“The Yellow Wallpaper” Close-Reading Worksheet

This worksheet will guide you in developing a close-reading of “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (pg. 189-203, *The Carolina Reader*). **NOTE**: This short story is older, English, and stylistically vague, so it is recommended that you read slowly, read out loud, or listen along with a recording, such as <https://youtu.be/p5fJywoGM1g>.

1. Read the short story once for general understanding and enjoyment. Circle any words you don’t understand and make annotations in your text of anything you deem important or surprising.

* Define any words you don’t understand here:
  + [word: definition]

1. Once you have an idea of the text, read the text a second time in order to answer the following close-reading prompts.
2. Based on the set-up on the first page (pg. 190, “It is very seldom” … “they are broken now”), how would you describe the tone of the text? What specifically on the first page makes you think that? Include 2 quotes with page numbers.

* [tone of first page, quotes]

1. How does this short story follow conventions of the Gothic genre? (Google it if you don’t know what it is.) Include 4 examples from the text with page numbers.

* [Gothic examples, quotes]

1. How does the narrator describe John’s treatment of her? Include 2 quotes with page numbers to back up your answer. How would you describe John’s treatment of her? What specifically in the text makes you think that? Include 2 quotes with page numbers.

* [John’s treatment, quotes]
* [interpretation of John’s treatment, quotes]

1. What do you think is causing the narrator’s poor health? What specifically in the text makes you believe that? Include 3 quotes with page numbers to back up your answer.

* [cause, quotes]

1. Some people interpret the woman behind bars in the wallpaper as the literal shadow of the narrator behind the nursery’s barred windows, meaning that the damage in the room is caused by her. What specifically from the text could back up this interpretation? Include 5 quotes and page numbers.

* [literal interpretation, quotes]

Extra Credit 1: How is the narrator delivering the story we’re reading? In your opinion, how does that method of delivery contribute to the story? In other words, what effect does it have on the story? What if it were done a different way (for example, if it were written by John or an impersonal, omniscient narrator)?

* [extra credit 1 answer]

Extra Credit 2: Who is “Jane”?

* [extra credit 2 answer]