



American Conference for Irish Studies

An Chomhdháil Mheiriceánach do Léann na hÉireann

Midwest Regional Conference, Washington University

in St. Louis

Eugene O'Neill Symposium

6-8 October 2023



These events have been co-sponsored by University Libraries, Performing Arts Department, Center for the Literary Arts, American Conference for Irish Studies, and The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, with administrative support from the College of Arts & Sciences.



O'Neill Symposium/ACIS Midwest Conference

Schedule of the October 2023 Conference

Thursday, 5 October 2023

- Arrive in St. Louis, Missouri
- Check in to the Moonrise Hotel on the Loop near Washington University campus, or whatever other accommodation you have made.
- **7:00-9:00 pm, Reception: Twilight Room at the Moonrise Hotel**
 - featuring All-Ireland traditional musicians **Eileen Gannon** (Harp) and **Eimear Arkins** (fiddle, vocals), from the internationally acclaimed **St. Louis Irish Arts**
 - There will also be a registration check-in table available

Appetizers & Drinks, in the Twilight Room, Moonrise Hotel, cash bar



Friday, 6 October: ACIS/Eugene O’Neill Symposium, Full Day

Events on site at Olin Library, Washington University Danforth Campus, unless otherwise specified.

8:30 am-4:30 pm – ACIS Conference Check-in & Registration –

Registration Desk, Olin Library, Room 142

♣Eugene O'Neill Symposium ♣

Washington University Libraries will be hosting a one-day symposium to officially open the Harley Hammerman Collection on Eugene O’Neill. This will also constitute the first day of events in the **Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) Midwest Regional Conference**.

This event is co-sponsored by University Libraries, Performing Arts Department, Center for the Literary Arts, and The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, with administrative support from the College of Arts & Sciences.

9:30-10:45 am—Ronán Noone, playwright, (Boston University),

Olin Library 142.

The Joy is in the Struggle

While *Long Day's Journey into Night* is going on in the living room - what is happening in the kitchen? *Thirst* is the play that takes place in the kitchen of Monte Cristo Cottage during that fateful day in August 1912. By using an upstairs/downstairs perspective, it opens a conversation with Eugene O’Neill’s classic family drama. Ronán Noone (Boston University), author of *Thirst*, will discuss the process of creating the play while illustrating how the themes of deracination and immigration are considered essential to our understanding of O’Neill’s work.

10:45-11:00 am—Break (Whispers Café nearby, inside the Library)

11:00 am-12:15pm—Symposium Plenary Lecture, Olin 142: Beth Wynstra (Babson College), author of *Vows, Veils, and Masks: the Performance of Marriage in the Plays of Eugene O’Neill*

Between the Covers: Roles, Performance, and Eugene O’Neill in Early 20th Century Women’s Magazines

Illusion making. Conditioned spousal behavior. Double standards. Strategic infidelity. Such are fundamental elements in Eugene O’Neill’s plays focused on marriage. Yet these elements have significance off the stage as well. In prominent and high-circulating publications geared to women such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Vogue*, and *Ladies Home Journal*, 20th century wives and hopeful brides were encouraged, through articles, advice columns, and advertisements, to be dynamic performers who mask honest feelings and abide by set roles. The very women who brought O’Neill’s characters to life felt the pressures of these culturally constructed expectations around marriage. Actors like Alla Nazimova, Louise Closser Hale, and Claudette Colbert navigated in worlds that judged them harshly for deviating from matrimonial rules they did not create. While past scholars have seen and labeled the wife characters in O’Neill’s plays as “shrewish,” “vindictive,” and even as “cannibals,” an analysis of these characters that takes into account crucial cultural context reveals something else altogether. In this presentation, I offer new possibilities for studying marriages and wife characters in literary and dramatic texts. These new possibilities include a recognition, and, hopefully, a rectifying of past patriarchal approaches that can reduce a complex individual to a simple role.

12:15-1:45 pm—LUNCH on your own, available at various campus locations near Olin Library, including the Danforth University Center, Stanley’s Café, Bergson Café, and Whispers

1:45-3:00pm – Symposium Plenary Lecture, Olin 142: Katie Johnson (Miami University, Ohio), author of *Racing the Great White Way: Black Performance, Eugene O’Neill, and the Transformation of Broadway*

Following the Archive

How can an archive influence how we think about theatre and performance? What is the relationship between the archive and performance (or, what Diana Taylor calls ‘the repertoire’)? What does it mean to follow the archive when writing about theatre and cultural production? And what can archival errors reveal to us? This presentation will discuss how research in archives like the Hammerman Collection reshaped the contours of my most recent book, *Racing the Great White Way: Black Performance, Eugene O’Neill, and the Transformation of Broadway*. In following the archive, I reveal lost histories, fresh stories, and a different way of thinking about O’Neill’s contributions in breaking color lines on the Great White Way.

