

Spring 2019

O'Neill Society News

The official newsletter of the Eugene O'Neill International Society

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Society Sessions & Business Meeting at ALA Conf May 25

The Eugene O'Neill Society will be fully participating at the American Literature Association Conference on Saturday, May 25 at the Westin Copley Place Hotel in Boston, MA. The first session is from 9:40-11am and is a papers session titled "International Perspective on O'Neill" moderated by Steven Bloom. The second is from 12:40-2pm and is a papers session titled "Recent Research" and will be moderated by Jeff Kennedy.

Immediately following the second session, beginning at 2:10pm, will be the annual Society Business Meeting. All Board members and Society members are welcome and encouraged to attend. An agenda will be sent out to members before the meeting takes place.

Suffolk University, Boston, Site of O'Neill Intl Conference 2020

The Eugene O'Neill Society will be coming home to the place where it was housed for many years, Suffolk University, the site of its next International Conference, now scheduled for June 17-20, 2020.

Suffolk University is located in the heart of Boston's downtown and close to several attractions, historical landmarks, and outstanding restaurants. Conference co-chairs Steven Bloom and Beth Wynstra, both Boston-area residents, will be planning all year for this event, held traditionally every three years at a site that held meaning to O'Neill in some capacity. Nearby

Cambridge is where O'Neill studied playwriting with Professor George Pierce Baker, but he also had a home just north of the city, and Shelton Hall (once the Shelton Hotel and now at Boston University) is where he spent his last days. Treks to important O'Neill locations in and around Boston will be part of the Conference events, as well as several sessions of academic papers with the newest scholarship on O'Neill and related subjects, theatre performances, and much more. Watch for future announcements with information about how you can submit papers and panels as well as information to help you join us!



Fletcher awarded Donald Gallup Fellowship

Society Member Anne Fletcher recently finished her 2nd week of research after being awarded a Donald Gallup Fellowship in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. Fletcher, a Professor of Theatre History and Dramaturgy at Southern Illinois University, received the prestigious award that gives her the opportunity to conduct research at Beinecke for the total of a month. The fellowship is supporting her project “Beyond the Horizon of Scene Design: Eugene O’Neill’s Influence on American Scene Design.”



Kennedy awarded as Fulbright Scholar

Society Board Member Jeff Kennedy recently received notification that he was awarded a Fulbright Scholar Grant to research at the British Library in London for six months beginning January 2020. His new research project will be an interdisciplinary text tracing American theatre history from the colonial to the contemporary. His most recent book *Staging America: The Artistic Legacy of the Provincetown Players* is being published by University of Alabama Press.

Remember to visit the Society’s webpage at www.eugeneoneillsociety.org and our Facebook page “Eugene O’Neill International Society” as these are updated periodically

Hammerman Donates Collection to Washington University St. Louis

by Julie Hale, Washington University

to sharing the collection with faculty, students, and the greater community.”

In December 2018, Washington University Libraries acquired the Eugene O’Neill Collection, an archive of manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and other materials related to the life and work of playwright Eugene O’Neill.

Along with first editions of the playwright’s works, the collection features handwritten and typed letters written by O’Neill to significant cultural figures; handwritten manuscripts and typescripts; vintage photographs of O’Neill and his immediate family—many by key photographers— and rare handbills, posters, scripts, and promotional books related to productions of his plays. Personal items belonging to O’Neill and a sculpture of him commissioned by Hammerman round out the archive.

The Eugene O’Neill Collection was acquired from Harley Hammerman, an alumnus of the Washington University School of Medicine and a longtime O’Neill enthusiast. Hammerman provided materials for Washington University’s 1988 Eugene O’Neill Centennial exhibition. He is the creator of the website eoneill.com, where materials from the collection can be viewed.

“To have this fabulous collection now housed permanently at Washington University is a scholar’s dream come true,” says Henry Schvey, professor of drama and comparative literature at Washington University. “The collection will provide tremendous opportunities for research on arguably America’s greatest playwright by graduate students, biographers, and scholars from the world over.”

