, to the Supreme Court Decision on *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, which overturned anti-abortion statutes. Other events noted on the timeline are the formation of important women's organizations, including the National Association of Colored Women (1896), the National Organization for Women (1966), and the National Black Feminist Organization (1973).

All of the literature I have chosen for this unit could be categorized under the umbrella of "the literature of women's dissent," or "feminist literature." However, for the sake analysis, organization and clarity, I have grouped these writings according to more specific sub-themes. We will spend a considerable amount of time comparing and contrasting texts, both within and among these sub-categories. Again, these activities will help students prepare for the CAPT because they necessitate developing interpretations, making connections, and taking a critical stance.

I have identified three themes that this unit will address. They are:

1. Feeling trapped by traditional roles and society's expectations.
2. Anger, which is either projected outward or inward as self-hated.
3. The quest for identity, power and a voice.

Many of the texts could fit into more than one category, and students will have a chance at the end of the unit to make their own connections among the works of literature we read. But, for now, I will assign each piece of literature to a thematic subgroup for the sake of organization. To explain how I will deal with each theme, I have prepared the following examples, which do not include all of the literature we will study.

Feeling trapped

“Free, free, free!” says Mrs. Mallard, over and over again, when she learns of her husband’s death in Kate Chopin’s, “The Story of an Hour,” which was published in the early 1900s. An entire century has passed, but women’s need for independence has not. Mrs. Mallard’s situation is as relevant now as it was a hundred years ago. Today, it is still not uncommon for a woman to ask her husband for permission to buy something, even if the woman has her own job. Mrs. Mallard does not have a difficult relationship with her husband, who is portrayed as being kind. Yet her husband’s death makes her realize that she felt restricted by her marriage, and she begins to look forward to “living for herself.” To desire for independence is a theme that recurs in other works we will read during this portion of the unit. These works include “The Yellow Wallpaper,” a short story by the early feminist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

In “The Yellow Wallpaper,” the narrator is suffering from post-partum depression. This young wife gradually loses her sanity when her physician husband confines her to her bedroom to do nothing but rest. She is not allowed to write or take part in useful activities (a nurse is caring for her baby). With no outlet for her intelligence or creativity, she begins to focus on the wallpaper. She thinks she sees a woman trapped behind the paper and begins ripping at it to free the woman -- a brilliant metaphor for the plight of the narrator. This is an example of a story that can be looked at on at least two levels. There is the simple, first-person account of the narrator, which chronicles the deterioration of her mental health. Then, there is the powerful, cautionary message about what can happen to a woman if all outlets for creativity and self-expression are taken away from her.

Adrienne Rich’s poem, “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers,” which was mentioned earlier, deals with a similar theme of being trapped. Aunt Jennifer creates needlepoint pictures of tigers, while working under “the massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band.” This poem epitomizes how women are restricted by the patriarchal society in which they live, symbolized the heavy ring. Yet Rich, a more modern writer than Chopin and Gilman, presents a glimmer of hope. Aunt Jennifer’s creations live on after her death. Her creativity has given her a kind of immortality.

Anger, projected outward and inward

Anger is a salient theme in women’s literature, and there is no dearth of texts that focus on it. One of my favorites is Zora Neale Hurston’s “Black Death,” in which a mother exacts revenge on her daughter’s seducer. Hurston describes how the protagonist, Mrs. Boger, is transformed by her anger into a “female tiger cut by the chisel of shame.” When Mrs. Boger is about to visit a voodoo doctor, Hurston writes that “All Africa awoke in her blood.” She does not allow herself or her daughter, Docia, to remain a victim. She reaches back to her African-American heritage and derives power from it.

For this part of the unit, we’ll read “Trifles,” by Susan Glaspell, a one-act play in which one woman’s revenge also plays a central role. In addition, the play is about two other women who withhold key police evidence from their husbands. The women are angry because their husbands have not taken them seriously and have teased them about “worrying over trifles.” Ironically, the women have actually solved a murder by piecing together things their husbands consider to be insignificant -- the details of daily life. The play suggests that by

withholding the evidence, the women are not only getting back at their husbands, but also protecting their neighbor, who murdered her abusive husband. So, in addition to the theme of anger, there is a message about sisterhood.

