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The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

January, 1980

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD: ENTERING THE O'NEILL DECADE

As the Newsletter follows America's greatest playwright into the 1980's, completing its third year and volume with the present issue, it is gratifying indeed to review the mass of information and insights, both penetrating and peripheral, that its existence has permitted to be shared by an ever-growing readership. Judging from your affirmative comments, I infer that the publication's *raison d'être* and value have been firmly established; and I will use your many helpful suggestions in striving to make subsequent volumes even richer and more valuable than the three now completed.

O'Neill's presence will loom large in the years ahead. The recently begun centennial efforts of the Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill and the growth in membership and activities of the Eugene O'Neill Society, whose first plenary session will be held at Tao House on December 29, are enough by themselves to suggest that the 1980's will be an O'Neill Decade. Add to them the growing number of books and articles on the playwright, and the increasing frequency of productions of his plays—the list of them in this issue is the longest yet—and one's excitement can really blossom! It will continue to be the Newsletter's goal, however arduous the task may become, to gather and relay all that is happening; to provide an avenue of communication among the various centers of O'Neill activity, both theatrical and scholarly; and to print as much as it can, about the playwright's life, times and work, that deserves publication but might not otherwise achieve it. The continued support of a dedicated and informed readership will make that goal realizable. Many thanks to you all.

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THE EMPEROR JONES:

O'NEILL, NIETZSCHE, AND THE AMERICAN PAST

The Emperor Jones has long been regarded as something of a limited experiment, a *tour de force*, a probing of the "racial unconscious," a study of atavism and Jungian archetypes, or a documentary of the "Negro mind." Even among O'Neill's more recent and sophisticated critics there is an uneasiness about the play. John Henry Raleigh plainly calls it a "Negro play."¹ Timo Tiisanen sees it as a play about "racial memories," a "study of atavistic fear."² Travis Bogard worries about its "essential racism" and dismisses the thematic interest of the work as basically that of an "ethnic study."³ I propose to argue that O'Neill intended to suggest a great deal more.

"The idea for *The Emperor Jones*," O'Neill reported, "came from an old circus man I knew ... [who] had been traveling with a tent show through the West Indies. He told me a story current in Haiti concerning the late President Sam. This was to the effect that Sam had said they'd never get him with a lead bullet; that he would get himself first with a silver one.... This notion about the silver bullet struck me, and I made a note of the story."⁴ In this fragment of a legend, I wish to suggest, beyond its immediate appeal as anecdote, lay the germ of O'Neill's idea for a tragic romance of American history. Its hero would be an Afro-American corrupted by the mercantile mentality of the whites who had enslaved his ancestors, and his flight from the natives on his West Indian island would symbolize a disintegrating culture confronting again the forest primeval that had always haunted its dreams.

My argument rests on the assumption that O'Neill's purpose in *The Emperor Jones* is best understood when theories of racial psychology are discounted and when the play is set in the context of his sustaining effort of the twenties—an attempt to invent a mythic framework for American history incorporating Nietzsche's insights concerning Greek tragedy and culture.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, a book that greatly affected O'Neill, Nietzsche writes that the Greeks, more than any other people, knew and felt the terrors of existence. In order to live at all, they invented the shimmering fantasy of the serene Olympians, chief among them the god Apollo. The same impulse gave rise to art, which, through the creation of pleasurable illusions, seduced the Greeks to a continuation of life. However, as a people the Greeks were fully aware of their subliminations and during their dramatic festivals succumbed once again to the self-oblivion of the Dionysian state:

Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man.... Now the slave is a free man: now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or "impudent convention" have fixed between man and man are broken.⁵

Through tragedy, a discharge of Dionysian insights in Apollonian images, the Greeks were able to transform their pessimism into passion and idealism. As a result, Athens in the fifth century B.C. gave birth to the greatest age of art and culture that the world had known. But then, with the drama of Euripides, Greek myth collapsed and the final stage of Greek culture appeared: the age of Socrates. A tragic and artistic culture found itself supplanted by a theoretical culture that Nietzsche refers to, slightly as "Alexandrian." Our "modern" culture is a continuation of that event, which began with the enthronement of rationalism.

What makes *The Emperor Jones* interesting in this connection is O'Neill's attempt to fuse a Nietzschean perspective with the myth of an American Eden. In O'Neill's view, expressed throughout his career but especially in his early work, the New World, stretching to the ocean with its endless forests, offered a promise of renewal (*Beyond the Horizon*), an opportunity for European culture to shed its masks and to regain its Dionysian energy and wholeness (*The Fountain*, *The Hairy Ape*). Yet through material acquisitiveness—not rationalism, as Nietzsche had it—the dream was dashed (*Maroo Millions*). Instead of reuniting man with nature and dissolving the boundaries separating one man from another, the American experience only reinforced the loneliness and competitiveness of the stark soul (*Diff'rent*, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*). The mania for owning things (*Desire Under the Elms*) divided individuals and reestablished under terms of new social relations all those hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or convention may fix between one human being and another. In the terror of that loneliness, made vivid by the backdrop of the great, dark forests, Americans grew evermore ingrown and repressive (*Mourning Becomes Electra*). Moreover, instead of rediscovering the possibility of tragic art as the robust manifestation of desperate culture (*The Great God Brown*), Americans fled for solace to melodrama or the sentimental stage.

In this context we can better understand why in the twenties O'Neill was always talking of getting back as far as it was possible in modern times to the Dionysian origin of theater.⁶ But from a Marxian perspective it might be argued that O'Neill's reliance on Nietzsche for a framework of historical analysis was unfortunate. For whatever its value as a literary document, *The Birth of Tragedy*—indeed a work of psychological insight—completely avoids economic discussion and thus ignores the extent to which the material basis of Greek society may have been responsible for the conditions of tragic art and the culture that produced it. No doubt the "terrors of existence" experienced by the Greeks must have been to some degree economic as well as metaphysical, but Nietzsche is uninterested in this aspect of reality. With Nietzsche it is important to underline that only "under the charm of the Dionysian"—that is, only through the experience of tragic art and its complement of pleasurable illusion—does the slave become a free man; only in contrast to quotidian reality (Greece was, after all, a slave-owning society) is the primal union between man and man affirmed. Despite the ontogenetic title of his essay, Nietzsche is more interested in the affects of tragedy than in its origin. As an aesthetician he is original and brilliant, but as a historian his focus is dangerously narrow. Slavery is not simply a psychological phenomenon.

By contrast, however, O'Neill's mythologizing of American history does at least contain a basis in economic and historic specificity. Although O'Neill claimed to be little interested in political problems and would have described himself as anything but a materialist, he was above all a moralist, and for the moralist—liberal or Marxist—there remains one glaring issue in American history that cannot be ignored: the bondage of an entire people, an economic institution located precisely in time and place. As an American dramatist O'Neill was determined to explore the psychological effects of such a perverse social arrangement on both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Thus, while *The Emperor Jones* may be described as O'Neill's first real attempt to deal with tragedy in Nietzsche's terms, the play at the same time documents his first attempt to deal conceptually with American experience as a whole. Indeed, like

⁶ Gelb, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

¹ *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), p. 107.

² *O'Neill's Scenic Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 107, p. 111.

³ *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 139.

⁴ Barbara and Arthur Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Delta, 1964), p. 438.

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. 36. Additional references are cited parenthetically in the text. O'Neill's debt to Nietzsche is well documented, though Nietzschean ideas have not generally been applied to *The Emperor Jones*. For an extended discussion of the influence of *The Birth of Tragedy* on O'Neill's plays of the twenties, see my essay, "The Birth of Tragedy and *The Great God Brown*," *Modern Drama* (September, 1973), pp. 129-140.

Yank Smith, Jim Harris, Ephraim Cabot, Dion Anthony, and other characters to follow, Brutus Jones is animated by Nietzsche's Dionysian pulse, a force surging beneath the twentieth century's mask of shrewdness and materialism. Like so many other O'Neill characters, Jones is at once an incarnation and a destroyer of this vital force. But what is significant here is that his journey on stage is one into history as well as into the unconscious, a flight backwards in time toward the uncovering of the original sin that, in O'Neill's view, marred the Edenic harmony of the New World. That sin was slavery: the possession of those who cleared the wilderness as well as of the wilderness itself. In this respect, then, O'Neill is not exploring in *The Emperor Jones* "the collective unconscious of the American Negro" so much as he is exploring the collective conscience of Americans. To O'Neill Jones is America almost in the same sense that Oedipus "is" Thebes. He therefore is a character invested with tremendous dignity and power, entrusted to embrace and purge a moral plague afflicting not simply his little island empire, but the spirit of the nation that corrupted him. Brutus, O'Neill begs us to remember, "has a way of carrying it off."

Jones's opening speech ("Who dare wake up de Emperor?"⁷) already is an invitation to unmasking, the first step into a spiritual enclosure from which there is no exit. Unlike Oedipus, Jones is wily but incapable of introspection. This may be a flaw in the play's structure, for it mars the action by eliminating the possibility of the protagonist acquiring complete self-knowledge. Yet O'Neill's goal is for his hero to spark a shock of recognition in the spectator. Toward this end Brutus is thrust into a series of encounters which eventually lead him back, like Oedipus, toward the hidden meaning of his past. In O'Neill's play Jones's "messengers" are his visions.

This progressive uncovering of identity is prefigured symbolically in the pattern of color imagery set forth in the opening scene. The entire setting is a projected wish fulfillment of Jones's power-craving self. His place is situated on "high ground with 'bare, white-washed walls,' white floor tiles, and a 'portico with white pillars.'" The other major color in the decor is the "eye-smitting scarlet" of the painted throne, a huge chair made of uncut wood. The palace carpet is bright scarlet; so are Jones's trousers. But red also is the color of the native woman's bandana handkerchief, Smithers' nose when colored by the "native rum," and the painted body of the witch doctor who accosts Jones in the forest. Scarlet, then, suggests the Dionysian phase of Jones's divided nature, linking him not only with a lost past, but with the vitality of the native community over which he presumes to rule. The extent to which Jones has estranged himself from that community is revealed by his having to ask Smithers, the white trader, the meaning of the drums that have awakened him. Smithers, who functions as the play's ironic chorus, has to tell him, "That means the bleedin' ceremony 'as started" (I, p. 14).

Jones's purpose is to outwit the natives by taking refuge in the forest. ("Trees an' me, we're friends.") He scoffs at the power of their heathen witch doctors ("De Baptist church done pect me and land dem all in hell"), although, business being business, "I'se after de coin, an' I lays my Jesus on de shelf for de time bein'" (I, p. 15). Should all else fail, he will bank on a myth of his own creation (invented earlier to keep the natives awed) that he can be killed only by a silver bullet. He has five lead bullets in his revolver "good enuff fo' common bush niggers—and after dat I got de silver bullet left to cheat 'em out o' gittin' me" (I, p. 14). At the very least he will die unbowed as befitting an emperor—in the height of style.

But no sooner does Jones enter "the Great Forest" than he is lost, the supposedly friendly trees now "enormous pillars of deeper blackness." "Can't tell nothin' from dem trees! Gorry, nothin' round heah looks like I evah seed it befo'" (II, p. 17). Jones is correct in more ways than he can understand, for

he has entered now a symbolic forest of the psyche, endowed, as it were, in Nietzsche's words, with the power to discharge itself ever anew in a dream world of Apollonian images. (In the stage directions for Scene IV, the forest specifically is granted volitional powers; it stands aside momentarily "to let the road pass through and accomplish its veiled purpose. This done, the forest will fold in upon itself again and the road will be no more.") What follows may have been suggested by this passage in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

In several successive discharges this primal ground of tragedy radiates this vision of the drama which is by all means a dream apparition and to that extent epic in nature; but on the other hand, being the objectification of a Dionysian state, it represents not Apollonian redemption through mere appearance, but, on the contrary, the shattering of the individual and his fusion with primal being. (BT, p. 65)

As Jones begins to hallucinate, his mask of Apollonian control progressively is shattered, and Dionysian ritual takes over. "Woods," the Emperor asks defiantly, "is you tryin' to put somethin' ovah on me?" (II, p. 20).