3:00–3:30 pm: Break

3:30-4:45 – “The Assembled Playwright”: Harley Hammerman’s Eugene O’Neill Collection, Olin Library Special Collections:

Exhibition tour and viewing with curator Joel Minor and donor Harley Hammerman.

>>Remaining Events this day will be held in **Umrath Lounge**:

5:00-6:00 pm – Reception: drinks and hors d’oeuvres provided

6:00 pm – Formal Opening of the Harley Hammerman Collection on Eugene O’Neill

- -Words of Welcome - Mimi Calter, Vice Provost and University Librarian
- -Intro of Harley Hammerman – Prof. Henry Schvey, Professor of Drama and Comparative Literature
- -Remarks by Harley Hammerman

6:45 pm – Pre-performance introductory remarks by Henry Schvey

7:00 pm – Performance: *The First Man*, a play by Eugene O’Neill:

Directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, Danville, CA; Dramaturgy by Beth Wynstra. Performed in the Umrath Lounge. Talk back after the play, with the Director, the Dramaturg, and Prof. Henry Schvey moderated by Prof. Schvey.

Please note that **new titles by plenary speakers** Beth Wynstra, Katie Johnson, and Sean Farrell will be **available for purchase** at the WashU Campus Store on Friday 9-4 and Saturday 10-2.

**Saturday, 7 October—Full Day of ACIS panels, Knight
Conference Center, Washington University Danforth Campus**

8:00 am-4:30 pm Conference Registration

**7:00-8:30 am Breakfast available in the Knight Center Anheuser-
Busch Dining Hall, included in your conference fee**

8:30-10:00 am Session 1: Contemporary Visions

- **Panel A: Contemporary Irish Visions, Tim White (Chair), Knight Center 200**
 - Tim White, “Giving Voice to the Voiceless: Cáit in *The Quiet Girl*”
 - John Kerrigan, “Sally Rooney: *Normal People* and Moral Inquiry”
 - Abigail Keaney, “Under Pressure: The Role of *An Dream Dearg* in Northern Irish Language Politics”

- **Panel B: Through the Lens of Gender, Amy Heath-Carpentier (Chair), Knight Center 210**
 - Kenneth Shonk, “The Future of a Different Past: Alternative Masculinities in A *Sense of Ireland* Festival, UK 1980”
 - Bridget English, “‘A Series of Impulses’: New York, Irishness, and Nervous Disorders in Elizabeth Bowen and Djuna Barnes”

10:00-10:30 am: Break

10:30 am-12:00 pm Session 2: A Sense of the Past

- **Panel A: Memoirs and Boundaries, Sally Ebest (Chair), Knight Center 210**
 - Sally Ebest, “Resisting Lives: Performing Irishness through Memoir”
 - Anna Teekell, “Line Breaks: Nature Poetry and the Irish Border”

- **Panel B: Interpreting the Past, M. Wade Mahon (Chair), Knight Center 200**
 - Christine Myers, “Sugar of Lead: Accidental Poisoning or Attempted Murder?”
 - M. Wade Mahon, “Who Wrote J. H.? A Case Study of Publishing and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century Ireland”
 - J. Hollis Harris, “New Directions in Irish American Nationalism: The Reunion of Clan-na-Gael and Reinvention of Irish American Politics”

12:15-2:00 pm LUNCH: ACIS Business Meeting. Lunch will be available in the Anheuser-Busch Dining Hall, included in your conference fee.

2:00-3:15 pm Session 3: Irish Expression and the Natural World

- **Panel A: Ecocritical Approaches to Irish Literature, William Kerwin (Chair), Knight Center 200**
 - Éamonn Wall, “‘Amazing Glory’: An Ecocritical Reading of John McGahern’s Fiction”
 - Joseph Heininger, “Jane Clarke’s Portraits of the Miners of Glenmasan: Recuperative Poetics in *A Change in the Air*”
 - William Kerwin, “Moya Cannon, Deep Time, and the Colliding Worlds of *Donegal Tarantella*”
- **Panel B: Irish Poetry, Ian David Clark (Chair), Knight Center 210**
 - Stephanie Alexander, “From Toome Road to Toomebridge: Seamus Heaney’s Evolving Pastoral”
 - Colleen English, “‘All the souls of feelings’: Moore’s *Melodies* and the Politics of Grief”
 - Ian Clark, “Ecologies of Forgetting: Rereading Seamus Heaney’s Bog Poetry in an Era of Climate Change”