“Black Death” and “Trifles” are tales in which the characters’ anger is aimed at others, but some of the texts we’ll read deal with women’s depression and self-hatred, which are caused by anger turned inward. Included in those texts will be at least one Sylvia Plath poem, “Lady Lazarus,” which is about the poet’s suicide attempts. Tillie Olsen’s short story, “I Stand Here Ironing,” is another example of anger turned inward. But, in this case, the anger has been transformed into guilt, as a mother feels anguish over not having been able to properly nurture her daughter. Because of Olsen’s own experience trying to work, raise children and write, she was concerned that women don’t have enough time to incorporate creativity into their lives.

In “I Stand Here Ironing,” the narrator -- because of numerous other responsibilities -- neglects the daughter who turns out to be the most gifted and creative of all her children. I believe the daughter symbolizes the mother’s (and all women’s) creativity. In describing her daughter, the narrator laments that her gift “has as often eddied inside, clogged and clotted, as been used and growing.” This statement could apply to the mother’s situation, too, since she is not engaged in creative activity, but rather is standing and ironing, a taxing and mundane chore that is often done by women for others in their family.

The quest for identity, power and a voice

Another significant theme in the literature of women’s dissent is the lack of power and identity that many women experience, as well as a woman’s need to be heard. Some of the texts we will read address these themes with eloquence and authority. For example, in her poem, “A Work of Artifice,” Marge Piercy compares women to bonsai trees, which are pruned to stay tiny. Like the girls Pipher talks about in *Saving Ophelia*, their growth is truncated. Although Piercy isn’t Asian, this poem uses Eastern images and metaphors, such as the bonsai tree and foot binding. It is therefore a perfect introduction to our reading and discussion of “No Name Woman,” the first chapter of Maxine Hong Kingston’s novel, *The Woman Warrior*.

Like “A Work of Artifice,” “No Name Woman” deals with themes of powerlessness and loss of identity. The narrator of *Woman Warrior* recounts the story of her aunt in China, who as a young woman drowned herself and her baby in the family well. She had given birth to an illegitimate child and had become an outcast and scapegoat, both in the eyes of her family and the entire village. As a result, she was stripped of her lineage and identity. She was told by her family that they wish she had never been born, and her name was never again spoken, even after her death. She had no power, except to take her own life and that of her baby. The narrator of *Woman Warrior* notes that in the old China women did not have free will and that “some man had commanded her [the aunt] to lie with him and be his secret evil.”

Another work that addresses this theme is Kate Chopin’s short story, “Desiree’s Baby,” in which a foundling’s unclear ancestry and lack of racial pedigree comes back to haunt her as a grown woman and ultimately leads to her undoing. As is the case with the No Name Woman in *The Woman Warrior*, it is only Desiree’s connection to her adoptive family and, later, to her husband, which gives her an identity. When she loses this connection, she loses her life.

How we will work as a class

No matter which class I am teaching, I take the approach that my students and I are a community of learners. So, my plan for this unit is to avoid giving lectures and to take students through carefully guided, student-

centered explorations of the literature. These will include close readings and interpretations of the texts, whole-class and small-group discussions, and the writing and sharing of reader responses. Our main underlying activity will be to analyze texts for their deeper meaning.

After we have thoroughly read, discussed and written about each of the three subgroups of literature, we will take a more global approach and examine how all of the texts we've read fit under the rubric of dissent. We will compare and contrast texts, both within the subgroups and in the literature as a whole. Students will discuss and write about which texts they related to and what made them connect with them. Students also will write about which texts they think are most thematically alike, setting aside my previous categorizing of the literature. This assignment will enable students to make their own connections among texts from the entire unit, which will encourage analytical thinking. And, another topic for writing and discussion will be for students to decide which stories they consider to be good literature. This, of course, is an important CAPT question, which cannot be neglected.

