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## A Theme Of Depression In The Yellow Wallpaper By Charlotte Perkins Gilman

There are different ways that someone may cope with depression. Nowadays with modern technology, prescription medicine is available to take to help deal with the symptoms. Everyone is different, so that means that someone's way of coping with depression isn't going to be the same for someone else who is also suffering from the mental illness. Back then there wasn't as such an easy solution to someone who had depression and many of those "solutions" never worked, it only drove them even more mad. In *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, because depression played a role in her life she focused on that in her writing. When Gilman was young, her education wasn't as regular as it should have been because in eighteen years of her life, she moved nineteen times. Eventually, her father left which led her mother to take care of Gilman and her siblings and be the only source income which wasn't enough for them to live off of. During her middle-age years, she married Charles Walter Stetson who was an artist and had a daughter named Katherine with him. Between 1860 and 1935 Gilman was suffering from terminal breast cancer which later led her to take a lethal dose of chloroform to end her life.

Throughout her life, Charlotte Perkins Gilman witnessed many deaths and seeing people being very ill in her lifetime. Some of those people were the elderly relatives she lived with and her sister Julia. Because of this her attitude towards death became more progressive which also lead her to write topics about death including assisted suicide. After giving birth to her daughter Katherine, she began to suffer from severe depression. She then saw the neurologist S. Weir Mitchell who prescribed her to do a "rest cure" which resulted her to strictly relax and be secluded from everything. He also told her to live a life as domestic as possible and to "never touch a pen, brush or pencil again, as long as I lived". She did exactly what the doctor told her to do for three months and during those months she went mad. Gilman stopped her treatment and separated from her husband Charles. She moved to California and became involved in the Nationalist movement and moved in with her lifelong friend, Grace Ellery Channing. In the story that Gilman wrote, the main character is supposed to resemble how she felt during her experience with the "rest cure". The main character is convinced that her husband, John is doing everything he can to help her get better, eventually she begins to voice her anger that she has towards her husband to the woman in the wall. The illness starts to take over her life, she isn't able to perform wifely duties as she should which starts to anger John and makes him become more annoyed with her than being concerned.

When John is sympathetic and caring towards her, he will talk to her as if she was his own child.

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It becomes a situation where John acts as if he's the mother taking care of a child. During the time that she is locked in her room which seems to be an old nursery of some sort, she begins to see the woman in the wall and the reason for that is because she has been over exposed to the smell of mold, which is now causing her senses to become inaccurate.

It gets to a point in the story where she starts to question everything because she doesn't know what to believe anymore. The main character now starts to think deeper into the woman in the wall and question if the woman needs help or if the woman is just stuck behind a piece of wallpaper. At the end of the story, John sees how much worse she got with her mental state and faints in shock. She then crawls over his body and this shows triumph of getting through her mental illness and getting on the road to recovery. After Charlotte Perkins Gilman stops her treatment that failed her miserably and made her worse, she goes back to doing normal things that she loved to do like writing. Since she stopped the treatment, she still had some struggles that she had to deal with throughout her life because they didn't just disappear after she went back to her normal routine. Gilman suffered from continuous nervous breakdowns for three years.

The Yellow Wallpaper was written to not make someone go mad themselves when reading it. That was not her intention of writing the story, instead it was to save people from being driven crazy just like she had when she had to do the "rest cure". Another reason she wrote the story was to give an example of what not to do for the other doctors around the world and not make the same mistake as Dr. S. Weir Mitchell did when he tried to help Gilman. After the story was written she sent a copy to her doctor but he didn't acknowledge it. The story not only helped doctors to not make the same mistake in the future but it also helped a woman that was given the same treatment as her and after reading the story her family immediately refused that sort of treatment. Gilman wrote The Yellow Wallpaper as a survivor story. Just like anyone else who has been through something traumatic and lived through it, she also went through something traumatic which was going insane while trying to cure herself of depression. This story was more or less her survival story and she wanted the reader to experience the mental challenges she encountered.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman committed suicide when she was suffering from terminal breast cancer. Her suicide didn't just represent a self-inflicted death but the culminating act of contemplation about death and dying. Charlotte Perkins Gilman lived a not so great life, she struggled mentally her whole life and had to witness death and first hand. She of course had some good moments in her life too, for instance getting married and having a child of her own. Another good moment is writing The Yellow Wallpaper and letting everyone know the struggles she went through in order to cure herself. As I mentioned earlier, she became more intrigued with death because that's what was all around her during her life. Most writers write about what is around them and their difficulties and challenges throughout their life and eventually

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overcoming them. In this case, Gilman always focuses on writing about death and depression because she was struggling with it her whole life.

In some ways people can relate to Gilman, by not doing a rest cure but by being lost in their thoughts for too long and eventually going mad. Now a days, doctors suggest to people who are suffering with mental illness to do activities or hobbies they love to do because if they sit around like how Gilman's doctor did, they will fall deeper into the mental illness and not get better faster. Gilman can be used as an example of someone who kept going despite what was stopping them from doing so.

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