

Motherhood and Liberation in Making a Change by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

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Abstract

This paper examines Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Making a Change in terms of the motherhood at Gilman's time. The motherhood in Gilman's society and how motherhood turns the mother's life into an entrapment for a woman is my first issue. How the difficulties of motherhood bring the narrator to the verge of death and the perception of motherhood in the patriarchal society will be scrutinized.

To solve this problem Gilman promotes the idea of 'social motherhood' which requires the entire race to be responsible for motherhood. 'Social motherhood' is defined as community responsibility. The difficulties of Julia as a new mother and the help of Mrs Gordins as an experienced mother will be the focus of my analysis. Julia's liberation after gaining her economic independence and how the relationships among the family members change after her emancipation will also be analyzed.

Keywords: Motherhood, Liberation, New Woman, Economic Independence, Entrapment.

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Introduction

Making a Change is Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story which was published in 1911. In Making a Change Julia gets married to Frank Gordins and begins to live in the same house with her mother-in-law. Julia is a music teacher; yet she gives up working after she gets married. She gives birth to a son and she begins to encounter some difficulties considering her new life as a mother. Being unable to attend for her son by herself, she unwillingly gives the child to her mother-in-law's care. While the grandmother is taking care of the baby, Julia attempts to commit suicide, but is saved by her mother-in-law. After the attempt, Mrs. Gordins realized that just helping her with the child care is not enough for Julia's state of mind, as it is not the motherhood she struggled with, it is the social expectations as a mother that take her to the edge of death. As a solution to such entrapment- that of the patriarchal clash between being a mother and an independent human being, Mrs. Gordins founds a kindergarten and Julia begins to give music lessons, while Mrs. Gordins, the senior, takes all the responsibility of the child. When Julia starts to work, everyone in the family becomes happier.

Discussion and Development

In this article, I will analyze how Gilman tries to promote the idea of new motherhood along with the New Woman with a comparison of the experienced mother and the perception of motherhood in patriarchal society. Gilman states that motherhood is a community responsibility. It is a responsibility for the whole race. Mrs. Gordins takes the responsibility of the child, but as she is the old woman, Gilman creates a conflict here. Gilman tries to show that motherhood is not the responsibility of the birth giver, it is a social duty. As she is of the opinion that mothers should be educated more than experienced, she gives Mrs. Gordins as an old-fashioned woman with her old doctrines to show the contrast between the new woman and the old woman.

In *Making a Change* there are two mothers. The first one is Julia who promises an improvement in womanhood, as she is educated and has a career, and Mrs. Gordins, as the older, experienced woman. According to Katharine Cocking, the relationship between the young and the old woman results with anxiety.

The New Woman phenomenon, presents relationships between women (those between older and younger women particularly) as sources of anxiety as well as sources of radical knowledge. Relationships with older women (distantly related but rarely their mother) promise transformation for the younger generation of women (Cockin, 317)

The anxiety of the relationship is clearly seen each time Mrs. Gordins, criticizes Julia's motherhood; however, the irony is that Mrs. Gordins is not enough for the child because the child does not become educated with the old doctrines of the old woman. Yet as Gamze Sabancı states "Mrs. Gordins is the agent of change for Julia" (Sabancı, 151). If she, as a patriarchal woman, does not exist, the change that happens in Julia cannot be achieved. For Gilman, Mrs.

Gordins, presents how motherhood can become a depressing experience, if it is under the sole responsibility of the birth mother.