Equally important, the forest into which Jones has wandered is symbolically American, a mythic testing ground toward which characters have been drawn since the earliest days of our national literature. As John Henry Raleigh points out, O'Neill is very much an American writer, and for American writers the wilderness is mythical.⁸ It is always in the forest where masks are shed, where truth breaks out. The play may be set in the West Indies, and its conception may be Nietzschean, but along with Cooper, Hawthorne, Twain and Faulkner, we have visited this place before. (It can be said in passing that O'Neill's symbolic portrait of a self-absorbed protagonist, alone in the forest, cut off from the community and searching for the meaning of experience, is prefigured in Cooper's "Leather-Stocking" novels, Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," and Henry Fleming's flight in *The Red Badge of Courage*; while it also anticipates Nick Adams in "Big Two-Hearted River" and Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* crashing through the woods in pursuit of his strayed architect.) For O'Neill the forest represents the loss of self-assurance. It contains also the glimmer of a golden past.

When Jones fires his pistol at the first apparition, "The Little Formless Fears," he initiates a pattern that contributes directly to his inevitable downfall. Each time he fires he illustrates a refusal to face truth. In this lies the great irony of the plot, for Jones's determination not to submit to the revelations of his visions only drives him deeper into the forest and brings him closer to the brink of panic. At the end Jones wastes his silver bullet, the symbol of his myth-making ability, his creative imagination, by firing at the apparition of the crocodile—the final clue to his identity. That croc, O'Neill suggests, is the symbolic epiphany of the false god Mammon, upon whose altar Jones has sacrificed throughout his life: "the long green," a perversion of the green life force of the forest. "I gives it to 'em an' I gits de money. (With a grin) De long green, dat's me every time!" (I, p. 7). In the end the natives mimic their emperor's ingenuity and hoist him with his own petard. As Lem tells Smithers: "Lead bullet no kill him. He got um strong charm. I cook um money, make um silver bullet, make um strong charm, too" (VIII, p. 34).

Jones's journey into the forest, then, is a journey of missed opportunities, a series of failures to discover the reality of his condition. But as the dream sequences progress, his personal encounters are transformed into a ritual pattern of communal significance. His encounter with Jeff, the Pullman porter, is a first step in this direction. Jones had killed Jeff in a dice game in which Jeff had cheated for "the long green." Jones, too, has cheated the island's natives for "the long green," but he "remurders" Jeff's apparition, repressing its significance rather than confronting it. In the following scene he reenacts his error by firing at the white

⁷ *Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Modern Library, 1954), *The Emperor Jones*, Scene I, p. 6. Additional references to the play are cited parenthetically in the text.

⁸ See Raleigh's chapter, "O'Neill as an American Writer," in *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, op. cit. Oddly, Raleigh does not consider *The Emperor Jones* in his otherwise excellent discussion of O'Neill and history in the same volume.

overseer of the chain gang instead of pausing to determine what he too may have meant to the formation of his character. The "white devil" actually is a key to Jones's will to power, his "Emperor Self"; but again he simply fires at the apparition.

In the next scene, perhaps the most important in the play, Jones's stature as a communal representative grows clearer. He stumbles into a large circular clearing in which a slave auction is being held, the ghostly figures of the scene all dressed in Southern costumes of the 1850's. "The planters raise their fingers, make their bids. They are apparently all eager to possess Jones," the stage directions tell us—thus laying bare the key to the whole enterprise. As O'Neill has written elsewhere:

I'm going on the theory that the United States, instead of being the most successful country in the world, is the greatest failure.... Its main idea is that everlasting game of trying to possess your own soul by the possession of something outside of it, too. America is the prime example of this because it happened so quickly and with such immense resources. This was really said in the Bible much better. We are the greatest example of "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"⁹

Jones is an embodiment of that original violation of America's communal spirit, the introduction of slavery (the vilest manifestation of the profit motive) to a fresh and vital land. In O'Neill's eyes he is both victim and victimizer, for he has reenacted that original violation by enslaving the natives of his West Indian empire. He has tried to redeem his wounded selfhood by adopting the mask of his oppressors, but in thus attempting to possess his soul, he has corrupted the vital force sustaining it—beyond redemption. Here Jones attains at least a glimmer of recognition, for he seems on the verge of beginning to understand the meaning of his past: "I know I done wrong, I know it!" (V, p. 26). Yet once again he panics and fires his revolver at the Planter and the Auctioneer.

In the final scenes, however, Jones's power-craving fantasies are destroyed, and he is transformed into an agent of ritual purification compelled to submit to the mysterious Force in the forest that is determining his destiny. Stripped to a breech cloth, he mingles his own voice with a chorus of slaves chanting in the hold of a ghostly slave ship, divorced from time, drifting forever toward a New World yet untainted. This time he does not fire. The apparition fades of its own accord, but Jones no longer may be considered a free agent. "The expression of his face is fixed and stony, his eyes have an obsessed glare, he moves with a strange deliberation like a sleepwalker or one in a trance" (VII, p. 30). He has evidently reached his final destination, an altar at the foot of a "sacred tree" by the edge of a great river.

Here the Congo Witch Doctor materializes and summons Jones by his motions "to allay the fierceness of some implacable deity, demanding sacrifice" by joining in his dance (VII, p. 31). Still hypnotized, Jones participates with Dionysian frenzy until "the whole spirit and meaning of the dance has entered into him, has become his spirit" (VII, p. 32). At the climax of the dance the Witch Doctor offers Jones salvation by commanding him to sacrifice himself to the force embodied by the crocodile—and then the spell is broken, the journey truncated. In anguish Jones cries out to Jesus to save him, but the white man's god proves false. "Immediately in answer to his prayer, comes the thought of the one bullet left him" (VII, p. 32). The silver bullet reserved for his own suicide thus is fired at the croc, and, helpless now, robbed of his dignity, Jones is caught and murdered by the natives. They find him at the place where he originally entered the forest; apparently he had gone round in a circle.

At this point one might object that if O'Neill truly intended the play to represent a criticism of American values, he could have made Jones a more acquiescent, sympathetic figure, a victim rather than a self-destroyer. But from his earliest one-act plays

up to and including his late autobiographical masterpieces, O'Neill remained incapable of writing thesis drama. "The tragic alone," he would argue, "has that significant beauty which is truth. It is the meaning of life—and the hope."¹⁰ By "the tragic" O'Neill clearly meant that drama of character (not situation) in which disaster, representative and communally significant, stems from excessive power-craving and misguided strength (not from excessive weakness and naivety). In a series of plays including *The Emperor Jones*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Great God Brown*, *Marco Millions*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *The Iceman Cometh*, and *A Touch of the Poet*, O'Neill sought to create a grouping of American characters who, through their own self-aggrandizement and visions of "Manifest Destiny," illustrate the tragic pattern of American life.

To be sure, even when judged on its own terms as an American tragedy, *The Emperor Jones* is not a fully realized success. Jones lacks the power to articulate his vision, and despite the play's symbolic bravura, his journey fails in its ultimate endeavor to unite a fragmented community and spark a rekindling of the spirit. Another corrupt emperor (probably Lem) will take Brutus' place. In this sense O'Neill's design falls short of emulating the lofty vision of the Greeks. The tragic hero, Nietzsche writes, "though every law, every natural order, even the moral world may perish through his actions, ... [also produces] a higher magical circle of effects which found a new world on the ruins of the old one that has been overthrown. That is what the poet wants to say to us insofar as he is at the same time a religious thinker" (BT, p. 68). O'Neill does not pretend to offer himself as a religious thinker, and his sense of pessimistic irony prevents him, at this early stage of his career, from arriving at any positive affirmation. It could be said, too, that O'Neill's vision of American history, replete with a lost Eden and original sin, is overly simplistic.

But it is a mistake to impute to the play a racial intention that O'Neill never would have endorsed. Granted, there are uncomfortable moments when filaments of stereotyped speech enlance the monologues. The play is obviously a work of the early twenties and might have been written differently (for example, without dialect) at a later date. Still, I have tried to demonstrate that for O'Neill *The Emperor Jones* explores not racial psychology—if by that term one means "black psychology" as opposed to "white"—but the nature of the American past. Like Yank of *The Hairy Ape*, who speaks a working-class, "white" dialect, Brutus was intended to represent all of us. "Yank," O'Neill wrote, "is really yourself, and myself.... But, apparently, very few people seem to get this. They have written, picking out one thing or another in the play, 'how true' it is. But no one has said, 'I am Yank. Yank is my own self.'"¹¹ So it is with Brutus Jones, the first in a line of tragic protagonists of several races and nationalities who, in O'Neill's eyes, share in common the American fault: desire to possess. It is interesting to note that at his death O'Neill left unfinished a cycle of plays about American history the title of which, *A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed*, indicates the theme that most preoccupied him. *The Emperor Jones* prefigures and possibly encapsulates that great, unwritten project. It would be a pity if the play were lost to the American stage as the result of misperceived intentions.

--Michael Hinden

¹⁰ Quoted in Oscar Cargill, N. Bryllion Fagin and William J. Fisher, ed., *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism* (New York: New York University Press, 1963), p. 104.

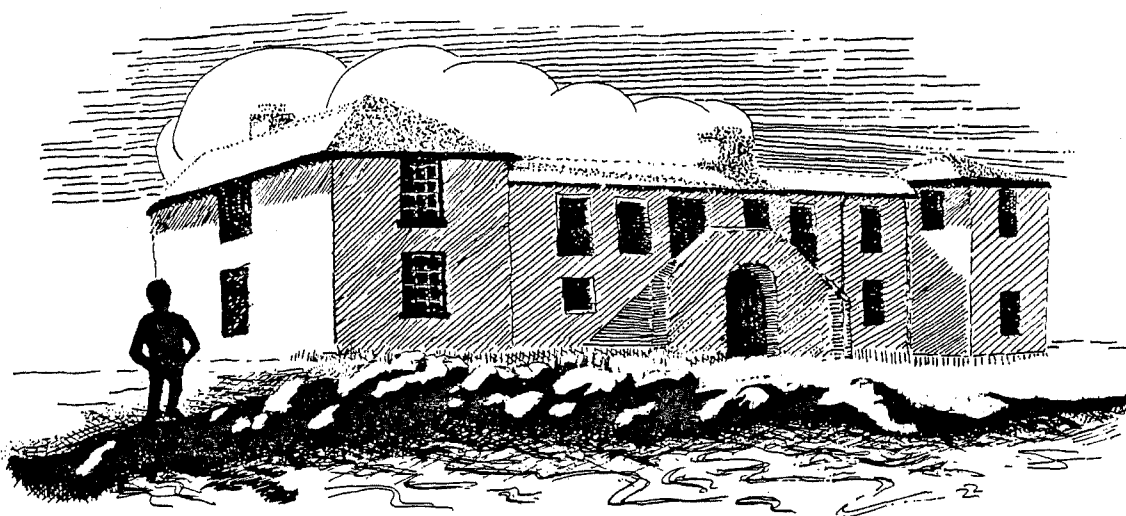
¹¹ Quoted in Toby Cole, *Playwrights on Playwriting* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 236.

⁹ Quoted in Barrett Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays* (New York: Dover, 1947), pp. 152-153.

SPITHEAD REVISITED, 1979

Eugene O'Neill's Bermuda home during the late 1920's was Spithead, a pink sandstone bay-side villa with a long view of Hamilton Harbor some three miles away. I managed an evening's journey into night there after a sweaty Sunday sunset in a guest house opposite Hamilton Harbor, on the same side as Spithead in adjoining Paget Parish. [Spithead is in Warwick Parish. --Ed.] Spithead is not open to the public *anytime*.

