IN THIS ISSUE:

* O'Neill Double-Bill at MLA '78 (p. 3)
* Provincetown Playhouse Redux--and Then Some! (p. 4)
* Robert McIlvaine on Crane's influence on The Hairy Ape (p. 8)
* Patrick Bowles on the Bible and Desire Under the Elms (p. 10)
* Michael Hinden on one of O'Neill's favorite poets (p. 13)
* Frank Cunningham on a 1977 MLA Session on O'Neill (p. 16)
* Walter Fairservis on adapting and directing Marco Millions (p. 18)
* Reviews, reprints and abstracts (p. 21)
* News, notes and queries (p. 25)
* An O'Neill bibliography by Charles A. Carpenter (p. 29)
* Persons represented in this issue (p. 31)
* Index to Volume II (p. 32)

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This winter is a time of endings and beginnings, in much more than a seasonal sense. For instance, Volume II of the Newsletter comes to an end with this issue; but a hurried glance at just the first page is enough to suggest that the seeds of an even better Volume III have already been planted. The editorial staff has doubled (from one to two!) and the new logotype of O'Neill--with its brooding stare, its aura of mask, and its simultaneous suggestions of wingedness and solidity--is the work of associate editor Marshall Brooks. Himself the editor and printer of a literary magazine, Nostoc, and a 1976 graduate of Suffolk University, Mr. Brooks is a free-lance writer whose eclectic interests have been recorded in such publications as Canadian Literature, the Boston Globe, and the Society for Industrial Archeology Newsletter. His affection for O'Neill began in an English Honors seminar on the playwright in 1974 and has continued to ripen in the intervening years.
His favorite O'Neill work is Iceman, partly because of its dialectal dazzle and partly (perhaps) because he describes himself as "the kind of guy who can't pass up a good, dark bar." Marshall's gifts as artist, printer and layout designer will make him an invaluable collaborator on future issues.

Of course the wary will not judge a newsletter solely by its cover, but another "seed" will be evident within. The editor's long-standing desire to include photographs has at last been realized, with several scenes of the Sharon (Conn.) Playhouse's 1978 summer production of Marco Millions. What an asset it can be, for scholars and theatre people alike, to have set designs and action shots of productions otherwise inaccessible to them. Future contributors should seriously consider submitting diagrams, drawings and photographs (5x7" glossies) to accompany articles--especially reports and reviews of specific productions.

I should mention one additional change in the current issue: the use of different sizes of type. To keep the publication at an attractive price to subscribers, while also providing as much O'Neill material as possible within its modest size, we have decided to include longer pieces, but to print them in smaller type. Witness Professor Charles Carpenter's mammoth and tremendously valuable bibliography of books that include chapters or sections on O'Neill (p. 29). It will be of great use to scholars around the world, so it certainly merits printing; yet it lacks the cliffhanger element that would call for serialization. So we have chosen a reduced, double-column format for its presentation. If the print tries one's patience, we apologize. It is merely an experiment, and we welcome readers' responses, both to the mini-print of the bibliography and the in-between type we have used for the Provincetown Playhouse production list, the "Persons Represented" section, and the index to Volume II. If the latter type is acceptable, we can print slightly longer essays than we have in the past. If the mini-print is permissible, we can print considerably longer essays--and we have received several that would be of great interest to readers. Let us know.

But when I spoke of this season being a time of beginnings, I had more than the Newsletter in mind. There are other evidences of rebirth in O'Neill studies that extend well beyond the medium of print. Two are recorded in this issue: the restoration of the Monte Cristo Cottage in New London and the plans for its use by scholars and artists and the completion of an architectural competition for the new Playhouse and O'Neill Archival Center in Provincetown (p. 4). Putting these activities together with the two exciting O'Neill sessions at the MLA Convention in December--a three-hour, star-studded presentation by actors, directors and scholars on the 29th; and the first formative meeting of a Eugene O'Neill Society on the 30th (p. 3)--one has an incontrovertible feeling that exceptional days are ahead, for lovers of O'Neill in particular, and, in general, for the future development of significant American drama and dramatists.

Two final notes to subscribers. (1) Many subscriptions end with the current issue. If the box at the right has a large red X in it, yours is one of them. I hope you will
O'NEILL DOUBLE-BILL AT MLA '78.

As is appropriate in the year that marks the ninetieth anniversary of his birth as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, the year that was also, according to his own instructions, to have seen the first appearance of his greatest play, Eugene O'Neill's presence will loom large at the 1978 MLA Convention in New York City after Christmas. The smaller of the two events devoted to the playwright, but one that will be of great influence on the future of O'Neill studies, will be a meeting of all persons interested in the formation of a EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY. Professors Horst Frenz, Virginia Floyd and Frederick Wilkins will make suggestions about the organization and by-laws for a society, and everyone interested is cordially invited, even urged, to attend. The meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m., on Saturday, December 30, in Room 504 of the New York Hilton.

The earlier and initially larger event will be a SPECIAL SESSION, moderated by Virginia Floyd, from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Friday, December 29, in the New York Hilton's Grand Ballroom East. And it promises to be grand! MLA members have already seen the program in PMLA. The following abbreviated version is for the information of non-members, who may wish to register for the convention. The program, "A Consideration of the Late Plays: Long Day's Journey into Night and Moon for the Misbegotten," is in three parts.

PART I: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO O'NEILL.
1. Travis Bogard, "From the Silence at Tao House."
2. Tom Olsson, "The World Premiere of Long Day's Journey."

PART II: THEATRICAL APPROACHES: REFLECTIONS OF O'NEILL'S INTERPRETERS.
1. Jose Quintero, "My Life-Work with Eugene O'Neill."
2. Jason Robards, "The Hell and Redemption of Jamie-Jim Tyrone."
3. Colleen Dewhurst, "Josie Hogan--the Redeeming Woman of O'Neill's Misbegotten."
5. Geraldine Fitzgerald, "Mary Tyrone--O'Neill's Quintessential Mother Figure."

**PART III: DISCUSSION PERIOD: "FROM PAGE TO STAGE."
**
Moderator: Timo Tiuanen.
Interpreters: Dewhurst, Fitzgerald, Robards, Brown, Quintero.
Schrifters: Bogard, Olsson, Raleigh, Louis Sheaffer, Esther M. Jackson, Horst Frenz, Peter Egri.

To accompany this stellar event, a special O'Neill exhibit will be featured in the foyer of the Grand Ballroom East from 1:00-6:00 p.m. on the same day. The exhibit is provided through the courtesy of Theodore Fetter, Museum of the City of New York, and Louis A. Rachow, Walter Hampden-Edwin Booth Theatre Collection and Library.

Unquestionably a not-to-be-missed event, whose highlights will be assiduously reported in the next issue of the Newsletter, as will those of the first meeting of the Eugene O'Neill Society. But don't rely on after-the-fact reportage: be there yourself!

**PROVINCE TOWN PLAYHOUSE REDUX--AND THEN SOME!**

Helen Hayes, addressing a crowd estimated at over 500 in the Universalist Church of Provincetown on Sunday, November 19, called the Provincetown Playhouse "the cradle of modern drama in America." She was one of the guest speakers at a ceremony heralding the reconstruction of that cradle: the announcement of the winner in a unique eight-day, on-site architectural competition for the design for a new Provincetown Playhouse and Eugene O'Neill Archival Center. It was an emotional morning, and rightly so, for the Provincetown Playhouse, whose most recent manifestation (its third since 1915) had been destroyed by teenage arsonists in March of 1977 (see p. 14 of the Newsletter's January 1978 issue), was indeed the artistic "home" of O'Neill, and from that man and place has evolved all that is best in American drama.

The eight-day competition, called a "Design Charette" and supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy, took place in the wharf-front Flagship Restaurant in full view of an interested and involved public. As William Marlin, architecture critic for *The Christian Science Monitor*, associate editor of *Architectural Record* magazine, and initiator of the Charette project, said on the 19th, the competition was "designed to take the public into confidence and into account."

Seven New England architectural firms competed, and their initial activities were described by Anne LeClaire in the *Boston Sunday Globe* (November 12, p. A-20): they "spent the first two days in Provincetown
attending briefings and orientation meetings, touring the town, visiting the site of the theater, talking with community residents and reading a book prepared specifically for the Charette which details the town's economic and cultural history and its artistic heritage." Designs were expected to include a 400-seat theater; an archival center; heated rehearsal space which could be used year-round and, accommodating an audience of 100, could also house productions of new and experimental work; and "a large entrance room, which would open onto the ocean with fireplaces at either end," that would retain the "homey" atmosphere of the previous Playhouses.

One of the challenges to the competitors, besides fitting the building to the town that will be its home, was the specific space where the theater-archive complex will stand. Just off Commercial Street in the center of town, down an alley from Adams Pharmacy, on the oldest whaling wharf in Provincetown, the site's spatial dimensions are 47' by 266'.

The week of designing at an end, the nine jurors, headed by I. M. Pei and including five other renowned architects and three residents of Provincetown, met to make their decision on Saturday the 18th. But it was not until 2:30 a.m. on the 19th, the day of the ceremony, that their deliberation concluded. Suspense was evident everywhere; the whole town was abuzz with rumors and speculations.