Julia is struggling to look after her newborn baby. The beginning of the story shows this struggle as it begins with the voice of the baby “Waa waaaaawaaaa” (Gilman 1911:61). Even this voice makes the couple stressed as they cannot contend with the baby and Frank Gordins, the husband of Julia, gets angry and “Is there no way to stop that child crying (1911: 61)? The tense relationship between the couple is clear and her husband does not feel that it is also his responsibility to look after his son. Julia does not feel well and her husband’s attitude shows how the motherhood is left to women and not to the men, Frank instead of questioning himself, he evades this responsibility and asks his wife for a way. Julia is seen only as the mother of the child after the birth of the baby and this new life of her makes her discontented and it is clear at the very beginning of the story “If Frank is not satisfied with the child’s mother, he must say so, perhaps we can make a change” (Gilman, 1911: 61). The ‘change’ that Gilman means is the change for the whole society and the whole family. The senior Mrs. Gordins, though being an experienced mother, does not offer help to her. Frank does not want to take any responsibility of the child. Frank is always nagging at his wife because of the voice of the baby and a grandmother who does not offer help because “it was her duty to take care of it, and take care of it she would” (62). Julia is expected to be a mother, Frank is complaining about the baby’s cry and the grandmother is hesitant at helping her. Traditionally; Julia and the society that she lives in believe that the mothers are the only caregiver of the child and the three fulfill their traditional roles. Gilman uses Julia in order to criticize the society in which the mothers are the only caregivers and they are left alone with their children (Schwarzenbach & Smith, 326); in fact, she is of the opinion that motherhood should not be done only by the mother.

It is in the training of children for this stage of human life that the private home has ceased to be sufficient, or the isolated, primitive, dependent woman capable. Not that the mother does not have an intense and overpowering sense of loyalty and of duty; but it is duty to individuals, just as it was in the year one (Gilman, 1898:221).

Gilman is of the opinion that motherhood excludes women from the society and makes them isolated that’s why the women cannot fulfill their expected duties as mothers and being left at home alone with their babies without any social event around is the reason for insufficient motherhood. Though women are biologically featured to be the child bearer, it does not mean that they will be mothers, motherhood should also be shared.

When the older woman accepts to take care of the baby and after she tells that she can look after the baby and consenting by saying “I do” (1911:61), this answer of Mrs. Gordins can be interpreted as an answer to a marriage proposal, actually the relationship between these two women symbolizes the ideal marriage as it is Frank who is expected to help his wife but Gilman chooses to resolve this with an older woman. According to Allen “Gilman frequently suggested in her stories that women's intergenerational needs for self-expression, like those of the older and the younger Mrs. Gordins, should be approached simultaneously, in a complementary, mutually

supportive manner” (Allen, 153). It can be assumed that Gilman shows that the two females need each other; actually Gilman tries to prove that the motherhood responsibility can be shared; otherwise, it may be compelling for a mother to be alone in this duty.

Because of the fact that Julia is nearly driven to death, Gilman shows that women should be freed from their entrapped domestic world and believes that only by professionalizing the mother and the domestic work, then the women will be freer and better in terms of child-rearing. “The services of a foster-mother, a nurse, a grandma, are often liked by a baby as well as, and perhaps better than, those of its own mother” (1898:102). One can also argue that Mrs. Gordins is not suitable for being a good mother for the young baby because she is not professionally educated since Gilman always favors the professional care for children as she does in *Herland*. However, Mrs. Gordin’s transformation occurs as a result of this lack

Mrs. Gordins always criticizes Julia’s motherhood. She thinks that Julia is not a “natural” mother. She has the “musical temperament that does not always include patience, nor necessarily, the power of management” (1911:63). Therefore, according to her, the problem is not the baby but the mother.

“he is a perfectly lovely child! -There’s not a thing the matter with him! It is just her absurd ideas. She is so irregular with him. To think of letting that child cry for an hour! He is nervous because she is. And of course she could not feed him till after his bath- of course not” (1911:65).

