



Challenging the Patriarchy: Radical Feminist Themes in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'

Nurhayati Purba¹, Ella Meidelin Kokardi², Gihon Kusy Marpaung³, Devi Tania Panjaitan⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Indonesian Methodist University, Medan, North Sumatra

E-mail: ellamdlkokardi@gmail.com

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Abstract

The main factor causing inequality for women is patriarchy. As in many old-school traditions, patriarchy remains in marriage where wives are urged to bow down to their husbands and the husband is regarded as the ultimate authority of the household. This research investigates the narrative of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's iconic short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper". Descriptive qualitative research and textual analysis approach are used to complete this research analysis. Along with the depiction of radical feminism, this research aims to subvert patriarchal ideals. This is in keeping with the narrator's husband John, who works as a physician, forbids her to do anything instead locking her in the ancestral halls. The reason of his attitude as if this is the only way to cure the female narrator's depressing nervous trouble. She is often considered let the silly fancies run in her mind and lost control. In the nursery room she is locked up, she found an irritating painting on the yellow wallpaper. Yet, she later discovered there is a woman imprisoned in the painting who is always creeping. The findings show that the yellow wallpaper symbolizes the female narrator's suffering as a captivated creature and pushed by the patriarchy control.

Keywords: *patriarchy; radical feminism, The Yellow Wallpaper*

Introduction

Literature is an expression used to denote both written and spoken content. According to (Desmawati, 2018), literature is a verbal and written composition that conveys the author's intentions and is regarded as having aesthetic value. In comparison to the average, non-literary text, literature offers more and more varied sorts of experiences. This is how it differentiates from the mass of writing. Literature includes a wide variety of stories that are depicted in poems, plays, proses and other art forms made from the experiences of mankind (Purba, Theresia, Sinaga, & Tambunan, 2023).

Prose is the only literary work that applies the ordinary language people use in speaking or writing. People from all walks of life read it, which sets it apart from poetry, as it can be accessed by anyone regardless of their education or knowledge of literature (Chen, 2020). There are principally two categories of prose: fiction and non-fiction. As Lee mentioned in (Qureshi, Ranjan, Rajkumar, & Shah, 2019), fiction writing is about imagination, while non-fiction is based on facts but may not necessarily be actual events. Novels and short stories are currently the most widely read types of prose literature.

(Saunders, 2021) stated a short story is like a picture of human experience, concentrated and intensified, that captures a single moment or event that brings to light universal truths or uncovers surprising perspectives. A short story defines itself as a brief narrative with a completely refined concept but majorly shorter and less complex than a novel. A short story is a compact work of literature that usually concentrates on one particular narrative theme or a small group of characters. A short story delivers a complete story line in a shortened style and frequently explores themes, emotions, and conflicts. Short stories are often referred to as prose fiction. It is meant to convey a particular experience or moment and give readers a taste of a bigger story or idea. Unlike novels, short stories can only take a single session to be read. Cited from (Gaiman, 2021), short stories serve as small portals to other realms, thoughts, and aspirations. They allow the readers to embark on adventures to the furthest reaches of the cosmos and still return home in time for a meal.

Short stories cover a wide range of genres and literary forms, including literary fiction, science fiction, fantasy, horror, and more. Authors don't just entertain readers with their stories; they also use them to communicate messages that are typically positive and invite the reader to take something away from the story (Budiman & Untari, 2019). In a shortened narrative structure, it frequently addresses universal themes and emotions while also offering readers insights into the human condition or making social criticism. They can touch on concerns like love, loss, identity, social issues, and more. As (Gay, 2022) shares short story is a condensed piece of fiction that portrays a specific experience, mood, or moment, frequently shedding light on the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and self-identity. Short stories can be used as a vehicle for social criticism, illuminating society problems, inequalities, or difficulties. They might criticize the current situation, challenge stereotypes and prejudices; and encourage readers to think critically about their surroundings.

Numerous women and girls still experience discrimination due to their sex and gender everywhere in the world. Many problems that disproportionately harm women and girls, such as sexual and domestic violence, lower income, constrained access to education, and lack of medical care are a result of gender inequality. Gender inequality occurs when discrimination based on sex or gender frequently gives one sex or gender a greater priority or advantage than the other. Gender-based discrimination infringes on the fundamental human right to gender equality.