“The Libraries are honored to be chosen as the permanent home of this amazing collection that has taken Dr. Hammerman decades, and extreme devotion, to build,” says Nadia Ghasedi, associate university librarian for Special Collections Services. “We look forward

Harley Hammerman



O'Neillians on O'Neill and Miller at the Comparative Drama Conference in Orlando April 4-6

Four O'Neillians participated in the 43rd Comparative Drama Conference, held this year at Rollins College in Orlando, April 4-6, 2019. They were mainstays of both the Eugene O'Neill Society and the Arthur Miller Society sessions.

David Palmer chaired the O'Neill Society session. Thierry Dubost spoke about issues concerning the ending of *Anna Christie* as the play moved from O'Neill's 1922 text to the 1930 film version, directed by Clarence Brown and starring Greta Garbo in her first role in a talking picture. Patrick Midgley discussed his new play, *Public Domain*, which explores intertextual connections in the works of O'Neill and Shakespeare (the topic of Patrick's dissertation), and the play's reception both at his university, Texas Tech in Lubbock, and at the American University in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, where it was performed earlier this spring.

Patrick chaired the Arthur Miller Society session. Here Thierry delivered a second paper, this one on Miller's adaptation (1950) of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (1882) as a science play in which science, political discourse, and the foundations of truth are explored. David spoke on Kierkegaard's teleological suspension of the ethical as an element in tragedy and a way of understanding Don Parritt in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, Eddie Carbone in Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, and Gallimard in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*. Eric Fraisher Hayes, the artistic director of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation at Tao House in Danville, discussed his recent experience directing *Hughie*, in which he inserted a third character who spoke O'Neill's stage directions on stage, and the insights he had developed



from this on both O'Neill and Miller as playwrights concerned with social engagement and responsibility. Eric's production of *Hughie* was staged last year both at the barn at Tao House and as part of the Eugene O'Neill International Festival of Theatre in New Ross, Ireland, which O'Neill Foundation president Dan McGovern took a major role in initiating.

An added highlight was Patrick's role as a member of a dictatorial elite in a dystopian new play, *The Tasters*, by Meghan Brown, which had a staged reading at the conference. The play is about emerging rebellion among a group of people who taste food for the elite to protect them from poisoning by opposition forces.

Each year the Comparative Drama Conference is an enlightening and engaging event for drama scholars because of its small size – roughly 150-200 participants – and strict focus on international theatre from many eras. The conference takes place annually in early April and highlights a contemporary dramatist in a keynote interview on Friday evening. This year's dramatist was Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins. Past dramatists have included Simon Stephens, Lisa Loomer, Tony Kushner (who also participated in a special O'Neill Society event), David Lindsay-Abaire, David Henry Hwang, Edward Albee, and Paula Vogel. Here is a link to the conference website: <http://comparativedramaconference.org>

MEMBER NOTES

On January 28, 2019 a staged reading of a new play by Society member Joseph M. Paprzycki titled *Visions of Beatitude* was held at the Provincetown Theater in Provincetown, MA, as part of their new Winter Reading series. The play imagines the ghosts of Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams being summoned to the closed-for-the-evening Atlantic House in P'Town by St Genesius, the Catholic patron saint of theatre, to reveal each other's biggest secret by digging into each other with their pens. This reading took place 200 yards from the site of the house on the wharf where O'Neill and the Provincetown Players changed American theatre forever. This was the play's second staged reading after a 2016 outing at the South Camden Theatre Company, which Paprzycki helped found. The playwright is represented by the Susan Schulman Literary Agency in New York and his website is <http://www.joseph-m-paprzycki.com>.



Travis Bogard Artist-in-Residence Program Announces 2019 Fellows

by Wendy Cooper

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House announces that a theatre historian and author, a playwright, and a scholar have been selected as the three Tao House Fellows for the 2019 Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program at Tao House.

They are English professor Katie N. Johnson, of Miami University, Oxford Ohio; New York playwright, director, and media artist John Jesurun; and English professor Jane K. Dominik, San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, California.