Dressed in my most correct tourist brochure bittersweet chocolate sportcoat, yellow shirt, orange medallioned dark-brown tie, and yellow cotton pants, I set out along Harbor Road, a winding grey-coral-lined speedway for mopeds and mini-cars. The sole walker at a dangerous hour. Sunset.



Three miles and an hour later I was at the gatehouse to Spithead, drenched with sweat. Humidity: 80%. Temperature: 80° in the shade. Time: late July. I left a postcard of Brookline, Massachusetts, in the basket used as a mailbox on the front porch bannister of the main house and walked back up the heavily parked circular carriage drive toward the gatehouse, now a separate home. But neighbors told me They—the Blucks, the present owners—were out on the motorized sailboat which we could see skimming the harbor a few yards off the veranda dock to the right of the house. I went back and stood on the dock with two dogs sniffing me, one wailing weakly that I was intruding, and waited for the boat to dock.

When it did, a young crew disembarked. Celia Bluck-Waters, daughter of the family, was entertaining a group of Bermudan, English, and American friends with a chartered cruise of the harbor. It was after 9 p.m. and I was summarily invited to a veranda/dockside dinner of cold fried chicken, salad, white wine, and the obligatory Bermudan swizzle (high-powered pink lemonade, heavy on the gin cum rum). Everyone unwound and reminisced about the 60's.

It was now ten years later. Celia had been at Radcliffe in 1968 while I was active in Cambridge radical newspapers. Noel Dyer, Jr., the only black Bermudan present (with white wife) had been in the RAF in the Near East together with his Midlands UK friend who was returning to England the next day. A friend of Celia's was returning to Vermont the next

morning. I was the oddity. Everyone admitted to not liking O'Neill's plays or his personality. Eventually Noel and the other RAF'er and I played TV Dogfight on a small black and white TV set in the kitchen. (Unfortunately, I won twice. I admitted that I can't even drive, let alone fly . . . why else did I walk to Spithead?)

The setting is better suited to F. Scott Fitzgerald now. The Blucks are Bermuda's premier Dutch antique dealers, so unapproachable that Spithead is never open to the public; and only open to Bermudans during Gardens Week, a charitable fundraiser for "may-basket" charities in a tax-free Bermuda. All of this according to L.J. "Robbie" Robinson, former hotelier, now tourguide for American International Tours' daylong \$20 cruise, leaving from Hamilton Harbor daily.

I had broached the unbroachable. I was even given a minor tour of the rooms and views. Very little of O'Neill remains in any sense as a presence in Bermuda. Author's queries regarding O'Neill sent to all Bermuda papers—the *Royal Gazette*, *Mid-Ocean News* and *Bermuda Sun*—were not printed. But Robbie Robinson keeps O'Neill's name and fame alive as the boat passes Spithead in daylight, and he is as ambiguous a character as Graham Greene's pseudo-vacuum-cleaner-salesman-cum-spy in Cuba: O'Neill's solo barker in Bermuda, circa 1979. (Write him c/o Box 230, Hamilton, Bermuda. He'll be glad you did.)

--Bill Costley

--Drawing by Marshall Brooks

JACK LONDON AND *THE HAIRY APE*

Robert McIlvaine's convincing article in the January 1979 issue of *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter* ("Crane's Maggie: A Source for *The Hairy Ape*," pp. 8-10) shows that Yank's low-down but poetic lingo owes something to the rough talk Stephen Crane created for Jimmie in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1896). Like the notorious Jimmie, Yank is a defiant survivor of a brutalized childhood; both characters, as McIlvaine notes, show a potentiality for awareness that has been crippled by New York's worst environments. Further parallels in the two works that McIlvaine observes are the use of ape imagery and of the same final words of rejection—"Go to Hell"—which send both Maggie and Yank to suicide. I would like here to suggest another important influence on *The Hairy Ape* (1922), that of Jack London's autobiographical novel, *Martin Eden* (1909), which is closely related to O'Neill's central concerns as well as to his characters and plot. It was a natural influence, for O'Neill had to a degree modeled himself on Jack London, an early hero—the red-blooded sailor, romantic adventurer, gifted and self-made writer, and revolutionary socialist.

Both *Martin Eden* and *The Hairy Ape* center on rugged lower-class seamen (although Martin is an untaught genius, far surpassing barbaric Yank in awareness) who painfully discover that they do not "belong" in the bourgeois society that despises and exploits the likes of them. Each is challenged by an anemic princess in white; a sexless, protected daughter of wealth. Martin wills to improve and educate himself so that he can worthily win his goddess. Yank, in contrast, vows to destroy the pale she-ghost who had in revulsion termed him a "filthy beast." Despite these differing quests, both men suffer disillusionment, disorientation, disintegration. Both are rugged individualists who reject conformity to socialism as well as to capitalism, and who finally reject life (i.e., a frustrated life of mere existence) in ways that symbolize return to nature—Martin drowning himself by dropping from a ship (bound for the Eden of the South Sea islands); Yank forcing open the zoo cage to release the gorilla that crushes him in an "embrace."

Before both protagonists reject, by snuffing out life, a meaningless existence, they are offered the same alternative to the unnatural bourgeois system—the socialist alternative, sympathetically presented by both writers, especially by London. While both protagonists *reject* the socialists, the implications of their rejections are different, for London believed in revolutionary socialism whereas O'Neill had moved toward a dark mysticism of evolution and the life force.

O'Neill, who had voted for Eugene Debs and early considered himself a socialist, is sympathetic to his socialists, though not so much to the sloganeering Long, who reveals the class struggle to Yank, as to the open and aboveboard IWW men who reject Yank's wish for a conspiracy of violence. But he has Yank (his Everyman) express the basic human problem as alienation from nature rather than as class struggle due to bourgeois exploitation, for human nature, in the eyes of Yank and his creator, is in a transitional stage of evolution, having lost clear guidance from instinct without having perfected thought—a painful diagnosis recalling Theodore Dreiser's naturalism.

The Hairy Ape derives from O'Neill's questionings about what might have caused the suicide of his friend Driscoll, a tough, proud stoker who had leapt from his ship to drown (ironically, Martin Eden's way of suicide). On the other hand, *Martin Eden*, originally titled *Success*, is a carefully elaborated, at times overwritten, warning that both bourgeois success and Nietzschean individualism (considered here as the lonely achievement of the true philosopher, scientist or artist) are paths of death for a gifted member of the working class who is drawn to the false idols of "culture," "refinement," "love," "success," "art" and "achievement," as these are defined by bourgeois society. Martin's rejection of the compassionate, revolutionary movement of socialism is a fatal error: that is London's warning to his readers.

Both London and O'Neill were torn by conflicts between their marked individualism and their social concern and sympathy for the masses (or, in Nietzschean terms, their pity for the weak, the herd). Caught between Nietzsche and Marx, Jack London favored Marx, worked hard for the socialist cause, and yet, like his Martin Eden, ended in depression and suicide. O'Neill took a different philosophical road. In her excellent study, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (New York, 1962), Doris Alexander has shown how O'Neill, influenced by the "life force" preached by Bernard Shaw (pp. 95-96) and more especially by the Hindu and Buddhist mysticism of his friend Terry Carlin, resolved "the conflict between Marxian socialism and Nietzschean individualism in favor of individualism. Through his friendship with Terry Carlin, Eugene O'Neill became a philosophical anarchist and a confirmed mystic" (p. 214). Thus, despite the parallels in character, conflict and resolution, *The Hairy Ape* and *Martin Eden* reach differing conclusions.

Young, poor, rough, gifted Martin Eden's initial illusion is that there is a "finer life"; a life he has read about in romantic fiction; a life of culture, art and refinement lived in beautiful great houses by marvelous, intelligent, kind people. People not like the likes of him, unless he prove himself worthy by educating himself; by improving his appearance, speech and manners; by earning and achieving a signal success. In love with romantic love, the infatuated Martin mistakes a repressed, uselessly educated, wealthy girl, Ruth, for a goddess of beauty, culture and purity whom he will worship and serve with all his intense genius and energy. She will improve and inspire him, until he is worthy of her and her family. Unlike Yank, who fights the bourgeoisie, Martin's initial wish is to join them after proving his worthiness to do so. A true student, he drives himself into literature, science, philosophy; he proves himself in debates with college people, going so far ahead intellectually that he begins to look down on the bourgeois as being timid conformists—a conforming herd like the working class; not brave, original thinkers like his new found heroes, Herbert Spencer and Nietzsche. But Martin does not see through Ruth,

his goddess on a pedestal, until she and her family reject him on the basis of a newspaper's inaccurate and malicious description of him as a "red" when in fact he had attacked the socialists to their faces as a slavish and cowardly herd.

When disillusionment with middle class "love" strikes him, Martin is devastated and has nothing to live for, even though suddenly all his literary ships come in and his writing is acclaimed and bought by everyone. Literary success proves a nightmare of commercialism, lionizing and backbiting. He cannot return to his roots in the lower classes, having read too many books and changed too much. Nor can he be a simple sailor again, as his friend Brissenden urges him. Consumptive poet and reluctant socialist, Brissenden argues for socialism as a way of life: even if socialism be a lesser evil, only preferable to "the man on horseback," even if it limit individualistic genius in some ways, it is the way of compassion and humanity. Brissenden's arguments are too late for Martin, and Brissenden's suicide seals his despair. Liz, the working-class girl who, in contrast to Ruth, loves Martin for himself and offers to live with him without marriage, speaks the final truth to him: he has become "sick in the head." London has him make the final discovery that if he has rejected socialism, neither is he a Nietzschean superman, for he cannot rise above compassion for the weak and the poor, represented by his drudging, wasted sister. Jack London warns us that the charms of genteel culture, of romantic love, of personal success, even the nobler heroic dream of being the lonely genius who serves beauty or truth—that all of these are false and fatal ways. Martin's illusions, like Yank's, lead to nothingness, but Martin should have chosen otherwise.

Yank, too, moves toward disillusionment, but there is not the feeling that Yank could or should have made other choices. O'Neill has Yank begin with the illusion that he *belongs*, as the self-proclaimed leader of rugged men who do the elemental work of feeding the mighty boilers which provide the power to move the modern world. When Mildred Douglas, the pale, indelicate daughter of the owner of Nazareth Steel, recoils from him as from a "hairy ape," he is enraged, but his efforts at violent revenge upon her and her class prove impotent. In a parody of Rodin's "Thinker," he sits and ponders, a baffled brute. Could it be that the old sailing days were really better because closer to nature, as the old drunken poet Paddy says? Are he and the likes of him the slaves of the effete but well-protected rich? How can he strike out against them? Is he an ape-man? When the socialists reject him as violent, ignorant and conspiratorial (O'Neill has Yank get his distorted picture of socialists as bomb throwers from the tirade of a right-wing senator), he in turn rejects socialism as a pathetically limited solution, for the problem is not "three meals a day," but *belonging*—Yank is homeless on earth. Shedding his illusions of power and pride, finding himself a feeble thinker and an unnatural ape, he stoically chooses extinction.

I leave it to O'Neill scholars to debate whether *The Hairy Ape* is not O'Neill's somewhat reluctant farewell to what Mark Twain described, upon finishing Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, as "man's last and best dream, socialism." To a degree O'Neill had experienced the same conflicts as Jack London and shared London's quest: "Let me glimpse the face of truth. Tell me what the face of truth looks like." I think *The Hairy Ape* owes something to the truth as Stephen Crane viewed it in *Maggie*; much to the truth as Jack London saw it in *Martin Eden*; and more to the truth Eugene O'Neill saw in his experiences, questionings and meditations.

