

# **MENTAL ILLNESS OF WOMEN IN “THE YELLOW WALLPAPER” BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND “THE BELL JAR” BY SYLVIA PLATH**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the awarded of Master of Arts  
degree in English Literature

by

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
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## **SATHYABAMA**

**INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)**

**Accredited with Grade “A” by NAAC**

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**APRIL – 2021**



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### BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

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## DECLARATION

I **JENI JEBA. J** hereby declare that the Project Report entitled **MENTAL ILLNESS OF WOMEN IN “THE YELLOW WALLPAPER” BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND “THE BELL JAR” BY SYLVIA PLATH** done by me under the guidance of **Dr. Sowmiya. L.M**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai – 600119. This is submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of Master of Arts degree in English Literature.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is discussed about the mental illness of women, which focuses on Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar" and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and today's reality of women's mental health. Author's unstable mind and their real-life connection with their fictional character's life. And the connection between both the author and their works from two different centuries. And the real-life characters are related to the fictional characters. The connection between the 19th and 20th centuries of American literature about women. Analysis of the works, author's life, and real-life characters. Comparison and similarities of the works. This study investigates women's mental illness, fear, anxiety, depression, alienation, and femininity of the era. Everyone was interconnected with real-life situations.

**Keywords:** Mental illness, Alienation, Mistreatment, Psychology, Feminism.

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# CHAPTER I

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.1 *Mental Illness Of Women*

This project is mainly to talk about the Mental illness of women and the struggles against the oppressive social atmosphere. These problems were related to the real-life characters and the fictional characters in the novel "The Bell Jar" and the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper". Then the writer's of these two works and there's a mental state while writing their works. Their work is seen as the final voice of the authors. Both the works are semi-autobiography. The novel and the short story written while the authors are in depressions. They show a clear image in their works. They talk about the struggles of mental illness of women. How they mistreated by society and their family. Finally taking cure from the mental disorders. The two authors Gilman and Plath give a clear picture of their life and own experiences in their works.

This Thesis, begins with questions like what is mental illness? And who was affected by this? And how are they taking cure from these kinds of disorders? Finally, The lives of women drove her out of her mind. The women living in the patriarchal society there have to face so many problems. They have failures and falls come into their life. They need to face all the downs. But few fall into depression finally they are affected by this madness or mental illness. Every woman is playing three major roles in their life as a daughter as a wife and as a mother. So they have so many burdens upon them and some were taken care of their career too, which made the women fall into stress, depression, and madness. And women were mistreated by their own families and society. Some are affected by a failure in relationships and in professional life. When they cannot handle the flaw in their life made them into a madness stage. These days depression affected many working women. These are the sad realities of today's life of women. In this thesis, we try to talk out some of the possibilities for the recovery of these disorders.

This thesis explores the illness of women in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century which deals with the patriarchal oppression of women, the fear and anxiety of nineteenth and twentieth-century women's and women writers. The society's justice against the mad women. The middle-class woman in America is explored in the yellow wallpaper and the bell jar. The attitudes toward madness of women in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. We can see the social environment and how they treat the affected women. This thesis describes those things. The two novels come across in American literature as well as in women's literature too. The text of the works related to real life.

"The Bell Jar" novel by Plath and "The Yellow Wallpaper" short story Gilman both works written in different years nearly 70 years between those two works. But, obviously, the concept and the power of the work are the same. Both the work was written by women authors and the novel and the short story is a semi-autobiography of the authors. The bell jar and The yellow wallpaper written under American feminist literature. Plath and Gilman published these works close to their death. So these works are considered as the last voice of Plath and Gilman. Both the women committed suicide.

### ***1.1.2 The History Of Mental Illness***

From earlier days mental illness is seen as a bodily disorder. But mental illness is different from bodily disorder. An imbalance in the humours was seen as the main cause of mental and physical health conditions. Most of the physicians believed that mental illness was psychosomatic and it influenced the two different changes in its body and soul. This belief had its roots in the Stoic philosophy, people argue that the soul can express, "Intentions through the physicality of the body" (Ibid 63,64). In medieval age, society religions played an important role and medicine which leads to the "Close interplay of the religious and the medical" (Ibid 75). Here some Medieval physicians would often argue that mental illness was of demonic origin. Immediate "signs of insanity and demonic possession were very similar as both could be denoted from violent behavior, odd facial expressions and hand gestures, and loud shouting" (Ibid 68). In the rise of the "Scientific Revolution" and the secularization of the 18th

century, the common view of mental illness changed radically and shaped it. "Religious reforms in the Western world led to the rejection of certain medieval treatments of mental illness, such as exorcism" (Mellyn 85). It was believed to be the meditation and external cause of the illness. According to Time, it's changed many physicians started differentiating mental illness into different categories. On occasion, insanity was seen as a form of neurosis – a disorder directly connected to the nervous system. These new discoveries paved the way for neurology and a more in-depth understanding of psychological conflicts, which were seen as the cause of neuroses and psychoses (Berrios and Marková 123-125).

The 18th century was a turning point in the understanding of mental health, when the illness came to the male then it was switched to the female. Although Men and women experienced the same symptoms of mental disorder, their maladies were differentiated by physicians. There was a regular malady that was associated with the economic and intellectual pressures of a civilized man, and a female malady that was associated with sexuality and the essential nature of a woman. It was believed that women were more prone to mental disorders, especially those concerning insanity, than men and would "experience it in specifically feminine ways" (Showalter 7-8).

Be that as it may, along with the modern disclosures that were made within the 19th and 20th centuries, more people argued that outside components were the most cause of mental sickness in ladies, instead of their reproductive organs. With this, numerous accepted that the reason why women were more regularly proclaimed as insane than men depended on their keeping social presence. Richard Napier, a 17th-century physician, noted that among his patients, ladies from any social class endured more from misery, communicated more uneasiness, and complained more of stress and unhappiness in their marriages than male patients. Whereas women's activists say that as a result of the abuse of women on a social level (Ibid 3), physicians did not appear to share the same view and instead chose to center on and fault the diverse "biological crisis of the female life-cycle", such as adolescence, childbirth, and menopause (Ibid 55). This states a clear idea about the mentality of the society at different

time periods. How physician misguided their patient. As a result, women are affected mentally and it leads to the development of their disorder. So now we get a glimpse about why authors have mistreated by their society and family during that period. Now we take a look at the author's life

### **1.1.3 Biography And Mental State Of Charlotte Perkins Gilman Sylvia Plath**

#### **1.1.3.1 Charlotte Perkins Gilman :**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was born on July 3rd, 1860. In Hartford, Connecticut. She had a normal family background. She had a difficult childhood. Charlotte Perkins grew up in poverty, her father having essentially abandoned the family. Her father's relatives of the "well known and influential Beecher family including the writer Harriet Beecher Stowe" (Bauer). Then her mother raised two children on her own. Gilman moved around a lot as a result. Her education suffered greatly for it. Her education was irregular and limited, but she did attend the Rhode Island School of Design for a time. In 1882 Gilman "suffered her first bout with depression" (Bauer 31).

In May 1884 she married Charles W. Stetson, an artist. The couple had a daughter named Katherine. She soon proved to be totally unsuited to the domestic routine of marriage, and after a year or so she was suffering from melancholia, which eventuated incomplete nervous collapse. "narrow confines of marriage life and motherhood" ( Bauer 31). It's a difficult life of handling the husband and her child. In her traditional marriage life, her husband doesn't see her difficulties. Because these made Gilman "increasingly despondent" (Bed rest 4).

Her writing and creative thinking soon become stopped by family life. The burden and depression of her family made fall on her life. This made her ill. Her experience with the illness is believed to have inspired her best-known work "The Yellow Wallpaper". In 1888 she moved with her young daughter to Pasadena. She divorced her husband in 1894, and, after the separation of the couple no one blamed author one " but it seemed plain that if I went crazy if my husband is no good, and be a deadly injury to my child" ( Darby dyer) But she

worried to separated from her family "better for that dear child to have separated parents than lunatic mother" shortly thereafter to one of her close friends, she sent her daughter to live with them. After this, she decided to leave her family never going to see her family and never going to see her child as a poor mother. She separated herself from the family and led her life out in madness and it was built up in seriousness.

After her move to California, Perkins began writing poems and stories for various periodicals. Among her stories, "The Yellow Wall-Paper," published in The New England Magazine in January 1892, was exceptional for its starkly realistic first-person portrayal of the mental breakdown of a physically pampered but emotionally starved young wife. In 1893 she published In This Our World, a volume of verse. For a time in 1894, after her move to San Francisco, she edited with Helen Campbell the Impress, an organ of the Pacific Coast Woman's Press Association. She also became a noted lecturer during the early 1890s on such social topics as labor, ethics, and the place of women, and, after a short period of residence at Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago in 1895, she spent the next five years in national lecture tours. In 1896 she was a delegate to the International Socialist and Labor Congress in London, where she met George Bernard Shaw, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and other leading socialists. After this, she published more books and succeeded in her professional life and also her personal happiness. After she married her cousin George and they stayed happily, she was also one of the major reasons for happiness. In her personal life, she became the "well-known author and was invited to speak regularly on the subject of women's rights and economic independence" ( Bed rest 3). After this her career runs well she published "several books, essays, poems, a novel, and the forerunner of her works published from 1909-1916" ( Bed rest 5).

Gilman's emotional state of mind "Gilman saw the painfulness of death" (Darby dyer 5) her mother died from cancer and " as Gilman watched at her mother's bedside, she whispered to her friend,[...] ' if this should come to me in future years, I will not go through with it. It is needless' " (knight 150) shortly after her mother's death her husband died as "a very good way to go" ( knight 150). She mourns for her husband's death after some long gape. She waited to tell the

message to her daughter "she waited several months...to break the news of terminal illness to her daughter" (knight 152 - 153). "She simultaneously prepared for her death and continued to live as normal a life as her disease would allow"(knight 152-153). " She enjoyed the remainder of her life with her family, who all eventually felt her plans to end her own life were permissible" finally because of depression and mental illness she committed suicide and ended her life. She died on August 17, 1935.

### **1.1.3.2 Sylvia Plath :**

Sylvia Plath was born to Otto and Aurelia on 27, Oct 1932, in Boston Massachusetts, United States of America. Her father Otto professor of biology at Boston University and a well. The respected authority showed her anger and love towards his father in her poem daddy. She died earlier " developed gangrene in one foot after minor trauma and was found to have late-stage untreated diabetes mellitus" (cooper 4) diabetes which was treated for long so his "leg was amputated but three weeks later" (cooper 4) and he died in hospital "this was rather traumatic for Plath and her mother" (Darby 6). At her young age, she lost her father and her mental illness developed. When she was eight years old this happened. She was left with a feeling of grief, guilt, and anger that would haunt her for life and led her to mental depression and this situation made her write. Most of her poems were written in that period.

After Plath's father's death, her mother raised the two children Plath and her younger brother. They lived in Winthrop. Plath appeared at her young age to be a socially well-adjusted child. " Plath was a rather peculiar adolescent; her personality was often seen as premorbid, for it demonstrated" (Darby 7). She was an excellent student in class who dazzled her teachers in the Winthrop, Massachusetts, public school system and she was praised by everyone for her writing ability. She was just eight when she wrote her first poem. And it was published in the Boston herald. " Constant dissonance between bright, buoyant, high achievement persona whose ideals of success social status and domestic are conveyed in the latter to her mother, and the dark sense of isolation and inner emptiness that finds expression in her journal and poems" ( cooper 5) In

her young age she had a powerful awareness of the beauty and terror of nature and strong love. After a few years, her mother got a job as a teacher. From her early, she attempts suicide. She expresses her suicide attempt mentality in her poem Lady Lazarus; she expresses all her pain and her new hope. From that poem, we get to know about her curiosity over the death which she has.

Plath has psychological problems but the problem not at all affected her writings. And she became an excellent scholar and also succeeded in her career. So achieved a lot in her lifetime she is a prizewinner. She seems quiet and intellectual but her writing speaks aloud.

Once Plath at Cambridge she met Ted Hughes at a party in 1956. When he was twenty-five and she was twenty-three they met together. " She was strikingly bright, pretty and vivacious, catching his eyes rather swiftly" (darby 8) both of them were aspiring poets this made the connection between them the bonding developed for them. Three years before she committed suicide. Everything is known by Ted and they planned to marry. This took Plath's psychological troubles away and she hopes for a better future. They lived in London earlier in their married life. After that Plath got a job in Smith college so they moved to the states. After their marriage life, she has a lot of pressure. She had two of their children taking care of their two young children and families so she was unable to write and she faced difficulties on it. Then they moved to England where she spent some time writing a few poems and novels. At that time wrote her novel The Bell Jar; it was her final voice that speaks to her mental state.

After that Ted had a serious affair with another woman which causes her relationship. Ted rarely comes to visit them he doesn't take care of them because of his serious relationship with the mistress which led them to separation. Plath again falls into a depression not take of her children and herself they were alone. Ted emotionally hurts the Plath. " She eclipses him in her ability to live on through her writing" (Darby 9) after that she spends time writing and again she committed suicide finally she ends her life. "Many believe

the removal to have been done by Bell Jar fans". She died on February 11, 1963.

#### **1.1.4 Glimpse About "The Yellow Wallpaper" And "The Bell Jar"**

The yellow wallpaper was written by the American feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1890. It was written in Victorian-era The Yellow Wallpaper published in New England magazine in May 1892 and a form of a book published in 1899 "several publishers for its macabre explicit content, finally to be published in 1892" (Alexandra-9). Later the work reappeared in various magazines and books, for example in the Gold book in 1933. In feminist press edition from 1973. The Charlotte Perkins Gilman reader from 1980 or in Catherine Golden's captivity imagination A casebook on "The Yellow Wallpaper" and little interest has been shown in the accuracy of various versions of the used text. It was interpreted as a gothic horror tale. It is an autobiography fictionalized in the first-person narration. The Yellow Wallpaper was written based on Gilman's own experiences soon after recovery from her illness she wrote the Yellow Wallpaper.

