



GROWING AS A  
WRITER

---

*Imani R. Jacobs*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author . . . . .	2
Author's Note . . . . .	3
Close Reading: Revised . . . . .	6
Researched Argument: Revised . . . . .	10
The Revision Process . . . . .	15
Reviewing Peer Work . . . . .	17
Acknowledgments . . . . .	21

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Imani R. Jacobs

---

I always take tests backwards. I'm not sure why; in fact, I always seem to do things out of order, which is probably why I have begun my portfolio this way. Don't worry; I'll fix it. This is just my chance to ramble for a minute while I try to get everything organized. One second...let me just...ah, of course. The theme of this book is structure and formal language. Perhaps we are off to a rough start. Oh, if only my revelation from English 1102 was "I figured out how to use my voice in my writing!" But, alas. The problem is that I use too much of it. Literary analysis -- college-level analysis at that! -- is not supposed to be a diary, Imani. Yes, I am treating this part like it is, but the biography isn't technically part of the book, right? We haven't started yet. I'll just get it out of my system now. Anyway, I hope you enjoy my thoughts on growing as a writer!



- Imani R. Jacobs

---

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

---

Dear Beloved Reader,

In literature analysis, there is no “right” or “wrong.” This may come as a relief to some, but, for me, it has always been quite the opposite. I like structure, and I like being sure of the answer. I have spent years trying to “solve” English assignments with a formula -- my theses were always structured the same way as the first sentence of the essay, my arguments almost never went outside the box, and there were always five paragraphs which were all structured the same way. As I progressed through high school, however, I soon realized that there was no formula. One English teacher told me “Don’t use direct quotes; always paraphrase,” but then my English teacher the following year insisted “Always use direct quotes.” I was told to write a different way every year. “The conclusion is a crucial part because it expands your analysis beyond itself.” “You don’t have to have a conclusion.” “There should be three distinct parts of your argument listed in your thesis.” “Your thesis is just your overarching claim and doesn’t have to include specific examples.” There could not possibly be a right way. Writing is all shades of gray; there is no “right” or “wrong,” but there is “ineffective,” “well-written,” “unsupported,” and many other possible characteristics of a piece.

My struggle with literary argument is that one should *treat* it as though it is black and white, preferably without uncertain phrases like “seems to be” or “perhaps.” However, being uncomfortably aware of the open-ended nature of literature analysis has caused me to play it safe with uninteresting ideas, unoriginal claims, and ultimately very little analysis. As I have tried to step out of my comfort zone, I have ended up treating my essays more like theoretical discussions with myself -- thus my very informal writing style and many questions sprinkled throughout my writing. My essays have always ended up either over-simplified or over-complicated and disorganized.

This struggle is most obvious in my first essay about Robert Frost’s poem, “Design.” There were multiple instances of the word “consider,” quite a few questions, and many parentheticals. I recall being pleased with my submission of the essay because it was a step

forward for me in terms of analysis -- thanks to our many in-class discussions about various literary pieces. However, looking back on it now, I realize that it read quite awkwardly as a formal close reading.

By the time I was writing my researched argument, I had developed some awareness of my overly-informal tendencies. In the end, it still had some slight informalities, but I believe it disrupted the essay significantly less. Many of the works I cited also had slightly informal styles, so I felt that it was reasonable to somewhat include my own voice in this essay. There was, however, still a lot to improve upon in terms of organization and a clear line of thought -- especially because my sentences were so long, almost to the point of being run-on.

I think much of the disconnect for me can be attributed to “putting thoughts into words.” Although I find open-ended discussions about literature to be eye-opening and compelling, my brain does not put ideas together very well. This is obvious in other areas of my life, too, such as driving and other forms of navigation. I only know one way to get to each important place in my hometown, and I only know the way directly from my house; the roads don’t connect in my mind. I think my relationship with literature analysis is very similar because I can follow multiple different lines of thought, but I find it incredibly difficult to unite them.