--Joseph Jurich

THE HAIRY APE GOES TO DARTMOUTH

The Dartmouth Players Repertory Company's 1979 summer season at the Hopkins Center in Hanover, NH, featured, from August 8 to 24, a splendid production of *The Hairy Ape*. The dedicated teamwork of a group of skilled theatre artists—two of whom are represented in articles following this report—turned an all-student performance into a memorable and revealing dramatic experience. Lighting, sound, sets, costumes, and coordinated stage movement—especially the kinetic energy in the forecabin and stokehole; the cinematic flow between scenes; and the choreographed mannerisms of the dancing, half-masked aristocrats on Fifth Avenue—combined to create a unified impact both cerebral and visceral.

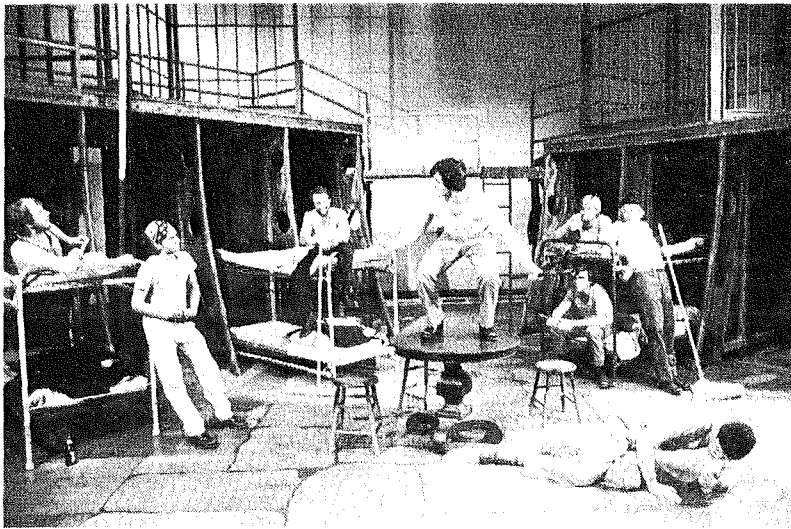


Figure 1

As the accompanying rehearsal shots by Stuart Bratesman may suggest (figures 1 and 4), the stokers looked neither sea-seasoned and coal-smudged nor old and bent from labor; but they handled O'Neill's challenging dialects effectively, and the lengthy Scene-One aria of Paddy (figure 4)—uttered to harmonica accompaniment with all action temporarily frozen around him—was a moving lament for a happier (though probably illusory) past.

Mark L. Lotito (figures 2 and 3) was outstanding as Yank. A performer capable of both gruffness and lyricism, both brawny aggressiveness and balletic grace,

he created a protagonist in whom one could believe and for whom one could feel great pity when, after ejection from the IWW headquarters in Scene Seven, he wills his own death by entering the gorilla's cage and inviting the embrace of a killer (another "member of dis club") who will go on, briefly, to wreak the revenge that Yank had found himself incapable of carrying out. When he arrives at the zoo, he discards a bag of peanuts that he had purchased—throwing it away as he will also throw away the unspent portion of his life. After the gorilla deposits Yank's crumpled form in the cage, bangs the door shut, and prepares to exit, it picks up the discarded bag, and the last sound we hear—in a production rich with vocal and electronic sounds by George B. Todd—is the cracking of one last peanut. Undeniably a directorial interpolation, but a most evocative one.

Despite several stylized moments—the freezing of all other actors during Paddy's aria, the use of slow motion in the ejection of Yank from the IWW office and his hosing at the end of the prison scene, the aura of ritual in the bandaging of hands and Yank's presentation of

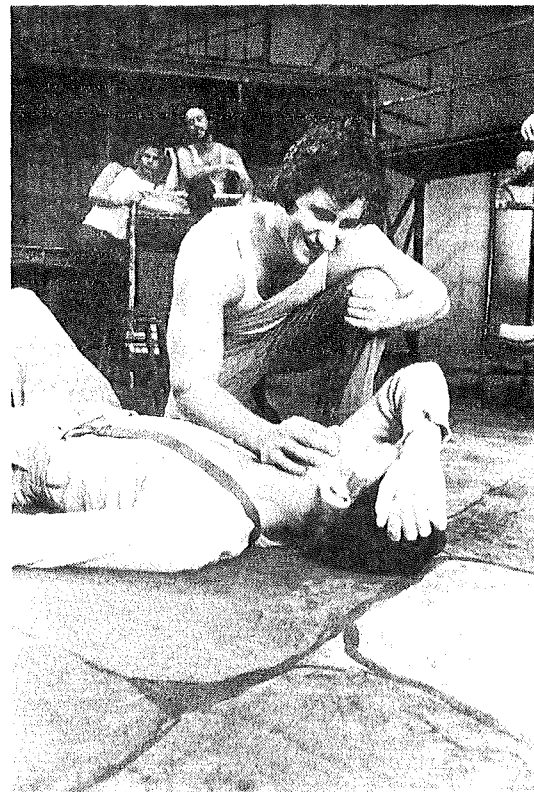


Figure 2

shovels to his subordinates in the stoke-hole scene, and the half-masks and grotesque choreography for the Fifth Avenue crowd—the production emphasized the realistic rather than the expressionistic elements of the script. There was, for instance, no emphasis on the "cramped space" of the stokehole and no "brazen, metallic" choral echoes of Yank's words. Still, symbolic tableaux underscored thematic points, as in Yank's being stationed, in Scene One, between Paddy (spokesman for the past) and Long (activist for the future), and in his tormented position on stairs at stage-right in Scene Five, half-way between the masked dancers above and below him—a tragic figure, totally lost and alone.

John Carver Sullivan's costumes—especially the half-masks worn by the IWW members, the aristocrats, and Yank's fellow prisoners on Blackwells Island—added immeasurably to the production's impact, as did the lighting of Stephen R. Woody. I remember particularly the dark blue of the cyclorama, against which the omnipresent and oppressive overhead girders were starkly silhouetted; the red glow from the furnaces reflecting on the stripped torsos of the stokers; and the one small

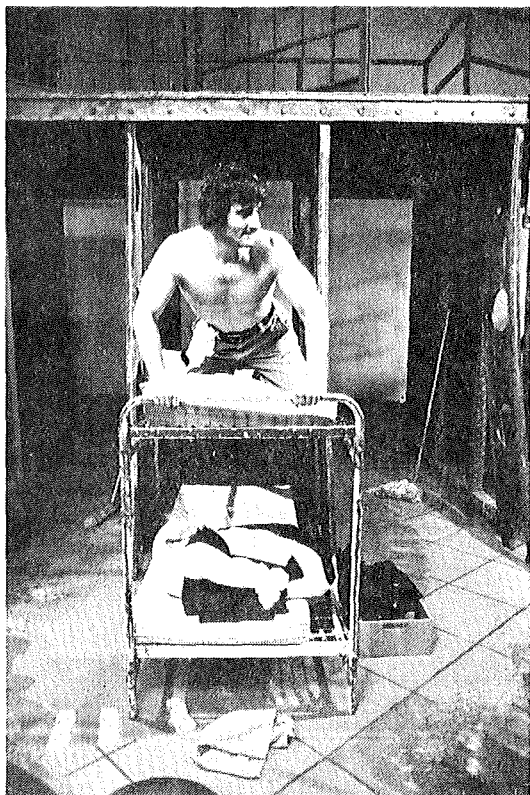


Figure 3

but glaring light suspended above Yank's prison cell, spotlighting the dejected outcast as he listens to the reported speech of Senator Queen.



Figure 4

Congratulations to everyone involved in this memorable production. The following essays by director Michael E. Rutenberg and scenic designer Bernard J. Vyzga, plus a portfolio of Mr. Vyzga's drawings for the eight sets he constructed, will give a fuller insight into how it was done and the concept of the play's protagonist that provided its momentum.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

P.S. One apology to Mr. Vyzga: the slide of his drawing of Scene Two was reversed by the printer (i.e., the figures of Mildred and her aunt *should* appear at the viewer's *left*), and time limitations prevented my sending the slide back for correction. But I couldn't bear to renege on my promise that the Newsletter would enter the 1980's with a burst of color—pale though it be, and in contrast to the brilliance of the artist's original water-colors. --Ed.

BOB SMITH AIN'T SO DUMB: DIRECTING *THE HAIRY APE*

[Michael Rutenberg directed the Hopkins Center production of *The Hairy Ape* in Hanover, NH, last August. The following is an excerpt from the director's log dealing with the character of Yank. --Ed.]

Who is Bob Smith? Most O'Neill scholars would be hard-pressed to recognize the name. Even Smith can't quite remember who he is.

SECRETARY. What's your name? I'll make out your card.

YANK. (*confused*) Name? Lemme tink.

SECRETARY. (*sharply*) Don't you know your own name?

YANK. Sure; but I been just Yank for so long—Bob, dat's it—Bob Smith.

But Bob Smith ain't so dumb. A lummoX can't go through an identity crisis; it takes intelligence. Still, because of O'Neill's description of the man, plus his Brooklyn accent and what other characters say about him, the impression is that Yank is a dolt. And audiences don't empathize with blockheads. The lack of audience involvement with Yank has plagued the play from its inception. O'Neill has said, "Yank is really yourself, and myself. He is *every* human being. But, apparently, very few people seem to get this."¹

The essential question for the director, then, is how to find a way to make the audience identify with Yank. A closer look at O'Neill's text provides the answer. On first examination, the doltish image remains with us. O'Neill's description reads as follows:

YANK is seated in the foreground. He seems broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest. They respect his superior strength—the grudging respect of fear. Then, too, he represents to them a self-expression, the very last word in what they are, their most highly developed individual.

And what is it that they are? O'Neill describes the men more fully:

The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of Neanderthal Man is guessed at. All are hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes.

There is no mention of intelligence. The description is essentially physical, alluding to a diminished brain capacity. But Neanderthal Man's brain was as large as modern man's. The only certainty for the director so far is that he must cast a powerfully-built man who is capable of savage emotion. Where then is the impression that Yank is a dumb ox?

Perhaps a look at what others say about him will help explain the image. Mildred calls him "the filthy beast!" Well, yes; he is filthy. Anyone shoveling coal in the stokehole would be. And he does use foul language. But she doesn't comment on his mentality. O'Neill, however, adds more to the brutish image at the start of Scene Three, when he describes the stokers as being "*outlined in silhouette in the crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas.*" (The play's title doesn't help offset the image of stupidity either. Still, looking like a gorilla doesn't ipso facto mean that one must have a gorilla's intelligence.) Paddy, in Scene Four, is the next to add to the infamous image: "In this cage is a queerer kind of baboon than ever you'd find in darkest Africy." He goes on to say,

¹ Mary B. Mullett, "The Extraordinary Story of Eugene O'Neill," *American Magazine*, XCIV, No. 5 (November, 1922).

just a bit later, "Sure, 'twas as if she'd seen a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo!" Yank asks Paddy if indeed Mildred called him a hairy ape, and Paddy fudges a bit by answering, "she looked it at you if she didn't say the word itself." Paddy insinuates it, and Yank believes him. O'Neill has him say, "I'm a hairy ape, get me?" when he talks to the prisoners in Scene Six. Finally, it is the Secretary who solidifies the image when he scornfully attacks Yank, whose arms and legs are pinned by the men of the IWW in Scene Seven:

No. He isn't worth the trouble we'd get into. He's too stupid.
(He comes closer and laughs mockingly in YANK's face.) Ho-ho!
 By God, this is the biggest joke they've put up on us yet. Hey, you Joke! Who sent you—Burns or Pinkerton? No, by God, you're such a bonehead I'll bet you're in the Secret Service! ... Oh, hell, what's the use of talking? You're a brainless ape.

And so the portrait is complete. Yank is sub-human. An ape! In fact, it is in the gorilla's cage that Yank, quite convinced that Mildred and the Secretary are right, accepts that he is a wild beast to be caged and then killed.