Students will work individually and cooperatively in small groups. The culminating assignment will be to write a five- to seven-page paper about one of the authors whose work we studied. The paper will contain information about the writer and her life. It also will include an analysis of which message or messages of dissent the writer puts forth, as well as what remedies, if any, her work suggests or implies. Students will be asked to tie in the details of the author's life with the issues the author writes about, if a connection can be made. Students will share their papers with the class, and we will discuss them as a way of providing closure and cementing the knowledge students have gained.

Lesson Plan One

Objective: Students will be able to identify women's strengths and write autobiographically about a strong woman in their lives.

Initiation: Teacher and class will put together a list of what they think are women's strengths. Then teacher and class will create a list of the character traits that society values.

Class discussion: Topic: Do the women's strengths identified by the class coincide with the traits that society values?

Activity: Using the format of their choice, students will write about a strong woman they have known. In their writing, students will be asked to make connections between the woman they write about and one or more of the women we've read about.

Closure: Students will share what they've written. Class will make further connections between students' writing and the works we've read.

(Will take longer than one, 43 minute class period to complete)

Lesson Plan Two

Objective: Students will be able to identify historical issues that occur as themes in the literature we've read.

Initiation: Teacher will present a short overview on the First Wave of feminism (the Suffrage Movement). Teacher also will explain Victorian ideas of womanhood and how they affected women's literature of the time.

Development: Students will break up into groups of three to discuss how the women's history they've just been exposed to is reflected in "The Yellow Wallpaper," "Patterns," "The Story of an Hour," and "Desiree's Baby."

Closure: The small groups will report their findings back to the whole class for discussion.

Lesson Plan Three

Objective: Students will be able to work cooperatively on writing a skit on an issue we have discussed from the women's literature we've read.

Initiation: Teacher and class will brainstorm to make list of women's issues that have come up in our readings and discussions. (For example: freedom, equality, etc.)

Development: Students will break up into groups of four or five to choose an issue and then collaborate on writing a skit that deals with that issue.

Students will rehearse and then perform their skits for the class.

Closure: Whole class will discuss issues presented in skits and how those issues relate to the literature we've read.

Will probably take two class periods.

Lesson Plan Four

Objective: Students will be able to individually research an aspect of women's history and then, as a group, put together a timeline of important events.

Day One

Initiation: Students will pick a topic out of a fishbowl. Teacher will explain to students that they will be responsible for researching that topic on the Internet.

Activity: Teacher will take class to library, where students can do research on their topic. Students will print out information to take home with them.

Homework: Student will write about topic, using information gathered on Internet.

Day Two

Closure: With teacher's help, students will use the essays they wrote the night before to put together a timeline of important events in women's history. Teacher will type up and pass out a copy to each student during a future class.

Annotated Bibliography

Berkeley, Kathleen C., *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* (Greenwood Press, 1999) An overview of the women's movement from the 1960s to the late 1990s. Contains a helpful timeline of important events, dating back to the first women's rights convention in 1848. Also contains a useful glossary of terms. Brumberg, Joan Jacobs, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (Random House, 1997) Documents the way in which girls have become increasingly preoccupied with their bodies over the past century. Quotes from the diaries of real girls. Cott, Nancy F., editor, *History of Women in the United States, Volume 20: Feminist Struggles for Sex Equality* (K.G. Saur, 1994) Twenty-four historical articles on women's lives and activities, from the emergence of the women's movement in the mid-1800s to the 1980s. Useful information about women's issues, including those of African-American women. Pipher, Mary, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (Ballantine Books, 1994) Explains why American girls are becoming increasingly prey to depression, eating disorders, addiction and suicide attempts. Contains case histories of actual teenage girls. Useful for understanding why many schools need a more "girl-friendly" environment. Wolf, Naomi, *The Beauty Myth* (Anchor Books, 1991) Wolf puts forth the powerful argument that despite the gains made by the women's movement, today's women are oppressed by an obsession with thinness and physical beauty. According to Wolf, the fact that women equate beauty with self-worth prevents women from realizing their true potential.

