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A Rose for Emily and the Yellow Wallpaper: Comparison and Contrast

 The two short stories "The Yellow Wallpaper" written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and “A Rose for Emily” written by William Faulkner share the stories of the protagonists who suffer from mental illness and isolation. The characters in both the stories experience insanity and isolation. Both the stories are often compared and contrasted. Both the stories take place in the time when men were considered superior to that of women, and both share the points of similarities as well as differences from the life perspectives and life experiences.

 Emily in ‘A Rose for Emily' deals with her separation from society as a norm. She was a monument for the community, and this is the reason most of the people came to attend her funeral. Most of them also wanted to look into her house which was unknown to almost all of them. On the contrary, the narrator in the other story ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,' considers her isolation as a plague which will eat her someday. Her husband is a physician, and she yearns for him to be by her side.

 The Faulkner tells the story in the form of a third person by a narrator who lives in a town which is depicted as a wealthiest area which has most of the chivalrous men having norms and principles. Over time, as they aged their principles as well as chivalry is lost. Emily who us the protagonist, once the pretty daughter of an aristocratic family of the town. Her father who is an overprotective man and he fails to find any good man for his daughter. Being overprotective he stops her daughter from getting married and finding true love for her and hence he does not let her live a normal life (Faulkner and Polk). In the end, she is nothing but a spinster who is left with just home and is struggling to accept the death of her father and is unable to admit that he is no more. Thus she prevents his removal form three days.

 After some time she meets a man who is there in twin for temporary work. They are noticed by just two members, and every one supposes that they will believe a life together. After her death, Homer's dead body is discovered from her room which reveals that she murdered Homer to keep her imaginary love with her lifetime. The true meaning of the story is inspired by the life stories and experiences of the author. Faulkner himself belonged to the wealthiest family and grew up enjoying the myths of the stories.

The text also indicates that Emily belongs to the pre-civil war era. Houses that were close to her home were replaced by the factories, and she chooses to live with her past and does live with society. The author uses symbolism to show her isolation in the story; for instance, she lives in a dark and dusty house which shows how she has separated herself from society. In addition, her isolation from society can be observed from the fact that she dislikes the laws and regulations when she goes to buy poison to the druggist. Another indication of this is when the aldermen representatives visit her for the tax she tells that her father loaned the town to some mayor who died almost ten years ago. This tells the level of isolation with society. She also refuses to comply with the laws when an order is issued to her for the address. She is also quite satisfied with her state of affairs. It is understood from the story that she did not like isolation and Homer's murder indicate that he was the only man she wanted to be and therefore she murdered him to keep him and lie next to him.

On the other hand, in the ‘Yellow Wallpaper,' the isolation of woman is due to male dominance. This story is also impacted by the author’s own life exercises as Gilman was immobilized by deep depression according to Abcarian & Klotz (Abcarian et al.). The husband always indicates that the wife is on fault and he is always right. Her husband showed disagreement with her writing and advised her to take rest. Her husband is a physician, and he only trusts the facts than anybody else. The yellow wallpaper is the indication of the worn-out beliefs of men of ownership and his wife's provisions, and it is the reflection of herself if she tries to change her traditional role of being a housewife. In this story, the woman has to listen to her husband and his symbol of power in the form of a Jennie, a housework talent. Initially, the woman gets used to the smell of yellow wallpaper but later gets disturbed with the smell, and it feels creepy to her. This indicates that she is untying herself from the procession, but later she wants to stay. It is may be due to a self-discovering of her freedom which will move away if she goes back. According to John, her health can be nurtured back by the rest, but her self-discovery shows the fruits of recovery.

On the other hand, it can be discovered that Emily had no time to discover her self-worth and she lived with self-pity and isolation. These two stories share the life of two contrasting women who were in similar circumstances. Both were suffering from isolation due to male dominance, Emily due to her father and the narrator due to her husband's misunderstanding and lack of support. Emily is so entangled in this that she is not willing to see the negative effects of it. She supposed that her destiny is in male dominance and she can only survive if she clings to past. This is evident from the rejection of her father's demise, tax reduction, and Homer's death.

On the contrary, the woman in “The Yellow Wallpaper” is able to discover her self-worth. She is ready to break loose and tear the wallpaper. She is jealous of her house help Jennie and her husband, and she states that she has found both staring at yellow wallpaper to her great surprise and their own awkwardness. She is a personification of great innovation in the fact that she revives her new energy and viewpoint. By then, her nervousness gets over as she breaks the circle of isolation and prefers to be surrounded by the self-trust and more positive thoughts. And she describes her discovery she claims that they can’t put her back (Gilman, 10).

 To sum up, both writers use their excellent writing skills to show the effects of being satisfied and restricting oneself to a popular belief. Both the stories show the emotional trails of women, living an exclusive lifestyle and falling deeper into their insanity. Emily is depicted as a monument that symbolically reflects someone who is unchanging. On the other hand, the woman in the other story is happy to rediscover herself that enables her to improve herself. The opposing effect of isolation and loneliness is sensed during both stories. Each authors viewpoint makes the two stories incorporate different meanings and themes yet having similar plots.

Works Cited

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