Ladies and gents, step forward and take a slant at de one and only—*(His voice weakening)*—one and original—Hairy Ape from de wilds of—*(He slips in a heap on the floor and dies. ...)*.

Our preliminary study of the text seems to reinforce the image of Yank as sub-human, but audiences laugh at gorillas; they don't identify with them. Yet, I believe that it is possible to see Yank quite differently from the way he is usually played and to think of him as a truly tragic figure. A more in-depth examination of the text is in order.

Language separates men from animals. It is man's ability to formulate and articulate abstract thought which allows him to rise above and rule the beasts of the earth. And it is in the language of the play that we will find the key to Yank's somewhat dubious intellect. His speech patterns are a combination of "Brooklynese" and a lack of education. "No one ain't never put nothin' over on me and got away wit it, see!" The language is rough, but the message is clear. Yank has never been anyone's patsy—and that takes some doing. He may be crude, but he's no dummy.

Let's probe further into his mentality. In violent answer to a song about a lass waiting for a sailor to come home, he barks, "Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Home? Home, hell! I'll make a home for yuh! I'll knock yuh dead. Home! T'hell wit home! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Dis is home, see!" He's thinking abstractly. He understands that home can be wherever you want it to be. He's the supreme realist. No dreams. No escaping that way. "Home is where you hang your hat." That his view of women is based solely on the types that frequented waterfront dives in the 1920's and on the bitter memories of a mother who was a drunkard understandably explains his attitude toward them. "Goils waitin' for you, huh? Aw, hell! Dat's all tripe. Dey don't wait for no one. Dey'd double-cross yuh for a nickel. Dey're all tarts, get me?" Prejudiced, yes! But definitely not the thinking of a mental defective.

Certainly it is his comments on politics and religion that forever wipe away the doltish image so many have given him: "nix on dat Salvation Army-Socialist bull. Git a soapbox! Hire a hall! Come and be saved, huh? Jerk us to Jesus, huh?" His thinking becomes even clearer toward the end of the play:

—de same old bull—soapboxes and Salvation Army—no guts! Cut out an hour offen de job a day and make me happy! Gimme a dollar more a day and make me happy! Tree squares a day, and cauli-flowers in de front yard—ekal rights—a woman and kids—a lousy vote—and I'm all fixed for Jesus, huh?

One might even go so far as to say that his analysis of governmental control, corporate power and institutionalized religion borders on the profound. But it is his ability to think metaphysically that totally separates him from the brutes of the world. *He sees himself as omnipotent—the prime mover!*

...Sure, on'y for me everyting stops. It all goes dead, get me? De noise and smoke and all de engines movin' de woild, dey stop. Dere ain't nothin' no more! Dat's what I'm sayin'. Everyting else dat makes de woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move witout somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves! It—dat's me!

To be both the beginning and the end. To be able to see oneself as infinite. That takes intelligence!

He's not a bad comedian either, and cracking a joke takes a clever mind—if it's the same mind that thought it up. He talks to Paddy: "But aw say, come up for air onct in a while, can't yuh? See what's happened since yuh croaked." Sometimes he throws in a clever alliteration that brings with it an amazing clarity of thought. "He's hittin' de pipe of de past, dat's what he's doin'"; or, "she was all in white like dey wrap around stiffs." But the most insightful metaphor is "... if she tinks she—She grinds de organ and I'm on de string, huh? I'll fix her!" Not bad for a moronic brute. When the men kid him about Mildred, telling him that he has fallen in love with her, he retorts: "I've fallen in hate, get me?" A nice turn of phrase for someone supposed to be brainless.

Yank also sees more deeply than the other men. Note the description of Mildred's skin: "Did yuh pipe her hands? White and skinny. Yuh could see de bones through 'em." Later he describes her in more detail: "Her hands—dey was skinny and white like dey wasn't real but painted on somep'n. ... She was like some dead ting de cat brung in."

When Long suggests a pacifist approach to a proletarian revolution, using a slightly more sophisticated language than what we have heard from the stokehole, Yank has no difficulty understanding it. He grasps it immediately and responds with his own philosophy: revolutions are won by force.

LONG. Easy goes, Comrade. Keep yer bloomin' temper. Remember force defeats itself. It ain't our weapon. We must impress our demands through peaceful means—the votes of the on-marching proletarians of the bloody world!

YANK. (*with abysmal contempt*) Votes, hell! Votes is a joke, see. Votes for women! Let dem do it!

LONG. (*still more uneasily*) Calm, now. Treat 'em wiv the proper contempt. Observe the bleedin' parasites but 'old yer 'orses.

YANK. (*angrily*) Git away from me! Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Force, dat's me! De punch, dat's me every time, see!

As the play progresses, Yank comes to realize more deeply that he can no longer return to the stokehole, having had a glimpse of the power of wealth. When asked by the IWW Secretary about the other stokers like himself, he replies that "dey're all dead to de woild." There is nothing else for him to do. He can't return, and the rich won't have him; and so he concludes that the only way out of his insignificance is to commit an act of destruction. Then he'll be noticed. It is an awful insight he has reached. Man can rise above his fellow men by creativity or by destruction. It is the philosophy assassins are made of.

YANK. ...I mean blow up de factory, de woiks, where he makes de steel. Dat's what I'm after—to blow up de steel, knock all de steel in de woild up to de moon. Dat'll fix tings!

But the IWW doesn't want him. They mistake him for a government infiltrator and throw him out. Defeated, ostracized and finally humiliated, he understands the irony of his visit to a gorilla in the Central Park Zoo. It is then that Yank becomes his most insightful.

Ain't we both members of de same club—de Hairy Apes?
(They stare at each other—a pause—then YANK goes on slowly and bitterly) So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white-faced tart! I was you to her, get me? On'y outa de cage—broke out—free to moider her, see? Sure! Dat's what she tought. She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too—worsen'n yours—sure—a damn sight—'cause you got some chanct to bust loose—but me—

It is during this scene that we realize O'Neill's unfolding of Yank's character and the subsequent development of the plot. In the eight scenes it takes to perform the play, Yank's character goes from savage to humane. It is a tragedy, if one can accept Maxwell Anderson's definition of a spiritual realization arrived at too late. Yank *can* think, despite his humble declaration that "tinkin' is hard—". He understands precisely his tragic dilemma when he says, "I ain't on oath and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call hell, huh?" Not so far removed from Sartre's "hell is other people," is it?

Yank also knows the mold is cast. His life is not going to change. Things are not going to get better. So he does the only thing possible, the only free choice still left to him. *He kills himself. He lets the gorilla out of the cage so that it will kill him.* And this is the essence of the play. Nothing fancy about myth, existentialism, or everyman symbols for the oppressed proletariat. Just an explanation, a clarification, of one man's suicide. O'Neill wrote about it in 1935:

It was at Jimmy the Priest's that I knew Driscoll, a Liverpool Irishman who was a stoker on a transatlantic liner. Shortly afterwards I learned that he had committed suicide by jumping overboard in mid-ocean. Why? The search for an explanation of why Driscoll, proud of his animal superiority and in complete harmony with his limited conception of the universe, should kill himself provided the germ of the idea for *The Hairy Ape*.²

Yank opens the cage to let out death, but for a while a part of him will continue to seek vengeance upon New York City in the body of the gorilla. Together they will wreak havoc until the beast, too, is killed.

YANK. ...T'hell wit it! A little action, dat's our meat! Dat belongs! Knock 'em down and keep bustin' 'em till dey croaks yuh wit a gat—wit steel! Sure! Are yuh game? Dey've looked at youse, ain't dey—in a cage? Wanter git even? Wanter wind up like a sport 'stead of croakin' slow in dere? *(The gorilla roars an emphatic*

² *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Scribner's, 1935), Vol. V. (The Wilderness Edition includes this brief anecdote.)

affirmative. YANK goes on with a sort of furious exaltation) Sure! Yuh're reg'lar! Yuh'll stick to de finish! Me 'n' you, huh?—bot' members of this club! We'll put up one last star bout dat'll knock 'em offen deir seats? Dey'll have to make de cages stronger after we're trou!

If the actor who is cast can believe that Yank is not stupid, that he can think quite insightfully, that he is vulnerable and human, then the audience will identify and empathize with Yank and the play will become a modern tragedy. Perhaps the most significant way to conclude this examination of Yank's intellect is to remind oneself that O'Neill's use of Rodin's "The Thinker" as a running motif is not as ironic as one might at first assume.

--Michael E. Rutenberg

DESIGNING O'NEILL'S *THE HAIRY APE*

[Mr. Vyzga kindly consented to describe the concept underlying his set designs for Dartmouth's production of *The Hairy Ape*. In his essay he makes detailed reference to the portfolio of drawings that accompanies it. It must be noted—with yet another apology to the artist—that financial restrictions prevented the Newsletter from capturing much of the vivid brilliance of his sketches. (The subtle gray wash of the sky, for instance, is not captured in the print of the Scene 2 sketch, nor is the more pervasive blue in Scene 8. The fiery background in Scene 3 is closer to rust brown than to yellow in the original, and the aqua of Scene 7 was more gray.) We have discovered the inadequacy of color xerography, but we felt that enough remains, and is of sufficient value to others contemplating productions of the play, to justify the inclusion of what we *could* afford. If it becomes possible to offer more faithful prints to readers interested in purchasing them, an announcement to that effect will appear in the next issue. --Ed.]

Designing O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* provides an artistic and technical challenge for any scene designer. Furthermore, designing this production to work within the 1979 Dartmouth Summer Repertory season with Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* and Moliere's *Tartuffe* made the process even more complicated. Consequently, production meetings began almost six months prior to the opening, and involved the director, Michael Rutenberg, the costume designer, John Sullivan, and myself.

Central to the design is the director's idea of the play as a study of a man's process toward suicide. Also, images of heaven and hell, steel, cages, and man's lack of harmony with nature were discussed. The director's idea and the aforementioned images were eventually to merge into the central concept of man thrust into an industrialized/dehumanized world in which death is an inevitability. In order to provide visual unity, to aid the director in creating the play's central rhythms, and to create a manageable repertory production, I designed a flexible unit set.

Within the unit set are a series of levels which both metaphorically create man's (Yank's) place in society (see sketches for Scenes 1 and 2 and note that the picture of Scene 2 is reversed) and establish certain character relationships (see sketch for Scene 3). Through direct manipulation of these scenic levels, the juxtaposition of characters and

of scene to character is clearly established. Furthermore, as Yank's perception becomes more chaotic, the levels can be manipulated artistically (see sketches for Scenes 5 to 8), thus reinforcing visually Yank's state of mind.

The use of steel in the design is an essential thematic component in O'Neill's play and echoes its mechanical rhythms. For example, the supports for the various levels are stylized steel ship girders which give both an impression of locale and contribute to a sense of claustrophobia (see sketches for Scenes 1 and 3). Under each platform is a series of "bays," each containing a "palette," a small castored platform. Necessary set pieces—e.g., the bunks, the stokeholes, and the Fifth Avenue shops—moved in and out of the bays with a piston-like movement. The texture of steel and the movement of the set pieces provide a certain mechanical quality that further aids in establishing the scenic metaphor of a dehumanizing society.

A strong monochromatic color scheme enhances the central metaphor. For example, blacks and grays are predominant and serve to emphasize flesh in contrast with steel and the cold, lifeless and mechanized world. Accent colors are introduced to clarify the heat and horror of the stokehole (see sketch for Scene 3), as well as to provide a juxtaposition between the inhuman quality of certain characters and the bright, sunny sky behind them (see sketches for Scenes 2 and 5).

The unit set—with its color scheme, its textures, and the steamship details—is central in creating the director's vision of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*.

