



**MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS REFLECTED BY THE  
NARRATOR IN CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN'S  
*THE YELLOW WALLPAPER***

**A THESIS**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Undergraduate Degree  
Majoring American Cultural Studies in English Department Faculty of  
Humanities Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

I truthfully declare that this thesis is written by me without taking any thesis from other researchers from any university, in diploma degree, S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree. I am certain about this thesis' novelty. I ensure this thesis is written by taking the material I needed from the references that have been mentioned, by paraphrasing or quoting.

Semarang, 6 October 2022



Lyla Aldora Balqis

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*“You can’t always be strong, but you can always be brave.”*

- **Johnny Suh**

*“Nobody can stop you from being you.”*

- **Johnny Suh**

*This thesis is dedicated to  
My parents, lecturers, myself,  
And those who have supported me  
Throughout all this time.*

**APPROVAL**  
**MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS REFLECTED BY THE**  
**NARRATOR IN CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN'S**  
***THE YELLOW WALLPAPER***

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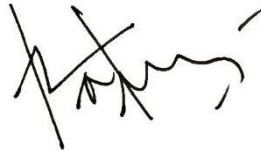
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Research Problems	4
1.3. Objectives of the Study	4
1.4. Previous Studies	4
1.5. Scope of the Study	7
1.6. Writing Organization	7
CHAPTER 2 THEORY AND METHOD	9
2.1. Theoretical Framework	9
2.1.1. Intrinsic Elements	9
2.1.1.1. Theme	10
2.1.1.2. Character and Characterization	10
2.1.1.3. Plot	12
2.1.1.4. Conflict	13
2.1.1.5. Setting	13
2.1.2. Extrinsic Elements	14
2.1.2.1. Hierarchy of Needs Theory	14
2.1.2.2. Physiological Needs	16
2.1.2.3. Safety Needs	17
2.1.2.4. Love and Belonging Needs	18
2.1.2.5. Esteem Needs	18
2.1.2.6. Self-actualization Needs	19
2.1.2.7. Social Condition in Victorian Society	20
2.2.1. Method of the Data Collection	22



2.2.2. Method of Approach	23
CHAPTER 3 DATA ANALYSIS	25
3.1. Intrinsic Elements	25
3.1.1. Theme	25
3.1.2. Character and Characterization	26
3.1.2.1. The Narrator	26
3.1.2.2. John	28
3.1.2.3. Jennie	30
3.1.3. Plot	31
3.1.4. Conflict	34
3.1.5. Setting	35
3.2. Extrinsic Elements	37
3.2.1. Hierarchy of Needs	37
3.2.1.1. Physiological Needs	37
3.2.1.2. Safety Needs	40
3.2.1.3. Love and Belonging Needs	46
3.2.1.4. Esteem Needs	51
3.2.1.5. Self-actualization Needs	58
3.2.2. Social Condition	61
CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION	63
REFERENCES	65

## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes a short story entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper* written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. This study observes the psychological aspect of the main character that aims to find out how the fulfillment of the Narrator's hierarchy of needs. The main character is known as the Narrator of Gilman's story as she is the writer of her own story, which is her diary. This analysis will use two elements of the short story, that are intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. The writer analyzes the intrinsic elements, which are theme, plot, conflict, character and characterization, and setting. While in the extrinsic elements analysis, the writer applies Abraham Maslow's – Hierarchy of Needs theory that is divided into five categories: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The method used in collecting the data is library research. For the approach, the writer uses structural approach for intrinsic elements and psychological approach for extrinsic elements. In this thesis, the writer comes to the conclusion that the Narrator's hierarchy of needs are not fulfilled which are caused by within the Narrator herself and her society by applying a social psychology approach, especially on the love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

**Keywords:** *Hierarchy of Needs, The Yellow Wallpaper, Psychological Aspects, Abraham Maslow's Theory, Psychoanalysis, Patriarchy System*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The story entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper* is one of many representations of literary works which fall into the category of a short story or short fiction. Gilman published *The Yellow Wallpaper* as a form of American literary work (Raouf, 2014: 157). This story is about a nameless character known as the Narrator. In order to clarify about the character's designation name, the narrative is shown as the narrator's long rambling to her diary and it is how Gilman addressed the main character in the story as "the narrator" of her literary work (Delashmit, 1990: 76 & 97). She has been suffering from nervousness, and to make it worse, she was told by her husband to have some "rest cure," in which she must stay in the room and rest for they believe it could cure her sickness. The Narrator could only write unobserved by her husband about her daily activities and contemplations since her husband thought writing a diary or journal would disrupt her rest cure. After a long rest in her bedroom, she started seeing things from the ugly yellow wallpaper she already disapproved of from the start. The things she started to see symbolize herself who was locked up in the bedroom. That circumstance happened as the Narrator saw "creatures" imprisoned inside the wallpaper in which it is related to her in reality. The primary focus of this study is on the main character of the story by highlighting the depiction of the behavior from the interactions of the main character with other characters and the characterizations of the main character.

Apart from the interactions between each character, the results of this study can also be found by observing the social and psychological conditions of the character herself. This can be done by analyzing using literary psychology.

As conveyed in *Theory of Literature*, the psychology of literature may refer to the psychological investigation of the author as a type and as an individual, the research of the creative work, the research of the psychological types and laws that exist in literary works, or, the inquiry of the effects of literature on readers (Wellek and Warren, 1949: 75). In analyzing the psychology in this literature work, the writer applies Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Known as the father of humanistic psychology, Abraham Maslow using this theory aims to change the subject matter in psychoanalysis and behaviorism (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 245). The fulfillment of human potential, conscious free will, and human talents and desires are all highlighted in the theory. It paints a positive and favorable picture of human nature, portraying humans as dynamic, creative individuals interested in development and self-actualization. (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 245).

The writer is interested in researching the main character's hierarchy of needs. There are five hierarchies of needs according to Maslow's theory; physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Concerning this hierarchy of needs, humans have their own needs they must fulfill to survive. In this study, the main character in this story experiences issues in fulfilling her needs due to obstacles from within herself and the environment. For basic needs such as physiological needs, she experiences

difficulties. There are obstacles due to her psychological condition as well as the absence of mental health care. That affects her inability to fulfill her basic needs (James, 2016:5). Some needs such as safety needs, love and belonging needs, and esteem needs are affected by the environment and other people. In the end, because of these issues, she had difficulty in fulfilling his highest need, self-actualization. Thus, the analysis results will be based on these observations through the plot, dialogue, characterizations, conflict and even setting. Additionally, this thesis analysis aims to understand the psychology of the Narrator who is from the Victorian era. Which later in this research, the social aspects as the external factor influenced the hierarchy of needs.

In the end, the author will conduct research on this literature object by analyzing intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. In intrinsic elements, the author will analyze theme, character and characterization, plot, conflict, and setting. In the approach to intrinsic elements, a structural approach is applied. And in extrinsic elements, the author will analyze the fulfillment of the main character's hierarchy of needs by applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The approach used in analyzing the extrinsic elements is a psychological approach. In addition to the analysis, the author also wants to discuss social issues as external influences in the problem of fulfilling the hierarchy of needs for the main character. In this section, the author actually only uses this topic as a matter related to the way the Narrator fulfills her needs which will be elaborated together in the results and discussion or data analysis in chapter three, so that it remains focused on the psychological discussion.

## **1.2. Research Problems**

1. How is the hierarchy of needs in the Narrator fulfilled?
2. How does society influence the hierarchy of needs of the Narrator?

## **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

1. Determining the Narrator's lack of ability in fulfilling her hierarchy of needs by analyzing the story's intrinsic elements and psychological aspect of the Narrator.
2. Giving shreds of evidence on the Narrator's lack of fulfillment in hierarchy of needs, in physiological, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization by cause of internal and external influences.

## **1.4. Previous Studies**

Several previous studies had been done regarding *The Yellow Wallpaper*; However, most of the studies are related with feminism and yet, so rare it is observed under a psychological goggle. Most analysis or research on this story discusses the Narrator's lack of freedom and how she must only obey what her husband says to her, while the research during this thesis focuses on the analysis of psychological aspects of the female main character.

The first study is from Shintya Dwi Fiedhawatie's thesis (English Department of Languages and Literature Universitas Brawijaya) entitled "*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Manifested by the Main Character in the Forrest Gump the Movie*" (2013). The researcher analyzed the movie *Forrest Gump* using

the equivalent theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In the research, Shintya applied the wise fool concept on the character's analysis. Since the object is a movie, the researcher analyzed it using movie studies. Also, Shintya's thesis showed how the main character in the movie fulfills his basic needs and his relationship with his society.

The second study is from Ricky Nugraha's thesis (Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University) entitled "*Hierarchy of Needs in Dan Gilroy's Nightcrawler*" (2017). This thesis also used the movie studies, including the intrinsic elements that are: theories of narrative aspects and cinematic aspects. In the narrative aspects, the researcher analyzed the character and the plot. Ricky used the cinematic aspects to emphasize the meaning and content of the object. This thesis also shows how the character can fulfill his hierarchy of needs by describing and depicting how he does it.

In an article entitled "*Beyond The Yellow Wallpaper*" (1997) written by Ann Oakley (from Reproductive Health Matters) discusses the medical and health in the context of "women and health" using the object of *The Yellow Wallpaper* short story as it depicted how a woman and her health affected by her surroundings. The article gives elaboration and explanation of women and health. There are three discussions as the main focus; production, reproduction and the mental illness medicalization. Using this article, the writer can have more references in writing this thesis since the article discusses the relation between women and health and this article provided medical discussion.