A group of individuals is championing women's rights by addressing the issue of unequal treatment. They advocate for legal reforms and participate in protests to uphold women's entitlements. Their commitment to promoting equality for all women serves as an inspiration.

Patriarchy refers to a system of beliefs, rules, and attitudes perpetuating gender inequality between men and women in political, social, and economic contexts. According to its original definition, patriarchy is a system of social interactions in which socially identified women and men are treated unequally. The patriarchy is a system that grants men power and control while perpetuating gender inequality and limiting the agency and autonomy of women. This is often achieved through various social, economic, and political means (Solnit, 2019). The word "patriarchy" is mainly used by feminists to describe how power is shared between men and women. (Benstead, 2021) argues that many political scientists overlook the true meaning of patriarchy and do not utilize the insights provided by feminist perspectives.

According to feminist theory, patriarchy is the leading cause of violence against women today, including rape, assault, and murder. One of the things restricting women's abilities to experience development's advantages and equality is the patriarchal culture that has been institutionalized for generations. In patriarchy, women were constantly reminded of their inferiority and still are. The social structure that developed and encouraged many other inequities, inferiorities, discriminations, and degradations is what led to women's inferiority. It is class society, not nature, that has deprived women of their right to take part in society's higher duties and given priority to their animal functions, such as childbirth.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the combination of urban industrialization and progressive political views led to the emergence of the first wave of feminism. This movement, primarily concerned with securing voting rights for women, aimed to expand opportunities and rights for females. Feminism works towards eliminating various types of oppression, such as sexism, racism, and classism. It acknowledges that the fight for gender equality is linked with more significant battles for social justice (Salem, 2018). The core belief of feminism is that women should have equal rights in society, the economy, and politics. Although it first emerged as a response to Western traditions that oppressed women, feminism now has diverse expressions and global importance.

Crenshaw in (Coaston, 2019) discussed feminism is a movement that aims to liberate all marginalized groups by recognizing how gender intersects with other forms of oppression, including race, class, and sexuality. It is an inclusive and intersectional movement. There are five core principles that most feminists agree upon: promoting sexual freedom, eliminating gender inequality, expanding human choice, and striving to improve equality.

There is a movement known as radical feminism that seeks to address gender inequality by challenging traditional gender roles and power structures that have historically favored men. This movement argues that men's desire for control over women is a major contributing factor to this inequality. Radical feminism is a political movement that addresses the underlying reasons behind women's oppression. It challenges the patriarchal system and aims to liberate women from male dominance and gender-based discrimination (Jeffreys, 2010). The goal of radical feminists is to eliminate patriarchy, which they see as the main reason for gender inequality. T

hey believe that activism and systemic change are necessary to address the root causes of oppression, rather than relying on government or economic reforms. Radical feminism seeks to bring about global systemic change to liberate women. To achieve this, they propose new frameworks for understanding the relationship between men and women. According to radical feminists, traditional marriage is a patriarchal institution that reduces women to the status of men's property. Even today, marriage may still perpetuate inequality since women are still responsible for most unpaid household chores. If the conditions of women workers improve, they can choose to marry for love instead of marrying for money, or they can choose not to marry at all (Tax, 2022).

'The Yellow Wallpaper', an 1892 short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, has the structure and style of a journal. The woman narrator expresses her enjoyment in recording her experiences during her husband John's absence. Despite John's initial apprehension about the potential adverse effects of writing, the narrator is experiencing a positive impact and is eager to share her thoughts. The consideration John has shown for his wife's well-being is greatly appreciated. It is worth noting that "The Yellow Wallpaper" is presented in the first person from the woman's point of view and through her voice, which adds to the story's overall impact. This is because she is the only one who can give us any information about her husband's actions and personality, as well as how she is treated (or mistreated). This story, which doesn't preach and instead lets one of the victimized women speak for herself, examines the entire field of nineteenth-century patriarchal society and how it treats women.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is a thought-provoking short story that sheds light on gender issues and contributes significantly to feminist literature, patriarchy, and literature. Through a feminist literature review, readers can gain valuable insights into the themes explored in the story, which revolve around gender inequality and patriarchal ideals, and how they impact women's rights. The story offers a unique perspective on these issues and can be a valuable resource for those seeking a deeper understanding of gender-related topics.

