

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper' and 'The Man-Made World': Female Physiological Problems and Behaviour

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Abstract – This paper attempts to yield a critical reading of “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), which is one of the pioneering feminist works of American literature. Attempts have been made at finding affinities between the specific characterization of the story and the stereotypical male and female figures as defined by patriarchy and in terms of traditional gender roles. The paper tries to draw on Lacan’s conceptions of language, Cixous’ ideas about *écriture féminine*, and Freud’s misconception about women’s conditions. Drawing critical attention to this information, the paper focuses on the main unnamed female character and the fact that her anonymity helps the readers, specifically female readers, to identify themselves with her. This paper looks into the lives of the female protagonists in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Doris Lessing’s “To Room Nineteen,” and Khairiya Saqqaf’s “In a Contemporary House” in an attempt to reach a better understanding of women’s “madness.” To that end, this paper investigates the possibility of madness not being entirely a breakdown, but also a breakthrough, by analyzing the lives and experiences of the “mad” protagonists, as represented in the selected literary works, in light of R. D. Laing’s theories on the divided self and the politics of individual experiences. Despite the difference in time, place, and cultural contexts, all three women share the same experience of home confinement and domestication for different reasons that stem from patriarchal and social constraints. Such circumstances eventually lead these women to embrace forms of “madness” in ending a suffocating existence that does not allow them to connect with their inner-selves.

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INTRODUCTION

In the above lyric Maya Angelou presents the way of life of ladies all around the globe. One gets the inclination that the writer is over-responding to the unending rundown of things that a lady does as a major aspect of her residential work. The lady is by all accounts so fixated on her normal household errands that the quick development in her work establishes the pace of the sonnet. In a rushed manner she discusses the work she needs to do. In the second part of the ballad, the lady feels that nature, which comprises the sun, downpour, sky, stars and the moon, barring the man whom she serves, are what she can consider her own. Her reassurance originates from the chilly frosty kisses of snowflakes. The lamentable circumstance wherein a lady is put is communicated in the last four lines of the lyric.

Like a youngster, she needs to discover friendship in the unconcerned articles, for example, the moon, downpour and sky regardless of the openness of a buddy like man who is fit for giving adoration, solace and comfort. A typical contemporary issue confronting each nation is the topic of lady's place in the public arena. The mind-boggling proof considered in the

authentic point of view demonstrates that ladies' status and rights were allocated inside a male centric set up. Lady is the immediate result of the fundamental supposition of male-produced social qualities and has remained so for a considerable length of time. She is formed, reshaped, and reoriented by man and for man. The battle by ladies for a free, honorable life is anything but another wonder, however has a long history. Numerous crusaders like Mary Astell Mary Woolstonecraft, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Simone de Beauvoir voiced their hatred against the chauvinist frames of mind of a male-ruled society with little outcome or improvement in ladies' condition. Expanding awareness of their persecuted circumstance has offered ascend to ladies' battle against male strength and against the strictures gone by men. Ladies need to look for and assert their personality in the evolving setting.

The new lady, who is facing the imperialism and who requests poise and an equivalent situation with man, isn't just mindful of her colonized personality but on the other hand is looking for her legitimate character.

The essential objective of the women's activist is to comprehend and improve the state of ladies,

While hoping against hope an adjustment in the outlook concerning the conceivable is achieved. Marge Piercy, another women's activist idealistic author, says that

The lady's fantasy of a decent society, an ideal world, however not impeccable yet better than the creator's involvement, has an alternate concentration from men's fantasy. Ladies envision utopias where the impalpable highlights of human presence get increasingly unmistakable thought. Subsequently, where United States utopias by men worry as closures in themselves matters of open approach - be they political, financial, or innovative, ladies' utopias are bound to incorporate these issues fundamentally as they give a way to the social finish of completely created human limit in all individuals. Regularly, ladies make issues of family, sexuality, and marriage more focal than do men.

