

Feminine oppression in the yellow wallpaper

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" I never saw a worse paper in my life." Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), American author, lecturer, feminist, and social reformer wrote " The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892). A passionate supporter of such causes as women's suffrage and their societal and economic independence, Gilman argued for the equal treatment of women and encouraged them to pursue interests outside of the home. She produced a number of highly praised fiction and non-fiction works during her lifetime including poems, plays, essays, critiques, short stories and novels which are still studied today for their relevancy in the 21st century. The misogynistic male in the literature suppresses his wife in order to keep her dependant, until she realizes how to break away from him.

First off, the narrator's husband John, is a misogynistic male who suppresses Jane and everything that she does." And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me til it tired my head" (Perkins-Gilman). John treats Jane like you would treat a child, not an adult. He puts her to bed, and reads to her until she falls asleep, that is not how a normal husband treats his wife, it makes her look inferior under his hand. This is a way of John suppressing Jane and never letting her grow up and take care of herself, and keeping her dependant on him so she can never try to leave him." John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage" (Perkins-Gilman).

John is putting Jane down so she can never be independent because no one should really expect that in marriage, it is just what he taught her to think.

Next, the narrator Jane, is a weak woman whose husband is holding her back and keeping her dependant on him." I meant to be such help to John, such a

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real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!"

(Perkins-Gilman). No matter what Jane does, she always thinks that somehow she's not living up to John's standards and she makes him unhappy, she tries as hard as she can to do what will make him happy. "Of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim" (Perkins-Gilman). No matter how uncomfortable she is, she believes it is more important that John is comfortable because he makes her think that he is superior and she should make sure that he is always comfortable in every aspect.

Last, the woman behind the wall paper is a symbol for Jane's independence trying to emerge from behind John." '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!' " (Perkins-Gilman). Jane's saying that she is no longer going to be dependent on John, she has broken out of his hold and she's not going back in, no matter how hard he tries, and she is ready to think and live by herself without constantly being in his shadow." Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the all, so that I had to creep over him every time!" (Perkins-Gilman). During the story before Jane got the strength to break free she always respected John by calling him John, now for the first time she says "that man" which is less respectful than saying his name.

Which shows that Jane does not think of John as superior to him, not even the same, her calling him "that man" shows that she believes him to be inferior to her now. John believes that he is superior to his wife, Jane, throughout the story until she learns how to be an independent woman, with the help of the wallpaper. This piece of literature makes women who are also <https://assignbuster.com/feminine-oppression-in-the-yellow-wallpaper/>

treated like this by their husbands realize what is going on and hopefully help change it. This story can possibly end the cruel treatment of women by men around the world.