Class Reading List

Short Stories

Chopin, Kate, "The Story of an Hour" from *Women & Fiction*, ed. Susan Cahill (Penguin Books, 1975) page 3

Chopin, Kate, "Desiree's Baby," from *The Story and Its Writer*, ed. Ann Charters (Bedford Books, 1995) page 316

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, "The Yellow Wallpaper," from *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings* (Bantam Books, 1989) page 1

Hurston, Zora Neale, "Black Death," from *The Complete Stories of Zora Neale Hurston* (Harper Collins, 1995) page 202

Olsen, Tillie, "I Stand Here Ironing," from *The Story and Its Writer*, ed. Ann Charters (Bedford Books, 1995) page 1091

Longer Fiction

Cisneros, Sandra, *The House on Mango Street* (Vintage Books, 1991)

Kingston, Maxine Hong, *The Woman Warrior*, Chapter I (Vintage Books, 1977)

Plays

Glaspell, Susan, "Trifles" from *Fifteen American One Act Plays*, ed. Paul Kozelka (Pocket Books, 1961) page 182 Poetry

Jong, Erica, "Alcestis on the Poetry Circuit," from *Becoming Light* (Harper Collins, 1991) page 149

Lowell, Amy, "Patterns," from *Americans' Favorite Poems*, ed. Robert Pinsky (W.W. Norton & Company, 2000) page 173

Piercy, Marge, "A Work of Artifice," from *Circles on the Water* (Arthur A. Knopf, 1999) page 75

Plath, Sylvia, "Lady Lazarus," from *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*, ed. Ted Hughes (Harper & Row, 1981) page 198

Rich, Adrienne, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" from *Adrienne Rich's Poetry & Prose* (Norton & Company, 1993) page 4

Walker, Alice, "Expect Nothing," from *The American Poetry Anthology*, ed. Daniel

Halpern (Avon Books, 1975) page 450

Endnotes

Susan Glaspell, "Trifles," from *Fifteen American One Act Plays*, ed. Paul

Kozelka (Pocket Books, 1961) page 182

Adrienne Rich, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," from *Adrienne Rich's Poetry & Prose* (Norton & Company, Inc., 1993) page 4

Mary Pipher, *Saving Ophelia*, (Ballantine Books, 1994) page 12

Alice Walker, "Expect Nothing," from *The American Poetry Anthology*, ed. Daniel Halpern (Avon Books, 1975) page 450

Nancy Cott, *History of Women in the United States*, Volume 20, (K.G. Saur, 1994)

Kathleen C. Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* (Greenwood Press, 1999)

Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project, An Intimate History of American Girls* (Random House, 1997)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," from *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings*, (Bantam Books, 1989) page 1

Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour," from *Women & Fiction*, ed. Susan Cahill (Penguin Books, 1975) page 3

Ibid. page 4

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," from *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings* (Bantam Books, 1989) page 1

Adrienne Rich, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," from *Adrienne Rich's Poetry & Prose* (Norton & Company, Inc., 1993) page 4

Zora Neale Hurston, "Black Death," from *The Complete Stories Of Zora Neale Hurston* (Harper Collins, 1995) page 202

Ibid. pages 205-206

Ibid. page 206

Susan Glaspell, "Trifles," from *Fifteen American One Act Plays*, ed. Paul Kozelka (Pocket Books, 1961) page 182

Sylvia Plath, "Lady Lazarus," from *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*, ed. Ted Hughes (Harper & Row, 1981) page 198

Tillie Olsen, "I Stand Here Ironing," from *The Story and Its Writer*, ed. Ann Charters (Bedford Books, 1995) page 1091

Ibid. page 1096

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