

**CHAPTER III**  
**THE AUTHOR AND**  
**THE WOMEN'S LIFE IN HER TIME**

**3.1. Charlotte Perkins Gilman**

She was born Charlotte Perkins, in Hartford, Connecticut, on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1860. In 1884, she married the artist Charles W. Stetson. Divorced in 1894, then she married George H. Gilman.

Known as an American reformer and author, she was mainly identified with the labor and women's rights movements. Largely self-educated, she was well read in anthropology, sociology, and economics.

Ill with cancer, she committed suicide in Pasadena, California, on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1935.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman advocated equality for women to those of men. She published; Women and Economics (1898), advocated economic independence for women; In this Our World (1898), a book of verse; The Yellow Wallpaper (1898), considered as her best piece of fiction; Concerning Children (1900); What Diantha Did (1910); The Man-Made World (1910); The Crux (1911); Moving the Mountain (1911); His Religion and Hers (1923); and The Forerunner (1909-1916), a journal of reform (The Encyclopedia Americana, 1944:IX-656 and 1977:XII-750).

**3.2. The Women's Life in in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Time**

Women today are free to do interesting and exciting jobs. They can arrange their lives so as to have both marriage and career (Clymer & Erlich, 1959:viii).

Too contrast with those who lived in the nineteenth-century. Their role was largely defined by marriage and motherhood. Man, in the order time, was developed first; as energy comes before harmony; power before beauty. Woman was therefore under his care as an elder. He might have been her guardian and teacher. But as human nature goes not straight forward but by excessive action and reaction in an undelated course, he misunderstood and abused his advantages, and became her temporal master instead of her spiritual sire. He did not clearly see that woman was half himself; that her interests were identical with his; and that by the law of their common being he could never reach his true proportions while she remained in any wise shorn of hers (Fuller in Inge,1987:222-225).

Those statements shown about women's life in the nineteenth-century. Their status as married women still depended on the Old English Common Law, a product of medieval civilization, "The husband and wife are one, and that one is the husband" (Blake,1952:283). Both a wife's property and her earnings belonged to her husband. She had no rights to make a deed, a contract, or a will nor to sue in the courts without his consent.

Women reformers responded to the social problems of the city, and their other preoccupations was the plight of their own sex in a male-dominated society (Blum,1984:484). Their bill of grievances, well documented and longstanding, included political disfranchisement, legal discrimination, economic exploitation, cultural and educational deprivation, and domestic drudgery.

The inequality of women, based as it was upon tradition rather than reason.

The great American agitation derived from the indignation of earnest female advocates of temperance and antislavery who found their activities circumscribed by the conventions of the day. Some feminists decided to organize a convention in 1848, "to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women". They held Declaration of Independence to be a self-evident truth that all men and women were created equal and asserted that the history of mankind was "a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her" (Blake, 1952:284-289).

The movements goes through and runs fast after the Second World War. Charlotte Perkins Gilman as a reformist and feminist presented her fiction which is considered as her best of fiction, "The Yellow Wallpaper" in 1899. She wrote it to show her views about women's life in the nineteenth-century, presenting her idea of feminism which actually written to show the men's authority of women.

## **CHAPTER IV**

# **ANALYSIS OF THE IDEA OF FEMINISM IN "THE YELLOW WALLPAPER"**