At Tao House, **Katie Johnson** plans to complete her third book project, a monograph, “Racing the Great White Way: A Counter-History of Early Twentieth-Century Broadway,” that charts a fresh account of one of the most vital and formative moments of U.S. culture. The book will show how theatre shaped cultural attitudes toward national identity, immigration, sexuality, race, and urbanization, and will uncover new sites of cultural production and expand the map of spectatorship. Johnson’s central claim is “by looking beyond Broadway ... we discover not only a rich history of diverse theatrical performances, but also a powerful archive of U.S. culture transitioning to modernity.”

According to Johnson, “as most theatre historians tell the story, the glistening pavement of Broadway lies at the end of various one-way roads that weave through marginal, segregated, and queer spaces. Traffic never seems to go in the opposite direction.” Her research of archival materials reveals that there were extraordinary exchanges between black, immigrant, white, straight, and queer theatres and artists. The stage was central to sorting out major cultural concerns.

She uses the term ‘racing’ to “reference the practice of white audiences ‘racing up’ to Harlem, where they saw—and often poached—theatrical productions

and performance practices.” ‘Racing’ also refers to the ways in which African-American actors changed the racial landscape of the Great White Way through their performance practices—and performative interventions—on stage and beyond.

Johnson recently won the 2018 Outstanding Article Award from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education for “An Algerian in Paris: Habib Benglia’s *Emperor Jones*.”

“Racing the Great White Way’s” first chapter demonstrates how O’Neill’s expressionist drama, *The Emperor Jones*, dismantled racial barriers across the U.S. and internationally. The tumultuous 1924 premiere of O’Neill’s *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*, which predicted riots if a white actor kissed a black actor’s hand, is included in a chapter on performances by Paul Robeson that portrays miscegenation while crossing geographical, racial, and genre boundaries.

In her application Johnson said, “When I stepped onto the grounds of Tao House last May with other members of the Eugene O’Neill Society, the breathtaking scenery stopped me in my tracks ... I knew I wanted to come to Tao House and finish my book, a third of which is about O’Neill.” She also looks forward to examining the archival resources in the Foundation’s research library.

John Jesurun will research, write, and create a special stage design for *Tabula Rasa*. The play—about libraries, interpretation, memory, and mental space—will have characters, but the library itself will become the lead. *Tabula Rasa*, set in the not too distant future, “concerns a minor academic exiled to a space station with the task of ‘decontaminating’ the major repository of archival information it contains.” Jesurun intends “this work to be an investigation into the archival qualities of the mind and the fragile nature of information.”

Jesurun is known for his presentations, which integrate elements of language, film, architectural space, and media in works where narratives cover a wide range of themes and explore the relation of form to content. They challenge the experience of verbal, visual, and intangible perceptions.

He says, “I have great interest in the ongoing visionary and troublesome transfers of libraries to the internet. Because this change has bridged my lifetime I see the virtual aspect of the library as a powerful shift in the idea of information and how it is disseminated. In the process much information is found but much may be lost or buried forever.”

His characters will methodically edit, delete, conform, and eventually restructure the vast variety of material under distant supervision of a morally ambiguous ministry of information. After a decade they realize that they must eventually rewrite their own histories to fit into the apparent fiction they have created, and the entity of the library and its human element begins to define itself as a distinct format.

Jesurun says, “Where is our language going? What is happening to language? These interconnected issues contribute to the construction of my play.”

He believes “the specific kind of solitude of the Tao House is a unique opportunity to experience some of what I am writing about. This kind of atmospheric reality is fairly impossible in New York. The closeness of the library and archives, the real history in this house will hopefully imprint itself into the play itself.”

Jesurun began his theatrical career at the Pyramid Club in New York with his groundbreaking serial play, *Chang in a Void Moon*, now in its 60th episode. Since 1984 he has written, directed, and designed more than 25 pieces, including *Deep Sleep*, which was awarded the

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1986 Obie for Best Play. Recently he has collaborated with Japanese playwright Takeshi Kawamura, coming up with “something quite unique as a cross-cultural form.”

