

# Subject English Yellow Wallpaper Storywant To Write Journal"The Yellow Wallpaper" The Ending Of The Story

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Writing an analytical journal or essay about Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* can be a rewarding endeavor, especially when focusing on the story's ending. This haunting narrative offers a wealth of themes, symbolism, and psychological insights that invite deep exploration. In this article, we will delve into the story's plot, its thematic significance, and provide a comprehensive analysis of the ending, equipping you with the knowledge to craft an engaging and insightful journal entry or essay.

## Understanding the Context of The Yellow Wallpaper

Before analyzing the ending, it's essential to understand the story's background, themes, and characters.

### Plot Summary

*The Yellow Wallpaper* is a semi-autobiographical short story written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1892. It narrates the experiences of an unnamed woman suffering from postpartum depression. Her husband, John, a physician, prescribes a "rest cure," confining her to a room with yellow wallpaper that she finds disturbing. Over time, her mental health deteriorates as she becomes obsessed with the wallpaper's pattern, perceiving a woman trapped behind it.

### Thematic Significance

The story explores several themes:

- **Gender roles and restrictions:** The protagonist's confinement reflects societal limitations on women's autonomy.
- **Mental health and repression:** The narrative depicts the impact of repressive treatment on mental well-being.
- **Madness and perception:** The story blurs the line between reality and hallucination, emphasizing subjective perception.
- **Symbolism of the wallpaper:** The pattern symbolizes societal constraints, mental entrapment, and the protagonist's psyche.

# The Ending of The Yellow Wallpaper: A Detailed Analysis

The culmination of the story is both shocking and symbolic, providing profound insights into the protagonist's mental state and the story's broader themes.

## Summary of the Ending

As her obsession deepens, the narrator perceives the woman behind the wallpaper struggling to break free. She becomes increasingly unhinged, believing she must free the trapped woman. Late in the story, she finally tears down the wallpaper in a frenzy, symbolically freeing herself from her mental and societal imprisonment. When her husband, John, comes in and sees her crawling over the room, she declares independence, asserting her agency and mental liberation.

## Symbolic Interpretation

The ending is rich with symbolism:

- **The Wallpaper:** Represents societal restrictions and the protagonist's fractured mind. Her tearing it down signifies rebellion against oppression.
- **The Trapped Woman:** Embodies the narrator's own feelings of entrapment and her desire for freedom.
- **The Crawling Woman:** Symbolizes her complete descent into madness but also her ultimate assertion of independence.

## Psychological and Feminist Perspectives

From a psychological standpoint, the ending indicates a breakdown—she fully immerses herself in her delusions. Feminist analysis interprets her act of tearing down the wallpaper as a rejection of patriarchal control, asserting her independence and voice. Gilman's story critiques the oppressive medical and societal practices that silenced women and dismissed their mental health struggles.

## How to Write a Journal or Essay About the Ending

When composing your journal or essay, consider the following aspects to create a comprehensive and engaging piece.

## 1. Introduce the Context and Plot

Begin with a brief overview of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, its plot, and main themes. Set the stage for your analysis by highlighting the importance of the ending.

## 2. Analyze the Symbolism in the Ending

Discuss how the act of tearing down the wallpaper and the imagery of the crawling woman symbolize liberation, madness, and societal critique. Use textual evidence to support your points.

## 3. Explore Psychological Dimensions

Reflect on the protagonist's mental deterioration and what her final actions reveal about her psyche. Consider how Gilman portrays mental health issues and societal pressures.

## 4. Incorporate Feminist Readings

Analyze the ending as a feminist statement against gender oppression. Discuss how the protagonist's rebellion symbolizes women's fight for autonomy.

## 5. Personal Reflection and Critical Thinking

Share your interpretation of the ending's significance. Do you see it as hopeful, tragic, or empowering? How does it resonate with contemporary issues related to mental health and gender rights?

## Conclusion: The Lasting Impact of the Ending

The ending of *The Yellow Wallpaper* remains one of the most powerful and discussed in American literature. It encapsulates the story's themes of repression, mental health, and resistance. By tearing down the wallpaper, the protagonist symbolically shatters her confinement and asserts her independence, even in madness. This act challenges readers to consider the importance of understanding mental health, respecting individual agency, and questioning societal constraints.

