Farhana Haque

Manifesto Project #1

Time to Liberate

A man will do everything in his power to try and rationalize all your problems. Do not double guess yourself,

He will try to silence you when you are trying to speak out of turn.

You will internalize your concerns and opinions before sharing in an effort to benefit the both of you. He will use his authority..

He will use his profession as an excuse for his authority and try to belittle your requests and prescribe cures HE believes are best for your health.

He will tell you he is looking out for your best interest, you do not need his permission.

He will imprison you within the home he provides you with.

He will neglect all your outcries with his “better” judgement.

He will expect you to blindly accept your dilemma as it is and give you a false sense of emotional security.

He will observe your mental state deteriorating and proclaim it is an illness for which you need to seek help.

He will make you feel like a burden when you dont comply to his requests.

He will first try to take away your pen, and with that your sanity.

You will soon plummet into a state of anxiety as he slowly takes your rights away

You will become wary and secretive, out of touch with reality.

He will notice your attempts to help yourself. Be weary for he will use familiar faces to aid in diminishing such attempts.

You will experience distraught and soon find yourself looking for solace....

You will soon find yourself looking for solace in anything just to keep your mind at bay.

You WILL create methods of relief for yourself, to perspire the negativity and doubts which were unjustly battered into your mind.

You WILL find an escape, a self achieved liberation from the captors of your once free will.

You WILL win against your ultimate demise.

You WILL free your soul of all the misery.

You'll once again WILL yourself.

The oppression of women, being constantly undermined by their husbands has been an ongoing occurrence in history. The “Yellow Wallpaper,” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman depicts a married woman who struggles with depression diagnosed by her husband who also happens to be a doctor. Individual expression is essential to a woman's sanity. Every time she tries to vocalize her troubles, he neglects her concerns and orders her to keep from working and writing. She keeps a secret journal in which she expresses her inner thoughts and feelings. He confines her within a room, where she becomes fixated by a yellow wallpaper, which she refers to at first as unappealing, but soon it takes a larger toll on her and she develops a deep hatred towards the yellow wallpaper.

Right from the beginning of the story, she explains her husband's dominance within her life. She tries to justify this dominance by mentioning his role as a physician. She does however disagree with his diagnosis of her, but in secret, because she obviously feels inferior to him. “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 to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.” (Gilman, 17) She allows her husband to dictate the way she should think, and soon she diverts her attention away from herself and into the house.

Her sanity begins to dwindle. She complains to John about the wallpaper but he just shrugs it off. This is the part where she feels like she has to make an effort to write about everything she is feeling and daily routines soon become chores. She finds comfort in writing however she continues to stress over the wallpaper and the secrets within it. The wallpaper is a representation of her inner self. It is her own identity which she keeps from John when he is away. She mentions that, “There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes. When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always. By moonlight—the moon shines in all night when there is a moon—I wouldn't know it was the same paper. At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candle light, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.” (Gilman, 148-151)The wallpaper is of her identity during the day and how it changes at night based on the lighting. At night it's like she is in prison.

The narrator keeps these true feelings to herself because every time she tries to bring it up with her husband John, he tries to tell her otherwise and also, guilt trips her. He tells her to think about him and the baby and so she believes he's looking out for her best interest. However, as he does so, she becomes more fixated by the wallpaper day by day. “And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake—O no! The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.” (Gilman 157,158) She admits her fear of John and she becomes more reluctant to speak up to him due to fear of him belittling her which is a big problem for women in society today. She knows what is best for her and what is wrong with her and she suffers alone because of the negligence of her husband who is supposed to be her protector.

In the end of the story, her unhealthy obsession with the wallpaper is at it's peak. She needs to figure out exactly what the pattern is. She is afraid that if she tells John he'll ridicule her. She believes that by staying quiet, she is becoming stronger within because she is getting closer to figuring out the secret behind the paper. According to her, the women in the wallpaper moves around during the day. Towards the last two days she becomes contemptuous of John as she loses touch with reality and is determined to set the woman in the wallpaper free. “He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind. As if I couldn't see through him!”(Gilman 211,212) Even John starts to realize something isn't right about her. When he finds her pacing back and forth on the last day, she exclaims that she has pulled out most of the paper and he can't put her back. This shows that she has shed all signs of care, and expresses herself freely, she is now completely free of John and her own life.

Gilman's writing portrays how an idle and limited life can drive a woman into sanity. She shows how a man can have good intentions but still slowly break down a woman's worth. The main character may have been driven to sanity but she was able to relelase herself of all her burdens and defy her husband, ultimately.