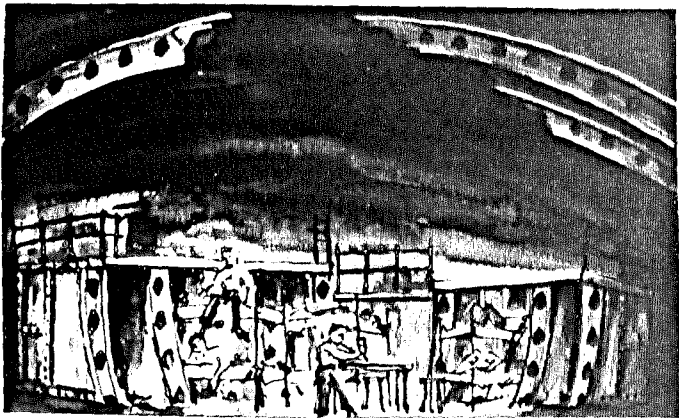
--Bernard J. Vyzga

REPRINTS AND ABSTRACTS

1. Normand Berlin, "Ghosts of the Past: O'Neill and *Hamlet*," *Massachusetts Review* (Summer 1979), pp. 312-23.

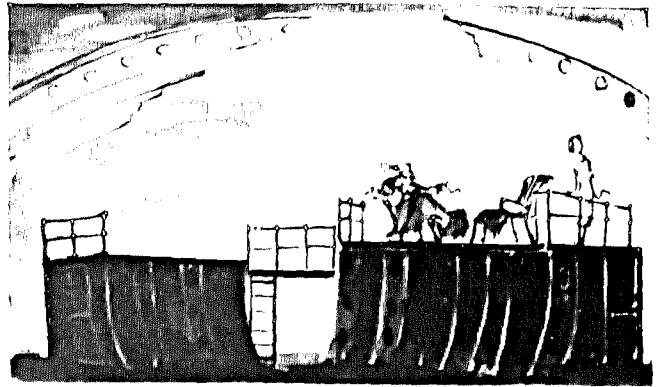
As we approach the end of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*—with the three Tyrone men seated frozenly, listening to Mary's awkward playing of the piano in that other, darker room, then staring at her as she enters the living room, her face now youthful, her mind recalling moments in her dope-induced past—Jamie Tyrone breaks the heavy silence with the words: "The Mad Scene. Enter Ophelia." A shockingly vicious allusion, causing both James and Edmund to "turn on him fiercely." The Shakespearean allusion, at this crucial moment in the play, has powerful resonances; the dramatic entrance of Mary, like the remembered entrance of Ophelia, impresses itself vividly upon the mind. In writing *Long Day's Journey*, in facing his dead, the image of a dope-filled mother entering a room of helpless men was inescapable for O'Neill. Less inescapable, but still compelling, is O'Neill's allusion to the entrance of Ophelia. Not only this striking image, but the entire play *Hamlet* seems to have exerted considerable pressure on O'Neill's creative imagination when he was writing his last two plays, *Long Day's Journey* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* allowed O'Neill to become better acquainted with his own night and with the night of the dramatic world he created.

Jamie's reference to Ophelia is a specific O'Neill allusion to *Hamlet*, and the parallels between Mary Tyrone and Ophelia are many and evocative—a fragile woman taking center-stage, her isolation, revelations caused by dope or madness, musical props, "nunnery," remembrance of things past. But the strong relationship between *Long Day's Journey* and *Hamlet* goes beyond the specific allusion. Both are ghost plays; in both the



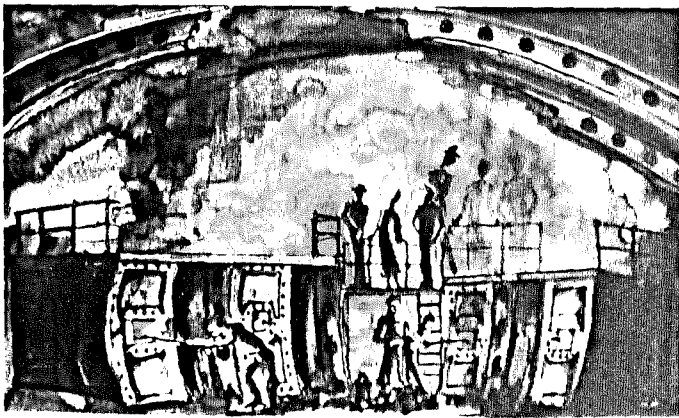
Scene 1

The Forecastle



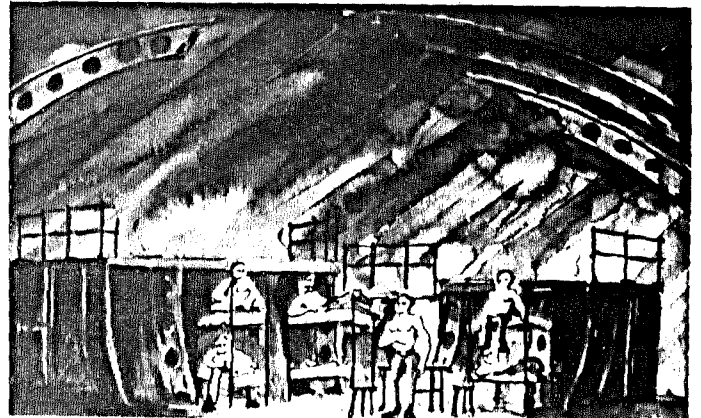
Scene 2

The Deck



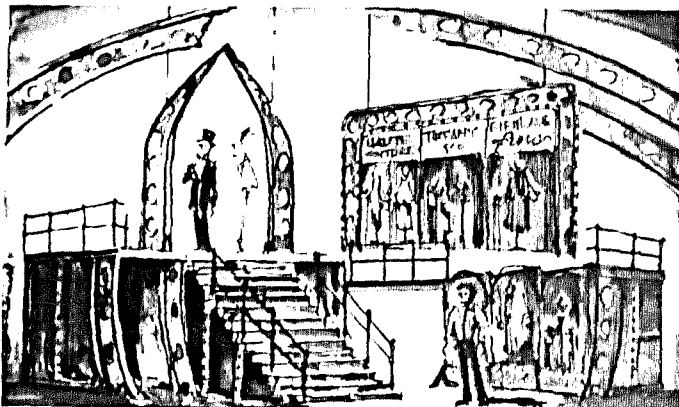
Scene 3

The Stokehole



Scene 4

The Forecastle



Scene 5

Fifth Avenue



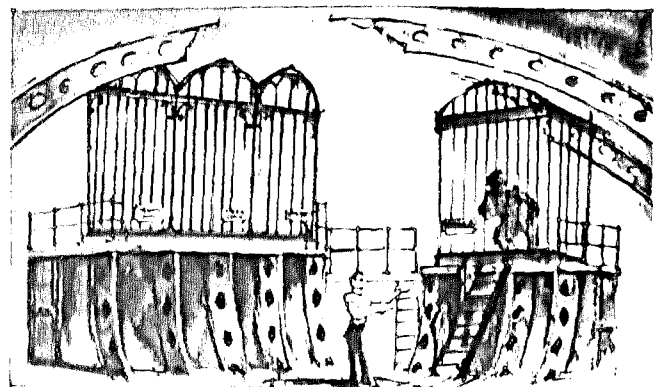
Scene 6

The Prison



Scene 7

The IWW Hall



Scene 8

The Zoo

past controls the present; both deal with family relationships, especially the relationship of son to mother; in both the mother's behavior informs the lives of members of her family; in both young men are "a little in love with death"; in both we find a religious undertone; in both we hear of sea voyages; in both drink provides a clue to character. The Jamie of *Long Day's Journey* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is as close to Hamlet as any character in modern drama. Bitter and cynical, his whole life revolves around the condition of Mary Tyrone, whom he considers to be both whore and mother, as the close parallel between Mary and Fat Violet makes clear. This mother-whore combination points directly to the agonizing dilemmas of both Jamie and Hamlet, and results in world-weariness and thoughts of death.

O'Neill's biography leads us to realize that Shakespeare was a member of the family, a companion in creativity. O'Neill could not avoid, especially in his last two autobiographical plays, the psychic pressures exerted by his knowledge of *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's play gave O'Neill a denser view of the reality of his personal situation. *Long Day's Journey* and *A Moon*, dealing with ghosts of O'Neill's past, were written in the shadow of *Hamlet*, itself dealing with ghosts of the past. Like Hamlet, O'Neill had the courage to face his ghosts, and once he did he would write no more. He could have uttered Hamlet's dying words: "The rest is silence." (N.B.)

2. Carol Billman, "Language as Theme in Eugene O'Neill's *Hughie*," *Notes on Modern American Literature*, III (Fall 1979), #25.

Billman shows how O'Neill, in "one of his most optimistic plays," uses his "gift of gab" in a way that "affirms the need for human communication" and the possibility of its achievement. In contrast to Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* and LeRoi Jones's *Dutchman*—"two other American plays likewise set in New York City and devoted to depicting man's difficulty in communicating even in crowded spaces"—O'Neill's play "shows that humans need not resort to the violent acts of Jerry and Clay in *Zoo Story* and *Dutchman*—their language will suffice as the vehicle for communication." A brief essay (two 5½ x 8½" pages) but of interest as a comparative study and as a hasty introduction to fuller studies of *Hughie* by Bogard, Carpenter and Shaughnessy.

3. Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Plays*. Introduction by José Quintero. Garden City, N.Y.: Nelson Doubleday, Inc., 1979.

A worthy successor to, though insufficient as a substitute for, the Modern Library volume of *Nine Plays*. Of the nine that O'Neill himself had chosen for that previous edition, five remain here (*Emperor Jones*, *Hairy Ape*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Strange Interlude*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*), and the four that have not been retained (*All God's Chillun*, *Marco Millions*, *Great God Brown*, *Lazarus Laughed*) have been replaced by *Anna Christie*, *Iceman Cometh*, *Touch of the Poet*, and *Moon for the Misbegotten*.

Quintero's introduction (pp. ix-xiv), while only half the length (and weight) of the Modern Library introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch, does have the immediacy and insightfulness of someone intimate with six of the nine. Accordingly, he introduces them to us "in the same way I would introduce you to a group of old and beloved friends." Amid theatrical memories of stars, rehearsals and performances, he defends the published version of *Anna Christie* ("hardly a cotton-candy, manufactured happy ending"), explains the virtue (the "glory") of O'Neill's use of abundant repetition, especially in *Iceman* ("O'Neill writes like a musician, and therefore repeats his themes again and again, utilizing different sections of the orchestra to realize the different shadings inherent in a feeling"), and discusses (p. xiv) the "two realities" that contribute to the "heightened breath" of "America's greatest dramatist":

Every time I've been involved with one of O'Neill's plays I've had a sense of existing in two entirely different kinds of realities: the commonplace, photographic reality; and the interior reality of fantasy. I think the struggle of these two realities—where the impossible can happen among the commonplace, where the figures become regal, monumental, and totally equipped for tragedy—gives that unbelievable tension to his works.

4. James A. Robinson, "O'Neill and Albee," *Philological Papers* (West Virginia University Bulletin), 25 (February 1979), 38-45.

The lives, careers and plays of Eugene O'Neill and Edward Albee exhibit an intriguing number of similarities. As a child, each experienced real or symbolic abandonment by his parents, and failed at formal schooling; as young playwrights, both moved quickly from off-Broadway acclaim to Broadway success, partly through their skillful adaptation of contemporary European expressionistic techniques to the American stage. The shapes of their subsequent careers likewise run parallel. Their first five years as popular playwrights found them focusing on social themes like urban alienation (*The Hairy Ape*, *The Zoo Story*) and racism (*All God's Chillun Got Wings*, *The Death of Bessie Smith*), but both concluded this phase with baffling allegories that confounded both audiences and critics (*The Great God Brown*, *Tiny Alice*). Later plays, like *Strange Interlude*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *All Over* and *Listening*, displayed resigned protagonists in a death-centered world. Similar character types and motifs also characterize their drama. The figure of the dead or dying son recurs in their plays, which also frequently feature manipulative mothers presiding over deteriorating families; and in both, the disintegrating family represents the declining sense of community in American culture.