When writing your journal or essay, focus on weaving these symbolic and thematic analyses with your personal insights. Use direct quotations from the story to strengthen your arguments, and ensure your conclusion reflects on the story's enduring relevance. Whether viewed through a psychological, feminist, or literary lens, Gilman's ending compels us to reflect on the costs of repression and the power of liberation.

In summary:

- Understand the story's background and themes.
- Analyze the symbolism and psychological implications of the ending.
- Connect the ending to broader societal and gender issues.
- Express your personal interpretation and critical insights.

- Support your analysis with textual evidence and scholarly perspectives.

By following these guidelines, your journal or essay will provide a comprehensive, insightful, and engaging exploration of *The Yellow Wallpaper's* ending, capturing its depth and enduring significance.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the main theme of 'The Yellow Wallpaper' story?**

The main theme revolves around mental health, the oppression of women, and the importance of self-expression and autonomy.

### **Why does the narrator in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' become obsessed with the wallpaper?**

She becomes obsessed because the wallpaper symbolizes her own feelings of entrapment and her subconscious desire to break free from her oppressive environment.

### **What is the significance of the ending of 'The Yellow Wallpaper'?**

The ending signifies the narrator's complete mental breakdown and her identification with the woman she perceives trapped within the wallpaper, symbolizing her loss of grip on reality but also a form of liberation.

### **How does the story 'The Yellow Wallpaper' reflect the societal views on women's mental health during its time?**

It highlights the dismissive and patronizing attitudes toward women's mental health, showcasing how societal constraints and medical treatments often worsened their conditions.

### **What journal writing insights can be gained from analyzing 'The Yellow Wallpaper'?**

Writing a journal about the story can help explore themes of mental health, gender roles, personal freedom, and the symbolic meaning of the wallpaper, fostering deeper understanding and personal reflection.

### **How does the story's ending impact the reader's interpretation of the narrator's mental state?**

The ending leaves readers contemplating whether the narrator's actions are a sign of mental illness or a form of rebellion, emphasizing the complexity of her psychological state.

# What are some key symbols in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' and their meanings?

Key symbols include the yellow wallpaper itself, representing confinement and oppression, and the woman trapped within it, symbolizing the narrator's own feelings of entrapment and desire for freedom.

## Additional Resources

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In the realm of American literature, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" stands out as a compelling critique of gender roles, mental health treatment, and societal expectations in the late 19th century. As students, literary critics, and casual readers seek to understand its enduring significance, many find themselves intrigued by the story's enigmatic conclusion. This journalistic exploration aims to dissect the ending of "The Yellow Wallpaper," providing a detailed analysis of its themes, symbolism, and implications, while also offering insights into why the conclusion remains a focal point of discussion among readers and scholars alike.

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### The Context of "The Yellow Wallpaper": A Brief Overview

Before diving into the ending, it's essential to understand the story's background and narrative framework. Published in 1892, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a semi-autobiographical short story that explores the mental deterioration of a woman subjected to the "rest cure," a common treatment for postpartum depression at the time. The protagonist, whose perspective is narrated in the first person, is confined in a room with disturbing yellow wallpaper, which gradually becomes a symbol of her declining mental state.

The story's initial tone appears as a straightforward account of a woman's recovery; however, as the plot unfolds, it reveals layers of repression, gender dynamics, and societal constraints. The protagonist's obsession with the wallpaper's pattern culminates in a symbolic rebellion that challenges her confinement and mental health treatment.

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### Unpacking the Ending: A Summary

The ending of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is both haunting and open to interpretation. As the narrative reaches its climax, the protagonist perceives herself as having shed her previous identity and fully identified with the woman she believes is trapped behind the wallpaper's pattern. She has, in her mind, become the woman she perceives within the wallpaper, symbolizing her liberation from societal and mental constraints.

In the final scenes, the protagonist:

- Creeps around the room, peeling off the wallpaper to free the woman she believes is trapped inside.