After Town Manager Charles Cobb opened the announcement ceremony with a genial welcome, Mr. Marlin praised the "intensity and integrity" that had marked the competition. The resultant building, he said, will be "not only a structure, not only a symbol," but an opportunity "for raising the sights of people [and] for the enhancement of human feelings."

Before announcing the winner, I. M. Pei called this unusual method for selecting an architect "an experiment that will set a standard for the nation." It had amply fulfilled, he said, the two conditions for which it had been proposed: to involve the people of the community; and "to give the competitors, as well as the jurors, the chance to understand the community in which the structure is to be built." Provincetown, he said, has "a very special and recognizable form, scale and texture," and the jurors chose the design most appropriate to them. Mr. Marlin described it as a "large piece of lovingly created cabinetry," a "literal evocation of the traditional Cape Cod style with contemporary flourishes" (New York Times, Nov. 20, p. C-16). And Adele Heller, Producing Director of the Playhouse, praised it as "sensitive, traditional and in keeping with both the theater and the town" (Boston Globe, Nov. 20, p. 3).

Then the suspense was at an end. Mr. Pei announced and congratulated the winner, William Warner of Exeter, Rhode Island, who said he was "flabbergasted." He'd just spent two weeks in the town—his first visit in ten years. "Now I can come again in the summer!" It is interesting that of the seven competing firms, Mr. Warner was the only architect who worked alone; the other six were represented by two-person teams. I don't know who the townspeople had been betting on, but I heard the phrase "dark horse" behind me in the applause-filled
church. Dark horse or not, Mr. Warner has constructed a light, bright and attractive model, which may be on display at the special O'Neill exhibit in the foyer of the New York Hilton's Grand Ballroom East on December 29. Mr. Warner's plan, which still must undergo modifications in consultation with a specialist in theatre design, will later be printed in Architectural Record, in a ten-page feature in the Christian Science Monitor next March, and in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Helen Hayes said that, although she had never been to Provincetown before, her visit was "like a homecoming," since Provincetown had always been a part of her life. She recited Emily Dickinson's poem, "I never saw a moor," and said, "I feel like that today." She recalled how, after 1916, her mother had bought season tickets for the cut-rate Sunday night dress rehearsals at the Provincetown Playhouse in Greenwich Village, where they saw such plays as The Hairy Ape, The Emperor Jones and the sea plays. "We were impressionable, and they would have been impressive to solid rock!" She herself had played in O'Neill only twice: in A Touch of the Poet on Broadway in 1957, and in Long Day's Journey at the Catholic University in Washington--her last stage performance. Taken ill during the run, she had been briefly hospitalized, and the attending physician found that she was allergic to theater--more specifically, to dust, which is prevalent in the theater. He urged her, if she wished "a few more years in this world," to withdraw from the production immediately. But Miss Hayes was too much a trouper to quit. It was only after completing the run of Long Day's Journey that "I allowed myself to be benched."

Miss Hayes said she was not sure why she was there, but confessed to a long-standing weakness for accepting attractive invitations. (She reported, in fact, that her late husband Charles MacArthur had expected to long outlive her and had an inscription all ready for her headstone: "God called, and Helen said, 'Yes, I can come.'") But her determination to be present, despite illness, attested to the momentousness of the event, which she described as "a noble and a blessed idea" and "an exercise in grace reborn."

Biographer Barbara Gelb, who began by reminding Miss Hayes that the actress had, at the age of eighteen, been turned down by O'Neill for a role in The Straw, spoke of O'Neill's Provincetown years--the encouragement he received there from George Cram ("Jig") Cook; the plays he wrote in Provincetown (the sea plays, Anna Christie, The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, and Beyond the Horizon, which is set on a farm in nearby Truro); his rivalry with John Reed for the affections of Louise Bryant, and his and John's being suspected, in the spring of 1917, of signalling U-boats with a special espionage device--that turned out to be O'Neill's typewriter! "The spirit of O'Neill and his colleagues is still very alive here," she said, noting especially the "kinship and harmony with life" that O'Neill had felt "out here." She quoted his description of the sphinx-like sand dunes and his feeling of being most at one with his beloved sea in this town at its edge. Her conclusion was that, while New York was the city of his birth and New London was the town of his boyhood, "Provincetown was the birthplace of his art."
Adele Heller was the last speaker, before the crowd adjourned to a festive reception and prepared to view once more the models at the Flagship Restaurant. Understandably moved by emotions of a day that signalled the realization of a dream, she recalled her first, honeymoon visit to Provincetown in 1949; and spoke eloquently of her love of the theatre for its power to "give birth to a higher reality" and to "communicate the broadest possible range of human feelings to individuals." For that was the real meaning of the day. As I. M. Pei had said, the "heart and soul of the project is to produce a great space for the theatre."

Of course the greatest events are yet to come. Groundbreaking is scheduled for late spring of 1979, and the theater is expected to open on July 4, 1980. As in the past, the Playhouse will nurture new playwriting talent while also producing the classics--with, of course, a play or more of O'Neill's every season. Surely, as the following list of Playhouse productions of O'Neill since 1940 attests, no theater has been as dedicated in preserving his work on stage.

1940: *Diff'rent.*
1941: *The Emperor Jones.*
1946: *Anna Christie.*
1947: *Diff'rent; Desire Under the Elms.*
1948: *The Emperor Jones; Gold.*
1949: *Ah, Wilderness!*
1950: *Anna Christie.*
1951: *The Straw.*
1952: *S. S. Glencairn (Moon of the Caribbees, Bound East for Cardiff and In the Zone).*
1953: *Dynamo.*
1954: *Beyond the Horizon; Three Plays from the Sea (Where the Cross Is Made, Ile and The Long Voyage Home).*
1955: *Diff'rent.*
1956: *S. S. Glencairn (same trio as in 1952); Ah, Wilderness!*
1957: *Days Without End; Desire Under the Elms.*
1958: *A Moon for the Misbegotten; The Emperor Jones.*
1959: *The Hairy Ape.*
1960: *A Touch of the Poet; Diff'rent.*
1964: *Ah, Wilderness!*
1965: *Hughie.*
1966: *Ah, Wilderness!; Moon of the Caribbees; Bound East for Cardiff; A Touch of the Poet; Long Day's Journey Into Night; A Moon for the Misbegotten; Beyond the Horizon.*
1967: *The Rope.*
1968: *The Hairy Ape.*
Since 1970: *Moon for the Misbegotten; Sea Plays; More Stately Mansions; Desire Under the Elms (2 seasons); Long Day's Journey Into Night (2 seasons).*

One of the most exciting features of the new design is the O'Neill Archival Center, which will feature an extensive collection of O'Neilliana and a library of critical literature, and will be a year-round center for O'Neill studies and publication--the only one in existence that can, on a regular basis, bring academics and theatre people together for creative collaboration. But more on that in a future issue. For the present, congratulations to Adele Heller and the Provincetown Playhouse for putting "the cradle of modern drama in America" back on the map--and then some!

--Frederick Wilkins
The influence of the writings of Stephen Crane on the plays of Eugene O'Neill has been only slightly explored. In his study Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill (Oxford University Press, 1972), Travis Bogard points out that Stephen Crane was among the naturalistic authors O'Neill read when he was a young man. Bogard discerns the possible influence of The Red Badge of Courage on the imagery of Thirst and on the anti-heroic treatment of war in Mourning Becomes Electra. Bogard informs us that in 1917 O'Neill wrote a short story entitled "The Hairy Ape," which he destroyed after it had been rejected for magazine publication. One can surmise that this short story was probably even more clearly influenced by Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets than was the play, which was written in 1921-22.

Robert "Yank" Smith is a character very much like Maggie Johnson's brother Jimmie and her seducer Pete. Jimmie and Pete are "Bowery Jays," while Yank was "dragged up" on the Brooklyn waterfront. Because of their brutal childhoods, all three men have a defiant, chip-on-the-shoulder attitude. All of them speak a very similar limited dialect, filled with oaths.

Pete's account to Maggie of one of his street encounters reminds the reader of Yank's encounter with the church-goers on Fifth Avenue:

When I was a-crossin' deh street deh chump runned plump inteh me, an' den he turns aroun' an' says, "Yeh insol'en' ruffin!" he says, like dat. "Oh, gee!" I says, "oh, gee! git off d'eart'!" I says, like dat. See? "Git off d'eart'!" like dat. Den deh blokie he got wild. He says I was a contempt'ble scoun'el, er somethin' like dat, an' he says I was doom' teh everlastin' pe'dition, er somethin' like dat. "Gee!" I says, "gee! Yeh joshin' me," I says. "Yeh joshin' me." An den I slugged 'im. See?

In the stage directions for The Hairy Ape, O'Neill writes that a man "runs full tilt into the bending, straining Yank, who is bowled off his balance." Yank, "seeing a fight--with a roar of joy as he springs to his feet," exclaims, "I'll bust yuh," and he does, though with less satisfactory results than Pete achieves.