In Chalak Ghafoor Raouf's article (Research Journal of English Language and Literature, from Istanbul Aydin University) entitled "*Patriarchy's Control on the Narrator in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper*" (2014), Raouf analyzed the story from the perspective of a feminist. The article describes how patriarchal control or the patriarchal traditions work in the short story which depicts the main character, the Narrator, who is a woman. The depiction of the patriarchal society is shown in how the husband controls what the Narrator should do, think, and speak. In other words, he controls the Narrator's body and mind. Raouf explains the patriarchal controls in five categories; separation, discipline, surveillance, language, and nature.

Putri Arti Lestari's thesis (Faculty of Humanities in Diponegoro University) entitled "*Hierarchy of Needs of Lily Bloom in Colleen Hoover's It Ends With Us*" (2019) has similarities with this thesis but with different objects of the studies. Putri's thesis also used characters and characterization and conflict as the intrinsic elements for the analysis and hierarchy of needs theory for the analysis of the extrinsic elements. In Putri's thesis, the character is not lacking in fulfilling all the hierarchy of needs, which means that the character successfully fulfills all needs. And the thesis is used as a reference for the framework in how to write the writer's thesis.

The previous studies mentioned above are discussions on the same object of literary work, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, or with the same theory, the hierarchy of needs. However, there are differences in this study with previous studies which are in the focus of fulfilling the hierarchy of needs in the main character. This



study also discusses what can affect the success and failure of fulfilling these needs. There has been no discussion of the hierarchy of needs analysis on the main character in this object of literature work previously.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on the analysis of Maslow's hierarchy of needs of the main character, the Narrator, by analyzing *The Yellow Wallpaper* according to the categorized needs of Maslow's theory. The extrinsic element is restricted in the psychological approach with the social condition in the Narrator's society as supporting the research. In addition to the other element, the intrinsic elements, the writer will analyze the theme, character and characterization, plot, conflict, and setting by applying structural approach.

### **1.6. Writing Organization**

#### **CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, and scope of the study.

#### **CHAPTER 2 : THEORY AND METHOD**

This chapter consists of two things, those are theoretical framework and research method.

### CHAPTER 3 : RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of the result of the research that is written coherently and is the main discussion of this research.

### CHAPTER 4 : CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of the conclusion from the discussion.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORY AND METHOD**

#### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework discusses the theories used in this thesis to analyze the short story entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper* which focuses on the main character, the Narrator. In discussing the intrinsic elements, the writer analyzes the theme, plot, character and characterization, conflict, and setting. In discussing the extrinsic elements, the writer will use Abraham Maslow's theory that is hierarchy of needs divided into five parts; physiological needs, safety needs, love, and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

##### **2.1.1. Intrinsic Elements**

According to Wellek and Warren in their book *Theory of Literature*, the intrinsic approach is a study of literary work which analyzes any elements occurring inside the work itself which are the fundamental components that make up a literary work. They stated the main aspect of the intrinsic approach is centered on interpreting and analyzing the contents of the literary works (1949: 139). Based on that book, the intrinsic elements which form the foundation of literary works are theme, plot, setting, character and characterization, conflict, point of view, and style (1949: 139-263).

### 2.1.1.1. Theme

Theme in literary works refers to the general idea in a literary work, intended to engage and persuade the reader, whether implicitly or explicitly (Abrams, 2014: 205). The passion in that the authors exhibit through their works and the ideas they clearly wanted to show affect the depth of their works, where in this case, the authors are not required to express their judgements so overtly. Yet, they can still give their views and opinions regarding something through the theme of their works. (Roberts and Zweig, 2011: 67).

### 2.1.1.2. Character and Characterization

Character is one of the crucial elements in literature, since character helps the fiction in shaping the plot. A character can be depicted as several kinds of things. It can be human, animals, or even objects (Abrams, 2014: 42). As stated by Abrams in his book, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*,

“Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the **dialogue**—and from what they do—the **action**.” (2014:42).

It is known in the story that this character is referred to as a human being named "I", which means it is from the first person point of view to show who is telling the story to the readers. In this point of view, it can be seen from the narrator in the story and outside the story (Diasamidze, 2014: 162). This first-person point of view explains how the narrator in the story tells about the perspectives and knowledge that only they knew, their own experiences, and also to find out how

their true inner feelings are as the “I” narrator. The “I” is also known as a single character portrayed in a literary work (Diasamidze, 2014: 162).

Forster in Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2014:43), stated that character in literature is divided into two; flat character and round character. A *flat* character is how the character is presented without showing more detail in each individual. Furthermore, flat characters can be represented in a single phrase or sentence, in other words, it could be described in a simpler way. It is also called a type, or “two-dimensional” (2014:43). A *round* character is the opposite of a flat character. Round characters are described in a more complex way and presented as close as possible like real persons in reality and are also capable of surprising the readers so it is more difficult to describe (2014: 43). In short, flat character is a minor character but still needed for the plot, and the flat character is also a fixed and invariant character (Roberts and Zweig, 2011: 1441). Round character is the major character in the story and can develop and change in the story (2011: 1448).

Abrams divides characterization into two and those are showing and telling, and for this reason, characters who are distinctive can be built and established. In *showing*, the author of the story presents the characters through talking and acting. It is also called the dramatic method, and the reader can infer the motives and temperament conveyed by the characters’ actions and words or speech that can be found in between the dialogues (2014: 43). Not only does the author can represent the external speech and actions of the character, but the author of the story can also represent the internal thoughts, feelings, and other inner elements of the character. Meanwhile, in *telling*, the author of the story

directly intervenes to represent and evaluate the temperament and motives from the character (2014: 43).

### **2.1.1.3. Plot**

The events and activities which make up a plot in a literary work are presented and structured to achieve certain creative and cognitive consequences. The characters' acts, both verbal and physical, are how they express their social and attitudinal characteristics. It is a brief summary of what happens in chronological order (Abrams, 2014: 265). There are five structures in plot: exposition, complication, climax, crisis, and resolution or denouement (2014: 265). **Exposition** is the presentation of crucial background knowledge (Abrams, 2014: 267). Introduction of the characters, backgrounds, characteristics, limitations are laid forth or presented in this section and it does not have to occur at the start of the story; it can occur anywhere (Roberts and Zweig, 2011: 238-239). **Complication**, or the rising action, starts right after the exposition and in complication, the conflict is also developed (Abrams, 2014: 267). Important conflict begins to grow and the major characters along with any principles and ideals are started to get known (Roberts and Zweig, 2011: 239). **Climax** is where the story reached its highest point. It happens near the end of the story; this part is where it makes logical sense from the full process (Roberts and Zweig, 2011: 239). **Crisis** is the point at which the most intense conflict happens and where a decision or response is taken to overcome the problem (Roberts, and Zweig, 2011: 239). This section can also be called falling action (Abrams, 2014: 267). **Resolution or denouement** is the end of the conflict or action in the story. There

are no more mysteries to solve, it's possible for the character to succeed or fail, and the conflicts have been solved (2014: 267).

#### **2.1.1.4. Conflict**

Conflict is also included in the intrinsic elements in literary works that depict the battle between two opposing powers in a character or many characters. This intrinsic element is one of the reasons and factors how a story can work as one. As Lamb stated, there are four basic conflicts and those are man against man, man against nature, man against society, and man against self (2008: 117-119). Man against man, man against nature, and man against society are the examples of external conflicts. While man against self is the example of internal conflicts.

Man against man is a conflict which happens between a person and another person who has the opposing power. Man against nature is a conflict between a person or character with nature such as animals, natural disaster, and other nature forces. Man against society is a conflict between a person with society and social norms, as Lamb stated in her book, it can also be said as a conflict between a man against the government, fight for civil rights, or a push for change (2008:118). The last one is man against self where it is a conflict between a person and his/her inner thoughts.

#### **2.1.1.5. Setting**

In narrative work, setting is the geographical or physical location, time, and social conditions that occurred (Abrams, 2014: 330). The characters in a narrative work are usually strongly concerned with their surroundings which can

be the source of their passion and their potential conflicts; that is why the depictions of places, objects, and background must be included (Roberts and Zweig, 2011: 208).

### **2.1.2. Extrinsic Elements**

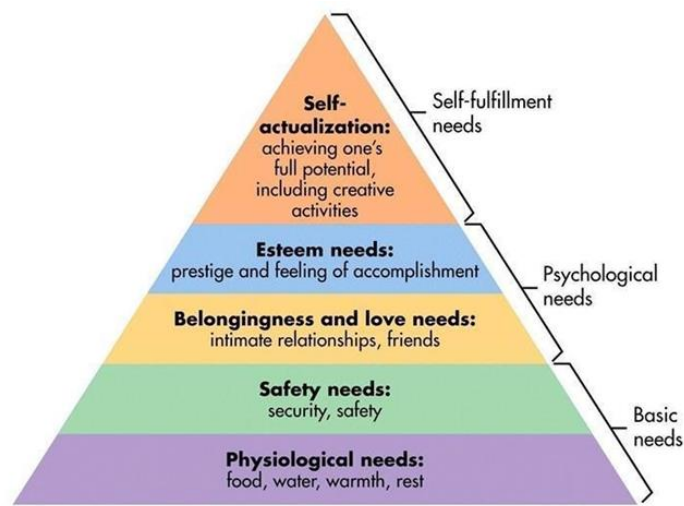
Extrinsic elements are the elements that exist outside the story and are involved between the individual and the literature; as well as the society or culture (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2006: 129). Psychological aspects, cultural aspects, political aspects, and others are the examples of extrinsic elements. In this thesis, the writer discusses the psychological aspects of *The Yellow Wallpaper* by using Maslow's theory that is the hierarchy of needs. Maslow divided human's hierarchy of needs into five parts and those are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization needs.