Jane Dominik will develop, edit, and complete for publication “Singing for Their Fathers: The Struggle for Connection and Catharsis in American Drama,” a paper previously presented at the American Drama Conference. Expectations and demands of fathers and sons who strive for connection will be analyzed in nine plays by five playwrights, including O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*.

She will highlight “issues that popular psychology has begun to address in the last twenty years, but that these playwrights explored long before then. While further analyses of the female in literature are needed continually, so, too, are analyses of the male in light of evolving questions and issues concerning definitions and expectations of gender.”

Dominik teaches literature, playwriting and screenwriting, film adaptation, and

creative writing at San Joaquin Delta College and also pursues scholarly research and creative writing. Her recent work includes the publication of “Stifled, Staid, and Suspect: The Working Woman in Arthur Miller’s Drama;” “Empty Chairs and Pools of Light: Absent Characters in Arthur Miller’s Drama,” in *Arthur Miller’s Century: Essays Celebrating the 100th Birthday of America’s Great Playwright*; and a review of *All My Sons* at the Court Theatre in Chicago in *The Arthur Miller Journal*.

She is also working on a book titled “Writing in Their Gardens,” which “began at Wordsworth’s summer house at Rydal Mount in the Lake District, when I was moved to write there and found an interesting effect upon my writing, both in subject and style.” Her book, which includes photographs of writers’ gardens, will celebrate “the connection between writing and nature” and “the ways writers’ gardens can impact their work.”

She says about being at Tao House: “It would be an incredible privilege to work in the environment in which O’Neill wrote *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, accessing relevant research and archival materials in the library.”



Katie Johnson



John Jesurun



Jane Dominik



Dan McGovern, president of the board of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation and a Visiting Scholar in the theater department at Cal Berkeley, will speak on “Eugene O’Neill and Ireland” on April 25 at 6:30pm at the American Irish Historical Society in New York (991 Fifth Avenue). When McGovern interviewed the Irish playwright Frank

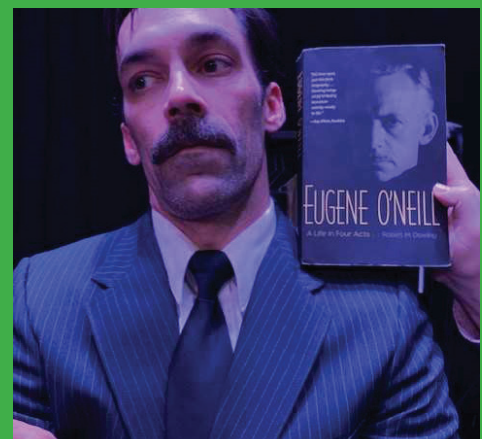
McGovern to Speak about O’Neill and Ireland in NYC April 24 and in Boston April 30

McGuinness in Dublin last October, he told McGovern that he regarded O’Neill as America’s greatest playwright, but *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* as Ireland’s greatest play. This provocative remark provides a lens through which McGovern examines both *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* and O’Neill’s relationship to Ireland. McGovern will be giving this same talk before the Eire Society of Boston at Boston College’s Burns Library on April 30.



Midgely Play about O’Neill goes to U. A. E

Patrick Midgley, the incoming secretary-treasurer for the Society and a Ph.D. candidate at Texas Tech, recently took O’Neill to The United Arab Emirates. Patrick co-wrote and acted in *Public Domain: A Play with Footnotes*, a play which, in the fragmented expositional style of *Strange Interlude* and with a self-conscious theatricality reminiscent of The Reduced Shakespeare Company, explores the intertextual connections between Shakespeare and O’Neill. Equally erudite and entertaining, full of fat suits, whiskey, paraphrased poems, and grad student angst, the play delves into the authorship question, analyzes the differences between quotation, allusion, and appropriation, and ultimately upholds both the power of performance and the obligation of a critic to write well about it. *Public Domain* premiered at The Second Annual International Theatre Festival, hosted by The American University of Sharjah, on February 4, 2019 with Dr. Mark Charney directing.



