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Literary Analysis Outline of the Yellow Wallpaper

1. Introduction

They say that the brain is not an organ for sex and that there is not a female mind. However, this idea is only plausible in enlightened societies that do not discriminate women and stereotype them as fragile human beings, who are only confined to house chores. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in the Yellow Wallpaper, reflects on the life of women during the Victorian era and the oppressive nature of gender roles. The story revolves around a woman, who after the birth of her child, is confined in her isolated mansion by her physician husband; John, in what he refers to as “the rest cure.” The woman finds it difficult to heal because her husband does not believe that she has a mental illness, and even though the woman aspires to be a writer, her husband shuns her dream by driving her into the brink of insanity. In the Yellow Wallpaper, Gilman uses imagery, symbolism, and dialogue to depict the role of women in society and the oppressive nature of gender roles during the Victorian period.

1. Main body paragraph 1
2. Gilman employs the use of dialogue to bring out the nature of gender roles during the Victorian period, and how they diminished a woman’s place in society.
3. In the short story, Gilman portrays men as strong individuals and women as children who do not have a significant input in their lives.
4. The narrator says the quote
5. The dialogue between John and the woman
6. “What is one to do when a physician of high standing, who is one’s husband assures people that there is nothing wrong to worry about, except for a temporary nervous breakdown (Gilman, 323)?”
7. The narrator brings out the male perspective through dialogue as he says that no matter what the woman says, the husband’s position remains standing.
8. Gilman uses dialogue through the perspective of men to clearly show how women were oppressed during this specific period.
9. Main body paragraph 2
10. Gilman uses symbolism to depict the oppressive nature of gender roles during the Victorian age.
11. In the short story, the woman’s husband confines the woman in the house, and with nothing else to focus on, her eyes captures the yellow wallpaper.
12. The woman says the quote
13. The woman is bored
14. “She describes the wallpaper as unclean yellow as if fading away in the dim sunlight. She goes on to examine the paper as a faint figure that is almost fading away, as if it wants to get out (Gilman, 320).”
15. The yellow wall paper is symbolic, and represents the woman, as she identifies with the state of the yellow wall paper that is fading away in the dim light as if it wants to escape.
16. The symbol of the yellow wallpaper depicts the suffrage of the woman as she is bored and she cannot escape her misery but remains obsessed with the wallpaper, which is the only thing that she can focus on.
17. Main body paragraph 3
18. In the short story, Gilman also employs the use of imagery to portray the position of women in society during this specific time.
19. The narrator presents the audience with visual imagery of the house to help them understand what the woman in the story is going through.
20. The narrator presents a visual analysis of the house
21. The woman and her husband John had relocated to the new house
22. “The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village… for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate houses for the gardeners and people (Gilman, 329).”
23. The house standing alone and far from the roads with separate rooms depicts that it is isolated from society. Within the house also, the woman is confined in a separate room, with locked windows and doors to prevent her from any escape.
24. Through this imagery, Gilman clearly brings out the unjust treatment of women by men during this era.

Work Cited

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Virago Press, 1981.