As well as Mrs Gordins, Frank- Julia’s husband also thinks that Julia is not a perfect mother as he states “my mother knows more about taking care of babies than you will ever learn” (1911:62). Yet, according to Gilman, the education of motherhood does not come from the old traditions, but from personal development: For Gilman motherhood is coming from the inner feelings and the mother shapes what she has inside. When Julia unwillingly lets her mother-in-law start caring for the baby, she finds it hard to accept this, because of the maternal feeling that she has. Gilman shows this burden saying “young Mrs. Gordins looked at her mother-in-law from under her delicate level brows, and said nothing. But the weary lines about her eyes deepened; she had been kept awake nearly all night, and she had been kept awake nearly all night, and for many nights” (Gilman 1911: 61). Julia feels that she cannot pull her weight; therefore, she consents to her mother-in law’s offer, as she is really tired because of sleeplessness. Although she has the maternal feeling, she has some problems in terms of turning it into practice. The senior Mrs Gordins is depicted as experienced. “She has the real love of it, and the practical experience” (1911:61). Julia does not have this practical experience. She has difficulty in finding a way because of the change the baby brings to her life as she was a musician and she was earning her money before marriage and because she becomes dependent to the child she cannot turn to her personal life and Gilman clarifies it in her *Women and Economics*;

Because of her maternal duties, the human female is said to be unable to get her own living. As the maternal duties of other females do not unfit them for getting their own living and

also the livings of their young, it would seem that the human maternal duties require the segregation of the entire energies of the mother to the service of the child during her entire adult life, or so large a proportion of them that not enough remains to devote to the individual interests of the mother (1898:133).

According to Gilman, women leave everything for the sake of looking after their children so they do not have any social life and they cannot go out of their domestic life which requires only motherhood. Nothing but her motherhood and how she cannot deal with the new-born child is depicted in the story; therefore, the burden that the child brings to her life can clearly be understood. She leaves everything about her job because of the maternal duties and her past life was happier compared to the one she experiences after giving a birth. There is an analepsis reminding the reader of Julia's past life.

Julia's nerves were at the breaking point. Upon her tired ears, her sensitive mother's heart, the grating wail from the next room fell like a lash burnt in like fire. Her eyes were hypersensitive, always. She had been an ardent musician before her marriage, and had taught quite successfully on both piano and violin. To any mother a child's cry is painful; to a musical mother it is torment (1911:61).

Julia is described as an ambitious musician and she is entrapped in her domestic life, she gradually falls into depression. "She used to wish she had been the greatest musician on earth—that she might give it up for him! She had given up her music, perforce, for many months, and missed it more than she knew (1911:63). She wants to be the best musician; however, she ends up being a domestic mother. According to Allen,

The housekeeping service that gets reorganized communally in "Making a Change" is child care. Like many of Gilman's female characters, Julia Gordins is frustrated to the point of impending insanity by the conflicting claims of her family's care and the expression of her life work (Allen, 169).

Julia is not comfortable as she is aware that she has to take the responsibility of her child. It is the society that they live in that makes women feel that they are the sole responsible of their children. Julia as well as her mother-in-law feels that there is a need for change and the older woman told that "It does seem to be time for a change of treatment and the young woman added "or for a change of residence" (Gilman 1911: 62). Is the "change" in this sense done for Julia or for the child? Actually it is done for the child because both Frank and Mrs. Gordins, the senior, cannot understand what Julia really experiences. For Julia the real change for her can be a change of the residence as she and her mother-in-law share the same apartment because her husband has some economic problems when they get married. Julia thinks that she can find relief if she changes the residence. Being unaware of what she experiences, her husband is always out at work. "He hadn't had the faintest appreciation of her state of mind. When people say they are nearly crazy from weariness, they state a practical fact" (Gilman, 1911:62). Frank only works and Julia's duty is to take care of the child. Men in Gilman's works do not understand what their wives really experience. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, John also does not have any idea on what his

wife experiences. “John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him.” (4). What the female do within the domestic sphere does not create anything to suffer or any problems according to them. Gilman criticizes the way how the jobs are divided according to the sex in her *Women and Economics*,

All the varied activities of economic production and distribution, all our arts and industries, crafts and trades, all our growth in science, discovery, government, religion,—these are along the line of self-preservation: these are, or should be, common to both sexes. To teach, to rule, to make, to decorate, to distribute, —these are not sex-functions: they are race-functions. Yet so inordinate is the sex-distinction of the human race that the whole field of human progress has been considered a masculine prerogative (1898:137).

