

Artistic Expression as Resistance in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"**Churamoni Kandel, PhD**

Associate Professor, Department of English

Shree Vinduwasini Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Campus), Nepal Sanskrit University, Nepal

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5002-2354>Email: churamoni39@gmail.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jdl.v4i1.88010>**Abstract**

This paper examines and explores Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" as an intersection of artistic resistance against patriarchal oppression. It makes a study of the protagonist's acts of writing, imagination, and visual interpretation of the wallpaper that function as forms of defiance against the systemic silencing of women. Through clandestine journal writing, the narrator subverts the authority of her husband and physician, asserting autonomy despite the confinement imposed by the restrictive "rest cure." The wallpaper itself emerges as a powerful symbol of female entrapment and liberation, reflecting the narrator's psychological transformation and growing resistance. This study employs the theory of resistance to explore how the subversive narrative style, characterized by first-person narration, diary format, and stream-of-consciousness, disrupts traditional literary norms and challenges the male-dominated discourse. The story portrays the protagonist's descent into madness not merely as psychological deterioration but as a deliberate rejection of patriarchal constraints through artistic expression. Additionally, this study examines the role of imagination as a tool for transcending oppressive realities, positioning the narrator's visions as acts of creative survival and rebellion. This paper employs a qualitative approach with an interpretive research design to analyze the story as a powerful text of artistic resistance, offering insights into how creativity becomes a means of confronting and dismantling the systems of control.

Keywords: confinement, liberation, narration, patriarchy, resistance**Introduction**

This research explores Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (TYW) to examine a woman who in a restrictive "rest cure", secretly turns to writing and

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interpreting the wallpaper in her room as an outlet for her emotions. The story narrates this restriction as a medical treatment that enforces isolation and inactivity upon women suffering from supposed nervous disorders. The narrator introduces the story as a first-person narrative, in the form of a secret journal, resisting the patriarchal oppression of her husband, John, a physician by profession. This act of creative expression serves as a form of defiance, illustrating how artistic engagement can challenge social constraints. As a seminal text in feminist literature, this story delves into themes of mental health, autonomy, and resistance against patriarchal oppression. The narrator's mental state deteriorates. It denies any intellectual or creative stimulation. However, her artistic perception of the wallpaper becomes intense, culminating in a dramatic act of liberation. Thus, this study explores the damaging effects of societal expectations on women's mental health and underscores the significance of self-expression as a means of reclaiming agency.

Gilman's (1892) work often explores the gender roles and medical practices that silenced women in the nineteenth century. *TYW* introduces the narrator's artistic impulses that functions as both a coping mechanism and a method of resistance against the rigid gender norms imposed upon her (p. 648). Numerous scholars examine *TYW* from feminist, psychological, and Gothic perspectives. So, they pay less attention to the exploration of artistic expression as an act of resistance against patriarchal constraints. However, the protagonist subverts the imposed silence through both her clandestine writing and imaginative interpretation of *TYW*. It reveals the power of artistic expression as a mode of resistance. Thus, this research explores how creative engagement serves as a subversive act that reclaims identity in a restrictive patriarchal framework.

The nineteenth-century women writers, including Gilman, often find themselves "constrained by social expectations that equate female creativity with disorder" (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p. 45). In *TYW*, the narrator's secret journal functions as an act of defiance, allowing her to articulate thoughts and emotions otherwise her husband may otherwise dismiss it. Hence, Lanser (1989) postulates, "the narrator's artistic engagement with the wallpaper serves as a metaphor for the broader exclusion of women from intellectual and creative spheres" (p. 423). Through this interpretation, the protagonist's transformation from passive patient to active interpreter of her surroundings challenges the traditional boundaries imposed upon female authorship.

TYW introduces Gothic elements to reinforce the theme of artistic resistance. The protagonist's interpretation of the wallpaper's chaotic patterns becomes an alternative form of storytelling, a means of breaking free from the linguistic and ideological structures imposed upon her. Hedges (1973) asserts, "the narrator's growing obsession with the wallpaper parallels the historical marginalization of female voices in literature and society" (p. 52). The narrator employs a narrative technique in the story, as Haney-Peritz (1986) adduces, "The Yellow Wallpaper employs subversive narrative techniques, positioning the narrator's fragmented discourse" (p. 116) as a challenge to patriarchal literary norms. All these perspectives suggest how the protagonist's artistic engagement with her environment stands not merely a symptom of mental deterioration but a deliberate act of defiance.

