



The darkness within: Gothic reflections of female oppression leads to madness in the select short story of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's the yellow wallpaper

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Abstract

The Yellow Wallpaper is a semi-autobiographical short story written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's a Utopian feminist. The article emphasizes the study of madness when it affects women and its causes. The narrator's descent into madness is mirrored in the creepy, decaying house and the wallpaper's eerie presence. Through a psychoanalytic lens, the story explores the narrator's inner turmoil and repressed emotions. Her husband, a physician, dismisses her feelings and imposes his own interpretations, symbolizing the patriarchal suppression of female desires and identities. The short story deals with a female protagonist who is trapped in a world that controls every aspect of their existence. The protagonist's fixation on the wallpaper represents her growing dissociation and rebellion against societal expectations. The story aims to go beyond the actual illness and socially constructed definitions to investigate the implications of insanity and the causes that lead to a woman being labelled mad. The Gothic atmosphere highlights the isolation, oppression, and the blurring of reality. The result of this analysis shows that female characters may appear to have a less powerful role in society throughout Gilman's works. The story explores the patriarchal norms of the time and damages the effects of dismissed women's mental health and autonomy. This story The Yellow Wallpaper aimed to convey the protagonist's psychological state and the societal commentary. #

Keywords: Emotions, isolation, madness, oppression, patriarchal society, turmoil, wallpaper

Introduction

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an American novelist, humanist, writer and sociologist. She was a feminist and her works served as a role model for future generations of feminist writers because of her unorthodox concepts and lifestyle. Her works Focused specifically on gendered labor division in society and the problem of male domination. Her famous short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a semi-autobiographical work where we can appreciate the details of her postpartum depression and anxieties regarding her marriage, as well as her beliefs retrieved from the feminist movement.

Review of Literature

This paper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper, is about a female protagonist trapped in a world that controls every aspect of her life. Marriage and motherhood are the ultimate sources of women's happiness but are the partners of men's explicit forms of oppression, exploitation and psychological torment towards women. Though the short story was written almost a century apart, the female exploitation travels across borders and time periods. The short story was published in a first-person narrative and was published in the year 1892. The unnamed woman protagonist lived with her husband in a colonial mansion in America for her treatment. She has acquired postpartum depression and completely loses her grasp on reality in the end. In the Yellow Wallpaper, the narrator's husband doesn't understand her spouse, and she silently stops communicating with him. So, she changes her reactions to the wallpaper, and it indicates the illness of her depression, and she visualizes the wallpaper behind the woman was trapped and tries to liberate her from the

peeling of the wallpaper. She herself identifies herself with creeping women who are oppressed by society's restrictions and with the woman in the wallpaper.

Methodology

The Gothic genre delves into the darkest recesses of the human psyche and explores themes of fear, madness, and the supernatural. The Yellow Wallpaper is characterized by mysterious events, and the short story reveals the complex characters' desires and anxieties that sneak underneath the surface of the human mind. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story portrays the duality of the protagonist's nature and the descent into madness. The story highlights the narrator's behaviors and the darker aspects of his own psyche. The narrator lived with her husband in a locked room with yellow wallpaper. The story highlights the protagonist's need for an escape, like a kind of remedy that is needed to purge her illness and hide from her husband. The Yellow Wallpaper, penned by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is set within a single century rather than spinning two. The narrative revolves around a married couple arriving at an old colonial estate that has long remained unoccupied. The husband, a physician, selects this estate as a refuge for his wife, who requires a rest cure. The place is surrounded by landscapes and an unsettling presence. Confined, the yellow wallpaper seeks to capture the narrator's attention with its enchanting gardens, yet an unease settles in as she ventures indoors. The room she is confined to was once a nursery, it's past evident in its weathered appearance. The room is decorated in a yellow color with wallpaper faded with irregular patches. An enigmatic odor pervades the space, contributing to the atmosphere of disquiet.

