



# SHARLOTTA GILMAN PERKINSNING “SARIQ DEVOR GULQOG’OZI” HIKOYASIDA RUHIY KASALLIK TASVIRI

**Sadullayeva Nazokat Kuvondiq qizi**

*O'qituvchi,*

*O'zbekiston Davlat jahon tillari universiteti*

*Toshkent, O'zbekiston*

*E-mail: [Nazoshka9300@gmail.com](mailto:Nazoshka9300@gmail.com)*

*ORCID iD:0009-0004-4046-0746*

## ANNOTATSIYA

Maqola Sharlotta Perkins Gilmanning “Sariq devor gulqog’ozi” asarida aks etgan ruhiy kasallik ifodasini roviy-muallif, ramziylik va obrazlar tizimi tahlili orqali o’rganishga bag’ishlangan. Asarda tasvirlangan bosh qahramon obrazining ruhiy xastaligi hamda turmush o’rtog’i John bilan munosabati misolida 1800 yillar so’ngida jamiyatda hukmron bo’lgan ayollar ruhiy salomatligiga nisbatan zulmkor munosabat yoritilgan. Tadqiqotda immanent tahlil vositasida bemorning yolg’iz qoldirish, tizimli parhez va qat’iy rejimga asoslangan “ihotalab davolash” deb nomlangan shifo turi badiiy o’rganilgan. Shuningdek, maqolada tibbiyotda avtonomiya masalalari ham muhokamaga tortilgan. Tadqiqot xulosalari Gilmanning asarlari bugungi kunda gender masalalari, ruhiy xasta insonlarga ijtimoiy to’g’ri munosabat shakllantirishda muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Oxir oqibat, “Sariq devor gulqog’ozi” jinnilik tasviri orqali hastalikni emas, balki ayollik e’tirozi orqali erkinlikni taqdim etadi, so’zlar orqali ayollik o’zini ifodalaydi, bu esa noma’lum ayol qahramonga kuch beradi. Adabiyotda ruhiy kasallikning tasviri o’tgan va so’nggi yillarda muhim mavzu bo’lib kelgan. Jismoniy kasallik har doim mualliflar tomonidan o’z adabiy asarlarida tadqiq qilingan va tasvirlangan va hissiy azoblanish qo’rquvi ruhiy kasallik mavzusini yorituvchi adabiyotlarning ko’payishiga olib keldi. Sharlotta Perkins Gilman, XX asr boshlarida badiiy va fantastika yozuvchisi, ruhiy kasalliklar tasviriga nisbatan tarixiy yoki badiiy asarlarga taalluqli bo’lgan narsalarga keng ta’sir ko’rsatadigan kuchli fantastik hikoyani yaratish uchun ruhiy tushkunlik bilan kurashdi.

## KALIT SO’ZLAR

Ruhiy xastalik, ramziylik, roviy-hikoyachi ovozi, obrazlarning o’zaro ta’siri, feminizm.

# АНАЛИЗ ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЯ ПСИХИЧЕСКОГО РАССТРОЙСТВА В РАССКАЗЕ ШАРЛОТТЫ ПЕРКИНС ГИЛМАН “ ЖЁЛТЫЕ ОБОИ”

