

A Psychoanalytic Study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper

Myette L. Tabla^{1*}, Pauline Mae M. Menchavez², Angel Carin Mangubat³, Lito L. Diones⁴

^{1,2,3}Student, Department of Languages and Literature, Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines

⁴Associate Professor III, Department of Languages and Literature, Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines

Abstract: This study investigates the psychoanalytic effect of the main character in the short story of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* which specifically delves into the plot, symbols, and conflicts. The study's data is obtained based on two theories: Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality and Carl Jung's Archetypal Theory, both of which are concerned with the narrator's psychoanalytic behavior and the circumstances that influence her mental activity. Moreover, this research is qualitative in nature, employing discourse analysis to thoroughly examine the literary work. The study's findings suggest that the plot clearly demonstrates the psychoanalytic effect of the main character, which includes postpartum depression, unfree, mental health and life, dangerous hallucination, and recovery. Symbolism shows that postpartum depression, courageous, uncomfortable and oppressed, relieves the main character's mind, and guilt. The conflict depicts the narrator's psychoanalytic effect, which includes insanity, depression, stress, suppression, and dejection. In a conclusive thought, *The Yellow Wallpaper* reveals the main character's psychoanalytic effect.

Keywords: behavior, psychoanalytic, oppressed, wallpaper.

1. Introduction

Literature as a form of art plays a special significance to shape the perception of reality, creates possibilities, and preconceptions are challenged. It allows each person to encounter the experiences of others as well as literature brings together moral, emotive, intellectual, historical, artistic, and even humorous parts of people's daily lives, allowing to gaze out of own brains and emotions. Literature focuses on a variety of issues from human tragedies to fables and is written in words. In the ability of the mind's creativity to comprehend the text's complexity or purity, these words come to life. Additionally, it allows humans to perceive the world through the eyes of other people, including non-animated objects, and serves as a doorway into the viewpoints of others (Anderson).

As everybody understands the value of analyzing literature, a short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is selected for this study titled, *The Yellow Wallpaper* that such plot centers around an individual who is struggling from per partum insanity, a serious form of the mental disease initially diagnosed and considered by physicians to be caused by the cognitive and emotional stress of childbirth during pregnancy (Qibtiyah).

This study allows the reader to envision the psychological aspect of the character and examines the meaning of psychological symptoms from which it emerges. Mental Illness is depicted as an increasing rate today. According to the Department of Health, roughly 10% of women who are pregnant and 13% of new mother's experience depression. During pregnancy, 15.6 percent of women are overweight and after childbirth 19.8 percent are overweight. In severe cases, mothers suffering may become unbearable and unable to function normally (World Health Organization).

This study aims to help the reader comprehend the character's behavior in greater detail rather than just understanding the plot of the story. Additionally, this study intends to make clear to the reader the conflicts that arise in the story and the significance of the yellow wallpaper's symbolism, as a great factor of the character's mental decline throughout the narrative.

This study investigates the psychoanalytic effect of the main character in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Specifically, it looks into plot, symbols, and conflict.

This study is supported by the Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality and Carl Jung's Archetypal Theory.

The first theory is the Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality. According to Freudian psychoanalytic theory, personality evolves throughout a series of stages, each characterized by inner mental conflicts. In Freud's structured theories of personality, the importance of unconscious mental conflicts in developing thoughts and behaviors is highlighted. The human psyche is divided into three parts: Ego, Superego, and Id. (McLeod). The id is the earliest component, focused providing the essential physical cravings and urges right away. It operates on a very subconscious level. The ego, in contrast to the instinctive id and the ethical superego is the cognitive rational self. Differs from the id in that it is separated into verbal and nonverbal phases. It's the ego as Sigmund Freud put it, as well as its purpose is to keep the id and super - ego in line inside the physical world. The superego is preoccupied with values, ideals, and norms, much like the "conscience" or "moral compass" that many people refer to.