A comparison of the dialect spoken by the characters in Maggie with the dialect spoken by Yank reveals significant parallels. While neither Crane's nor O'Neill's spelling of dialect is always consistent, there are enough similarities to make one think that perhaps O'Neill modeled Yank's speech at least partially on that of the characters in Crane's novel. A clear example would be that Yank several times says, "Git off de oith!"--the same expression used by Pete in the above quotation. Yank also has the habit of frequently ending his statements with a "See?" as Pete does twice in the above quotation and as he and Jimmie do throughout Maggie. A good example of Yank's speech appears in Scene 1:
Aw g'wan! I've listened to lots of guys like you, see. Yuh're all wrong. Wanter know what I t'ink? Yuh ain't got no noive, get me? Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Yellow, dat's you... Dis is a man's job, get me? It belongs. It runs dis tub. No stiffs need apply. But yuh're a stiff, see? Yuh're yellow, dat's you.

Besides the use of "see" and similar rhetorical expressions at the ends of sentences, Pete and Yank often repeat their statements twice ("'Yer joshin' me,' I says, 'Yer joshin' me'" ; "Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Yellow, dat's you.") Both men's vocabularies are filled with "dey," "youse," "dis," "dem," "tink" or "t'ink," "den," "dere," "dat's," "naw," "ting" or "t'ing," "tree" (for "three"). and such slang words as "scarrpin'," "bloke," and "mug." Yank starts his above speech with "Aw g'wan!"—an expression he uses more than once. Pete sometimes uses the same expression, spelled, "Aw, go ahn!" Similarly, Pete several times uses the expression "do me dirt," and Yank says the same thing, but spelled "do me doit." I am certain that a systematic reader could discover other verbal parallels between the two works, although I believe that the ones I have found make, in themselves, a strong case for the influence of Maggie upon O'Neill's imagination.

This language, however, is not even the most striking parallel between the two works. Yank's account of his childhood is exactly the same as the childhood of Jimmie and Maggie. Yank reminisces:

Me old man and woman . . . always got too big a head on Sunday mornin', dat was dem. (With a grin) Dey was scrappers for fair, bot' of dem. On Satiday nights when dey bot' got a skinful dey could put up a bout outher been staged at de Garden. When dey got trough dere wasn't a chair or table wit a leg under it. Or else dey bot' jumped on me for somep'n. Dat was where I loined to take punishment.

Certainly no reader of Maggie could ever forget the drunken, furniture-throwing "scrapes" between Mary Johnson, the formidable mother of Maggie and Jimmie, and her husband which periodically destroyed their tenement rooms. They also were continually beating their children, who learned to fight and take punishment as early as did Yank.

Despite this brutal upbringing, Crane suggests that Jimmie as well as Maggie had the potential to be more than they were if only their environment had been somewhat different. Crane writes that Jimmie, "on a certain star-lit evening, said wonderingly and quite reverently, 'Deh moon looks like hell, don't it?"

Similarly, in Yank's address to the gorilla he remarks:

I seen de sun come up. Dat was pretty, too--all red and pink and green. I was lookin' at de skyscrapers--steel--and all de ships comin' in, sailin' out, all over de oith--and dey was steel, too. The sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was a breeze blowin'. Sure, it was great stuff.
There is even a hint of hairy ape imagery in Maggie. Yank ends his life at the Central Park Zoo, admiring the gorilla. Crane has Pete escort Maggie to the Central Park Menagerie, where he admires a monkey:

Once at the menagerie he [Pete] went into a trance of admiration before the spectacle of a very small monkey threatening to thrash a cageful because one of them had pulled his tail and he had not wheeled about quickly enough to discover who did it. Ever after Pete knew that monkey by sight, and winked at him, trying to induce him to fight with other and larger monkeys.

The implied comparison of Pete and his fellows to monkeys fighting in the menagerie may have helped to suggest O'Neill's explicit comparison in The Hairy Ape. The Marxist sailor, Long, even remarks to his fellows, "What right 'as they got to be exhibitin' us 's if we was bleedin' monkeys in a menagerie?"

The final important parallel between Maggie and The Hairy Ape lies in the manner in which Maggie and Yank are sent to their deaths by a callous society. When Maggie is debating leaving home with Pete, her drunken mother exclaims to her, "Git th' devil outa here." Crane's ironic comment is, "Maggie went."

Apparently pleased with this technique, Crane used it again. After being abandoned by Pete and her family, Maggie begs of Pete, "But where kin I go?" "'Oh, go to hell!" cried he." Again, Crane might have commented, "Maggie went."

After Yank is thrown out of the office of the IWW local, O'Neill ends the scene thusly:

Yank. (in a vague mocking tone) Say, where do I go from here?
Policeman. (giving him a push -- with a grin, indifferently) Go to hell.

The next and final scene finds Yank before the cage of the gorilla at the Central Park Zoo.

In his study of O'Neill, Travis Bogard comments, "Among the plays of the 1920's, The Hairy Ape, for all its seeming originality of style and substance, is perhaps the most derivative." I hope that this study demonstrates that some of the style and substance of The Hairy Ape was probably derived from Maggie: A Girl of the Streets.

--Robert McIlvaine

ANOTHER BIBLICAL PARALLEL IN DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS

It is well-known that Eugene O'Neill relied throughout his career upon biblical and classical parallels in an effort to transcend what he believed to be the naive naturalism of American theatre and to
lend structural and thematic coherence to his plays. As early as 1915 O'Neill had written with Harvard classmate Colin Ford a play called Belshazzar, based on an episode from the Old Testament, while in Rope (1918)--the manuscript of which he destroyed soon after completion--he used the Genesis story of Jacob, Isaac, and Esau, and again, in Lazarus Laughed (1927), retold a famous story from the New Testament. In The Great God Brown (1926), the strange Nietzschean hybrid Dion Anthony brought together in his very name the primitive pagan and Christian elements that are in conflict in much of O'Neill's work, while in The Iceman Cometh (1946), Christian mythology was inverted into a nihilistic fable about the necessity of illusion in a godless universe. And O'Neill's great trilogy Mourning Becomes Electra (1931), based upon the Oresteia of Aeschylus, is perhaps the most ambitious adaptation of a classical subject in American drama. Occasionally, O'Neill even used multiple parallels within a single play; a good example of this is Desire Under the Elms (1924), in which at least four such substructures are at work.

Of these four parallels, three have been previously pointed out by critics. Perhaps the most salient of these is O'Neill's use of the Phaedra myth, with the ill-fated triangle of Theseus, Phaedra and Hippolytus clearly serving in Desire as a structural prototype for the relationships of O'Neill's Ephraim, Abbie and Eben Cabot, respectively. A second, though somewhat less rigid, parallel derives from the Oedipus legend, with Eben Cabot as a modern Oedipus; the brooding spirit of his dead mother, which lives symbolically through his stepmother, as Jocasta; and, again loosely, Ephraim as a frustrated Laius. And a third parallel has been shown to exist in the loose but suggestive equation of Cabot with the Old Testament prophet Hosea. In addition to these three parallels, I wish to suggest a fourth, also from the Old Testament.

One of the first things we notice about Desire Under the Elms is that each of the four major male characters bears a biblical name. Peter, for example, may be associated—if only, like Rocky in The Iceman Cometh, for negative reasons—with the biblical rock (petrus) upon whom the church was founded; it is he who throws a rock through the window at Abbie, his new stepmother. Against both Peter and his brother Simeon, who may be associated with the Simeon of Genesis 49:5, stands Eben, whose final integrity tragically but fully warrants his name (Hebrew, stone of hope). And, finally, there is Ephraim, whose name suggests the progenitor of the tribes of Israel. These four names are not only appropriate to the rural New England setting of 1850, but resonate well with the legalistic, Old Testament ethos of the play as a whole. The significance of these names has also been pointed out before by critics, yet no one, to my knowledge, has offered either a source or a significance for the name of Abbie Putnam. While the name Abbie is of course a diminutive of Abigail (source of joy),

there is a good possibility that O'Neill derived the name from a
minor heroine of the Old Testament, who appears in the following
passage from the first Book of Kings:

Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they
covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore
his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my
lord the king a young virgin; and let her stand before
the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in
thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they
sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of
Israel and found Abishag a Shunhamite, and brought her to
the king. And the damsel was very fair, and cherished
the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her
not. (I Kings 1:1-4)

Beyond the obvious aural similarity of the names Abishag and Abbie,
several parallels between the biblical story and O'Neill’s play exist.
The name of the former derives from the Hebrew avishagh, which means
"the father wanders," and it incidentally illustrates the fateful
action of Ephraim at the beginning of the play as he goes out to seek
a mate. King David, too, "wanders," if only by proxy, in order to
find Abishag the Shunhamite. And in both cases this wandering is
brought about by a serious lack of sexual vitality or "heat:" "I been
hearin' the hens cluckin' an' the roosters crowin' all the durn day,"
says Ephraim. "I been listenin' t' the cows lowin' an' everythin'
else kickin' up till I can't stand it no more." Both King David and
Ephraim require women considerably younger than themselves to be
restored to happiness and health, although both Abbie and Abishag
ultimately fail to fulfill this task. Abishag the Shunhamite shares
with Abbie the tripartite role of nurse, lover, and, symbolically,
mother, to an aging ruler, and like Abbie, if less culpably, inspires
the sexual competition of a younger son. In I Kings 1:5 a young
soldier named Adonijah appears, who, like handsome Eben, is not only
a younger son in competition with his lord and master, but is described
as "a very goodly man." Having previously attempted to usurp the
throne, shortly before the death of David, Adonijah infuriates Solomon,
David's successor, by entreating him for the hand of Abishag. Solomon
has Adonijah executed; so too, presumably, will Eben Cabot be executed.