During the period secured by the commented on catalog finishing up this volume, 1836-1983, a noteworthy topical variety happens in United States Women's Utopian Writing. Prior to 1970, ladies' self-sufficiency is all the more regularly seen adversely as opportunity from control, particularly in marriage where ladies commonly trade administrations for monetary help. The 1960s imprint a progress period alluding to a changed from of the subject. Since the 1970s ladies' self-rule is all the more frequently seen decidedly, as opportunity for the improvement and articulation of potential, particularly with the setting of a strong network, once in a while made out of ladies in particular. Prior to 1970, marriage ordinarily shows up as the focal point of lady's understanding: marriage change, instead of suffrage, is the change all the more regularly called for in utopias by ladies. Most utopias composed between 1836-1920 regarded marriage as an issue. Just 24 percent displayed suffrage as a major aspect of an answer for lady's place in the public arena.

WOMEN AS PROVIDERS OF HEALTH, HEALTH CARE

And medical care as providers of health and health care, women are important through their role in the division of labour. In their domestic lives, they provide health care by attending to the physical needs of those with whom they live. They obtain food, provide and dispose of the remains of meals, clean the home, buy or make and wash and repair clothing, and take personal care of those who are too young or too old, or too sick or too busy to take care of their own physical needs. These activities are known as housework, a somewhat peculiar term, since most of the work done has nothing to do with houses, but a great deal to do with maintaining the health and vitality of individuals. Incidentally, or perhaps not so incidentally, it is a matter of great importance to policy-makers as to how this health-promoting work of women is described.

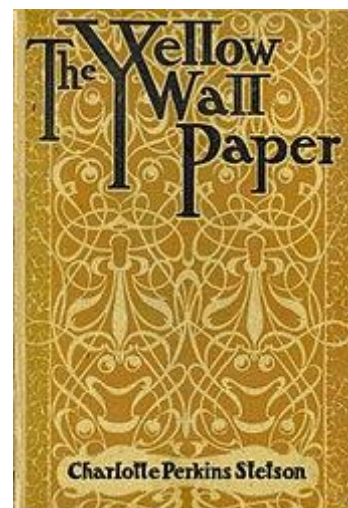
Mostly it is described in terms of an ideology which attributes to women a feminine altruism that many would prefer to have recognized as unpaid labour.

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

Also known as Charlotte Perkins Stetson, her first married name, was a prominent American humanist, novelist, writer of short stories, poetry, and nonfiction, and a lecturer for social reform. She was a utopian feminist and served as a role model for future generations of feminists because of her unorthodox concepts and lifestyle. She has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.[2] Her best remembered work today is her semi-autobiographical short story "The Yellow Wallpaper", which she wrote after a severe bout of postpartum psychosis.

Less well known are Gilman's views on race. To solve the so-called "Negro Problem" in the United States in the early twentieth century, Gilman suggested a system of forced labor she called "enlistment".

The Yellow Wallpaper"



The Yellow Wallpaper, one of Gilman's most popular works, originally published in 1892 before her marriage to George Houghton Gilman

In 1890, Gilman wrote her short story "The Yellow Wallpaper", which is now the all-time best-selling book of the Feminist Press. She wrote it on June 6 and 7, 1890, in her home of Pasadena, and it was printed a year and a half later in the January 1892 issue of The New England Magazine.[1] Since its original printing, it has been anthologized in numerous collections of women's literature, American literature, and textbooks,[25] though not always in its original form. For instance, many textbooks omit the phrase "in marriage" from a very important line in the beginning of story: John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage." The reason for this omission is a mystery, as Gilman's views on marriage are made clear throughout the story.

The story is about a woman who suffers from mental illness after three months of being closeted in a room by her husband for the sake of her health. She becomes obsessed with the room's revolting yellow wallpaper. Gilman wrote this story to change people's minds about the role of women in society, illustrating how women's lack of autonomy is detrimental to their mental, emotional, and even physical wellbeing. This story was inspired by her treatment from her first husband. [26] The narrator in the story must do as her husband, who is also her doctor, demands, although the treatment he prescribes contrasts directly with what she truly needs — mental stimulation and the freedom to escape the monotony of the room to which she is confined. "The Yellow Wallpaper" was essentially a response to the doctor who had tried to cure her of her depression through a "rest cure", Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, and she sent him a copy of the story.

