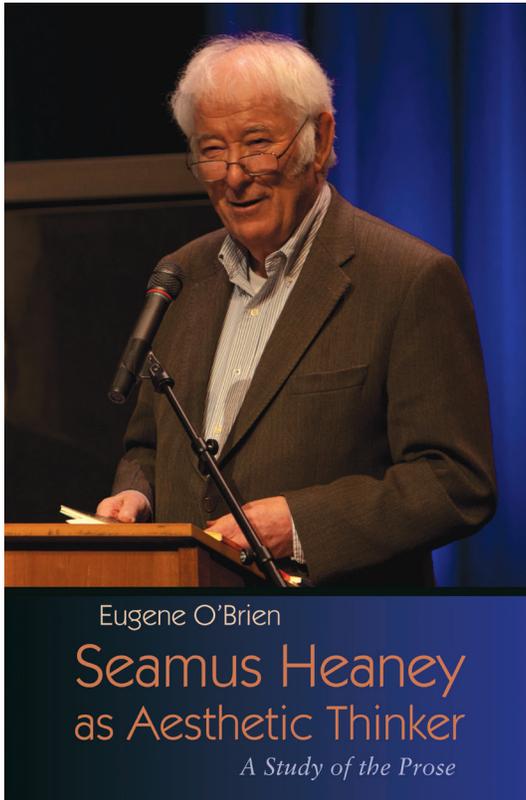


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Seamus Heaney as Aesthetic Thinker

A Study of the Prose

Eugene O'Brien

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Seamus Heaney's unexpected death in August 2013 brought to completion his body of work, and scholars are only now coming to understand the full scale and importance of this extraordinary career. The Nobel Prize-winning poet, translator, and playwright from the North of Ireland is considered the most important Irish poet after Yeats and, at the time of his death, arguably the most famous living poet. For this reason, much of the scholarship to date on Heaney has understandably focused on his poetry. O'Brien's new work, however, focuses on Heaney's essays, book chapters, and lectures as it seeks to understand how Heaney explored the poet's role in the world. By examining Heaney's prose, O'Brien teases out a clearer understanding of Heaney's sense of the function of poetry as an act of public intellectual and ethical inquiry. In doing so, O'Brien reads Heaney as an aesthetic thinker in the European tradition, considering him alongside Heidegger, Derrida, Lacan, and Adorno. Studying Heaney within this theoretical and philosophical tradition sheds new and useful light on one of the greatest creative minds of the twentieth century.

Eugene O'Brien is a senior lecturer and head of the Department of English Language and Literature at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. He is the author of numerous books, including *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing*.

**For more information, contact: Lisa Kuerbis, Marketing:
315-443-5546 lkuerbis@syr.edu SyracuseUniversityPress.syr.edu**