

Literary analysis of "the yellow wallpaper"

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Charlotte Perkins Gilman once said, " There is no female mind. The brain is not an organ of sex. Might as well speak of a female liver" (Brainyquote).

Gilman's belief that there really was no difference in means of mentality between men or women is strongly demonstrated through " The Yellow Wallpaper". " The Yellow Wallpaper" is a short story about a woman who has a mental illness but cannot heal due to her husband's lack of belief. The story appears to take place during a time period where women were oppressed. Women were treated as second rate people in society during this time period. Charlotte Perkins Gilman very accurately portrays the thought process of the society during the time period in which " The Yellow Wallpaper" is written. Using the aspects of Feminist criticism, one can analyze " The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman through the dialogue through both the male and female perspective, and through the symbol found in the story.

To begin with, one can analyze " The Yellow Wallpaper" by examining the aspect of dialogue through the male perspective. Gilman makes a strong statement about males in society during her time period. The men are portrayed to really see women as children more than as individuals. This is made clear when the Narrator says, " If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression- - slight hysterical tendency- - what is one to do?" (Gilman). Gilman shows the male perspective through dialogue because the Narrator explains that no matter what she says her husband shrugs away her illness. He strongly believes that his wife is being overly dramatic and that nothing is wrong.

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The typical male makes his wife a conformist by enforcing his beliefs on her. The husband truly believes that nothing is wrong with his wife so he ignores the problem and adds to his wife's illness. The Narrator also falls victim to oppression through derogatory names on behalf of her husband. This is made clear when the husband interacts with the Narrator, " The he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished , and have it Whitewashed into the bargain" (Gilman). The key phrase in the quote is " little goose", the husband treats his wife like a child and speaks to her as such. This shows how much intelligence the husband thinks his wife has.

He degrades his wife by using terms that one would typically use to speak to little children. Gilman clearly demonstrates how oppressed women were during this specific time period through dialogue from the perspective of men. Next, one can gain a better understanding of " The Yellow Wallpaper" by examining dialogue from the perspective of women. Gilman shows two very different sides of women during the time period in which " The Yellow Wallpaper" was written in. The first side Gilman demonstrates is the conformist side that women seemed to take.

The conformist female essentially goes along with the belief that women are subservient to men, this is made clear when the Narrator says, " I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!" (Gilman). The Narrator feels that she is a burden to her husband because she dislikes the wallpaper and keeps complaining about it even after he says that he won't change it. She blames herself for not being able to cope with the room her husband has made her

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live in even though she was able to find solutions to the problem. These solutions included changing rooms or changing the wallpaper, but her husband said no. Gilman is also able to demonstrate the other side of women through dialogue. The Narrator finally overcomes her conformist ways towards the end of the story when she says, " I've got out at last," said I, " in spite of you and Jane.

And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back" (Gilman). This example demonstrates that the Narrator felt trapped with her family and that she finally managed to speak up and act on behalf of herself. The Narrator finally becomes the strong female hero of the story after she speaks up for herself. Gilman demonstrated both sides of women during her time period through means of dialogue. The final observation that can be made in " The Yellow Wallpaper" is symbolism.

There is a clear sense of symbolism that one can obtain from the yellow wallpaper itself. The wallpaper in the Narrator's room represents imprisonment and this is made clear when the Narrator says, " The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out" (Gilman). The imprisonment representation is created from the yellow wallpaper because the Narrator repeatedly asks to remove the wallpaper but isn't allowed so and she is ultimately confined to the room she despises due to the stubbornness seen from her husband. The quote shows that the Narrator is finally realizing that her husband's treatment towards her is questionable and that she wants to escape her prison-like life. Gilman also shows how obsessive the Narrator has become with the wallpaper and why she is so obsessed. The symbolism is clearly seen when the narrator <https://assignbuster.com/literary-analysis-of-the-yellow-wallpaper/>

describes the wallpaper, " At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candlelight, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be" (Gilman).

The Narrator's obsession with the wallpaper increases because she wanted to change it but wasn't allowed to do so. She has become the woman in the wallpaper trapped behind the bars. The Narrator was finally able to see how she had little say about anything in her life. This feeling was able to manifest itself on to the wallpaper thus leading to an increase in the symbolism and importance of the wallpaper. The symbolism was made clear in " The Yellow Wallpaper". In Conclusion, one can clearly see that Charlotte Perkins Gilman felt strongly about women suffrage.

Gilman made clear in " The Yellow Wallpaper" that gender plays no role in the mental abilities of men and women. " The Yellow Wallpaper" also demonstrates the struggle that women had to go through in order to be heard. By using the aspects of Female criticism one analyze the " Yellow Wallpaper" by examining dialogue from both the perspective of males and the perspective of females, and through symbolism. " The Yellow Wallpaper" is an important short story in terms of history due to the positive implications it helped bring about for women. This story was written during a time where women suffrage was hardly spoken of and women were treated inferior to men.

This story demonstrates the struggle women everywhere had in terms of being heard and respected. It is important to remember how far women have

come since " The Yellow Wallpaper" was written. Since this paper was written women have gained many of the rights that men have had for decades prior to the writing of " The Yellow Wallpaper" but there are still many more miles to go before women and men are completely equal. Works Cited Famous Quotes at BrainyQuote. Web.

07 Apr. 2011. ; <http://www.brainyquote.com/>; Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, and Dale M.

Bauer. The Yellow Wallpaper. Boston: Bedford, 1998. Print.