*Corresponding author: main.19001062@cnu.edu.ph

The second theory is the Archetypal Theory of Carl Jung that is also present in this short story. Archetypal examples based on Jung's ideas may aid our understanding. These archetypes, according to Carl Jung, are images and concepts derived from the collective unconscious. As per Jung's primary archetypes, every human possesses four archetypes. The Animus or Anima, The Persona, The Self, The Shadow (McLeod). There is self, which provides a sense of completeness to the experience. Jung states that every person's objective is to attain a state of selfhood (similar to self-actualization), and Jung is moving in this aspect towards a more humanist perspective. This is personality's anima aspect (like the id in Freud). It's likely that Jung's archetypes represent predispositions that originally served a purpose in existence, that would agree with the theory of evolution. The "anima/animus" is the complete opposite of the sexual identity, i.e. the hidden feminine aspect of men and the masculine tendencies of females. A woman's psyche has male aspects (the animus archetype), whereas a man's consciousness contains female characteristics (the anima archetype). The persona (or mask) is the public face that people present to others. It hides the true self of a person, and Jung refers to it as the "conformity" archetype. This is the face or role a person presents to the world as an individual other than who they genuinely are (like an actor). Exploration of various Jung's Archetypal patterns is also required to delve further in both the author, and this persona in such a way that the reader is drawn to individuals learn new things.

students and instructors who are learning about the mind and behavior, personality, and the elements that influence how individuals think, act, and feel.

2. Literature Review

According to an article by Study Board titled, The Necklace Plot Analysis by Guy De Maupassant states that the plot has 4 structures which are the Exposition, Climax, Rising Action, and Resolution. When it comes to plot analysis, the story usually starts with the exposition, in which a young middle-class woman dreams of a lifestyle that is beyond her means. Monsieur Loisel returns home one day with tickets to a very well-off party, which Madam Loisel is eager to attend but is concerned that Madam appears cheap and tacky. Following that, the rising action hits the plot diagram, where Madame Loisel isn't wealthy but wishes to be. Monsieur Loisel pays for a dress, but Madam is not satisfied and borrows jewelry from a wealthy acquaintance. As Madam Loisel walks away from the ball, Madame Forestier reaches for the necklace and discovers it is missing, followed by the climax that after days of searching, they replace it with one that bears a striking resemblance. When the couple is able to pay their debts and Madame Forestier informs them that the necklace is "false," or a forgery, the resolution takes its place. The reader is left to ponder the irony of the situation.

In an article by Study Boss, Symbolism in Edgar Allan Poe's The Black Cat discusses certain parts of the story to show the relevance of the symbols that is used to expose the capability of narrator for guilt, violence, and madness. In this story, the narrator is an animal lover with a kind heart who is happily married. Because of alcohol, he becomes moodier, and unconcerned about the emotions of others. The story's central symbol is the very first black cat, which reflects the narrator's violent heart and evil. The next black cat reflects the character's guilt. The narrator discovered a white spot on the black cat, two's breast, which represents purity and light. The first black cat, the white spot, and the next black cat which is the second are the story's three major symbols.

As per the Spark notes article titled, Conflict in the Yellow Paper, conflict is defined as a clash of two different forces, and it is frequently utilized to convey a profound meaning while highlighting characters' motives, ideals, and vulnerabilities. Man vs. himself is a conflict that has been going on for quite some time and man vs. man are the story's fundamental conflicts, with the narrator and her husband disputing about the nature and remedies of her ailment. As a result, the narrator is divided between her wish to hide her own vulnerability and her growing knowledge of it. This leads the narrator to have a mental conflict between her growing knowledge of her own vulnerability and her desire to suppress it.

