

# [Short essay about the yellow wallpaper](https://assignbuster.com/short-essay-about-the-yellow-wallpaper/)

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In the short story, “ The Yellow Wallpaper”, the narrator describes step-by-step her decent to madness through her stream of consciousness in the story.

Her husband is extremely controlling and the narrator is getting fed up with it. Looking at the hideous yellow wallpaper every day is torturing Jane. When she finally can’t handle it anymore, she bursts out of her shell as she is tearing off all of the wallpaper in the room. This signifies Jane transforming from a weak female to a strong female, as she leaves the remnants of the ugly yellow wallpaper symbolizing her former being behind. Using feminist criticism, a reader can analyze the characters in “ The Yellow Wallpaper” by taking a closer look at Jane, Jennie, and John. First, the character Jane can be analyzed using feminist criticism.

In the story, the narrator explains, “ and I am absolutely forbidden to “ work” until I am well again…” (Gilman). In this quote, the narrator makes it clear that her “ job” is the upkeep of their house and making sure everything is clean. She refers to this as “ work” because she is actually unemployed and spends all day doing housework. In another quote, she says, “ John always laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage” (Gilman). In this quote, it is clear that Jane expects to be talked down to and treated badly by John.

This is absurd. No matter what, women should never be this disrespected by men. “ But, John says I feel so, I shall neglect proper self control; so I take pains to control myself…” (Gilman) is another quote that supports this theory. Jane is so brainwashed by this man, she believes that she has to feel a certain way just because John says she has to. Jane is clearly a weak female. She conforms to society’s standards.

She is extremely passive and just lets things happen and people do things without standing up for herself. “ He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction” (Gilman). Jane believes it is normal for women to be treated this way and be told what to do by their husband or significant other. This is an audacity. The truth is, John is extremely controlling. Jane is blind to John’s true character, she just takes his actions as expressing his love for her.

Later in the story, the narrator says “…here I am a comparative burden already!” (Gilman). By this sentence, the narrator makes it clear that she feels like she is a burden to her husband. A woman shouldn’t feel like a burden to her husband. She should be a partner of equal caliber. The narrator’s name is not presented until the end of the story, so it symbolizes that she is speaking on the behalf of all women collectively.

The narrator’s confinement begins to cause her to lose her sanity, though her husband is a physician so she should be able to find fulfillment in her home. Second, the character Jennie can be analyzed using feminist criticism. In the story, the narrator says of Jennie, “ She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!” (Gilman). In this quote, Jennie accepts inferiority and believes that she cannot make more out of her life than just being a housekeeper. She accepts her role happily and makes no stand to improve her life.

In another quote, the narrator says of Jennie, “ Jennie sees to everything now” (Gilman). In this quote, the narrator makes it clear that Jennie is a hard worker, as women were expected to be during this time. Women were expected to stay home and clean the house and do laundry and take care of anything else that needed to be done. Jennie is clearly a weak female, just like Jane. She conforms to society’s standards and lives the way others expect her to.

Third, the character John can be analyzed using feminist criticism. In the story, the narrator states, “ John is a physician, and… perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster… You see he does not believe I am sick!” (Gilman). In this quote, it is evident that John has told Jane that he does not believe she’s sick. In his mind, she’s perfectly fine. She isn’t sick at all to him. He is silencing her.

Despite anything that Jane has to say, John has his own opinion on it and his own way to control it. John also claims that Jane has a “ slight hysterical tendency” (Gilman) which is leads the reader to think that John believes a lot of women have these hysterical tendencies and can’t be logical. Men never get hysterical. Another quote in the story is, “ John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures” (Gilman). In this quote, the narrator explains how plain John is.

He rarely shows emotion. John is clearly a male oppressive character in the story. Later in the story, the narrator says, “ John says if I don’t pick up faster he will send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall” (Gilman). This is a perfect example of a male expressive figure because John is trying to make Jane live the way that he wants her to. Also, in the quote, “ What is it, little girl?” (Gilman) that John asks Jane is shocking.

The two are close in age but John is talking down to her as if she is a child. This statement supports the fact that John is an oppressive male because by the way he is talking to her, he implies that he believes she is inferior to him even though they are close in age. Using feminist criticism, a reader can analyze the characters in “ The Yellow Wallpaper” by taking a closer look at Jane, Jennie, and John. In terms of feminist ideas, the story describes how important balance is in relationships. The story also demonstrates that writing can be extremely liberating even if one is in a difficult situation. Since this woman is disrespected and taken advantage of, she begins to lose her sanity.

This proves how essential respect to women is. In a patriarchal society, a multitude of weak females fuel the oppressive males to continue treating women as a lower class citizen than themselves. America needs more strong females to finally kick this repulsive habit once and for all!