This short story deals with technological, scientific, and social progress. This work was to "illustrate the historical cross-culture" (Oakley-31). The Yellow tells the states of women in the society. This story is the mirror of middle-class American women's lives in the late nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, women had limited rights for education, career, political rights.....etc. It shows the reflection of the Victorian age or era. This story is based on prejudiced treatment for mental illness. It illustrates the attitudes toward mental and physical health of women in The Yellow Wallpaper.

This story described the emotional and intellectual deterioration of a young mother and wife who, apparently suffering from postpartum depression, undergoes a 'rest cure' involving strict bed rest and a complete absence of mental stimulation, under the case of her male neurologist. "It was not intended to drive people crazy, but to save people from being crazy, and it worked" The story which deals with the 'madwoman' is not a simple account of mental illness; these are the problems in the story. Gilman gives the reason for the story why

she wrote " the story of the story is this: for many years I suffered from a severe and continuous nervous breakdown tending to melancholia \_\_\_ and beyond" (Darby 19). And after delivering the reason for writing she conveyed to her readers that "during about the third year of this trouble [she] went, in devout faith and some faint stir of hope, to a noted specialist in nervous diseases, the best known in the country" ( Darby 19).

In the Yellow Wallpaper Gilman describes the young intellectual and who was suppressed by her husband "young intellectual women whose creativity, intellect and personal freedom are, more or less unknowingly, suppressed by her husband" (Marilena 7) These we can see the male domination over her. Her husband doesn't allow her to write. But in the end, the unnamed narrator who decided to write and write about depression, loses women. she touches all the reality. The woman was dependent on her husband so she was unable to decide on her own. Because of that, she spent her vacation in the rented house for the entire summer. He doesn't allow her to do any job at home. She was locked there in a prison. Her husband physician John doesn't allow her because of illness. He treats her for mental illness. He always told her to stop imagination and not to "give way to such fancies" (Marilena 8). So she is not able to share her feelings with her husband. She was isolated and her mental illness was getting worse because of these. Her husband cannot understand her "notion of gender not only influences the definitive but also the treatment of mental illness" (Elaine Showalter). In those days and also these days women were mistreated during their illness. Because of lack of understanding, this may happen and it brings to struggle. In the Victorian period, women were not allowed to go outside; they stayed at home as a wife of some once. And to be a mother of their children. They have the only duty to take care of their husband and children.

The Yellow Wallpaper deals with the "disorder involved a growing melancholia, and that as those who have tasted it consists of every painful mental sensation, shame, fear remorse, a blind oppressive confusion utter Weakness a steady brain ache that fills the conscious mind with crowding image of distress" (Gilman). Gilman finds to get treatment for this "live as domestic a life as possible have your child with you all the time [.....] lie down an hour after

each meal. Have but two hours of intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush or pencil as long as you live" (Gilman) Gilman tries to follow these things but the cure only made her madness "perilously near to losing my mind" (Gilman) again she started doing work on that time she recover from that madness "ultimately recovery some measure of power" (Gilman) (Linna Kristin).

The Bell Jar novel by Sylvia Plath first published in January 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas and later released posthumously under her real name. The Bell Jar is in a psychological as well as historical context. Many literary scholars were constantly reading this autobiographical novel. Linda W. Wagner calls the novel a "testimony to repressive culture mold that trapped many mid-century women" and Marjorie G. Perloff said it is "one of most acute analyses of the feminist problem that we have in contemporary fiction".

The Bell Jar tells the story of young women struggling against the oppressive social atmosphere of the 1950s. In it the girls coming-of-age, but it does not follow the usual trajectory of Bildung Roman. And the traditional image of women in the novel. While Plath wrote this novel it was Victorian times in which this story speaks about mental health. And the main character struggles against social and cultural oppression. At the end of world war II, millions of servicemen returned home and they were eager to marry and begin a family. In those periods women were married earlier many child marriages happened in that particular period. So women struggled to take care of their families. That period Plath wrote her work as an egotistical "The Bell Jar".

Plath was quite open-minded in her writing for the text "Plath describes the battle and the Esther Greenwood must wage to hear her own muse and create her own language" The young heroine of Plath's work Bell Jar, Esther Greenwood, is torn between the "old-fashioned role and the unattainable new role for women". In it, Plath talks about the young women in the novel being a student at renowned Smith college. She wins an internship at a fashion magazine in New York. On account of her academic excellence, she got a chance. She is a woman who fulfills her dreams outside of a traditional family. Since Esther's ambition to become a writer, she welcomes this opportunity first.

After completing college nothing was done by her. Which would lead to punishment and exclusion from society. After returning home to her mother, she came to know about herself in severe depression. She experienced a nervous breakdown. The New York trip and together with her incipient depression it's made her even more difficult to Esther's relationship with seemingly respectable medical student buddy Willard. Having received a rejection from Harvard aggravates her situation even more despite treatment for her condition she hardly improves.

During the peak of her depression, Esther tries to commit suicide with sleeping pills. After several treatment attempts, she finally recovered and eventually managed to return to school. Esther feels social pressure to adapt to society's rules. She senses this pressure not only from her mother or from society in general, but also her fiancé. She received a first marriage proposal, having success in college, is upsetting and disorienting to her. Esther developed her depression and wanted to die. She slowly recovered from her attempt to die. And hope is a simple thing to survive.

The Bell Jar can be considered not only a confessional novel but also a statement of what happened to a woman's hope's and ambition in a society that has no interest in taking female ideas and aspirations seriously "[.....] madness and confinement were both an expression of female powerlessness and an unsuccessful attempts to reject and overcome this state". Through Plath's work "bell jar confining 1950s culture" (Boyer 201). The main character has the inferior "like a small black doll" (Boyer 202) because she is a woman in a bell jar she breaks out the cultural bell. But still, she suffers from an inferiority complex. Her position in society has led her to depression.

These real-life characters have this kind of mental illness. Generally, Mental illness is categorized in two ways. One is born with a mental disorder. Another is trauma in their life. Most of them, they abandoned by their family and left out in the streets. They suffered even for their basic needs. They were abused and break down. After all, those happened, Government reduced them and take care of their basic needs. There also mistreated by their fellow people.

Like this, How they suffered and their problems with what they went through in their life which was found in this investigation. The real characters who have mental disorders are different from the fictional characters. In a fictional character, the person suffered by his own will or her own cause. But in reality, the problems are due to the society or the fellow people who were around the women. This makes the situation much worse. They are facing this kind of problem and finally dying because of these disorders. In fiction characters where there is too much care this lead to a state of mental disorder. But in real life, women where lack the care, there is no one to care for the person which worse the disorder even worse than fiction.

## CHAPTER II

### 2.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Yellow Wallpaper and The Bell Jar are important works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Sylvia Plath. In their works there are so many variations of themes and a variety of connotations used in them. That's why those works are still discussed by many scholars. And papers written and many volumes of books were published on their works. Some were written with mental illness in literature and femininity concepts.

Anna Homoncik (2020), Mental illness and social frames in The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath and The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in this work discuss the influence of social factors on Women's life in the 19th and 20th century in the United States. In this article which found that the inequalities lead to depression and health problems. Homoncik's research based on Betty Friedan's research in the feminist mystique and analysis of the characters from the novel Bell Jar and The Yellow Wallpaper. At the beginning Homoncik presented women's position in society and the oppression of women in the 1950s and 1960s. Secondly things which contain an analysis of an analysis of the Bell Jar. Discussion focused on the main characters attitude, feelings and mental state. Finally this work describes the main character of the Yellow Wallpapers which shows social patterns imposed on women lead to depression.

Monika Truncyte (2020), The True Cost of Womanhood: A study of women's mental health in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar. In her work she investigate the depiction of women's mental health and the effect which societal ideals have on it in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper and Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar her discussion about to These two literary works openly criticise the societal standard of femininity in 19th and 20th century. The analysis views how forceful implementation of these ideals upon women can have great effects on their mental health. With support from mental health. Supported with the historical background and both author's own experience with mental illness. This argues

that impossible norms and constant male subordination of women can become too much for a woman to carry and can lead to actual insanity

Khalid Nawab (2021) A Marxist feminist study of "A Mercy" of Toni Morrison and "Bell Jar" of Sylvia Plath in his work demonstrate as a Marxist-Feminist approach as well as for data source of this dissertation. This study focused on Marxist-Feminist by Karl Marx and Engel's notion of bourgeoisie. The research methodology of descriptive qualitative reading has been used for data analyzing. Both accounts fulfill the lens of Marxist-Feminism. And, in both novels Females have been found to be subjugated by Patriarchal society, owing to the poverty they seem helpless and oppressed as well as made slave in the accounts. In A Mercy, Florens, the main character, is a young educated girl, kept under power with her mother, by the owner Jacob Vaark, but still She seems to resist against Patriarchy. Similarly, In Bell Jar, Esther Greenwood, a literary poor Female, faces a lot of challenges from men; still she is competitive and wants to pass a liberal life with her gender fellows. She has been well known as a martyr of Feminism due to her dealings for the problems and supremacy of feminism, the sexual twofold pursuit for self as well as pursuit for individuality throughout the narrative.

Alise de Bie (2021) Teaching with madness or 'mental illness' autobiographies in postsecondary education: ethical and epistemological implications. This work presents a critical interpretive synthesis of 53 articles describing the pedagogical use of madness/'mental illness' autobiographical narratives in postsecondary education. Focusing on instructor intentions and representations of student learning outcomes, findings indicate that narratives are most commonly used as 'learning material' to engage students in active learning, cultivate students' empathy, complement dominant academic/professional knowledges, illustrate abstract concepts and provide 'real'-life connections to course content. This paper contributes to a conversation across the intellectual traditions of Mad studies, medical humanities, educational research, stigma reduction and service user involvement to interrogate pedagogical uses of autobiographical narratives that remain in uncritical educational terms rather than as a matter of justice for Mad communities. While

teaching with narratives will not inevitably result in social justice outcomes, thoughtful engagement with the ethical and epistemological considerations raised throughout this review may increase this possibility by shifting when, why and how we teach with autobiography.

Meghna Kantharia, (2020), Psychoanalytic approach of Mental illness in Perkin's 'The Yellow Wallpaper' This paper explores the most familiar issue of concern, ie, mental illness. It is considered as a mental disorder or condition that affects a person's mood, thinking, feeling, and behaviour. Such a condition causes many miserable problems in one's life. It is noticed in a considerable segment of the society that undergoes some complexity related to mental conditions. In the 19th century, mental illness had been a taboo making victims often isolated from the world. Charlotte Perkins Gilman sought to bring light particularly on the subject of women's madness in her short story "Yellow Wallpaper" when the protagonist was taken to an old country house away from her family as part of her treatment. If the protagonist received treatment in early stage of the ailment then maybe her condition could have improved but the conviction of the society on this matter tends further to deteriorate her mental conditions. Her mental illness, thus, remains hidden until a moment when her condition reveals itself liberating her mentally.

Kia Jane Richmond (2018), Mental illness in young adult literature: Exploring real struggles through fictional characters. Mental Illness in Young Adult Literature: Exploring Real Struggles through Fictional Characters highlights American young adult literature published since the year 2000 that features characters grappling with mental illness. Chapters focus on mental disorders identified by the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, ADHD, and OCD. Each chapter begins with a description of a mental illness that includes its prevalence, demographic trends, symptoms, related disorders, and treatment options before examining a selection of young adult texts in depth. Analysis of the texts explores how a mental illness manifests for a particular character, how that character perceives him-or herself and is perceived by others, and what treatment or support he or she receives. The

connections between mental illness and race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and identity are examined, and relevant research from education, psychology, and adolescent health is thoroughly integrated. Each chapter also provides a list of additional readings. An appendix offers strategies for integrating young adult literature into health curricula and other programs.

Katherine Sweat (2018), *Madness as "The Divided Self" in the works of American female authors*. When R.D. Laing wrote *The Divided Self* in 1960, his goal was "to make madness, and the process of going mad, comprehensible." Laing argued that psychosis was, core, an existential problem, driven by a sense of disconnection from the world and in turn, a fragmentation of the self. This thesis uses Laing's theory of "the divided self" as a framework for examining how madness is constructed in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1890), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), and Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962). Each of these works offers a unique portrait of the "divided self" that both builds upon and enriches the understanding of Laing's theory and uses that "divided self" to highlight the greater themes of the works. These narratives not only illuminate the complicated nature of madness and psychosis but also the ways that society and the larger world contribute to these conditions, particularly in the case of women. By analyzing the ways that Laing's theory of the "divided self" functions within the texts of Gilman, Plath, and Jackson, I aim in this thesis to highlight the ability of each of these texts to confront issues of gender, social roles, and mental health while also unpacking the unique intricacies and implications of female madness in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Jayasree Kalathil, *Inscribing Madness: Another Reading of The Yellow Wallpaper and The Bell Jar*. What is a paper attempting yet another reading of two western novels in a book on women and mental health in India? The question has been at the forefront as this paper went through a considerable number of revisions. The paper attempts to examine the nexus created by three nodes: women, madness and writing. At the outset, I claim that literature can give us useful insights into the phenomenological experience of being mad in a way that psychiatry never can. The texts that I am concerned with are not just

representations of madness; they are works written by women who have experienced some kind of mental illness and have written about it in an autobiographical mode. What then interests me is the act of writing itself, what it means to write about an experience which has resounding sociocultural implications in the ways in which female subjectivity itself is defined. The primary objective of this paper is to pose questions related to women and madness, to explore the connection, or the lack of it, between femininity and insanity. One way in which literature can provide insights into the understanding of madness is by de-pathologizing it. Literature, especially the kind of texts that I am analysing in this paper, looks at the experience of being mad, raises questions of social and cultural significance about the state of being 'made as defined in terms oppositional to accepted definitions of 'normalcy'. Apart from the male scientific discourse of normalcy and madness, what do women have to say about the experience of being mad in a 'normal society? There is a vast body of literature written by women on the theme of madness. These works come across as powerful readings of the creation of female madness as an institution.