So, right as I was struggling to begin my researched argument, my sister suggested a way to help me put my thoughts together. “Just start talking,” she said. I summarized “The Yellow Wallpaper” for her, and then she told me to give her my initial thoughts. I already had some vague ideas about the patriarchy, so I started with that. At first, nothing I said made sense, but she began asking me question after question about what I meant and how it might fit in with my original idea about the story. She made me backtrack numerous times because I would start talking about one thing and then go on a complete tangent about something else I noticed. All the while, I was typing everything I could think of into a collective document. Many of my notes were not full sentences, or even full thoughts, but it helped me find some motivation to start writing. After I had a long list of choppy sentences and incomplete phrases, I started to move them around. It was by no means organized, but I was able to group some ideas together and even find an overarching one which I believed could connect them all.

I spent far too much of my life expecting myself to be able to create a perfect essay with a snap of my fingers, and I missed out on truly experiencing amazing works by inspiring people. If you don't know where to begin, that is completely fine and normal. Start telling someone about it, or maybe even step away from it for a while and go for a walk. Different techniques work for different people, but this book is a collection of strategies that have helped me personally become a better writer -- not perfect, not even great, but better. I sincerely hope they will be of use to you.

Cheers,

Imani

---

## CLOSE READING: REVISED

---

Here is an example of the close reading essay I wrote recently. It is not perfect (and that's okay!), but it is a significant step-up from my writing before the beginning of this semester.

> Some tips I have learned:

- Write as much as you can, then edit and condense. It is much more difficult to try to fight to expand upon a concept.
  - Try to write the introduction last. I just rewrote one for my revised version because I had written my original introduction first, and it could barely have been considered an introduction.
  - Don't over explain yourself, especially the very small details.
- 

### Spiders and Free Will: A Close Reading of Robert Frost's "Design"

Although Robert Frost's poem, "Design," is quite a dark and horrific portrayal of an unsettling event, the specific word choice stands out as very beautiful and almost magnificent. These contradicting features together pose a question: is the spider responsible for the moth's death, or is it free of blame? Frost explores these ideas in the second stanza, but ultimately leaves the question hanging. The true answer depends on whether one believes there to be a higher power in control of such things, or of anything at all.

Likely the first thing which captures the reader's attention is the spider's beautiful, unusual color: white. It becomes even stranger as the poem also introduces a white moth and a white flower. Not only are the spider, moth, and flower explicitly described as being white, but there are also many other descriptors reminiscent of the color, such as "snow-drop," "froth," and "paper kite." Another common denominator of these descriptions is that they all have gentle or benign connotations: a snowdrop is a pretty flower; a froth is a gentle fizz -- perhaps of the ocean or a cup of coffee; a paper kite is a fragile toy associated with children and innocent play. Frost could have described a harsher white or paleness, but he instead chose to establish the traditional significance of the color white. Had he chosen the former (something like "A ghostly spider, a



flower like a skull / And dead wings carried like a brittle sheet”), the meaning of the poem would have changed completely, as there would have been no stark contrast between the depiction of the event and the depiction of those involved.

Simply put, white is often associated with innocence and purity, which may lead one to wonder: why is the spider white? In this particular poem, the arachnid seems to be responsible for the tragic death of the moth -- so why did Frost choose it to be such an innocuous color? The most obvious conclusion is that the spider is, in fact, innocent. This is where the main theme comes in -- the speculation of some higher power and, perhaps, the question of free will. The implication of the white spider and the white moth on the white heal-all is that the living things present in this poem are all clean or blameless. So then, who is to blame for such a tragic occurrence? Frost considers the possible culprit in the second stanza, in which he poses a series of questions considering what caused the events which led up to the moth’s death. “What but design of darkness to appall?” he declares. The implication here is, of course, that the *design* of the universe or some higher power is the only way these events could have occurred so precisely.

Furthermore, the aforementioned line suggests that design is “dark” or evil in nature and makes things happen simply to shock and horrify (“appall”) observers. “Appall” literally means “to make pale” (or white), making this particular word choice especially compelling. By implying that this supernatural darkness makes us white, Frost also suggests that this higher power cleanses of blame. Although *design* is clearly painted as an evil force in the poem, there seems to be some implication that it lifts blame off of living things entirely -- could humanity use this to its advantage?

