

A Hole in a Wall: A Creative Piece and Critical Analysis

Creative Piece- Story I:

Hello. I am writing to you as a person who has no one else to write to. Or no one else who will listen. Not that I've ever really had a someone, but that's not the reason we are here. Something strange is happening and maybe you can help me. You see, they keep telling me I need help and that it is not normal for someone of my age to always be alone. I do not need help. I have no problem with *being* alone. The concept of *feeling* lonely is one that I am no stranger to, but as I have mentioned earlier something strange is happening. I can feel someone watching me.

I can *feel* someone watching me. I can almost feel their breath on my neck. So I decided to walk around my room, *well I can't really call it to mine if it also belongs to the other girls.*

So I walked around *the* room as the other girls played outside and fondled with each other's hair, braiding, twistings, wrapping in the pinkest of ribbons, and swirling the ends just enough to make a potential adopter want to squeeze their cheeks and say, "well aren't you the sweetest little girl one has ever seen." Well, I am not a "sweet little girl."

I am quite developed for my age. One might describe me as an "old soul trapped in a little girl's body."

They all can wonder and create stories of me as much as they please, I am fine as I am. *I never actually swallow those pills either.* But that's not the reason you are here.

So I walked around my room searching for this *someone* who has been disrupting my aloneness. The aged and deteriorated yellow stained-floral decorated walls and reddish-yellow quilt pattern duvets should be enough to make any of the other girls stay outside for as much time as their rosy cheeks will buy them, yet there is this *someone* here with me now.

I checked behind each of the chipped, rustic dark wooden armoires. I checked behind the, now turned grey, pastel pink curtains that hide only parts of the wall where the wallpaper has peeled and there is nothing but rotted bricks. I checked under the floorboard that has remained broken ever since one of the other girls came up with the *splendid* idea to sneak cheese and biscuits up into the room because “Jaq and Gus were hungry.”

All places that I looked, I couldn't find this *someone*. Do you now see how you can help me? Well, you're always here and I'm sure no one will glance at you. You lay in my space almost hidden in plain sight ! O what a plan so perfect ! Let us say I am present in the washroom or the caff, you play as my eyes and ears.

It is true, I have spoken these words before, but this time shall be the last. Once this *someone* is revealed I will trouble you no further. We shall both return to our lonesome ways.

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Hello again. There's a spot I have neglected you say? *How is that so? No one spends as much time in here as I?* So does this mean you have found this *someone*? Yes, o yes ! You must tell me right this second ! What is this, a clue?

What invention lets you look right through a wall? O how silly of me, I have forgotten all about the window ! I shall return shortly.

* * * * *

Hello once more. While the other girls were out, I grabbed their dressers and stacked them high enough to reach the window. The window had a metal latch which I lifted then I proceeded to push the window open. O how heavy it was !

My pea-sized head only made it necessary to have the window open just a wee bit even despite this monstrosity that is growing from my head.

And right there, on the right of the building, right on the outside, there was some sort of cloth sticking out from the bricks of the building. *Could this someone be living in the walls?*

I hurriedly climbed back down and began to knock along the walls searching for a hollow spot. I pretty easily found this hollow spot and carefully but quickly peeled at the wallpaper to find a hole in the wall.

It looks like this *someone* has been living in the walls. A small light enters the hole from the outside. In this hole, there is a dirty worn-out blue blanket and a dirty white pillow. *Could this blanket be the same piece of cloth I saw sticking out from the bricks?* There are also small faint drawings along the walls of the hole of stick-figure children holding hands. There are other drawings of a child by themselves almost with no expression staring right at me. There is also a pencil and paper.

I could leave a note or I could wait in the hole until this *someone* returns. The other girls will be returning shortly. I shall leave a note and return the wallpaper. The other girls or anyone else must not know about this.

But you have played your part. So I shall leave you to rest in your lonesome.

Creative Piece- Story II:

I write to you from the grave, not a literal grave, but a hole in a wall, a hole that is as bleak and as cold and as lonely as a grave. I am rather a young boy, but with a long life of stories to tell. I have known nothing outside of this hole in a wall and the space that occupies under the squeaky floorboards where I am occasionally fed fresh and perfect square sliced cheddar and salty biscuits. I relieve myself through another hole, that is in a hole in a wall, that hath formed over time due to the deteriorating nature of the bricks that shape this building. I am quite petite so space has never presented an issue, for this hole in a wall is pretty spacious for a boy of my

size. I have a comfortable pillow that carries spots that almost resemble a checkerboard, and I have a comfortable cover that resembles swiss cheese but covers enough of my petite body to keep me warm, as there is a breeze that enters through another hole, that is in a hole in a wall. During the day, if I get hot enough, and I am resting, I will stick the end of my cover to the other hole, that is in a hole in a wall, to let a breeze wash over my petite body.