WOMEN AND ECONOMICS - A SOCIAL UTOPIA

In spite of the fact that the American political novel didn't advance along the proper course graphed for it by Speare in the above definition, pundits who tailed him kept on focusing on the gear of politics as opposed to on its substance, much in his very own way. Joseph Blotner in his hypothetical talk of the political novel (2012) distinguished his subject as "a book which legitimately depicts, translates or breaks down political phenomenon."² Gordon Milne in the American political novel (2013) secured an any longer period that is from 1774 to 1964 we deplored that "the vast majority of the books ..." which examined legislative issues "were preferred social records over writing" and "had more legitimacy as promulgation than as workmanship. They were "not unmistakably agreeable and showed those shortcomings so far as artistic worth was concerned. Fay M. Blake in the Strike in the American Novel (2012) marked the 244 books which she picked in her clarified list of sources by permitting herself an expression or two of exemplary resentment as, "A crazy novel," "A horribly composed novel," - "A horrendous idealistic novel, An absurd novel with no saving grace aside from the social student of history," "A frightful novel.

Dull, Dull, Dull," "This in fantile romantic tale," "A sub-scholarly record, An obtrusive screed, A senseless novel,"⁴ and so on. Praising her seventieth birthday celebration, Charlotte Perkins Gilman whined to the clinician Samuel D. Schmalhausen that in her judgment the lady inquiry has scarcely been posed, significantly less replied.

We have had the battle for 'rights' and this hullabaloo about sex, however barely any investigation of the biologic and sociologic impacts of the prematurely ended advancement of a large portion of the race. This supposition may have caused Gilman to compose Women and Economics as study. The historical

backdrop of ladies' privileges development is summarized by only one of its angles that is, the battle for the suffrage. Be that as it may, it is obvious from the works of Mrs. Gilman, especially Women and Economics⁵ that vote was just a fringe some portion of the transformation that Gilman forecasted and progressed.

Among 1910 and the reception of the nineteenth amendment in 1920 the expansive and significant inquiry of the spot and fate of lady in modern modern culture was gobbled up in the battle for vote. Ladies' privileges development was essentially seen as a drive for the suffrage. The inquiry that drew in light of a legitimate concern for Charlotte Perkins Gilman was the manner by which to accomplish full uniformity for ladies in a mechanical society. She turned into a perceived individual in the covering however unmistakable circles that upheld Bellamy's Nationalism, social gospel, social virtue, exchange unionism, restraint, lady's suffrage and populism. Today this idea is by and by a live one. It has been brought up in scores of magazine articles and in books like Simone de Beauvoir's stupendous The Second Sex (New York, 1951)

Morton Hunt's, Her Infinite Variety (New York, 1962), and Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique (New York, 2013). 50 years before Simone de Beauvoir composed that lady has been "a being separated, obscure, having no weapon other than her sex ..." ⁶ Charlotte Gilman investigated the thought in Women and Economics. Sixty years before Betty Friedan contended for outside interests for wedded ladies and Morton Hunt helped us to remember the differing possibilities of ladies, Women and Economics solicited similar issues Women and Economics is a phenomenal and significant book, it is unique, provocative and incendiary. It's anything but a book to which one can be uninterested. To fortify a contention or outline a thought, Gilman took material from what others had said before her, however the pith of what she composed and how she thought was intensely unique. Gilman's issue is sex, she gives insufficient consideration to class or race or ethnicity, and her contention is accordingly debilitated. In any case, what she needed to state about sex is as yet alarming today, after ninety years, Gilman's significant affirmation that the "sexuo-economic" relationship is the focal truth of human connections is a splendid definition. She based on the work hypothesis of significant worth, however stretched out it to the issue of sex. She did likewise with transformative hypothesis, giving new life to both broadly held ideas by that augmentation. Gilman utilized the acknowledged "Logical" insight of her time however implanted it with a women's activist point of vision, and in this manner changed it significantly, offering a perspective on sexual orientation connections that seem evident after she says it, yet that is profoundly unique. Like different scholars focused on the hypothesis of development,

she utilized it to clarify and demand the attractive quality of progress. What she needed changed was hers alone: Women's work, home, marriage, kid raising. Gilman finds the wellspring of the subjection of ladies in the home, the most adored foundation in her general public.

