



With Her in Ourland: Sequel to Herland (Contributions in Women's Studies)

Mary Jo Deegan, Michael R. Hill

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Two works in one, this volume contains the full text of *With Her in Ourland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, as well as an illuminating sociological analysis by Mary Jo Deegan with the assistance of Michael R. Hill. *Ourland* is the sequel to Gilman's acclaimed feminist utopian novel *Herland*; both were published in her journal, *The Forerunner*, in 1915 and 1916. *Ourland* resumes the adventures of *Herland*'s protagonists, Ellador and Van, but turns from utopian fantasy to a challenging analysis of contemporary social fissures in *his land*, or the real world. The republication of *Herland* as a separate novel in 1979 revived critical interest in Gilman's work but truncated the larger aims implicit in the *Herland/Ourland* saga, leaving an erroneous understanding of Gilman's other/better half of the story, in which it is suggested that strong women can resocialize men to be nurturant and cooperative. Gilman's choice of a sexually integrated society in *With Her in Ourland* provides us with her answer to her ideal society, but her foray into a woman-only society as a corrective to a male dominated one is a controversial option. The challenging message of *Ourland*, however, does not impede the pleasure of reading it as a novel.

Though known more for her fiction today, Gilman in her time was a recognized and accomplished sociologist who admired Lester F. Ward and frequently visited Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull-House. The male protagonist in *Herland/Ourland*, Van, is a sociologist, used by Gilman as a foil on which to skewer the assumptions and practices of patriarchal sociology. The interpretation presented here, which adopts a sociological viewpoint, is invaluable reading for scholars and students of sociology, American women's studies, and utopian literature.

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