



***“An island at the center of the world”:* Reconsidering Ireland’s Role on the Global Stage**

6th Annual Dean Hopper Conference, Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

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Taoiseach Leo Varadkar’s recent interview in *Time* magazine concluded with an optimistic and historically loaded statement: “Geographically, we are at the periphery of Europe, but I don’t see Ireland in that way...The way I see us is as an island at the center of the world.” Varadkar’s quote contains echoes of the historiography of empire, which, particularly in the postcolonial era, has brought about intellectual frameworks of core and periphery, hubs and spokes. Barry McCrea’s *Languages of the Night* (2015) questions exactly this sort of binary. McCrea’s book offers insight into experiential commonalities amongst a number of European linguistic territories, including Brittany and Provence in France, Catalonia and Basque Country in Spain, as well as others, proving that continental Europe itself is also fractured with regional distinctions that cannot be juxtaposed against its neighboring islands as a homogenous totality. As Varadkar and McCrea make clear, today’s thinkers in both the political and academic realms are more concerned than ever with Ireland’s continuously evolving relationship to both Europe and the wider world. This concept is further complicated by Ireland’s longstanding historical engagement with its own diaspora, as is exemplified by the statement of then-Minister for Enterprise, Mary Harney in 2000. Speaking to a meeting of the American Bar Association, she noted “geographically, we are closer to Berlin than Boston. Spiritually, we are probably a lot closer to Boston than Berlin.”

Drew University’s 6th Annual Dean Hopper Conference aims to examine these historical, cultural, and political connections, while expanding conversations surrounding Ireland’s role on the international stage in the 20th and 21st centuries. This conference aims to engage issues of spatiality through concepts of peripheries, diasporas, and their related power structures in Ireland and abroad. Related papers from all disciplines are welcomed in Irish or English.

Suggested topics and disciplines may include but are not limited to:

- Space and place
- Spatial analysis (in history, literature, poetry, etc.)
- Irish regional identities
- Modern Irish Literature
- Diaspora Studies
- Ireland and the EU
- Irish social and political engagement with Trump’s America
- “Town Twinning”, “Partner Towns”, and “Sister Cities”
- Irish Language Rights and the Irish Language Abroad
- Irish Nationalism
- Ireland and post-colonialism
- Comparative histories
- Pre- and Post-Brexit Policy
- Northern Irish Political Policy
- The Belfast Agreement: 20 year perspective
- Immigrants, emigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers

- Literature and Poetry of the Troubles
- Irish Poetic and Narrative Traditions
- Maintenance of Music and Visual Arts Across Place
- Nua-Litríocht na Gaeilge agus an Diaspóra Éireannaigh
- Litríocht na himirce
- An Litríochta Trasnáisiúnta/ An Tairseachúlacht
- Litríocht náisiúnta agus litríocht mionlaigh
- Scríbhneoirí ar deoraíocht
- An chathair mar thairseach
- Scríbhneoirí idir dhá chultúr

Please send a 250 word abstract and 100 word biography to Rebecca Van Horn or Patrick J. Mahony at hopper@drew.edu