This study mainly focuses on plot, symbols, and conflict that allows readers to decipher the factors of mental problems that are present in every part of the story. Additionally, this discusses psychological symptoms which are highly pertinent to the subject matter and aid readers in understanding the psychoanalytic effect of the main character in the story titled,

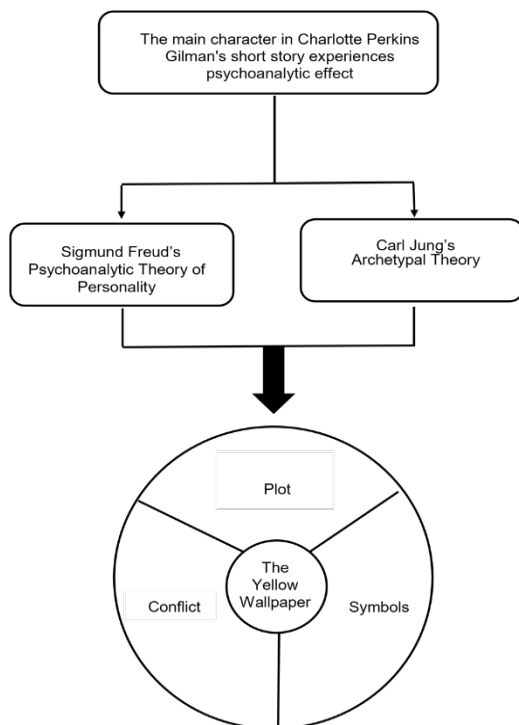


Fig. 1. Schematic presentation of the theoretical background of the study

This study is beneficial to those who are inclined to literature and psychology. Additionally, this study could benefit literature students and instructors since it allows them to broaden their perspectives, especially because they are more focused on studying literary works. This could also benefit psychology

The Yellow Wallpaper.

3. Methodology

This study is a qualitative research that uses discourse analysis. Qualitative is a descriptive manner and has non-numerical methods to examine hidden meaning and contextual meaning of a literary work. Discourse analysis is applied to examine the contextual meaning of the language use in literary work. Moreover, this study focuses on detailed analysis of the literary piece to effectively address the main problem and sub-problems of the study.

The primary source of data is taken from The New England Magazine in May 1892 with 38 pages and in book form from Dover Publications in 1899 and the copyright of the book belongs to the author.

The secondary source of data are from electronic sources, including online journals, dissertations, theses, and articles.

In gathering the data, the procedure of the study undertakes the following three phases: Phase 1. Plot, Phase 2. Symbols, Phase 3. Conflict.

A. Phase 1. Plot

Phase 1 focuses on examining the plot of the short story. The plot is thoroughly analyzed by using Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality. Also, this phase uses scenes from the short story being studied to get the main character's psychoanalytic effect.

B. Phase 2. Symbols

Phase 2 anchors on the analysis of the symbols that are present in the short story. The symbols are examined through Carl Jung's Archetypal Theory and Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality. This phase also employs the meaning of the symbols from the short story to achieve the psychoanalytic effect of the main character.

C. Phase 3. Conflict

Phase 3 centers on the analysis of the conflict in the short story. Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality, states that the conflict can be thoroughly examined to understand the problems that the main character endures throughout the story. This phase also employs scenes to achieve the main character's psychoanalytic effect.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the data in order to answer the sub-problems raised in the study generated through the literary method used.

A. Plot

Table 1 presents the elements of the plot and how it affects

the main character.

As shows in table 1, these are the significant events related to the psychoanalytic effect of the main character's life in the story. In the exposition, John rented a house after the birth of their child while Jane recovers from a temporary nervous depression. Both the husband and brother of the main character are doctors. The main character claims to be unable to participate in most activities until the recovery. However, on the other hand, the main character believes that the variety and excitement can benefit as clearly narrated in the story:

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad. So, I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The main character remarks on how lovely the location is and starts to picture how lovely and wonderful the garden is. All of the fantasies have ruined the ghostliness, and Jane is terrified because of it. The main character had the impression that the house is weird. Told John about it but the main character's husband didn't seem to mind. This particular scenario is clearly narrated in the short story:

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a draught, and shut the window.