By review the literature, we came to know about the social state of the women which lead her to depression. Because of the inequalities in the society which leads to the mental disorder of the women. But now, the social status of women has been raised than before. Though the still women are affected by the disorder. Actually, it is now only the society that affects women. The family affects the women's mental health through the standard of women who were raised in society. women were carrying burdens over their limits, which leads them into frustration. The reason is they cannot able to achieve their desired height in their professional growth because they have to take care of their family too. They are in the competitive world. They supposed to run to come front without any support. This may also lead her to frustration. She wants a liberal life to live.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

### 2.2.1 *Feminism*

Current feminist criticism is not a single theory or procedure, Rather a variety of important points. However, different feminists share their assumptions and concepts which undergo the various ways that individual critics explore the factor of sexual difference and privilege in the analysis and evaluation of works of literature (Abrams and Harpham, 2009). These were helpful to know about it more. First of all, the basic view is that Western civilization is pervasively patriarchal, man fate infused with masculine assumptions and reasoning, consequently leading to a gender bias within critical treatments of literary works (Abrams, and Harpham, 2009). we see in this thesis based on the assumption that the female narrators we learn about in *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Bell Jar* are all trapped within this patriarchal ideology. By listening to them speak it will hopefully be easier to say something about who they really are, and what they in fact need, In the face of such bias and discrimination

Psychology and feminism related to each of them were the voice of women. A classic study on gender differences in moral reasoning by Carol Gilligan, explained by Kathy Davis ``Voice" referred to an ethic of care and since it tended to be expressed by women, it was, implicitly, the expression of feminine morality. Many feminist women were talked about feminine problems and their beliefs are written in their works. Mainly they talk about the gender difference as not just the unfortunate product of patriarchal order which should be attacked in the name of equality, but that women's practices and ways of knowing might also be a source of empowerment and even inspiration. (Davis, 1994:353) through their voice, they said about their culture and society and all. Davis goes on to explain the three meanings bestowed upon voice. First, voice is seen as a psychological entity, meaning that voices are the embodied connection between the psyche and the body, on the one hand, and the psyche and culture on the other. Secondly, voice refers to the feminine self, being an authentic expression of what women feel and are. Thirdly, voice is seen as an object of oppression. The feminine voice can be „muffled", „suppressed" or silenced, and in a male-

voiced culture, a woman's voice may altogether vanish. This may often be the result if a woman feels she has to be nice, or sacrifice herself for the good of others. In light of all this, Davis argues that: The metaphor „voice“ highlights the existence of an authentic feminine self. It pays much attention to a different morality. It focuses on the quiet and suppression of women in the patriarchal social order. Create upon the metaphor voice, therefore, has important implications not only for research on women's social experiences but also for feminist theory on femininity, morality, and power. (Davis, 1994:360)

The problem and the struggles which the woman undergoes that she showed in her narration her voice to word the female. I would argue that it is possible to come, at least somewhat, close to the narrator's authentic feminine selves and their struggles with quiet and suppression in a patriarchal society. Restricted and organized to subjugate women to men in all cultural domains. The female is defined by the negative reference to the male human norm, as anOther, or kind of non-man. In the process of socialization, women are taught to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology. Secondly, while one's sex is determined by anatomy, the prevailing concepts of gender are large, if not entirely, social constructs that are generated by the pervasive patriarchal biases of our civilization. By this cultural process, the masculine has come to be widely identified with traits such as rational, active, and dominating, whereas the feminine has come to be identified with such traits as passive, emotional, and timid. Thirdly, this patriarchal ideology pervades those writings which have been traditionally considered to be great literature, and which were mainly written by men for men (Abrams and Harpham, 2009). This is perhaps best exemplified by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and her insistence that she did in fact not write literature, but wrote texts with a purpose. She and her contemporaries were more or less locked out of an exclusively male literary tradition. Just as there existed separate spheres for men and women in society, there also existed separate spheres in the literature (Meyering, 1989). Furthermore, although traditional types and criteria for analyzing and evaluating literary works are presented universally and objectively, they do exist.

Psychology and feminism is the foundation of both the works *The Bell Jar* and *The Yellow Wallpaper*. One of the most significant texts in this context is Elaine Showalter says that: *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (1985). As the title suggests Showalter delineates the history of views on women's psychiatric illnesses within psychology from psychiatric Victorianism, through psychiatric Darwinism and up until, and including, psychiatric Modernism. Her intention is to contribute toward the feminist revolution in psychiatric history, with a book that not only speaks for women but also allows women to speak for themselves (Showalter, 1985). Similarly to Showalter, Lisa Appignanesi also explores the ways in which we have understood madness, badness, and sadness over the last two hundred years, in her work: *Mad, Bad, and Sad. A History of Women and the Mind Doctors from 1800 to the Present* (2008). She argues that some of that understanding has to do with how the dividing lines between the mad, bad and sad were conceived and patrolled, in particular by a growing group of professionals or „mind doctors.“ Furthermore, the book also focuses on the way in which madness, badness and sadness, and other diagnoses, were lived by various women, in addition to exploring various treatment methods. Jane Ussher, in her work: *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?* (1991), attempts to unravel the contradictions in the conundrum which asks whether feminism or psychology has the answer for women. She explores the conflicts between the radical critiques of the so-called anti psychiatrists and the feminists, and those who, faced with the needs of women to receive help, affirm the desperate pleas of women to be heard. Phyllis Chesler's landmark work: *Women and Madness*, (2005 [1972]) has also been an important text in this context. Chesler explores many themes: the mother-daughter relationship, the importance of female role models, and the psychology of incest and rape to mention a few. She too takes a look back on the history of women in psychiatry and uses interviews with women in order to support her views. Many women write about women in feminism.(Linn)

### **2.2.2 Disability**

Literary disability theory originated to attempt to dispel the inaccurate literary representation and the stereotypically negative use of disability to represent aberration within narratives. Alice Hall's *Literature and disability-*

focused on this study. Hall discusses how fictional characters with disabilities are often invoked as straightforward symbols of evil, exoticism, weakness, and ugliness (Licole 11). Hall also explains the origin of disability studies as an activism-based movement and explains that it is feminism. Disability studies originated from the feminist movement, even though feminism initially silenced disabled individuals. Feminist disability studies originated nonetheless and went through three waves of activism

Disability studies have mostly been focused on physical disability: the characters' self-awareness, particularly in narratives whose textual self-awareness is predicated on the portrayal of cognitive disability. In sum, he shows the implications and impact of disability studies on literary studies and invites a rereading of these texts in order to change the way in which people with disabilities are represented and the number of representations that exist.

As many scholars have noted, the experiences of femaleness and disability are abundantly intertwined. As Rosemarie Garland Thomson notes, "Western thought has long conflated femaleness and disability, understanding both as defective departures from a valued standard. Aristotle, for example, defined women as 'mutilated males'". G. Thomas Couser also notes that "femaleness" and "disability" are often seen as synonymous, pointing out that physical impairment is often associated with "emasculatation, even feminization". In fact, Couser suggests that women are, in some sense, already considered disabled; he argues that more attention is generally given to stories of disabled men, while "the story of the disabled woman is ignored because of its apparent redundancy".

In addition to the historical conflict over women and disability, many scholars have also explored the concerns and experiences shared by women and people with disabilities. For instance, Susan Wendell points out that many of "the same attitudes about the body which contribute to women's oppression generally also contribute to the social and psychological disablement of people who have physical disabilities". such the body and the idea should be controlled. She described her experience with multiple sclerosis, Nancy Mairs identifies

embodiment and cultural attitudes about the body as a concern shared by both women and people with disabilities. As Mairs points out, in Western cultures, bodies are treated as “subordinates, inferior in moral status” so that “[o]pen association with them shames us”. Bodies, then, are “viewed with suspicion,” and Mairs argues this is especially true for the female body “since so much of it is in fact hidden, dark, secret”. As Mairs observes, these cultural assumptions about the body lead women to feel shame for their bodies. However, with M.S., Mairs says she feels additional shame for her body, for “it is a crippled body”; therefore, Mairs argues, her body “is doubly other, not merely by the homosexual standards of patriarchal culture but by the standards of physical desirability erected for everybody in our world”). Thus, as Mairs suggests, her struggles as a woman are compounded and intensified by her experience of disability.

Many scholars started growing and examined the feminism theory and the Disabilities theories and found with the disabled women demonstrating that, as Wendell puts it, “disabled women struggle with both the oppressions of being women in male-dominated societies and the oppressions of being disabled in societies dominated by the able-bodied”. The *Bell Jar* and the *yellow wallpaper* traditionally viewed the main characters' struggles and experiences as specifically feminine, disability theory offers an additional perspective, on that the women in the work who's mental distress not only a response to patriarchal oppression but also as an additional stigmatizing experience. Although “mental illness” is not always included in discussions of disability, This made development in disability theory, which is itself a relatively new field in cultural studies. As Lennard Davis notes, “[a] though the category has existed for a long time, its present form as a political and cultural formation has only been around since the 1970s and has come into some kind of greater visibility since the late 1980s”. Writing in 1997, Thomson argues that disability as an identity category has still been largely ignored by scholars: “Although much recent scholarship explores how difference and identity operate in such politicized constructions as gender, race, and sexuality, cultural and literary criticism has generally overlooked the related perceptions of corporeal otherness”. As disability theory

after that theory developed many scholars agreed and some disagreed with the Chronic illnesses, as well as mental distress. As Peter Beresford points out, “[t]here does not seem to be any agreement in disability discourse whether or not madness, distress, and psychiatric system survivors are part of the discussion”. Thomson, adopt a much broader definition of the disability category while still retaining the differences between the various forms: Like Thomson, Wendell prefers a more inclusive definition of disability; in critiquing the United Nations’ definition of disability, she finds the fact that “they are general enough to include many conditions that are not always recognized by the general public as disabling” it was one of the positive aspects of the theory.

Wendel discussed the life-threatening illness, mental distress, from the disability category, noting that “some of the initial opposition...may have come from an understandable desire to avoid the additional stigma of illness,” including that associated with “psychological or developmental disorders”. And as Beresford, G. Gifford, and C. Harrison noted in their 1996 essay “What Has Disability Got to Do with Psychiatric Survivors?” Many disagree with this; they were unwilling to see it as disabled. They deal with the distress and experience. They did not see themselves as emotional or mentally distressed. Some disabled people don't feel that psychiatric survivors are disabled Because they have no physical disability or their condition is not permanent. There are also fears and anxieties on both sides of being lined with the negatives that are often associated with the other. (Maple 3)

### **2.2.3 Alienation**

The term alienation refers to the presence of estrangements between people’s relationships with diverse elements in their environment. The term is open to multiple psychological and philosophical interpretations. Notably, the word became popular in the nineteenth century from Hegel’s school of thought. Thinkers and philosophers later developed the notion further in the twentieth century. Hegel developed the idea of alienation by perceiving history as a dialectical revelation of spirit. In this case, the philosopher believes that the spirit is separated from the objective world; thus, it is alienated from itself. Moreover,

Hegel through his slave dialect defined alienation as the desire to have one's consciousness recognized by another without reciprocating the same.

However, Jacques Lacan expounded on the same definition; he defined it as a person's desire to acquire meaning in another's desire. The situation is possible since an individual wants his aspirations to be recognized by others. Lacan proposed that the fundamental desire of human beings is to be perceived as relevant by others. In this case, individuals are alienated since they can only understand themselves through others (Middleton, 1963). In the view of the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud suggested that "the essence of the process of repression lies, not in abrogating or annihilating the ideational presentation of an instinct, but in withholding it from becoming conscious" (Freud, 1963). In this case, past traumatizing effects remain in an unconscious state in an individual's mind and can cause traumatic effects in the future.

On the other hand, Karl Marx deviated from other thinkers in the definition of the term since he emphasized economic, political, and social forces in history. He based his ideology on capitalism, which alienates a worker from the profits of the production process (Sarva Haryana, Thiyagarajan, & Manikandan, 2017). Workers lost their ability to think of themselves as the master of their doings; to determine the integrity of their actions; to own property, which they produced. In this case, the workers were directed towards the goals and objectives of the rich, who held the means of production (Musto, 2010). Thus, they were alienated from the human aspect of life.

In the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger expounded on existential alienation, which is the limitation of the human brain towards world's perception. In this circumstance, people are limited to the "idle talk," where they discuss topics using the "they say" notion (Kanungo, 1979; Shepherd, 2015). The situation leaves them with nothing new to discover about the world. Idle talk is the human ability to understand ideologies without owning them. On the other hand, According to sociologist Melvin Seeman, alienation refers to a state at which a person becomes alienated from their environment and other people

(Mann, 2001). They are often neglected or rejected by society and their loved ones, which makes them estranged and distanced from their emotions.

#### **2.2.4 Psychology**

Psychology theory is not just literature. This is a sense of course which comes across many areas in life including storytelling not to tell everyday lives. It's our own experience. We can say this as part of our own life, we can see the relation to psychology and our need for self-telling. We need to share the experience or feeling with someone. It's not like narration. As a result, the narrative is important for creating an identity, and a meaningful life story. This self-creation does not occur in a vacuum: "much of self-making is from outside in – based on the apparent esteem of others and on the myriad expectations that we early, even mindlessly, pick up from the culture in which we are immersed" (Bruner 4). Culture and life tell us what we are in society. "The narrative gift seems to be our natural way of using the language for characterizing those deviations from the expected state of things that characterize living in a human culture" (Bruner 13). The narrative is seen as an expression of language which builds ourselves. This is what we learn from the culture and conveys our conformity to the culture we are in or the pain of our nonconformity. This is perhaps most distinctly exemplified by Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar*, but can also, of course, be seen throughout *The Yellow Wallpaper*.

