

## **Writing, the State, and the Rise of Neo-Nationalism: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Concerns**

In January 1868, John William De Forest took to the pages of *The Nation* with a call that would resound over the next century and a half: the writing of the "Great American Novel." In so doing, he asserted both the shaping force of the nation on the arts, and the importance of the arts for the national imaginary. On the sesquicentennial of De Forest's essay, the College of General Studies at Boston University will host a conference to explore the broader intersection of writing and the nation. This conference will meet on Boston University's campus in London, England, on June 30, 2018. The conference will feature a keynote address by Daniel Karlin, Winterstoke Professor of English at the University of Bristol.

The exigency of ongoing scholarly consideration of the relation between the nation and writing could not be more apparent. The rise of populist and pro-national politicians and events such as Brexit place new strains on the architecture of globalization. A disruptive force, neo-nationalism has provoked anxiety about sustaining existing international institutions and prompted introspection within nations about the abiding ties of community and place.

This conference seeks a diverse range of panels and papers from scholars in literary studies, rhetoric, the social sciences, and other disciplines. Interdisciplinary papers and panels, and papers and panels addressing transatlantic subjects, are especially encouraged. Possible topics include, but are by no means limited to, the following:

- The portrayal of the nation-state in works of literature.
- Representations of the relationships among the local, regional, and (or) global.
- Challenges to, problems with, and affirmations of national belonging.
- Reflections on De Forest's original essay in light of the past 150 years.
- The impact of socioeconomic changes on the project of a national literature.
- The ways in which technological development can re-inscribe narratives of the political unit.
- International exchanges on the idea of a "great" national literature.
- Consideration of forces that help construct or challenge nation-oriented narratives of literature.
- Characteristics and implications of neo-national oratory.
- Rhetorical analyses of neo-national propaganda.
- The role of national iconography for literary and artistic expression.
- The ways that marginalized populations can preserve or introduce their voices in the context of changes in the global landscape during the neo-national era.
- Reactions to and presentations of neo-nationalism in the arts.

Paper proposals should be 250-300 words in length and should include a brief CV.

Panel proposals should be 300–500 words in length; indicate whether the panel will be traditional, seminar, or roundtable style; and include the names and CVs of participants and working titles of their papers.

Submit all proposals to Christopher K. Coffman ([ccoffman@bu.edu](mailto:ccoffman@bu.edu)) and Thomas Finan ([etfinan@bu.edu](mailto:etfinan@bu.edu)) no later than November 30, 2017.