

"a reader response critique of the yellow wallpaper"

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Imagining living a life where you are told what to wear, what to eat, what to think, and how to act. Now being in the 21st century, we cannot imagine that. How we live our life is much different now from what it used to be in the 1900's.

Men and women are looked at equally. Using feminist criticism, the reader can analyze Charlotte Perkins-Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* through symbolism, dialogue, and character. In the beginning of "The Yellow Wallpaper" the narrator is stuck in a world where women are looked down on. The narrator presents herself as "one's self" throughout the story because she feels as if she is not her own person. She is married to a man named John. John is her caretaker and husband.

Even though he acts more like a mother or father figure he shows his love in a dysfunctional way. The narrator's way of keeping sane is by writing. John does not like her writing so she has to write when she knows that she can be alone. John has it in her head that she is sick when in reality he really is. She is lost in this world where she can't be herself and she is driving herself literally insane.

The wallpaper in her room is a clear representation of women in that general time trying to escape from what society is presenting them to be. When move out day came she was finally in her room alone and she had this itch in her that she had to free the woman behind the wallpaper. She stood on top of chairs and night stands ripping the wallpaper down. When John finally got into the room he saw the wallpaper all over the floor. He was in such shock of her behavior that he literally fainted.

She walked out of the room right passed him and she soon realized that she was one. She was different from the rest. She became Jane. The narrator stated that " I have a scheduled prescription for each hour in the day; he takes care of me, and so I feel basely ungrateful to no value it more" (2) She is stuck in society's expectations. In the early 1900's women were not expected to think or do anything for themselves.

It was not said verbally but it was known. She thought that she was mentally ill. She wants to be her own person but physically cant. The only thing that kept her tamed for so long was that she felt bad because John took such good care of her that she felt bad if she ever thought of leaving him. He knows that he is controlling her by making her think she is sick.

The narrator also stated that " Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and he hates to have me sick. He tells me that I must not lose my strength, and he has me take liver oil and lots of tonics and things" (6) by him doing this he is controlling her even more than he already is. We know that he loves her but by not letting her do anything for herself, he is only making her push farther and farther away from him. The narrator says " John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in a marriage" (1) The unfortunate part about this statement is that when you are married to someone you normally don't expect that. In a marriage you would expect a person not to judge you but to comfort you when you needed the comforting. All John truly wanted from her was to be a basic housewife.

Yes, each partner has their own duties in a marriage but being a slave for a man was not anticipated. The narrator felt almost as if she was in prison. She

was isolated from everyone and everything, not only in the house, but society as a whole. The only time she could honestly be herself is when she was alone. Jennie understood where she was coming from with her alone time.

Jennie didn't say anything to John or the rest of the people because she deep down inside wanted to do the same thing that Jane was. She just didn't have any potential of doing so. The narrator says that " Personally I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change would do me good" (1) At this point in the story she is realizing that she can think for herself. She doesn't need John to tell her how to feel or what would make her feel better. The narrator was forced to be someone that she really wasn't.

In the story she really didn't know who she was. All she knew about herself is that she was " sick" or so she thought. She was being forced to act a certain way and even forced how to think. Even when she was alone, she really wasn't alone. She always had John, Jennie, or the rest of the world in the back of her head. In conclusion, Jane sadly was stuck in a world of nothing but expectations from everyone.

She felt as if there was no way out until she found what kept her sane. Without the wallpaper she would not have gained her identity or her self-confidence. She was lucky enough to come to her senses that she deserved better. She also realized that she was a person just like everyone else. Just because she was a woman didn't mean that she had to act a certain way.