

Gender critique assignment

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The Yellow Wallpaper,” John’s dominant male role shows error to the patriarchy. Jane, a submissive wife, lets Johns’ say so and high societal standing dictate her actions and decisions. Gender roles in 1892 played a major role in this text’s story. While it was common for the male to be in higher position than the woman, the hushing of Jane’s actual madness only led to her complete loss of sanity. The story opens up with John taking Jane away to a rental house to help her with her “nervous disorder.

Jane is found to be undermined by her claims of serious illness, and is looked at as if she isn’t really sick, showing that John dominates all aspects of their relationship. “If a position of high standing, and one’s own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one, but temporary nervous depression- a slight hysterical tendency- what is one to do?” (Gilman 291) John feels as if he should take overall control over his wife and make it known to her that she is in the wrong and that nothing is wrong with her.

Jane states, “Personally, I disagree with his ideas,” but is submissive anyways because she knows that is her only option as his wife and as a woman in this time period. Jane is shown to be a woman held down by the power hand of the patriarchy. “Hardly lets me stir without special direction,” she states, showing that John saw her as unfit to make her own choices and decisions, which further contributes to John’s ignorance when it came to her asking to switch rooms. His mindset made her opinions irrelevant, resulting to her being locked in with the yellow wallpaper, the start of her downward spiral.

As the story progresses, Jane's encounters with the wallpaper become more frightening and more vivid, only leading her to write in her journal for comfort. John takes this pleasure away from her because he sees it unfit to help in her "resting phase of recovery." "He hates to have me write a word," says Jane, only further showing John's overpowering dominance. John takes overall control of her, making sure that she is submissive, even getting his sister to watch her throughout the day.

He makes Jane feel inferior and silly for thinking that something might actually be wrong with her or her accusation of the wallpaper. He mocks her in her time of need, coming off as comforting at times, but only proceeds to place her into further seclusion. In the end, Jane is driven completely mad. John is represented as the dominant lead of the text, not noticing that if he would have forgotten about his "social roles" for a brief moment, he may have noticed that his wife was actually in severe distress.

Men of this time were known for holding all power and for making sure that their wife was submissive to them. While John showed much love and adoration for his wife, he did not take her claims seriously, representing that he thought he knew what was best. John's downfall was him thinking that just because he was the husband of Jane, he could control and handle the circumstances. Only to see that the circumstances were far greater than his own fears for her "condition."