*Садуллаева Назокат Кувондик кизи*

*Преподаватель*

*Узбекский государственный университет мировых языков*

*Ташкент, Узбекистан*

*E-mail: [Nazoshka9300@gmail.com](mailto:Nazoshka9300@gmail.com)*

*ORCID iD:0009-0004-4046-0746*

| АННОТАЦИЯ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Данная научная статья рассматривает вопрос репрезентации психического заболевания в новелле Шарлотты Перкинс Гилман “Жёлтые обои” посредством анализа голоса рассказчика, художественных символов и взаимодействия героев. Это художественное произведение демонстрирует репрессивное отношение к женскому психическому здоровью в культуре конца 1800-х годов, повествуя о пути главной героини к безумию и ее отношениях с мужем по имени Джон. В исследовании используется метод контент-анализа, который позволяет проиллюстрировать негативные последствия лечения постельным режимом - популярного медицинского лечения, включающего полную изоляцию, систематическую диету и полный покой для пациентов. В нем также обсуждается необходимость автономности и самостоятельности пациента для его психического выздоровления. Полученные результаты подтверждают непреходящую актуальность работы Гилмана в современном дискурсе о лечении психических заболеваний и гендерном вопросе и призывают к более сострадательному и чуткому подходу к борьбе с психическими заболеваниями. В конечном итоге "Желтые обои" предлагают свободу не через безумие, а через женскую речь (<i>écriture féminine</i>), выражение женского "я" с помощью слов, что в итоге расширяет возможности безымянной женщины-протагониста. Изображение психических заболеваний в литературе было важной темой как в прошлом, так и в последние годы. Физические болезни всегда исследовались и изображались авторами в их литературных произведениях, а страх перед эмоциональными страданиями привел к увеличению количества литературы, затрагивающей тему психических заболеваний. Шарлотта Перкинс Гилман, известная писательница начала XX века, использовала собственную борьбу с депрессией для создания мощного художественного повествования, которое имеет широкое влияние на исторические или художественные произведения, связанные с изображением психических заболеваний.</p> | <p>Психическое здоровье, контент-анализ, художественные символы, голос рассказчика, взаимодействия героев, феминизм.</p> |

# A STUDY OF THE PORTRAY OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE SHORT STORY “THE YELLOW WALLPAPER” BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

Sadullayeva Nazokat Kuvondik kizi

*Teacher, Uzbekistan State World Languages University*

*Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

*E-mail: [Nazoshka9300@gmail.com](mailto:Nazoshka9300@gmail.com)*

*ORCID iD:0009-0004-4046-0746*

| ABSTRACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | KEYWORDS                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This research paper examines the representation of mental illness in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” via the lens of narrative voice, symbolism and character interactions. The story highlights the oppressive cultural perspective towards female mental health in the late 1800s by delving into the protagonist’s journey into insanity and her relationship with her husband, John. The study uses the method of qualitative content analysis to illustrate the negative consequences of “the rest cure”, a popular medical treatment consisting of total isolation, a systematic diet and complete rest for patients. It also discusses the necessity of agency and autonomy in mental health care. The findings support Gilman’s work’s enduring relevance in modern discourse about mental health treatment and gender dynamics and calls for a more compassionate and empathetic approach to dealing with mental illness. In the final analysis, "The Yellow Wallpaper" offers freedom, not through madness, but through ecriture feminine, the expression of the feminine self-using words, finally empowering the unnamed female protagonist. The portrayal of mental illness in literature has been an important topic in past and recent years. Physical illness was always researched and portrayed by authors in their literary works, and the fear of suffering emotionally caused an increase of the literature that broached the topic mental illness. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a significant writer of fiction and non-fiction in the early 20th century, employed her own battle with depression to create a powerful fictional narrative which has broad effects in what concerns historical or fictional works relative to portrayals of mental illnesses. | Mental illness, content analysis, symbolism, narrative voice, character interactions, feminism. |

## INTRODUCTION

A recurrent topic in literature, mental illness offers deep insights into medical practices of the past and social attitudes toward mentally ill people. The groundbreaking novella “The Yellow Wallpaper”, written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and published in 1892, explores the intricacies of mental illness and the restrictive therapies that were frequently placed on women. In addition to providing a glimpse toward the protagonist’s rapidly declining mental state, this story challenges the larger medical and cultural structures that contribute to her illness.

The representation of mental illness in “The Yellow Wallpaper” has received an extensive analysis and discussion in literary and psychological academic communities. In her introduction to the 1973 Feminist Press publication of February,

Elaine R. Hedges suggests that the narrative functions as both a personal and political manifesto. Hedges contends that Gilman's personal experience with mental illness and the rest cure are paralleled in the protagonist's situation (Hedges A., 1973, 12). This viewpoint is consistent with Gilman's own description in "Why I Wrote The Yellow Wallpaper", where she describes her own delve into near-madness after receiving the same type of therapy (Gilman C., 1913, 271).