3:15-3:45 pm Break & Refreshments

3:45-4:45 Session 4: McBride Lecture—Sean Farrell

- **Plenary Lecture, Sean Farrell (NIU): “Dare We Speak the Word? Sectarianism and Nineteenth-Century Irish Historiography”, Knight Center Room 200**

5:00-6:00 Book Launch: Sean Farrell's *Thomas Drew & Victorian Belfast* (Syracuse University Press); **Bear Pub, Knight Center, 1st Floor.**
Drink tickets available for your first beverage. Appetizers available in the Bear Pub, cost included in your conference fee.

7:30-9:30 pm Conference Banquet at McGurk's in Souldard:

MCGURK'S

[314-776-8309](tel:314-776-8309)

1200 RUSSELL BLVD

ST. LOUIS, MO 63104

We have reserved the Poets & Patriots Room for this gathering.

McGurk's is preparing a special menu for us.

Vegetarian options will be available.

Cost will be \$35 per meal, plus tax and gratuity. Cash bar only; soft drinks, tea, and coffee included in the meal price.

Sunday, 8 October—Half Day of ACIS, Knight Center

7:00-8:30 am Breakfast available in the Knight Center Anheuser-Busch Dining Hall, included in your conference fee

08:00-9:00 am Conference Registration

9:00-10:15 am SESSION 5: Technology & the Arts

- Panel A: AI in the Classroom: A Roundtable Discussion Panel, Barry Devine (Chair), Knight Center 210
 - Barry Devine, “Hey Students, This Is Not the Miracle You Think It Is.”
 - Stephanie Alexander, “Blue Books, Low Tech, and the Limits of AI-Proof Assignments.”
 - Helena Theixos, “The Ethics of Generative AI”

- Panel B: Music and the Visual Arts, Erin Finneran (Chair), Knight Center 200
 - Malachy Egan, “‘They are our traditions, and as such they suit us best.’ Defining a Narrative Musical Tradition through the Broadcasting of Seán Ó Riada”
 - Kurt Bullock, “A Bit of Horseplay: the Equine Signifier in Jack Yeats’s Writing and Painting”
 - Erin Finneran, “Turn and Face the Strange: Teaching Irish Literature alongside Contemporary Music”

10:15-10:30 am Break & Refreshments

10:30-12:15 pm SESSION 6: Irish America

- Panel A: Irish America, Dirk Killen (Chair), Knight Center 210
 - Andy Wilson, “The Ulster Liberty Legion: A Case Study of Chicago Irish Nationalists, 1938-67”
 - Greg Koos, “‘Along the great thoroughfares’: Irish Settlement in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1830-1860”
 - Dirk Killen, “Splendor & Sadness of the World: An Irish-American Short Story Tradition”

12:15-1:30 pm Closing of the ACIS Conference; Boxed lunches will be available at the Knight Center, included in your conference fee.

List of Conference Chairs & Presenters:

- Stephanie Alexander, Indiana State University
- Kurt Bullock, Grand Valley State University
- Ian Clark, Washington University in St. Louis
- Barry Devine, Heidelberg University
- Sally Ebest, University of Missouri, St. Louis
- Malachy Egan, Trinity College-Dublin
- Bridget English, University of Illinois, Chicago
- Colleen English, Loyola University, Chicago
- Sean Farrell, Northern Illinois University
- Erin Finneran, Washington University in St. Louis
- J. Hollis Harris, Northern Illinois University
- Amy Heath-Carpentier, Washington University in St. Louis
- Joseph Heininger, Dominican University
- Katie Johnson, Miami University (OH)
- Abigail Keaney, University of Notre Dame
- John Kerrigan, Rockhurst University
- William Kerwin, University of Missouri, Columbia
- Dirk Killen, Washington University in St. Louis
- Greg Koos, McLean County Museum of History
- M. Wade Mahon, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point
- Christine Myers, Independent Scholar
- Ronán Noone, Boston University
- Kenneth Shonk, University of Wisconsin, Lacrosse
- Anna Teekell, Christopher Newport University
- Helena Theixos, Loras College
- Éamonn Wall, University of Missouri, St. Louis
- Timothy White, Xavier University
- Andy Wilson, Loyola University, Chicago
- Beth Wynstra, Babson College

Conference planners and organizers: Joel Minor (O'Neill Symposium), Dirk Killen (O'Neill Symposium and ACIS Midwest), and Barry Devine (ACIS Midwest).