

The American Literature Society seeks submissions to a panel at the annual American Literature Association Conference (ALA), which will be held at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco on **May 24-27, 2018** (Thursday through Sunday of Memorial Day weekend).

### **“Reading Confederate Monuments”**

What do literary criticism, literary history, and critical theory offer to our reckoning with Confederate monuments? This panel seeks papers offering a broad array of responses to this question. Papers might provide, for instance, readings of actual monuments – their construction, their location, their design, their inscription, their typeface, their reception history. They also might feature literary histories of the those genres – such as white supremacist melodramas, reconciliation romances, and Lost Cause reminiscences – that continued working on behalf of the Confederacy long after either Appomattox or the Compromise of 1877; juxtapositions of Confederate monuments with those literary texts and films, like *Gone with the Wind*, that might be termed "Confederate monuments" in their own right; alternative periodizations of the Civil War and its role in organizing American literary history that take into account the recent upsurge in neo-Confederate activity in defense of Confederate monuments; or readings rethinking Confederate monuments by placing them into conversation with those literary texts, like Kevin Young's *For the Confederate Dead* or Suzan-Lori Parks's *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, that represent the ongoing role played by Confederate memory in American life.

**Abstracts (between 200 and 300 words) and CVs should be submitted by December 30 to Travis Foster at [travis.foster@villanova.edu](mailto:travis.foster@villanova.edu)**

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### **“Reassessing Leslie Fiedler”**

2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the 1948 publication of “Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey!” That essay, later incorporated in Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960), has been called by Ross Posnock “the most influential single essay ever written about American literature.” This panel invites papers that consider the assumptions about race, desire, national identity, and literary merit that Fiedler put into print. How much do we still owe to those assumptions, and how much can we claim to have superseded them?

Fiedler's legacy is fraught: he was the first to spotlight race and sexuality in American literary studies, but he did so in order to claim an American literary exceptionalism that, as Robyn Wiegman points out, makes the white male psyche the privileged stage where dramas of racial injustice play out. If Fiedler celebrated queer desire as aesthetically generative, he also insisted on a notion of innocent homosexuality, as Christopher Looby observes. Fiedler is a practitioner of the myth and symbol school, long outpaced by more rigorous historicisms. Yet Kathy Lavezzo and Harilaos Stecopoulos suggest that Fiedler's transhistorical approach—whereby medieval troubadours return as mid-nineteenth-century novelists—might well align with proposals for queer unhistoricism or other calls for asynchronous reading. Papers might also consider Fiedler's position as a midcentury Jewish intellectual and self-styled provocateur, one whose reach to a nonacademic audience (“Come Back”

was published in *Partisan Review*, and *Love and Death* was published by Criterion) might provoke us to reflect on our current professional aspirations and limits.

Abstracts (between 200 and 300 words) and brief CVs should be submitted by December 30 to Ashley Barnes at [ashley.barnes@utdallas.edu](mailto:ashley.barnes@utdallas.edu).