

Paper Topic No. 2 - Feminist Theory and Practice

The problem of "consent" is one of the thorniest and most interesting issues in feminist theory because it is about the nexus or connection between men and women in our society.

Discuss the problem of consent from a position of feminist theory. Incorporate theoretical observations from two or more of the following theorists we have read: Michel Foucault, Adrienne Rich, Patricia Williams, Gayle Rubin, Judith Walkowitz, Patricia Hill Collins (or others of your choosing). Consider the theory or theories you have chosen in relation to specific areas of women's experience (pornography, rape, prostitution, sexual harassment or sexual relations more generally). Unlike the last paper which was grounded in your own experience, this exercise asks you first and foremost to generalize and consider the larger issues affecting female/male or same sex interactions. How does the theory we have been reading help us consider real issues of consent and relationship? How do we incorporate issues of power, pleasure, knowledge, economics, social pressures, reproduction into our understanding of some of these more difficult issues in women's lives? [Be sure not to bite off more than you can chew. I do not expect you to take on more than one or two aspects of this issue.]

Not all women will have direct contact with prostitution, pornography, rape -- yet all will be affected by their existence. How does the theory we have been studying help us to understand these issues? What new insights can we gain from bringing together theoretical writings with particular issues of lived experience?

The paper is due on April 13 in class. Papers should be 7-10 pages in length.