Panel: Roth’s Biographical Legacy

The Philip Roth Society invites submissions for a panel entitled “Roth’s Biographical Legacy” at the American Literature Association Conference in Chicago, from May 26-29, 2022.

Roth sought to control his reputation and defend his personal freedoms throughout his life—and even from beyond the grave. He attempted to limit biography and ordered that his archive be destroyed at his authorized biographer’s behest. Yet the allegations of sexual misconduct against Roth’s chosen biographer force readers to contend with Roth’s own reputation for misogyny. Meanwhile, scholarly Roth biographies layer our understanding of the novelist in relationship to his fiction, prizes, and drive. We invite papers that consider how Roth biographies impact Roth’s legacy.

- How has new biographical information influenced readings of Roth’s fiction? How does biography function in the age of #MeToo? Or cancel culture?
- How have Roth’s fears about his posthumous reputation come true?
- In what ways does the debacle of Roth’s authorized biography remind readers of Roth’s staunchly anti-fascist stance?
- Might journalistic coverage of Roth parallel the portrayal of media in The Human Stain?
- Are you writing/have you written biographically about Roth? What’s the experience like?
- What is the future of Roth’s personal archive?

Proposals (approx. 200 words) along with a brief bio should be emailed to Miriam Jaffe, the Philip Roth Society Program Chair, at miriam.jaffe@rutgers.edu by 1/15/2022.

Philip Roth Society Roundtable: Roth’s Regional Writing

On the heels of The Many Saints of Newark HBO, an ethnographic storytelling of Roth’s home base, we invite discussion on Roth’s representation of suburbs, cities, countrysides, and nations. We’re happy to think beyond Roth’s Newark and follow his journeys, especially through Chicago, but perhaps also Manhattan, “Winesburg,” as well as the Middle East and Eastern Europe. How does Roth reveal his politics through his discussion of, say, Cuba in The Dying Animal? Or of New England in The Human Stain? What do biographies say about Roth’s travel experiences, and how did he use them in his fiction? How has Roth’s regional writing influenced his reputation at home and abroad? Please email miriam.jaffe@rutgers.edu by 12/15 if interested in participating