Given the consistency of biblical names among all the other Cabots,
as well as the other parallels we have noted—which allow the fourth,
and new framework of Eben-Adonijah, Ephraim-David (or Ephraim-Solomon,
David's successor) and Abbie-Abishag to emerge—it seems quite possible
that O'Neill derived Abbie's name and, to some extent, her role, from
the Old Testament.

--Patrick Bowles

[The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary states that the name Abigail
derives from the Hebrew words meaning "my father rejoices." --Ed.]
"SPLENDID TWADDLE": O'NEILL AND RICHARD MIDDLETON

Rereading Agnes Boulton's Part of a Long Story (Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y.: 1958), I came across a reference which eventually led me to the basement of the university library, there to poke around the bins of unshelved, uncalled for, and forgotten books. In the fall of 1917, Agnes recalled, Eugene O'Neill "often carried in his pocket a small blue volume of poems "which really dramatized something of himself as he was then" (pp. 61-62). "He would read and quote these poems often," Agnes wrote. "It disturbed me because I began to wonder which was Gene and which was the poem—was it that the poem expressed him and what he felt? Or had he read the poem and from it created an image of himself?.... These poems of Richard Middleton's—how many people know about them, or read them now?" (p. 62).

Richard Middleton? Indeed, a forgotten name. Who was he? What kinds of poems had he produced? Was he undeservedly forgotten? What manner of influence had he had on the young, impressionable O'Neill? After a lengthy search I found that "small blue volume of poems" at the bottom of a dusty bin; intrigued, I set out to discover what I could about its author.

A few years older than O'Neill, Middleton was a lonely soul who yearned for literary recognition. Alas, the description Joyce gives of Tristan Tzara in Tom Stoppard's Travesties would have fit him wonderfully: "an over-excited little man with a need for self-expression far beyond the scope of [his] natural gifts." 1 Apparently Middleton found it easier to affect the manner, dress, and mores of a London poet than to actually produce the art for which he might have been remembered. His Edwardian childhood, spent in fashionable despondency, was given over almost entirely to solitude and moping. The main event of these early years, according to the poet's own account, was probably a bout with measles which afforded him a paraqisal interlude from contact with the boys at school who taunted him. Adolescence was, of course, a nightmare. Then, in his early twenties Richard was placed for a short while in the office of a business corporation—which, quite predictably, he abandoned for Bohemia. The remainder of his life was an extended literary cliche. Encountering Middleton in a cafe during this period, the critic Arthur Ransome characterized his poetry and conversation as "twaddle, but such downright, spirited splendid twaddle, flung out from the heart of him in a grand, careless way that made me think of largesse scattered royally on a mob." 2

1 Tom Stoppard, Travesties (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), Act I, p. 62.
What followed in due course were years of alcohol, carousing, brief affairs, poverty, much verse—and dark, intractable obscurity. The end came on December 1, 1911 when Middleton, aged twenty-nine, poured chloroform over a handkerchief, covered his face, and permanently went to bed. What weighed most heavily on Middleton's mind, according to Henry Savage, his friend and humorless biographer, was "love, poverty and neuralgia." More likely the main motive for Middleton's suicide was the hope of posthumous fame. Indeed, to complete the romantic scenario, his works (unmarketable during his lifetime) were actually in print within a year. The books were published in London by T. Fisher Unwin and ran to five volumes, all bound in blue buckram and lettered on back and front in gilt. One of these surely was the volume of poems mentioned by Agnes Boulton. In 1917 O'Neill had discovered Middleton at the height of the poet's brief span of popularity.

Today Middleton is no longer read—and for very good reasons. His poems, like his life, unfortunately are indulgent, derivative, self-centered, melodramatic, and at times unintentionally comic. What O'Neill found to admire in them is difficult to discern. In his finest moments Middleton could offer a dreamy, pseudo-Keatsian melodic line, as in "The Last Serenade":

Be silent now, oh moon, and be you dumb,
Oh too importunate stars! I will not hear
Your dulcet tales that make my senses numb
With easeless longing. . .

And no doubt O'Neill, recollecting his sailing adventures, was stirred by the romanticism of "The Last Cruise":

The stars were out overhead, and 'Lo!' I cried,
'Nevermore,
Nevermore shall the palace know me;' and high on the masts
The white sails trembled as skyward the good ship bore
Her cargo of shadows.
Never a word of regret as I stood on her moonlight poop
And sang not of old past things but of wonders to be;
And saw great birds with a glory of plumage swoop
Down the sea's meadows.

After all, Edmund speaks in similar accents in Act IV of Long Day's Journey Into Night.

But the majority of Middleton's poems are dull and silly and eminently worthy of oblivion. Like Edmund, Richard may have had "the makings of a poet," but he lacked the skill and genius to develop. His favorite themes recur with numbing regularity and include the idealization of dreamers, children, starry nights, Bohemia, Bacchus, fame, pain, love, fate, early death, and—most insistently—himself.

My name is Richard Middleton, I'm living in Blackfriars,
Two stories up, above the street, to chasten my desires;
I have no purple heather here, no field, nor living tree—
But every night when I look out, God lights the stars for me.
("In Blackfriars")

4 From one of the chapter headings of Savage's biography.
Only with dead or dying children could he identify completely. After
his own sorrows, they were his favorite subjects, and his poems
("Dorothy," for instance) abound with the pitter-patter of little
ghostly footsteps. On brighter days the poet's chief happiness lay
in picturing his eventual canonization and (in contemplation of that
event) anticipating the pleasures of old age.

In the brave year nineteen fifty
    Though our sun is down the sky,
May we show the world together
    That Bohemia does not die.
Though our songs are sung by pirates
    And our names are in Who's Who--
May I wander to this tavern
    And renew my youth with you.

("In the Brave Year Nineteen Fifty")

But more often Middleton grappled with his anonymity and suffered the
pangs of unrequited love. In this mood he was forever visualizing his
own death and consoling himself with the conviction that after he was
gone (and all his words in print) the world would surely miss him.

Love brought a pretty girl to me,
    But when she saw that I was fat,
She cried, 'My heart, can such things be!'
    And then she laid me flat
And used me as a mat.

My flesh is worn, my heart is bruised,
    The thing I had to say is said,
And all my senses are confused;
    They'll soon put me in bed
And say 'Hullo! he's dead!'

("Life and Love")

The girl in question, though she had not seen Middleton for more than a
year, on hearing of his suicide wrote to Mr. Savage a long and tear-
stained letter professing that the news caused her to fall in a dead
faint, but that she would "be ever so pleased if you will kindly send
me the names of the publishers where his books are to be published
that I may buy them. I cannot write more now because I am too upset.
Kindly write soon and give me all the details."

Middleton would have been pleased. He would have been pleased, too
by the extravagant eulogies his friends poured forth on the occasion
of his death. Minor poets throughout England rose to pluck their lyres
in tribute to the fallen Adonis. William Kean Seymour addressed him as
a "Dreamer with Love's roses on thy brow/ Entwined with bitter sprays of
mournful yew" ("Richard Middleton: In Memoriam"), and Mr. Arthur Coles
Armstrong immortalized him as "He of the straggled beard, the Vulcan
frame,/ The tender voice, the ego undefiled" ("With Richard Middleton
Along the Dover Road"). Finally, he was apostrophized as follows by
W. R. Titterton:

5Ibid., p. 84. In addition to the biography, Savage produced Richard
Middleton's Letters To Henry Savage, edited with an introduction and
comments by the recipient (London: The Mandrake Press, 1929). Most
of the letters ask for money.
The golden cities that his verses piled 
Rise on the mountain-tops serene and strong; 
Part woman, part swashbuckler and part child, 
He was lord of song.

("A Dead Poet")

Thus in life poor Middleton wrote bad poetry, and in death he was the cause of it in others.

Concerning the value of his poems, Middleton hoped and pretended, yet he knew himself but slenderly and did not seem able to distinguish sham from genuine emotion. At best his verse is shallow, imitative, limp—at worst, ridiculous. His fin de siècle attitudes, stale diction, images, and swelling rhyme assured his oblivion when a new generation of poets returning from the Great War determined to bury the past and modernize the British poetic tradition. As Mr. Ransome perceptively remarked, it all was splendid twaddle, and by "the brave year nineteen fifty," Richard Middleton's star had been eclipsed.

What influence did Middleton's poems have on the artistic development of young O'Neill? Thankfully, very little, as far as can be judged. But the affinity O'Neill felt for the unfortunate poet was real and understandable. At twenty-three and in despair of ever becoming a great poet, O'Neill had attempted suicide by drug overdose in January of 1912; Middleton had succeeded in taking his own life a month earlier in similar circumstances and for precisely the same reasons. That year remained important for O'Neill: The Iceman Cometh as well as Long Day's Journey Into Night take place in 1912. But perhaps the closest link between the famous playwright and the failed poet is found in O'Neill's dreamy autobiographical play, Ah, Wilderness! Set six years earlier, the play (sometimes satirically) depicts the growing pains of a love-sick, moody, poetical young man. Was Richard Miller named for Richard Middleton?