Scholars that employ a linguistic lens to analyze the novella, including Paula A. Treichler and her essay "Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'", claim that the protagonist's diary serves as a means of resistance against patriarchal language and authority. Treichler's research emphasizes the value of writing and narrative voice as strategies for regaining agency in the face of social and medical oppression (Treichler P., 1984, 65).

Moreover, Susan S. Lanser in her work "Feminist Criticism, 'The Yellow Wallpaper', and Politics of Color in America" examines how race and gender intersect in Gilman's novella. According to the author, racial tensions, common for that period, are also reflected in the story by emphasizing the colony of yellow, which is typically connected to both disease and cowardice (Lanser S., 1989, 420). This places mental illness in the context of broader societal fears and biases, which enriches our knowledge of it as it is portrayed in the narrative.

The comprehension of "The Yellow Wallpaper" has also been enhanced by medical historians, who have placed the rest cure in the larger context of 19th-century medical procedures. In "For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice to Women," Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English describe how the rest cure embodied the damaging and sometimes condescending medical treatments provided to females (Ehrenreich B. & English D., 2005, 67). They contend that these therapies were motivated by the need to control women's bodies and minds and that they were a reflection of a larger social movement to uphold gender standards.

The purpose of this article is to contribute to these academic conversations by offering a thorough examination of the portrayal of mental illness in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper". This research aims to comprehend the story's critique of the 19th-century medical system and its implications for the treatment of women's mental health by concentrating on the narrative voice, symbolism and character interactions.

## **MAIN PART**

This detailed analysis will show how Gilman's novella not only offers a potent critique of contemporary medical procedures but also contributes to current debates around gender roles and mental health treatment. The findings made in this research can facilitate the comprehension of the past and present difficulties that women have

ever experienced in mental health care.

Key components of “The Yellow Wallpaper” that illustrate the protagonist’s mental illness and challenge conventional perceptions of mental health are revealed via the analysis of the plot. The research uses a qualitative content analysis of “The Yellow Wallpaper”, emphasizing the relationships between the characters, symbolism and narrative voice. The study is contextualized and supported by a variety of primary and secondary sources, such as modern literary criticisms and historical writings on 19th-century medical procedures.

The comprehension of the protagonist’s mental decline requires an appreciation of the first-person viewpoint. Gilman successfully immerses the reader in her psychological decline by limiting the story to her point of view. This method highlights the negative impacts of suppressing and limiting women’s voices while highlighting the sense of helplessness and lack of agency felt by women undergoing the rest cure treatment. This fragment below demonstrates what is included in the rest cure: *So I take phosphates or phosphites, whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to "work" until I am well again (Gilman, 1892, 3).*

Through the writing in the protagonist’s diary, readers are given immediate access to her thoughts and emotions, underscoring her developing infatuation with the wallpaper. For example, she calls the wallpaper “repellent, almost revolting” and its hue as “sickly, unclean yellow” (Gilman, 1892, 10). Thanks to this intimate narration, readers can feel the protagonist’s growing worry and anxiety as she becomes fixated on the wallpaper’s patterns, thinking that a lady is trapped inside of it. The narrative voice is also clearly seen in this fragment: *John is a physician, and perhaps - (I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind -) perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster (Gilman, 1892, 3).* The narrator’s voice in this fragment is personal and candid, emphasizing the solitude she feels. By addressing the ‘*dead paper*’, she finds a method to convey her actual ideas and feelings, which she is unable to share with others. This highlights her loneliness and the lack of understanding and support from people around her, including her spouse.

The protagonist’s comment contains a perceptible irony. She speculates that her husband’s work as a physician, despite his medical competence, may be the cause of her poor recovery. This irony underscores the potential harm caused by historical medical procedures, particularly those based on patriarchal philosophy. The narrator’s cautious terminology (double ‘*perhaps*’) reflects her internal turmoil and difficulty she has in challenging her husband’s authority and the suggested treatment.

