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Understanding the Socio-cultural Barriers

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EXPOSING THE PATRIARCHY CAMOUFLAGED AS COMPASSION THROUGH CHARLOTTE PERKIN GILMAN'S "THE YELLOW WALLPAPER"

Daisy Priya Gogoi

ABSTRACT

In most societies, it is the male who is given a superior position rather than the female. He is assumed to be more rational and the woman is expected to take his advice at face value. "The Yellow Wallpaper" examines the role of women in nineteenth-century American society, including the relationship between husbands and wives, the economic and social dependence of women on men, and the repression of female individuality and sexuality. Examining the historical texts, one would realize that the lower class women seemed to enjoy more freedom as compared to the women of the higher class. "The Yellow Wallpaper" was written by Gilman at a time when women of the narrator's class were expected to stay in the home and submit to their husbands' authority. Most decisions are made for her, not by her. Instead of being treated like an equal, she was treated like a child. The care that the male shows is actually patronizing. It seems more like an insult to her identity, rather than a form of compassion. This paper thus examines the reality of how the patriarchy exercises dominance in the form of consideration and affection.