

The 11th International Conference on Eugene O'Neill

Longing and Belonging

Suffolk University Boston, Massachusetts

July 6-9, 2022

As we head into the 20s of the 21st century, we mark the centennials of key O'Neill plays that introduced his voice to a wider audience. *Beyond the Horizon* premiered on Broadway in 1920 and ushered in a uniquely American tragic form. *The Emperor Jones* also opened on Broadway in 1920 and was a work that both experimented with emerging expressionist theatrical techniques and broke the color line on Broadway. *The Hairy Ape*, staged by the Provincetown Players in 1922, criticized capitalist structures and pointed out the fragility and fallibility of the American Dream.

Tapping into the zeitgeist of the early 1920s, a time when rapid changes in technology and industry, sudden shifts in workplace environments, and clashes between and among individuals based on differences of race, class, and gender swirled around the cultural and societal ether, O'Neill's works reflected the longing and belonging that permeated the contemporary culture. A full century later, as we make our way out of the isolation and separation that pervaded the world-wide pandemic, a conference on longing and belonging seems to be not only fitting, but essential to the Eugene O'Neill Society's participation in the current cultural conversation.

This conference calls for papers that interrogate and investigate notions of longing, the horizon beyond, the unattainable, the pipe dream, and/or belonging, fitting in, feeling "at home." And, in turn, we invite considerations of those who feel they can never belong: the alienated, the displaced, the misbegotten.

During this fertile and prolific period in O'Neill's writing life, *Exorcism* and "*Anna Christie*" also premiered and his willingness to experiment was taking off, so we seek participants who wish to explore O'Neill's own experimentation in his lifetime as well as experimental approaches to O'Neill in our own time. We invite scholars, historians, directors, playwrights, actors, and teachers to examine new ways of engaging O'Neill, thereby expanding our own scholarly and pedagogical horizons.

Boston's geography is central to the conference, just as it was foundational to O'Neill's development as a playwright. O'Neill was tethered not only to Boston/Cambridge (his brief early stint at Harvard; his later stay at the Shelton Hotel, now part of Boston University; and his eternal rest at Forest Hills Cemetery), but also to spaces beyond Boston/Cambridge, including Marblehead to the north, and, of course, Provincetown to the southeast.

We invite proposals on all aspects of O'Neill's work, whether specifically related to the conference theme (longing and belonging) or locale (Boston, New England) or not.

We note that the 11th International Conference was initially scheduled for the summer of 2020, under the theme “Beyond the Horizon” but was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Accepted participants in that conference are invited to submit the same proposals to the 2022 conference, if you feel that yours fits within the new theme. We will make every effort (subject to issues of capacity) to include previously accepted proposals.

Proposals are invited in these formats:

1. Individual papers of 15-20 minutes
2. Panel presentations on a particular theme with three speakers, none to exceed 20 minutes
3. Roundtable discussions of 75 minutes on a particular topic, with 3-6 participants
4. Creative works such as performances, staged readings, or videographic essays
5. Working Groups with an eye toward publication (possibly with the *Eugene O’Neill Review*)
6. Graduate Student and Advanced Undergraduate student presentations
7. *Ted-talk* style presentations

Please send a 250-word proposal, including name, academic affiliation, mail and email addresses, paper title, a brief abstract, biography (of 100 words), and desired format. Panel or roundtable proposals should include this information for all participants, with brief abstracts for panels or participant bios for roundtables.

In the interest of making the conference more accessible to a wide variety of participants, the Eugene O’Neill Society has created a fund to support graduate students, theatre artists, contingent faculty, and others who do not receive sufficient institutional support. Applicants can apply for an award of up to \$250 for the conference fee and up to \$250 for travel to the conference, for a maximum total of \$500. The Fred Wilkins Travel Award for graduate students (up to \$500) is also available. For more details on how to apply for funding, [click here](#).

Send proposals by September 1, 2021 to Herman Farrell at Herman.Farrell3@uky.edu with the subject heading: “O’Neill Conference.” If you are considering something experimental and wish to consult more about an idea before the deadline, we encourage you to write to Herman Farrell.

Conference Organizers: Steven Bloom and Beth Wynstra
Conference Session Planner: Herman Farrell

Interested in joining the Eugene O’Neill Society? [Click here for more details](#).