#### **2.1.2.1. Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is depicted in the form of a triangle or pyramid scheme where the bottom of the pyramid is the most basic thing to be fulfilled, and the top of the triangle is a need that can only be fulfilled when all the needs lower are sufficiently met. The first need to be fulfilled is physiological. Physiological needs are basic biological needs like food, water, sleep, shelter, etc. The second one is safety needs, the need for security, protection, stability, etc. The third one is the need for love and belonging, the needs for a family, friendships, social relationships, affection, work, and so on. The fourth one is the need for esteem, which is the need for achievement, status, responsibility, and reputation to



be fulfilled, either from the internal or external influences of individuals. The fifth one or the last one is the need for self-actualization which is when a person's potential can be fully developed, especially after the previous four needs have been met (Maslow, 1943: 372-382).



Hierarchy of needs has its own characteristics where the lower needs have more urgency and priority to be fulfilled first rather than the higher ones (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 250). While the highest needs in the pyramid are also the weakest needs. The higher needs can be postponed in fulfilling them since they are less significant in surviving life and if a failure happens, it will not cause an immediate crisis. However, they give a sense of massive contribution to personal growth which can increase happiness, satisfaction, health, and can live a long life. Conversely, a crisis will ensue when a failure in fulfilling the lower needs, such as the physiological and safety needs (2016: 250-251). The writer quoted other characteristics stated by Schultz and Schultz,

“Gratification of higher needs requires better external social, economic, and political circumstances than does gratification of lower needs. For example, pursuing self-actualization requires greater freedom of expression and opportunity than pursuing safety needs” (2016: 251).

In the statement above, it is mentioned that factors from outside a person can cause the fulfillment of the higher hierarchy of needs, the esteem and self-actualization needs (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 253). For example, social factors as well as one's freedom. The ability to meet an individual's needs depends on more than just that person; it also depends on their environment (James, 2016: 9). Furthermore, mental wellbeing, a sense of powerlessness, and a huge amount of worry also have a greater impact in unsuccessfulness to fulfill the hierarchy of needs (James, 2016: 10)

#### **2.1.2.2. Physiological Needs**

The first need which humans must fulfill is physiological needs. It is the most basic need and in the form of the pyramid scheme, physiological needs are the ones in the very bottom part (Maslow, 1943: 372). The basic needs are the most essential needs to be fulfilled by human beings since these needs are related to the needs of the body. Water, food, sleep or rest, warmth, and even sexual desires are the main things needed by the human body. As stated by Maslow in his book, *A Theory of Human Motivation*:

“The physiological needs. —The needs that are usually taken as the starting point for motivation theory are the so-called physiological drives” and “...physiological needs are the most pre-potent of all needs” (Maslow, 1943: 372-373).

It can be inferred that physiological needs can also be related to other sorts of needs. If the physiological needs dominate a person, then the body will push the

other needs into the background. Same as physiological needs, other needs that dominate a person can also change the whole hierarchy of needs in the future as well (Maslow, 1943: 373). In physiological needs, the support factors from the family in emotional support and perceptions in health are indicators of successful fulfillment of these needs (James, 2016: 9). In addition, people will struggle to meet the criteria for the following stage, safety needs, if the needs in this section are not satisfied (James, 2016: 20).

### **2.1.2.3. Safety Needs**

When physiological needs are already fulfilled, humans also have other needs that have to be satisfied, and those are the safety needs which are the needs for security and safety in their life (Maslow, 1943: 376). Every human being is certainly in need of safety and security; both in safety in the psyche and safety in property, law, personal security, and health (McLeod, 2007: 5). An individual can feel the struggle in fulfilling the safety needs if the individual does not have a safe place to live in and has no sense of security in the society or community (James, 2016: 22). As Maslow stated, “Thus even when adults do feel their safety to be threatened we may not be able to see this on the surface” (1943: 376), meaning as a human grows up and becomes an adult, they are more aware of the danger surrounding them rather than an infant does. The danger will become less dangerous if the adult has the knowledge about the danger or threat that happened. Adults who are psychologically healthy have typically met their requirements for stability, security, and freedom from anxiety and discomfort (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 252).

#### **2.1.2.4. Love and Belonging Needs**

After fulfilling the physiological needs and the safety needs, every human being has to fulfill their love and belonging needs. In the love and belonging needs, human beings will meet the needs of affection, love, and belongingness in order to get away from loneliness (1943: 380-381). As conveyed by Maslow, a person will feel lonely when they do not have relations of friends, a sweetheart, a wife, or children, and a human being can also feel the hunger in this need to which they will do anything to satisfy this need. In literal meaning, they will run into love (Maslow, 1943: 381). In addition to who can help fulfill this need, social relationships within a group in society are also needed (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 253). In fulfilling love and belonging needs, every person should be involved in giving and receiving it, so it is not only one way of giving or receiving the love and belongingness. In another case, stated in an article, it was mentioned that studies on individuals experiencing mental illness are unable to satisfy intimate needs towards their partners (James, 2016: 11).

#### **2.1.2.5. Esteem Needs**

Esteem needs are the needs to be fulfilled in terms of respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, and freedom. Esteem needs are a person's desire to assess oneself, self-respect or self-esteem, and even the esteem of others. Those are the things that are included in the need for esteem which can be obtained from how a person's capacity for realness, and achievement, alongside with how other people give respect to one person (Maslow, 1943: 381). According to Maslow,

this desire for esteem is divided into two, the first one is the desire for freedom, strength, achievement, self-confidence, and reputation while the second one is the prestige that comes from other people's respect, recognition, attention, and appreciation (Maslow, 1943: 382). In other words, it can be said that the first type can be achieved from inside the desires of a person in need of esteem, and the second type can be achieved from the outside of the person. Each factor from the internal and external of the person affects how to fulfill the esteem needs. In the fulfillment of this need, any individual who has confidence in their strengths and has a sense of self worth, can help lead in a more qualified and productive life. Conversely, if we lack all these aspects, such as feeling worthless, inferior, and lacking confidence can derail the positive aspects of life also in self-actualization (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 253).

#### **2.1.2.6. Self-actualization Needs**

After each person can fulfill all the aforementioned needs, they must meet the needs in self-actualization which can be done by looking for potential within themselves to become someone who is more aware of themselves. Still, this need can be fulfilled if a person is able to fulfill other needs beforehand such as physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, and also esteem needs (Maslow, 1943: 382-383). Humans are principally always dissatisfied with many things if they have not been able to achieve their highest desires (Schultz and Schultz, 2016:253). As written in Maslow's book, "what a man can be, he must be" is one way to fulfill self-actualization (Maslow, 1943: 382). For example, a singer must be able to sing, a dancer must be flexible, and so on, it can

be another kind of capabilities, there are no limitations. In order to meet the self-actualization needs, a person must be liberated from societal and personal restrictions, while also not getting misled by the lower needs. Humans must be safe in their very own image and in social relationships, they must be responsible for giving and receiving love as well. Lastly, humans have to be aware of each ability and limitations, character traits, and character flaws they possess (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 254). There are several self-actualization tendencies; a decent knowledge of reality, a willingness to tolerate oneself, society and surroundings, a variation, freshness and simplicity, a focus on issues other than their own, a desire for solitude and a sense of separation, a recognition of innovations, peak experiences, social concern as in need of others in socializing to help fulfill self-actualization, strong interpersonal interactions, creativeness, and enculturation resistance (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 256-258). Schultz and Schultz stated that “People have been known to fast until death in the service of their beliefs, thus denying their physiological and safety needs” as the non-traditional way in self-actualization (Schultz and Schultz, 2016: 254). Self-actualization needs are the highest and the last needs that have to be fulfilled in one’s own capability in reaching their maximum limits.

#### **2.1.2.7. Social Condition in Victorian Society**

As stated by Chalak Ghafoor Raouf in his article entitled *Patriarchy’s Control on the Narrator in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s The Yellow Wallpaper*, this literary work represents how society works back in the 1880s where it is the male-dominated society. This study looked at the factors that support the male

society's dominance over the Narrator's physique and mind (Raouf, 2014: 162). In this study, women are shown to be suffering at the hands of oppressive authorities that want to uphold a patriarchal society in which they are treated like infants who need "direction and stability" and seen as inferior to males (Raouf, 2014: 157). The Narrator's postpartum anxiety is used by society to sustain her confinement and create her subservient physique. Through separation, the husband tries to reconstruct the wife and transform her into his ideal image of a Victorian wife (Raouf, 2014: 158). There are many controlling, isolating, and manipulating ways men can direct to their wives. The wives were forced to stay at home and could only behave with what society already formed them. Also, in Chalak Ghafoor Raouf's article, there are several patriarchal controls done in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, which are separation, discipline, surveillance, language, and nature (2014: 158-161). The social aspect of the Victorian era gave many influences on the psychological aspect of women. Women only have limited activities they could do, like doing house chores, only staying at home, cooking, and so on, they do not have the freedom to express their feeling and passion (Singer, 2019: 21).

The intention of the story itself is to bring the topic of mental or psychological issues, which in that era, was less being discussed and people were still not aware. In acquiring health, social relations and moral foundations are necessary and inseparable (Oakley, 1997: 30). In health improvement, emotional support is also needed. An individual's social relationships or lacking those social relationships, or in personal relationships inside or outside the family of the woman, have a critical influence on the function of both physical and mental

(Oakley, 1997: 30). Physical needs are included in the hierarchy of needs. As well as for the family relationship, it also included in love and belonging in hierarchy of needs. As for safety needs, it also can be seen from the principles of society which are established by cultural norms and beliefs (Gorman, 2010: 3). Cultural factors are influenced by psychological processes, vice versa, psychological processes also influenced by culture. Cultural practices that develop over time influence human thoughts and actions, and individual thoughts and actions influence these cultural norms and practices (Lehman, Chiu, and Schaller, 2004: 689). It is known as social psychology, where scientific study of social psychology examines how individuals feel, think, and act toward the people around them, as well as how those individuals impact another individual's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors (Stangor, Jhangiani, and Tarry, 2014: 10).