TYW employs symbols to portray the narrator's psychic barricades. She perceives a trapped woman behind the wallpaper—one she eventually attempts to free. It serves as a metaphor for women's struggle for autonomy. Treichler (1984) asserts, "The wallpaper becomes both a prison and a text, an oppressive structure that the protagonist ultimately reads and then physically dismantles" (p. 66). This act of destruction, while outwardly irrational, interprets the narrator's ultimate assertion of selfhood; a rejection of the imposed silence that stifles her creativity. Shumaker (1985) analyzes the protagonist's final moments—her creeping over the unconscious body of her husband—the collapsing of the patriarchal orders that sought to confine her (p. 596). In this way, the artistic expression, whether through writing or imaginative interpretation, emerges as a tool for resistance and self-liberation.

Statement of the Problem

TYW introduces male gender roles and medical practices to silence women of the nineteenth century. So, scholars pay attention to its psychological and feminist themes more than to its other themes, like the role of artistic expression as an act of defiance and resistance. Therefore, this study explores the under-explored function of artistic engagement through writing and interpreting visual stimuli as a means of reclaiming agency in oppressive environments. By analyzing the protagonist's creative impulses, this study investigates how Gilman's narrative demonstrates the subversive power of artistic expression in challenging patriarchal constraints.

Research Questions

This study formulates the following research questions:

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- (a) How does artistic expression function as a form of resistance in *TYW*?
 - (b) In what ways do the narrator's creative engagement with writing and the wallpaper challenge patriarchal oppression?

Objectives

This research draws the following objectives:

- (a) To analyze the artistic expression functioning as a means of resistance against social and medical constraints in *TYW*.
- (b) To explore how the narrator's engagement with writing and visual symbolism serves as an act of defiance and self-liberation in *TYW*.

Review of Literature

Numerous scholars analyze *TYW* from its feminist perspective, psychological depth, and gothic elements. However, a fewer studies examine artistic expression as a form of resistance in the story. This section reviews key interpretations that contribute to understanding how creative engagement in *TYW* functions as a subversive force against patriarchal oppression.

In *TYW*, Fleenor (1983) explores Gothic elements in the story, particularly with the narrator's engagement with the wallpaper that transcends mere artistic fixation and becomes a subversive form of storytelling. She interprets the shifting patterns and envisioning imprisoned women within the wallpaper. She constructs a narrative that deviates from the rigid, male-dominated discourse of her time. She finds this imaginative act as not just an expression of mental distress but a radical redefinition of authorship itself. She postulates, "the narrator's creative interpretations of the wallpaper represent an alternative form of authorship, one that challenges conventional literary and social structures" (p. 139). In this sense, the narrator's perception of the wallpaper as a site of hidden female voices parallels the broader feminist struggle for recognition and self-expression. Her artistic vision becomes a counter-narrative to the silencing forces of patriarchy, positioning her madness not as a descent into chaos but as a defiant assertion of agency through unconventional literary means.

Likewise, Golden (2004) analyzes the narrator's creeping at the end of *TYW* as a powerful and unsettling act of defiance that subverts traditional domestic norms. Rather than viewing this movement as mere insanity, Golden (2004) introduces it as a

"performative form of resistance, disrupting the domestic space that has entrapped the protagonist" (p. 210). The narrator's physical actions, "crawling over the fainted body of her husband while tearing away the wallpaper" (p. 210), symbolize her complete rejection of the patriarchal constraints that oppress her. By creeping in circles around the room, she reclaims control over a space that was meant to confine her. This act mirrors the breakdown of the domestic order, challenging the authority that John and the medical establishment represent. Her creeping can be read as a grotesque parody of female submission. While she moves low to the ground, she does not subjugate but rather liberates, enacting a final break from societal expectations. The repetition of this movement reinforces her transformation from a passive, silenced wife to an active force of resistance, using her own body as a tool to defy the structures designed to suppress her agency. Through this lens, the narrator's creeping acts not a defeat but an assertion of autonomy through embodied resistance.