--Michael Hinden


A group of over fifty O'Neillians gathered in the Palmer House on December 27th for discussions of papers by Prof. Thomas F. Van Laan (Rutgers University) and Professor Dan Isaac (SUNY-Purchase). Prof. Letitia Dace (John Jay C.-CUNY) and Prof. Frank Cunningham (University of South Dakota) chaired the proceedings, indicating at the outset that their purpose in selecting the papers had been to emphasize less frequently considered modes of approach to O'Neill than the biographical and religious themes that had dominated discussion in Special Sessions conducted by Prof. Cunningham in recent years at MLA.

To that end, Prof. Van Laan led off with a reading of his well-written essay, "Singing in the Wilderness: The Dark Vision of O'Neill's Only Comedy," which considered previously unstressed images of depression and regret in the Millers' emotional landscape. Van Laan asserted that O'Neill chose to satirize his characters' unconscious misperception of
the nature of their reality, and that the play "emphasizes three familiar American cliches...the Norman Rockwell-like gallery of sentimental stereotypes, the Fourth-of-July myth of independence and equality, and the notion of family life as the ideal form of existence." Van Laan suggested that the major characters are like "key sentimental stereotypes readily found in the wish-fulfillment fantasies of the middle class," and that Richard Miller's posing resembles that of Con Melody in A Touch of the Poet. He concluded by explaining O'Neill's affirmative ending as a result of the dramatist's failure in detaching himself from the values the Millers attempt to believe in. "The light-heartedness, sunniness, and sense of self-satisfaction emphasized by the commentators in the play are for the most part merely examples of singing in the wilderness—which is a rough equivalent to whistling past a cemetery—by characters who are no more able to face the desolate reality confronting them than are the denizens of Harry Hope's saloon or the four haunted Tyrones."

After a discussion of Van Laan's controversial reading of Wilderness that, in the main, centered on O'Neill's expressed statements of his motives in writing the play, Prof. Isaac offered his paper, a psychoanalytic approach to "Matricide and the Late Plays of O'Neill." Countering the majority view that would serve to explain the final three great plays as Oedipally or religiously inspired, Isaac asserted that O'Neill's achievement in the final plays was in large measure a result of his having successfully dealt with his previously subconscious wishes to commit matricide. Working from Freud's Totem and Taboo and the analytic work of Leon I. Jacobs, Isaac contended that the primal crime in O'Neill's scheme is not the murder of the father, but the murder and devouring of the mother, and exemplified his thesis with the examples of Hickey's killing of Evelyn—a mother figure rather than a sexual partner—Parritt's confession of his "matriarchal crime" to Slade, the three men's feelings of hostility as well as protectiveness toward Mary Tyrone in Long Day's Journey, and Jamie's actions on his mother's funeral train in Moon for the Misbegotten. Isaac concluded by typifying O'Neill's male figures in these plays as, in the main, existing in a state of regression, of confused and angry infancy.

Isaac's paper stimulated a discussion that extended thirty minutes past the closing time for the Session, as participants advanced theories of male characters' suppression of mature sexuality in favor of submission to dominant women characters; parallels in O'Neill's own life to such themes; and the influence of Adlerian psychology—especially feelings of inferiority on the part of certain male characters—on these psychological concerns in the plays. Professors Vera Jiji (Brooklyn C.-CUNY) and Timo Tiulanen (Univ. of Helsinki) spoke with particular eloquence on the need to consider themes of love generally in O'Neill's work, and Prof. Cunningham and Jiji planned to hold a Special Session in New York in 1978 devoted to psychological perspectives in O'Neill, particularly themes of sexuality and the various meanings of "love" in O'Neill's canon. [Unfortunately that session was cancelled, but the subject remains a vital one and may find a place in the 1979 MLA Convention program. —Ed.]

--Frank R. Cunningham
MANAGING THE MAGIC OF MARCO MILLIONS

[Tiziana Beggiato, at the age of six, saw her first live play at the Sharon Playhouse in Connecticut last August. Nothing unusual in that, except that Miss Beggiato is from Bologna and knows no English, and the play she saw was Marco Millions. And she loved it.

That the play, with its epic sweep, cast of hundreds, and seemingly endless parade of set and costume changes, was done at all is a novelty. But that its combination of satire (of Western materialism and acquisitiveness) and paean (to Eastern mysticism) would prove a total, comprehensible delight to a six-year-old who didn't even understand the dialogue: that might be an even greater surprise--and a measure of the achievement of adapter-director Walter Fairservis, who found a way to prune this neglected work, stage it with a combination of Eastern stylization and story-theatre inventiveness, and mount a twirling carnival of a production that would (and did) appeal to all ages without sacrificing O'Neill's original and serious intent.

The Sharon Playhouse production was obviously a taxing one for the busy young company—and less a finished, polished product than an intriguing, engrossing work-in-progress which may be even more fully realized hereafter. Accordingly, I had chosen to offer, rather than a strict review, a description of the experience to accompany the appended photographs. But I scrapped it when I received a letter from Dr. Fairservis that describes the physical production and its inception far more knowledgeably than I possibly could. The following is an abbreviated version of that letter, with bracketed editorial interjections to add a point or direct the reader's attention to a specific picture. --Ed.]

Eugene O'Neill's fascination with Asia was not unlike Walt Whitman's, Coleridge's or even Puccini's: a place where limitless time and vast wisdom combined to produce an exotic world; cruel, colorful, extravagant and mysterious—but above all human, delicate and harmonious. O'Neill's twist, whereby the Polos become the symbols of Western materialism, was a stroke of genius. It has always intrigued me that, as inaccurate and often fantastic as his vision of Asia was, there is no question that he sensed what materialism, Western-style, would do to age-old Asian traditions. As far as I know, he never travelled in Asia nor was he intimate with Asians; yet he saw Asians as individuals, not as the unfeeling masses, which seemed to mark much of the Western conception of the East in his day, and indeed still persists today.

The play, with its enormous cast and extravagant sets, would be impossible to do today. In reading both the play and the various biographical studies of O'Neill's writing of it, I suspected that he got caught up with the "Dramatic imagination" of Robert Edmond Jones and Max Reinhardt and the ideas of Gordon Craig. This plus the plush musicals of Ziegfeld and his contemporaries would certainly motivate a writer of O'Neill's imagination to attempt to overwhelm an audience with the teeming exotic Asia of his vision. In the sense that the Polos themselves described "Cathay" in wondrous terms to their contemporaries in medieval Italy, O'Neill has an authentic reason to create a spectacle. What a blow to an American audience, that ending of the play, when, after an evening in the exotic East—where at last Kukachin's fate would force Westerners to see her as a living, wonderful person—Marco Polo would
Flowers in a porcelain vase, a calligraphic scroll, some colored ribbons, a few instruments and as many passions: no more was needed. The props may have been of plywood and cardboard; the actors may not all have been of professional caliber; but the production captured more of the Orient than O'Neill himself had in his overblown, blockbuster extravaganza.
drive off with the audience as if nothing had happened! I can almost hear O'Neill's exuberant comment as he seized on this motif! In such motivations lies the life of the play!

It struck me that if one could eliminate the extravagance, pare down the overwrought and overlong speeches, sharpen the subplots by clarifying the dialogue, and make reasonably authentic the Asian background so that there was more of a documentary realism than a spectacle's "show" quality, the point of the play would emerge and O'Neill's real intention would come forth. An intention which is even more relevant today than in the 1920's.

The method I devised was based on the idea: supposing an Asian theatre troupe were to do the play. Such a troupe would minimize scenery and play instead on the imagination. The key figure here was the stage manager [a role that Dr. Fairservis devised and built into the production]. He is an actor's actor who describes the scenes partially in terms of the motivations for them and partially because he insists that the audience use their imaginations in all circumstances. He helps them; he claps his hands and a cardboard tree appears, borne by a suitably costumed stage hand; he claps again and, at this signal, off-stage voices are heard--as wind, as rain, as lamentation. Kukachin is discerned, and with a few ribbons moved in large geometric figures, symbolizes the leitmotifs of her fate. She stops and all the stage manager has to say is "the great desert of Persia" and we are there.

The stage manager moves throughout the play; he prepares us for Venice with a short poem about a city of boats, and then he and Marco Polo pantomime sailing on a gondola while a little orchestra of four pieces, Chinese style, imitates the sound of gondolas and Venetian guitars. [In the UPPER-RIGHT PICTURE, Marco (Charles Dietz) stands shakily in a skittish gondola as he bids farewell to his beloved Donata (Adrienne Krug).] Thus the stage manager moves the Polos across Asia from Acre to Xanadu via Persia, India, and Mongolia, and return. Cardboard camel and elephant cutouts, carried variously on the shoulders of the Polos, carry one from place to place. [The LOWER-LEFT PICTURE shows Nicolo (Chester Mors) and Marco; Maffeo (Stuart Zagnit) is reading his notes on the quaint customs and unpleasant traditions of the East they are traversing.]