Method

This research employs descriptive qualitative research method to analyze the data. Descriptive qualitative research examines the qualities of a phenomenon by focusing on a phenomenon's features rather than its underlying causes or mechanisms. It involves gathering and analyzing information in the form of words, pictures, or other non-numerical forms. According to (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), the goal of descriptive qualitative research is to offer a detailed and nuanced portrayal of the research topic, which can help researchers better understand the subject matter. (Hirose & Creswell, 2022) shares the purpose of the descriptive research approach is also to learn more about the state of the world as it is right now. Researchers can analyze and examine one or multiple variables through various research techniques when conducting a descriptive research approach. This research method allows for a thorough exploration and understanding of the chosen variables, which can ultimately provide valuable insights and information.

Descriptive qualitative research is beneficial in providing insights that may have yet to be apparent through other research methodologies. The method allows researchers to uncover and analyze underlying themes, patterns, and relationships within the data, providing a rich and detailed perspective on a phenomenon. Among the different qualitative research methods is descriptive qualitative research, which aims to capture a particular phenomenon's unique characteristics, behaviors, and contexts. This approach provides a comprehensive and detailed account of the subject under investigation, enabling researchers to understand its complexities better.

This research approach focuses on answering questions about who, what, when, where, and how rather than seeking to establish causal relationships or make generalizable claims. By immersing themselves in the data and engaging in an in-depth analysis, researchers can identify patterns, themes, and unique features, contributing to a detailed portrayal of the phenomenon. Atkinson in (Purba, Theresia, Sinaga, & Tambunan, 2023) stated that qualitative research is a method of inquiry that systematically explores social phenomena through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, images, and observations. This approach aims to uncover the complex and nuanced aspects of human behavior, attitudes, and experiences that cannot be fully captured by quantitative methods alone.

The present study aimed to delve into the portrayal of radical feminism in literary works, specifically in short stories. For this purpose, *The Yellow Wallpaper* was selected as the primary data source. This short story, written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, comprises ten pages and is widely regarded as a classic piece of feminist literature. To collect the necessary data, the researchers followed an extensive process that involved downloading the document from a credible website

and thoroughly reading and understanding its contents. The researchers then analyzed the text, highlighting quotations that illustrate instances of patriarchal events throughout the story. This data was further analyzed by describing and interpreting it in detail. The study aimed to conclude the portrayal of patriarchy in *The Yellow Wallpaper*. By analyzing the text, the researchers sought to gain a deeper understanding of the feminist themes and messages conveyed in the story. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the role of literature in advocating feminist ideologies and challenging patriarchal norms.

Results

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "*The Yellow Wallpaper*" is a profound and unsettling examination of the effects of patriarchy on women's lives. Through a series of carefully crafted quotes, the story offers a poignant depiction of the oppressive nature of patriarchal norms, revealing the unequal power dynamics, the suppression of women's voices, and the harmful consequences of societal expectations. The quotes within "*The Yellow Wallpaper*" provide a lens to view the protagonist's experiences within a patriarchal system. They lay bare the dismissive attitudes, emotional regulation, and control exerted by male figures, particularly the narrator's husband, John. These quotes offer a glimpse into women's struggles, providing insight into their limited agency and the emotional toll of being confined within restrictive gender roles.

Moreover, the quotes underscore the isolation and lack of understanding experienced by the narrator. They demonstrate how women's thoughts and experiences are often disregarded, belittled, or pathologized, reinforcing the patriarchal belief that women's emotions and perspectives are irrational or insignificant. Through these quotes, the story presents a stark contrast between the narrator's internal struggles and the dismissive responses from those around her. In addition, the quotes illuminate the symbolism of the yellow wallpaper, which represents the pervasive influence of patriarchal structures. The wallpaper becomes a metaphorical prison that traps the narrator, mirroring how women were confined within prescribed gender roles and denied their autonomy. It is a potent symbol of the oppressive force's women faced during this time.