Underlying this work is the understanding of depression as a psychological disorder. As described, among other things, Hilgard's *Introduction to Psychology*. Depression is characterized as a mood disorder, but in fact, there exist four sets of symptoms from which depression is diagnosed: Emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physical symptoms. A person who has symptoms can't explore everything, but in the case of severe symptoms they are in depression should be explored. All three narrators exhibit symptoms of depression, although in varying degrees. The emotional symptoms are commonly seen as the most indicative of the illness, and of these sadness and dejection are the most salient. The individual usually feels hopeless and unhappy, experiences crying spells, and may contemplate suicide. In addition,

activities that used to bring satisfaction seem dull and joyless, and the individual seems to have lost pleasure in life. The cognitive symptoms consist primarily of negative thoughts, in which low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy are pervasive. They feel hopeless about the future, blame themselves for their failure, and doubt that they can do anything to improve their life. Consequently, motivation is deteriorating: the depressed person tends to be passive and has difficulty initiating activities. Finally, the physical symptoms of depression include sleep disturbances, fatigue, loss of energy, and changes in appetite (Linn 3-4).

In transitional psychology are the depression and sadness it made the loss either of an ambivalently loved other, of the "ideal" self, or of "meaning" in one's life. The hostility that should or could be directed outward in response to loss is turned inwards toward the self. "Depression" rather than "aggression" is the female response to disappointment or loss. (Chesler) Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia,". Freud explores the ideas of the depressions

Gender discrimination made the female to the depressions. According to Freud's psychology theory, he is telling the psychological level of people. In childhood, boys and girls show similar levels of depressive disorders and depressive symptoms. Beginning at the age of twelve, however, girl's rates of depressive symptoms and disorders increase substantially, whereas boy's rates increase only slightly. Consequently, by the age of eighteen, the consistent ratio found for females with depression to males with depression is 2:1 and this ratio remains relatively constant throughout the adult life span. On the other hand, while boys' rates of depression increase only slightly from the age of twelve, it is worth mentioning that boys rates for criminal behavior and substance abuse increase at this age to a much greater degree than do girls' rates (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2006). This, in turn, could suggest that there is truth in the assumption that boys tend to turn towards aggressive behavior, whereas girls instead turn towards depression.

Moreover, there are few more reasons why women suffer because of depression. Susan Nolen-Hoeksema argues that three themes have emerged in the literature which provides the basis for contemporary perspectives on gender differences in depression: First, women experience certain stressors more frequently than do men because of women's social roles and status relative to men's roles and sociocultural status, and these stressors contribute to greater rates of depression in women. Second, women may be more prone than men to react to stressors with a depressive outcome as opposed to other forms of psychopathology, because of both biological and socialization-related differences between women and men. Third, more frequent stressors and greater stress reactivity may operate cumulatively to increase rates of depression in women compared with men. (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2006:9-10). Here we see the argument that the gender difference found in depression is more than biological difference, but the cultural and socialization-related difference, which consequently results in women's greater vulnerability to depression. These assumptions viewed concerning women in the both work *The Bell Jar* and *The Yellow Wallpaper* psychology problems of the protagonist makes sense and their suffering because of isolation from that plays their voice raised. And also they talked about this in a socio-cultural context, since it seems that these female voices of depression speak not only of themselves, but also express what they need from the world that surrounds them.

## CHAPTER III

### 3.1 THE STORY

#### 3.1.1 *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" main character The unnamed narrator has come with her husband to an isolated country estate for the summer. The house, a "colonial mansion," has been untenanted for years through some problem with inheritance. It is "the most beautiful place!" The grounds contain "hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people" (11). Despite this palatial potential to accommodate many people, the estate is virtually deserted with nothing growing in its greenhouses. The narrator perceives "something queer about it" and believes it may be haunted. She is discouraged in this and other fancies by her sensible physician-husband who credits only what is observable, scientific, or demonstrable through facts and figures.

He has scientifically diagnosed his wife's condition as merely "a temporary nervous depression"; her brother, also a noted physician, concurs in this opinion. Hence husband and wife have come as physician and patient to this solitary summer mansion in quest of cure. The narrator reports her medical regimen to her journal, together with her own view of the problem: 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. Personally, I disagree with their ideas. Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good. But what is one to do? (10). Her room at the top of the house seems once to have been a nursery or a playroom with bars on the windows and "rings and things on the walls." The room contains not much more than a mammoth metal bed. The ugly yellow wallpaper has been stripped off in patches-perhaps by the children who formerly inhabited the room. In this "atrocious nursery" the narrator increasingly spends her time. Her husband is often away on medical cases, her baby makes her nervous, and no other company is permitted to her. Disturbed by the wallpaper, she asks for

another room or for different paper; her husband urges her not to give way to her "fancies." Further, he claims that any change would lead to more change: "after the wall-paper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on" (14). So no changes are made, and the narrator is left alone with her "imaginative power and habit of story-making" (15). In this stimulus-deprived environment, the "pattern" of the wallpaper becomes increasingly compelling: the narrator gradually becomes intimate with its "principle of design" and unconventional connections.

The figure of a woman begins to take shape behind the superficial pattern of the paper. The more the wallpaper comes alive, the less inclined is the narrator to write in her journal- "dead paper." Now with three weeks left of the summer and her relationship with the wallpaper more and more intense, she asks once more to be allowed to leave. Her husband refuses: "I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger, I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know" (23). She expresses the fear that she is not getting well. "Bless her little heart!" he responds, "She shall be as sick as she pleases" (24). When she hesitantly voices the belief that she may be losing her mind, he reproaches her so vehemently that she says no more. Instead, in the final weeks of the summer, she gives herself up to the wallpaper. "Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be," she tells her journal. "You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was" (27). She reports that her husband judges her "to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper." She begins to strip off the wallpaper at every opportunity in order to free the woman she perceives is trapped inside. She becomes increasingly aware of this woman and other female figures creeping behind the surface pattern of the wallpaper: there is a hint that the room's previous female occupant has left behind the marks of her struggle for freedom.

Paranoid by now, the narrator attempts to disguise her obsession with the wallpaper. On the last day, she locks herself in the room and succeeds in stripping off most of the remaining paper. When her husband comes home and finally unlocks the door, he is horrified to find her creeping along the walls of the

room. "I've got out at last," she tells him triumphantly, "And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back" (36). Her husband faints, and she is obliged to step over him each time she circles the room. After he was raised and he found she got a new freedom.

### **3.1.2 *The Bell Jar***

The *Bell Jar* can roughly be divided into three major parts: Esther Greenwood's stay in New York City working for a women's magazine, the protagonist's return to her hometown including her suicide attempt at her mother's house, and her time at psychiatric institutions, which ultimately lead to her apparent recovery. In the first part, the reader finds out that Esther has won an internship at a women's magazine in New York City and therefore is provided with the opportunity to experience the life of a professional magazine editor or writer, two of Esther's longed for occupations. Additionally, New York is the site where Esther could have experiences with men other than her former boyfriend Buddy Willar. "I was supposed to be having the time of my life".

However, Esther's life in New York is marked by her aimlessness: thus, she wants to copy the bubbly, cheerful lives of the other twelve girls, headed by Doreen, who have also "won a fashion magazine contest, by writing essays and stories" (*The Bell Jar* 1963:3). In her pursuit to fit in, "My name's Elly Higginbottom", I said. Esther even adapts her name to Elly Higginbottom and invents a whole identity, which makes her feel safer around men. "I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest". Although her friend Doreen tries to set her up with friends of her latest boyfriend's, Esther's adventures with men end unsuccessfully, either with a rejection by a man, or worse, with attempted rape. These experiences with men are matched by her unsatisfying experiences with Buddy Willard, whom Esther believes to be a "hypocrite", whom she "would never marry [...] if he were the last man on earth" (*The Bell Jar* 1963:43).

Despite her attempts to impress her boss at the magazine, Jay Cee, Esther also fails to accomplish this goal and has a breakdown at the final photo shoot of the magazine. No matter how hard Esther tries to find her role in

society, she can neither fulfill her role at the magazine and in professional life, nor can she establish her femininity in private life. Esther's only hope remains the summer writing class, which she is sure to be accepted to and which would provide her with a certain sense of self. The second part of the novel is set in Esther's hometown near Boston, where Esther finds out that she has not been accepted to the summer writing class. Instead of taking other summer classes, Esther decides to spend her summer with her mother. Since her professional career either as an editor or as a writer has not been launched, Esther is searching for another identity, possibly the one she has always rejected: an identity like her mother's or her neighbor Dodo Conway's as a housewife and mother. "Then I knew what the trouble was. I needed experience". Suffering from sleeplessness and sinking into a state of depression, Esther consults the family doctor, her aunt's sister-in-law Teresa, who sends Esther to Doctor Gordon, psychiatrist. "The skin of my wrist looked so white and defenseless that I couldn't do it". Esther dislikes him from the beginning on and after a shock treatment quits seeing him and ultimately undertakes various suicide attempts. "To the person in the bell jar ... the world itself is the bad dream".

The third part is set in various hospitals and psychiatric institutions: first at the hospital of her hometown, where Esther regains consciousness after her last suicide attempt, then at the psychiatric ward of the city hospital, and upon the help of her benefactress Philomena Guinea at a private hospital. "I thought the most beautiful thing in the world must be a shadow". This private hospital is subdivided into different parts, according to the severity of the case. Esther first arrives at a "gloomy brick building called Caplan", where she encounters Doctor Nolan, her new, female psychiatrist (The Bell Jar 179). Contrary to her fear of being moved to Wymark, the building for more severe cases, Esther is quickly moved "to the front of the house [with] lots more sun", where she reencounters Joan, Buddy Willard's other former girlfriend, who is also a patient (The Bell Jar 1963:185). "I would be sitting under the ... bell jar, stewing in my own sour air".

Esther accepts and respects Doctor Nolan as her psychiatrist and even moves to Belsize, where the less severe cases reside. "The bell jar hung, suspended ... I was open to the circulating air". However, Esther has to undergo

electroshock therapy, but unlike before, she actually improves. With Doctor Nolan's help, Esther has a fitting for a diaphragm in order to avoid pregnancy, something she is very scared of. Subsequently she has a sexual encounter with an older professor, Irwin. Esther loses her virginity, but almost hemorrhages to death. With Joan's help, Esther undergoes medical treatment and survives. Joan however commits suicide and Esther attends her funeral. "I ... listened to the ... brag of my heart. I am, I am, I am". The novel ends with the hearing for Esther's dismissal from the psychiatric clinic.

## **3.2 ANALYSIS**

In the following section analyse "The Yellow Wallpaper" and "The Bell Jar". The analysis will be divided into four subsections: the stories which closely deal with the topic of women's mental health.

### **3.2.1 Character Analysis**

#### **3.2.1.1 Esther Greenwood**

Esther, a brilliant student, attends an elite Massachusetts women's college. In a nationwide contest in 1953, she was chosen to be one of 12 guest editors for a New York City fashion magazine. This is a great honor, but Esther finds herself increasingly depressed and delusional, and she is unable either to work or enjoy herself during the June internship in Manhattan. She returns home to find that she has been denied entry to a writing class—a serious blow to what little self-esteem she has left. Gradually Esther sinks into a suicidal state, making two halfhearted suicide attempts before she overdoses and nearly dies. Esther is sent to a psychiatric facility, where she makes slow progress. As the book ends, she is on her way to a discharge interview at the hospital.

Esther Greenwood is the protagonist and narrator of *The Bell Jar*. The plot of the novel follows her descent into and return from -madness. *The Bell Jar* tells an atypical coming-of-age story: instead of undergoing a positive, progressive education in the ways of the world, culminating in a graduation into

adulthood, Esther learns from madness, and graduates not from school but from a mental institution.

Esther behaves unconventionally in reaction to the society in which she lives. Society expects Esther to be constantly cheerful and peppy, but her dark, melancholy nature resists perkiness. She becomes preoccupied with the execution of the Rosenbergs and the cadavers and pickled fetuses she sees at Buddy's medical school, because her brooding nature can find no acceptable means of expression. Society expects Esther to remain a virgin until her marriage to a nice boy, but Esther sees the hypocrisy of this rule and decides that like Buddy, she wants to lose her virginity before marriage. She embarks on a loveless sexual encounter because society does not provide her with an outlet for healthy sexual experimentation. Plath distinguishes Esther's understandably unconventional behavior from her madness. Even though society's ills disturb Esther, they do not make her mad. Rather, madness descends on her, an illness as unpreventable and destructive as cancer.

Largely because of her mental illness, Esther behaves selfishly. She does not consider the effect her suicide attempts have on her mother, or on her friends. Her own terrifying world occupies her thoughts completely. Though inexperienced, Esther is also observant, poetic, and kind. Plath feels affection toward her protagonist, but she is unswerving in depicting Esther's self-absorption, confusion, and naïveté.

### **3.2.1.2 Unnamed Narrator**

Recently having given birth and suffering from a "nervous condition," the unnamed narrator has been prescribed total rest as a treatment. This means that she must do very little that is physically or mentally stimulating in the hope that she will regain her mental health. The confinement and inactivity of the treatment, however, only make her mental condition deteriorate. She becomes obsessed with the pattern of the yellow wallpaper in her room, and her preoccupation with its twistings and turnings serves to catch and trap her mind and imagination. Her preoccupation eventually detaches completely from reality, as her imaginations become hallucinations, and her view of other people

becomes more and more paranoid. Many readers believe the narrator's name is Jane, revealed in a cryptic comment at the very end of the story.

The narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a paradox: as she loses touch with the outer world, she comes to a greater understanding of the inner reality of her life. This inner/outer split is crucial to understanding the nature of the narrator's suffering. At every point, she is faced with relationships, objects, and situations that seem innocent and natural but that are actually quite bizarre and even oppressive. In a sense, the plot of "The Yellow Wallpaper" is the narrator's attempt to avoid acknowledging the extent to which her external situation stifles her inner impulses. From the beginning, we see that the narrator is an imaginative, highly expressive woman. She remembers terrifying herself with imaginary nighttime monsters as a child, and she enjoys the notion that the house they have taken is haunted. Yet as part of her "cure," her husband forbids her to exercise her imagination in any way. Both her reason and her emotions rebel at this treatment, and she turns her imagination onto seemingly neutral objects—the house and the wallpaper—in an attempt to ignore her growing frustration. Her negative feelings color her description of her surroundings, making them seem uncanny and sinister, and she becomes fixated on the wallpaper.

