

Student's Name

Course Name

Professor's Name

Date

The Thematic Representation of Gender and Patriarchy in Perkins's *The Yellow Wallpaper*

The Yellow Wallpaper is a text that explores the complexities of mental illness. Beyond the theme of mental illness, Perkins explores the dynamics of gender relations and the traditional patriarchal social structure. Perkins was an outspoken feminist, and she rejected the traditional notions of gendered roles in society. The story reflects the state of 19th-century society and features a female figure trapped behind a yellow wallpaper as a symbol of the trappings of gendered roles within patriarchal male-dominated societies.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the author uses the basic conventions of a psychological horror story to criticize the role of women within the institution of marriage. Marriage was one of the most oppressive institutions during the Victorian era, when the book was published. The typical Victorian-era marriage was an institution used to propagate the oppression of women. As the narrator quips at the start of the story, "If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency – what is one to do?" (Perkins 648). The passage illustrates that the narrator is faced with the predicament of being vulnerable to the authoritative overtones of the medical community, her family, and her husband. She does not agree with the treatment, but she is incapable of changing the situation, since she has been rendered powerless (Perkins 654). *The Yellow Wallpaper* illustrates how gender stereotypes

during the Victorian era kept women in a state of ignorance and submission, since men took on the role of decision-makers and authority figures within the family and society at large.

The narrator in *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a female figure who is transitioning to and from extreme states of consciousness. The story reveals the extent of female oppression, as the female character is incapable of voicing her opinions or standing up for herself. The themes of gender oppression and patriarchy are prevalent in the text, and the book is relevant in modern society because modern society has not fully addressed the issues associated with female subordination and patriarchal perspectives and ideologies.

Work Cited

Perkins Gilman, Charlotte. "The yellow wallpaper." (1892).