By examining these quotes and their underlying meanings, we obtain a more profound comprehension of the prevailing theme of patriarchy in "*The Yellow Wallpaper*." Such observations reveal the detrimental impact that patriarchal standards impose on women's mental and emotional health, emphasizing the urgent need to question and dismantle these oppressive systems. The protagonist's descent into madness is a potent symbol of the overarching effects of societal expectations and gender stereotypes on women during this period. As we scrutinize these literary elements more closely, we can better appreciate the story's significance in unveiling the challenges women face and advocating for their emancipation and empowerment. Through this lens, "*The Yellow Wallpaper*" transcends beyond its narrative and becomes a powerful commentary on the

gender dynamics that continue to exist, even today, making it an enduringly relevant work. In this way, the story challenges norms and serves as a call to action for society to explore new paths toward equality and genuine liberation of the mind.

"John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage." (Gilman, 1892)

The quotation mentioned above brings to light the deeply ingrained power dynamics present in the narrator's marriage, where gender serves as the underlying factor. Specifically, the narrator's spouse, John, exhibits a dismissive attitude towards her justified concerns, thereby belittling her emotions and reinforcing the notion that it is customary for husbands to ridicule their wives' perspectives. This pattern of behavior highlights the unequal distribution of power between men and women, perpetuating the societal expectation of women's subservience to their male counterparts in all matters concerning intellect and decision-making.

"There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will." (Gilman, 1892)

The protagonist in the narrative shares her perspective on the yellow wallpaper in her room, which she views as a symbol of the oppressive and confining nature of the patriarchal system. This observation highlights the profound sense of isolation that she experiences and the limitations placed upon her ability to express herself freely and assert her agency in a world that silences and marginalizes women. Through its use as a metaphor for the larger social structures that perpetuate cycles of disempowerment and inequality, the yellow wallpaper serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by women throughout history.

"I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition." (Gilman, 1892)

In this passage, it becomes evident that the narrator's deteriorating mental state is directly influenced by the oppressive patriarchal system surrounding her. She constantly falls victim to deception and manipulation, with others dismissing her emotions as illogical. Her well-being continues to deteriorate alarmingly as she grapples with the need to repress her feelings to conform to societal expectations. The weight of these cultural norms and the pressure to maintain a facade of normalcy only isolate her from her true emotions further, distancing her from any genuine sense of self and intensifying her psychological decline. This exploration of the connection between the patriarchal system and mental health not only highlights the stark realities faced by women at the time but also serves as a powerful commentary on how cultural norms can inhibit personal growth and self-discovery.

"I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is think about my condition." (Gilman, 1892)

In the story, the main character realizes the importance of social interaction and intellectual stimulation for her health and happiness. Sadly, her efforts to prioritize these needs are met with resistance from John, who represents the oppressive patriarchal system. He undermines her desires and prevents her from taking control of her emotional and mental well-being, highlighting the restrictive nature of gender norms that limit women's independence and inhibit their ability to express their individuality fully.

"I've got out at last, in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" (Gilman, 1892)

The act of tearing down the yellow wallpaper in the story serves as a crucial moment of transformation for the narrator. This pivotal event represents her awakening to the repressive patriarchal structures that have long hindered her autonomy and freedom. It signifies her bold determination to challenge and subvert the societal norms imposed on women, thus paving the way for her to assert her right to self-determination. As a powerful act of liberation, this rebellion stands as a resounding call to action for women everywhere to break free from the confines of gender-based discrimination and claim their rightful place in all aspects of their lives.

"John is a physician, and perhaps—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster." (Gilman, 1892)

In the story, the narrator experiences a profound epiphany as she understands how her husband's occupation as a medical doctor perpetuates and enforces patriarchal norms within their relationship. She starts to see that John's traditional role in the medical field hampers her journey toward healing and self-discovery, diminishes her emotions, and dismisses her individuality. This critical moment of awareness is a pivotal turning point for her; she begins to perceive the broader societal implications of traditional gender roles within her marriage, which she had previously failed to recognize. As a result, she starts questioning the very foundation of their relationship and reassessing her place in this hierarchical structure. This newfound understanding ultimately leads the narrator down an uncharted path toward empowerment, resistance, and self-determination.