As the narrator sinks further into her inner fascination with the wallpaper, she becomes progressively more dissociated from her day-to-day life. This process of dissociation begins when the story does, at the very moment she decides to keep a secret diary as "a relief to her mind." From that point, her true thoughts are hidden from the outer world, and the narrator begins to slip into a fantasy world in which the nature of "her situation" is made clear in symbolic terms. Gilman shows us this division in the narrator's consciousness by having the narrator puzzle over effects in the world that she herself has caused. For example, the narrator doesn't immediately understand that the yellow stains on her clothing and the long "smooch" on the wallpaper are connected. Similarly, the narrator fights the realization that the predicament of the woman in the wallpaper is a symbolic version of her own situation. At first she even disapproves of the woman's efforts to escape and intends to "tie her up."

When the narrator finally identifies herself with the woman trapped in the wallpaper, she is able to see that other women are forced to creep and hide behind the domestic “patterns” of their lives, and that she herself is the one in need of rescue. The horror of this story is that the narrator must lose herself to understand herself. She has untangled the pattern of her life, but she has torn herself apart in getting free of it. An odd detail at the end of the story reveals how much the narrator has sacrificed. During her final split from reality, the narrator says, “I’ve got out at last, in spite of you and Jane.” Who is this Jane? Some critics claim “Jane” is a misprint for “Jennie,” the sister-in-law. It is more likely, however, that “Jane” is the name of the unnamed narrator, who has been a stranger to herself and her jailers. Now she is horribly “free” of the constraints of her marriage, her society, and her own efforts to repress her mind.

### **3.2.2 *The Problem Faced by the Characters of These Works***

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” and Sylvia Plath’s “The Bell Jar” depicted the plight of one woman as she suffers in a patriarchal society. As Beverly A. Hume suggests we can “interpret the narrative as one that offers the detailed and chilling account of a woman’s entrapment, defeat and movement toward madness”. My goal is not to state that all women who were deemed mentally ill in this era were diagnosed erroneously or maliciously. Rather, my goal is to observe Gilman’s and Plath’s works as a reflection of the medical neglect suffered by so many women of the era, so as to help clarify the reasons why this might have occurred, at least according to Gilman and Plath’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “The Bell Jar” brings forth the point of view of a woman who has been diagnosed with a mental illness. The short story’s and the novel’s characters present with obvious symptoms of a mental disorder, which worsen as the narrative progresses. The purpose of this chapter is to focus more specifically on the suffering that the characters endure as she undergoes treatment for these symptoms. The effects of collective psychology will be considered causal factors for the characters’ mistreatment. In exploring Gilman’s story and Plath’s novel in the context of nineteenth-century and twentieth-century societal and medical ideas.

All people experience psychological conflicts, knowingly or unknowingly. Psychological conflicts involved among the thoughts, emotions, and rational thinking. Psychological conflict or inner conflict, to Freud (in Cloninger, 2004:35), is both pervasive and important. People can both love and hate the same person. The conflict may lead to aggression. It is influenced by the structure of personality. Psychoanalysis can be analyzed by using Psychoanalysis. According to Freud "Psychoanalysis reflected changing values in the society and plays a role in the changing of values" (Pervin, 1984: 21). Freud developed a comprehensive theory in which he said personality consisted of three separate but interacting parts, the id, the ego, and the superego. In analyzing the novel, there are three parts to the analysis, namely the structure

Personality, psychological conflict and aggression. The structure of the first personality. The structure of personality is divided into three parts as identity, Ego and Superego. Identity is the source of personality, unorganized, hereditary, and its sole purpose is to reduce the tension created by primary drives regarding hunger, sex, aggression, and irrational stimuli (Feltman, 1989: 329). Ego provides a buffer between identities and the realities of the goal, the outside world. Ego is also the place for higher cognitive skills such as intelligence, thinking, reasoning and learning. The principle by which the ego operates, in which the intuitive energy is controlled to maintain a person's security and integration into society (Feldman, 1989: 329). Superego (Feltman, 1989: 329) is the ultimate personality structure for developing the rights and wrongs of society provided by an individual's parents, teachers and other important individuals. Superego acts contrary to identity. The second is a psychological conflict. Psychological conflicts in our thoughts, emotions and rational thinking. This conflict creates irrational thoughts and behavior, as Freud's particular interest as a physician was in cases where there were powers of the conscious and unconscious mind Conflict (Cloninger, 2004: 35) A third aggression. Aggression is solving the problem by ending life. Aggression involves adaptive violence in certain situations based on natural selection. According to Freud (Feast, J and Feast, GJ: 42), the purpose of

destructive impulse is to turn an organism into a mineral. Since the final mineral state is death, the ultimate goal of the aggressive drive is self-destruction.

The woman is ill, but nobody believes her. She sits in a room with yellow wallpaper, unable to convince the men around her that her suffering is real. "You see he does not believe I am sick!" she writes of her doctor husband. The tale, which follows its protagonist's slow descent into madness as she gradually discerns a woman trapped inside the yellow wallpaper of her sickroom, has long been heralded as a feminist masterpiece, a cry against the silencing patriarchy. But literary scholar Jane F. Thrailkill warns against looking too hard for those meanings in the text. Instead, she focuses on Gilman's own insistence that medical gender distinctions hurt female patients. "The Yellow Wallpaper" comes from Gilman's own struggle with a "nervous disorder," a depression for which she was treated by a physician named S. Weir Mitchell. It was a new diagnosis at the time, and when physicians treated women with complaints for which they could find no obvious source, they turned to new diagnostic techniques and treatments. Mitchell was entirely interested in the body, not what women had to say about their own symptoms. His signature "rest cure" relied on severe restriction of the body. Patients were kept completely isolated, fed rich, creamy foods and forbidden to do any kind of activity, from reading a book to going on a walk. "Complete submission to the authority of the physician" and enforced rest were seen as part of the cure.

But Mitchell was no women's specialist. In fact, writes Thrailkill, he honed his medical skills during the Civil War, treating soldiers who became "hysterical" or developed symptoms like phantom limbs after amputations, surgeries, and traumatic battles. As a result, Gilman was treated with what Thrailkill calls "a model of disease articulated through experience with male bodies." Mitchell likened the strain of the nineteenth-century home to that of war and his female patients to vampires who sucked the life out of everyone around them.

Gilman bucked hard against her treatment and Mitchell's misogynistic reign. Nonetheless, notes Thrailkill, she shared some of his views. Like Mitchell, Gilman believed that psychological conditions were physical ones. But she used

that belief to push for equality both in medical treatment and in life. Women's brains are no different than men's, she argued, and women should be able to sidestep a stifling home life in favor of a professional career.

Today, it's more common for women to document their pain through memoir as opposed to fiction. Books like *Sick* and *Ask Me About My Uterus* insist on gender parity in medicine, while also situating women's pain within a patriarchy that stifles and silences. Thrailkill encourages readers to try reading "The Yellow Wallpaper" literally. Gilman, she writes, wanted the story to shock readers—specifically, her own doctor—into changing their treatment of women.

*The Bell Jar* tells the story of a young woman's coming-of-age, but it does not follow the usual trajectory of adolescent development into adulthood. Instead of undergoing a progressive education in the ways of the world, culminating in an entrance into adulthood, Esther regresses into madness. Experiences intended to be life-changing in a positive sense—Esther's first time in New York City, her first marriage proposal, her success in college—are upsetting and disorienting to her. Instead of finding new meaning in living, Esther wants to die. As she slowly recovers from her suicide attempt, she aspires simply to survive.

Esther's struggles and triumphs seem more heroic than conventional achievements. Her desire to die rather than live a false life can be interpreted as noble, and the gradual steps she takes back to sanity seem dignified. Esther does not mark maturity in the traditional way of fictional heroines, by marrying and beginning a family, but by finding the strength to reject the conventional model of womanhood. Esther emerges from her trials with a clear understanding of her own mental health, the strength that she summoned to help her survive, and increased confidence in her skepticism of society's mores. She describes herself, with characteristic humor, as newly "patched, retreaded and approved for the road."

Esther observes a gap between what society says she should experience and what she does experience, and this gap intensifies her madness. Society expects women of Esther's age and station to act cheerful, flexible, and confident, and Esther feels she must repress her natural gloom, cynicism, and

dark humor. She feels she cannot discuss or think about the dark spots in life that plague her: personal failure, suffering, and death. She knows the world of fashion she inhabits in New York should make her feel glamorous and happy, but she finds it filled with poison, drunkenness, and violence. Her relationships with men are supposed to be romantic and meaningful, but they are marked by misunderstanding, distrust, and brutality. Esther almost continuously feels that her reactions are wrong, or that she is the only one to view the world as she does, and eventually she begins to feel a sense of unreality. This sense of unreality grows until it becomes unbearable, and attempted suicide and madness follow.

Esther feels pulled between her desire to write and the pressure she feels to settle down and start a family. While Esther's intellectual talents earn her prizes, scholarships, and respect, many people assume that she most wants to become a wife and mother. The girls at her college mock her studiousness and only show her respect when she begins dating a handsome and well-liked boy. Her relationship with Buddy earns her mother's approval, and everyone expects Esther to marry him. Buddy assumes that Esther will drop her poetic ambitions as soon as she becomes a mother, and Esther also assumes that she cannot be both mother and poet.

Esther longs to have adventures that society denies her, particularly sexual adventures. She decides to reject Buddy for good when she realizes he represents a sexual double standard. He has an affair with a waitress while dating Esther, but expects Esther to remain a virgin until she marries him. Esther understands her first sexual experience as a crucial step toward independence and adulthood, but she seeks this experience not for her own pleasure but rather to relieve herself of her burdensome virginity. Esther feels anxiety about her future because she can see only mutually exclusive choices: virgin or whore, submissive married woman or successful but lonely career woman. She dreams of a larger life, but the stress even of dreaming such a thing worsens her madness.

The *Bell Jar* takes a critical view of the medical profession, in particular psychiatric medicine. This critique begins with Esther's visit to Buddy's medical school. There, Esther is troubled by the arrogance of the doctors and their lack of sympathy for the pain suffered by a woman in labor. When Esther meets her first psychiatrist, Dr. Gordon, she finds him self-satisfied and unsympathetic. He does not listen to her, and prescribes a traumatic and unhelpful shock therapy treatment. Joan, Esther's acquaintance in the mental hospital, tells a similar tale of the insensitivity of male psychiatrists. Some of the hospitals in which Esther stays are frighteningly sanitized and authoritarian. The novel does not paint an entirely negative picture of psychiatric care, however. When Esther goes to a more enlightened, luxurious institution, she begins to heal under the care of Dr. Nolan, a progressive female psychiatrist. The three methods of 1950s psychiatric treatment—talk therapy, insulin injections, and electroshock therapy—work for Esther under the proper and attentive care of Dr. Nolan. Even properly administered therapy does not receive unmitigated praise, however. Shock therapy, for example, works by clearing the mind entirely. After one treatment, Esther finds herself unable to think about knives. This inability comes as a relief, but it also suggests that the therapy works by the dubious method of blunting Esther's sharp intelligence.

### ***3.2.3 Cause of Mental Illness Among These Characters Gone Through***

The cause of mental illness of women in the text gone through. In feminist analysis of the social context of the United States. Plath's novel and Gilman's short story is also set., Betty Freedon describes how women learned to be women and how to live up to society's expectations: "They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists of presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights." (5).

Another of society's expectations of women is that when it comes to sexuality women should wait until marriage. These expectations can be linked to patriarchal societies' views on female sexuality, which is described by Millett: "The large quantity of guilt attached to sexuality in patriarchy is

overwhelmingly placed upon the female" (54). Women's sexuality is controlled by guilt and hence in *The Bell Jar* a Yale student tells Esther that "if he loved anybody he would never go to bed with her. He'd go to a whore if he had to and keep the woman he loved free of all that dirty business" (Plath 84). He thinks it's a woman's sexuality Forbidden, she must be pure, the vision of purity in a patriarchy Millett stressed: "Women are still denied sexual freedom and biology Control her body through the worship of virginity "(54). According to Willard, a woman should be a virgin when she goes to get married, but not always. It was different for men, he had already lost his virginity. In the end Esther Novel has her first sexual experience, with a professor named Irwin, and she describes the dual standards of society and her friend as exhausting: "My virginity menu is from what I learned about Willard's scandal It weighed like a millstone around my neck ... I had been waiting for it for five years. I'm not sick about it. "(240) .Esther finally denies the expectations of the community. The woman comes to orgasm and decides to stop protecting her virginity; Thus she "Millstone" is removed.

Moreover, it is an important expectation on women in patriarchal society Childbirth. When it comes to health care in *The Bell Jar* it is controlled Patriarchy, "Plath expresses this feminist critique Medical institutions where his characters interact. She is very critical of Obstetrics and Gynecology as a patriarchal institution in which men are alienated By accepting control of women, in the guise of the beneficiary of care, Women's bodies. "(125). A clear example of this is that Patti goes to medicine As the school and Esther are curious about the "hospital scenes" she follows her friend Notice the birth of a baby. Esther describes the sounds of the woman giving birthAs "inhumane" (Plot 69). The friend tells her "The woman was on a drug. LIt will make her forget that she experienced no pain and that she swears and cries. She had no idea what she was doing because she was in a kind of twilight state Sleep "(69). This is outrageous to Esther, it is " The type of medicine a man discovers. A woman here was in terrible pain, apparently feeling every bit or she won't scream like that, she will go straight home and start another baby because you will forget how bad the medicine is. There was pain ... "(69). Emphasize childbirth and the

“twilight sleep” aspect Great influence of men on women's health. Because it is based on femininity Marriage and women giving up their lives for their family, childbirth a Key Features to Consider Women should be treated as women if they want to Children are in the hands of patriarchy during childbirth. Expectations of following the social norms of femininity are intense. Psychological effects that can lead to results with negative influence About the well-being of women, as Freidon explains: “In a New York hospital, a woman was nervous when she found out she could not breastfeed her baby. In other hospitals have refused a drug that has been proven by research to treat women who die of cancer might save their lives: its side effects were said to be unfeminine.” (6).

