
Analysis Of Symbolism In The Yellow Wallpaper By Charlotte Gilman

The 'Yellow Wallpaper' by Charlotte Gilman provides insight into the life of the narrator- a woman censored and unable to express herself due to the nature of her controlling husband. The narrator leads the reader into the character's downfall into insanity, allowing for her inner conflict to be understood. The unnamed narrator of the 'Yellow Wallpaper' by Charlotte Gilman discovers that the woman she hallucinates living in the wallpaper is herself and reflects countless other women oppressed and trapped by society similar to how she is. Through her descent into insanity, she can free herself from societal constraints but loses her sanity in the process. The author uses setting, symbolism, imagery, and vivid description of the environment to illustrate women's social confinement during the 19th century.

The narrator focuses her attention on the environment around her illustrating the narrator's constraints. The home's landscape sits 'quite alone,' and the estate's grounds subsist of 'hedges, walls, and gates that lock'. The narrator depicts the home as controlling, and these exterior descriptions portray the bedroom as a monitoring device with bars and a bolted bed. The house and the bedroom is a metaphor for the female body, making it controllable and manageable. The property contains a 'delicious garden,' and the room has 'air and sunshine galore'. Although the narrator's office was once a nursery, the bars on the window suggest a jail cell because of the closed territory. Prison symbolizes freedom restraints which relate to the restricted freedom of a woman in the male-dominated society. As the story progresses, other elements of the setting slowly fade away in importance and are replaced by the wallpaper. The narrator perceives this new descriptive setting as an inconvenience due to the color and smell. The wallpaper within the room is 'strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight' and repellent, almost revolting yellow. The author uses odor and foul sight references to illustrate the feeling of decay: This decay symbolizes the slowly negative effect of unfair treatment brought upon the narrator. The wallpaper draws so much of her attention that the importance grows from a simple point of setting to a living new character in the story. The narrator admits that she 'never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before' and 'The paper looks to me as if it knew what a vicious influence it had'. Gilman represents oppression as a symbol through the use of the woman's image within the pattern of wallpaper, which she refers to as 'bars,' illustrating imprisonment. After gazing upon it, the narrator believes she visions a humanoid expression within the complexities of the wallpaper which makes it appear as if the wallpaper turns into a restrained second character, an imaginative personality which the narrator adopts throughout the story.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

As the narrator's attention becomes more devoted to the characteristics of the wallpaper, the speed of the story accelerates, especially during the night period descriptions. The sentences become shorter, and exclamation suggests this too. 'She crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it over.' The woman shaking the pattern – pattern representing prison bars – contains much symbolic meaning. It leads to the idea of imprisonment and overprotectiveness brought upon by John, the narrator's husband, which leads to society's view in a woman - that they're weak. Although the bedroom is an enclosure that never allows the social element into it, it provides a voyeuristic entrance for John by using the symbolism of locks. Remember gate at the head of the stairs and the barred windows in the bedroom. The narrator states, 'At first (John) meant to repaper the room, but afterward, he said that I was letting it get the better of me and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies'. It appears as if the bedroom is a prison which maintains the observer. The structure supported by both the system of locks, bars, bolts, and shutters that seal the openings and a controlling eye. This system of control displays a subject surrounded by surveillance and restricted access to everyone except the doctors and John, – those who possess the key – maintain the power to control the structure of the roles of those inside the establishment. Despite the purpose of locks being to fortify the home to prevent possible 'leaks,' at the same time locks create openings although they are meant to guard against them.

John's occupation as a physician grants him the power to diagnose and watch her. John insists that she is well indeed and then adds, 'There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy' as he attempts to make his wife go back to sleep. John views women as false, deceptive – a trick of femininity which needs necessitates regulating and surveying women. The 'Yellow Wallpaper' is an imposed confession, and the narrator feels guilt as she writes a personal journal though she's supposedly not allowed to do. The reader expects John to find his wife writing and punish her, similar to how he threatens punishment for her not improving her health rapidly. The narrator views herself as a secret, and the bedroom is her mask. John forces the narrator to write, and without this secret, John would lack incitement to survey and control his wife. John, therefore, not only makes the discovery imminent, he insured the written material inside the journal; thus also controlling her rational thoughts, the one thing the narrator believed she had power over.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)