"I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more." (Gilman, 1892)

The quote in question aptly illustrates the oppressive behavior the narrator's husband exhibited throughout their marriage. This man exerts his dominance by controlling every aspect of his wife's life, from determining the structure of her daily routine to the minutiae of her tasks. He effectively undermines her autonomy and diminishes her self-worth by stripping her of any personal responsibility. The narrator finds herself caught in a vicious cycle, feeling guilt for not appreciating her

husband's domineering efforts, which further entrenches her sense of inferiority and powerlessness. This passage poignantly highlights the precarious and unbalanced power dynamics within their relationship. It showcases a disturbing version of a marital bond in which the husband wields near-total control over his spouse, relegating her to a subservient and demeaned position with little hope for change or escape.

"John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him." (Gilman, 1892)

The quotation provided is a poignant illustration of the husband's evident failure to grasp the narrator's experiences' gravity and significance. Through his dismissive and callous demeanor, John negates the validity and legitimacy of her emotional turmoil and reinforces the deeply entrenched patriarchal notion that women's feelings and accounts of their experiences are inherently devoid of merit and logical coherence. This troubling attitude effectively perpetuates the marginalization and invalidation of women's voices. It underscores the critical need for greater empathy, understanding, and support for those who have endured similar oppression and discrimination.

"I think that woman gets out in the daytime! And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!" (Gilman, 1892)

In the narrative, the protagonist draws attention to a figure depicted in the wallpaper, which symbolizes the subjugation and domination of women in a society controlled by men. The quotation underscores how the protagonist's understanding of the woman's presence is becoming increasingly apparent and how she relates to her plight. The text suggests that she recognizes other women oppressed and silenced by the patriarchal system. This highlights the significance of the protagonist's realization and her potential to take action to challenge the status quo.

"I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!" (Gilman, 1892)

The quote above is a poignant portrayal of the narrator's gradual descent into mental instability. This is evidenced by her identification with the female figure trapped within the confines of the wallpaper, which symbolizes the oppressive forces of patriarchy that have permeated her psyche. By referring to herself as an "embodiment" of this figure, she acknowledges the extent to which she has internalized these forces and is now seeking to confront and control them. The mention of the rope indicates that she is willing to take drastic measures to achieve her objectives, regardless of the potential consequences that may arise.

"He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency." (Gilman, 1892)

The statement above illuminates the narrator's long and difficult struggle against her husband's dismissive and belittling attitude towards her impressive and innovative creative abilities. Despite her undeniable and deep-rooted artistic talents, John consistently attributes her condition to nothing more than a supposed "nervous weakness," thereby undermining her capabilities as a woman and, in turn, damaging her self-confidence and limiting her potential for growth and development. This type of behavior can be seen as a clear reflection of the pervasive and restrictive patriarchal societal norms that have historically hindered women from fully exploring and realizing their true potential, a struggle that countless women continue to face and overcome even in the present day.

"I verily believe [John] enjoys it!" (Gilman, 1892)

As the narrator delves deeper into the discussion of her deteriorating health, she comes to a chilling realization that her husband, John, derives a certain sense of satisfaction from her ailment. Unsettled by this discovery, she cannot help but theorize that perhaps his contentment stems from the way her condition cements his position as the dominant force in their relationship and reinforces the traditional gender roles that society has long dictated. Her dependency on him allows their lives to reflect an age-old patriarchal dynamic, wherein her husband thrives as he assumes her caregiver role, and she remains bound in a weakened state. Through this troublesome lens, the narrator's ever-worsening health takes on a more sinister tone, serving as a cruel reminder of their unequal partnership and the societal power structures that govern it.

"And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head." (Gilman, 1892)

The quotation represents the protagonist's infantilization and reliance on her husband for guidance and support. Depicted as a fragile and vulnerable character, she is believed to lack the capability to tend to her needs and well-being. Consequently, she is subjected to the constant oversight and direction of her husband, who assumes complete control over her life physically and emotionally. This stark revelation sheds light on the inherently unequal power dynamics that thrive within the confines of a patriarchal society. As her husband maintains his authoritative stance, he ultimately subjugates his wife, perpetuating a cycle of oppression that stifles her growth as an independent individual. This carefully crafted paragraph reveals a bitter truth about women's discrimination in such settings, where their potential is often smothered under the weight of male dominance exercised through control and condescension.