## **2.2. Research Method**

### **2.2.1. Method of the Data Collection**

In collecting the data for this research, the writer uses a library research method. Library research can help this research in identifying and finding sources that provide tangible information or even opinions on a research question by experts or individuals/personnel (George, 2008: 6). In using this method, the writer collects the sources from library data then she will read and take notes from the results of the sources found which will eventually be processed as research materials. Books, journals, and articles alongside other scholars' theses are used as library sources in this research as well.



### **2.2.2. Method of Approach**

According to the focus of the thesis, the most suitable approach for this research is psychological approach as the extrinsic element. From the psychological approach, there will be results from the sources about the evidence that provide at least partly of the answer for the research and supporting it in various physical shapes, human included (Mary, 2008: 19). In this case, the character is a human being. In analyzing the character as a human being, the writer is using hierarchy of needs theory by Maslow. The five needs in the hierarchy of needs are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. In addition, to approach social psychology, the love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs are analyzed in this research as it is related to the social aspects.

To help in completing the research of the extrinsic elements, the writer also uses intrinsic elements: theme, plot, setting, character and characterization, and conflict. In analyzing the intrinsic elements, the writer is using the structural approach as it is the most suitable approach. In the structural approach, the writer analyzes the structure of the literary work itself. The structure in this approach here indicates the foundation of the literary work and as the matter in analysis which has to be thoroughly understood in relation to the ideas of system and value (Childs and Fowler 2006: 225). The writer must do a close reading and has to dive deep into the structure of the story in searching for the intrinsic elements since not all stories show meanings from the text explicitly or plainly on the surface

(Eagleton, 1996: 83). The writer uses the intrinsic elements theory mostly from Wellek and Warren, Abrams, also Roberts and Zweig.

## CHAPTER 3

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. Intrinsic Elements

##### 3.1.1. Theme

*The Yellow Wallpaper* has a specific theme, majorly represents social and mental health issues. The theme was deliberately raised by Gilman because she wanted to convey the anxiety and depression felt by the Narrator, since she did not have any freedom at all and how it affects the fulfillment of her needs. The social pressure triggers mental health issues in women. The one sentence that can illustrate this situation is as follows,

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? (Gilman, 1998: 1)

This sentence can be dissected to elaborate. “If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband,” in this section, the Narrator likes to illustrate how the male character has privilege, as a doctor who has a high position and is a husband in his household. “...assures friends and relatives”, here the Narrator finds out her husband really uses this privilege as a doctor, and her personal doctor, also a husband, to be able to convince his relatives about the Narrator's condition. “...that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency – what is one to do?” The Narrator here seems to write how the husband depreciates his wife's depression and nervousness by not validating her. The Narrator cannot do anything about the

evidence that her husband is convincing her relatives and family about the Narrator's condition, how it is not serious. Even "temporary" things can become prolonged or permanent if there is a lack of support from close relatives, and this can be seen in the progression of the Narrator's condition when in the end, the Narrator does not get any better and instead makes her hallucinate even worse, "I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder. "I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!" (Gilman, 1998: 15). This can happen due to the lack of knowledge in psychological medication, especially in the Narrator's case.

### **3.1.2. Character and Characterization**

There are three main characters that the writer will use as the object of this research; the Narrator, John, and Jennie.

#### **3.1.2.1. The Narrator**

The Narrator is a **round character** and it can be proven from the fact how she is the major character in the story. She also depicted as closely as possible as a real human being in real life who happens to experience changes and development in characteristics. For instance, it can be seen from the part where the Narrator is still aware that she is sick even though John, her husband, does not believe it, "You see, he does not believe I am sick!" (Gilman, 1998: 1). Yet in the end of the plot in the story, the Narrator starts to change, "Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!" (Gilman, 1998: 15), and here the context is her

psychological state where she is no longer aware of herself. She developed a new characteristic as the plot goes.

The Narrator is a woman who suffers from a nervous depression. It happened after the Narrator gave birth to her first child. Although the incident is not explicitly explained, it can be seen in the way the husband keeps her away from the child, “It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby! And yet I cannot be with him, it makes me so nervous” (Gilman, 1998: 4), commonly known as *baby blues* or postpartum depression. In addition to her characteristics, the Narrator is represented as a clever woman who knows exactly what she needs, what she wants, what to think, and what she has to do, but the society she lives in does not like a person such as the Narrator. Therefore, the least she can do is just obey what her husband says, even though she knows exactly what her problem is in her mind.

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? (Gilman, 1998: 1-2)

As emphasized in the sentence, “I personally disagree with their ideas. Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good,” already shows how clever the Narrator is thinking about what she should actually do. But she also does not like the idea of disobeying her husband, so she keeps that idea to herself only as in the sentence, “But what is one to do?”

From her behavior shown in the story, she is a rebellious person, she did not obey her husband not to write, instead she writes this story as her diary,

“There comes John, and I must put this away,— he hates to have me write a word” (Gilman, 1998: 3).

The characterization of the Narrator is **showing** characterization. The Narrator’s characterization is portrayed through speech or dialogues and actions in the story. Through the Narrator’s writing, the reader can slowly figure out what kind of person she is. This way makes the reader more absorbed in understanding her characteristics rather than describing them explicitly.

### **3.1.2.2. John**

John’s character type is a **round character**; he is also described in a complex manner and like a real person and undergoes development and changes of characteristics in the story. For instance, it is shown by how the Narrator describes John’s characteristic in some of the early parts of the story, as in, “I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wallpaper!” (Gilman, 1998: 4), where John disregards the Narrator’s feelings about the wallpaper. But in the end, John undergoes the development in his characteristic where he finally realizes about his wife’s condition, “Now why should that man have fainted? But he did...” (Gilman, 1998: 15), and was in shock until he fainted.

John’s attitude of which can be interpreted from reading this story is, he is someone who wants to be obeyed, stubborn, selfish, likes to gaslight the Narrator, and does not want to hear other people’s opinions. Additionally, in accordance with the background issues of the story, John is described as a man who has a

high ego and self-esteem, so he does not want his wife to exceed him in all aspects. However, John's attitude in his wife's view is slightly different, by the reason of every treatment John gives to his wife is considered as "love".

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction. I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more (Gilman, 1998: 2).

The sentence, "...hardly lets me stir without special direction," gives the depiction of the Narrator being restrained from doing anything. And with the way John controls his wife, it is giving the Narrator the feeling of inferiority and John being superior. If interpreted, it is implicitly saying it is his modus to make the Narrator not exceed John in any capability. He is also insensitive to his wife's feelings and inconsiderate by laughing at her for what she tries to tell him about her condition when she is in the room with the atrocious wallpaper, "I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wallpaper!" (Gilman, 1998: 4). The sentences give a meaning of how John does not try to put himself in the same situation as in the Narrator's condition, and it shows that John is a careless person. Hence, the writer thinks John really portrays the patriarchal society that was rife at the time through the portrayal of John's behavior throughout the plot. It can be said that John is a symbol of the patriarchal society.

The type of characterization of John himself is the **showing** characterization type, because in this story, the Narrator describes and depicts John's behavior through his words and actions. Some are explained by the Narrator explicitly or implicitly, and it depends on the interpretation of readers.

From the description of the character shown in the story, the writer can interpret John's characteristics as a man and a husband.

### 3.1.2.3. Jennie

Jennie, John's sister, is a **flat** character in the story, for throughout the story, her character does not change and is static. This means Jennie's characteristics have not changed at all. At the beginning of the story, Jennie is described by the Narrator as a perfect woman who loves doing housework.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing. She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick! (Gilman, 1998: 5)

The Narrator explains how Jennie is a "perfect" woman, as Jennie also does not like the idea that the Narrator writes, "I must not let her find me writing". It implies that Jennie must be thinking she is not the same kind of woman as the Narrator as she likes being a housekeeper more, "She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession." The Narrator likes to write and Jennie likes to be a housekeeper, implicitly conveying that women should focus on doing house chores only. Jennie also obeys John more than the Narrator. That is because she is the image of a perfect woman and housewife, who actually is the result of the social condition. She obeys the unwritten rules of, what is known to be, the patriarchal system itself. As a result, Jennie is the picture of a good mother and housewife. By the end of the story, Jennie still has the same characteristics as when she first appeared in the story, "And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give." (Gilman,



1998: 13). What is meant by “him” is John, asking Jennie about the Narrator’s condition. The way the Narrator said “She had a very good report to give” implies that Jennie indeed is a good housekeeper who keeps anything in the house intact and in good condition.

She is the one who gets to take care of the house chores, “Of course I didn’t do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now” (*Gilman, 1998: 6*). Jennie does not really play an important role in the story, but she symbolizes and illustrates to the readers what a woman’s role should be. In the story, Jennie is a character who shows the reader what a woman should indeed do. Jennie's characterization type is **telling** characterization. She is portrayed explicitly in the story and is intended as a symbolization of the woman the reader wants to be.

