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SCHIZOAFFECTIVE DISORDER DEPRESSIVE TYPE IN “THE YELLOW WALLPAPER” BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

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Schizoaffective Disorder Depressive Type in “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

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ABSTRACT

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” is a literary work of empowering women and serves to explore the human psyche upon women in the 19th century. The author wanted to create a story that brought people’s attention to the rest cure treatment, and how it was not beneficial for the mind. It actually has detrimental effects on one’s mind, because the rest cure isolates that person in a room with nothing to do but to essentially “go crazy.” Therefore, the author wanted to warn people about this form of treatment through the downward spiral of the narrator’s mental health in the story. In my presentation, I will use other literary references and descriptions given from the short story to show the audience evidence of the narrator’s behavior with the character diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder depressive type. To do this, I plan on discussing the criteria of the diagnosis from the DSM-V and how these criteria are met in the short story. This criterion includes a major depressive episode and schizophrenic symptoms. The narrator of Gilman’s story displays her depressive mood within the story by crying all day at nothing; she displays her schizophrenic symptoms when she experiences delusions, hallucinations, and social withdrawal. I also plan on discussing how the sociocultural factors involving the rest cure treatment given to the narrator and her relationship with her husband further diminishes her mental health. This mental instability that she experiences causes much distress in her life to the point where she could not take it anymore.

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