

“there have been so many times, I have seen a man wanting to weep, but, instead, beat his heart until it was unconscious.”

— Nayyirah Waheed

The patriarchal structures of society have dominated women and created hurdles for them as history can tell. Conventionally, the man was considered not only the one who had an authoritative position in the household, breadwinner, protector, and the head of the clan. The man would establish the roles of women in the family. The role of women was defined and restricted by men as taking care of the family, bearing children, being submissive to the authority, etc. The patriarchy present during that time shows the way women have befallen to their stereotypical roles of being present but not heard. The man was referred to as the norm in society whereas women were considered as the "other". During the Victorian Era, women were not considered independent entity due to a lack of distinguishable traits. Traditionally, they were referred to as "gentle, self-sacrificing, timid, yielding, and intuitive" like part of the norm (Das 144). However, time and again, cases of women's oppression and suppression, patriarchal structures of global communities dominating women and producing hurdles for them, lead to the emergence of feminism.

Thesis: The role of women in the west was fueled by discrimination and patriarchy that subjected them to men's whims and desires.

"The Yellow Paper" depicts the autobiographical life of Gilman. It was published in 1892, during the Victorian Era. This Era greatly influenced the norms and values in the US. The values suggested that the women needed to be reserved and prioritize their household only. This story exemplifies the stifling and suffocating nature of women's life, they had to experience during

the 19th century and the 20th century. The writer used her personal experience to unveil the psychological trauma that a woman goes through having been turned down from a male-driven society. She intended to reveal the predicament during the Victorian era, that women having "hysteria" suffered through, the "rest cure" treatment. Gilman portrays the marriage relation, the economic dependence of women on men, and the oppression of female individuality. After giving birth to a son, the main character struggles with post-partum depression and is recommended full bed-rest by her husband, in spite of her convincing them that she wants to write. She covertly starts writing in a journal, this shows that her husband is the authoritative power, and is to be the decision-maker and that she has no part to play in the society rather than being a charming obedient wife and a proficient mother. She is treated like a child by John, referring to her as his "little girl" and his "blessed little goose." Even when the writer has a "real earnest reasonable talk" with her husband to get permission to visit her relatives, he refuses and stops her from going out. The clear cost faced by the writer is her sanity. Being considered and treated as a small child, she starts to feel and act like one and later becomes far aside from the real world. Thus Gilman discloses the price of considering women as second-class citizens.

Gilman also draws attention to the fact that the position and status of women in society need to be refined. The status attained by men in society has been questioned, considering the women as vessels and carriers to their heirs. The early emergence of the feminism movement stated that for one to apprehend the status and value of women in the community, one had to look at the cultural and social norms inserted by the man in the community. Furthermore, the argument is on men viewing women from self-constructed paradigms and the women viewing themselves from a similar perspective.

The roles of women were clearly defined and enforced by men, and women were enforced

to follow these strict rules and regulations of behavior, conducts, and thoughts as well as turning down their freedom of speech and expression. Gilman begins the story asking for help from other women, she explains that the ill-treatment of women in the society was similar to as colonial mansion that is being succeeded by one generation to another and was exercised in full by inheritors. This statement shows the real purpose of Gilman writing this story. She also mentions that the reason women have faced constant repression and oppression over many years was that it passed down from generation to generation (Gallulo).

Still in the story, the writer expresses how much she is obsessed with fighting for women's rights and hopes that there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel. Furthermore, she shows unusual and oddness in the treatment of women in society. She questions if the women should get rights, why women are oppressed and why won't it stop? Gilman shows how she tried her level best to attain rights for women despite the resentment and oppression she faced. At the end of the introduction to her story, she hopes that society would become appositive. Her husband John continually tells her to think about her condition rather than doing anything else, this makes her feel bad. " 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, and I confess it always makes me feel bad. So I will let it alone and talk about the house"

On the other hand, the content juxtaposes closely with Gilmans aching autobiographical reality by using the narrative of the first-person along with her feminist voice. The thought of using first-person narration gives us insights into woman's confinement during the victorian era. Additionally, it dramatizes the oppression that women scuffled within the male-dominated society. This part is demonstrated in the story when John asks the narrator to stay in the room. Johns's assertion and enforcement to restrict her in a room prohibits the narrator from writing or visiting

family etc.

According to the values and norms of the Victorian Era, women were expected to blindly follow commands and only be satisfied in breathing. Men and women were split between the public and private sphere, and women were forced to spend their lives only in the domestic sphere. Not incidentally, women who show resistance or tried entering the masculine public domain were seen as rebellions, something comparable to prostitutes. In this view, although John can be considered as the antagonist of the story, he is merely a reflection of his society. The narrator's aspiration to have more in her life than John and her child is not corresponding to social expectations. Furthermore, her love for reading and writing differentiates her from the ideal "angel of the house" that she is supposed to imitate. Gilman rebelled against these expectations and, by leaving her husband and moving to California to write, was not considered appropriate in the respectable society of the prevailing times. Women started to get the awareness of their rights and how they should be treated at par with men. They started understanding their value and how compromising was not their duty. Growth in size and influence of the international women movement was witnessed in this decade. Since then until now, this movement is gaining momentum and is achieving what women should have achieved years ago.