### **3.1.3. Plot**

The **exposition** at the beginning of the story explained that John rented a house, “It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer” (*Gilman, 1998: 1*). Later, John is introduced as the Narrator’s husband and a doctor, “John is a physician... and one’s own husband...” (*Gilman, 1998: 1*), for his wife who is said to have a psychological issue, nervousness, “... that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency...” (*Gilman, 1998: 1*). Here the Narrator conveyed “temporary nervous depression” as herself who suffers the issue. The Narrator said, the rented house makes her has an uneasy feeling, “Still I would proudly declare that there is something queer about it” (*Gilman, 1998: 1*).

Next is the **complication or rising action** where the fundamentals of concern arise. The Narrator is placed in the top room, the nursery room, “So we took the nursery at the top of the house” (Gilman, 1998: 2). The Narrator is isolated in the room with her condition being mentally ill with the yellow wallpaper, and she also has nothing to do to distract herself from it since her husband forbids her to do anything. In the end, she writes secretly behind John’s back, seeing John who believes writing will aggravate her wife’s health. Since she had no other productive activities to do, she would stay in her room staring at the wallpaper until she got too lost in her thoughts about it, “This paper looks to me as if it *knew* what a vicious influence it had!” (Gilman, 1998: 5). The Narrator is the one who has eyes, not the wallpaper. So, when the Narrator said “This paper looks to me,” it implies she is the one who is looking at the paper and imagining it being “vicious”. She began to hallucinate.

Coming to the **climax**, the Narrator hallucinates more and more about the color and pattern even the odor of the wallpaper, “Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like” (Gilman, 1998: 11). Every day, especially at night, she keeps looking at the wallpaper. Eventually, she sees there is a woman, sometimes women, in the yellow wallpaper, a woman crawling on the wall.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don’t like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here (Gilman, 1998: 8).

Every morning, she does not really have much time alone to examine the wall, but at night when everyone else is asleep, the Narrator watches the wallpaper even

more, “John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wallpaper till I felt creepy” (Gilman, 1998: 8). Hereafter, she feels anxious and more nervous and wants to leave the house, but as John says, she cannot leave until the appointed time when she will get better.

In the **crisis or falling action**, the Narrator realizes the woman in the wallpaper can creep out in the morning, and the Narrator realizes no one else can see the woman but her, “I think that woman gets out in the daytime! And I’ll tell you why – privately – I’ve seen her! I can see her out of every one of my windows” (Gilman, 1998: 12). Then she locked herself in her room and threw the key into the front path so no one could interrupt her watching the wallpaper, “I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path” (Gilman, 1998: 14). She began tearing off all the wallpaper on the wall she could reach in the hope of releasing the woman from her confinement, “Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor” (Gilman, 1998: 14).

As the **resolution**, John and Jennie begin to panic, especially John. He tries to axed the door until it breaks, “Now he’s crying for an ax. It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door” (Gilman, 1998: 14). The Narrator tells her husband where the key to the room is, “”John dear!” said I in the gentlest voice, “the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!”” (Gilman, 1998: 15). When John enters the room, he is shocked to see his wife who has ripped off the wallpaper and crawled around the room, “”What is the matter?” he cried. “For God’s sake, what are you doing?”” (Gilman, 1998: 15). The Narrator told her husband that she was very happy to be out and free from the wallpaper. In shock,

John fainted, and the Narrator ignored him by continuing to creep around the room and even over John's body lying in the room.

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder. "I've got out at last," I said, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!". Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time! (Gilman, 1998: 15)

#### 3.1.4. Conflict

In this story, the most obvious type of conflict is the conflict between **man against man** and **man against self**, which means both types of conflict, internal and external conflicts, exist in this story. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the Narrator and her husband's conflict is one of the examples for *man against man* conflicts, since it happens between a person and another person who has more power than the other. Her husband forbids her to write, but the Narrator is adamant and stubborn to write, "There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word" (Gilman, 1998: 3). The sentence included by the writer as a man against man conflict since John and the Narrator oppose each other. John "hates" the Narrator to write, but the Narrator still writes.

In the *man against self* conflict, she conflicted with herself when writing, thinking about how John does not like her to write, "I know John would think it absurd," though the Narrator knows she needs it, "But I must say what I feel," and this conflict only happens among herself.

The Narrator also has a conflict within herself about the wallpaper, Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like. It is not bad – at first, and very gentle, but quiet the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met. In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me. It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house – to reach

the smell. But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell (Gilman, 1998: 11).

These sentences explain explicitly how the Narrator has man against self conflict about the smell of the wallpaper. The Narrator points out how she is puzzled by the smell, “to find what it smelled like,” but in the end, she assumes what it smells like, “A yellow smell.”

### **3.1.5. Setting**

The writer will discuss the setting of place, time, and background setting. This story happened inside a house and for the most part, in one of the rooms inside the house with a yellow wallpaper, "I'm really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper." (Gilman, 1998: 4). For the time setting, it is known this story happened in the Victorian era, and occurred between late 1890s and early 1900s in America. It also can be seen in the depiction of the house as a colonial mansion, "A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity -- but that would be asking too much of fate!" (Gilman, 1998: 1). The Narrator mentioned “a colonial mansion” and it is then interpreted as the Victorian era in late 1890s and early 1900s. Or another description the Narrator wrote about the house, "It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people" (Gilman, 1998: 2). The Narrator describes where the house is located and how it illustrates as “English places that you read about.”

An addition for the time setting, the Narrator writes mostly in the daytime since it is the time for John to go to work, “John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious” (Gilman, 1998: 3). The Narrator stated “John is away all day”, and emphasized the word “all”, presuming the Narrator can only write in daytime. And in night times, it is the time for the Narrator to start staring into the wallpaper, “John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wallpaper till I felt creepy” (Gilman, 1998: 8). The word “moonlight” gives an illustration to readers as it is at night time. Furthermore, the Narrator describes how she sleeps better in daytime rather than in night time, “I don’t sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in daytime” (Gilman, 1998: 11). Lastly is the background setting of the story.

Additionally, the writer also found the background setting in this story. The background setting is the social norms issues as the main subject, it is the patriarchal system in the society. It also talks about the struggles of women in the era and how society acknowledges the mental health issue, “I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes at night, and that is hard! It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!” (Gilman, 1998: 14). The sentence “...it is so pleasant to be out in this great room” illustrates how the Narrator, a woman, also wants to have her own freedom. Yet the sentence “I shall have to get back behind the pattern” gives the illustration of the Narrator which she is hallucinating about the pattern on the wallpaper. This gives the depiction of the mental health issue that occurred in the Narrator.

## **3.2. Extrinsic Elements**

### **3.2.1. Hierarchy of Needs**

#### **3.2.1.1. Physiological Needs**

She gets her basic biological and physiological needs from her husband's help, but apparently, she cannot freely fulfill her own physiological needs. As a matter of fact, judging from the background of her husband, who is a doctor, "John is a physician..." (Gilman, 1998: 1), the Narrator can easily fulfill her physiological needs, both her physiological needs in general and physiological needs to help her recovery. Moreover, her husband even rents a house, "...mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer" (Gilman, 1998: 1), a place to live, for her wife's sake to help her in the healing process, "He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get" (Gilman, 1998: 2). She can easily get food, water, and medicines that must be consumed by her in order to heal, privilege of having a husband who is a doctor, "John says I mustn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat" (Gilman, 1998: 7). She does not have to spend more money to pay for her health costs at the hospital for a room, "It is an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim" (Gilman, 1998: 4). She describes the room as "an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish" presents how the Narrator gets a comfortable place to rest. She can freely enjoy eating, drinking, sleeping, and breathing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and an absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again (Gilman, 1998: 1).

The Narrator mentioned air and rest, which not all human beings have that privilege. Yet, the Narrator also has other basic needs fulfilled for her recovery such as “journeys” and “exercise”. This indicates that the Narrator has the advantage in fulfilling her physiological needs. However, in doing eating, drinking, and sleeping activities, she is given restrictions and schedules by her husband, “I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day...” (Gilman, 1998: 2). To point out the fact, the Narrator is sick and needs more supervision in her condition so it is why she needs a schedule prescription. However, if basic things are being controlled and being limited, thereafter, it will be difficult to fulfill it efficiently, especially for adults who have more demands.

I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour. I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can. Indeed he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal. It is a very bad habit I am convinced, for you see I don’t sleep (Gilman, 1998: 10).

Human beings genuinely need sleep and rest, but if they are continuously forced to always rest and sleep, it also further worsens their health. It also applies to the Narrator in this story. The Narrator actually knows she needs other activities besides just sleeping and lying on the bed, “It is a very bad habit I am convinced”, clarifies that adults know their own physiological needs and how to fulfill it. Especially since the yellow wallpaper in her room cannot make her sleep and get her a proper rest, “I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.” the Narrator declared that the wallpaper “keeps me



quiet by the hour” and it is what makes the Narrator not sleep, “for you see I don’t sleep.”

Furthermore, the Narrator told her husband several times about the yellow wallpaper in her room, but John himself did not want to understand and give any solution to his wife’s opinion and talk, “... and really, dear, I don’t care to renovate the house just for a three months’ rental” (Gilman, 1998: 4). By reason of the yellow wallpaper, the Narrator found it difficult to get enough sleep at night.

He thought I was asleep at first, but I wasn’t, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately (Gilman, 1998: 5).

The Narrator explains how she “lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately,” points out the Narrator does not sleep at night. And the word “pattern” means the one on the wallpaper. Even if she does get some sleep in the afternoon, those sleeps do not help at all for her recovery since it is scheduled strictly. The Narrator has even told her husband she only eats her food when he is present by her side. Which meant when he was away, the Narrator did not eat well even though there was a meal schedule for her.