Meanwhile the stage manager plays a dozen roles accompanied by six assistants, all of whom carry out their tasks with military precision. They are Persian rug dealers, dancing prostitutes, moving Hindu idols, Mongolian shamans. The great wall of China is a cloth which is unravelled by two assistants while the Polos are intrigued by a Mongolian acrobatic dance centered on the stage manager, who is anything he wants to be, from boatman, to Kublai's executioner, to the boatswain on a sea-going junk, to the Cathayan Chronicler. [In the LOWER-RIGHT PICTURE, the protean stage manager (R. C. Lawson) offers to behead Marco for the Emperor to determine whether Marco has an immortal soul.]

Even the cannon scene is arranged by the stage manager, whose assistant brings out a large cannon cutout in the Chinese style. When the cannon is fired--a drum beat; powder flies into the air from a
bellows placed in back of the cannon's mouth; the stage manager carries
a ball on a stick from the cannon's mouth to a paper wall held up by
two assistants who promptly fall into picturesque, exaggerated positions
as the wall is pierced by the cannon ball.

The stage manager also commands the authentic sounds of a muezzlein
from the minaret, the papal choir, the grunts and groans of camels and
horses, the eternal "Om" of India, and the leather smack of Mongol
horsemen; he leads the sea songs and the land songs, all of which were
especially written for the production by Eric E. Pourchot.

Thus with a cast of fifteen, the stage manager, imagination and the
introduction of authentic sounds, gestures, and even certain words of
Asian languages, we were able to present the play. It is true that I
wrote a part for the stage manager--mainly in blank verse, so that a
style which fitted more appropriately to Asian rhythms could be main­
tained; it is true that sharp cutting was done on much of the play
(particularly where O'Neill lost both his lyricism and his point) in
an effort to take full advantage of his dramatic situation; and it is
also true that music, sound and action "miniaturized" the scale of
the original. But what did come through, according to many who
commented, was Eugene O'Neill--speaking sharply, idealistically and
dramatically, as was his wont, without the fat and the frills...but in
the Asian setting I'm sure he wanted.

--Walter Fairservis

[What Dr. Fairservis didn't mention was the marvelous performances
he won from his actors: Charles Dietz as Marco, whose transition
from idealist to proto-ugly-American was both comic and touching;
R. C. Lawson as the agile and inscrutably smiling stage manager;
Dr. Fairservis himself as the quiet, all-wise Chu-Yin; and
especially Elf Fairservis as Kukachin. She captured the beauty and
ideality of the East, and even made Kukachin's seemingly uncharacter­
istic rage, when Marco's crass shell proves impenetrable, totally
believable. In the UPPER-LEFT PICTURE, she is bidding farewell to
Kublai her father (Brock Putnam) before sailing to Persia.

When I said that Marco Millions was a total delight to Tiziana
Beggiato, I was partially in error. She could not accept Kukachin's
dead, and her eyes filled with tears. We English-speaking oldsters
had heard Kukachin, in that memorable Prologue speech, say,"I loved
and died. Now I am love, and live." But this was a Kukachin of
such "intense fragility" (to quote Cummings) that our eyes dampened
too. --Ed.]

REVIEWS, REPRINTS AND ABSTRACTS.

1. THE TENOR GETS THE GIRL: DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS AS AN OPERA.

A new Composer-Librettist Conference, sponsored by the Eugene O'Neill
Theater Center in collaboration with the Opera Company of Philadelphia,
began its existence on the 10th and 12th of August, 1978, in the Palmer
Auditorium of Connecticut College in New London, with performances of an
opera version of Desire Under the Elms. Eight years in the making, the
opera has a score by New York City composer Edward Thomas, and a libretto by Joe Masteroff, author of The Warm Peninsula and the books of two Broadway musicals, Cabaret and She Loves Me.

This first foray into the field of opera by both artists was presented as a "staged reading" of a "work-in-progress." The cast of five principals and a chorus of twenty-four was accompanied by two pianos. Musical direction was by Paulette Haupt-Nolen of the Opera Company of Philadelphia. Joseph J. Krakora, executive vice president of the O'Neill Center and the originator of the idea for the Conference, served as stage director. The set was a two-level modular design by Fred Voelpel, and was praised by Christian Science Monitor critic Louis Chapin as "strikingly effective" (September 14, p. 19). He also liked the "flecks of projected light" that suggested the brooding elms—the work of lighting designer Arden Fingerhut.

The chorus was composed of local volunteers who were lengthily trained by Ms. Haupt-Nolen. But the five soloists were skilled professionals, which was fortunate since there were only nine days of rehearsal with the full cast before the first performance. The vocal range of each of the leads seems appropriate: Eben is a tenor (Michael Best), Abbie a soprano (Carol Todd), Ephraim a bass (William Fleck), and Eben's brothers both baritones (Sean Barker as Peter and Ken Bridges as Simeon).

The co-creators agreed that O'Neill had made their work relatively easy, and they in turn have respected his text. According to Krakora (New York Times, August 6, p. 45), "We have allowed the music and libretto to grow organically out of the play itself, which makes it very dramatic." "I really don't feel I've done very much," Masteroff reported in the same article. "I didn't make many changes because who is going to mess with O'Neill. I'm certainly not going to. O'Neill almost wrote an opera. All the grand passion was there.... It was just a matter of putting it into shape." Not that the play itself is shapeless; but an opera's texture and substance are technically quite different from those of a play. The librettist explained this belated discovery in the Sunday Record (Bergen/Passaic/Hudson Counties, NJ, August 27, p. F-17): "when I finished the first act and the music had been composed, we realized we had only one person singing at a time. That's the way O'Neill had written it. So I had to go back and look for possibilities for duets and larger ensembles."

While the New York Times had announced the work as "an American folk opera," Mr. Krakora claimed that the creators were "not after folk opera, but just opera, period." However, he did acknowledge its having "a particularly American sound, which is part of what we are after. We want to bring the popular musical theater and opera a bit closer together." Composer Thomas clearly agreed with this desire for popular appeal, stating in The Day (New London, July 18, p. 14) that his goal was "to re-affiliate people with opera instead of alienating them with incomprehensible atonal music."

The musical result met with the approval of Monitor critic Chapin: "Mr. Thomas, writing tonally though with rich melodic and chordal dissonance, has given the singers a number of fine and well-handled lyrical opportunities." Chapin's only major criticism involved the chorus. While he liked its "fine, gossipy song-and-dance job in the middle of the story," he felt it should have other things to do as well, "most particularly at the beginning and the end," where he seemed to
feel that the authors had been too faithful to the original. He found the opening duet by Simeon and Peter, and Ephraim's "sober soliloquy" at the end ("God's not easy ..."), insufficient for setting and sustaining "the mood of this high-powered story."

But these were, after all, workshop performances; opportunities to find out what works and what doesn't and needs changing; and Mr. Chapin was optimistic about the opera's future. Presumably the composer and librettist are currently revising it on the basis of the summer experience—the kind of experience for which the O'Neill Center is so justly famous. When revision is completed and the work is orchestrated, it will be, according to Krakora, "available to any company that wants to mount a full-scale production and put it into its repertoire." [Ed.]

2. "Honoring O'Neill" was the headline appended by the New York Times (November 26, 1978, Sec. II, p. 5) to a letter the newspaper received from Normand Berlin of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Mr. Berlin's letter deserves recording here.

"Twenty-five years ago tomorrow Eugene O'Neill died in a Boston hotel room. A few days earlier he muttered to his wife Carlotta: 'Born in a hotel room—and God damn it—died in a hotel room.' The statement captures his tone of voice, reveals the pressure of despair behind that voice, and reminds us of the agony of his major characters, in all of whom he lived.

"With Brutus Jones, he heard the beat of the tom-toms and touched the heart of that mystery; with Chris Christopherson, he cursed the fog and puzzled over 'dat ole davil, sea'; with the hairy Yank, he took a despairing view of mechanized American society; with Nina Leeds, he became 'sick of the fight for happiness'; with the mourning Lavinia and the hunted Orin, his conscience was tortured by the Furies of the past.

"In each of his late autobiographical plays, but especially in Long Day's Journey Into Night, probably the highest achievement in American realistic theater, O'Neill probed his personal agony again and again. To see, with Carolotta O'Neill, the playwright coming out of his study after a long day's bout with the four haunted Tyrones—'gaunt and sometimes weeping,' looking ten years older than when he entered the room in the morning—is to recognize the pain of his art and the price that confrontation with his own past demanded.

"A divided man, he wrote about divisions within men and women, which explains in part his reliance on masks and alcoholic reveries and pipe dreams and dope dreams. His was an intensely personal art, driving so deeply that it managed to range widely. Back in 1912, during his battle with tuberculosis, he made the fateful decision 'to be an artist or to be nothing,' and he never wavered from that decision. Writing inexhaustibly, he transformed his medium and expanded American theater, never compromising his integrity, always making the largest demands on his audience."
"Eugene O'Neill gave America a stature in world drama that it never possessed before he wrote those early sea plays performed on the rickety Provincetown boards—a stature it has rarely achieved since his death. He was our finest American playwright. This darkly impressive dramatist, this authentic man—born and dying in a hotel room, gone twenty-five years tomorrow—hovers over American drama like the elms of his brooding play."