Dobie (2011) examines the narrator's fragmented language as a reflection of the restrictions placed on women's voices in both literature and society. She finds, "her disrupted syntax mirrors the constraints imposed on women's literary expression" (p. 187). It demonstrates how the narrator's broken sentences and erratic structure symbolize her struggle against patriarchal silencing. This linguistic disintegration not only illustrates her mental deterioration but also serves as a subversive means of resisting the rigid expectations of female discourse. This linguistic disintegration not only illustrates her mental deterioration but also serves as a subversive means of resisting the rigid expectations of female discourse. Similarly, Shumaker (1985) explores how the interplay between confinement and imagination reveals the paradoxical power of artistic resistance, wherein "the very conditions meant to silence the narrator that fuels her creative vision" (p. 596). She finds the narrator's forced isolation that paradoxically strengthens her artistic resistance. The imposed restrictions on her inspire a heightened imaginative engagement with the wallpaper. This interplay between confinement and creativity underscores how repression can unintentionally foster a subversive form of self-expression. These perspectives contribute to a broader understanding of how artistic expression functions not just as an act of resistance but as a radical assertion of selfhood.

The wallpaper turns out as a medium for the narrator to bring her out from her confinement. Johnson (1989) adduces, "the narrator's fascination with the wallpaper reflects a deeper artistic impulse, one that allows her to navigate her confinement through

imagination” (p. 522). Johnson makes a study how the narrator’s obsession with the wallpaper serves as a creative escape, enabling her to reimagine her confinement as a space for artistic exploration. Through this imaginative engagement, she transforms oppression into a form of self-expression. This analysis supports the idea that artistic expression provides a vital, if unconventional, means of autonomy.

Visual and textual elements play a role in *TYW*. It demonstrates how the act of writing becomes a means of creative survival for the narrator. Golden (2004) postulates, “the protagonist’s secret journal serves as an unregulated space for self-expression, a place where she can question, resist, and eventually transcend the constraints placed upon her” (p. 195). In this sense, the act of writing mirrors the narrator’s increasing engagement with the wallpaper’s patterns, suggesting a link between textual and visual artistic resistance. Furthermore, Showalter (1977) finds “The Yellow Wallpaper” challenges realist conventions through its diary format, fragmented syntax, and shifting perception of reality” (p. 92). This resistance to linearity symbolizes an artistic rejection of patriarchal rationality and authority.

Thrailkill (2002) analyzes *TYW* from a medical humanities perspective. He explores the inadequacies of nineteenth-century medical treatments for women’s mental health. He asserts “the narrator’s engagement with the wallpaper can be read as a therapeutic artistic process, where perception and imagination become tools of resistance against male-dominated medical discourse” (p. 589). This perspective broadens the discussion of artistic defiance by situating it within historical medical practices that sought to suppress female agency.

The story’s use of imagery, especially the entrapment motif within the wallpaper reflects a broader struggle for female autonomy. Bates (2017) adduces, “the narrator’s ultimate destruction of the wallpaper is a radical artistic act, wherein tearing it down serves as both a literal and symbolic liberation” (p. 131). Her analysis reinforces the idea that artistic perception and physical engagement with the wallpaper become integral aspects of the narrator’s resistance.

The above reviews portray how *TYW* employs artistic expression through writing, visual interpretation, and non-traditional narrative forms as a means of challenging patriarchal constraints. These scholarly discussions help to draw a research gap, how Gilman presents creativity as an act of defiance, and illustrates how women’s artistic voices can serve as tools of resistance against systemic oppression.

Methods and Procedural

This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing textual analysis to examine the artistic expression as resistance in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *TYW*. Through a close reading of the text, this study explores how the protagonist's creative engagement—both through her secret writing and her imaginative interaction with the wallpaper functions as a mode of defiance against patriarchal oppression. By focusing on the interplay between confinement, artistic agency, and feminist resistance, this analysis aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how Gilman employs literary techniques to highlight the subversive power of artistic expression.

The primary method of analysis involves an interpretive framework based on feminist literary criticism, which emphasizes the historical and ideological constraints imposed on female creativity. The secondary sources, like the scholarly discussions on journal articles, books on *TYW*, etc., help to examine to contextualize the narrator's artistic expression within a broader tradition of feminist resistance literature. It further integrates inter-textual analysis by drawing connections between *TYW* and other nineteenth-century literary works that engage with similar themes of female creativity, artistic oppression, and patriarchal control.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to artistic expression as resistance in *TYW*, primarily exploring the themes of confinement, imagination, and psychological deterioration. While it draws on feminist literary criticism, it does not extensively engage with alternative theories like psychoanalysis, trauma studies, or disability studies, which could offer deeper insights into the narrator's descent into madness. This study does not compare artistic resistance across other feminist or Gothic texts like *The Awakening* or *The Bell Jar*, which could expand the literary framework. Though it discusses the subversive narrative style, it does not explore the readers' reception that evolves across different periods. Finally, this research relies on established feminist criticism, leaving the emerging fields like digital humanities that affect the theory largely unexplored.

