

Analysis essay of the yellow wallpaper

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The “ Yellow Wallpaper” is a vivid, partly autobiographical tale of clinical depression and the struggle for selfhood, written by an early feminist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman. This short story is focusing on the American Gothic Fiction Literary Movement. This story is about a woman who fights for her right to express what she feels, and fights for her right to do what she wants to do. The narrator in this short story is a woman whose husband loves her very much, but oppresses her to the point where she cannot take it anymore. It revolves around the main character, her oppressed life, and her search for freedom.

The first characteristic of American Gothic fiction seen in “ The Yellow Wallpaper” is the dark, scary setting. The setting is which the story takes place is in the narrators room, where she is severally ill, and she is “ locked up” in the room which served as her cage. The room in which the narrator is caged in is a nursery, “ it is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways. The paint and paper look as if a boys’ school had used it.” The narrator describes the color of the walls as repellent, almost revolting, it is an unclear yellow with a dull orange. The condition that the narrator is in, the repulsiveness of the room, and the room haunting her, drives her into insanity.

The second characteristic of American Gothic fiction is the way Gilman uses the wallpaper to be frightening. She is also very aware that what she perceives in the wallpaper is frightening and provoking, and yet is no more or no less than the apparitions of apprehensions a child sees in a dark room. She even uses an example from her past in which she remembered a “ strong” chair that could save her from any terror-laden inanimate objects

that threatened her. She later then becomes fond of the room because of the wallpaper, and not for a switch in perception, she does not think the wallpaper lovely all the sudden. Instead she becomes fond of its vociferous ugliness.

The third characteristic of American Gothic fiction is violence. The narrator, restricted to her bedroom by her insisting physician husband, is subject to violence in the form of insanity because of his authoritative actions. The violence manifests in her mind because of the yellow wallpaper in the bedroom, and gets progressively worse throughout the story. The narrator's physician husband, John, believes he is helping his wife's depressed condition by confining her to a third floor bedroom with barred windows. In actuality, he creates a domestic prison where his wife has nothing but her own thoughts and a journal to pass away the time. John does not even want his wife to journal, as the narrator states, "...but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad" (p. 93). John is completely oblivious to the fact that his medical-opinioned "treatment" was in fact driving his wife insane.

The fourth characteristic of American Gothic fiction in the story comes at the end when the narrator focuses on the supernatural. She imagines that there are women creeping around behind the patterns of the wallpaper, and comes to believe that she is one of them. She locks herself in the room, now the only place where she feels safe, refusing to leave when the summer rental is up. "For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow. But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my

shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way. (Gilman 8777)

In conclusion, Gilman was a women's rights activist in the late 1800's and she used her fiction to raise feminist issues and to bring about a change in their circumstances . She did a great job of exemplifying the American Gothic Fiction Movement in, " The Yellow Wallpaper," telling a story of a woman entrapped within the confines of her marriage and her expected roles as a woman and it is this perhaps that causes the woman's madness.