3. Eugene K. Hansen, Professor of English at College of the Desert, Palm Desert, CA, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology from the School of Theology at Claremont, CA. The title of his dissertation was "Earth Mother/ Mother of God: The Theme of Forgiveness in the Works of Eugene O'Neill"—a project aimed at applying the method of theological criticism to the O'Neill corpus, and to show how the need of maternal pardon dominated much of the playwright's work. An abstract follows.

"Although the works of Eugene O'Neill are marked by a strong religious concern, theological criticism, or criticism from the standpoint of religion and literature, has largely ignored his drama. The reasons for this oversight of the country's greatest dramatist on the part of this twentieth-century critical movement are to be found in the nature and treatment of his religious concern.

"While only one play, Long Day's Journey into Night, is strictly autobiographical, virtually his entire work grows out of the author's personal experiences. The plays involve men who are on a quest, a quest which is seen variously but which always involves a spiritual need. Closer examination of the plays shows the close connection between women, mothers in particular, and the quest. Even those women characters who are wives to the heroes are seen by them as mothers. Behind these women ultimately can be found another mother, Mary the Virgin Mother of God of O'Neill's rejected Catholicism. What the heroes desire is a restoration of the relationship they once knew with such a Holy Mother, a restoration that amounts to forgiveness. Because the author's own mother, a devout Irish Catholic who left the convent to marry O'Neill's father, was deemed to have failed him by virtue of her morphine addiction, the playwright appears to take his revenge on all women, in life as well as in his art. Because of this, the search for forgiveness before the mother fails, and the mother is rejected. Symbolic of the renunciation and of the continuing search is the way the hero turns to other women: prostitutes. These prostitutes are often sage and even sexless, examples really of the Earth Mother. They, too, prove to hold no genuine pardon, no real consolation, for the heroes, and so the men must join those who had been better off had they never been born, the ones the author calls the Misbegotten: damned to live out lives they would rather not have lived at all.

"Thus, what O'Neill offers for the contemplation of his viewers is an aesthetic world in which the only hope is to be found within the art itself. His faith had failed him, so only his art could save. It is this concept, salvation by art, that has kept theological criticism away. That it should not is evident from the validity of the artistic world he offers for contemplation, a world not only personal but utterly human." —E. K. H.
NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES.

1. Scholars sleeping in the spare room once occupied by the real Mary Tyrone? Staged readings of Long Day's Journey in the actual room that provided its setting? Not as far-fetched as one might think. Such activities are envisioned for the Monte Cristo Cottage on Pequot Avenue in New London, now a National Historical Landmark, which is currently being restored to its original appearance by Sally Pavetti and Lois McDonald of the O'Neill Theater Center in nearby Waterford.

Readers of last January's issue of the Newsletter (pp. 12-13) already know of the restoration activity. An interview with Sally Pavetti in New York Theatre Review ("Using O'Neill's Plays to Restore Monte Cristo Cottage," October 1978, pp. 24-25) provides fuller coverage of her experiences during the reconstruction. Ms. Pavetti describes the house as an embodiment of James O'Neill's frugality: "Rather than build a new house from scratch, he chose instead to 'assemble' a residence. Located on the property when he bought it, were a store and dwelling, and a school house. Mr. O'Neill moved them together, and, to make the cottage a residence, added the necessary Victorian 'add-ons': the porch with its clover leaf bargework, the tower room with witch's hat roof, and the widow's walk." One of last summer's discoveries, found after the removal of a bookcase that had been built into the wall of the front parlor after the O'Neill's sold the house, was "the original wall switch which Mary Tyrone turns on at the end of the fourth act." And they have learned, with the aid of Eugene O'Neill's own pencil drawing of the house, "that the present kitchen was the dining room of Ah Wilderness! and that the actual O'Neill kitchen was a lean-to, fallen in disrepair by 1937." (The O'Neill's took their meals out and did not, like the Tyrones, have a cook.) A patch of the original pink wallpaper has been discovered in the second-floor hallway. It is exquisite, and its color matches the pink tiles of the front-parlor fireplace downstairs, suggesting to Lois McDonald that Ella O'Neill, despite the general public impression of her that has resulted from Long Day's Journey, had an active and alert eye in the decoration of the house.

Having taken my O'Neill seminar to visit the cottage last November 18, I can report that the exterior has been beautifully restored to its turn-of-the-century appearance--from its new shingle roof and restored bargework to the replacement of a section of porch that had been removed--but that the interior will still require much work before the house can become the living museum it will someday be. (The walls were about to be replastered, display cases half-filled the sitting room, and a leak had developed in the basement.) But a visit to the cottage is already an incomparable experience for anyone familiar with the plays set there, especially when one's guide is as genial and knowledgeable as Lois McDonald, who devoted half of her Saturday to showing us, not only the cottage, but the Harkness mansion in Waterford, and the neighboring Hammond estate with its ice pond, where James O'Neill's tenant "Dirty" Dolan watered his pigs. (Messrs. Harkness and Hammond are blended in the Harker of Long Day's Journey and the Harder of Moon for the Misbegotten; and it is a whimsical wink of fate that the Hammond villa should now house the headquarters of the O'Neill Theater Center!)
One's first impression of Monte Cristo is its smallness. Despite high ceilings in all but the sitting room, the first-floor rooms are surprisingly small. (The second-floor rooms, without the saving grace of height, could be even more oppressive, though several are sunny when the O'Neillian fog is not about.) But the surprise gives way to increased understanding when one considers how easily tempers could flare in such close quarters.

The O'Neill Theater Center has plans for the cottage to serve as a conference site for O'Neill enthusiasts from both theatre and academia. But that must await the completion of the renovation, which was hampered by last February's blizzard, which tore open doors, upended display cases, blew snow into indoor drifts, and left the cottage looking, according to Sally Pavetti, "like a bomb had hit the place." However, the blizzard is now long gone, the work is progressing admirably, and my class and I can attest to the insight and delight that a visit there can offer. --Ed.

2. The O'Neill section of the International Seminar on English and American Studies in Debrecen, Hungary (Sept. 8-11) is reported to have been successful. Papers were read by Virginia Floyd ("Eugene O'Neill: A Playwright's Progress--The Long Night's Quest") and Peter Egri ("The Uses of the Short Story in Chekhov's and O'Neill's Multiple-Act Plays"), and Jess Adkins spoke on the work of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Conn.

3. Anent the 1923 silent film version of Anna Christie starring Blanche Sweet, whose recent rediscovery in a Yugoslavian archive was reported on page 19 of the last issue of the Newsletter. The film, produced by Thomas Ince and directed by John Griffith Ray, was shown, sans its Russian subtitles, on New York City television station WNET's "Lost and Found" series last July. John J. O'Connor reviewed it in the July 21 issue of the New York Times (p. C-25):

"The O'Neill play was put through the inevitable process of adaptation, and the action is no longer confined to the New York waterfront and the coal barge captained by Chris Christopherson, Anna's father. The film opens in 'a small village in Sweden,' where 5-year-old Anna plays happily by the shore. Then a cut to Shanghai and a shot of her sailor father, drunk and broke, cursing the spell of the devil sea.

"After this, the scene set for 15 years later, 'time passes,' and the father learns that Anna is coming to visit him from her farm in Minnesota, where she was raised by cousins after her mother's death. The play proper begins, and O'Neill's brooding tale of promises and betrayal, purity and corruption unfolds—with some typical Hollywood adjustments, of course.

"Miss Sweet's Anna is created through an unusual combination of unaffected acting and stylized mime. Her entrance, carrying a bulky suitcase and wearing a hat pulled down over one eye, is a memorable arrangement of body gestures. As the father, George S. Marion (who played the same role in the later Garbo version of Anna Christie), settles for the caricature of the pathetic clown, his curious features almost frozen into a ridiculous mask. William Russell as Mat, the burly Irishman who courts Anna ('Anna--sure it's a nice name and suited to you'), is pure O'Neill, a perfect candidate for the title role in The Hairy Ape."
4. For the record. Persons interested in organizing an O'Neill event might do well to emulate the work of Dr. Martin Blank, who produced a six-week O'Neill Festival at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York (then Staten Island Community College), in September and October 1974. The festival included productions of Hughie and Long Day's Journey; films of Long Voyage Home, Anna Christie, Ah, Wilderness!, and The Count of Monte Cristo (the James O'Neill film of 1913); videotape interviews with Jason Robards, Colleen Dewhurst and Harold Clurman; lectures by Barbara Gelb, Elliot Martin and George White; seminars on the two productions conducted by Louis Sheaffer; and an exhibition of rare manuscript material, including O'Neill's Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes. "An inspiring program," wrote Elaine Boies in the Staten Island Advance (Sept. 19, 1974). May it inspire others!