The combination of “pure” and sinister imagery conveys an especially twisted sense of inevitable hopelessness beneath the power of such a dark design. On one hand, Frost writes that the spider is “holding up a moth / Like a white piece of satin cloth.” The spider holding the moth in this manner seems to be almost reverent, which is reinforced by the moth’s comparison to a white satin cloth -- satin is a very delicate, pure material, and white garments are often associated with celestial beings, such as gods or angels.



However, the overall description of the surroundings and setting is actually quite dark. Phrases like “characters of death and blight” and “ingredients in a witches’ broth” sharply contrast the lily-white imagery, which significantly enhances the foreboding tone of the poem. This contrast is especially compelling because an innocent creature as the target of something terrible translates as much more evil than an already cruel one being said target. For example, if the spider, moth, and flower were more traditional colors, the spider would seem more malicious, and the moth less innocent. The horrific effect would not be the same because the spider would be viewed as despicable in the first place, or perhaps the story would be termed “the circle of life” and dismissed entirely.

Ultimately, at the heart of the poem seems to be the question of whether or not free will exists -- and the overtone that it does not. The two types of imagery clash together to characterize the poem’s events as both sublime and disturbing, suggesting that the “characters” in the poem have no real choice in the matter and that their actions are instead being controlled by a heavenly power which is malicious in nature. This makes the individual actions of the spider seem tragic, rather than disgusting or animalistic. “What had that flower to do with being white, / The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?” Frost asks. He implies that, had the flower not been white and innocent, the tragedy would not have happened. If it had free will, the moth would not have perished to such cruelty.

Overall, it seems that Frost seeks to convey the pointlessness of life, although he only seems to be baffled by this possible revelation -- not angry or despairing. While the tone of the poem is quite foreboding, Frost’s attitude toward it seems to be in notable contrast to this. He is very inquisitive in the second stanza as he contemplates what predestination might mean for him. In poetry, it is traditional for an earlier stanza to pose questions which are then answered in a later stanza. Robert Frost, however, puts a twist on this practice. The opening stanza of this poem is full of symbolism and aspects that stand out as significant -- such as the color white and the numerous similes -- which are largely able to be interpreted in a traditional, moderately straightforward sense. However, the second stanza immediately jumps into questions which throw off one’s understanding thus far and open the poem to even more interpretation. The final

line considers “If design govern in a thing so small,” which counters the opening stanza by speculating the role of design. Frost could be implying that no celestial force or higher power governs insects because they are so small and insignificant, which leads one to consider whether humanity is also seen as equally insignificant -- so does design actually govern in anything at all, and does such a power even exist?

---

## RESEARCHED ARGUMENT: REVISED

---

This is my revised research argument -- the most recent essay I have written. I did not change much from my final submission, simply because I revised and rewrote it so many times before actually turning it in. However, I believe I was able to make some parts clearer.

> Some tips I have learned:

- Don't let your sentences go on and on -- it is difficult for the reader to follow and will weaken even the strongest argument.
  - Make sure every idea has been set up, especially those you bring up near the end. It should not be completely out of the blue.
- 

### Perception Corrupting Reality, as Shown in "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" chronicles the narrator's increasingly incoherent perception of the room in which she resides while away from her home. What begins as simple observations of the room's "decor" and the supposed efforts of her husband to cure her of her illness soon transforms into notions of eyes in the wallpaper, her caretakers' malicious intents, and even a woman trapped just within the putrid yellow wallpaper. As the narrator spirals into nothing short of madness, her detest for the wallpaper and the room which confines her transforms into a sort of attachment to its familiarity. In the story's conclusion, the narrator rips the wallpaper from the walls, "freeing" the woman she believed to be imprisoned beneath it, but simultaneously discovers contentment in her jail-like quarters. In her eyes, she has now gained control of her situation and consequently considers herself free -- from the will of her husband and from society -- despite the fact that she remains trapped, physically and mentally, in the confines of both the room and her own mind. Under the guise of complex metaphor, Gilman weaves a narrative that juxtaposes perception and reality and calls attention to the manner in which the former skews the latter; in Gilman's argument, insanity -- being consumed by one's own perception -- is the only true refuge from inescapable oppression: the patriarchy, as Gilman has it.