The "sexuo-monetary" relationship secures ladies in their homes and afterward recognizes the work that is done in them as "characteristic" work for ladies. Gilman tears away that façade, uncovering the truth of the foundation as a restricting spot, and she does it with a hypothetical detailing that clarifies how it came to fruition and why and how it should and will change. Gilman was a communist, and a collectivist. She supported a financial and social teaching that acknowledged the helpful idea of generation and requested that dispersion be correspondingly aggregate. And yet she had a more genuine feeling of individual rights and needs than the moderates, who discussed independence however clung to conventional ideas offamily as the center social unit, and the nonconformists, who talked about free individual rights, Gilman contended that the future lies with the development of an aggregate soul, yet that the "sexuo-monetary" connection continues an outdated crude independence. That independence is reinforced by making the family the fundamental social unit. Gilman looked to supplant the family with the network, for if this was done, she stated, not exclusively would the collectivity be upgraded however people also, particularly ladies who generally have their distinction submerged in the family framework.

CONCLUSION

With rare exceptions, the stories Gilman published during the Forerunner years were fantasies with a feminist message, as in the case of her utopian fiction, or illustration of women's economic independence. The stories in the former category tend to be whimsical and parabolic, stories in the latter contrived and repetitive. For example, in "If I were a Man" (1914), Mollie Mathewson is transformed into her husband Gerald s/he enjoys such novel experiences and at the office, s/he defends women from the aspersions cast by men. Similarly in "when I was a Witch" (1910), suddenly on the Halloween day, the narrator acquires the magical power to realize her wishes. In the course of seven days, she metes out punishment to fit the offers to those who abuse animals, sell bad milk or meat, shortchange customers. At her desire newspapers begin to print their lies, slander, and ignorant mistakes in different shades of pink. Thus the narrator silently reforms the world, much as Gilman reinvented it in her imagination. Unfortunately when the narrator wishes that women might realize womanhood at last "nothing happens for" this magic which had fallen on "her" was black magic "but she had wished "white." "Worse yet, her vain wish "stopped all the other things that were working so nicely"1.

The story seems to betray the author's usually unspoken fear that she might fail as a reformer, that

concrete instructions after all might withstand the changes she imagined would occur. In "Dr. Clair's place", a third fantasy, Gilman proposed an ideal resolution to her predicament as a young wife, thirty years before. In this tale, she outlined how a female might treat neurasthenia. Unlike male counterparts such as Weir Mitchell, whose prognoses presumed the fragility of the "weaker sex", Willy Clair prescribes for her patients a regimen of work and amusement. She explains that "the trouble with Sanatoriums is that the sick folks have nothing to do but sit about and think of themselves and their "cases". Instead, her patients read, weave, garden swim, even climb mountains, and recover their strength and vitality." Gilman's parables of economic independence were more heavy handed, formulaic, and predictable than her feminist fantasies. In each case, the protagonist becomes independent when she is separated at least temporarily from her husband and she resolves to improve the occasion, often with the aid of another woman who acts as her patron. For example in "The Widow's Might" (1911), a middle aged woman, who nursed her late husband through his last illness and to whom he deeded his property, declares to her grown children her intention to enjoy her remaining years. "Thirty years I've given you-and your father... Now I'll have thirty years of my own." To their surprise and dismay, she plans to travel throughout the world and live on the income from the family ranch. (CPGR-98-106).

Similarly, in "Mrs. Beazley's Deeds" (1911), the protagonist is counselled by "the best woman lawyer in New York" to "make a stand" against her never-do-well husband for the sake of her children and refuse to deed her inherited property over to him. Mrs. Beazley eventually opens a boarding house and becomes economically self-reliant while her husband is compelled to flee the state to escape his traditions. The title-character in "An Honest-Woman" (1911) settles an old score with the man who abandoned her and their infant daughter. Over the years she "has won comfort, security and peace" as a respectable hostler, and she is free to spurn the advances of her gold-digging ex-lover when he reappears (CPGR 75-86).

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