This hole in a wall may be the only hole in a wall in this building, there also may be another hole in a wall much like this one. I have not traveled beyond the hole in a wall nor have I traveled beyond the space that occupies under the squeaky floorboards where I am occasionally fed cheddar and biscuits; this lack of exploration makes it quite difficult to acquire knowledge on the possibility of the existence of any other hole in a wall. What I do know about this building is its purpose; it is an orphanage for young little girls. Judging from the small view I have obtained from the other hole from where a breeze enters, I can tell you that I am on the third floor of the building. Based on the slightly bigger view from the hole in a wall from where I hear the orphan girls rest, there are twelve beds lined up in two rows, perfectly perpendicular to one another.

Over time, I have learned their names and have written a synopsis of my own for the girls: there's Meave; she likes to read a lot, so much so that the rest of the girls call her "Headmaster Meave" and believe she will be the first to finally leave; there's Ruby; she is older than the other girls, and because of this they all think of her as the older sister who will never get an out; there's Ola who bickers the most with the other girls for she is greedy and doesn't like to share, but she possesses the most elegant penmanship, so the girls are nice to her so she could write their letters to their future adopters for them; Aimee is not the youngest of the girls, but also not the oldest. She has the organizational skills of a law firm and hates to upset anyone; she goes out of her way to please the other girls even if it is to her own dismay. Lily has an odd

obsession with outer-worldly fascinations. She keeps the rest of the girls entertained, however, and she appropriately scares off the ministry and director running the orphanage when the time calls. Cal and Vivienne are the youngest and are twin sisters; left at the front doors as infants, this place is all they have ever known and have never stepped foot out of this area; locked away from the rest of civilization, having only made contact with the girls, the ministry, and the director, they fear of being taken away and finding what may lay beyond; they hideaway to this place I am even unsure of, away from any potential adopters. Olivia, Erin, and Emily might as well be the same person. They have a peculiar daily routine that mirrors one another that they *must* follow to a tee. They wake at the same time; they brush and wash at the same time; they relieve themselves at the same time; they laugh at the same time; they walk at the same pace; they even swallow at the same time. Their behavior is interestingly odd, that is if you choose not to account for Olivia's murderous birth parents, Erin's compulsive hoarder family background, and Emily's cannibalism, cult-driven family; thus explaining the bond they created amongst one another, but not excusing their odd behavior and attachment issues sprouting from the age of an infant, continuing on from when they were brought to the orphanage at the age of eight, and showing no signs anywhere near to an end, five years later. Jean, I would say is the simplest of them all; she wants to leave and finally have a real family, with a mom and a dad, perhaps siblings and a pet dog or fish. Jean would make the perfect candidate but she wishes for so much she eats more than she can chew and finds herself back in one of the twelve beds lined up in two rows, perfectly perpendicular to one another, each night.

Lastly, there is one girl whose name remains a mystery, synopsis still being written, as she is the most complex of them all. While the other girls go out for playtime, she stays inside. I do not recall ever hearing her utter a word, she walks around carefully and with purpose, her

movements are subtle, yet meticulously planned, as if she has a set counter of the number of steps to walk from one place to another. If she is not in the washroom or caff, she sits on her bed with perfect posture writing; she seldom looks up from the words on her page and she seldom shifts to adjust her posture. I wonder what it is she writes.

A couple of days ago she walked more than usual and her pace seemed out of place, unplanned. She seemed to be searching for *something*. She stalked the girls' dressers and peeked her tiny head and all of her big fro out the window searching for *something*; almost immediately she jumped down and she started to get closer to the hole in a wall. Tearing at the wallpaper, she revealed herself to me.

“Hello there,” I calmly presented myself afraid to startle her, but she did not reply. It was as if she was looking through me; looking through my petite body and analyzing the drawing I have drawn in my free time to hang along the hole in a wall. She and I resembled one another, our hair texture, our skin, our features; we are the only ones in, if not the whole building, the room, who look like one another. But she can not see me; *she can't be ignoring me*.

“I am here!” I tried to yell but I failed to capture her attention. Some noise causing her to lose her focus on the hole in a wall shifted her whole demeanor and she quickly covered back the hole in a wall with the wallpaper swallowing the view of the room that I had for a few short minutes; a room so big but so dull, full of death and sadness, that extracts the life out of the happiest and innocent of children. *But why couldn't she see me?*

Critical Piece:

The two novelists whose writing styles I have chosen to emulate are Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Herman Melville. In the creative stories that I have written, I attempted to imitate the narrative method, imagery, and diction used by Gilman and Melville. Both presented a challenge,

Melville's style being more difficult to imitate than Gilman's. I believe this is partly because of the language that was used during each novelist's time. Melville, born in 1819, has a more complex vocabulary compared to Gilman, born in 1860. Nonetheless, both writers use a variation of the English language that is intricate and most would have difficulty comprehending today.