The protagonist's room is her prison. The rings on the walls and bars on the window (Gilman 648) are reminiscent of a literal jail cell -- surely a tell-tale sign. Naturally, the narrator spends much of her time longing to be free from the room because she knows her confinement does not help with her "temporary nervous depression." John does not even believe her to be sick, so she is far less inclined to accept his rest prescription. "The schedule that John prescribes for her each hour, does not only confine her to dullness, but deprives her of her true identity and renders her a prisoner in a room that she dislikes" (Shaalan 3). She begins to lose herself because she has nothing to do except think about the oppression of her own situation and the desire to leave the room.

However, by the end of the story, the narrator expresses her direct opposition to leaving and even confines herself within the room further by tying a rope around herself and anchoring it to some feature of the room (Gilman 656). Her own fixation on freedom and control distracts her from the physical confinement by figuratively confining her inside her own mind. What changed between her desire to escape from the room and her determination to stay is simple -- her perception of her own freedom. The room never stopped functioning as a prison. She simply became convinced that it was not one.

So, what convinced the narrator that the room was not a prison? The answer is that she believed the wallpaper to be the imprisoning factor of her circumstance, rather than the room itself. Bak explains, "The figure's freedom is important for the narrator because that is what she wants -- freedom, not from the room's confinement but from the wallpaper that she believes is monitoring her every move." (44). Upon tearing down the wallpaper, she believes she has fully escaped John's power because she feels personally in control. However, she remains more imprisoned than ever, both within the room and her own mind.

The room and its wallpaper is symbolic of the patriarchy -- it is an inescapable force, in the eyes of the narrator. While the wallpaper is the narrator's perception of what oppresses her, it is, in reality, the room which confines her. Because her perception of reality has been skewed by her insanity, she believes destroying the wallpaper has solved her problems and made her free. However, she remains more trapped than ever before, now physically tied to the room and even

unwilling to leave it. In her madness, the narrator builds a new identity around an immunity to the wallpaper's power. To escape the oppressive nature of the room, the narrator must first retreat into her own mind in order to find refuge. At this point, however, she becomes trapped in a loop of insanity, in which she is unable to physically or mentally escape what truly ails her. Gilman uses this metaphor to relate to the female experience within the patriarchy, in which women of the time are permanently trapped without realistic opportunity for escape; instead, insanity is the only chance of comfort within an oppressive society.

At the end of the story, the protagonist exclaims, "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 656). There is, of course, no mention of anyone called Jane prior to this point, and it seems to be a common assumption that, as Bak puts it, "'Jane,' here, is arguably herself, estranged now not only from John but from her own identity as well" (44). This theory is perfectly plausible, since the narrator has gone mad and separated herself from the woman she was before. "In objectifying herself through this imaginary woman, the narrator can free herself, if only in mind, from the external prison her husband places her in" (Bak 44). The previous version of herself was susceptible to John's rules and the patriarchy because, Zeidanin explains, Gilman was calling attention to the fact that "gender difference holds women in a state of infantile ignorance" (Zeidanin 1417). Even though she did defy John in secret, she made excuses for him and generally tried to follow his orders. The madwoman at the end of the story, on the other hand, is completely immune to John's influence. She has found a new identity in the belief that she is free from that which confined her; she believed this to be the wallpaper, when, quite apparently, it is the room itself.

Her perception of freedom may be derived from her growing insanity, but, more specifically, it could be a result of her perception of control. As the story progresses, the narrator becomes more confident in herself and her speculations, which is apparent as her journals shift from a focus on John's thinking to her own thoughts, and, in some cases, how John has misinterpreted what is happening. In response to these rising suspicions, the narrator begins to make more choices of her own. She stays up at night, talks of how she has fooled Jennie and John, and speaks of her disobedience to John's commands. By going against her husband's

orders, she displays a defiance for the patriarchy which she once comfortably accepted. Simultaneously, her insanity grows; she begins to see more things in the walls -- things which are not there -- yet she becomes more comfortable in the room nonetheless.