Gilman criticizes the division of jobs thinking that the jobs have nothing to do with gender. Frank Gordins only thinks of his job and how to earn his living to look after his son, mother and wife. When one of his friends asks about his marriage and home, he tells that “the child always cries but it is natural and he dismissed the whole matter from his mind and bent his faculties to a man’s task-how he can earn enough to support a wife, a mother and a son” (1911:64). The man is expected to be the provider, while the woman is expected to be the mother and the wife. However; Julia is different in that she thinks that the baby will bring her happiness and joy as every mother does in the society she lives in, but the real case is different. “When the baby came, her heart overflowed with utter devotion and thankfulness; she was his wife – the mother of his child (1911:63). Though she is happy with what she has but still she longs for music. “Her happiness lifted and pushed within till she longed more than ever for music, for the free-pouring current of expression, to give forth her love and happiness. She had not the gift of words” (1911: 63). She feels that she cannot lay open what she feels without the existence of music. After a great deal of effort and a lot of sleepless nights to look after her own son she desperately decides to make a change and she tells it to her husband. “All right, Frank. We will make a change. And you shall have some peace” (1911:63). It is difficult to decide on it but Frank is happy about this decision. “Thank Goodness for that, Jule! You do look tired, girlie- let mother see to his nibs, and try to get a nap, can’t you” (1911:63)? She said; “Yes, yes ... I think I will. Her voice had a peculiar note in it. If Frank had been an alienist, or even a general physician, he would have noticed it. But his work lay in electric coils, in dynamos and copper wiring-not in women’s nerves and he did not notice it” (1911:63). She is really hesitant; however, her husband, being the expected man of the time, cannot comprehend what was going on in her mind. He does not how difficult it is for her to give the baby son to her mother-in-law; however; at last she decides to give him to her mother-in law in order to be looked after. “Would you mind looking after Albert? She asked in a flat quiet voice. I think I will try to get some sleep. Oh I shall be delighted replied her mother-in-law” (1911:64). Julia is a young mother who was run ragged by child caring. She eventually feels that the only way left is to commit suicide; she cannot relinquish these tasks without a great shame so she thinks that she will set herself free by committing a suicide. Luckily Mrs. Gordins sniffs out the scent of gas from behind Julia’s locked bedroom door. She opens the door with a pinch she pulls herself through the transom, rescues Julia, and decides to take control of their lives. Women’s committing suicide at that time was really high because of the social sphere they were living in. According to Howard I. Kushner in

his article *Women and Suicide in Historical Perspective* stated that “the highest suicide rates are found among those women who are the most submerged in the family” (Kushner, 8). According to him, domesticity and domestic labors make women feel entrapped and they resort to committing suicides to free themselves from social constrictions and Julia commits suicide because of the domestic life she has, however, she is saved and she makes a change in her life. She tries to liberate herself from the domestic life she lives in, Julia thinks that she will find liberation in her marriage and in motherhood and she cannot find in both. She tries to escape through suicide which is the most common form of liberation in that age.

The change ahead is apparent when Julia comes to herself and finds out that she is hugged by her mother-in-law Mrs. Gordins. This is the first step Mrs. Gordins change. She turned into an affectionate mother-in-law, rather than being critical. She tries to soothe her by saying “Don’t say a thing, dearie. I understand. I understand, I tell you! Oh my dear girl- my precious daughter! We haven’t been half good enough to you, Frank and I! But cheer up now; I have got the loveliest plan to tell you about! We are going to make a change! Listen now!” (Gilman, 1911:66). The help of Mrs Gordins shows the female solidarity and how the female help each other, she begins to understand Julia’s feelings and she decides to make a change and her acceptance of not being good to Julia showed how the society viewed women in general at that time, the society also is not good to them, the two women with the help of Mrs Gordins find a way to liberate themselves. Mrs Gordins, senior, decides to make great changes and because of her love of babies, she decides to found a baby garden on the roof and she takes the care of her grandchild.

