
The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman: a Woman's Plight

A woman is a human being too. She deserves to be able to make her own decisions and to express herself freely. A woman should be able to live in society without being oppressed into submission by rules or by men. "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is a story about a woman who is confined and silenced in her gender role which ultimately leads to her insanity.

In the beginning of the story, the narrator seems rational but as she receives "treatment" her perspective of what is happening seems untrustworthy, as the information she gives the readers becomes muddled. By suppressing her creativity, and dismissing her concerns, John oppresses his wife into insanity while believing, he is saving her. By having her creative outlet, her journal, taken away from her, the narrator progressively succumbs to her mental illness. In the story the narrator describes the journal as "a great relief to my mind". The journal helps to keep her mind in check since it provides mental stimulation. She believes this since she says in the story that "Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good". She believes if she is able express herself creatively, it would help her keep her sanity. But her husband believes differently, since he forbids her to work until she gets better. And if she writes openly in front of him she is immediately met with strong opposition. His belief is that her imagination will run away with her and no mental stimulation is the best course of action for her.

This opposition of her believe backfires since she can no longer write, she instead starts to focus on the wallpaper in the room. She notices the wallpaper has a "sprawling flamboyant pattern committing every artistic sin". Her fascination with the paper symbolizes her descent into madness with her creative outlet taken away from her. She even begins to give the paper life like characteristics, saying it "looks to me as if it knew what a vicious influence it had". And she believes the paper has two patterns, a front pattern and a sub pattern with a shadowy figure trapped behind bars. The sub pattern symbolizes her feeling trapped since she has no means to express herself other than looking at a wallpaper. The mental constraints placed on her by her husband in his attempt to save her leads her into insanity.

By dismissing his wife's opinion under the assumption that he is wiser than her, John repressed his wife into her insanity with the intention of aiding her. When they moved to the new house, the narrator expresses that the house comes off as creepy, but her husband laughs at her instead of listening to her seriously. This is the first sign that he doesn't take her seriously. And she realizes this because she says, "If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband,

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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?" She's aware that her husband looks down upon her because he's a doctor and believes he knows better.

Another example of this is when the narrator asks her husband she can have the room with roses on it, but he insists on her going to the nursery. He patronizes her by saying that they came here on her account and that "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear, and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time. " Convinced she takes took the nursery, but based on her description, it doesn't feel like a room for healing. She says, "It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls". Her husband put her in a room for "little children" because he believes the narrator is childlike in her condition and needs to be taken of like one. This of course frustrates the narrator which puts a mental strain on her which aids in degenerating her sanity. As a doctor John failed to listen to his concerns of his patient and as a husband he failed to treat his wife as an equal. If he had put aside his ego, and seriously tried to look at things from her perspective, he would've realized he was oppressing her individuality which did her more harm than good.

Women are equally capable as men and have a lot to contribute to society. But by oppressing them, society will lose out on the valuable creativity they have to offer. In the story, John believes he is superior to his wife because he is a physician. As a result, he represses her creativity and dismisses her opinion, leaving the narrator to feel like she has no control over her life. Her feels of being oppressed in every aspect of her life leads her to be obsessed with her imagination, the only thing she feels she has control over. This turn of events ends with her losing her mind and her husband losing his wife to the illness he was trying to cure. By oppressing women does not only it harm them but the ones they are connected to as well.

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