Results and Discussion

The following results and discussion help to achieve the goal of the study.

Artistic Expression as a Means of Liberation Within Confinement

In *TYW*, the narrator's forced isolation under the "rest cure" reflects the oppressive social and medical practices imposed on women in the nineteenth century. Her husband, John, confines her to a room and forbids any meaningful activity, particularly writing, which he deems harmful to her recovery. He dismisses her creative desires, as he asserts, "you are to have perfect rest and all the air you can get. Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear, and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time" (Gilman, 1892, p. 646). John's well-meaning but patronizing attitudes reinforce the rigid gender roles of the era and expect women to remain passive and submissive.

The narrator introduces her frustration as she asserts, "I sometimes fancy that in my condition, if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus, it would have been a different story" (Gilman, 1892, p. 649). The analysis of the text reflects her acute awareness of the importance of self-expression for her mental well-being. Yet, under the guise of care, she finds her basic need of intellectual engagement repeatedly denied. Despite the prohibition, she secretly continues writing in her journal, transforming this forbidden act into a form of rebellion. "I must say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!" (Gilman, 1892, p. 651), she confesses, revealing how writing becomes her only means of asserting her voice and maintaining her sense of self.

The narrator's growing fascination with the yellow wallpaper becomes an extension of her creative expression. Initially describing it as "dull enough to confuse the eye," she gradually begins to see patterns and figures hidden within it (Gilman, 1892, p. 650). This imaginative engagement with the wallpaper allows her to reinterpret her confined reality on her own terms. As she spends more time studying it, the wallpaper evolves into a symbolic text that only she can understand: "The front pattern does move...and no wonder! The woman behinds shake it!" (Gilman, 1892, p. 654). The trapped figure she perceives in the wallpaper mirrors her own entrapment, turning her creative vision into an act of resistance.

Through this imaginative act, the narrator reclaims control over her story in an environment designed to silence her. Her growing obsession with "freeing" the woman in

the wallpaper symbolizes her deeper struggle for autonomy and creative freedom. In this way, the narrator's artistic engagement—first through writing and then through her interpretation of the wallpaper becomes a powerful act of liberation, defying the oppressive forces that seek to confine both her body and her mind.

The Wallpaper as a Symbol of Resistance and Liberation

The *TYW* unfolds the narrator's initial revulsion toward the wallpaper that evolves into a profound and obsessive engagement with its chaotic patterns. At first, she describes it as "one of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin" (Gilman, 1892, p. 649) and remarks on its unsettling nature: "It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study" (Gilman, 1892, p. 650). This disturbing description reflects her growing discomfort with her surroundings and foreshadows her deeper connection to the wallpaper as a symbol of her own confinement. As the narrator's isolation intensifies, she begins to perceive a trapped woman behind the wallpaper, as she adds, "there is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down" (Gilman, 1892, p. 651). This vision of a woman struggling behind the pattern mirrors her own entrapment within rigid social and domestic structures. The narrator's realization—"The front pattern does move... and no wonder! The woman behinds shake it!" (Gilman, 1892, p. 654) signals her increasing awareness of her oppression and the hidden layers of female subjugation embedded in her reality.

The wallpaper becomes a powerful metaphor for female repression and the struggle for autonomy. Just as the wallpaper traps the woman, so too a nursery confines the narrator, that functions more like a prison. The wallpaper's chaotic design reflects the complex and oppressive structures of patriarchal control that stifle women's voices and artistic expression. The narrator's growing obsession with deciphering the wallpaper transforms into an act of creative engagement and resistance. She postulates, "I pulled and she shook," (Gilman, 1892, p. 656), describing her physical and emotional effort to free the woman. This collaborative imagery between the narrator and the figure in the wallpaper symbolizes her deepening identification with the figure's struggle.

The narrator's final act of tearing down the wallpaper represents a desperate yet decisive break from the confines of her reality. As she peels away the layers, she finds, "I've got out at last... in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" (Gilman, 1892, p. 656). This climactic moment signifies a

radical assertion of autonomy, where the destruction of the wallpaper becomes an act of reclaiming her voice and agency. The act of tearing down the wallpaper symbolizes not just physical, but also her psychological liberation and her refusal to be confined by societal expectations any longer.