The main character begins to dislike the room as time passes. Jane claims that the wall's hue is repulsive, a blazing, dirty yellow that is curiously diluted by the slow-turning sunshine, that makes the main character to dislike it.

As presented in the table above, in the rising action narrative. It's been two weeks since the main character moved into a room. The main character becomes increasingly isolated as John underlines that Jane must utilize the own self to flourish. As a result, John selects a room with obnoxious yellow wallpaper in an odd style, and the main character has been unable to sleep. The main character believes the wallpaper design is changing. This particular event is explained in the story:

I am glad my case is not serious! But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing. John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him.

With all of the sleepless nights caused by anxiety over the yellow wallpaper, the main character hides it because Jane believes that it is such a big burden to John. The main character also insisted on changing rooms, but John seems unconcerned.

Table 1
Plot analysis

Elements of the Plot	Scenes	Psychoanalytic effect of the Main Character
Exposition	John rented a house	Post- partum depression
Rising action	John restrains jane to write	Unfree
Climax	The yellow wallpaper irritates and creeps Jane	Affects mental health and life
Falling action	Notices the creepy woman	Dangerous hallucinations
Denouement	Successfully removes the yellow wallpaper	Finds recovery

In addition, the main character occasionally believes that if one is only well enough to write a little, the thoughts about the wallpaper would be relieved. However, as Jane tries to write, Jane becomes exhausted. John always pledges to request a long visit from the cousin, but nothing ever happens. The main character wants to get better faster, but the wallpaper becomes a distraction. The main character is enraged of the wallpaper’s indecent image and its indestructibility. Jane notices that the creature travels vertically, horizontally, and laterally, and that its weird, unflinching eyes are always there.

In the climax, the main character examines the wallpaper daily and observes how the pattern shifts when the room’s lighting changes. Even when Jane is not around, Jane notices a lady lurking behind the wallpaper, and the wallpaper begins to bother its senses. This scenario is immensely narrated in the story:

I really have discovered something at last. Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out. The front pattern does move – and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it! Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

As the day progresses, Jane is convinced that there are things in the yellow wallpaper that only Jane is aware of. Every day, the shapes behind the wallpaper become more visible, and Jane describes it as if a lady is crouching down and moving around behind the pattern. Jane tries to be courageous at night because the moonlight, like the sun, beams in all directions.

In the falling action narrative, the frightening woman strolling around the arbors and garden becomes apparent to the main character. The main character begins to believe that John and Jennie are becoming increasingly suspicious of Jane’s actions. The exact day before they are required to go back home, the main character starts stripping in every part of the wall in order to free the frightening woman. Jane locks herself in and throws the key down the alley, as accurately explained in the story:

I must get to work. I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path. I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John Comes.

Moreover, Jane also grabs a rope after locking in the room and removes the wallpaper, which Jennie did not notice. Jane grows enraged to the point of doing something desperate.

In addition, the denouement of the story is when John gets home, the main character’s husband starts hammering on the

bedroom door, pleading for an ax to smash it down. When John finally opens the door, he sees Jane creeping on the floor, and John starts crying. Jane creeps around the room and over John's body. As evidently elucidated in the story:

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! Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall so that I had to creep over him every time!

The Yellow Wallpaper closes unclear note for Gilman. The reader may only speculate on what happens to John and Jane. If the story continues, literary experts agree that the main character would be committed to a mental institution. Jane would most certainly continue to live in captivity and isolation rather than obtaining effective treatment, causing the sickness to worsen.

The plot shows the main character’s psychoanalytic effects, including postpartum depression, unfree, affects mental health and life, dangerous hallucination, and lastly it finds recovery in which it conveys the main character’s battle to mental health.

B. Symbols

Table 2 represents the symbols in the story and how these affect the main character using Carl Jung’s Archetypal Theory and Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality.