“One Festival, Two Countries” To Again Take Place in Danville, CA and in New Ross, Ireland Fall 2019

After the success of last year’s inaugural year, the Eugene O’Neill International Festival of Theatre in New Ross will take place October 9-13, 2019 in New Ross, Ireland. The Festival will be both a cultural and a civic celebration of the strong ties between Ireland and the United States exemplified by O’Neill’s Irish heritage. Eugene O’Neill’s father James, along with his parents and siblings, lived in nearby Tinneranny and emigrated from New Ross. Eugene O’Neill famously said, “The one thing that explains more than anything about me is the fact that I’m Irish.”

The cultural tie between the two countries will be reinforced by the partnership of the O’Neill Ancestral Trust of New Ross and the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, of Danville, California, to produce “One Festival, Two Countries.” The first half of the festival, the 20th Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival in Danville, will be held throughout September 2019, and the second half, the Second Annual Eugene O’Neill International Festival of Theatre, will be held in New Ross October 9-13, 2019.

The 20th Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival, Danville, California Aug. 30–Sept. 29:

Long Day’s Journey Into Night by Eugene O’Neill, directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes, Artistic Director, Eugene O’Neill Foundation, The Old Barn, Tao House, Sept. 14–29

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams, Village Theatre, downtown Danville, directed by Chloe Bronzan, Aug. 30–Sept. 15

O’Neill’s S.S. Glencairn trilogy of sea plays, performed aboard the 1886 square-rigger Balclutha, San Francisco Maritime National Park, in an Irish production, directed by Paul Walsh, Aug. 30–Sept. 1

Renowned Irish soprano Clodagh Kinsella, “Irish Airs and Arias,” Village Theatre, Sept. 5

Annual Hike to Tao House, 3.1 miles, through regional parks

For further information, go to www.eugeneoneill.org/Events

The 2nd Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival of Theatre in New Ross, Ireland Oct. 9–13

Long Day’s Journey Into Night by Eugene O’Neill, St. Michael’s Theatre, directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes, Artistic Director, Eugene O’Neill Foundation, St. Michael’s Theatre, Oct 10

O’Neill’s S.S. *Glencairn* trilogy of sea plays, performed aboard the *Dunbrody* famine ship, directed by Paul Walsh, Oct. 11



Strange Interlude by Eugene O’Neill, staged reading in two parts with dinner interval, directed by Ben Barnes, Former Artistic Director of the Abbey Theatre, St. Michael’s Theatre, Oct 12

The Diary of Maynard Perdu, written and directed by Billy Roche, best known for the *Wexford Trilogy*, St. Michael’s Theatre, Oct. 13

Festival and Day Tours Oct. 9–13

The Festival Tour Package, including dinner, bed, and breakfast for 5 nights at Brandon House, as well as admission to all Festival events, but not including airfare, is \$1,000 double occupancy.

Daytime tours during the Festival:

Viking Waterford, Irish National Heritage Park in Wexford, *Dunbrody* famine ship, Ros tapestry, Kennedy Homestead and JFK Arboretum

Extended Tour After Festival Oct 14–20

The Festival and Extended Tour Package for 11 nights, not including airfare, is \$2,600 double occupancy. The tour includes Newgrange World Heritage Site, Titanic Exhibit, Belfast City, Giants Causeway UNESCO World Heritage Site, Bushmills Distillery, Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh, Co. Tyrone, and ending with two days in Dublin.

For further information, go to eugeneoneillfestival.com or contact Sean Reidy, Chair of the O’Neill Ancestral Trust, seanreidygirl@gmail.com

O’Neill Society Introduces Scholarly Component at New Ross

Four members of the Eugene O’Neill Society along with colleagues from the Waterford Institute of Technology will be introducing a scholarly component to this year’s Eugene O’Neill Festival of Theatre in New Ross, Ireland. **Zander Brietzke, William Davies King, Alex Pettit** and **Beth Wynstra** will participate in a symposium titled “Eugene O’Neill, American” at the Waterford Institute of Technology on October 10, 2019.

