American Literature Association
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CALL FOR PAPERS

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN SOCIETY

Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Novel

Panel Organizer: Peter Betjemann, Oregon State University

In 1899, Charlotte Perkins Gilman declared that her writing wouldn’t “stop to be bothered with characters.” Disavowing the “careful analysis and disentangling of individual” peculiarities, Gilman asserted that her work would instead draw out social, economic, and racial types. “Characters in mass” would center a fiction that she conceived, first and foremost, as sociological.

The novel, however, is not easily stripped of individual peculiarities, and such works as Gilman’s Benigna Machiavelli (1914) do present a strong, iconoclastic, and central protagonist. Gilman’s eight novels indeed offer a number of counterexamples to her declaration that she disliked “disentangling” individual characters.

Papers are invited on any aspect of Gilman’s relationship to the novel. Possible focal points include (1) Gilman’s own novels; (2) the relationship of Gilman’s short fiction or non-fiction to the novels of other writers; (3) the interplay between Gilman’s stated literary purposes and theories of the novel more broadly; or (4) any other way in which the study of the novel helps us understand Gilman’s work.

Please send one-page proposals and an abbreviated CV by DECEMBER 15, 2013 to peter.betjemann@oregonstate.edu.