

Student's Name

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Subject

DD Month YYYY

Male Chauvinism

The subject of gender is something that mainly comes into the situation of inequality. Its resolution revolves around a concept of which the people of this world should attempt to live in a sustainable environment that may be harmonic for all. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) explains a historical experience from the perspective of an ill woman, which relates to the philosophical message of Simon de Beauvoir's "Woman as Other" (1949) that discusses how the male community perceives women. Both authors demonstrate the ideas they share on how women are not seen as human beings, their "negative" traits, as well as women's motivation to stand and fight for what is equally theirs. The philosophical interpretation by de Beauvoir (1949) demonstrates how women are perceived as something inanimate and fragile for men. The message perceived in "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) is an indication of what many women went through in the hands of men, and not only the ill woman in the story.

Women are neglected and their views are disregarded by their male counterparts. According to Gilman (1892), despite the fact that the patient in the story feels she is being misdiagnosed, the two physicians who happen to be so close to her, that is her husband and brother, feels that she is the cause of her illness and that it is not as serious as she thinks. She says, "You see he does not believe I am sick! And what can one do?" She is restricted to doing

things that before her someone would do well towards the recovery from her condition (Gilman 660). For instance, doing congenial works with excitement and change, but which she is restricted to being engaged in them. She has no choice but abides by the wish of her husband, which is an indication of the situation many women find themselves, with no choice of their own, but to comply with the man's wish and decision. Even though the husband is a doctor and cares for his wife, it appears that the treatment she receives places her within a status below her husband. In the same breath, the quotation connects with the de Beauvoir's ideology when she says: "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute - she is the other" (de Beauvoir 802). As de Beauvoir refers to man as "absolute", it demonstrates the position of Gilman's character John who is a doctor as doctors may understand more about the human body in a biological and psychological level. Also, it makes the character appear slave-like and obey what her husband tells her to do and not come to an agreement. By regarding the female gender as "The Other" de Beauvoir shows the contempt and disregard that men have towards women.

Women are regarded as the sources of negativity in the society which is the perception of men. Gilman's work also shows how the presence of women in this world justifies how "negative" they are from the view of man. The period of Gilman's story focus on women's reception of hysteria, it only unravels the harsh reality women face as man seem to diagnose a variety of women with the same illness as the author indicates: "John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall. But I don't want to go there at all" (Gilman 664). This signifies that any arguments made by the patient are all wrong because she is a woman and has to comply with the directives. This is seconded by de Beauvoir's elaboration on how the

image of woman is perceived as "negative" and rather a burden as she mentions: "A man is in the right for being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong [...] Thus humanity is male, and man defines not in herself but is relative to him [...]" (de Beauvoir 801). De Beauvoir's philosophical view, which teaches the reality of what woman becomes, connects to how an illness within women leads toward generalization and supremacy of man only to continue this manner of belittlement, and place women within the group of individuals who will tend to be completely wrong, as de Beauvoir claims that man is either positive or neutral, while woman is purely negative. This complementary message by de Beauvoir connects to Gilman's work in portraying male chauvinism in the society.

At the same time, women are viewed as people who cannot make sound decisions in their lives. The men chauvinism is evident in the texts, even when it comes to the choice of the residential houses. The protagonist talks of the dislike the woman has towards the house they are currently leaving in but her opinion of moving to a house of her preference is met with opposition from her husband, detailing the reason as to why they should remain in that house because it is favorable to him. She says, "I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened to Piazza... He said there were only one window and no room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another" which shows that the woman had no choice over a man, and only lead as he pleased (Gilman 661). For instance, he tells her that there is no near room for him if he took another, which shows that he had intentions of marrying another wife. This extends de Beauvoir's claim that "...man can think of himself without a woman. She cannot think of herself without a man". This clarifies the male chauvinism which existed at that time and the endurance women had to go through when it came to making choices (de Beauvoir 801).

A review in the de Beauvoir's work shows a close support to the protagonist's situation

in the Gilman's work. The position of a woman in the society is depicted as inferior and that of men as superior. The message strives to motivate and bring forth a group of supporters to fight against the oppression of women, and reform society into one that is equal and socially tolerable. From the viewpoint of Gilman within "The Yellow Wallpaper" her work refers toward the injustice of a torturous treatment toward women only to deprive them of their sanity which creates an unbalanced world. Her work elicits a statement of revolt and conflict as the work indicates: "I've got out at last," said I "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" (Gilman 671). The quotation signifies the strength of the protagonist which is no longer connected with her dark environment. She strives to fight against the unethical treatment of Weir Mitchell to lead readers to discover more gender inequalities and unify many people to fight for changes for the future. It also shows how the protagonist surpasses the emotional obstacle that limits her sanity and continues to harm her. This view is seconded by de Beauvoir's argument of universality towards creation of an utilitarian environment, and bring balance and not vengeance as she says, "To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal – this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste" (de Beauvoir 805). De Beauvoir depicts the world where man and woman are not different in the biological sense. Although they are individuals, they are still human beings, but a line must be drawn to have each person (in this case women) to understand and unite to change for themselves and future generations.

Overall, the philosophical views of Simone de Beauvoir and the work of Charlotte Gilman focus on how the perception of women is not on a human level, their possession of "negative" aspects from the eyes of opposite sex, and their attempts to create a union to battle against the inequalities that are present and that limit the liberties of women. Gilman's

protagonist goes through an emotional roller coaster, and de Beauvoir presents a philosophical argument which elaborates on what occurs to women in a universal sense that demonstrates the specific things that must change. It is a way to show many readers that no matter what the issue is inequalities will continue to appear, but there is no excuse to at least attempt a movement to bring an end to one injustice. The harsh reality of people being unable to live in unity is difficult and may seem impossible; however, the attempts that someone makes brings a major effect to evidentially motivate someone to be the prominent successor and do whatever possible to achieve what is necessary for the better future.