Zander plans to address “Irreconcilable Desires” in the Glencairn plays, *Strange Interlude* and *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*. Beth will discuss the presence/absence of women in the same set of plays. Dave will look at *Long Day’s* as an unexpected play of World War II. Alex will discuss the interplay of failure and gender in *Strange Interlude* and other plays.

Dr. Richard Hayes, Vice President for Strategy at the Waterford Institute and an O’Neill scholar, is the convener of the symposium. Two panel discussions will then take place at the New Ross Library to address questions and deepen understanding of the two O’Neill plays presented at the Festival, with Zander and Dave focusing on *Long Day’s*, Beth on *Strange Interlude*, and Alex on the Glencairn plays.

Recent Productions Around the World



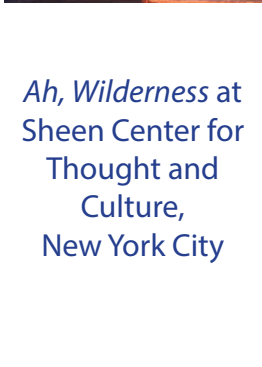
Cast of the
S. S. Glencairn Plays
aboard the
Dunbrody Ship, New
Ross, Ireland



Ah, Wilderness at
Douglas
Morrisson
Theatre, Hayward,
CA



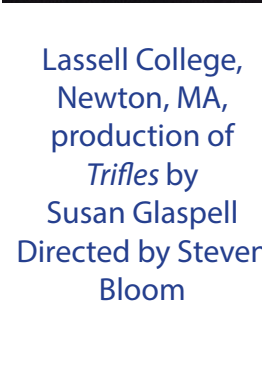
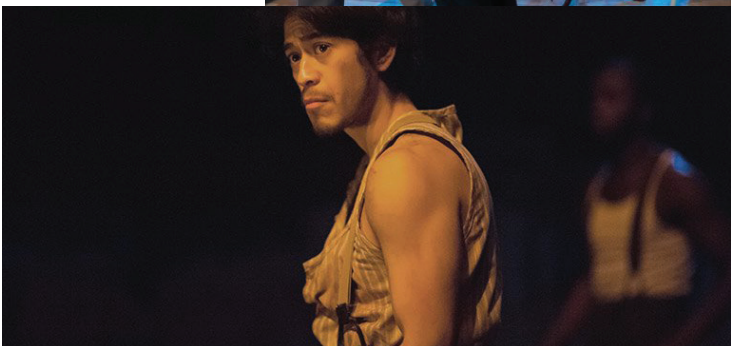
Bozeman, MT
Actors Theatre's
production of
*A Moon for the
Misbegotten*



Ah, Wilderness at
Sheen Center for
Thought and
Culture,
New York City



University of
North Carolina's
School of Drama
production of
The Hairy Ape



Lassell College,
Newton, MA,
production of
Trifles by
Susan Glaspell
Directed by Steven
Bloom



Upcoming Events for the O'Neill Society 2019

May 23-26: American Literature Association Conference in Boston, MA. O'Neill Society will have two panels and the membership annual Business Meeting will take place on Sat, May 25 @ 2:10pm at the Westin Copley Place Hotel.

Aug. 30–Sept. 29: The 20th Annual Eugene O'Neill Festival, Tao House, Danville, California.

Oct. 9–13: The 2nd Annual Eugene O'Neill Festival of Theatre in New Ross, Ireland

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Jeff Kennedy

For future newsletter submissions, send to the editor at jtkennedy@asu.edu. Deadlines are typically March 15 and October 15.

For up-to-the-minute news, like and/or follow the "Eugene O'Neill International Society" Facebook page. Information on the Society and how to become a member are available at the Society's website at eugeneoneillsociety.org

For info on submitting academic and research-based articles to the *The Eugene O'Neill Review*, go to our web site, then "Journal"