O'Neill's and Albee's work has many techniques in common as well. The central symbol unifies *Desire Under the Elms*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Tiny Alice*, and *Box/Mao/Box*; the musical device of variations on a theme structures *The Hairy Ape*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *All Over* and *Counting the Ways*; confessional monologues dominate *Iceman*, *Long Day's Journey*, *Zoo Story*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *A Delicate Balance*. The two playwrights also verge occasionally into allegory (*Hairy Ape*, *Great God Brown*, *Zoo Story*, *Tiny Alice*), largely because they share a vision of the symbolic and mysterious nature of existence.

Finally, O'Neill and Albee reach similar conclusions about this world: they suspect (especially in *Strange Interlude* and *Tiny Alice*) that we are ludicrous victims of a cosmic comedy; they suggest (Albee more ambiguously than O'Neill) that existence is insupportable without sustaining illusions. These and the many other parallels between O'Neill and Albee can perhaps be attributed to similar personal backgrounds, similar cultural assumptions, and the resemblance of the 20's to the 60's in American theatrical history; but they also argue for an important, albeit limited, influence of O'Neill on Albee. (J.A.R.)

5. James A. Robinson, "O'Neill's Symbolic Sounds," *Modern Language Studies* (Spring 1979), pp. 36-45.

Eugene O'Neill's claim that "I have always used sound in plays as a structural part of them" applies especially to his expressionistic dramas, which frequently feature aural environments that symbolize man's victimization by irrational, demonic forces. The sounds made by the tom-tom, the ghosts and the protagonist himself in *The Emperor Jones*, for example, dramatize the gradual victory of Jones's primitive unconscious over

his ego; and the jarring whistles, gongs and mechanized voices in *The Hairy Ape* point up the defeat of Yank's emerging consciousness by a brutal, industrial civilization. *Lazarus Laughed*, on the other hand, contrasts the human sound effects of Lazarus's exultant, affirmative laughter and the grotesque, distorted laughter of others to suggest the domination of mankind by a subconscious love/hate of death—"the fearful obsession with death and hatred of life of nearly everyone in the play but Lazarus" (p. 42). *Dynamo* similarly contrasts sounds, of thunder and a generating plant, ostensibly to demonstrate the death of the old Christian god and the birth of the modern god of science; but like the other plays, its primary theme is man's helplessness in a universe where mysterious forces consistently alienate and destroy him. (J.A.R.)

6. Paul D. Voelker, "The Uncertain Origins of Eugene O'Neill's 'Bound East for Cardiff,'" *Studies in Bibliography*, 32 (1979), 273-81.

In May, 1914, Eugene O'Neill copyrighted three new plays, only one of which, "Children of the Sea," was to be of much later importance. With revision and a new title, "Bound East for Cardiff," it became, in the summer of 1916, O'Neill's first produced play. Traditionally, "Cardiff" has been seen by O'Neillians as the first sign of O'Neill's dawning maturity as a playwright, a view encouraged by O'Neill himself in his well-known letter to Richard Dana Skinner.

Nevertheless, given the importance of "Cardiff," it seems surprising that no detailed textual comparison of it and "Children" has been published. No doubt O'Neill's recent biographers—the Gelbs, Doris Alexander, and Louis Sheaffer—have been influential in this regard, because all have reported that there are only minor differences between "Children" and "Cardiff." Yet, textual analysis suggests that the opposite may be true.

The revisions which changed "Children" into "Cardiff" suggest that, in fact, O'Neill may have been doing more than simply "polishing" an essentially finished script. Among other things, he cut one page from his original ten-page manuscript, a page in which Driscoll recounts his murder of a ship's officer. O'Neill also revised the order of three key lines, making it clearer in "Cardiff" that Yank eventually overcomes his fear of death. Other revisions and cuttings suggest that, instead of polishing, O'Neill was re-thinking both his attitude toward Yank and Yank's role in the play. The net effect is that in "Cardiff" Yank is more heroic and more clearly the central character, while the overall tone is more elegiac. The differences between "Children" and "Cardiff," taken all together, seem more substantial than the biographers have suggested.

If they are, then a question arises: when did O'Neill make the changes? "Children" was copyrighted in 1914; "Cardiff" appeared in 1916. Yet, four months after copyrighting "Children," O'Neill enrolled in George Pierce Baker's playwriting course at Harvard. Traditionally, Baker's influence has been viewed as, at best, non-existent, and at worst, disastrous. Yet at present there is no documentary evidence to confirm O'Neill's recurrent report that he completed "Cardiff" before he went to Harvard.

The so-called "Cardiff" manuscript at the Museum of the City of New York is no help here. Close study clearly shows that it is actually the manuscript of "Children of the Sea." The Museum manuscript antedates the copyrighted typescript of "Children." So there exists a two and one-half year gap between the latest "Children" (the LC typescript of May, 1914) and the earliest "Cardiff," published in *The Provincetown Plays, First Series*, in November, 1916.

However, George Cram Cook's "part script" for the role of Yank, which Cook originated, survives in the Berg Collection of American Literature at the New York Public Library. Close study of it reveals that O'Neill had made the changes in "Children"

which resulted in "Cardiff" before Cook made his script (presumably in the summer of 1916). This suggests that O'Neill did not make the changes because of what he saw in the rehearsals of his very first production.

So why did he make the changes? Did he, in fact, respond to Baker's criticism that "Cardiff" was not a play? O'Neill reported this comment to Barrett Clark, but when Baker wrote about O'Neill in 1926, he cited "Cardiff" before noting that O'Neill first perfected his art in one-acts, then in longer plays. Did Baker change his mind or had O'Neill changed his play?

Or did O'Neill respond to the suicide (by jumping overboard) of his real-life friend, Driscoll, in the fall of 1915, by rewriting "Children" and making the death of Yank more heroic and the tone of the play more elegiac? If so, this might explain why O'Neill brought "Cardiff" to the Provincetown Players in 1916, rather than a play he had completed after May of 1914.

Whatever motivated O'Neill to make his revisions, there is at present no proof that he did so before he went to Harvard. In fact, at present, no manuscript of the final "Cardiff" has been found in any of the major O'Neill collections. Yet he must have had one in Provincetown in the summer of 1916. If such a manuscript could be found, and dated with accuracy, it might serve to close the two-year gap and to indicate whether O'Neill finished "Cardiff" before, during, or after he went to study playwriting under Professor Baker. (P.D.V.)

O'NEILL ON SCREEN: *NEW YORKER* IN AUDIENCE

[The Public Theater's recent screening of six films based on O'Neill plays, plus a simultaneous run elsewhere in New York City of the Lee Marvin *Iceman Cometh*, elicited a series of evaluative ripples in the capsule-film-review pages of the October 15, 22 and 29 issues of *The New Yorker*. Given Brendan Gill's oft-repeated views on the playwright (see page 15 of the September 1977 issue of the Newsletter for a characteristic slam), one can't expect eulogy, but the film capsules, reprinted below, are, of course, anonymous. --Ed.]

1. *Ah, Wilderness!* (1935). "This piece of ordinary-family-life Americana, centering on the sweet love pangs of adolescence, is so remote from Eugene O'Neill's life and his other work [? --Ed.] that it's something of a freak. O'Neill said that the play came to him at night, as a dream, but it seems to be a dream based on Booth Tarkington's world. Eric Linden (who always looks as if he's just about to cry) plays the mooning high-school-valetorian hero in the era of choking starched collars; that cloying old fraud Lionel Barrymore is his father; Wallace Beery is his tipling uncle; and Aline MacMahon and Spring Byington wear neat shirtwaists and make themselves useful about the house. If it sounds Andy Hardyish, it is, and more than a little; in 1948, MGM tried to capitalize on the resemblance by starring Mickey Rooney in a musical version of the play, called "Summer Holiday." The musical turned out to be an abomination, but this early version, directed by Clarence Brown, while not a world-shaker, and rather dim as entertainment, has at least a nice sense of period."
2. *Anna Christie* (1930). "One waits for an eternity for Garbo to show up and utter her first talking-picture line—'Give me a whiskey, ginger ale on the side. And don't be stingy, baby.' This is not one of Eugene O'Neill's best plays, and dat-ole-davil-sea stuff is pretty hard to take in this version, directed by Clarence Brown."
3. *The Emperor Jones* (1933). "Eugene O'Neill's play about a black man's disintegration was conceived in a semi-Expressionist style, and it was filmed in that style by Dudley Murphy, from a screenplay by DuBose Heyward. Murphy, a director with ideas but almost

no technique, used painted sets, exaggerated décor, and an artificial jungle; the effects are sometimes powerful, sometimes foolish. O'Neill's violent emotions are accurately rendered by Paul Robeson and Dudley Digges, though they seem to be acting on a stage."

4. *The Iceman Cometh* (1973). "Eugene O'Neill's great, heavy, simplistic, mechanical, beautiful play has been given a straightforward, faithful production in handsome, dark-toned color. A filmed play like this one doesn't offer the sensual excitement that movies *can* offer, but you don't go to it for that; you go to it for O'Neill's crude, prosaic virtuosity, which is also pure American poetry, and—as with most filmed dramas—if you miss the 'presence' of the actors, you gain from seeing it performed by the sort of cast that rarely gathers in the theatre. The characters are drunken bums and whores who have found sanctuary in Harry Hope's flophouse saloon; each has a 'pipe dream' that sustains him until Hickey, the salesman—the 'iceman'—who attempts to free them all by stripping them of their lies and guilt, takes the life out of them. The play is essentially an argument between Larry, an aging anarchist (Robert Ryan), and Hickey (Lee Marvin); Larry speaks for pity and the necessity of illusions, Hickey for the curative power of truth. They're the two poles of consciousness that O'Neill himself is split between. Larry, a self-hating alcoholic, is a weak man and a windbag, but Ryan brings so much understanding to Larry's weakness that the play achieves new dimensions. Ryan becomes O'Neill for us; he has O'Neill's famous 'tragic handsomeness' and the broken-man jowls, too, and at the end, when Larry is permanently 'iced'—that is, stripped of illusion—we can see that this is the author's fantasy of himself: he alone is above the illusions that the others fall back on. He is tragic, while the others, with their restored illusions, have become comic. Yes, it's sophomoric to see yourself as the one who is doomed to live without illusions, yet what O'Neill does with this sophomoric conception is masterly. And Ryan (who died shortly after) got right to the boozy, gnarled soul of the play. The film is marred by the central miscasting of Lee Marvin (he's thick, somehow, and irrelevantly vigorous), but it isn't destroyed. Though the characters are devised from the thesis and we never lose our awareness of that, they are nevertheless marvelously playable. Fredric March interprets Harry Hope with so much quiet tenderness that when Harry regains his illusions and we see March's muscles tone up we don't know whether to smile for the character or the actor. And there are Jeff Bridges as Parritt, Bradford Dillman as Willie (you can almost taste his joy in the role), and Martyn Green, George Voskovec, Sorrell Booke, Moses Gunn, Tom Pedi, and John McLiam. Directed by John Frankenheimer."
5. *The Long Voyage Home* (1940). "One of the finest of all the movies that deal with life at sea, and one of the most successful of all attempts to put Eugene O'Neill on film—perhaps because the director, John Ford, and the adapter, Dudley Nichols, were so free in their approach to O'Neill's material. The young Mildred Natwick has a memorable scene in a café with John Wayne, and Barry Fitzgerald's return to the ship is a truly great moment. Greg Toland did the cinematography (which includes some early experiments in deep focus)."
6. *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1947). "O'Neill's six-hour Freudian-American Greek tragedy accumulates power on the stage, but it becomes merely oppressive in the nearly three hours of this painstaking yet static version, written and directed by Dudley Nichols. Rosalind Russell is the Electra, Katina Paxinou her adulterous mother, Raymond Massey her father, and Michael Redgrave her brother. (It is apparent from their accents that they have only recently become a family.)"
7. *Strange Interlude* (1932). "Whoever decided to revive this one forgot a sound bit of advice: let sleeping dogs lie."