Furthermore, the protagonist’s fear that her husband’s role as a physician is delaying her recovery serves as a veiled indictment of era-specific medical

procedures. The ‘rest cure’, which involves isolation and inactivity, was routinely given for women with mental health problems, although it frequently worsened their disorders. Gilman, via the narrator’s observations, criticizes this therapy and the larger medical system for failing to comprehend or treat women’s mental health.

In terms of gender dynamics, this part of the text illustrates power relations in both the protagonist’s marriage and society as a whole. The woman’s reticence to express her thoughts openly (*‘I would not say it to a living soul’*) reflects her internalized oppression and society’s assumptions that women defer to male authority, particularly in matters of health.

The symbolism of the yellow wallpaper changes with time, reflecting the protagonist’s worsening mental health and criticizing the rest cure’s imposition of confinement. She initially resisted being confined, as evidenced by her assessment of the wallpaper as “sickly” and “unpleasant” (Gilman, 1892, 10). Her growing fixation with the wallpaper represents her fight for liberation from social norms and her mental disorder. Her final act of ripping off the wallpaper to release the fictional lady symbolizes her ultimate struggle to restore her independence and her eventual departure from reality.

It is also worthy to mention how the protagonist’s mental illness and societal oppression are powerfully symbolized by the yellow wallpaper itself. The wild pattern of the wallpaper initially repulses her, but as her loneliness grows, she starts to believe that a lady is imprisoned behind it, reflecting her own sense of helplessness. “I think that woman gets out in the daytime! And I’ll tell you why—privately—I’ve seen her!”, - she writes in the diary (Gilman, 1892, 18). Her fight for independence and the negative repercussions of the repressive rest therapy are symbolized by this hallucination.

The figure of a baby is also symbolic in this story. Although the infant is not a key character in the novella, its presence is felt via the protagonist’s references to her incapability to care for it. The baby represents the protagonist’s perceived failures and cultural expectations of parenthood. The woman’s lack of a loving attachment with her infant emphasizes her struggle with postnatal depression and the sense of separation that typically comes with it: *It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby! And yet I cannot be with him, it makes me so nervous* (Gilman, 1892, 6).

The table below demonstrates how the symptoms of postnatal depression are illustrated in the text. The list of symptoms is taken from the official website of the UK National Health System (NHS).

| The symptoms of postnatal depression according to NHS                      | Fragments from “The Yellow Wallpaper” illustrating the symptoms                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| feeling sad, low in mood or tearful much of the time                       | <i>“I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.” (Gilman, 1892, 8)</i>                                                                                                                                    |
| feeling agitated or irritable towards your partner, baby or other children | <i>“I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I’m sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition” (Gilman, 1892, 4)</i>                                            |
| loss of interest in the world around you                                   | <i>“I don’t feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I’m getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.” (Gilman, 1892, 8)</i>                                                     |
| lack of energy and feeling tired most of the time                          | <i>“Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able,—to dress and entertain, and order things” (Gilman, 1892,</i>                                                                   |
| trouble sleeping at night                                                  | <i>“He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn’t, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.” (Gilman, 1892, 12)</i> |
| feelings of guilt, hopelessness and self-blame                             | <i>“I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already” (Gilman, 1892, 6)</i>                                                                    |
| negative thoughts such as feelings that you are a not enough good mother   | <i>“And yet I cannot be with him [baby], it makes me so nervous.” (Gilman, 1892, 6)</i>                                                                                                                   |

“The Yellow Wallpaper” portrays the protagonist’s relationship with her husband in a way that highlights the negative effects of patriarchal domination and larger cultural views about women’s mental health. John’s condescending and dominating behavior is a reflection of the widespread perception that women are essentially weaker than males and incapable of sophisticated intellect. In addition to

making the protagonist's illness worse, his recommendation for the rest cure, which is centered on isolation and inactivity, also represents the larger cultural trend of marginalizing and silencing women's voices.

