

## Gender Struggle Of The Main Female Character In The Short Story *The Yellow Wallpaper* By Charlotte Perkins Gilman

*Linda Tiara Putri*

*Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia*

*200511100100@student.trunojoyo.ac.id*

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*\*Corresponding Author*

### **Abstract**

Every gender gap from identification to prejudice to exploitation is examined by feminism. The study of gender identity places particular emphasis on gender conflict and its representation in short stories. The gender struggle for female characters in the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* is discussed in this study. The purpose of this study is to identify existence of gender struggles experienced by the main character in *The Yellow* short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. This study used qualitative research methodology. The main female character in this short story is described as a woman who is experiencing mental disorders and feels pressured because she is locked up by her husband, and she struggles to get the freedom she wants, to analyze it then this study used Paddy MacQueen's theory. The findings revealed a gender struggle for the main female character in the short story is struggle of dream, fact of life, affection and love.

**Keywords:** gender struggle, main female character, short story

### **Abstrak**

*Setiap kesenjangan gender mulai dari identifikasi, prasangka, hingga eksploitasi ditelaah oleh feminisme. Studi tentang identitas gender memberikan penekanan khusus pada konflik gender dan representasinya dalam cerita pendek. Perjuangan gender untuk karakter perempuan dalam cerita pendek *The Yellow Wallpaper* dibahas dalam penelitian ini. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi adanya perjuangan gender yang dialami oleh tokoh utama dalam cerpen *The Yellow* karya Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif. Tokoh utama perempuan dalam cerpen ini digambarkan sebagai seorang perempuan yang mengalami gangguan mental dan merasa tertekan karena dikurung oleh suaminya, dan ia berjuang untuk mendapatkan kebebasan yang ia inginkan, untuk menganalisisnya maka penelitian ini menggunakan teori Paddy MacQueen. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan perjuangan gender bagi tokoh utama perempuan dalam cerpen tersebut adalah perjuangan akan mimpi, kenyataan hidup, kasih sayang dan cinta.*

**Kata kunci:** perjuangan gender, tokoh utama perempuan, cerita pendek

## INTRODUCTION

The complexity and uniqueness of human life and activities make them exceedingly fascinating objects to study. The singularity of human existence is regarded as the most amazing topic to be covered in literary works. The complexity and uniqueness of human life and activities make them exceedingly fascinating objects to study. The singularity of human existence is regarded as the most amazing topic to be covered in literary works. Everyone has something special about them. It implies that every person is unique from one another. Every person has a unique personality, temperament, and conduct.

Male domination toward women is often found in the society. There are so many facts show how that woman are dominated by men in family and society and treated as second society. Women are treated as second creatures because they are weak and powerless. They are numerous discriminations lead women to bad conditions. Women struggle is not only found in a real world, but also is reflected in literary works. One of them is a short story entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. (Ratna Sari & Fitria, 2017). According to Sumardjo and Saini, short stories are fictitious stories or will not really happen but they can happen anytime and anywhere and the story is relatively short. (Raharjo, 2017)

According to Madsen (2000), feminism is a social and olitical movement. Feminism is about changing the way that people see male and female rights, and campaigning for equal ones. Some feminists believe that all genders should always be treated in exactly the same way. They also believe that there are important differences between men and women as they are also categorized by gender. However, they believe that these differences should not lead to any unfair treatment of women by men. (Ramadhan, 2020)

In this study, the writer chose *The Yellow Wallpaper* because the writer was impressed with the female character in this short story. The short story entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, published in 1892, tells the story of woman, the wife of a doctor, who suffers from depression after giving birth to her second child. In accordance with the medical measures at that time, the husband took his wife to a resting place so that his wife could rest completely. But the wife feels imprisoned physically, psychologically, emotionally and intelectually. In a state of stress due to constantly being in the room on the top floor. The wife who is by nature very imaginative and creative begins to focus her attention on the wallpaper in her room. The aim of this research is to identify the existence of gender struggles experienced by the main character. This research is analyzed by using the approach of feminism by focusing towards the gender struggle, This research used theory of gender struggle by Paddy MacQueen (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022). This study used qualitative research methodology and the data was taken from *The Yellow Wallpaper* short story to analyze the existence of gender struggle in the short story. The data from this study as a whole contains writings, words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, both dialogues and narrations related to the type of women's gender struggle in feminist studies. The initial research stage is reading, then storing the data, categorizing the data, and finally interpreting the data.

## METHOD

This study used Paddy MacQueen's theory. This study used descriptive method qualitative which is a problem-solving by way of preparing, collecting data, and analysing of the data.