“I don’t weigh a bit more,” said I, “nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!” (Gilman, 1998: 8)

The Narrator really needed her husband in the recovery process, “my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here,” clearly explains how her husband’s presence is important to her. It signifies how she indeed knows her meal is also

important for her recovery process, and her physiological needs in general. Regardless, for all her husband knew, the Narrator looked “healthy” considering what he saw, assuming his wife had gained weight.

“...It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really dear you are better!”

“Better in body perhaps—” I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word (Gilman, 1998: 5).

The Narrator stated “Better in body perhaps,” indicating how the Narrator knew only her physical appearance looks better, not her meal or her rest.

Fundamentally, the Narrator already had a supply of her physiological needs, and did not have to struggle to fulfill them. However, the Narrator still found it challenging to contemplate even her own basic needs with her mental issues since there is no emotional support from relatives. As stated in the theory, it can result in a shortfall in the individual when the physiological needs, as the lower needs, are not met.

### **3.2.1.2. Safety Needs**

The Narrator probably has no problem fulfilling her safety in material and property needs. Her husband and her brother are the high standing physicians, “If a physician of a high standing, and one’s own husband ... My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing ...” (Gilman, 1998: 1). Their profession as “physician of a high standing” indicates both are well-established and have good financial circumstances that can afford their own family’s needs. However, in addition to having safety and reassurance, the Narrator is not particularly able to

fulfill safety needs in other aspects. Genuinely, John was a person who was not superstitious at all, believing only in written and existed science; so the first time his wife said the house felt queer, John just ousted it. When in reality, the queer feeling felt by the Narrator is not a superstitious thing at all, it implied how the Narrator feels inside herself – her mental state. Herein lies the lack of knowledge in psychological medication in the Narrator’s case, the postpartum depression.

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage. John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures (Gilman, 1998: 1).

“John laughs at me,” shows how John disregards the Narrator’s feelings. Later then, John “scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures,” points out that he underestimates anything other than what he knows in science. More specifically, it means John does not want to talk about the Narrator’s “unwritten feelings” considering how John only thinks it is just a “feeling” which has no physical form. This treatment from John gives the Narrator of no feeling in personal safety.

She also wants to socialize and get stimulated and not be too repressed, “I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus ...” (Gilman, 1998: 2). The Narrator wrote “if I had less opposition” means she can only wish for it and that the opposition makes the Narrator’s safety less secure. On the other hand, by reason of her husband’s mindset, the Narrator cannot freely fulfill this need for safety, which is safety in psyches. The Narrator understands what she needs in her own safety, and understands what is reassuring

and safe for her, and she knows well enough she has worryment about her mental health, but other people – being one of it is John – do not give her a sense of safety in her health which resulting as a threat to her mental health.

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing. John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him. Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way (Gilman, 1998: 3).

The sentence “John does not know how much I really suffer” explicitly explains how John does not have sympathy towards the Narrator. He is the one who rented the house solely for his wife’s recovery, yet he does not know how much the Narrator is suffering and what makes her suffer, as in “He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him.” Eventually, the Narrator blames herself about her condition, “Of course it is only nervousness,” and the fact that the Narrator said “only” about her condition shows how she undervalues herself. And granting the fact that the Narrator herself knows how the nervousness “does weigh on me” points out how the Narrator is used to being depreciated about her illness, being considered that her illness is nothing. In the way that people close to the Narrator often depreciate her, resulting in the safety in her psyches cannot be perfectly met.

Furthermore, she knows that she needs to write to release her stress, yet she is not allowed to; instead she blames her illness for it.

He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manners of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try. I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me (Gilman, 1998: 4).

The Narrator stated how John says about the Narrator's condition, "He says...a nervous weakness like mine." It is a proof that John knows the Narrator has a debilitating mental state, "sure to lead to all manners of excited fancies," yet he forced the Narrator to think properly – like everyone else, stated in "that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency." Perceiving through John's behavior, it can worsen the Narrator's way of thinking seeing that she received too much pressure. In the end, it will put a risk to the Narrator's safety in the psyche.

During her recovery process, her husband intimidate her several times; one time he intimidate the Narrator to send her to another doctor if she did not recover quickly, "John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall ... and she says he is just like John and my brother..." (Gilman, 1998: 5). There will be no recovery if the safety of the Narrator's own psyches and health is forced and threatened. The Narrator felt that as days went by, she got more fretful. Apart from the safety of her psyches that cannot be fulfilled, her personal safety is also not accomplished.

She is mature enough and understands what is needed, yet John is the one being the obstruction to her safety. Other than her health in psyche safety, she is also lacking in the needs of security and protection, as noticeable by all the way of John's talking, and that describes how poor the Narrator's security is.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me. There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy the nursery with the horrid wallpaper (Gilman, 1998: 3).

It is a logical thinking of John's, that only from the Narrator's own self-control to get a fast recovery, "that I must use my will and self-control." Yet John's another spoken word saying that no one can help her, "no one but myself can help me," does not provide a sense of safety and security. The Narrator will feel no one can protect her and feel there is no one else to depend on. It further develops into the Narrator being fearful asking for help to other people, which ends up being true. Proving John's statement influenced the Narrator's feeling of security. The Narrator's safety needs can be met if she gets the support from her husband, and there is nothing wrong with John supporting his own wife in her healing process. Nonetheless, the Narrator still cares about her baby, "There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy." Even though she has to sacrifice her comfort and security to her baby from the wallpaper, "does not have to occupy the nursery with the horrid wallpaper."

John has no sense of helping the Narrator's need of security either, always asking the Narrator to just trust him seeing that he is a doctor and her doctor, "I am a doctor, dear, and I know". "You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you" (Gilman, 1998: 8). John stated that he feels much easier about the Narrator, "I feel really much easier about you," and that sentence shows how reckless towards the Narrator. Preceding John told the Narrator that no one else but herself could help, so the Narrator did not ask John for help at this stage. It indicates even if John is a doctor, "I am a doctor, dear, and I know," he cannot utterly support the Narrator's safety needs.

Because of John's behavior, the Narrator turns out to be horrified by him, "The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John" (Gilman, 1998: 10). When in due time John feels that his wife has begun to "recover", which she actually does not, the Narrator does not want to leave now that she lacks safety in her poor mental health and just keeps wanting to stay in the room to look at the wallpaper.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper. I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was *because* of the wall-paper—he would make fun of me. He might want to take me away (Gilman, 1998: 10)

In accordance with the sentences above, the Narrator began to lose trust in John and did not tell John about her actual condition, "I had no intention of telling him," as a consequence from John's behavior towards her, "he would make fun of me." Afterward, due to not acquiring security in her own husband, the Narrator felt the only thing that made her safe was the room, especially from the wallpaper. Seeing as the Narrator felt it was her safe place to be her own self, so she does not want to be away from the room, "He might want to take me away." Indicates the Narrator feels safe in the room. Realistically, the place she lived in gives threat to her safety in psyche. However, since there is a woman in the wallpaper, she feels safe. Which means, it is her way to cope with her position as a woman in the household.

Through this research by interpreting the actions and dialogues, the Narrator does not fulfill safety needs in her security, stability, health, psyche, or as a person. Even supposing that her husband is a doctor, he does not give a feeling of safety in the Narrator's mental health. There are many factors for the lack of

success to fulfill this need, one of which, as mentioned above, is support from close relatives. There is no way to fulfill her security needs when there are so many threats from her own family who are supposed to give emotional support. Every human being has to seek for the feeling of security. Even in the Narrator's case, she found it from an unresponsive object.

### **3.2.1.3. Love and Belonging Needs**

As the name suggests, love and belonging, it can be accomplished whether from family members, friends, spouse, children and social relations. The Narrator has a husband who is expected to give love to her, through her ups and downs. Yet John is seen depreciating his own wife's feelings, solely by cause of he is a man and has a higher position, "John is a physician ... perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see he does not believe I am sick!" (Gilman, 1998: 1). The statement, "You see he does not believe I am sick" indicates how John, as the husband, does not have the feeling of belongingness and depreciating his wife. On top of that, this husband and wife relationship has no intimacy in any manner, and since the Narrator is experiencing mental health issues, she also lacks the ability to give the same intimacy.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition. But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself—before him, at least, and that makes me very tired (Gilman, 1998: 2).

Herein, the Narrator realizes there is something wrong with herself, "I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive," specifically her emotional state, "I think it is due to this nervous condition." If interpreted, the Narrator knows about her condition



from John, and that signifies how the Narrator trusts John. Moreover, when John said to the Narrator, “But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control,” the Narrator trusts him and complies with it, “So I take pains to control myself.” Even though it is uncomfortable for the Narrator, she still does it as a form of reliance, “before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.” Indicates the feeling of love and belongingness from the Narrator to John, to keep her husband by her side - in order to help her in her recovery process and also in helping in fulfilling her love and belonging needs. By contrast, as can be seen from the scenario above, the husband does not give the same response to the Narrator. Signifies that the Narrator does not fulfill her love and belonging needs.

Anyhow, as the plot progresses, it has been described how John acted without consideration towards his wife, “He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind. As if I couldn’t see through him!” (Gilman, 1998: 13). This explicitly explains the Narrator’s feeling about her husband pretending to love her. And also, she left home with Jennie and other servants, “So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down...” (Gilman, 1998: 14). The “she” in the sentence refers to Jennie. The Narrator mentioned “servants” and Jennie, but not “John”, indicates that John does not have the desire to be wanting to accompany his wife at all time. The Narrator also mentioned, “It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work” (Gilman, 1998: 4), which is refers to John, but all he wants is for his wife to recover quickly with no considerable effort in helping; by staying by his wife’s side for instance.