- Descends into a state of complete psychosis, believing that her entire identity is merged with the wallpaper's pattern.
- Is discovered by her husband John, who faints upon witnessing her unhinged behavior.
- The story concludes with her continuing her creeping, now seemingly fully immersed in her delusion, with her husband fainting outside the door.

This ending leaves readers with a powerful image of her mental collapse and a symbolic assertion of her autonomy, albeit through madness.

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## Symbolism and Themes in the Ending

The conclusion of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is rich with symbolism that encapsulates the story's central themes. Understanding these symbols helps decode the story's powerful message.

### 1. The Wallpaper as a Symbol of Oppression

The yellow wallpaper itself is a potent symbol representing the societal and domestic restrictions placed on women. Its confusing, chaotic pattern reflects the protagonist's mental state and the oppressive forces she faces. Her obsession with the wallpaper's "revolting" pattern signifies her struggle to break free from these constraints.

In the ending, tearing down the wallpaper symbolizes her attempt to liberate herself from these oppressive structures, although it leads to her complete mental breakdown.

### 2. The Woman Behind the Wallpaper

The woman the protagonist perceives trapped behind the wallpaper symbolizes the repressed woman within her—her true self suppressed by societal expectations, mental health treatments, and her husband's authority. Her identification with this woman signifies her rejection of societal norms and her desire for freedom.

### 3. The Creep as Rebellion

The act of creeping around the room reflects her rebellion against her confinement and her mental illness. It becomes an act of defiance, a way to assert her independence from the roles imposed on her as a wife and patient.

### 4. The Final Collapse

Her mental breakdown at the story's end underscores the tragic cost of repression and the failure of the "rest cure" to address mental health issues. It also emphasizes the destructive potential of ignoring a person's autonomy and individuality.

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## Interpretations of the Ending

The ambiguous and intense ending has prompted numerous interpretations, each shedding light on different aspects of the story's themes.

## Psychoanalytic Perspective

From a psychoanalytic standpoint, the protagonist's descent into psychosis can be viewed as a manifestation of her subconscious rebellion against her repression. Her identification with the woman behind the wallpaper signifies her acknowledgment of her suppressed desires and frustrations. The act of tearing down the wallpaper symbolizes her attempt to break free from her psychological imprisonment, even if it results in madness.

## Feminist Interpretation

Feminist critics see the ending as a critique of patriarchal control. The protagonist's mental breakdown and her identification with the trapped woman represent the destructive effects of societal suppression of women. Her rebellion through madness underscores the extreme consequences of denying women agency and voice.

## Literary Symbolism

Literarily, the ending can be seen as a metaphor for the journey from repression to liberation, albeit a tragic one. The protagonist's complete immersion into her delusion signifies the difficulty of escaping societal constraints and the cost of asserting autonomy in a repressive environment.

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## The Impact and Legacy of the Ending

The conclusion of "The Yellow Wallpaper" continues to resonate with readers and scholars decades after its publication. Its visceral depiction of mental health struggles and gender repression has made it a cornerstone of feminist literature and psychological studies.

- Literary Influence: The ending's vivid imagery and symbolic depth have inspired countless adaptations, analyses, and discussions across disciplines.
- Social Commentary: It serves as a critique of the medical practices and gender norms of its time, prompting ongoing conversations about mental health and women's rights.
- Educational Significance: The story is frequently included in curricula to teach about narrative perspective, symbolism, and social critique.

## Final Thoughts

The ending of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is both a narrative culmination and a symbolic statement. It encapsulates the tragic consequences of repression, the power of rebellion, and the complex interplay between mental health and societal expectations. Its ambiguity invites multiple interpretations, encouraging readers to reflect on the importance of autonomy, understanding, and compassion.

In writing a journal or analysis on this story, one must appreciate the nuanced layers embedded in the conclusion. Whether viewed as a tragic descent into madness or a rebellious liberation, the ending remains a powerful testament to the story's enduring relevance and emotional impact. It challenges us to consider how societal norms shape individual identities and the profound importance of recognizing mental health as a vital aspect of human dignity.

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In sum, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" leaves us with a haunting image—one that continues to inspire debate and reflection. Its ending is not merely a conclusion but an invitation to explore deeper questions about freedom, repression, and the human psyche.

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