

# [Taylor of plath’s novel the bell jar,](https://assignbuster.com/taylor-of-plaths-novel-the-bell-jar/)

Taylor (2012) has argued in his studies of why men oppresswomen that, ‘ most women throughout history have been enslaved by men’ and thisis shown in both The Yellow Wallpaper and The Bell Jar. Gilman’sshort story The Yellow Wallpaper, incorporates the absolute power menhave in patriarchal societies, which they abuse towards women. This ownershipand control over women to fit the traditional gender roles is constructedthrough gaslighting and its complete psychological manipulation leading to thefemale’s mental illness.

Mental illness being defined as a condition whichcauses serious disorder in one’s behavior or thinking. Whereas, thecontemporary piece of Plath’s novel The Bell Jar, the inability tocontrol the pressure and fit into the traditional gender roles is the catalystof Esther’s mental illness.  Gilman’s short story is written in the first-person narrativein a journal. This is a privilege to the reader as it is the anonymous narrator’spersonal perspective.  Theconfidentiality of her narrative, including her work as a passionate writer, ispresented as something she has to be ‘ so sly about it’ around the othercharacters in the short story, including her husband. The slyness of her writingalso connotes a sense of guilt possessing the narrator although writing is herway to escape from her physical confinement. To add to this, it builds distrustwithin the reader of John (the husband and her doctor) as well as his motivedue to his hatred towards the narrator engaging with literature.  This is reflective of the oppression of womendue to the traditional gender roles, which consisted of having a purpose ofbeing a wife not intellectual and educated, as that was a male-dominated field.

Plath builds a similar trust between the narrator and thereader in The Bell Jar as the majority of the novel is recollections or inner dialogue. However, in The Bell Jar it can also be viewed as a limited narrative, onewhich is detached and cold when recollecting her memories. This detachmentcould be derived from the pressure of traditional gender roles andrepresentative of the desolation of conventional expectations.

Esther may feelas being alienated from a world and has to repress her dark humor. Thisisolation is presented by Plath instantly in the first section of Chapter 1, asEsther explains that due to her fortunate circumstances she should feelsatisfied and fulfilled however she finds herself not ‘ steering anything, noteven myself.’  Despite overcoming hermiddle-class, with few opportunities she is unmotivated by the artificially glamourousNew York, in fact in had the opposite effect and has made her feel ‘ very empty’. Through this Plath connotes numbness that occupies Esther, foreshadowing thetakeover of madness and future mental illness, in a way of which the conflict ofher feelings and the societal expectations becomes so large it leaves Estherunable to survive under it.  It can also be argued that both of the first-personnarratives in both The Yellow Wallpaper and The Bell Jar, are untrustworthy andunreliable due to their mental state and disorder. This is clear when theanonymous narrator of The Yellow Wallpaper frustratingly addresses the reader, “ yousee he does not believe I am sick!”, this desperate yet alarming pronoun can berepresentative of the start of the deterioration of the protagonist into mentalillness.

This convinced belief that she is sick can be seen as a product ofJohn’s acts and his controlling behavior, revealing the oppression andignorance within the household. It is clear to the reader that thisrelationship is under a controlling behavior, eing constructed by John as hedeprives the protagonist of means needed for independence as well as fromsources of support