In this for example , women are terrified of being considered unfeminine. Esther is not afraid of disputing society and she tells her psychiatrist Doctor Nolan that she wants the same freedom as men but she feels the threat of pregnancy: “A man doesn't have a worry in the world, while I've got a baby hanging over my head like a big stick, to keep me in line” (Plath 233). While many women follow the norms and do not dispute the role society imposes on women, Esther on the other hand questions and opposes the inequalities and she refuses to conform to society's principles regarding femininity. Consequently, in the end she is instead regarded as unfeminine due to “madness”; she is branded by society due to her institutionalization and this labels her as mad and unfeminine and the root of this is Esther's desire to strive for independence. Esther knows that there are many opportunities and choices in life and since she wants a life of freedom and independence, this causes a suffocating feeling of indecision. If she makes a choice, she believes this will result in her giving up on many other choices.

She imagines all these choices as a fig-tree with many different branches: One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet... and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I could not quite make out. I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this figtree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest,

and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet. (81). The fig-tree is symbolic of her opportunities which are part of the cause of her mental illness. The fig-tree has many branches but Esther still needs to choose between femininity or madness since this is what the branches represent. The Branch with poetry represents madness according to the patriarchy and the branch with a family represents femininity. This causes frustration for Esther and she feels limited by society's norms. Regarding the patriarchy's standards of femininity, in

Her work of second-wave feminism, Moi provides a statement: "A woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both unfeminine and unnatural" (65). This can be connected to Esther's frustration when it comes to society's limitations, since the punishment for a woman who wants to write poetry is to be labelled and not accepted by the patriarchal society.

In the end, Esther rejects society's expectations of femininity since she fears the "mystique" which is described by Friedan: "The mystique would have women renounce ambition for themselves. Marriage and motherhood is the end; after that, women are supposed to be ambitious only for their husbands and their children" (289). Esther's ambitions are too high and to be feminine according to society is like a curse for women because they have to give up their own desires. Friedan depicts it as "In the name of femininity, they have evaded the choices that would have given them a personal purpose, a sense of their own being" (253). Even though Esther has a hard time to choose a fig from the fig-tree, she cannot follow the path of femininity because she cannot stand its limitations; however the fig with "a husband and a happy home and children" is not considered by society as madness. Nevertheless, if she chooses this fig she is prevented from choosing the fig which "was a famous poet". Thus, her options are femininity or madness and the option of madness does not limit her creativity. The patriarchal society of *The Bell Jar* regards creativity for women as madness while limitations on creativity are a cause of Esther's mental illness.

In the yellow Wallpaper the unnamed narrator orders to let out some steam from the extreme frustration Gilman developed from the flawed rest cure treatments, she “dramatized her experience with Dr. Mitchell in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ (1892), a journalistic/clinical account of a woman’s gradual descent into madness at the hands of her husband[,] John, a doctor who subscribes to the Mitchell treatment” (Bak 39). This is a “striking story of female confinement and escape, a paradigmatic tale which seems to tell the story that all literary women would tell if they could speak their ‘speechless woe’” (Gilbert and Gubar 868). The story demonstrates clear personal connections, for Gilman explains it herself as “a description of a case of nervous breakdown”—her own, only embellished (Gilbert and Gubar 868). She tells her own story through that of the narrator in her frightening tale. Gilman’s fear-provoking story “recounts in the first person the experiences of a woman who is evidently suffering from a severe postpartum psychosis” (Gilbert and Gubar 868). This adequately parallels Gilman’s diagnosis. The narrator’s “husband, a censorious and paternalistic physician, is treating her according to methods by which S. Weir Mitchell, a famous ‘nerve specialist,’ treated Gilman herself for a similar problem” (Gilbert and Gubar 868). The lady in the story is driven mad, because she is not allowed to do anything intellectually stimulating. She is only allowed to rest. This is exactly what Gilman dealt with in her troubling situation with the rest cure. Gilman’s story thoroughly expresses the perception of submission through the narrator’s struggles.

Gilman was a literally skilled woman and developed her character to have the same interests. The narrator speaks of hiding her writing from her husband, because he “hates to have [her] write a word” (“Yellow Wallpaper” 44). Any self-expression or talents are looked down upon. The story that Gilman so skillfully composes represents not only her personal encounter with the mistreatment of her depression but also the controlling characteristics present in her first marriage. Her first husband was very traditional and found Gilman’s intellectual endeavors to be a distraction from her true purpose in life—to be a wife and mother only. When she began to develop depression and hysteria, her husband quickly came to the unsupported conclusion that any creatively stimulating

activities would only worsen her condition and kept her from doing anything but resting. To escape the confinement she once endured, Gilman comes alive through the narrator in her famous story. There have been many speculations established by various readers and literary critics regarding the connections made between Gilman and her narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper."

The madness Gilman's narrator encounters develops "through her struggle to authorize her own life's text in light of her society's attempt to ghostwrite it for her," which "paradoxically frees as it destroys" (Bak 45). Though on the exterior "she is clinically insane, unable to ascertain why her husband should be floored by her aberrant behavior, internally she is, for the first time, devoid of that identity that her husband (and his patriarchal society) had inscribed upon her" (Bak 45). She can no longer perform the understood and expected tasks of a woman, for she has gone mad; therefore, a sense of freedom is established within her. The narrator's primary goal for each day is to free the lady trapped inside of the wallpaper, which ideally means freeing herself from her husband's dominance and control. The case was relatively the same with Gilman. She wanted to have the freedom to write and express herself creatively, not being limited by her passions, for the limitations are what caused the madness to worsen for both Gilman and the narrator of her notable short story.

The central themes of Sylvia Plath's early life are the basis for *The Bell Jar*. The entire novel is, in a sense, a memoir. Plath is living her life over again through her main character, Esther Greenwood. Like Plath, Esther is also a writer. This particular scene in *The Bell Jar* develops a parallel between its author and main character. It is "[w]hen Esther finally baptizes herself in a hot bath, [that] she is revitalized, no longer 'a dirty-scrawled-over letter.'...The cure of water is Esther's bringing her writing back to life through her body" (Boyer 202). Throughout Plath's literary career, she also used various measures to revitalize her own writing. She often used her personal life experiences for ideas on which to write and would sometimes even live through her

character(s), as she does here with Esther. Another example includes “Plath’s stay at McLean,” which “entered the literary canon...by way of *The Bell Jar*” (Beam 97). Plath describes her experience at the mental institution, McLean, through that of Esther’s in the novel. Plath is able to express her feelings about the place and the effects it had on her and her mental condition through her character, as she is in similar situations to that of Plath.

Another important author-character connection between Plath and her main character is established in the article, “The Disabled Female Body,” as Boyer discusses that they both began their lives with a “fragmented, disabled conception” of who they were (Boyer 201). Both Plath and the narrator, Esther, bravely break through the “bell jar of the confining 1950s culture” (Boyer 201). In Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, the narrator is a young girl with an overwhelmingly negative outlook on just about everything. She should be enjoying herself in captivating New York, after having won a fashion magazine contest, but instead she obsesses over the death of the Rosenbergs. They were electrocuted, and their executions were constantly being discussed on the radio. Esther cannot seem to get them off of her mind (Plath 1). She also continually dwells on achieving academic perfection. If she does not do exceptionally well at each educational endeavor she attempts, she wallows in sorrow over her failure. Like Plath, who constantly obsessed over her husband’s infidelities as well as her quite limited academic failures (she was rather intelligent), Esther seems to regularly harp on the negativities in life, allowing them to bring her down quite brutally. The concept of submission is notably present in *The Bell Jar* and also becomes a significant issue in Plath’s life. Esther, the main character, constantly feels inferior like “a small black dot,” perhaps because she is a woman (Boyer 202).

Although she breaks out of the cultural bell jar, she still suffers from an inferiority complex, because women during her time were meant to be housewives and mothers. This second-rate position in society she is expected to endure is one of many things that gradually lead to her depression. Plath encountered entrapping submission in society as well as in her marriage, and one can clearly see she conceptualizes it in her writing. She was a daring woman, choosing to write and become something rather than adhere to what

was expected of her—to be a wife and mother only. Although she succeeded with her feminist aspirations, the lack of acceptance along with other elements during her time might have caused her to see no justifiable reason to continue to live.

### **3.2.4 Conclusion given by the Author**

The final journal entry reveals the complete disintegration of the narrator's identity. She is so invested in peeling off the paper, she seems violent toward anyone else who touches it: "no person touches this paper but me,—not alive!" She says that she is tempted to jump out the window but can't because of the bars. She notes that the "bedstead is fairly gnawed," then reveals that she is the one gnawing it: "I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth." These are violent images that point to a level of madness and agitation she hasn't shown to John, or the reader, at all.

As she finally descends into madness, she seems to merge her identity with that of the woman in the wallpaper. She doesn't want to go outside because she's come to identify so much with the wallpaper. She treats the nursery as if she has escaped out of the wallpaper and arrived to enjoy the large expanse of the room for the first time. Some readers believe that the phrase "in spite of you and Jane" is a cryptic revelation of the narrator's real name. If so, it shows that she has completely left behind her old identity. Some scholars believe that Jane is an error, meant to be Jennie, and that the narrator is actually referring to her sister-in-law. Other scholars have suggested that Jane is not an error (for Jennie), but a literary reference to Charlotte Bronte's character Jane Eyre (from her novel of 1847), who helps keep a violently insane woman locked in the attic. Either way, the ending has the same connotation because Jennie represents the type of woman who embraces the status quo.

Esther asks herself this question repeatedly throughout the novel in a variety of ways. When Buddy visits, she sees that he has been wondering the same thing. His own version of the question is so Buddy-ish that Esther cannot help laughing, but then she recalls that it helps her when Doctor Nolan promises that she, Esther, did not do anything to cause Joan's death. It is a sign of

Esther's growing compassion for herself and others that she is able to answer Buddy kindly. She doesn't even mind too much when Buddy wonders whether anyone will marry her; it is a question that she herself cannot answer.

Esther does take appropriate control of one issue: she gets Irwin to pay for her emergency room visit but refuses to see him again. She suffers the injury, and Irwin can suffer the payment, but she is not going to put him in charge of her sex life. It is not the most satisfying resolution emotionally, but nothing readers have seen of Esther suggests that sex is something she is ready to deal with on an emotional level. Nor is she really ready for the future—but who ever is? Esther can only see "question marks" ahead, but adults know that the future is definitely out of their control. Her seams are straight, her shoes cracked but polished. She is in charge of what she can manage, and that will have to do.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4.1 COMPARISON

#### 4.1.1 *Authors Personal Connections with their protagonist:*

##### 4.1.1.1 *Gilman*

Gilman gives her explanation for the writing of “The Yellow Wallpaper” in a nonfiction literary work she composed entitled, *Why I Wrote “The Yellow Wallpaper.”* She explains her reasoning for the story: “the story of the story is this: For many years I suffered from a severe and continuous nervous breakdown tending to melancholia—and beyond” (872). She goes on to tell her readers that “[d]uring about the third year of this trouble [she] went, in devout faith and some faint stir of hope, to a noted specialist in nervous diseases, the best known in the country”(872). The specialist discovered that Gilman had simply overworked herself. He did not feel women were meant to be as active as Mrs. Gilman was—that the only cure for her condition would be that of rest. And so, the specialist sent her home to rest and gave her the following orders: to “live as domestic a life as far as possible,” that she was to “have but two hours’ intellectual life a day,” and to “never to touch pen, brush, or pencil again as long as [she] lived”(Gilman, *Why* 873) Gilman claims to have followed the directions for “some three months and came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that [she] could see over” (“*Why*” 873). She knew this rest cure would be the end of her if she did not attempt to strategize another option for recovery.

Gilman began to consider her choices, for she knew that she could not take any more forced rest without going insanely mad. In order to rediscover the sanity she once had, Gilman states that she “went to work again—work, the normal life of every human being; work, in which is joy and growth and service, without one is a pauper and a parasite” (“*Why*” 873). This change in her resulted in “ultimately recovering some measure of power” (“*Why*” 873). She regained her strength through the invigorating process of intellectual activity. In the “narrow escape” to freedom through work—her creative outlet—that Gilman found “naturally moving,” she composed “The Yellow Wallpaper,” with its superfluities

and flourishes, to “carry out the ideal [of entrapment through forced rest and sexist daily guidelines] and sent a copy to the physician who so nearly drove [her] mad” (“Why” 873). She wanted him to know what his treatments truly did to her and hoped he would stop treating his patients with such flawed methods. Supposedly, Gilman later found out that the physician “altered his treatment of neurasthenia since reading ‘The Yellow Wallpaper.’” Gilman expresses her feelings toward the meaning behind this inspirational piece of literature: “It was not intended to drive people crazy, but to save people from being driven crazy, and it worked” (“Why” 873). This was her attempt to save others from the traumatic encounter she agonizingly endured from the ineffective rest cure. Not only did she wish to save others with her story, but Gilman reveals an ulterior motive “in her autobiography, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, that her intended reason for writing this Gothic tale was ‘to reach Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, and convince him of the error of his ways’” (Bak 45). She wished for him to know of his wrong-doings and hoped that he would alter his methods of psychological treatments. She found it rather unfair that she had to suffer such agony on account of his flawed methods and felt no one else should ever have to go through the overwhelming distress she underwent.

