

The yellow wallpaper by charlotte perkins gilman

Literature



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The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Characteristics that comprise a good story include protagonist development and the imagery to capture the reader's emotions. Development is essential if the reader is to have reason for reading the story, but it doesn't have to be positive. Imagery can indicate what the characters are experiencing, providing the emotions and capturing the sympathy and attention of the reader because they can identify with the action. These concepts can be seen in the short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

In this story, the protagonist's development is negative as she sinks into insanity and is the primary action of the story. The woman recognizes that something is wrong with her at the beginning of the story, writing that she disagrees with the diagnosis of her husband and doctor regarding her treatment. They feel she should be given plenty of rest and isolation: "Personally, I disagree with their ideas. Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good. But what is one to do?" Through the course of the story, the woman transforms from an individual who adores the outside and green growing things to feeling safe only in the artificial world created by man. Because she cannot escape from the confining yellow room, the woman becomes completely insane. The story ends with her creeping around the walls of her room after attempting to free the women she sees trapped in the wallpaper. She no longer recognizes that there is something wrong with her actions.

This woman completely loses her mind by the end of the story, which is seen to happen in stages as she begins to recognize the faces and figures of other

women trapped within the ugly pattern of the old yellow wallpaper. The imagery of this wallpaper begins to take on a life of its own in the mind of the woman and in the mind of the reader. This wallpaper plays a large role in the progression of the woman's illness as she sees women creeping around inside it, trying to escape their own oppression. " Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind. And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern – it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads" (Gilman, 1899). The entrapping imagery of this wallpaper is oppressive as the story is read, creating a sense of its smothering effect.

Through character development and strong imagery, Gilman is able to draw the reader into her story, evoking the feelings of oppression and weight experienced by her protagonist. The development of the character is a degeneration of sanity as a result of this constant oppression, but by allowing the reader to follow this digression, Gilman enables the reader to also understand how it could happen. It is this mind-opening understanding that makes " The Yellow Wallpaper" a good story and illustrates the importance of character development and imagery in making a good story worth reading.

Works Cited

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Boston: Small & Maynard, 1899.