New Historicism Essay Overview

The historical and biological background of the author and the time period of the mid to late 1800’s helps readers of the short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” gain a better historical and cultural understanding of her work. Through writing the short story, author Charlotte Gilman criticizes the infamous “Rest Cure” treatment, which was mainly prescribed by doctors to the women of the time. By examining and analyzing biographical background of the author, the doctors and their role in the short story, and different historical documents will illuminate sexist views of women and the strong structure of patriarchy within the story and within the time period. These examinations and analyzes will illuminate the misogynist perspective of the medical field, treatment of women, expose the oppression of women by doctors, and lack of appropriate medical treatment given to women of the time period.

Evaluation of Thesis:

I think this is a good thesis to write my paper on because it adds a historical and biographical background that adds to the story and helps readers to better understand the work. The short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” connects
to the story’s historical and biographical background and brings about the concerns and issues of the time period.

**New Historicism Essay Outline**

**Topic Sentence #1:** There is a connection between the short story and Gilman’s own past and experience that she had with the “Rest Cure”. Through writing the short story, Gilman criticizes the infamous “Rest Cure” treatment because of her own negative experience with it that also caused her to become insane.

**Relation to Thesis:** Gilman’s past and experience with the rest cure help her illuminate the misogynist perspective of the medical field, treatment of women of the time period, expose the oppression of women by doctors, and lack of appropriate medical treatment given to women.

**Topic Sentence #2:** In “The Yellow Wallpaper”, Dr. Mitchel was the doctor that the narrator’s husband threatened to take the narrator to if she didn’t get healthy and improve from her “nervous anxiousness”. Dr. Mitchel was also an actual doctor during that time period. He was the infamous doctor who actually created and developed the “Rest Cure”, which was prescribed for women of the time period. He was also the doctor that treated Gilman herself.

**Relation to Thesis:** Dr. Mitchel’s diagnosis and prescribed “Rest Cure” for
mainly women of the time, helped Gilman illuminate the misogynist perspective of the medical field, treatment of women of the time period, expose the oppression of women by doctors, and lack of appropriate medical treatment given to women.

**Topic Sentence #3:** The narrator’s own brother and husband were also doctors. So not only were they both superior due to their gender, but also because of their job. Due to their gender they also had a higher education, social status, and made the money in the family. But due to the fact that they were also both doctors, put these men on a whole other level from the narrator.

**Relation to Thesis:** The doctors and their role in the short story helped Gilman illuminate the misogynist perspective of the medical field, treatment of women of the time period, expose the oppression of women by doctors, and lack of appropriate medical treatment given to women.

**Abstract of at least 5 Sources**


https://www.raleighcharterhs.org/faculty/acallanan/YWP_rest%20cure%201.pdf
Source 1

Abstract: The short story The Yellow Wallpaper

Source 2

Abstract: This chapter gives an introduction and an overview of New Historical Criticism. This chapter teaches you how to connect a text to its historical context. It also gives an overview of what New Historical Criticism is and teaches you how to apply it to a text.

Evaluation of Source: This is a good source for giving an overview of New Historical Criticism and explaining what it is. I plan to use this source in the beginning of my essay, in the introduction.

Source 3
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, and Dale M. Bauer. "Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper."
Abstract: A short magazine article that Gilman wrote herself. In the article, she emphasizes the reasons why she wrote the Yellow Wallpaper and what she was intending for it to do.

Evaluation of Source: This is a good source for giving background information on the author and the story. I think it is really interesting and I plan to use this source in the beginning of my essay, in the introduction.

Source 4

Abstract: When feminist critics of the 1970s rediscovered this short story, they made an interpretation of the story, the history of its publication, and its reaction of readers. It explains how nineteenth-century audiences read the story differently then what readers presently do. Though supposedly, Gilman did not give up against the disapproval and hostility of male editors who refused to publish her work and upset male physicians who supposedly censured the story once it appeared.
Evaluation of Source: This seems like a pretty good source to talk about the main historical background of the text itself, but I’m not sure how much it will add to my argument about the medical field and its treatment of women.

Source 5

Abstract: This article explains the response from people of the time when it first got published and how certain males and physicians responded. It also talks about the initial misinterpretation of the story when first read. Then it goes on to connect the story to cultural background information.

Evaluation of Source: This article seems like it would be really helpful and useful to use as a source within my essay. Not only does it discuss the history of the text itself, but also discusses the cultural connections to the text. It will help to aide in my argument about the medical field and the mistreatment of women.

Source 6
Garvey, Ellen Gruber. "Making Hay Of The Yellow Wallpaper: 'The Boveopathic

**Abstract:** This article is about a popular read magazine and comedians of the 18th century. It goes on to talk about the treatment of the rest cure and its effects. The article also discusses a connection to social class and is mainly focused on women readers.

**Evaluation of Source:** This seems like a decent source, but only mentions “The Yellow Paper” and the rest cure a little in the beginning. Though it does not focus on “The Yellow Wallpaper” it reference it and discuss the ideas and beliefs of the time period. I kind of like it because it discusses what many women of the time actually believed and what they thought was important, which I find interesting and could also possibly use in my essay. This source may be helpful and useful.

**Source 7**

**Abstract:** This article is about the treatment of women and their “madness” in the 18th century. It takes a feminist and historical approach to examining and
analyzing the text of “The Yellow Wallpaper”. The article focuses on womanhood and domestic duties of women.

**Evaluation of Source:** Though this article mainly focuses on the ideas and concepts of feminism, it also brings in historical information and talks about the treatment of women of the time. It takes a look at what the role of women was and how they were treated during the mid to late 1800s.

**Source 8**
See book that Professor Pennington gave me

**New Historicism Essay Timeline**

**Friday, November 7**
- Read article abstracts & scan outside sources
- Pick out 5 useable sources
- Read 5 outside sources
- Copy & paste bibliography information for web cited page & fix later on
- Finish Proposal & Share on Google Docs

**Saturday, November 8**
- Read & Annotate “Contextual Documents” & “New Historicism” in The Awakening
- Read & Annotate “Historical Contexts” & “Cultural Documents & Illustrations” in The Turn of the Screw
- Read Chapter 7 in Writing About Literature Through Theory
Sunday, November 9th

- Start writing essay
- Write at least 1-2 paragraphs per day
- Aim for at least 5 basic paragraphs to start
- Try to get at least half way done

Monday, November 10th

- Work on Essay

Tuesday, November 11th

- Finish writing essay

Wednesday, November 12th

- Add evidence – quotes & paraphrase from short story

Thursday, November 13th

- Add comments & quotes from (5) outside sources

Friday, November 14th

- New historicism essay peer review due date
- Make Web Sited Page
  - Include short story “The Yellow Wallpaper”
  - Include Writing About Literature Through Theory Textbook
  - Include Yellow Wallpaper Book got from Pennington
  - Include 4 more outside sources
- Share essay on Google Docs before noon!
- Share with Dr. Pennington
- Have my sister Steph read & edit my essay
● Have other people (Mom, Grace, Jackie, David, & Brooke) Peer Review my Paper
● Print out original of essay
● Upload original of essay to Wordpress site & update blog

**Saturday, November 15th**
● Save Peer reviewed/edited drafts & print out a copy
● Start to edit, fix, and revise essay

**Sunday, November 16th**
● Finish editing, fixing, and revising essay
● Print out essay & organize drafts
● Upload original of essay to Wordpress site & update blog

**Monday, November 17th**
● New historical essay draft due today (or earlier if possible)