

Gilman's 'Yellow Wallpaper'

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YELLOW WALLPAPER

The yellow wallpaper is a short story that rotates around postpartum depression. Postpartum depression is depression occurs after childbirth and may be accompanied by anger, guilt, hopelessness, mood swings, and panic attacks. The story 'Yellow Wallpaper' uses symbolism such that the wallpaper represents family structures and the traditions where the narrator lives in. It symbolizes how women are trapped in families and cultures they are not comfortable in. The narrator talks about the deterioration of women's mental health and that the effects of not taking care of this may cause a person to fall into psychosis, depression, and nervousness. The narrator struggles to do routine activities since she stays up most nights and sleeps during the day. Her husband, who is also her doctor, encourages her to take more rest. Therefore, it is essential to be aware, and alert of one's mental activities. This is referred to as consciousness. Freud and Jung effectively describe the concept of consciousness and unconsciousness. Based on the Freudian perspective, hidden thoughts, traumatic memories, hidden desires, and raw drives such as anger, aggression, and fear form the center of unconscious minds. Nevertheless, the Jungian perspective argues that unconsciousness is a combination of the collective unconscious, personal unconscious, and ego (Falzeder, 2013). This essay analyzes how unconscious thoughts may lead to psychological traumas based on Freudian and Jungian perspectives.

When the narrator and her husband move into the vast, ugly room with the yellow wallpaper, she immediately develops disapproval against the room. Based on the Jungian perspective, she becomes defensive about switching rooms even though her husband refuses her. Moreover, her husband discourages her from wandering around the house or exploring her interests. This causes nervousness for the narrator, and she becomes insanely driven by the hideous wallpaper. The story concentrates on the narrator's nervous condition as she loses the real sense at the same time facing misunderstanding and misdiagnosis from her physician and husband, who believes that the most effective medication is for her to restrain herself in a room and rest. At some point, she argues that if she stares at the wallpaper for a long, she can see the patterns of the wallpaper

change and a woman in it moving and watching her. When she tells her husband that the woman that was in the wallpaper has exited the wallpaper, he faints, leaving the narrator surprised. Moreover, the reader can see how the narrator falls into madness due to her obsession with the shadowy image behind the wallpaper pattern. According to (Gilman 1892), insanity was the definition of feminine. Though Gilman does not represent madness directly due to oppression, she uses the wallpapered nursery where the female narrator is kept. The unconscious self is trapped behind the rules and gender roles placed on women. The article argues that the system pushed women to the edge of madness through their blind imagination that they are putting women in the right place.

Moreover, the narrator shows that they lack self-identity, according to the Freudian perspective. Self-identity refers to the perceptions of a person's particular traits, abilities, qualities, values, and the features that represent a person. Women are viewed as weak and childish that was not meant to be heard, and were not allowed to control their lives. For instance, the narrator was encouraged or compelled to follow her husband's opinions in every activity and aspect of life. That is, they were to abide by their spouse's views, whether socially, economically, financially, and mentally.

Moreover, women's mental and psychological health was highly misunderstood because women were seen as nervous and hysterical beings since most medical facilities did not comprehend how to deal with mental illnesses. As the representation of a woman's mental collapse, the 'Yellow wallpaper' gives a chance for women in the nineteenth century to deal with mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and postpartum depression. The nature of the story illustrates the oppressive nature brought by gender roles and the need for self-expression. This led to women's inner thoughts understanding that they were stuck in the massive room with the yellow wallpaper. Based on an article by (Carey 2011), Gilman is trying to warn society about the consequences of gender roles and in male-dominated societies. Men were considered rational thinkers, while women's role as a dutiful wife who did not question the authority to question every decision of their husbands. She tries to raise awareness about how women are misdiagnosed from her experience with a nervous condition.

In conclusion, Gilman is fighting against gender roles and illustrating how this has affected both men and women. For instance, the Jungian perspective shows that the narrator's husband believes that he is supposed to be a thoughtful partner; he does not allow his wife to think for

herself. He assumes that he knows about the condition of the narrator more than she does. Therefore, after seeing the woman exit the wallpaper, the narrator realizes that she could not remain locked up for the rest of her life. She rises over her husband's unconscious body from the room where she was confined. The narrator grows against the fear, anger, and negative emotions increased due to the postpartum depression.

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