5. WORK IN PROGRESS.

a. Ruth Selden, Vice President and Executive Editor of Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, has announced the imminent publication of a book of critical essays, Eugene O'Neill: World Citizen, which will appear in either the spring or fall of 1979. Edited by Virginia Floyd, the volume will contain the papers delivered at MLA sessions she has directed. Newsletter readers have read summaries of those papers in previous issues; soon they will be able to peruse them in full.

b. Robert E. Wilkinson of Villanova University is working on a Eugene O'Neill Handbook, which he hopes to complete "within the next three to five years." The Newsletter will be happy to forward any advice, caveats, suggestions, or just words of encouragement—or readers can write Dr. Wilkinson directly in Villanova, PA 19085. "I'm interested," he writes, "in knowing if there is a market for such a book, a market not in the economic sense but in the sense of readers interested in having a handy compendium of information about O'Neill."

c. Frank R. Cunningham of the University of South Dakota is completing a book on O'Neill and the Romantic Tradition. Professor Cunningham recently described his subject and approach: "I have thought for some years that O'Neillians have concentrated on the spiritual and religious themes in the works at the expense of the humanistic, psychological and philosophical ideas and motifs. I am particularly moved by the resemblances between Romantic myths (say, the rebirth of Coleridge's Mariner and Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh) and e. g. O'Neill's central character in his Ancient Mariner, Lazarus in LL, Juan in The Fountain, and even, to some extent, Larry Slade in Iceman. Following upon Morse Peckham and R. P. Adams' work in Romanticism, I have done some work on Lazarus and Dion Anthony as Romantic heroes, searchers for value in a potentially organic and meaningful universe. In short, I don't see O'Neill's world as 'depressing,' religion-bound, 'haunted,' to the extent that Engel, Bogard and others have. I agree with Trilling that Freud saw the connection between Romanticism and modern psychoanalytical thought; and I think I can demonstrate that O'Neill's view of man is considerably more spacious than the Naturalists or 'illusionists' have allowed so far. I suppose I am more in Carpenter's line of thinking, let
us say, than in that of any of the other prominent O'Neill scholars; excepting that I hope not only to show O'Neill as within the Romantic tradition, but also as positively affected by the thought of Freud, Adler, and 'humanistic' psychology generally." Readers of Professor Cunningham's previous essay in STC, "Lazarus Laughed: A Study in O'Neill's Romanticism," will rejoice that much more is yet to come. A portion of the study, dealing with Romantic motifs in The Fountain, will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.

6. RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

Travis Bogard, Richard Moody and Walter J. Meserve, The Revels History of Drama in English. Volume 8: American Drama. Methuen, 1978. [A. F. Sponberg, reviewing the volume in TLS (August 4, 1978, p. 886), while he lamented that American drama had still not found its F. O. Matthiessen, praised the first four chapters, by Bogard, which concern the "range and contexts of American drama," the fourth comparing O'Neill's work and Shaw's and relating O'Neill's oeuvre "to the world of ideas."]


Tom Scanlan, Family, Drama and American Dreams. Greenwood, 1978. (Contributions in American Studies, 35.)

7. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS.


Ile (dir. Camille David) and The Long Voyage Home (dir. Bart Whiteman), performed by Source at ASTA, 507 8th St. SE, Washington, DC, August 1978. [Richard L. Coe, reviewing the production in The Washington Post (August 19, 1978, p. E6), praised the group for its "probity" and "conspicuous integrity" in capturing the "rugged, granite quality" of the early O'Neill, and in honoring "the author's deliberate pace, a respect often denied older plays."]


(Tel. 617-742-8703.)
(A review will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.)


Mourning Becomes Electra. A five-part PBS television series, produced by New York's WNET, beginning on Dec. 6, 1978, and featuring Joan Hackett, Roberta Maxwell, Bruce Davison and Josef Summer. (A review will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.)


8. Patrick J. Nolan would appreciate any information, beyond the ready biographical data, about Charles S. Gilpin, the first Brutus Jones. The editor will happily forward any information.

9. Bargain hunters should note the current sale at New York University Press, Washington Square, New York, NY 10003. Through February 28, 1979, the price for Oscar Cargill and Bryllian Fagin's O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism is markedly reduced. The cloth edition, usually $13.50, is now $6; the paperbound edition, usually $4.95, is now $1.95.

PARTS OF BOOKS ON O'NEILL, 1966-78: ADDENDA TO MILLER

Jordan Y. Miller's Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic: A Bibliographical Checklist (2nd ed., rev., 1973) is so good that it needs very little help. But every secondary bibliography can use some degree of supplementing and correcting, and Miller's is no exception—especially since it is restricted to English-language material. In the course of my work on an international bibliography of modern drama studies, 1966-80, I have located many substantial discussions of O'Neill which, for one reason or another, are not included in Miller. The most important and elusive of these are parts of books. Listed below are fifty-odd chapters or other sections of books that might interest O'Neill scholars. I welcome addenda to the addenda.

--Charles A. Carpenter
PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

PATRICK BOWLES, of the Department of English at Marquette University in Milwaukee, is spending the current academic year at the Fondation des États-Unis, Cité Universitaire de Paris. His essay on "The Hairy Ape as Existential Allegory" will appear in a future issue.

CHARLES A. CARPENTER, Professor of English at SUNY-Binghamton, wrote a book on Shaw, compiled a Goldentree Bibliography on Modern British Drama, does annual bibliographies for Modern Drama, and writes articles on Pinter. His biggest project is an International Bibliography of Modern Drama Studies, 1966-1980, to be published c. 1983, of which the bibliography in this issue will be a part.

FRANK R. CUNNINGHAM, Associate Professor of English at the University of South Dakota, served as Senior Fulbright-Hays Lecturer in American Literature at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, Poland, in 1976-1977. His writing has appeared in Modern Drama, Ball State Univ. Forum, Sewanee Review, Saturday Review, James Joyce Quarterly, Literature-Film Quarterly and the New York Times Book Review. He is preparing a book on film director Sidney Lumet for Hall-Twayne's Theatrical Arts Series, and another on O'Neill and the Romantic tradition. He is represented on pp. 7-8 in the September 1977 issue of the Newsletter.

WALTER FAIRSERVIS, though he was raised in the theatre and has been active in professional theatre for most of his life, is by training and vocation an anthropologist with bases at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (where he is in charge of a new exhibit hall devoted to the peoples of Asia) and at Vassar College (where he teaches the anthropology of Asia).

MICHAEL HINDEN, Associate Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaches modern drama and has published a variety of essays on O'Neill (three are listed on p. 25 of the January 1978 issue of the Newsletter, which contains his essay, "Ironic Use of Myth in The Hairy Ape," on pp. 2-4), on other twentieth-century playwrights and on the nature of tragedy.

ROBERT McILVAINE is Associate Professor of English and chairman of the English Department at Slippery Rock State College in Pennsylvania. He has published articles, on such modern American authors as Wolfe, Stevens, Poe, Dreiser, Hemingway, Wharton, Cummings and Dos Passos, in such journals as American Literature, Journal of American Studies, The Explicator and Notes on Modern American Literature.
INDEX TO VOLUME II (sizable entries only)

I. ARTICLES.

Hamil, George. "Director's Notes for Where the Cross Is Made." [2, p. 12]
Kellman, Alice. "The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape: A Beginning and an End." [1, p. 9]
Morrison, Kristin. "Conrad and O'Neill as Playwrights of the Sea." [2, p. 3]
Wilkins, Frederick. "Provincetown Playhouse Redux--and Then Some!" [3, p. 4]

II. COMPILATIONS.

O'Neill plays directed by Jose Quintero. [1, p. 17]

III. SUMMARIES AND REVIEWS OF BOOKS, DISSERTATIONS, TALKS, AND ARTICLES PRINTED ELSEWHERE.

Egri, Peter. "The Use of the Short Story in O'Neill's and Chekhov's Plays." (MLA) [1, p. 8]
Gelb, Barbara. "A Touch of the Tragic." (Profile of Quintero in NYT Magazine) [1, p. 16]
"If Actors Had Their Choice of Roles." (NYT) [2, p. 19]
Isaac, Dan. "Matricide and the Late Plays of O'Neill." (MLA) [3, p. 17]
Josephson, Lennart. "A Role: O'Neill's Cornelius Melody" (rev. Frederick Wilkins) [1, p. 13]
Oliver, Roger. "From the Exotic to the Real: The Evolution of Black Characterization in Three Plays by Eugene O'Neill." (Forum) [2, p. 16]
Olsson, Tom. "O'Neill and the Royal Dramatic." (MLA) [1, p. 7]

IV. PRODUCTIONS REPORTED ON OR REVIEWED.

Anna Christie (1923 film rediscovered) [2, p. 19; 3, p. 26]
Desire Under the Elms (Gainesville, Fla., 1978; rev. Winifred Frazer) [2, p. 16]
Desire Under the Elms (opera; Waterford, Conn., 1978) [3, p. 21]
S.S. Glencairn: The Sea Plays (New Haven, Conn., 1978; rev. Frederick Wilkins) [1, p. 12]
Thirst (Madison, Wisconsin, 1978) [2, p. 16]
A Touch of the Poet (New York, 1977; rev. Roger Oliver) [1, p. 11]
Marco Millions (Sharon, Conn., 1978; rev. Frederick Wilkins) [3, p. 18]

V. MISCELLANEOUS.

Jensen, George. Progress report on editing O'Neill's letters. [2, p. 18]
Shaughnessy, Edward. "Hickey Greets a Hoosier." (meeting with Jason Robards) [2, p. 20]
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