She also needs companionship from her husband, since John is all she has in helping the recovery, not only just providing her with various kinds of objects and materials. The Narrator stated in another scenario, “I don’t want to go out, and I don’t want to have anybody come in, till John comes. I want to astonish him” (Gilman, 1998: 14). If interpreted, this also can have another meaning – out of the context of the wallpaper. It accentuates how the Narrator needs John’s fondness, intimacy, and trust.

It is shown in many parts of the story that the husband did not listen to his wife’s feelings, and even put off the Narrator’s opinion.

“Bless her little heart!” said he with a big hug, “she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let’s improve the shining hours by going to sleep and talk about it in the morning!” (Gilman, 1998: 5).

John’s treatment towards the Narrator through physical affection and communication is quite the opposite. John only gives the Narrator physical affections, “he said with a big hug.” Yet, he avoids in-depth conversation with the Narrator, “talk about it in the morning.” This gives the impression to the Narrator that her husband does not contribute a space for discussion and compassion – verbally. The Narrator also wrote that her husband laughed at her every time she spoke her heart and head, “He laughs at me so about this wall-paper!” (Gilman, 1998: 3). He is supposed to listen and give a proper reaction to his wife, especially when she is telling him about her feelings that threatened her. Yet she listens and obeys her husband’s opinion.

In another scenario, the Narrator asked John to change the wallpaper,

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies. He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of stairs, and so on (Gilman, 1998: 4).

John said to the Narrator that “he meant to repaper the room,” but John gives unreal hope to the Narrator. Following after, the Narrator stated how John said to her like, “He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of stairs, and so on,” gives an interpretation as if the Narrator asked an excessive amount of demands and it is a form of John guilt tripping the Narrator.

Apart from John, there is Jennie in the same house as them, and the Narrator too does not have a dependable relationship with Jennie. She is John’s sister, the Narrator’s sister-in-law and still considered as a family. And the fact that there is no genuine relationship that shows a sense of kinship in this house is pathetic. Jennie is on duty as the housekeeper in the house, not a family member who helped the Narrator personally, “She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession” (Gilman, 1998: 5). Jennie could have been a friend and companion for the Narrator to have someone to talk to or just be present with. However, it seems as though Jennie is not allowed to approach the Narrator in a more intimate way and is simply just a good housekeeper, as the Narrator describes Jennie “hopes for no better profession” other than housekeeper. The following statement from the Narrator, “And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give”

(Gilman, 1998: 13) also gives an illustration about Jennie being more like John's assistant to be a source of information about the Narrator's condition, and there is no more intimate relationship than that. the Narrator is also not allowed to meet her own child, "And yet I cannot be with him, it makes me so nervous" (Gilman, 1998: 6) and John let other woman take care of the child; certainly, her husband must be not participate in taking care of his child, since there are servants provided. From the perspective of health, it may be a good reason to not give the baby to the Narrator since her cause of her nervousness is after the postnatal period. But in the aspect of love and belonging needs, she clearly deserves it, leastwise, from the husband to the baby.

Anyhow, as the plot progresses, it has been thoroughly described how John acted indifferent towards his wife, "He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind. As if I couldn't see through him!" (Gilman, 1998: 13). This explicitly explains the Narrator's feeling about her husband pretending to love her.

From the observations and interpretations above, the Narrator does not have the presence of a sibling, child, and spouse in her recovery process. Being in an environment that is less concerned with mental issues makes her isolated, and the fact that John also isolates her from everyone and keeps her away from social relations. She can only, by oneself, alone in her room in a flustered state. And when has a feeling of anger, she cannot say it directly, instead, she is blaming herself and her condition. She does not have the ability and a helping hand in fulfilling her love and belonging needs; no support from relations. And with her

mental state, she also cannot give a proper reaction to her husband. It might be because she does not understand the concept of giving the sense of love and belonging since she is living in a patriarchal society where women are inferior. Thus, she considers obeying her husband and existing social norms, is a form of love and belongingness. To sum it up, there is no proper way in giving and receiving the sense of love and belongingness, which resulted in her failure in fulfilling this need.

#### **3.2.1.4. Esteem Needs**

Esteem needs are also acquired from within oneself and from others. They influence each other. An example of this can be seen from the Narrator. In this esteem need, the Narrator does not get respect, recognition, and freedom from others, making her also lack self-esteem. She also does not have the power, let alone her status, a woman and a wife, who unfortunately is experiencing a poor mental health condition as the lack of ability from her internal factors.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus – but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad (Gilman, 1998: 2).

She can only fantasize about being in a better social condition as in, “I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus,” makes it difficult to express herself. Besides her mental health condition, her surroundings not supporting her can suppress her self-esteem, “but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition.” It shows how John does not give the recognition and respect to the Narrator by giving her unreasonable

opposition. Yet she had great respect and recognition towards John. The Narrator always puts her husband's feelings first, surpassing her own feelings – and this is the sign of her losing her self-respect. She restrains herself from telling what she feels to her husband, “and I confess it always makes me feel bad,” and it shows how the Narrator feels about her condition, she is afraid of being a burden to other people. Although the Narrator still has the courage and desire to be free, people around her are the ones who do not give her the opportunity to achieve that desire, it is unlikely to be fulfilled perfectly. Her own husband underestimated her several times, “He laughs at me so about this wallpaper” (Gilman, 1998: 4). This action of John gives an indication how he looks down on the Narrator, “He laughs at me.” It takes away confidence and self-esteem in the Narrator.

She also wanted to put across her feelings to her husband, but she did not have the ability to do so. She is under the oppression from society and that makes her lose confidence. Shown when her husband seems to turn a deaf ear when it comes to his wife, “... but John would not hear of it” (Gilman, 1998: 7). It occurred as he does not appreciate her existence at all. The Narrator is the representation of someone who always often gets ignored and that later makes her less able to express her opinions more freely, always thinking about other people's opinions first and completely losing her own sense of self-respect as well.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window. I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition (Gilman, 1998: 2).

John pays no mind to the Narrator's feelings like they are nothing, and he said it directly to the Narrator, as in the sentence which indicate that analysis, "but he said what I felt was a draught." It makes her feel intimidated and does not easily open herself up to other people, she can lose her self-confidence. In actual fact, the Narrator knows about her feelings towards John's treatment, "I get unreasonably angry with John." However, since she gets no recognition and respect from others, she blames herself, "I think it is due to this nervous condition." This sentence is interpreted to show how oppression can take away someone's self-respect. Furthermore, the way John takes care of the Narrator is far from respectful, like she is just another patient he has, "...he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies" (Gilman, 1998: 4). The Narrator mentioned "he said" and "patient" in one sentence, indicating that John was the one who acknowledged it to the Narrator.

The Narrator is always steered by her husband, to this extent, the Narrator always believes and obeys John's words. Often in the story, the Narrator brings up such phrase like "John said", "he said", for instance, "He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me" (Gilman, 1998: 7). The Narrator believes in John when he says "no one but myself can help." Along with that scenario, there is one more scenario found in this context to be analyzed, as an illustration,

He loves me dearly, and hates to see me sick I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia. But he said I wasn't able to

go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished (Gilman, 1998: 7).

The Narrator tried to talk with John, “I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him,” about wanting to have social stimulus, “make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.” the Narrator hinting “I wish he would let me go” portraying the oppression John gave to her, because she wrote “wish” as if the Narrator does not always get freedom – or will not get it. Afterwards, John stating directly to the Narrator, as she wrote, “But he said I wasn’t able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there,” gives the implication that the Narrator is burdensome and that John does not want to give support to her. Also, John condescends her when the Narrator cries and correlates it with her illness, indicating that he does not give recognition emotionally, as in “and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.” The “good case” here means about the Narrator’s recovery process.

Along with that, she likes pouring her heart and feelings into writing. She already feels burdened by her illness, in combination with the people around her who do not give the Narrator the strength to even recover. Taking away her own inner strength for sure. She does not have the trust of others, so she does not trust herself either. She also becomes doubtful of the people around her, “It does not do to trust people too much” (Gilman, 1998: 9). No recognition for her and not treated and considered a real human being. Sometimes she felt unsure of herself, unsure of her feelings, too, “I don’t know why I should write this. I don’t want to. I don’t feel able ... But I must say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!” (Gilman, 1998: 7). It is due to her being used to hearing the disregarding



words, and makes her lose confidence and independence as she wrote “I don’t feel able.” Despite that, she was determined to find a way to pour her heart out for relief, “But I must say what I feel and think in some way.” However, the phrase “in some way” gives an interpretation and implication to readers that she does not get the freedom in expressing her feelings and has to think in another way to be free – confidentially. She got no validation from others and herself. As a woman in the era, she no longer had the power to raise her voice and opinion. She kept all her feelings and opinions to herself; no one knew what she was really feeling except for her diary. John, the one who always brings up his position and status before his wife, makes it difficult for the Narrator to revolt.

In addition, about the yellow wallpaper in her room, the Narrator says that there is a woman trapped in there. Until one day she saw the woman come out during daylight, but she kept hiding from the sight of others. The Narrator condones the actions of the woman in the wallpaper. The woman symbolizes that, being a woman in general, is difficult; having to hide her true self, not being able to express herself without restraint, and can only hide in the dark. This indicates that the Narrator understands the woman’s feelings, in that she feels the same circumstance as her; feeling confined.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines. I don’t blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight! I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can’t do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once (Gilman, 1998: 8).

