

Show Notes

Date: 9/2/2022

Name of Podcast: Read. Return. Repeat. A ReadICT Podcast.

Episode Title and Number: There's an End to This Monster Book (Season 2, Episode 6)

Episode Summary: In this episode, co-hosts Sara Dixon and Daniel Pewewardy tackle category 3: A Book That Intimidates You. Joining them is Dr. Francis Connor, an Associate Professor of English at Wichita State University. They talk about Shakespeare, Classics, how people's relationships to reading and books have changed in the past six-hundred years and why we should read more books that intimidate us.

Guest Bio: Dr. Francis X. Connor is an Associate Professor of English at Wichita State University, where he specializes in Shakespeare and Early English Literature. Born and raised in the coal-mining region of Pennsylvania, Dr. Connor studied English Literature and Drama at the University of Scranton, and later at George Mason University in Arlington, VA and The University of Virginia, where he earned his Doctorate. His areas of study included bibliography, book history and textual theory. In 2010 Dr. Connor joined the editing team for the New Oxford Shakespeare at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and has worked on a couple of publications as part of this team, including *William Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition* (Designed for classroom use), published in 2016, and *William Shakespeare: Critical Reference Edition*, published in 2017.

After joining the English faculty at Wichita State University in 2012, Dr. Connor's work has appeared in *Philological Quarterly*, *Sidney Journal*, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, and *Shakespeare Survey*. Aside from literary journals, he also published a book in 2014 titled *Literary Folios and Ideas of the Book in Early Modern England*, which investigates how the literary works of Ben Jonson, Samuel Daniel, Shakespeare, John Taylor the Water Poet, and others published in large-format folios contributed to contemporary debates about the nature of the book.

Although Dr. Connor's main research focus is Shakespeare, his current scholarly project is a book he is collaborating with WSU's Darren DeFrain which will uncover some of the Kansas contributions to the American Independent and Alternative music scene.

Topic Index:

Path to teaching English Literature (1:43)

Evolution of reading for pleasure (5:28)

Evolution of the book as a physical form (14:34)

Making Shakespeare approachable (21:46)

Where to start with Shakespeare (29:52)

Why people should read books that intimidate them (35:01)

What makes a book intimidating? (39:46)

The Wire and The Great American Novel (49:15)

Lack of diversity in “Classic Literature” (56:27)

Current and upcoming projects (1:03:17)

Books/literary works mentioned in this episode:

Finnegan’s Wake, James Joyce

Beowulf, Unknown

Venus and Adonis, William Shakespeare (poem)

Paradise Lost, John Milton

Ulysses, James Joyce

Underworld, Don DeLillo

Films/TV shows mentioned in this episode:

Ten Things I Hate About You (1999 film), directed by Gil Junger

William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet (1996 film), directed by Baz Luhrmann

The Wire (TV Series, 2002-2008), created by David Simon

Books recommended in this episode:

Hitler’s Ovens, Olga Lengyel

The Complete Photo Guide to Home Repair, The Editors of Black & Decker

Let’s Eat France! François-Régis Gaudry

Resources & Links:

About Dr. Francis Connor

[Wichita State University Faculty Bio](#)

[Link to Dr. Connor's Bibliography on Google Scholar](#)

Email: Francis.connor@wichita.edu

Other Resources

[Folger Shakespeare Library](#)

[The Complete Works of William Shakespeare](#)

[Francis Bacon](#)

[Christopher Marlowe](#)

[Oxford Scholarly Editions Online: The New Oxford Shakespeare](#)

[The Christopher Marlowe Project](#) (University of Kent)

[History of the Book: Research Guide by the University of Maryland](#)

[Britannica.com: The Flourishing Book Trade: 1550-1800](#)

[Kenneth Karmiole Lecture Series on the History of the Book Trade](#)

[Ben Johnson](#)

[Learning Express Database](#)

[Books Are Our Superpower \(Blog\): "Why You Should Read the Books That Intimidate You"](#)

[Book Riot: What Is the Great American Novel?"](#)

[The Marginalian: "Italo Calvino's 14 Criteria For What Makes A Classic"](#)

["Hooked on Classics" by Jill Anderson \(Harvard Ed. Magazine, Fall 2019\)](#)

["Beyond the Western Canon: Diversity in Classic Literature" \(Mackin Community\)](#)

[Darren DeFrain \(Wichita State Faculty, English Department\)](#)

[The Embarrassment](#) (Wichita band)

[ReadICT Facebook Page](#)

Full Transcript: http://wichitalibrary.org/BooksMore/podcast/Pages/rrr_s2e6.aspx

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