

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

The “New Woman” in *The Yellow Wallpaper*  
Nineteenth-Century Domestic Spheres

Directions: Read each article, poem, or caption and discuss the accompanying questions with your small group. Record notes for each section. On the final page, compare and contrast the roles of **women in the late 1800s and early 1900s**, the roles of **men during the same period**, and the roles of **women now**.

Read "[Gender and the Nineteenth Century Home](#)," and answer the questions with your group.

- How did advice columns promote separate spheres for men and women?
- Why was the home seen as the moral center for men and the family?

Looking at the picture, read the caption that accompanies the image.



- In the image, what demonstrates expectations for women?
- How does the caption demonstrate different roles for men and women during this period?
- How is the home seen as the center for the home?

“My son-thou wilt dream the world is fair,  
And thy spirit will sigh to roam,  
And thou must go;-but never, when there,  
Forget the light of home.” Sara J. Hale

Read "[Masculine Superiority Fever](#)": Making Sense of "Spheres".

- How were characteristics assigned to men and women in the late 1800s and early 1900s?
- Why did Pauline Wright Davis refer to women's roles as "soul murder"?

Read the "[Motherhood](#)" essay and discuss the following questions with your group.

- How did women having fewer children impact their role in the family?
- What positive and negative effects did motherhood have on women as a whole?

Read the "[Puss in the Corner](#)" poem below and relate the content of the poem to other questions discussed throughout the activity. How does it complicate, change, or add to any previous answers?

All day long in the corner she sits;  
All day long in the corner she knits;  
But while her dexterous needles play  
Her eyes so liquid and large and gray,  
Mark me and watch me around the house,  
For she's "Puss in the Corner," and I'm the mouse.

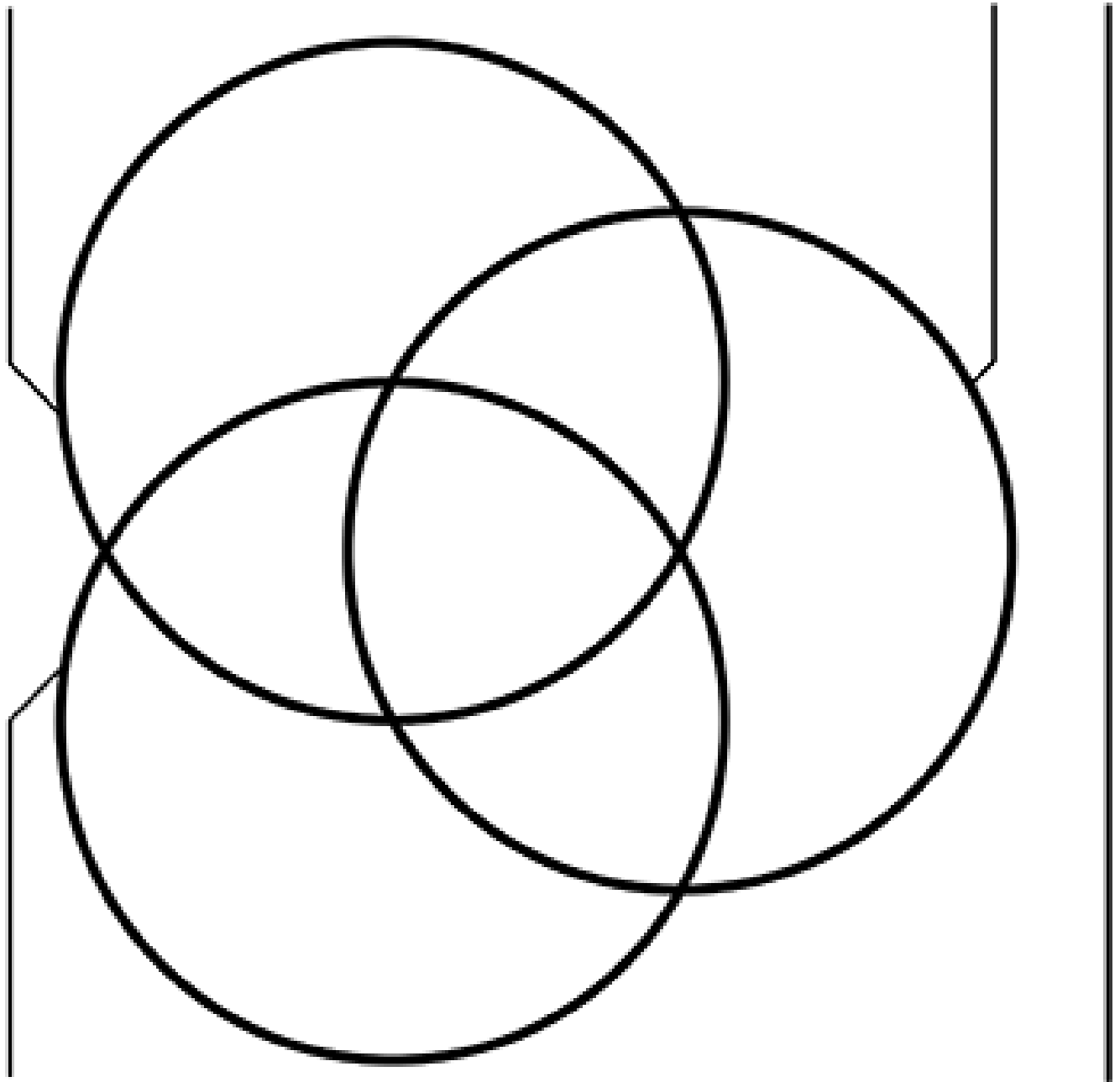
My puss hasn't got any taloned claws,  
And white as milk are her pretty paws;  
And none of the feline cruelty lies  
Lurking within her deep gray eyes;  
Yet she holds me and keeps me about the house,  
For she's "Puss in the Corner," and I'm the mouse.

I have heard that a very long time ago,  
When the world was young, and the world was slow,  
A lusty lion in a net was caught,

And the Monarch of Beasts was like to rot,  
Till the woven threads of his prison-house  
Were gnawed away by a little mouse.

This antique tale is reversed for me.  
I'm the mouse in a net, and I can't get free;  
For crosswise around my poor heart twines  
The net of Love in a thousand lines;  
And "Puss in the Corner" sits and smiles,  
And fastens the knots with a thousand wiles.

But I know the way to break the chains --  
A single course to me remains:  
When once the marriage vows are said,  
When "Puss in the Corner" and I are wed,  
We'll see who rules over all the house,  
And which is the cat and which the mouse!

A series of 25 vertical lines spaced evenly across the width of the page, intended for writing.