

Defiance and Forbearance in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman and her Contemporaries

Ever since her work was recovered by feminist critics and granted the attention it deserves, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman has been identified with tales of defiance, from Sarah Penn's moving the family out of their dilapidated home into the sumptuous barn in "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" to Louisa Britton's clever tactics at avoiding marriage by carrying home the food from Uncle Solomon's house in "Louisa," to Hetty Fifiield's decision to occupy a corner of the meeting house in "A Church Mouse." But Freeman's stories and novels are also case studies in forbearance, as Esther Barney in "A Conflict Ended" tolerates her stubborn lover Marcus Woodman's decision to sit on the church steps, and Lucy Greenleaf puts up with marriage as long as she can enjoy the spring flower in "Arethusa." Forbearance is also behind Freeman's simultaneous defiance of literary conventions and acceptance of conventional tropes and closures.

Both defiance and forbearance have been central to American mood in 2020. Protestors have marched to condemn police violence on African Americans or to avoid the wearing of masks. Shelter-in-place orders have prevented people from coming together in classrooms, graduations, polling places, weddings, and funerals. In some ways, renunciation, as well as resilience, are again the tenor of our times. The Mary E. Wilkins Freeman Society welcomes proposals for twenty-minute papers that examine defiance, forbearance, resilience, or their interplay in the works of Freeman, her contemporaries, her successors, predecessors, or other American authors. That is, we will consider proposal on other authors as long as they link to Freeman in some way. We will also consider proposals on Freeman on any topic, and we'll put together a coherent panel based on the best of the submissions.

Please send 250-word proposals and a brief CV to Stephanie Palmer at stephanie.palmer@ntu.ac.uk and Myrto Drizou at Myrto.drizou@boun.edu.tr by February 12, 2021.