

**THE MENTAL STATE OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER IN THE YELLOW
WALLPAPER SHORT STORY BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN: A
PSYCHOANALYSIS STUDY**

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the conditions experienced by the female characters in the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach. This research method uses a qualitative descriptive method, which is done by collecting data, describing the data, and then analyzing data from qualitative data types to obtain data. The data analysis technique used is summarizing, presenting data and conclusions. The results of this research are able to answer the research statement, namely to explain the circumstances and changes in character in the female character of the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. This research uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory approach to analyze the Id, Ego and Super-ego of the characters in the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*. This theory is used to understand the psychological problems experienced by characters, such as depression. The id shows the true purpose of an individual's life to satisfy himself. The ego decides to consider the fulfillment of every desire. Super-ego refers to one of the personalities of the human soul as desire or self-gratification. This approach helps researchers analyze a woman who experiences mental disorders due to her husband's treatment. In addition, this approach shows that mental health is very important because it can influence a person's ability to function optimally in everyday life, such as in interpersonal relationships and social activities.

Kata Kunci: mental state, psychoanalysis sigmund freud, psychological.

PENDAHULUAN

This chapter reviews explanations of short stories related to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, research questions, object studies, scope studies, significant studies, approach studies, and organization studies. Literature is deeply intertwined with human life, offering insights into thoughts, emotions, and struggles, thus fostering empathy and emotional connection. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which includes the concepts of id, ego, and superego, provides a framework for understanding the psychological dimensions of literary characters. This study focuses on the mental state of the unnamed female character in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," exploring how her oppressive environment and the treatment by her husband contribute to her mental deterioration.

The research aims to analyze how the environment affects the female character's mental health, how she copes with her mental state, and how the phenomena in "The Yellow Wallpaper" can be regarded as a work of psychoanalysis. Using Sigmund Freud's theory, the study investigates the character's depression, emphasizing the importance of mental health and the influence of external factors on psychological well-being. This study also highlights the broader implications for understanding women's struggles with psychological stress and advocating for gender equality.

The study employs a descriptive qualitative research approach to examine the events, phenomena, and social behaviors depicted in "The Yellow Wallpaper." The analysis is structured into five chapters: introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, analysis and discussion, and conclusion and suggestions. The research not only contributes to the field of literary analysis through the lens of psychoanalytic theory but also underscores the significance of mental health and the necessity of addressing psychological stress, particularly in women subjected to oppressive conditions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Yellow Wallpaper: A Psychoanalytic Review

In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper," the protagonist's mental state is profoundly affected by her environment. The small, confined space she occupies, referred to as "a room with hideous yellow wallpaper, the size of the space under the stairs," reflects feelings of entrapment and loss of freedom, aligning with Freud's theory of space neurosis. This physical confinement exacerbates her sense of isolation and contributes to her deteriorating mental health. The locked atmosphere of the room further intensifies her feelings of imprisonment, creating a physical and psychological prison that limits her freedom and exacerbates her mental distress.

The protagonist copes with her mental state through various strategies, including writing, which serves as a form of resistance and self-expression. Despite her husband's disapproval, she maintains a private journal, using it to exercise her thoughts and gain some control over her situation. This act of writing reflects Freud's concept of the subconscious, where unexpressed thoughts and impulses influence behavior. The wallpaper itself becomes a significant symbol in the story, representing the protagonist's mental state and serving as a battleground for her inner conflicts.

As the protagonist becomes more obsessed with the wallpaper, she projects her imagination onto it, seeing a woman trapped behind its patterns. This hallucination represents her subconscious desire to escape her confinement and regain her freedom. Freud's theory of projection explains how the protagonist attributes her internal conflicts and desires onto the wallpaper, creating a complex interplay between her mental state and the physical environment. Her fixation on the wallpaper ultimately leads her to believe that

she has freed the woman within it, symbolizing a temporary escape from her psychological imprisonment.

The climax of the story, where the protagonist believes she has escaped from the wallpaper, can be seen as both a symbolic victory and a tragic descent into madness. Her identification with the woman in the wallpaper represents a coping mechanism, allowing her to mentally escape her oppressive reality. This identification aligns with Freud's concept of defense mechanisms, where individuals adopt traits from others to manage internal conflicts and insecurities. The protagonist's final act of rebellion against her husband's control signifies a desperate attempt to reclaim her autonomy and resist societal constraints.

The phenomena in "The Yellow Wallpaper" can be regarded as a work of psychoanalysis due to its detailed depiction of the protagonist's psychological struggles. The story explores unconscious conflicts, such as the protagonist's urge to express herself versus societal norms, and employs symbolism to reveal deeper psychological dynamics. The yellow wallpaper serves as a powerful symbol of the protagonist's mental state, illustrating the impact of environmental and social factors on her psychological well-being.

The protagonist's identification with the woman in the wallpaper highlights Freud's theory of identification, where individuals integrate characteristics of others into themselves. This process allows the protagonist to project her feelings of entrapment and desire for freedom onto the imagined figure, providing a temporary sense of liberation. The story's use of symbolism and psychoanalytic concepts underscores the intricate relationship between the protagonist's environment and her mental health.

In conclusion, "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a profound exploration of the protagonist's psychological conflict and struggle against oppression and madness. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, the story reveals the impact of environmental constraints, subconscious desires, and defense mechanisms on mental health. The yellow wallpaper itself becomes a central symbol of the protagonist's inner turmoil, reflecting her subconscious conflicts and serving as a medium for her psychological projection. Overall, Gilman's story offers a compelling psychoanalytic perspective on the complex interplay between mental health and societal constraints.

CONCLUSION

This research discusses the mental state of the female character in the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Freud's psychoanalytic approach is used to understand character, motives, and psychological conflicts by analyzing the characters' actions, dialogue, and thoughts.

This short story, can be considered a work of psychoanalysis because it investigates the protagonist's psychological conflict and struggle in overcoming emotional stress, oppression, and madness. The story explores subconscious conflict, symbolism, and identification as key elements in understanding the protagonist's mental state. The subconscious conflict between social norms and personal desires, the use of writing as a defense mechanism, the symbolism of the yellow wallpaper, and the protagonist's identification with the female figure behind the wallpaper all contribute to the psychoanalytic perspective.

In the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper", the surrounding environment which influences the mental condition of the main female character plays an important role in worsening her condition. There are several main factors in the environment that have a negative impact. First, there is limited space felt by the female character, where she feels trapped and loses freedom in a narrow and locked space, in accordance with Freud's concept of "space neurosis". Second, the locked atmosphere creates two dimensions that affect the

female character, physically she is confined in a locked room, while the need for freedom and space for expression is an important aspect for her mental and emotional well-being. Third, the feeling of torture experienced by the female character due to the strange yellow wallpaper, which illustrates the influence of an unhealthy environment on her mental condition. Overall, the limited, locked environment that makes the female character feel tormented contributes greatly to the worsening mental condition of the character in the short story.

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