

English Summary	
Title	Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Dilemma of "Social Motherhood"
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This dissertation analyzes the dilemma of "Social Motherhood" raised by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), the author of *Women and Economics* (1898) and regarded as one of the most radical feminists in America at the turn of the 20th century.

"Modern feminism" was born as an ideology of protest against the declaration of the French Revolution, which celebrated liberty and equality for male citizens only. As suggested in the Latin the origin of the word of "feminism" –"femina" (woman) and "ism" (concept)—modern feminism developed a paradox in which feminists demanded equality with men while at the same time emphasizing women's difference from men.

Gilman saw herself as a "transition woman," by which she meant that she had lived both in the Victorian era and in the early-20th century. Therefore, she met her share of difficulties, struggling with

double dilemmas throughout her life, between being a Victorian woman and a "New Woman," and between the "equality" and "difference" of modern feminism. I discuss Gilman's dilemma as a "transition woman," and analyze her feminist theory of the reconciliation between the economic independence of women and motherhood, telling my version of "New Mother" Gilman's "story."

Chapter One explores the first half of her life and discusses why Gilman was compelled to write "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), and how in this process she was transformed from a "pathological mother" into a strong "radical feminist." Born in 1860 as a descendant of the Beechers, well known social reformers in New England, Charlotte's father Frederich abandoned his wife and two young children soon thereafter. Due to her father's abandonment of the family, Gilman grew up under financial hardship. At the age of twenty-four, Charlotte married Charles W. Stetson and had a baby a year later. Suffering a severe breakdown, she consulted Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, a neurologist famous for his "Rest Cure"; she suffered and almost became insane due to his inappropriate treatment. "The Yellow Wallpaper" reflects Gilman's bitter experience of suffering from a breakdown, providing an important clue for her transformation into a radical feminist.

Chapter Two analyzes Gilman's main work, *Women and Economics*, and the social background to the development of her feminist thought. After moving to California from the East coast, Gilman encountered various radical movements of the Progressive era. She had close contact with Darwinism, Nationalist Movements, Lester

F. Ward (a Reform Darwinian sociologist), home economist Helen Campbell, and settlement workers like Jane Addams. Through such contacts, Gilman developed her original feminist idea that formed the main thesis of *Women and Economics*.

In *Women and Economics*, Gilman thoroughly criticized the "sexuo-economic relationship" between men and women in which sex roles are divided into two separate spheres: with the public sphere being the "men's sphere," and women being socially confined to the private "women's sphere." In sum, Gilman proclaimed that women should not be economically dependent on men, and argued that domestic work be socialized and that public nurseries be established to free women to work in public sphere.

At a time when the women's social reform movements (Social Purity movements, Abolitionist Movements, and Temperance Movements) of the 19th century fundamentally espoused the ideology of Victorian virtue, Gilman attacked this virtue of "domesticity" as a deception and justification of a "women's sphere." Most of her contemporary women, who believed in the virtue of motherhood, therefore criticized Gilman's insistence on women's emancipation through "Social Motherhood" (public nurseries).

Chapter Three analyzes Gilman's three utopian novels: *Moving the Mountain* (1911), *Herland* (1915) and *With Her in Our Land* (1916), the sequel to *Herland*. In these three utopian novels, Gilman attempted to depict her ideal society for men and women. In particular, *Herland* is a feminist utopia in which the habitants are all women.

"Herland", where there are no wars or conflicts over some two thousand years, is ruled according to the principle of "Motherhood." At the end of this story, a young man falls in love with a Herlander. The couple ventures outside "Herland" and travel throughout the real world (Ourland) during World War I. They give up living and raising children in the real world and decide to return to "Herland" from "Ourland."

What compelled this couple to return to the utopian world that had excluded males? Ultimately, if there could exist only females, "Herland" would be only the "reverse" to the androcentric world. Gilman therefore needed to anticipate a future family to dismantle in her utopian world. Moreover, Gilman had no choice but to "confine", along with this couple, her attempt to reconcile feminism and motherhood within the utopian space of "Herland." After her death in 1935, Gilman was neglected for almost half a century.

An appended chapter discusses the problem of the "reception" of Gilman's feminism in Japan. In the first decade of the twentieth century, two heated debates over motherhood took place across the Pacific Ocean: one in America between Ellen Key, a Swedish feminist writer, and Gilman, and another among four feminists in Japan during the Taisho Period. They both debated the same theme: how to reconcile motherhood and the economic independence of women. The chapter questions a Japanese historian's claim that in the Japanese dispute over motherhood Gilman was "miserably" rejected because almost no one supported Gilman's radical feminism, while Key's maternalism was

widely supported by Japanese feminists. The reason this historian underestimates the influence of Gilman's insistence upon "New Motherhood" is that the historian falls into modern feminism's binary framework of "equality" vs. "difference."

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze Gilman's dilemma of "Social Motherhood" because this feminist paradox of social equality and maternal difference is deeply rooted within modern feminism itself. This is largely because as long as modern feminism is confined to the framework of "modernity", it will have to submit to androcentric, or men-centered principles. Modern feminism, burdened with this dilemma, became a mass movement in the decades following World War II. NOW (National Organization for Women), founded from within the women's movements in the 1960's by Betty Friedan (the first president of NOW), adopted eight demands in 1968, including maternity leave rights, child day care facilities. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that Gilman's lifework, the reconciliation of feminism and motherhood, has been accomplished. I conclude that Gilman embodies both the dilemma and dynamism of modern feminism. The dynamism of feminism will continue into the future not only for women, but also for all those who struggle for the affirmation of multiple differences.