Julia begins to give music lessons as she did before her marriage, when she was free and happy; and with their extra income they hire professional housekeeper and French cook. The solution of the old woman is the economic independence which is stressed many times by Gilman in *Women and Economics*.

Economic independence for women necessarily involves a change in the home and family relation. But, if that change is for the advantage of individual and race, we need not fear it. It does not involve a change in the marriage relation except in withdrawing the element of economic dependence, nor in the relation of mother to child saves to improve it. But it does involve the exercise of human faculty in women, in social service and exchange rather than in domestic service solely. This will of course require the introduction of some other form of living than that which now obtains. It will render impossible the present method of feeding the world by means of millions of private servants, and bringing up children by the same hand. (Gilman 1898:127)

According to Gilman, the women should make changes at home and in their relations, only domestic service is not enough for women; they should be in social service as well. Though Julia leaves her job and begins to the house service, she finds out that it is not the solution for her and she can only find her own self by working. She had her own business once and she was happy with that life. As “the labour which the wife performs in the household was given as part of her functional duty, not as employment” (Gilman, 1898:129), Julia now has her own business

and she could earn her own living and she releases herself from domestic life. Julia is now free of her duties as a mother. “However, this ending challenges the credibility of the story. Is it a success in terms of the young mother’s experience of motherhood” (Sabancı, 108). Gilman does not imply that Julia is not capable of looking after a child; instead she is depicted as a mother who is really feeling uncomfortable when giving the child. As stated above, she is a successful and ambitious teacher. This will bring us to the concept of Gilman’s New Motherhood which includes “The fullest development of the woman, in all her powers, that she may be better qualified for her duties of transmission by inheritance” (Gilman, 379). Julia is a professional musician, so her son can inherit this talent from her. Julia, as a working woman, is in the social service as well. She is a right mother for the child and she serves as a contrast to her mother-in-law. Mrs Gordins is depicted as talented and affectionate. “Here was Frank Gordins, well brought up, the only son of a very capable and idolatrously affectionate mother” (1911:62). Mrs Gordins is an affectionate and a capable mother, but there is not word saying that Julia is not. Does being affectionate make the mother educated and professional? Mrs Gordins is insufficient in that sense. Julia has been trying to adapt to the new conditions that the new baby brings to her life. She does not leave her baby happily. “She laid the child on the bed and stood looking at him in the same dull way for a little while. Then went out without another word” (1911:65). This does not show that Julia left the child willingly. Taking the change of Mrs Gordins into consideration, she can be assumed as Gilman’s professional help for Julia. Gilman in her *Kitchen-Mindedness* stresses the importance of the child environment. “Surely if all children were brought up in blacksmith shops, it would make them good blacksmiths; if they were brought up in dental parlors they would become good dentists” (Gilman,144)! If the son is brought up among the children coming to get piano classes, then he might have the capability to become a professional musician as well. This can be interpreted as the professional help of Mrs Gordins. Gilman always criticizes kitchen-mindedness. “Being kitchen-minded we cannot see that health is a public concern; that the feeding of our people is one of the most vital factors in their health, and that the private kitchen with its private cook is notable to keep the public well”(145). By founding a kindergarten, Mrs Gordins and Julia show that the public education is a concern. Going out of the kitchen and beginning to serve for the others apart from the family members is a way for being socially more acceptable. As Polly Wynn Allen states, “more than anything else, she wanted to liberate the women from solitary, burdensome housework. To that end, she urged the women to pursue as many strategies as they could think of appropriate to the particular location and circumstances” (163). In this way Julia is in a way pursues her own career instead of being stuck at home. It can be interpreted that Gilman keeps Julia out of her motherhood duty to because she would be ostracized from profession forever, if she continues to do so.

Gilman by emphasizing that she is a teacher and she is happy and successful in her professional life shows that female solidarity works. What Gilman does is to create a New Mother who resembles to a father figure supporting the family financially. Julia becomes the teacher of the children, but the responsibility of her son is left to her mother-in-law. If Gilman tries to promote the idea of social motherhood, it is still left obscure. In *Herland*, the birth-giver and the

professionals work collaboratively in order to provide the best care for the children. Mrs Gordins serves as a helper for the birth of the 'New Mother' of Gilman.

