

The John Updike Society and the International David Foster Wallace Society are co-sponsoring a panel at 29th annual conference of the American Literature Association in San Francisco on May 24-27, 2018.

The purpose of the panel is to explore “Great Male Narcissists,” a phrase Wallace uses to describe Updike, Philip Roth, and Norman Mailer in his acerbic review of Updike’s late work, *Toward the End of Time*. This panel intends to explore the connections and disparities between Updike’s and Wallace’s work, especially with regard to their depictions of masculinity. The aim is to complicate and introduce new ideas to both fields. Paper topics may include but are not limited to:

- The histories of American masculinity as reflected in Wallace and Updike
- Interrogations of the term “Great Male Narcissists” – what does it mean, how analytically useful is it, to whom could it refer
- Narcissistic masculinity in Wallace and Updike and in postwar fiction more broadly, and in the context of America now
- Masculinity and the suburb in both authors’ work
- In his review of *Toward the End of Time*, Wallace states he regards some Updike texts as possible classics, and declares he has read 25 of Updike’s books; papers could explore the references and allusions to Updike in Wallace’s work
- Similarly, Wallace’s parodies of/homages to Updike, the former being especially evident in *The Broom of the System*
- In light of Amy Hungerford’s pointed critiques of Wallace, misogyny in the work of both authors
- Issues of whiteness and points of racial/ethnic difference
- The way faith intersects with notions of masculinity in their works
- Wallace and Updike as part of a distinctly masculine tradition of the public intellectual, a lineage that includes not only Updike, Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, and Gore Vidal, but also earlier iterations, such as William Dean Howells
- Explorations of why Wallace and Updike were both compelled to write near-future dystopian fiction in the mid-1990s – Updike with *Toward the End of Time*, Wallace with *Infinite Jest*
- Terrorism and masculinity in their writing – Updike in *Terrorist*, Wallace in *Infinite Jest*, and the versions of narcissistic masculinity these characters embody

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words including name, institutional affiliation, and contact information, no later than January 15, 2018 to [info@dfwsociety.org](mailto:info@dfwsociety.org). Please attach your abstract as a Word document. Note that scholars are limited to one presentation at this conference. Please indicate if you’ll need AV equipment.

For more information about the conference, please consult the ALA website, <http://americanliteratureassociation.org/> For information about the John Updike Society, please visit <https://blogs.iwu.edu/johnupdikesociety/> And for information about the David Foster Wallace Society, please go to <https://www.dfwsociety.org/>