- The Source of Data and Data

The source of data is the object where the writer can get the data. The source data of this

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study was taken from The Yellow short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

- Data Collection
  - Choose the theory that will be used
  - Read for the short story related to the theory
  - Start to analyse the short story
  - Take notes to collect the data that will be used and discuss in the data.
- Data Analysis
  - Overview the problem
  - Identify the problem
  - Write a theory that accounts for the theory and evidence
  - Write a conclusion based on your research and analysis.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Gender Struggle

According to MacQueen (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022), the struggle for gender recognition is literally not only on the issue of women as social creatures, but rather as evidence of their actions to make them feel comfortable. The analysis focuses on the main female character. Technically, the short story is mostly from the main female character's perspective which is told by the narrator and main female character herself. The main female character describes a woman, the wife of a doctor, who suffers from depression after giving birth to her second child. In accordance with the medical measures at that time, the husband took his wife to a resting place so that his wife could rest completely. but the wife feels imprisoned physically, psychologically, emotionally and intellectually. In a state of stress due to constantly being in the room on the top floor. The wife who is by nature very imaginative and creative begins to focus her attention on the wallpaper in her room. Gender inequality, in MacQueen's opinion (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022), is one aspect of feminism literature. The gender struggle in literature focuses on looking for any female effort that suggests superior social relationships with other genders, particularly men. In order to establish a concrete fact of recognition, it is therefore possible to understand how every woman's efforts are appreciated from the context that alludes to appreciation of others. The analysis is presented below.

### 2. Types of struggle

#### a. Struggle of Dream

The first form of struggle represented by the character in the short story is the struggle for dreams. According to Bryson in (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022) Gender disparity prevents women from achieving their primary goals. Women become supporters of their boyfriends' desires and are therefore readily used and controlled. One of their goals is to be unburdened by the demands of women's roles and functions in society. Women who want to be regarded face challenges due to economic issues and male dominance.

As Bryson's part of the theory explains, dreams are one of the struggles that focus on women's desires to be achieved for personal will. Forms of recognition of the inability of the main character in the struggle of dreams can be seen in the quote below. The main female character said sometimes that if I were only good enough to write a little, it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022). But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

*"It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work."*  
(Gilman, 1892:5)

This quotation shows that the main female character no one supports her to write because he still hasn't recovered from her depression.

## **b. Struggle fact of life**

The second type of gender struggle experienced by the main female's character is the struggle for the facts of life. The struggle about the facts of life is not only related to the meaning of human life and the necessities of life. More than that is the struggle to be able to realize the desire for other things above their general needs. These desires are clearly not as easy as the general needs to be achieved, but through various kinds of struggle and recognition (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022). In the process of analyzing, the writer analyzes this struggle on when she feel lonely and and her husband does not let her do the things she likes for fear he's afraid she'll do the things she doesn't want but he doesn't even know if she feels lonely:

*"John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious. 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."*  
(Gilman, 1892:4)

This quotation shows that the main female character thinks that her husband thinks she is weak and can not do anything because she is sick.

## **c. Struggle of affection**

The third form of gender struggle experienced by the female character is the struggle for attention. The struggle of women in achieving affection is not easy if examined. This is because it is inversely proportional to what women try to get from affection. If a woman is only looking for love, then it can be with kindness and treatment of affection, but the problem can lie with other people whether the person wants something other than love (Ratna Sari & Fitria, 2017). In the process of analyzing, the writer analyzes this struggle when she attaching her husband's attention by always paying attention to her.

*"I don't weigh a bit more," said I, "nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!"*  
(Gilman, 1892:9)

This quotation shows that the main female character wants her husband to always be by her side.

## **d. Struggle of love**

Love is one of the deepest emotions in humans. In general, humans interpret love as a form of feeling towards something either person or object. Love itself in scientific and realistic studies is still an abstract and elusive thing. Because it consists of many different types of things that are in fact challenging to guess, love is said to be abstract and difficult to understand. Love is decisions, judgments, and promises. These three things are obviously quite challenging for someone to reach their limit. Therefore, the only way to discover the essence of these things is via effort. Finally, it is believed that one cannot directly understand love. Therefore, the only way to discover the essence of these things is via effort. Finally, it is believed that one cannot directly understand love. As previously stated, it can be very challenging to understand the boundaries and significance of a declaration of love for someone. The reason for this is that love requires many different efforts and battles in order to be fulfilled. In essence, love can only ever be understood through the efforts that have been made by one person to win the affection of another. (Eka Wahyu Nusantara et al., 2022). The

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Vol 1 No 2 pp 124-128

writer analyzes this struggle when the main female character has learned to love in a way that she accepts any love from her husband even though it makes her depressed.

“*He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.*”

(Gilman, 1892:5)

This quotation shows that her husband is very careful and loving but he does not know if it makes his wife even more depressed.

### 3. Discussion

Based on the study's findings, a discussion is presented in this section. This investigation focuses on the struggles that the main female character in the short story confronts and illustrates. It is discovered that the primary female character, a wife and mother who loses her child in the struggle for dreams, fact of life, affection, and love has a gender struggle. In this instance, various other characters, including the primary female character's husband, can also be shown to struggle with gender. Although her husband appears to be holding her, in reality he is also working to help her recover and doesn't always consider their deceased kid.

### CONCLUSION

Employing feminism theory, which focuses on gender struggles, to analyze the gender struggle displayed by the main female character in the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper." The main female character is a mother who lost her child and is depressed so that her husband is forced to lock her up and that is where the main character experiences a gender struggle because she feels imprisoned by her husband and does not feel freedom. After analyzing the gender struggle shown by main female character in The Yellow Wallpaper short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman use Paddy MacQueen's theory, this study comes to the conclusion that the primary female character's gender struggle involves a dream, fact of life, affection, and love. All of this is demonstrated by the explanation of the lead female character and by the way in which the other characters acknowledge and react to it. Consequently, this person is her husband.

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