With these changes and economically independent new mother, all the members of the family begin to feel better and it is recognized by Frank especially with the betterment of the baby. This shows the hope for the future of the working women along with being mothers. As the baby begins to feel better so does Frank Gordins. "Frank Gordins was pleased when the baby "outgrew his crying spells". He spoke of it to his wife. Yes she said sweetly. "He has better care." "I knew you would learn said he, proudly. "I have" she agreed. "I have learnt ever so much" (66)! The couple begins to return to their old days and Frank is satisfied with this situation which shows that economic independence and being out of the domestic life is better both for the family and for the society.

Female solidarity gives way to Julia's economic independence that's why Making a Change as the title referred, contains a hope for women and "this story is said to have been entrepreneurial or economically oriented and it is particularly instructive" (Davis, 26). It is instructive as it offers an insight to women so as to solve their own problems and empower themselves. Julia being a young wife, and a former musician who suffers in her new role of housewife and mother and is berated by her husband and his mother for her lack of maternal instinct transforms into a woman who takes control of the situation, ultimately renewing and empowering herself, and she becomes a model for the new mother. Considering the time, Julia and her mother-in-law challenge the restrictions of the society in terms of the house service, motherhood and wifhood which is the most discussed topic in Gilman's *Women and Economics*.

"She has been supposed to have no work or care on earth save as mother. She has really had the work of the mother and that of the world's house service besides. But she has surely had as much time and strength to give to motherhood as man to fatherhood; and not until she can show that the children of the world are as well mothered as they are well fed can she cast on him the blame for our general deficiency" (1898: 65).

Gilman argues that society has mixed motherhood with house service, and defines mothers on the basis of the quality of their cooking, cleaning and child-rearing. With the character of Julia, Gilman proves that a woman can be successful if she has her economic independence, but she does not mention anything about her motherhood. Being only a wife and a mother is not enough and they should have this economic independence as they should not be seen as the house servants and all the women should get rid of that domesticity and be independent economically.

"Women's economic independence; shown that women, as a class, neither produce nor distribute wealth; that women, as individuals, labor mainly as house servants, are not paid as such, and would not be satisfied with such an economic status if they were so paid; that wives are not business partners or co-producers of wealth with their husbands" (1898:7)

Gilman believes that domestic duties should not keep a woman from her invaluable maternal tasks and she asserts that patriarchy does that and even trivializes motherhood as women are

expected to take care of their children full time and they are not paid for that job; however, she thinks that true motherhood will only be achieved with a life outside the home.

The mother as a social servant instead of a home servant will not lack in true mother duty. She will love her child as well, perhaps better, when she is not in hourly contact with it, when she goes from its life to her own life, and back from her own life to its life, with ever new delight and power. She can keep the deep, thrilling joy of motherhood far fresher in her heart, far more vivid and open in voice and eyes and tender hands, when the hours of individual work give her mind another channel for her own part of the day. From her work, loved and honored though it is, she will return to the home life, the child life, with an eager, ceaseless pleasure, cleansed of all the fret and friction and weariness that so mar it now (1898:290).

Gilman always emphasizes that the mother should be economically independent to bring up independent children. “A mother economically free, a world-servant instead of a house-servant; a mother knowing the world and living in it,—can be to her children far more than has ever been possible before. Motherhood in the world will make that world a different place for her child” (1898:269). The great difference in Gordins family can clearly be perceived after Julia and the senior Mrs Gordins change. This change is done when Mrs. Gordins takes the responsibility of the child and it is the first step to save Julia which showed not only the birth-giver and but also the others may be responsible for taking care of the child.

All these do not make her a mother. In order to be a mother a person needs to work on the skills of being a proper mother. The new concept of motherhood dismisses the gender-constructed notion of motherhood. This new notion of motherhood provides the scope of motherhood to all genders and to all people around. Motherhood should be attributed to society, not to the birth-giver.