The window has been barred for the protection of children. The barred window is her only view and relief outside the room and husband John laughs at her view of ghost. The narrator believes she sees it in a complex wallpaper pattern. However, the narrator's ghosts are not as a result of someone who had once lived in the house. The narrator in the yellow wallpaper is a young wife and mother who have just suffered from symptoms of depression and worries. She does not believe that there is something wrong with herself. A young woman who has a husband named John. He is a physician and diagnosis to her wife, is temporary nervous depression. John decided to move to a small town in America to cure his wife. It is a place that has a beautiful view and a quiet place because the place is very far from the city noise. They choose a colonial mansion that has an enormous garden. The family lived for three months for a summer vacation in the small town. Since the arrival of his wife to the house, she has felt that there was something odd about the house. This case has been disclosed to her husband, but John does not believe in the existence of superstition. John laughed at his wife because he was a physician of high standing. The narrator is expressively prohibited actively such as writing involved in the creative activities that use her mind. The narrator wants to please her husband. But she was unable to balance the needs of her husband with all her desire for creativity. When the narrator tries to obey the wishes, John hoped to obtain healing rest in the room, the narrator secretly writes in her journal, to seek solace from the loneliness experienced. The main character is believed to be depressed by her husband, his family, and should be rested in a place away from the crowds. She also had to take some medication. The narrator's psychological complexity is often grappling with intense emotions, inner demons and moral dilemmas. This focus on only internal rather than external allows us to explore madness, guilt and the duality of human nature with a level both compelling and unsettling. The protagonist individual's flaws are battling their own inner darkness and can lead to hallucinations and often uncontrollable aspects of the human mind. The narrator begins to comfort herself in the horrible wallpaper that covered the walls of her room from the nursery. The narrator saw a woman imprisoned in the wallpaper, and she felt that two women were suffering from a man, and it was her husband, John. The narrator became more concerned with the pattern of the wallpaper in her room; she forgot her desire to be the perfect wife and mother, and she thought the only way to release the imprisoned woman from the wallpaper. The Yellow Wallpaper is particularly interested in the narrator's mind, and the aspects are hidden and repressed. The story reveals the unconscious mind of the protagonist, leading a rational thought to commit the violence and self-destruction of herself. The narrator's dark unconscious force emphasizes the fragile line between sanity and madness. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the duality carves the complexity of the narrator's identity through her life and the darker conflict between herself, freedom and society. The dual atmosphere hides the narrator's secrets and the inner turmoil of her life. Finally, the narrator secretly thinks about rewriting and to escape from her husband's pressure, even though not openly. In the beginning, she commenced writing feeling frustrated, but eventually this activity was able to make her feel better as she experienced psychological pressure. The protagonist had been suffering, and she felt freedom of pressure from

herself. In the end, the main character liberates the figure of a woman in the yellow wallpaper and frees herself. The narrator finally managed to become independent of her state of imprisonment herself. The woman behind the wallpaper is more and more real, doing senseless things, and the narrator identifies the woman behind the wallpaper as seeming like herself, living and ending up in total insanity. The narrator liberates her from her sanity, and she escapes the prison of the wallpaper's depression.

Results and Discussions

Literature and history have always been made male-centred. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story conveys the patriarchal conventions and finally deals with the issues of self-representation. In psychological states, fear and paranoia are the narrator's central characters. The emotions are not external threats, but they are deeply rooted in the protagonist's inner worlds that reflect their anxieties, unresolved conflicts and insecurities, and it impacts the psychological fear of one's own inner darkness. In the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*, fear is a pervasive and overwhelming force that misrepresents reality, leading the narrator's characters to question their own sanity. The narrator's fear often manifests her paranoia. At this stage, she herself becomes convinced that she is being watched, manipulated by unseen forces. The insanity of her emotions creates a sense of inevitable doom to affect the overall atmosphere of dread. The protagonist's characters often change to extreme actions such as violence, isolation and self-destruction, and she tries to escape from her fear. This fear reflects the darker aspects of the narrator's mind and, particularly, how these emotions can erode the boundaries between reality and imagination, leading to sadness and madness. In Gothic literature, repression reflects a fascination with hidden and disturbing aspects of the human mind. In the *Yellow Wallpaper*, repression represents the psychological process of the narrator's individual pushing down and suppressing herself from unwanted emotions that are often considered unacceptable in society and too painful to confront. The narrator's obsessive ambition and desire to overcome death repressed by societal norms and her own moral doubts leads her to behave like a monster. The protagonist's consequences of the repressed actions haunted her to traumas. The figure on the wallpaper develops into a woman who the narrator tries to understand and then free, until she finally starts thinking of herself as the woman in the wallpaper. The woman in the wallpaper shows herself in the dark night only, just like the narrator's individual thoughts. She becomes desperate and starts creeping into the daylight and the narrator's madness becomes the result of her solitary prison, and she finally forgets her own identity in the midst of the woman in the wallpaper. Women needing a space for their own becomes significant here.

Conclusion

The short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is a gothic tale of horror, and it presents elements not only suited to women of that age, but even in today's world it is also relevant. The *Yellow Wallpaper* remains a classic example of female expression and emancipation, and serves as a powerful commentary on the need for women's liberation, autonomy, and self-expression. The narrator's growing obsession with the wallpaper reflects her desperate attempt to escape the suffocating grip of patriarchal oppression. The character of

the woman trapped behind the wallpaper serves as a potent symbol of the narrator's own desires for freedom and autonomy. This portrayal of madness serves as a commentary on patriarchal society's tendency to pathologize women's experiences, silencing their voices and invalidating their emotions. The narrator's husband, embodies the patriarchal oppressor and his condescending attitude and dismissive behavior towards his wife's concerns reflect the societal norms of the time. Everything that Perkins obtained *The Yellow Wallpaper* through the use of supernatural, ghost elements and the repression of fears which were hidden behind wallpaper. This short story shows a deeper understanding of female texts as a reflection of their worries about all aspects of their lives, in order to oppose a male-driven world that tried to stop and constrict them.

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