She believes she is free because she perceives the illusion of control, and because she makes her own choices -- even though the choices she makes for herself are more severe than the choices John would have likely made for her. He had no plans to trap her indefinitely in the room, for example -- she has done this to herself. In the end of the story, John faints, leaving the narrator, at least temporarily, to deduce her own fate. While this control is likely ephemeral, the narrator is deluded with a freedom brought about by her power over what proceeds immediately following John's syncope. The narrator's tone at the story's end is triumphant, but any observer will pick up on the highly temporary nature of John's fainting spell. As Paula Treichler explains, "The surrender of patriarchy is only temporary: her husband has merely fainted, after all, not died, and will no doubt move swiftly and severely to deal with her" (67).

The narrator has "escaped" by destroying her perception of the patriarchy (the wallpaper); she is therefore content within it, but now, the patriarchy has even more control. As Karen Ford puts it, "although she does free the woman inside the paper, she is tied up, locked in a room, creeping on all fours like the child John has accused her of being" (310). Soon, John will awaken, and the narrator will likely be sent to Weir Mitchell, where she will be controlled even more than she has been up to this point; John has essentially no other option and is reaching the last resort: "The death sentence imposed by patriarchy is violent and relentless. No one escapes" (Treichler 73). This was the last day of the narrator's trip to the secluded house. If she had neglected to act -- neglected to give in to her insanity, which is what she perceived as necessary to escape her oppression -- she likely would have returned home or to vacation as scheduled, and John would have thought nothing more of taking harsh action; according to his words, he believed her state was improving. Her perception of the situation as becoming more unbearable disregards the reality that nothing has changed since the beginning of the story, at which point she was comfortable with the way she was treated. This represents how the patriarchy is inescapable, and while she has almost certainly made her situation worse, she remains content

nonetheless because she believes she is free. Ultimately, the fact that the narrator has not actually escaped from John or the room's imprisonment is irrelevant to herself because she considers herself to be a free woman.

---

#### Works Cited

- Bak, John S. "Escaping the Jaundiced Eye: Foucauldian Panopticism in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1994, pp. 39.
- Ford, Karen. "'The Yellow Wallpaper' and Women's Discourse." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1985, pp. 309–314., <https://doi.org/10.2307/463709>.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Virago Press, 1981, pp. 647–656.
- Salah Shaalan, Ban. "The Sick Heroine in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper." *Alustath Journal for Human and Social Sciences*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2020, pp. 1–10., <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v59i2.1089>.
- Treichler, Paula A. "Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 3, no. 1/2, 1984, pp. 61–77., <https://doi.org/10.2307/463825>.
- Zeidanin, Hussein H. "The New Versus True Woman in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper and Ellen Glasgow's Dare's Gift." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, vol. 11, no. 11, 2021, pp. 1416–1420., <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1111.08>.
-



# THE REVISION PROCESS

---

This is a supporting paragraph of my close reading analysis of “Design.” I was attempting to strengthen my argument with commentary and not only evidence. I think I have greatly improved in the revision stage since the beginning of the semester because I now work to cut down on and rephrase my writing, rather than desperately trying to add more. Even here, one can see that I added much more in draft three, but immediately cut back down in draft four.

\***Bolded** words and phrases were added in the given draft, and those which are ~~crossed out~~ are removed in the following draft.

---

## DRAFT ONE:

**On the other hand, the subject matter of the poem is actually quite dark. Even putting the storyline aside, phrases like “characters of death and blight” and “ingredients in a witches’ broth” sharply contrast the celestial imagery, which effectively enhances the foreboding tone of the poem.**

Of course, this is not even close to a full paragraph. When I start writing, I write down every sentence or claim I can think of, skipping lines for every new thought -- this is one of those. It was a fine start when I was drafting, but it definitely needed some explanation. In the next draft, I added a sentence to explain the reason Frost included the contrasting imagery to support my argument.