Gilman has been termed a “feminist” as well as a “medical iconoclast,” who clearly did not claim the “triumph of hers in narrowly therapeutic terms.” She very well knew that the “cure for female despair must be spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as social.” Gilman wrote “The Yellow Wallpaper” in order to demonstrate that even when a supposedly ‘mad’ woman has been sentenced to imprisonment in the ‘infected’ house of her own body, she may discover that, as Sylvia Plath was to put it seventy years later, she has “a self to recover, a queen. (Gilbert and Gubar 869) In other words, a woman must retain a greater sense of self to better her once disabled mentality. Once she has accepted her flaws, loving oneself and not wishing to change for the pleasing factor of anyone but one’s own self, she can then discover ways in which she can recover from her self-harming issues.

Although Gilman is best known for “The Yellow Wallpaper,” she was rewarded for many other literary achievements. Like her chilling story she is most famous for, she had underlying meanings behind other works as well. As noted in the biographical section of this study, Gilman had firm beliefs about death, and she “used literary representations, both fictional and poetic, to proselytize her views” (Knight 148). She felt that “by writing frequently on the subject, and in different genres and forums, [...she would] convert at least some readers to her cause” (Knight 148). Euthanasia, or assisted suicide, was one concept she truly felt should be looked into further. She aspired that if enough people read and came to understand her views on such a controversial topic, change could be a possibility.

#### **4.1.1.2 Plath**

Sylvia Plath had multiple reasons for her composition of *The Bell Jar*. Her novel “deals with Esther Greenwood’s life in the 1950s,” which is really Plath’s reflection on her own life during this era (Boyer 200). Demonstrated within her novel, it is not too difficult to comprehend that before feminism’s heyday in the late sixties and seventies, Plath was assessing the plight of the young woman artist at mid-century who was attempting to overcome the values of domesticity in a uni-polar milieu. (Boyer 200)

If Esther and her friends in New York City are wronged, “it is partly due to the mindset prevalent in those times: women should stay at home, cook meals, clean house, and bear children” (Boyer 200). Instead, the main character and her friends are living modernly, not adhering to what is expected from them as women. Plath was quite open-minded in her writing, for through the text, “Plath describes the battle that Esther Greenwood must wage in order to hear her own muse and create her own language” in the world. Esther is far from an ordinary girl of her time, and though “interminably abused and temporarily handicapped [from a societal perspective], she, like Plath herself at her peak, does emerge into her own ‘room,’ beyond the stifling enclosure of the bell jar” (Boyer 200-201). Being such daring women, both Plath and her narrator manage to escape the entrapping expectations of their time. Regardless of what their culture expects of

them, they express themselves creatively as they wish and are not afraid to show dissatisfaction with the roles they are expected to uphold. They break through their cultural bell jar, becoming the stepping stones of societal progress soon to come in terms of the rights and treatment of women. Plath did not necessarily come out openly to explain her reasoning for writing this powerfully striking novel, but ideally, the accomplishment of the novel [The Bell Jar] is in part that its author was able to break through the bell jar of the confining 1950s culture, to find her voice and her spirit as she identified herself as a writer (Boyer 201). She found them by expressing herself through her created character, Esther. She could finally tell the world how she felt, having the ability to literally let out all of her emotions and past troubles. Not only was the completion of the novel a relief for Plath, but also came with much literary fame, for her novel still sells quite successfully today. She wrote this novel to escape from her frustrations as a struggling poet, as well as to reveal her complex and troubling story to her readers and the world as a whole.

An example of such complexity was that of the agonizing aftermath of her marriage, for Plath then found a new and devastatingly influential voice, the voice of “Lady Lazarus,” “Daddy” and the other vastly terrifying poems that would become Ariel, the book on which her literary status finally rests. Plath “became, as if refined by the pain, the poet she had always dreamed she would be.” Plath, along with the many inconsistencies of her mental health, could “certainly be difficult, and unquestionably the presence of Hughes, a major poet in his own right, accelerated Plath’s development as a writer” (Grossman 2). Writing was her escape from her overwhelmingly racing mind. Telling her story through young Esther gave Plath the relief that her voice would finally be heard. She also came alive through her notable poems, establishing a true voice in her writing—one that launched her fame and success for years to come.

#### **4.1.2 Comparison of the Characters from the Text :**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ and Sylvia Plath’s novel, ‘The Bell Jar’, scrutinises how both women, the unnamed narrator and Esther, become mentally unstable. Both protagonists exploit their real life

situations in their story and novel to emphasise how being a woman living in a patriarchal society has caused mental breakdowns. Moreover, they make attempts to explore and understand their suffering of depression and the possible ways to overcome it. The short story is a reflection of personal experience in which Gilman identifies herself with the unnamed character. In 1886, in her first marriage and not long after the birth of her daughter, Gilman was stricken with a severe case of depression

It cannot be denied gender and society plays one of the biggest roles in the hysteria of the two characters. Both women aim to break out of the stereotypes of their times, although find it difficult to do this. In 'The Yellow Wallpaper' we are introduced straight away to the narrator, and it is clear she is an intelligent, well-spoken and creative woman from her use of punctuation and descriptions. [1]In the 1890s, "The New Woman" concept took off, where women started to aim for roles outside the home that used their intelligence. However, this was still looked down upon from men and other women, who believed a domestic housewife was the correct job for a lady. Women were seen to be 'normal' if they were passive and submissive while those who chose to move beyond those boundaries were seen as 'abnormal'. It is possible the narrator's hysteria stemmed from her being looked down upon and not being treated as an equal; it is certainly a reason her depression has sustained and not improved. The narrator states how her husband "laughs" (1997, p1) at her, but that "one expects that in marriage." (1997, p1) John patronises her by laughing, making the narrator seem like a dependent child. This idea is further reinforced with Gilman's choice to not give her narrator a name, possibly to dehumanise her and emphasise how women were thought of to be not needed. Women were subservient to men in the 1890s, however especially more so in marriage. Marriage may have connotations of love and families, but from a feminist view, for a woman marriage is a duty. The narrator seeks to challenge her husband and society around her by writing down her thoughts and feelings "in spite of them"; she has to be "sly" or is met with "heavy opposition." (1997, p2) She has resorted to writing behind her husband's back in order to express herself, as her skills are limited by those around her. She is seen as a fragile being without

much use, but remains strong through fighting back against society, even if it's only through her writing. Perhaps it is the desire for independence that the narrator strives for; Esther also is blocked from her own independence as her mother tries to involve herself in her life, which could lead both characters to a state of hysteria.

Feminists may argue it could be possible the narrator's illness stems from oppression in a patriarchal society, where she is suppressed by a male dominant (her husband), and finds herself getting "unreasonably angry" (1997, p2) with him. This reveals the fact Gilman's narrator does not know why she becomes angry, and blames this "sensitive" (1997, p2) side on her "nervous condition" (1997, p2). Psychoanalysts may view this as a subconscious desire to argue back with her husband, and on a larger scale, the social order. [2]Freud's idea of penis envy came about in the late 19th century, where he assumed women were jealous they did not have a penis, and in turn became resentful towards men. In this case it may explain the narrator's unexpected anger at her husband. [3]For Beverly Hume, Gilman's story is a "complex record of a woman's oppression". This is evident throughout her entries, which are only written down and not communicated to anybody else; as the narrator knows others would disapprove. Furthermore, the narrator identifies strongly with the woman behind the wallpaper, as she too is trapped, like the narrator in society. The narrator states how she "ran to help her" (1997, p13) as she hopes for the figure to escape. At this point she does not seem to be aware the lady behind the paper is symbolic of her situation, and the oppression she has suffered through. By the end she has torn all the wallpaper down, possibly proving that nobody can keep her locked up and allowing her a sense of freedom, and the strength of her defiance.

A feminist may view the act of "creeping" (1997, p15) over her husband as the narrator finally gaining power in society, and the beginnings of possible changes in the patriarchal system. However, if she has truly gained the power in her situation it could be argued that she no longer needs to creep, so one may wonder why the narrator feels she must continue to do so, and not stamp or run if she is truly free. Perhaps even though she has escaped her husband, she

knows she still has to face others like him in society outside of the wallpaper. Nevertheless, Gilman's narrator proves herself to be the stronger gender and person in the situation, as she reverses the gender roles existing at the time, her becoming dominant while her husband takes on a weaker emasculated form by "fainting"(1997, p15), something which women would have been expected to do when suffering from hysteria. This gives a sense of accomplishment to the narrator and further proves she has the ability to be strong and beat her condition.

#### ***4.1.3 The Events of the Work Compared to Real Life***

Real life events already undergo the "encounter with the Real" that is overwhelmed and embodies the void in this moment too, recognizing herself in this void as the objects. Like Esther, many schools and college going students are also affected by these disorders because of mental breakdown. Esther has been working at the magazine for a few days and is beginning to suffer from feelings of isolation and discouragement. She cannot focus on her work or enjoy the special treatment she and the other contest winners receive. She finds that her college successes do not help her navigate the rigid social expectations placed on women. Many students like Esther were successful in school and colleges but not that much explored in the job. They were isolated and discouraged by fellow people so they were frustrated.

The frustration of women leads them to take drugs and drinks more. Unstable men in their life like Esther. They have the question like Esther Why do women have to stay pure when men do not?. Then their depression level increased and they stopped doing their desires. And started stuck at home in a sluggish suburb. And they were dangerously depressed. At last Esther sees a psychiatrist, Doctor Gordon, who recommends that she have shock therapy at his private hospital. The treatment is horrific, and it does not help. Esther decides that the only way to end her suffering is to kill herself. Slitting her wrists seems like the least painful choice, but Esther cannot bring herself to carry it out. Hanging herself is impossible without a beam for the rope. Drowning in the ocean seems too cold. Like Esther's life even today many were mistreated by

psychiatric. After several days Esther is found and taken to a Boston city hospital. The psychiatric ward in the city hospital is a nightmare, and Esther refuses to cooperate with the staff. Hearing of her suicide attempt, Esther's college scholarship sponsor arranges to transfer her to a private hospital and pay for her treatment there. The new place is comfortable and attractive; Esther is free to wander the grounds, and she likes her female psychiatrist, Dr. Nolan. A high school acquaintance who also dated Buddy, Joan Gilling, resides at the same hospital, and they form a friendship of sorts. Esther is prescribed shock and insulin therapy, but this time, the shock treatment is performed correctly. As Esther begins to recover, she discusses her sexual conflicts with Dr. Nolan, who sends her to a doctor for birth control. This is the way to cure from the deceased one we have to give their desire then they'll recover from the illness.

The narrator has recently given birth and has come down with a "nervous condition" for which she has been prescribed rest. This rest, however, does not simply mean taking it easy but involves the near-total elimination of all stimuli, including interacting with people, reading, writing, and even seeing her own child. Two other women have come to help with child care and domestic tasks. Writing secretly, the narrator tells the story of her confinement in an upper room of the house—a room that was once a nursery and thus has barred windows. The room has tattered yellow wallpaper with an intricate pattern the narrator finds irritating. Weeks pass, and the narrator finds that her anxiety and depression have increased and even the smallest tasks have become overwhelming. She asks John if they can leave the house, but he doesn't think it is practical or reasonable to give in to this "fancy." The narrator continues to obsess about the wallpaper, finding it both appalling and mesmerizing. She spends hours each day looking at it, tracking it with her eyes and trying to follow the pattern to its stopping point. This is how many women struggles as a mother and a wife.

#### **4.1.4 Characters of the Both Work Compared with Real Life People :**

In order to let out some steam from the extreme frustration Gilman developed from the flawed rest cure treatments, she “dramatized her experience with Dr. Mitchell in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ , a journalistic/clinical account of a woman’s gradual descent into madness at the hands of her husband[,] John, a doctor who subscribes to the Mitchell treatment” (Bak 39). Today many of the people were frustrated because of their family, relationship, society and in their work. Most of the women are working nowadays. Women get the equal rights but also some don't get any kind of freedoms in their family and the surrounding were mistreated by the society. Moreover women's needs to support their family financially and take care of their children and husband. They do not even get any support from their family. Their frustration led them to depression which developed the mental illness."These nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing", which shows in The Yellow Wallpaper and The Bell Jar.

Women’s health, motherhood, mental breakdown and its treatment, as well as feminism and gender relations. These were the main problems of the women's and the real life story of women through the investigation of the mental illness peoples. The woman I met there is around the age of 21 one she was affected by mental disorder. Because of her relationship failure she falls into depression which leads her to mental illness. Many people mistreated her because of illness. Her own family wasn't able to take care of her so they forsaken the woman. She was raped by the men and she was rescued by our Tamil Nadu government. After that she was sent to the home where the people who have mental illness stayed. There she also faced so many problems she mistreated her. There they don't have enough facilities“temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency”. They need to mingle with everyone they need care and love this is the medicine they actually need. But they were alienated by others. They get more anger the society.The house is “queer”, long abandoned and isolated. All women were seen by physicians as susceptible to ill health and mental breakdown by reason of their biological weakness and reproductive cycles. And those who were creative and ambitious were deemed even more at risk.

The protagonist of the story might have been suffering from puerperal insanity, a severe form of mental illness labelled in the early 19th century and claimed by doctors to be triggered by the mental and physical strain of giving birth. The condition captured the interest of both psychiatrists and obstetricians, and its treatment involved quieting the nervous system and restoring the strength of the patient. The people who have the mental illness are like a kid they needed someone to take care of.

At the end of the story the narrator takes the opportunity of her husband's absence to lock the door and tear away the wallpaper, the women now creeping outside in the garden. Like the yellow wallpaper the people whom I met and through investigation I come to know in The Yellow Wallpaper the narrator misbehaving with the Wallpaper like. There I come to know those who have those disorders. Everyone has this kind one woman. She hates the beauty where she found the beautiful women she started to attack. Another woman always walks around the hall. Like this there I met every one in different Manners of behaviour.