Thus, the wallpaper serves as both a symbol of the narrator's repression and a medium for her resistance and transformation. Far from being a passive victim, she uses her artistic perception to reinterpret her circumstances and subvert the structures that seek to silence her. Her descent into madness, while tragic on the surface, demonstrates a radical escape from an oppressive reality—an act of reclaiming selfhood through creativity and imagination.

Psychological Deterioration as Artistic Liberation

In *TYW*, the narrator's mental state visibly deteriorates. Her artistic engagement with the wallpaper intensifies and simultaneously evolves into a paradoxical form of liberation. Her descent into madness demonstrates a transformative process through which she reclaims agency and self-expression. Early in the story, the narrator describes the wallpaper as "unpleasant" and "dull," with a pattern that "commits every artistic sin" (Gilman, 1892, p. 649). Her initial disgust reflects her feelings of entrapment and powerlessness. However, as her isolation deepens, she begins to see "a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure" behind the wallpaper (Gilman, 1892, p. 652), which soon becomes the focal point of her creative and psychological unraveling.

The narrator's shifting perception of the wallpaper mirrors her changing mental state. What starts as passive observation turns into active interpretation as she discovers "a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern" (Gilman, 1892, p. 653). She increasingly identifies with this trapped figure, seeing her own confinement reflected in the woman's struggle. This realization spurs her to action. In a climactic moment, the narrator tears down the wallpaper, declaring triumphantly, "I've got out at last... in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" (Gilman, 1892, p. 656). This destruction acts as both literal and symbolic, a deconstruction of the oppressive structures around her and a reclamation of her freedom.

The narrator's final act—creeping over her unconscious husband further reinforces the theme of liberation. She postulates, "I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!" (Gilman, 1892, p. 656), blending reality with her symbolic world. The act of creeping, initially viewed as

madness, becomes a performance of defiance. Her husband's collapse and her dominance over the room signify a complete reversal of power dynamics. The narrator, once infantilized and confined, now controls her space and body, asserting herself in a way that was previously unimaginable.

Gilman's story blurs the line between psychological collapse and creative liberation. Madness, far from being a mere loss of reason, becomes an alternative form of expression and empowerment. The narrator's final rebellion though unsettling, underscores the story's central message: in a society that suppresses female creativity and autonomy, madness can become a radical means of reclaiming selfhood. By tearing down the wallpaper and embracing her imaginative world, the narrator transforms her supposed breakdown into an act of artistic and psychological freedom.

Subversive Narrative Style as Resistance

In *TYW*, as against the traditional literary forms, the narrator's fragmented and evolving discourse rejects linearity and coherence, and challenges the patriarchal linguistic structures. Gilman's use of first-person narration, stream-of-consciousness, and a diary format offers an intimate look into the narrator's psyche. They blend reality with imagination while exposing the limits of male-dominated discourse. The first-person perspective draws the readers into her interior world, where she records, "There is something strange about the house—I can feel it" (Gilman, 1892, p. 647). She hints at an alternative reality that gradually unfolds through her narrative.

The diary format of the story forms a subversive tool. It provides the narrator with a private and unregulated space for self-expression, in contrast to the control exerted by her husband. John forbids her from writing, declaring it harmful to her condition. She concedes, "There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word" (Gilman, 1892, p.650). This secrecy turns her writing into an act of rebellion. As her mental state deteriorates, her sentences become increasingly fragmented, reflecting her psychological unraveling. Yet this breakdown of coherent language also symbolizes her rejection of patriarchal rationality and control.

The shifting descriptions of the yellow wallpaper illustrate the narrator's resistance. Initially, she describes it as "an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions" (Gilman, 1892, p. 651), an observation marked by passive detachment. As her connection to the wallpaper deepens, her tone shifts from passive compliance to obsessive revelation. Her sentences grow shorter and more urgent,

particularly in the climax, when she exclaims, “I’ve got out at last... you can’t put me back!” (Gilman, 1892, p. 656). This moment marks her full detachment from the rational constraints imposed upon her, signifying both linguistic and psychological liberation.

Gilman’s subversive narrative style, with its fragmentation and shifting tone, mirrors the narrator’s resistance to male-dominated structures. Her final act of defiance—both in tearing down the wallpaper and in refusing to conform to rational discourse underscores the inherent power of women’s voices. Even when fragmented or deemed irrational, these voices challenge patriarchal control, offering an alternative form of self-expression and liberation.

