

Gothic and feminist elements of the yellow wallpaper

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“ Never let the hand you hold, hold you down” (<http://www.lilithgallery.com>). Feminism commonly described as having a male believe he is superior to a woman or women, and women being dependent on a man, feminism is explained extremely well in Charlotte Perkins-Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Charlotte Perkins-Gilman was born on July 3, 1860 – and deceased in August 17, 1935, as a child she grew up in Hartford Connecticut.

In this short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* Jane (the narrator), and her husband John go through many symbols that show the basics of feminism. Using feminist criticism, the reader can analyze Charlotte Perkins-Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper* through character, dialogue, and symbols. Within each character feminist traits are shown, but mainly in John, Jane’s husband. He is very overprotective and overbearing on everything Jane does. He doesn’t allow her to go out or visit family. John believes Jane cannot fend for herself and it makes him feel superior that he can boss someone around and take control of her.

Jane once stated that John had said, “ John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage” (Gilman). Women in this time and day expected to be “ bossed” around by their husband and men women had no say in what they can and cannot do. John portrays his wife Jane as naive, and unintelligent, and many women in that day expected that from their spouses, due to the fact women were not well thought of. Another example would be when John says, “ Bless her little heart! Said he with a big hug, “ she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let’s improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!” (Gilman). This shows that he does not believe that she is sick, and doesn’t want to listen to <https://assignbuster.com/gothic-and-feminist-elements-of-the-yellow-wallpaper/>

anything she has to say. He believes she is only sick in her mind and that she is making it up, he doesn't want to hear any of her stories.

John doesn't listen to anything she has to say because he always ends up telling her she cannot do it rather than saying yes. The reader can start to infer his feelings toward Jane and how he treats her. Secondly, each character states a specific amount of dialogue in this short story that shows explicit examples of feminism. Jane states in her writing that, " There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will" (Gilman). Jane is basically saying that her writing shows more about her and more things that she knows, secrets that will never be shared.

She is her own individual person she may do whatever she wants to do. Most importantly is the symbolism in this story. The yellow wall paper throughout most of the story is seen as foul and vulgar, showing her dislike in the room and the wallpaper, she says, " But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so~~I can see a strange provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to sulk about behind that silly conspicuous front design" (Gilman). And then later in the story as the days go on Jane studies the wallpaper even more and one day says, " The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out" (Gilman). This represents at the end of the story when Jane finally realizes she doesn't want to be dependent anymore and have him make all her decisions for her, she wants to be her own person and nothing more.

In conclusion by looking at the character, dialogue and symbols the reader can use feminist criticism to analyze Charlotte Perkins-Gilman's The Yellow

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Wallpaper. The reader can learn that feminism affected the lives of women greatly and men treated women poorly. The reader can also learn that the whole time Jane was talking about the wallpaper she was really describing it as herself wanting to get out of a controlling partnership. The significance of the story was to show different aspects of feministic character and how it is portrayed.