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[Subject]

[Date]

**Poetry Explication Essay**

**Introduction**

The Yellow Wallpaper written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman can be taken as the backbone of feminism in the literary world. The story is basically in the form of general entries from a woman who in accordance with her husband is recovering from a nervous condition. There are nine short entries in the journal. The way the entries are written indicate that they have been kept a secret from the husband. I would deem the story as a psychological horror and is quite chilling and has a somewhat similar impact that Stephen King’s narrations have (Gilman). This paper will discuss how The Yellow Wallpaper can be viewed from a feminist approach and will also reflect on how the male protagonist can have a rather sexist way to deal with his wife.

**Discussion**

The story has a very obvious theme of how women are not taken seriously and at times what they go through is deemed as something that does not need attention. The narrator “Jane” felt entrapped and was living a life which she assumed was a good one. Her husband “John” constantly snubbed her in trying to prove his superiority in every way that he could. Initially in the first entry, Jane can be deemed as someone who is quite level headed and tries to look at things in a positive perspective. Her madness in my opinion progresses gradually as she is trapped by her husband in their summer house. She also confesses that she was not even given the right to choose a room for herself, and was made to sleep in the attic which was the nursery previously. I believe that is when Jane’s madness really started to progress and develop. The nursery was made in a manner that it had bars on the windows and a yellow wallpaper. It was a place where Jane was supposed to rest and feel better, but on the contrary she started to feel worse (Gilman). Jane constantly talked about how her husband did not let her make any decision for herself or even function the way she wanted to. John treats her like a child, calling her names like “little girl” and “blessed little goose” which indicates that he sees her as someone who is inferior and does not know what is best for her.

Initially, Jane saw her husband’s actions as caring and loving, she was looking at the bigger picture and wanted to see at things the way everyone wanted her to look at them. The fact that John rebuffs anything that indicated irrationality and emotions made things worse for his wife. Jane confided in her husband trying to tell him that the bedroom wallpaper distresses her, but he deemed it as what he would call “fancy.” He was supposed to understand her situation and let her change the room, instead of looking at the rationality he should have seen that his wife was in tears and something was causing her distress, but she was neglected the understanding that she needed to heal. Further, one of the best techniques that Charlotte used in The Yellow Wallpaper was telling the story in the voice of the narrator “Jane” herself. This way the reader can have a better understanding of the exact situation the narrator Jane was in. The writing might be horror, but Jane’s mental state deteriorating can be seen by every single entry. Initially she sounds alright, but towards the end all she has written does not make any sense. The thing here to be kept in mind is that her husband’s attitude towards her is making things worse. In trying to prove that he is the healthcare professional and knows better, he is ignoring the fact that his wife might really have a problem (Gilman). He does not acknowledge the fact that the problems that she is facing are real and silences her and treats her like a naïve child who does not know any better.

Now, coming to the Yellow Wallpaper, at first Jane looks at it and finds it hard to read but eventually she starts seeing another woman being trapped behind it. It is easy to say that what Jane actually saw was herself, the wallpaper was the societal expectations that were entrapping her from living her life like she wanted. While the creeping woman behind the wallpaper was a representation of how she felt “entrapped and unheard.” By scrapping off the wallpaper all she wanted was to free the creeping woman and as she did, she merged into her indicating that it was always her who felt trapped. Throughout the journals one can read her saying “There are so many of these creeping women,” “I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did?” All of these words indicate how women are entrapped by the societal pressures and are expected to act in a certain manner (Gilman). Towards the end when John faints, Jane feels a kind of triumph as she keeps on creeping thinking that now her husband is the sickly one.

**Conclusion**

Charlotte’s work in my opinion is way ahead of its time. She spoke out on behalf of all the women of the time trying to show the world that how a woman has a say and it should not be disregarded. They have the right to live their life the way they want and be heard as well. All Jane needed was for her husband to take her seriously for once and listen to her as an equal. She was going through something and it was all put aside based on the societal role and image that was expected of her. There were times where she even wanted to do something with her life but her husband’s need of superiority confined her amid walls and drove her insane.

**Work Cited**

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wall-Paper and Other Stories*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1998.