The Role of Imagination in Resisting Oppression

As the narrator’s isolation deepens, her imagination transforms the yellow wallpaper from a simple decoration into a symbolic battleground for female resistance. What begins as a passive observation of its “sprawling flamboyant patterns” (Gilman, 1892, p.650) quickly evolves into a vivid and personal projection. She envisions a woman trapped behind the patterns, noting, “The faint figure behind seems to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out” (Gilman, 1892, p. 654). This trapped woman becomes a mirror for the narrator’s own confinement, symbolizing her repressed desires and growing awareness of her oppression.

The narrator’s creative reinterpretation of the wallpaper allows her to challenge the rigid authority that dictates her reality. Each observation becomes more urgent; more charged with meaning, as she declares, “I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did?” (Gilman, 1892, p. 656). By engaging with the wallpaper as a form of art, the narrator constructs an alternate narrative where she gradually assumes control. This imaginative process mirrors the defiance of the “madwoman in the attic,” (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p. 49), a figure who disrupts patriarchal order through creative rebellion.

The narrator’s final act—tearing down the wallpaper becomes both an artistic and psychological rebellion. She proclaims triumphantly, “I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!” (Gilman, 1892, p. 656). This climactic moment symbolizes her complete rejection of the oppressive structures that have confined her, transforming imagination into a powerful tool of subversion. By reshaping her reality through art and imagination, she reclaims her autonomy, illustrating the liberating potential of creative expression in the face of systemic oppression.

Writing as a Covert Act of Defiance

The narrator's secret writing serves as an act of defiance against the domestic and societal restrictions that seek to silence her. Though her husband forbids her from writing, believing it will exacerbate her condition, she continues in secret, stating, "There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word" (Gilman, 1892, p. 650). This act of concealment turns her journal into a space for self-expression, preserving her thoughts and experiences that would otherwise remain suppressed.

The narrator's writing becomes more than a coping mechanism. It becomes a means of reclaiming agency. The urgency and fragmentation of her entries reflect her growing desperation and rebellion. Initially, her writing looks tentative and restrained, but as her isolation deepens, her words become more direct and forceful. She declares, "I don't know why I should write this. I don't want to. I don't feel able" (Gilman, 1892, p. 652), yet she continues, compelled by a need for self-expression that contradicts the imposed silence.

In defying John's authority through writing, the narrator constructs a reality independent of the rigid, male-defined logic that confines her. Her journal, though fragmented and chaotic, embodies a form of resistance that subverts the patriarchal control imposed on her. Ultimately, her act of writing transforms suppressed thoughts into a powerful protest, asserting her voice in a world determined to silence her.

Conclusion

This study finds *TYW* as an artistic expression of resistance against patriarchal oppression. Gilman explores how creativity becomes a survival tool and a form of rebellion through the narrator's confinement, imaginative engagement with the wallpaper, subversive narrative style, and clandestine writing. *The story* evolves from a mere decoration into a powerful symbol of female entrapment and liberation. It reflects how art can critique oppression and inspire freedom. The narrator's secret writing defies her husband's authority, reclaims her agency through language, and challenges societal structures that seek to silence her. Her fragmented, first-person narrative resists linearity and coherence, and mirrors her psychological struggle while rejecting the rigid logic of patriarchal discourse. Her visions of the woman trapped in the wallpaper, dismissed as delusions, embody her repressed fears and desires, and transform imagination into an act

of defiance. Gilman's portrayal of the narrator's psychological deterioration parallels the historical marginalization of women's voices, and positions madness as a final—if unsettling form of liberation. The protagonist's creative acts, from writing to peeling away the wallpaper, symbolize her rebellion against patriarchal constraints and affirm the power of artistic expression in reclaiming autonomy. As a feminist text, *TYW* remains relevant to contemporary discussions on gender, mental health, and artistic freedom. Future research could explore how it resonates with modern artistic movements that challenge patriarchal narratives through experimental storytelling like fragmented feminist fiction, digital narrative art, or performance works that use the body as resistance, thus expanding its influence in feminist literary discourse.

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To Cite this Article [APA Style, 7th Edition]:

Kandel, C. (2025). Artistic expression as resistance in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." *Journal of Durgalaxmi*, 4(1), 77-91. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jdl.v4i1.88010>