In the first creative piece that I wrote, I mimic Charlotte Perkins Gilman's writing style. One literary device that she uses throughout *The Wall-Paper* is a stream of conscious narration. Much like Gilman's *The Wall-Paper*, there is a protagonist whose name is unknown and they are often alone with their thoughts. In *The Wall-Paper*, the narrator has depression, and her husband, who is a physician, does not seem to listen to her feelings and degrades his wife's character by referring to her as a "little girl" (Gilman 652). The more alone that the narrator is, the more the narrator begins to lose touch with reality, as her journal entries also become increasingly vivid. In my story, the protagonist is narrating everything through her journal and she explains how she is often alone. She also alludes that she may have some mental illness but either choose to ignore it, or she is actually oblivious and truly does not believe that she has an issue. Similar to Gilman's use of descriptive imagery to give the wall-paper human-like characteristics, "...the smell is here. It creeps all over the house. I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs," (Gilman 654) I chose to give my narrator's journal human-like characteristics, "Do you now see how you can help me? Well, you're always here and I'm sure no one will glance at you. You lay in my space almost hidden in plain sight... you play as my eyes and ears" (Foster 2). She even goes as far to act as if the journal has revealed this "someone" who the narrator is searching for. With each entry, the narrators in each story slowly begin to lose their sanity and it becomes harder to differentiate what is real and what is imaginative.

Gilman's use of diction and architecture is another element that I have included in the first creative piece. Gilman uses asterisks to represent the passing of time or to change events. I used the asterisks to illustrate that it was a new journal entry and some time had passed between entries. Moreover, I copied her use of the word "o" to express excitement and her use of spacing a word and an exclamation point. These small details add significance to the story.

Finally, Gilman is known for incorporating feminist points of view in her work. In the *Yellow Wall-Paper*, the narrator ultimately wants to be free of her husband and wants to establish her independence. In my creative piece, it is hinted that the narrator is a young girl, but she does not see herself as one, seeing how she gets annoyed when referred to as a "little girl." We can see that even at a young age she is establishing some form of independence or at least yearns for that independence. She believes she is fine on her own and doesn't like being told what she needs.

In the second creative piece, I mimic the writing style of Herman Melville. Melville is commonly known for using very descriptive and lengthy paragraphs that pack a lot of details that introduce surprising factors and paint a confusing yet vivid scene. In *Benito Cereno*, his usage of wordy sentences and repetition reveals unsuspecting elements of the story, "To Captain Delano's imagination, now again not wholly at rest, there was something so hollow in the Spaniard's manner, with apparently some reciprocal hollowness in the servant's hollow duskiness of silence, that the idea flashed across him that possibly master and man, for some unknown purpose, were acting out, both in word and deed [...] some juggling play before him" (Melville 44). Melville often repeats the word "hollow" to compare the master and servant. In my creative piece, I often choose to repeat the phrase "hole in a wall." I do this to connect both narrators in my creative pieces to show how neither one feel they have a space that they can truly call their own.

Melville uses satire to poke fun at his characters. In *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, the narrator introduces the other characters while also making fun of them, “First, Turkey; second, Nippers; third, Ginger Nut. . . . In truth, they were nicknames, mutually conferred upon each other by my three clerks, and were deemed expressive of their respective persons or characters” (Melville 2). The narrator continues to describe each character and how their nicknames are a representation of their personality. In the second creative piece, I chose to dedicate a lengthy paragraph introducing and giving small details about each character who resides with the narrator from the first creative piece. The narrator in the first creative piece does not give a name to the girls other than the “other girls.” This is all intentional.

Melville and Gilman have opposing styles of writing that also complement each other. In my creative pieces, they work well because it leaves room for much interpretation. Despite being the author of both pieces, I found myself creating theories on these characters. For example: Is the narrator in the second story a ghost or is he a real boy? His belongings are in the hole, and he mentioned eating the cheese and biscuits that were for the “mice.” However, the girl can not see him. Or could it be that maybe the girl isn’t real? Not once in either story do we see her interact with anyone else and she is always in the room, or at least in the building, never once stepping outdoors based on what the text presents. Another theory could be that the boy in the second story is really an extension of the girl in the first story. She could be beyond insanity that she has been also acting as this boy in the hole, but since she does not have a grip on reality she is unaware of her actions. Nonetheless, Melville and Gilman writing styles provide enough detail without spoiling too much with the expectation that readers have an understanding of the story but are confused, pondering theories and questions about the main protagonist of their stories.

Works Cited

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