As shows in table 2, these are the symbols that are found in the story which are used to produce an impact by attaching imagery and thematic elements to the objects given to give a more significant meaning in the story.

The first symbolism mentioned in the story is the Yellow Wallpaper which represents the woman in the story being trapped within the constraints of John.

The yellow wallpaper infuriates the main character. Jane describes it as:

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate, and provoke study, and when you follow the lame, uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard-of contradictions.

The yellow wallpaper represents patriarchy and society. The main character enraged the wallpaper. Jane spends many hours attempting to discern a pattern in order to fully understand it. This depicts someone investigating patriarchal society and unable to find a credible explanation for it. The main character

Table 2
Symbols analysis

Symbols	Meaning	Psychoanalytic effect of the main character
Yellow wallpaper	Trapped and constraints	Postpartum depression
Diary	Escape from reality	Relieve the main characters’ mind
Moon	Feminism	Courageous
House	Recuperation	Uncomfortable and oppressed
Baby	Women role	Guilt

notices a lady behind the wallpaper, who she comes to believe is herself. The wallpaper, or patriarchy, holds the woman captive. The protagonist is attempting to escape the wallpaper/sexist society. So, the psychoanalytic effect of the yellow wallpaper that can be seen in the story is depression.

The second symbol presented in the story is the main character's diary which is a written expression of the main character in the story. Jane says that when the lady is left alone for lengthy periods of time in a room with awful yellow wallpaper, she has little to occupy her mind. Jane's "temporary nervous sadness" and "slight hysterical propensity" have been treated with a type of rest treatment. John, who is a physician, gives Jane specific instructions to engage in mental activity. The journal contains more than just the woman's thoughts. Jane disobeys John's order by retaining the item. Therefore, the diary represents the woman's disobedience. It also symbolizes Jane's inner voice and true self as Jane strives to articulate what is occurring. The psychoanalytic effect that can be seen in the story with this diary as a symbol is that it gives the main character a sense of relief which becomes a temporary cure of the mental illness and nervous breakdown.

The third symbol shown in the narrative is the moon, which represents a feminine period. During the day, the protagonist portrays the woman entangled in the wallpaper as inactive and motionless. When the moonlight strikes the wall, though, the woman begins to move or maybe crawl. This pattern parallels the protagonist's everyday actions, as Jane sleeps during the day and is awake, aware, and immersed in the intellectual activity she must suppress at night, while John watches. The psychoanalytic effect that is shown in the story for the moon as a symbol is that it gives Jane a sense of energy and freedom that increases the intellectual activity.

The fourth symbol presented in the story is the house. The main character's husband rented a house for Jane's fast recovery right after giving birth, however, the more they stay the more the that Jane's post-partum depression worsen. The psychoanalytic effect that is found in the story for the estate as a symbol is that Jane feels uneasy and oppressed especially in the room where Jane can see the yellow wallpaper.

The last symbol that is present in the story is the baby which symbolizes how society expected women to be women and mother. The main character's motivation to recover from her post-partum condition is for the sake of the baby. Jane wants to take care of the baby as if the main character is a normal mother. The psychoanalytic effect shown in the story for the baby as a symbol is guilt.

The symbols that are present in the story reveal the main characters' psychoanalytic effects, such as relieves the main

characters' mind, post-partum depression, courageous, uncomfortable and oppressed, and guilt that become significant factors that worsen the main character's mental illness.

C. Conflict

Table 3 represents the conflict in the story and how it affects the main character using Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality.

As shows in table 3, these are the prevailing conflicts that provide a crucial tension throughout the story and used to drive the narrative forward. These specifically highlight the psychoanalytic effects to the main character.

The first conflict mentioned in the story is man versus himself. Various events occurred as a result of Jane's long and exhausting fight to be treated with the illness.