## CHAPTER V

### 5.1 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, we see the madness of women who were mistreated in the social standards of femininity and regard them as insane in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. This literary analysis supports the initial claim that women who do not conform to or live up to these impossible ideals are seen as unstable and dangerous to themselves and others. The pressure put upon women can become too heavy, which can eventually lead to actual insanity, as depicted in the two works. Although these stories were written during different centuries, women's social situation was very similar. Motherhood and wifehood were seen as the main goals in a woman's life. Education was only necessary if it improved the woman's ability to take care of her home and her family. A woman who instead wanted to pursue her career was seen as unfeminine and neurotic.

In fictional characters' life, The unnamed narrator in Gilman's short story and Esther in Plath's novel struggle to conform to this idea of femininity. Their families, friends, and the general population push them towards the traditional suburban housewife lifestyle, but internally both women feel that it is not the right path for them. John, the unnamed narrator's husband, and doctor try to keep her away from the outside world so as not to over stimulate her, while in reality, she feels that work and social interactions will help her. Esther does not want to be a mother and a regular housewife. Instead, she wants to be a successful poet, but her family and her boyfriend do not approve of that and push her towards the traditional path for women. Without receiving any support from their surroundings, the protagonists go mad in their respective stories. However, society's response to that is to blame them for not following the rules and for being disobedient to their biological calling. In conclusion, women in fiction who do not fit the mold of an ideal female are treated as inadequate and personally blamed for being different. Women during the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with similar experiences to those of the protagonists were treated as social outcasts and had no place in their respective societies.

The two female narrators we have come to know in the two preceding texts are all very different. Time separates them, as they live their lives at fairly different points in history. Furthermore, they all have to contrast economic and social statuses, creating perhaps a continuum with the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" on the one side as the representative for the upper class, whereas Sasha Jansen exists at the other, distant end, without money, respect or country. Their diagnosis differ, or perhaps the lack thereof, and their reasons for depression are varied, and perhaps many. In addition, their coping mechanisms are diverse, from writing to drinking to withdrawal from the world. In essence, they all have different needs, and that is what their voices express. However, no matter how much these two narrators differ, the interesting thing is how much, despite this, they actually are alike. In this conclusion, I will take a closer look at some of the most significant similarities between these two female voices of depression. Behind every narrator, there is an implied author, and behind the implied author there is a historical author. Despite the temptation to draw correlating lines between the historical author and the narrator it will suffice to argue that the historical author might have shared some views with the implied author, which thus transferred over to the narrator in some form or another.

As such, I expect that the inferred creator composed with a type of direction, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman herself portrayed it, which thusly gives the narrator voice a reason. The authorial purpose in these two writings may from my perspective, in addition to other things, be communicated through these female voices of sorrow. Therefore, despite the fact that these voices express various requirements, they do share a huge perspective practically speaking: they should be tuned in to. By the making of these two first-individual female voices the suggested writer makes a nearby proclivity between the content and the peruser which makes it hard not to tune in, in this manner requesting such a consideration that is required with the goal for things to change; in regular day to day existence, in writing, on the planet. The first step is to listen.

As Elaine Showalter so accurately put it, with her final sentences in her work *The Female Malady*: Throughout the history of psychiatry, there have been many male liberators – Pinel, Conolly, Charcot, Freud, Laing – who claimed to

free madwomen from the chains of their confinement to obtuse and misogynistic medical practice. Yet when women are spoken for but do not speak for themselves, such dramas of liberation become only the opening scenes of the next drama of confinement. Until women break for themselves, the chains that make madness a female malady, like Blake's "mind-fog"d manacles," will simply forge themselves anew. (Showalter, 1985:250)

Thus this, I would argue, is the intention behind these female voices, to speak for themselves and be listened to, in order to break some chains. No matter what the authorial intent may be beyond this, at least the three narrators's voices have in common this first major part of the presumed authorial intent; to get attention. Furthermore, the close affinity between the text and the reader created mainly through the use of first-person narration and the fact that the narrator remains the focalizer throughout the text, which is true in the case of the two texts presented here, also facilitates a stronger sense of sympathy towards the narrator. This being, perhaps, because we as readers get to know all the narrator's" thoughts and views, and is, possibly, more intimate than a third-person narrator might be. It creates a bond between text and reader, so to speak, which makes it possible for the reader to emphasize further with the narrator and consequently award her sympathy. Such an establishment of sympathetic feelings is present in the two texts and is important because not only does it evoke memories of similar experiences in the reader which creates an even stronger affinity between narrator and reader, but it also highlights the injustices faced by these depressed females voices. Thus, the reader is able to recognize the significance of these voices, and perhaps the significance of her own voice, and the importance of speaking and being heard in order for things to change. Consequently, establishing sympathy with the narrator's side the voices towards being heard.

The idea that depression stems from a loss of an „ideal" self seems to be applicable to the two narrators. In "The Yellow Wallpaper" the narrator struggles with the loss of her creative, free self. that felt she still had possibilities in life. Esther Greenwood might be said to battle with the Her mental state. However, in Esther"s case the anger is what is most notable; the anger towards her father for

deserting her, and the anger towards her mother for expecting that she will be just like her. The anger, I would argue, can also be heard in the voices of the two other narrators, albeit not so obviously. It makes sense to surmise that the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper," in addition to mourning the loss of her „ideal“ self, also feels anger towards the world and the patriarchy for refusing her the possibilities to express herself and choose her own individual path in life.

Another phenomenon the two narrators have in common is the splitting of the self into two halves. Esther Greenwood experiences the most conscious splitting, as she decides to create another self in order to avoid being her real self. Still, her creation can be said to be a part of her real self, as it represents the freer, unbounded self she wishes she could become. In Esther's case, however, her doubles can be seen as aspects of herself, split images of who she is or who she wants to be, although this is not an actual splitting of the self. The narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" splits into two selves as she starts seeing a woman trapped behind the wallpaper. The other-self being, doubtlessly, an image of how she herself feels; trapped and hidden. Thus, it makes sense to argue that in two cases the splitting of the self is an extension of the voices of depression. They all express what they need and what they can no longer live with. In order for them to become a unified self again, their needs have to be met, forging a bond between the seemingly mutually exclusive divided selves. The splitting of the self can also be seen as a sign that the narrator lack a secure feeling of identity.

In "The Yellow Wallpaper" the wallpaper can be said to represent a mirror of sorts, mirroring the unconscious feelings of the narrator. She feels bound by rules and admonishing commands, wanting to exercise her free will and creativity. The woman behind the wallpaper is the woman she has become; subdued, but still rattling the cage. Consequently, the lack of a secure feeling of identity and the mirror images are all, to some extent, a continuation of their voices of depression, signifying a longing for a unified self, where all the conflicting aspects and emotions inherent in them can merge together, constructing a more balanced being.

Furthermore, two narrators have to struggle with the fact that they are being silenced. The most obvious example is, of course, the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper." She is not allowed a voice, not when it comes to taking a part in her own treatment plan and not even when it comes to writing in her diary. She defies that restriction, however, but not without paying a price. Esther is silenced by others' expectations and perhaps her own. However, she too faces the voices of authority who claim to know better what is good for her, than she does. The quintessential voice of authority is perhaps Dr. Gordon, who never listens, but claims to know what she needs despite this. Thus Dr. Gordon mirrors John, the authorial male doctor who claims to know how to heal his wife in "The Yellow Wallpaper." There is no surprise, then, that two narrators harbor a wish to step out of the female role and become voices of authority in their own right. This is one of the reasons why it can be argued that their depression is, to some extent, a covert rebellion against patriarchy. Resembling the slave psychology where the only way to be able to escape was to show signs of exhaustion, the covert rebellion can also be seen as evidence of the fact that women tend to become depressed, rather than to show signs of aggression. Thus their depression too is a form of anger towards the established order of society, in which they are silenced. The narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper," on the other hand, continues to write despite the rules, and Esther gains her sexual freedom. In other words, they all continue to rebel against patriarchy, wishing for a world without restrictions based on gender. Consequently, these female voices of depression highlight important aspects in a text, aspects that should not be forgotten. These voices deserve an audience, and to be taken seriously.

This desire to be heard is, perhaps, most apparent in "The Yellow Wallpaper" and *The Bell Jar*. The narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" needs to find her voice in order to heal, and Esther does not start to heal properly before she finds someone willing to listen. Nevertheless, her suicide attempt never quite kills the urge in her to be heard, to be taken seriously, to carve out the life she wants for herself. Consequently, it is vital to listen to these voices and to learn. These voices should not only be taken as expressions of needs that existed a long time ago. Even in our own time, these needs should be taken seriously. It

does not take too much awareness to notice the male voices of authority that still, in our own day and age, are out there, wanting to silence and hide what is not just. Thus these voices should be brought into our own lives; as a warning, an emphasis, and as a reminder. Not only to remind us of the importance of being listened to in society but to remind us of the importance of listening to ourselves.

In a way, these two female voices of depression accentuate the needs we all have, and their depression furthers this accentuation. We all need to find our voice, as the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" exemplifies. Furthermore, we all need to break free from expectations imposed on us, expectations that hinder our freedom. In a sense then, all three texts exemplify aspects of the same thing, needs inherent in a human soul, perhaps even more so, in a woman's soul. These two female narrators are at the end of their rope, so to speak, forced to deal with their needs; there is no escape. Most of us do try to hide until there is no hiding anymore. Thus, these female voices of depression can help to highlight aspects of ourselves we perhaps were not aware of, helping us to break free on our own. Consequently then, I would argue that these female voices of depression are a most valuable and significant aspect of a text, adding a dimension in any narrative that is worth listening to. Listen and learn, as they say. These female voices of depression bring into attention facets of life and individuality that should be listened to and taken seriously. Listen and learn.

This study has demonstrated many aspects of the lives and legacies of two successful women authors, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Sylvia Plath, who was stricken by mental illness and express it in their literature. In examining the family lives and marriages of these two women, in order to get an inside look at their developing mental health issues and outlooks on life and its purpose, I found that they were each victim of control and dominance in their marriages, and yet, they did their best to discover an escape through writing. Both women often questioned the importance of their lives but were rather intrigued by the concept of death, having no fear of its exploration. Gilman's and Plath's academic and literary accomplishments are very similar: they each strove in life to have the ability to be more than just a wife and mother and to succeed

through their creative endeavors. The connections the authors develop literally with their characters are how the authors reached their audiences. They told their own personal stories through that of their characters, hoping to find some sort of relief for themselves and/or to save others from going through the same troubling situations as themselves.

Although in the end, both women could not endure the pain of their distress, choosing to end their own lives, they each live on through the lasting effects they have had on their many dedicated readers and followers. I have come to learn that, though these women had separate emotional troubles, they each were able to come alive in their writing and truly make a significant difference in the world through their self-expression and aspiring goals to be influential individuals in society.

The problems of women led to mental illness. In my view, I saw the power play on the "yellow wallpaper" She is reluctant to listen to her caregiver's wishes and needs. He assesses that he is inactive The treatment will benefit his health, but he believes he should be involved in the community Engage in contacts and intellectual activity. Whereas The Bell Jar has Power Play Caused by forced care and lack of trust in her caregivers. The primary reason why the protagonist uses Power Play is that she feels she has lost control of her life? Thus she uses Power Play to regain control. The second reason he uses Power PlayBenefit from Power Play. The last reason is the survival of the protagonist's Intuition. Finally, if the protagonists are honest with their caregivers, the caregiver has gained insight into the mental problems of the protagonists, through which they would have been able to help them. A female figure that revolted against her traditional role was quickly labeled as "mad", regardless of whether she had experienced it.

"Postpartum or other depression heard voices, or was 'hysterically paralyzed; whether she was well-educated and well-to-do, or an illiterate member of the working poor; whether she had led a relatively privileged life or had been repeatedly beaten, raped, or abused in other ways; whether she accepted or could no longer cope with her narrow social role; whether she had

been idle for too long or had worked too hard for too long and was fatigued beyond measure-she was rarely treated with kindness and medical expertise".

It comes down to women, speaking out when they notice a lack of continuity in the care shown women suffering through postpartum symptoms that affect one in five women that go through birth. Here the fictional characters are examples of real-life people through incredible courage and an ability to look beyond the stigma of depression and psychosis that the author was able to share her story with the world in hopes for awareness and change. This is a sign of growth in a society that is known to shun women for speaking of having any postpartum difficulties, saying it's unnatural for a mother to feel that way about pregnancy and her child. More and more, women are taking full ownership of their physical and mental health, finding other means for surviving and thriving in the historically male-dominated society. The only way forward is to acknowledge the need for attention and growth in the medical community to support the moms of the present and protect the mothers of the future.

Each protagonist's sense of self comes from comparisons to other people or societal standards—whether it be against a husband's successor another woman's appearance—and popular values. Femininity and sexuality are, throughout her collection of fiction, the subjects which bring Plath's protagonists the most self-image issues, and magazine of the time remained a center for the archetypal female which her protagonists idealized. The male gaze shifted their self-perceptions and resulted in the suppression of sexual expression, domestic desires, and image insecurities. Plath explores this idea of the detached woman in all her fiction, through various outside structures which alienate each woman and dictate their choices. Ultimately, their quests for a personal identity lead to their detached attitudes, numbed accounts of mental traumas, a sense of limbo, and, in many cases, a deterioration in mental well-being.

Mental illness of women in the fictional character and the real-life characters. *Madwomen* shows the problem they undergo in their day-to-day life. And the solution given by the author in *the yellow wallpaper* Gilman said that the women overcome everything by her power recover from the illness. In *the bell jar*

Plath the solution that she did whatever she wants and she gets recover from her illness. For real-life people, they need someones to help and love. And good treatment for their life. Many scholars argue that women were needed equality. obviously today many get equal rights but even some women get the freedom to improve in their careers and succeeded in it. but they were failed in the family life. This causes too many problems in family life. they don't have enough time to do all the works to maintain the home and the office so they are in depression which is the main reason for the mental illness. In this patriarchal society, they wanting for equality. The freedom to stronger enough to lead their do all their wish. this will help our women out of mental illness. omen must be life.

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