The Narrator saying “when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines” about the woman in the wallpaper, gives a representation of how utterly it

is the same condition as her in real life, hiding herself from other people. For the Narrator's case, she was hiding behind her writing on paper – in emotional context – since her actual life is full of oppression. The phrase “I don't blame her a bit” by the Narrator gives meaning that she indeed knows how it feels and that she herself also felt it. The Narrator also said, “It is very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight,” conveying how “creeping” – being free – is humiliating. She does not want to get caught by John being “free” in her room, “I know John would suspect something at once,” since she knows that John will disregard her again.

At the end of the story, where the Narrator has ripped off all the wallpaper in the room, is a form of resistance and she at last feels free. The woman in the wallpaper she sees is herself. She feels free to crawl out to the room, yet she does not want to go out of the room. She feels that she must return to the wallpaper when night falls. When interpreted, it feels that the Narrator or the woman already get used to being trapped.

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard! It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please! I don't want to go outside (Gilman, 1998: 13).

The part where the Narrator said “I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes at night” conveys that she already lost her self-esteem. She has to hide herself so as not to get judged by others again. Yet deep down, the Narrator knows she likes to be free, “It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!”. For the Narrator, the room is a form of freedom, but in fact, she only stays in her own “imagination” since she cannot really get that rightful

freedom. She still feels agitated to get out to the real world that the Narrator thinks she will never get the recognition she needs, “I don’t want to go outside.” Eventually, it is because she gets used to it and so she even isolates herself – like the woman in the wallpaper.

It is only at the end of this story that the Narrator gains freedom, confidence, and self-esteem, which unfortunately is not real. The Narrator even has the courage to crawl over her husband, who is fainted on the floor, and ignoring his existence, “Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!” (Gilman, 1998: 15). The scenario where the Narrator stated “I had to creep over him every time” can be taken in the context of self-esteem, where the sentence means it is the manner from the Narrator to take vengeance by disregarding John. However, this is only the Narrator’s own imagination as she stares and mourns the wallpaper and the woman for too long and it leads her to imagine and hallucinate things that actually did not happen. After all that, it actually depicts how the Narrator finally fulfills her self-esteem from within herself—her own efforts.

This apparently aggravates the Narrator’s mental issue due to the imperfect esteem needs. The Narrator was under too much pressure from her surroundings; the many expectations her husband placed her on, made her even helpless. She indeed shows inferiority as the result of her husband’s superiority. In the end, she lost self-respect, confidence, freedom, and did not meet the self-esteem needs. Although in the end she managed to be unconsciously confident and surprise her husband by showing she was already free from the confinement

that her husband made. Showing the feelings she has sustained that she does not want to be humiliated and belittled. Yet it does not prove that it had any effect on her conscious self.

#### **3.2.1.5. Self-actualization Needs**

The Narrator is in a social condition that does not support her self-development. On the other hand, the Narrator is also unable to maximize her inner abilities and skills. There is no opportunity for her to develop. She could not accomplish and seek her talents, hobbies, abilities, or skills, “There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word” (Gilman, 1998: 3). It is proven that John hindered the Narrator’s development in self-actualization. He prevents the Narrator from writing, “he hates to have me write a word,” when in fact, he knows his wife likes to write. So, this action obstructs the Narrator’s way of developing her hobby. In addition, her needs were not met; she did not have freedom both from within herself and from others. She was also constrained by her unmet needs; no aspect of her life was safe, there was no sense of love and belonging that could be obtained even though she had given it to others. From this fact, the Narrator becomes a person who is confused and often misled, has no direction in being herself and in finding her true self.

There are too many limitations and restrictions given by her relatives, “I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me” (Gilman, 1998: 4). The sentence “it would relieve the press of ideas” proves how the Narrator is in a restrained position. Self-actualization itself requires a lot of development and effort from within oneself as

well as support from others, it cannot be just one sided. The Narrator still feels dependent on others, specifically John. John also chooses to sustain the yellow wallpaper rather than her wife's concern, as in the scenario, "... "and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental'" (Gilman, 1998: 4).

She cannot be independent; there is no freedom to socialize and with no close relationship and connection with relatives.

"It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now" (Gilman, 1998: 4).

She thoroughly explained how she cannot have companionship and being insulated, "It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work." She also mentioned "advice" about her works, which means that she needs advice to help her self-development. Thereafter, the Narrator said "he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now," implying how John does understand what "social stimulus" and "companionship" the Narrator mentioned. John equates the "social stimulus" to putting a "firework in pillow-case", signifying how the Narrator does not get the right support and appreciation from her partner.

She is completely isolated; known at least as long as the Narrator is in the house, for three months. She also always blamed herself even when she was not at fault, always hiding the emotions she felt, "... so I take pains to control myself—before him, at least, and that makes me very tired" (Gilman, 1998: 5). This can

lead into a flawed self-actualization where she does not think about her safety first, “and that makes me very tired,” and hurts herself. She could not stand up for herself, since she could only suppress her feelings. This is also due to the social norm that prevailed in her era which made it difficult for her to improve in herself. There was a lot to consider if she wanted to be blunt and straightforward about showing her true self and feelings, hobbies, and anything else that may not have been the norm for women in that era.

In the end, the Narrator becomes someone else, as the woman in the wallpaper. She is easily influenced by her thought, considering being too long unattended and pent up, in that, when the time comes for her to break out, it has worsened her situation.

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder. “I’ve got out at last,” said I, “in spite of you and Jane? And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!” Now why should that man have fainted (Gilman, 1998: 15).

The Narrator shows her true persona as who she was wishing for, “in spite of you and Jane? And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back,” signifying how the Narrator does not want to be confined anymore. The Narrator feels the “paper” is the thing – or a person – which has restrained her from finding her self-actualization needs; personality, inner self, and persona. Add to that a mental state that made it difficult for her to think clearly. Despite John having previously put her thoughts and imaginations out of her mind, the Narrator would still be confused in distinguishing between reality and fantasy. On top of that, the Narrator has no companion and can only observe the woman in the wallpaper,

making her think that it is real and that is the only activity she can do without fear of getting caught. The Narrator ends up falling into her own imagination and hallucinations to resist the way others treat her and it indicates that she is already disoriented as to who is who.

In conclusion, she becomes a person who is in disarray in knowing who she really is and fails in fulfilling the self-actualization needs. She cannot find her own strength and weakness, is hiding her true emotions, does not feel safe for being herself, still feels dependent on other people, experiencing damaging outcomes for being isolated, cannot get freshness from the surroundings, does not feel confident, and does not have the freedom in resisting social oppression.

### **3.2.2. Social Condition**

The discussion of this section is only part of elaboration about the root of the cause of the issues and conflicts in the story. These social conditions affect how characters think and act. In accordance with the main theme of this story, which is social issues and psychological issues. It is convinced that in this story, the patriarchal society is the main cause. The Narrator experiences nervousness after giving birth, which could have arisen from the patriarchy society. Based on research that has been done, this nervousness could be considered postpartum depression. Therefore, the Narrator is kept away from the baby and from housework by John as he is wary of his wife directly helping. The Narrator is aware that if she is just being kept away from everything and not given any other stimulus – social stimulus – will not get any result. As evidence, the Narrator is a subject of the existing patriarchal society; under the pressure of her husband and

the husband being the superior and the dominant one. As a form of patriarchal society, John forbade and restrained his wife, telling his wife only to obey him. John is too logical and realistic towards everything, yet her wife is too close minded and too restrained; showing a superior husband and an inferior wife. Or other observations from Jennie's character who is a portrayal of the role of women and the ideal Victorian wife; being to take care of housework.

Thus, the condition of social norms in the society becomes the main problem and the main reason why it worsen the Narrator's mental condition. Moreover, from this story, one sentence can be interpreted into various outcomes, both regarding social and psychological issues.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

*The Yellow Wallpaper* is a short story written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman which implicitly raises psychological issues. It tells about a woman who is in a state where her mental state is unstable and who is in the midst of a society that does not give a positive impact to her condition. The focus in this research is the struggle of the woman, the Narrator, in fulfilling her hierarchy of needs. In analyzing the hierarchy of needs, the writer applied Maslow's theory by using a psychological approach. The five needs that are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs were analyzed in searching of how the Narrator fulfills her hierarchy of needs. Some of the needs, such as love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs, are influenced by the social aspects, the writer applies the social psychology approach in analyzing it.

The first need is physiological needs where the Narrator can enjoy eating, drinking, sleeping, and breathing. Yet, as a whole, she does not have the freedom in fulfilling the physiological needs. She is being forced into her own sleeping and eating schedule. She experiences irregular sleeping schedules where she cannot sleep due to the yellow wallpaper in her room. Also the irregular schedules of meal time since she only eats well when her husband is present. However, her husband is not always present by the Narrator's side. Next is the safety needs where the Narrator achieves safety in material and property. In spite of that, the

Narrator does not meet the personal security, safety in psyche, stability, and health. There is no emotional support from her husband, John. For the love and belonging needs, as the Narrator also undergoes a mental issue, she cannot properly fulfill her love and belonging needs. There is no receiving and giving of love and intimacy happening between John and the Narrator. She also does not have the presence of other family relatives in the recovery process. And thus the society influenced how the Narrator behaved towards John, and vice versa that affects their relationship. In esteem needs, the Narrator shows no sense of feeling worthy, confidence, self-respect, strength within herself. Whereas the society she lived in also does not help her in fulfilling freedom, recognition, and respect. She shows inferiority in the end. Lastly is the self-actualization needs, where it gives a clear result of failure in fulfilling it since the aspects in each need beforehand are not fulfilled. This is influenced by both aspects, internal and external. Which her mental condition as an obstacle from within herself and the society as external obstacle where the oppression in a male-dominated society occurred. The Narrator in the end shows another persona of herself as the woman in the yellow wallpaper. She does not achieve her maximal capabilities in herself.

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