---

## DRAFT TWO:

~~On the other hand, the subject matter of the poem is actually quite dark. Even putting the storyline aside,~~ phrases like “characters of death and blight” and “ingredients in a witches’ broth” sharply contrast the ~~celestial~~ imagery, which ~~effectively~~ enhances the foreboding tone of the poem. **This contrast is especially compelling because an innocent creature being the**

**target of something terrible translates as much more evil than an already cruel one being said target.**

I cut out some parts after this draft. “On the other hand” did not flow very well because “on one hand” was multiple sentences back. I also realized that I segwayed to the “subject matter of the poem” but then immediately put the “storyline aside” and discussed figurative language, which did not make much sense at all, so I changed it to address the setting instead. I then introduced an example in an effort to further support the effectiveness of Frost’s contrasting language.

---

### **DRAFT THREE:**

However, the overall description of the surroundings and setting is actually quite dark. Phrases like “characters of death and blight” and “ingredients in a witches’ broth” sharply contrast the **lily-white** imagery, which **significantly** enhances the foreboding tone of the poem. This contrast is especially compelling because an innocent creature ~~being~~ the target of something terrible translates as much more evil than an already cruel one being said target. **For example, consider the difference in the mood of the poem if the spider, moth, and flower were more traditional colors and were overall painted as frightening creatures: even if “design” were still fully in control of their actions, the horrific effect would not be the same because the “characters” would be viewed as despicable in the first place (deserving of this fate, maybe), or perhaps the story would be termed “the circle of life” and dismissed entirely.**

The sentence that I added on here felt unnecessarily long and did not flow well, so I cut some parts out and changed some parts as well. Don’t be afraid to take something out if it does not fit well.

---

### **DRAFT FOUR:**

However, the overall description of the surroundings and setting is actually quite dark. Phrases like “characters of death and blight” and “ingredients in a witches’ broth” sharply

contrast the lily-white imagery, which significantly enhances the foreboding tone of the poem. This contrast is especially compelling because an innocent creature **as** the target of something terrible translates as much more evil than an already cruel one being said target. For example, if the spider, moth, and flower were more traditional colors, **the spider would seem more malicious, and the moth less innocent.** The horrific effect would not be the same because the **spider** would be viewed as despicable in the first place, or perhaps the story would be termed “the circle of life” and dismissed entirely.

I am satisfied with this final paragraph because I feel as though it provides good evidence of Frost’s word choice and adequately explains its effect on the poem’s tone.

---

Grammatical revision is fun for me, but I have always struggled with revision of structure and ideas because I tend to make my essay more incoherent the longer I edit it. This time, however, I am quite pleased with myself because I was able to sit down, re-read it multiple times, and edit it until it made sense and fit in with the rest of the analysis.

---

## REVIEWING PEER WORK

---

In the past, I have edited solely for grammar and spelling. However, this peer review was the first time I explicitly edited for content and readability. I enjoyed reading through her ideas, and it was fun asking questions and making suggestions about her writing. I tried to focus on parts which needed elaboration, but I also made comments on repetitiveness. Try to be as unbiased as possible when reviewing peer work; they will likely welcome your feedback.

\*The original text on which I commented is highlighted beige, and my comments are written in burnt umber.

---

I really like that the first paragraph addresses the first half of your thesis, and the second paragraph addresses the second half -- good organization of paragraphs.

While I agree with many scholars' argument of how Gilman's feminist short story created progress in western society, I believe many fail to address the ways in which Gilman hindered progress as well. This is a very intriguing take. Obviously this is a first draft, but as you write more, I think you could narrow it down a bit more (perhaps specify the "ways" she does this, or what about her writing has this effect).