Moreover, John's infantilizing language toward his wife underscores the power imbalance in their relationship and reflects the larger societal expectation of women as submissive and dependent on male authority. By calling her "a blessed little goose" and "little girl", John reinforces his own dominance while diminishing her agency and autonomy. This dynamic contributes to the protagonist's sense of isolation and helplessness, further exacerbating her mental deterioration.

It is also easy to notice the protagonist's internalized feeling of blame in her relationship with John. The woman frequently internalizes responsibility for her illness, feeling that she is partly responsible for her slow recovery. This internalization is seen in her reluctance to challenge John's authority and medical expertise. Her guilt is exacerbated by her failure to perform her expected obligations as a wife and mother, which makes her feel inadequate and guilty for her own misery: "I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!" (Gilman, 1892, 6).

In sum, the protagonist's encounters with John in "The Yellow Wallpaper" provide a stinging indictment of gendered relations and repressive treatment of women's mental health in the 19th century. Through these exchanges, Gilman emphasizes the importance of a more compassionate and understanding approach to mental health care, one that acknowledges individuals' autonomy and dignity regardless of gender.

In conclusion, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" presents a potent analysis of 19th-century perspectives on mental health and women's care. This study has shed light on the ways that Gilman's story highlights the intricacies of gender dynamics and mental health throughout the time through an analysis of narrative voice, symbolism and character interactions.

Gilman's use of first-person narrative voice highlights the helplessness and lack of agency felt by women undergoing the rest cure treatment while allowing readers to share in the protagonist's journey into madness. The main character's intense obsession with the yellow wallpaper is a powerful representation of both her declining mental health and the restrictive social norms that are imposed upon her. In addition, the protagonist's relationships with her husband shed light on the negative consequences of paternalistic control as well as larger patriarchal ideas toward women's mental health.

Gilman uses these literary devices to criticize the medical procedures that were common in her age, especially the rest cure, which frequently made women's mental health worse than better. The narrative is a powerful reminder of the negative effects



of denying women control over their own bodies and thoughts, as well as the value of paying attention to and respecting their experiences.

Furthermore, “The Yellow Wallpaper” remains relevant in modern issues concerning mental health treatment and gender relations. Despite advances in medical understanding and women’s rights, stigma and abuse of mental illness continue in numerous ways. Gilman’s work is a call to action for a more compassionate and understanding approach to mental health care, one that acknowledges the interplay of gender, racism and class in creating individual experiences.

## **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, “The Yellow Wallpaper” is a timeless and contemporary work of writing that pushes us to reevaluate our preconceptions about gender and mental illness and work toward creating a society that is more inclusive and equal for everyone. Gilman’s story is a potent reminder of the value of empathy, compassion and social justice in the quest of mental well-being as we continue to struggle with the difficulties of mental health treatment.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Ehrenreich, B. and Deirdre E. (2005) *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice to Women*. New York, Anchor Books, 432 p.
2. Gilman, C. P. (1892) *The yellow wallpaper*. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*. // Compiled by T. L. Erskine & C. L. Richards. Rutgers University Press, p. 3-20.
3. Gilman, C. P. (1913) *Why I Wrote The Yellow Wallpaper*. New York, *The Forerunner* 4, 233-235.
4. Hedges, E. R. (1973) *Introduction to ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ by Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. New York, Feminist Press, 64 p.
5. Lanser, S. S. (1989) *Feminist Criticism, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’ and the Politics of Color in America*. *Feminist Studies* 15(3), p. 415-441.
6. Treichler, P. A. (1984) *Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’*. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*. // Compiled by T. L. Erskine & C. L. Richards. Rutgers University Press, p. 61-77
7. Lanser, S. S. (1989) *Feminist Criticism, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’ and the Politics of Color in America*. *Feminist Studies* 15(3), p. 415-441.