[Your Name]

[Instructor Name]

[Course Number]

[Date]

The Yellow Wallpaper

“The Yellow Wallpaper” by “Charlotte Perkins Gilman” is a classic example of one of the finest literary pieces of work regarding one of the many social dilemmas. The story of the book revolves around a woman who is suffering from postpartum depression. Having to bear the loss of her child, the woman continues to struggle through intense depression and anxiety all on her own. As she does spend more and more time alone, she starts to witness strange figures and shapes in a yellow wallpaper in her room indicating her loneliness and psychotic behavior. The whole story revolves around her desire to be finally free and ends around the same note. The same notions are found in the views and opinions set forth by transcendentalism. Hence, the aim of this assignment is throw light over how does the story of the book "The Yellow Wallpaper" show transcendentalist ideas.

The concept of transcendentalism places utmost importance on a person’s intuitive and imaginative abilities. It's thought to be where knowledge is derived from, and also regarded as the purest form of living because it's free of bias, and assumes the person has "transcended" deeper and beyond what their senses can convey. On the contrary, transcendentalists believe institutions and widely practiced societal beliefs are damaging to a person’s purity and individuality. Transcendentalists were primarily concerned with the primary-ness of the individual and their position that social institutions like religion and political bodies corrupted or stunted the individual spiritual and personal progress. In this story, the damaging societal beliefs were centered on femininity, domesticity, tradition, social image, and marriage. The story shows that the protagonist is hemmed (and eventually locked) in by the institutions of marriage (her controlling husband) and medicine (her doctor husband and the psychiatrist who'd previously treated her) and society (which demanded her submission to her role as subordinate and which is represented by the sister in law). Her individual person was completely subsumed. The result of that slow psychological strangulation is that she goes insane (proving the transcendentalist theory).

For much of the story, all Jane longs for is to be heard and taken seriously. She is clearly not depressed, but she lives in an era where she is her husband’s property and basically, a second class citizen. Since John thought she was suffering from depression, and that her writing and imaginative skills were weaknesses further contributing to her mental instability, then it had to be true, no questions asked.

We see throughout the story how Jane desires to express her creativity and free thought with advice and companionship from John, in other words, establish mental independence and respect. It’s also understood that her title of a woman is compromised when she isn’t able to care for child (he refers to her as “goose” and “little girl”), her pleas to visit friends, or simply sit outside are unmet, and in essence she becomes mentally and physically constrained to a point which ultimately led to her insanity. Her loneliness heightened to such an extreme level that she started to identify even the scents and smells to be of yellow in nature.

A transcendentalist would see the progression of events inevitable. Both John and Jane are living their lives in accordance to what society has already outline for them. They live to uphold the married image they are expected to. Their souls have therefore been corrupted, their individual thought and authenticity has been lost, and they lose the ability to reach cosmic unity. Hence, one can conclude that much of the story in “the yellow wallpaper” exhibits transcendentalist beliefs and values as portrayed by above discussion.

Works Cited

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. The yellow wallpaper. Project Gutenberg, 1999.

Buell, Lawrence. Literary transcendentalism: Style and vision in the American Renaissance. Cornell University Press, 2016.