"He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me." (Gilman, 1892)

The quote in question underscores the deep pressure the narrator endures in her efforts to maintain composure and conceal her inner turmoil. Encountering relentless insistence from John that she turn inwards for self-reliance only further cements the long-established patriarchal precept that women must bear their hardships independently, without hope for comfort or endorsement from their

peers. Navigating this treacherous landscape, the narrator becomes increasingly susceptible to overwhelming emotional and mental stress, with each passing moment taking a heavier toll on her overall well-being. This merciless cycle thrusts her deeper into the abyss of despair and sanctions. It reinforces detrimental gender roles and stereotypes that perpetuate this toxic expectation of women, robbing them of the opportunity to seek solace in community and shared experiences. As such, the passage sheds light on a dark aspect of societal norms that demands urgent redress to bring about meaningful change in attitudes towards emotional support for women.

"But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way." (Gilman, 1892)

As the narrative progresses toward its culmination, the protagonist's psychological well-being exhibits a marked deterioration. This degeneration becomes discernible through an incisive excerpt that underscores her sense of entrapment and loss of personal autonomy within an oppressive patriarchal framework. Within this stifling environment, she has been reduced to a highly submissive state, seeking refuge in the process of assimilation into the confining mold embodied in the overbearing wallpaper. The protagonist's acquiescence to this repressive design is a stark testament to her relinquishment of individuality and self-determination, throwing into sharp relief the depth and intensity of her subjugation within a male-dominated society.

"He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction." (Gilman, 1892)

The quote in question eloquently illustrates the extent of the protagonist's husband, John's, domineering behavior, as he exerts an almost suffocating control over her every action and movement. This portrayal of John's character is a stark reflection of the oppressive atmosphere the protagonist finds herself trapped in, constantly at the mercy of her husband's whims and expectations. The passage serves as a poignant reminder of the deeply ingrained patriarchal expectations that dictate the need for women to be constantly surveilled and guided, reinforcing the power dynamics within the confines of the marital relationship. Furthermore, this narrative shed light on the insidious nature of such relationships, where the woman's sense of self and independence is gradually eroded to accommodate the husband's desires. Ultimately, this striking analysis of John's domineering nature exemplifies how societal norms and beliefs hold sway even within intimate relationships, perpetuating a cycle of subjugation and power imbalance that has long haunted women across generations.

"I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me." (Gilman, 1892)

In this thought-provoking excerpt, the speaker poignantly delves into her deep-seated desire to find an artistic medium to channel her emotional strife. Sadly, her society is bound by a rigid patriarchal framework, undermining her aspirations. Instead, she is faced with expectations that, as a woman, her primary focus should be maintaining her physical well-being and tending to her domestic duties. This unwarranted imposition prevents her from fully actualizing her artistic talents and hinders her personal growth and sense of fulfillment. Consequently, she is left grappling with a longing that cannot be easily assuaged without a creative outlet, further highlighting the suffocating nature of societal norms that significantly impact women's lives.

"And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so." (Gilman, 1892)

The quote above captures the essence of the woman who emerges from within the labyrinthine pattern on the wallpaper, which is witnessed and described by the narrator. The author cleverly employs a metaphorical lens to depict the woman's grueling battle against the monotonous and stifling design that represents the oppressive patriarchal system. By doing so, we are made aware of the countless obstacles and challenges women must face in their quest for self-determination and empowerment within a predominantly male-centric society.

Additionally, we follow the depicted woman's relentless pursuit of liberation and independence; it becomes evident that she yearns for a life unfettered by societal constraints that limit her potential. Her yearning incites us to acknowledge our responsibilities in resisting such inequalities while paying tribute to those women who continually defy these barriers to make strides for gender equality. Overall, this poignant metaphor is a powerful reminder of both individual and collective struggles women face in a world where patriarchy still holds sway, urging readers to delve deeper into this critical issue.