As all of these decisions are made by Mrs. Gordins, she is the one who directs everything at home and Frank Gordins does not know how these changes happened; he is only satisfied with the happiness of his family. He is the outsider in this family; he does not know anything about the family. When he first sees the baby garden, he becomes really angry and is soothed at first by his mother by greeting and apologizes for the secrets and explaining their new financial situation:

I rent the upper flat, you see—it is forty dollars a month, same as ours—and pay Celia who was the cook five dollars a week, and pay Dr. Holbrook downstairs the same for looking over my little ones every day. The mothers pay me three dollars a week each, and don't have to keep a nursemaid. And I pay ten dollars a week board to Julia, and still I have about ten of my own (1911:68).

Frank asks whether his wife gives music lessons or not and Mrs. Gordins tells him how happy they are with this new situation and tells his son not to feel bad about a thing that make all the members of the family happy (1911: 68). Then Julia appears and she also apologizes and tells that it is a real success and begs him to be proud of that.

“Oh Frank she begged, her arms around his neck. Please don’t mind! Please get used to it! Please be proud of us! Just think, we are all so happy and we earn about hundred dollars a week and all of us together. You see, I have Mother’s ten to add to the house money, and twenty or more of my own (1911:69)!

Gilman shows that this happiness is achieved through economic independence and new motherhood. This responsibility nothing is told about the child apart from its happiness. As her mother-in-law takes the whole responsibility, Julia becomes the one who supports her family economically. The end of the story shows a woman who is economically independent and successful and the story challenges the limitations of patriarchy; however it is not the case for her motherhood.

Julia tells her husband how she is saved her from the danger that she is in. “And mother showed me the way out, Frank. The way to have my mind again and not lose you! She is a different woman herself now she has her heart and hand full of babies. Albert does enjoy it so! And you have enjoyed it till you found it out” (1911:69). Actually Frank also changes his mind related to marriage and told his wife that he could stand it for their happiness and in the following years he changed his mind related to marriage “This being married and bringing up children is as easy as can be when you learn how” (1911:69). This shows that patriarchal society’s effects begin to lessen and men begin to see their prejudices against women’s lives; in addition, women begin to have their economic independence and contribute to the income and expenses of their home. Gilman does it with an entrapped woman and a foresighted woman and fortunately Mrs. Gordins finds her in time to save her, Mrs Gordins comes up with a way to solve their problems. Once Julia's attempted suicide is resulted in Mrs. Gordins attempt of saving her, this is a really happy story as the title states there is a clear change in women’s economic independence and their entrepreneurship. Actually in *Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Her Contemporaries*, the emphasis on the positivity of Making a Change and the transition from negativity to positivity can clearly be seen.

These shared life experiences informed their action, as did their struggles to depart from unhappy marriages. Both wrote their way out of these marriages. In “The Yellow Wall-Paper,” Gilman, like many other women writers, sheds the self that might have been, the self that she had to let go in order to achieve. She could then go on to offer her readers affirmative resolutions, to write her many, many positive stories where women manage to overcome obstacles and meaningful work, stories like “Making a Change (Davis & Knight, 146).

Gilman herself offers a positive way of life for women with “Making a Change, by allowing her protagonist to step outside the accepted social parameters. Yet readers also see that even though Julia could become economically independent, her motherhood is implicitly hindered as she had over her maternal duties to her mother-in-law.

Conclusion

Gilman provides a happy ending yet this happiness occurs as a result of economic independence and the idea of new mother. Julia is feeling better with the new arrangement and this is justified

by Gilman in her *Women and Economics* stressing that “freeing an entire half of humanity from an artificial position would make better motherhood and fatherhood, better babyhood and childhood, better homes and better society”(1911:317). For Gilman in order to free the women from the entrapment at home, domestic work can be made more professional; however, she lets Mrs Gordins, the senior, to look after the child which clashes with what she really believes in terms of motherhood, yet her point that female solidarity and economic independence of the female can overcome the problems of domestic motherhood is achieved. .

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