The main character's depression and exhaustion has reached to the point where Jane cannot tell what is real and what is not. In the story, to create the idea that Jane is healing, Jane is coerced into acting cheerful and content. The main character desperately needs an intellectual and emotional outlet because the rest treatment has forced her into quiet and submission. Jane becomes guilty with the illness that leads to suffer more from depression. Jane is into great detail about how much Jane despises the room's wallpaper and spends an increasing amount of time investigating this strange wallpaper throughout the story. The examination quickly turns into a compulsion. Jane can no longer control around the wallpaper because of the infatuation. Jane's imagination soars as it begins to picture a figure in the distance. Jane sees the woman as someone who is trapped in the same way. Jane talks of the woman shaking the "pattern" in the wallpaper, but what Jane truly sees is the woman "shaking jail bars" or attempting to flee the awful and unfair treatment that Jane is subjected to. The main character recounts an indentation circle the wallpaper as the story progresses, but Jane has no idea that it is the one who made the indentation. Jane, produced this indentation by pressing up against the wallpaper and circling the room. Jane circling the room is a representation of insanity for the never-ending desire for people to treat Jane as everyone else is treated. All in all, Jane can no longer separate imagination from reality.

The second conflict that is present in the story is man versus man, which the narrator experienced with John who is the doctor at the same time. It is difficult for Jane to express in a world dominated by men, as Jane says:

My husband told me that the very worst thing I can do is worry about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel horrible.

Table 3
Conflict analysis

Conflict	Scenes	Psychoanalytic effect of the main character
Man vs. Himself	Hallucination of a woman in the wallpaper	Insanity
	Guilty about her illness	Depression
	Sees herself in the wallpaper	Insanity
Man vs. Man	Restrains to write	Stress
	Begins to see herself battling	Depression
	Neglecting John's orders and diagnosis to rest.	Depression
Man vs. Society	Against the norms of conventional medicine	Repression
	Rejection to anything	Dejection

In the story, John had both the position and the knowledge of Jane's sickness and does not let express about the things that Jane likes especially writing as the coping mechanism against depression and at the same time, not given the opportunity to speak up; instead, Jane should defer to John when it comes to the nature and treatment of the illness. John isolates Jane in a room with strange yellow wallpaper designs since it is the best for Jane to rest and to recuperate quickly after giving birth. The main character believes that it has influence over events as the story progresses. Jane follows her husband's instructions and remains in the room. Nevertheless, the longer Jane stays, worse as the depression becomes. Jane begins to acquire mental strength from the wallpaper and begins to realize that John is not totally true in all of his assertions. John couldn't allow such things disturb Jane. For that reason, Jane concentrates on it. Jane believes that it is privy to inform that John is unaware of Jane says:

There are things in that paper that nobody knows about but me.

The main character now has some understands that John doesn't know about this over the treatment and nature of the illness and decides to neglect John's orders and diagnosis to rest as it triggers the depression.

The third conflict evident in the story is Man versus Society. Given the fact that a culture has a lot of rules and laws that people follow, it becomes a part of people's daily routine. People are imprisoned in society because of moral distinctions they do not share with the rest of the world. Morals with which society disagrees are ostracized and excluded, creating a dark open route that only a few people are prepared to travel.

People in culture are socialized to think and act in certain ways, which creates a barrier between individual's creativity and the norms of the society. The story explains that if people defy societal norms, they could be forced to confine themselves. An oppressive society ruled by a male figure is evident where women are seen in a lower place in the hierarchy and should always follow the males, and people should blindly follow the laws of the community rather than the rules of society. In addition, it is transparent that the main character is struggling because of John. Jane is forced to live in a house which the main character does not like because Jane is away from the baby in which a mother is obliged to take care of their children.

Conflict reveals the main character's psychoanalytic effects, such as insanity, depression, stress, repression, and dejection, which become a factor of the narrator's intense struggle to overcome mental illness, as Jane is prevented from expressing herself, communicating with others, and obtaining the autonomy to find the solutions Jane knows are effective.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper, reveals the main character's psychoanalytic effect.

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