Gilman uses the art of literature in order to portray ideas revolutionary to her time. She uses Maybe change this word because you have the word "uses" in the last sentence. fictional characters to depict the imprisonment of the patriarchy Maybe switch this to active voice because it reads as if the patriarchy is imprisoned. in a more entertaining and less harsh manner. How so? Definitely elaborate on this with some quotes and explanation. Do you mean the story itself is entertaining? I'm sure you could back this up, but my original thought is that it is more so unsettling, so you could address that as a possible counterpoint. Her use of characters to portray a clearly illogical situation I like this!! I think you could back it up with some specific evidence.

opens the eyes of many readers in that **the way women were being treated** **Although this reads naturally in my opinion, I know we aren't really supposed to be using passive voice.** was very damaging. For example, when our protagonist hesitates to say that “perhaps... John is the reason I do not get well faster”, we see the hold her husband has on her. As readers we can clearly see how our protagonist is suffering due to her husband’s prescription, yet the fact that she still hesitates to acknowledge this exemplifies the problem with the patriarchy in society, silencing women’s struggles **in favor of men.** **How is this in favor of men? Do you mean that John doesn't have to "deal" with her being in the way? I think you should expand upon this.** Additionally, \_\_\_ mentions how “to an outsider” John looks like a loving husband taking care of his wife, when in reality he is “an oppressor who **infantilizes his wife so discreetly**” **Yes! You could back this up by tying it back to her "prison" -- an abandoned nursery of sorts.** that it could be hard to miss(). **To go along with that idea,** **This language seems a bit informal for the essay.** the way that John treats his wife shows us as readers how what may be disguised as love is actually just a means of pushing down women, highlighting the problems with the patriarchy.

**However, Gilman’s radical ideas were not meant to make a more progressive society for all. She fails to address or even help with the racial problems of society at this time as well. Gilman may be progress towards a more feminist future, but she does not wish to make change for the problems of race in society.** **These two sentences are a bit repetitive.** For example, \_\_\_ explains how this story “depends on a race- and class-specific account of patriarchal oppression” instead of a broader point of view and including even more types of women. This story is based upon the experience of an upper class white woman, therefore limiting the struggles of women to only this one type of “ideal” woman. **The fact that the focus is on liberating only one prototype of woman is inherently not the solution to the problem at all but rather further puts women into such a box that she was trying to break out of.** **I love this idea so much.** **The feminism here is defined by the terms of**

the elite, white women of America rather than including the voices of all women (). Therefore this prioritization of white feminist ideals only enhances this problem by silencing the voices of others who do not fit into this box. This seems repetitive of the previous sentence. To act as if there is only a certain type of woman who deserves freedom and rights only insinuates the ideas Gilman claims to be fighting for-- this hierarchy of what a woman *should* look like just creates inequality in a different way. We also see this in the way the story ends. While our protagonist is inherently free from her husband now, she is still literally trapped in this room. I think this is what I'm going to write my essay about -- it's a very good point. While she has the ability to physically leave the room and her source of imprisonment, she herself is still stuck in a state of perplexity and tension How is she perplexed at this point? I think you should expand upon this also. that she is allowing. Throughout the whole story, she worked up to trying to get better and escape the effects of her husband's so-called cure, yet she stays imprisoned even after she finally is able to leave. This just points out how this push to end the patriarchy

I feel like a lot of this last paragraph could fit well into a conclusion. Maybe you could start over on a body paragraph and include more quotes and evidence which eventually lead up to this conclusion.

Overall, great start!!!

---

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

This book would not be possible without the encouragement of my brilliant younger sister, who was adamant that I put together a good essay. It wasn't just that, though -- she sat and talked with me as I tried to sort things out. A few times, she even said "Do you mean...?" and proceeded to say exactly what I was trying to say. "Yes!!" I would shout as I quickly typed it into my notes. Sometimes I would just be talking and she would interrupt to say "That's great; write that down." She made me feel like I was capable of coming up with good ideas and was not doomed to feel confused and overwhelmed every time I tried to approach a piece of literature.

I would also like to thank my English 1102 professor, Dr.

Cohen, for choosing pieces with various mediums, genres, and topics, and for encouraging the class to discuss different ideas. He never took over the discussion, and he waited very patiently for anyone to speak up. This was the first time I have enjoyed a literature class. Thank you.