"It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things." (Gilman, 1892)

Within this particular quote, the narrator adeptly communicates the unnerving and vivid nature of the yellow wallpaper. This particular symbol serves as a poignant metaphor, effectively highlighting the insidious influence of patriarchy and the damaging impact of societal expectations and gender roles frequently imposed upon women. The author's skillful use of this metaphor is thought-provoking and influential, providing readers with a powerful visual representation of the pervasive and oppressive forces women have had to contend with throughout history. Through this literary device, the author successfully conveys women's complex and nuanced experiences in a patriarchal society.

"But I must say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!" (Gilman, 1892)

The quote above effectively underscores the profound urgency felt by the narrator to articulate her innermost thoughts and feelings and escape the oppressive silence typically imposed upon women by the prevailing patriarchal norms of society. This quote also poignantly underscores the transformative power of communication and how it can empower women by providing them with a platform to voice their perspectives and experiences in a world that is often hostile to them. Furthermore, it emphasizes the crucial importance of validating the perspectives and emotions of women, especially within the context of a society characterized by patriarchal structures and norms that seek to suppress and marginalize their voices.

Discussions

In analyzing the quotes from "The Yellow Wallpaper," we are confronted with a searing commentary on the patriarchal power structures that have long dominated society. The quotes are a stark reminder of the oppression and emotional suppression women have historically faced and continue to face within these systems. One of the most striking aspects of the quotes is their depiction of male figures' dismissive and controlling attitudes, particularly the narrator's husband, John. This portrayal highlights the inherent inequality and power imbalances within patriarchal relationships. It underscores how women's voices, emotions, and agency are often diminished and invalidated in such dynamics.

Moreover, the quotes draw attention to the symbolism of the yellow wallpaper, which serves as a powerful metaphor for the confinement and entrapment that women experience within patriarchal systems. The wallpaper represents the restrictive gender roles and expectations that have long stifled women's individuality and autonomy. As the narrator becomes increasingly obsessed with the wallpaper, the story exposes the psychological toll of being subjugated to these patriarchal norms. By examining these quotes, we understand the broader theme of patriarchy in "The Yellow Wallpaper." We see how it profoundly impacts women's mental and emotional well-being and is a powerful critique of the societal structures that suppress women's voices and agency. The story urges readers to challenge and dismantle these oppressive systems and stands as a testament to the power of literature in exposing and critiquing them.

"The Yellow Wallpaper," written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1892, remains a compelling and significant literary work that continues to resonate with contemporary audiences. Through the story's protagonist, Gilman embodies the experiences of women oppressed by patriarchal norms and provides readers with an unwavering reminder of the necessity for advocating gender equality and the

validation of women's unique perspectives. This powerful narrative exemplifies the detrimental effects of societal expectations on women's mental health and well-being, as illustrated by the chilling descent of its protagonist into madness. The haunting imagery and symbolic significance of the yellow wallpaper serve as a metaphor for the subjugation faced by numerous women. Consequently, "The Yellow Wallpaper" remains an enduring testament to the importance of challenging oppressive systems to promote a culture that uplifts and empowers all individuals regardless of gender. By encouraging readers to recognize these issues and join in the ongoing battle for a more just and equitable world, "The Yellow Wallpaper" maintains its relevance as an essential work within feminist literature and beyond.

Conclusion

"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is a powerful symbol in the story, representing the damaging effects of patriarchy on women's mental health. It serves as a metaphor for the obstacles that prevent women from expressing themselves fully and reaching their potential. The protagonist's growing obsession with the wallpaper signifies her unraveling mental state, resulting from being denied and forced into submission. This haunting image serves as a powerful reminder of women's struggles throughout history, as they have been silenced, marginalized, and dismissed as "hysterical" or "mad."

Gilman's story is a powerful critique of the patriarchal norms perpetuating women's oppression and stifling their intellectual and emotional growth. It highlights the effects of denying women the opportunity to engage in meaningful work, establish their identities, and exercise autonomy. "The Yellow Wallpaper" remains relevant today as it invites readers to reflect on the enduring legacy of patriarchal structures and their impact on women's lives.

This work serves as a call to action to create spaces where women can express their true selves and contribute their unique perspectives and talents to the world. By exposing the damaging effects of patriarchy on women's mental health, "The Yellow Wallpaper" stands as a powerful testament to the resilience and strength of women throughout history. It is a work that demands attention where every individual need to be valued and allowed to flourish.

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