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. The editor is saddened to report the death, on August 8th after ten months of struggle against cancer, of Leonard Chabrowe. "At the end," writes a friend, "he was resigned, regretting many lost opportunities and, most immediately, the impossibility of saying goodbye in the personal way he would have liked." Readers of Mr. Chabrowe's *Ritual and Pathos—the Theatre of O'Neill*, whatever their reactions to its content, will doubtless join the editor in mourning the loss of a dedicated O'Neill scholar.
2. *O'Neill and Carlotta*, a dramatic collage by Barbara Gelb, was given two staged readings at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York City last October 14. Coming just two days before the ninety-first anniversary of the playwright's birth (October 16, 1888), the performances marked the first in an annual series of O'Neill birthday events, sponsored by the twelve-person Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill, and culminating in an O'Neill Centennial Celebration in 1988. *O'Neill and Carlotta* combined sections from letters and interviews by the playwright and his third wife, passages from O'Neill's published non-dramatic writings, and scenes from a number of his plays. The format was an abridged version of the one used in the Gelbs' 1962 biography of O'Neill. "Though I narrowed the focus to O'Neill and Carlotta for the stage reading," Mrs. Gelb noted, "I used the same technique we used in the biography. I tried to intertwine his life and his work, and illustrate his emotional climate with dialogue from his plays. What I have tried to write is a kind of introduction to O'Neill's genius." Directed by Robert Allan Ackerman, the collage was performed by Jason Robards, Colleen Dewhurst, Geraldine Fitzgerald, José Quintero (in his acting debut), Philip Anglim and Madeleine Kahn. Also included was the 1961 tape-recorded voice of Carlotta herself—a touch that, according to *New York Times* reporter Michiko Kakutani, "added a ghostly presence" ("A Long Evening's Journey Into a Past," October 15, 1979, p. C15).
3. The second activity to be sponsored by the Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill will occur at the Public Theater next summer: a repertory season of O'Neill plays directed by José Quintero and performed by a company including Jason Robards, Colleen Dewhurst and Geraldine Fitzgerald. Further information, if available, will appear in the May issue of the Newsletter.
4. *O'Neill, Son and Artist*, the Pulitzer Prize biography by Louis Sheaffer, was among the approximately 300 books in the American display at the Moscow International Book Fair last fall. The American exhibit was put together by a committee chosen by the Association of American Publishers. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., chairman, said that the committee was "left entirely on its own after receiving these simple instructions: 'Please make a small but representative display of current, popular and readily available books which will give our friends in the Soviet Union some notion of America's amusements and arts and concerns right now.'" The catalog for the display said the following of the Sheaffer entry:

Eugene O'Neill's plays won him the Nobel Prize for literature, four Pulitzer awards and acclaim as America's foremost dramatist. Yet he died, at 65, in 1953, with plays that could find no producers. His affecting *A Touch of the Poet*, written in 1940, and his towering, searing masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, saw their first productions not in the United States but in Sweden four years after his death. *O'Neill, Son and Artist* is the second and final volume in Louis Sheaffer's exhaustive, prize-winning biography—the life, the work, the tortured family relationships—of this tormented genius of the stage, "who transmuted private history and secret agony into art."

5. Normand Berlin, Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, whose recent essay on O'Neill and *Hamlet* is abstracted in this issue, has signed a contract with Macmillans of London to write a book on O'Neill for their forthcoming series, *Macmillan Modern Dramatists*.
6. Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf has signed a contract with the Frederick Ungar Publishing Company of New York to write a full-length book on the Provincetown Players. The authors are Dr. Gary Williams, Associate Professor of Theatre at Catholic University, and Daniel Heller, Associate Producer of the Hartke Theatre at Catholic University. Stanley Kauffman, theatre and film critic, will write the Introduction. The book is scheduled for publication in 1980 and is the first in a series of theatre publications on the Players, O'Neill, and other theatre-related subjects to be produced by the Provincetown Playhouse. Portions of the book were supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.
7. Travis Bogard has made an exciting discovery: motion picture footage that features O'Neill himself. The following is his report of this significant "find," a model of scholarly sleuthery:

Following a lead in Carlotta Monterey O'Neill's diary for April 6, 1938, wherein she states that "Dukie [Dr. Dukes, their physician] photographs fields, wild flowers, etc. with his movie camera," I went in search of the film. I was able to track down Dr. Dukes' granddaughter, Mrs. Lawrence Hart, now living in Santa Barbara, who had the films the doctor took. Among the reels were two clips, one of fields of poppies at Tao House, clearly the ones to which Carlotta refers, and one taken at the doctor's home in Berkeley, showing O'Neill, Carlotta and their dog Blemie. So far as I know this is the only motion picture of O'Neill that exists. It is only a short clip, seconds long, but it is an interesting and valuable historical record. I'm having the film duplicated and attempting to achieve some color correction of the old positive print. Mrs. Hart also gave me, on behalf of the Tao House Foundation, the camera which Carlotta had given Dr. Dukes and the projector.

8. THE GREAT O'NEILLIAN FILMIC FREEBIE. On Sunday, October 14, prior to a week of individual showings at regular prices, Joseph Papp's Public Theater kicked off its O'Neill centennial festivities with a free marathon screening of five films based on O'Neill plays:

- 1 p.m.: *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1947), dir. Dudley Nichols, with Rosalind Russell, Michael Redgrave, Raymond Massey, Katina Paxinou, Kirk Douglas and Leo Genn.
- 4 p.m.: *The Long Voyage Home* (1940), dir. John Ford, with Thomas Mitchell, John Wayne ("Py golly, I feel dizzy."), Barry Fitzgerald, Wilfrid Lawson, Ward Bond, John Qualen and Joe Sawyer.
- 6 p.m.: *Strange Interlude* (1932), dir. Robert Z. Leonard, with Norma Shearer, Clark Gable and Maureen O'Sullivan.
- 8 p.m.: *Anna Christie* (1930), dir. Clarence Brown, with Greta Garbo, Marie Dressler, Charles Bickford, and George Marion.
- 10 p.m.: *Ah, Wilderness!* (1935), dir. Clarence Brown, with Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Beery, Eric Linden, Aline MacMahon and Spring Byington.

One other O'Neill film, though not included in the long day's screening, was added to the quintet during the subsequent week: *The Emperor Jones* (1933), dir. Dudley Murphy, screenplay by DuBose Heyward, with Paul Robeson and Dudley Digges. For the capsule evaluations of these six and one other film of an O'Neill play that appeared in *The New Yorker* last October, see "O'Neill on Screen: *New Yorker* in Audience" on page 21 of this issue.

9. RECENT, CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS.

Ah, Wilderness! Boston University Stage Troupe, Hayden Hall, Boston University, Oct. 26 - Nov. 3, 1979.

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. Will Maitland Weiss. Apple Corps, New York City, Nov. 8 - Dec. 1, 1979.

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. R. Falls. The Wisdom Bridge Theatre, Chicago, March 19 - April 20, 1980.

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. James E. Runyan. American Theatre Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma, March 21 - April 5, 1980.

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. A. Fletcher. American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco, April 3 - May 30, 1980.

Beyond the Horizon, dir. Christian Renaud. 78th Street Theater Lab, New York City. Closed on Nov. 18.

Desire Under the Elms, dir. Irene Lewis. Playwrights Horizons, Queens, New York, Oct. 13 - Nov. 4, 1979.

Desire Under the Elms, dir. Robert Berlinger. Dartmouth Players, Warner Bentley Theater, Hopkins Center, Hanover, New Hampshire, Feb. 26 - March 1, 1980.
(An illustrated review will appear in the May issue of the Newsletter.)

The Emperor Jones, with Stephen D. Agins as Brutus Jones. Presented by "American Theatre Experiment" at Fordham University Theatre, New York City, Sept. 10-22, 1979.

Hughie. In repertory in the Black Swan Theatre, Oregon Shakespearean Festival, Ashland, Oregon, July - Sept., 1980.

The Iceman Cometh, dir. Larry McCarthy. Performed by Pegasus at the New Theater (Hasty Pudding Playhouse), Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 10-27, 1980. This revival of a successful former production by a young and highly-praised company will be performed in repertory with a new play that will also be of interest to O'Neillians: *Scrimshaw*, by Robert Rees Evans, which opens on April 11 and will alternate with *Iceman* thereafter. The play, originally commissioned by the Provincetown Playhouse, concerns an aging and diseased author who reviews his life when his artistic conscience is confronted by acquisitive exploiters. The protagonist is a composite of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and O'Neill, and much of the flashback material was derived from the Gelbs' biography of O'Neill. Illustrated reviews of both productions will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.) Information about both may be obtained from Professor Evans, who teaches drama at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Tel. (617) 287-1900, ext. 2971. Closer to production time, ticket information will be available at the New Theater box office: (617) 547-6360.

Long Day's Journey into Night. Queens College Summer Theatre, Flushing, New York, August 9-11, 1979.

Long Day's Journey into Night. Stratford Festival, Stratford, Ontario. In repertory, Summer 1980.

- A Moon for the Misbegotten*, dir. C. Nolte. Meadow Brook Theatre, Rochester, Michigan, Feb. 28 - March 23, 1980.
- A Touch of the Poet*, dir. George C. White. Actors Theatre of St. Paul (Minnesota), Feb. 7 - March 1, 1980.
- A Touch of the Poet*. Lyric Stage, 54 Charles St., Boston, Massachusetts, 02114, Feb 13 - March 22, 1980. Tel. (617) 742-8703.
- Welded*, adapted by Robert Andrew Bonnard, dir. Irene Horowitz. No Smoking Playhouse, New York City. Closed on Nov. 10.

10. O'NEILL PUBLICATIONS NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED.

- Conradie, P.J. "Mourning Becomes Electra en O'Neill se Griekse droom." *Standpunte*, 127 (1977), 17-36.
- Egri, Peter. "The Short Story in the Drama: Chekhov and O'Neill." *Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 20 (1-2), 1978, pp. 3-28. (An abstract will appear in the May issue of the Newsletter.)
- Evans, Gareth L. "American Connections: O'Neill, Miller, Williams and Albee." *The Language of Modern Drama* (London: Dent, 1977), pp. 177-204.
- Garzilli, Enrico F. "Long Day's Journey into Night (Mary) and Streetcar Named Desire (Blanche): An Inquiry in Compassion." *Theatre Annual*, 33 (1977), 7-23.
- Green, Charmian. "Wolfe, O'Neill, and the Mask of Illusion." *Papers on Language and Literature*, 14 (Winter 1978), 87-90. (On *Mannerhouse* and *Great God Brown*.)
- Haas, Rudolf. *Theorie und Praxis der Interpretation: Modellanalysen englischer und amerikanischer Texte*. Berlin: Schmidt, 1977. (Pp. 198-204 concern *Mourning Becomes Electra*.)
- McDonald, David. "The Phenomenology of the Glance in *Long Day's Journey into Night*." *Theatre Journal*, 31 (October 1979), 343-356. (An abstract will appear in the May issue of the Newsletter.)
- Müller, Kurt. "Die Behandlung der Rassen- und Klassenproblematik in den expressionistischen Stücken O'Neills," *Konventionen und Tendenzen der Gesellschaftskritik in expressionistischen amerikanischen Drama der zwanziger Jahre*. Frankfurt: Lang, 1977. (*All God's Chillun* and *The Hairy Ape* are discussed on pp. 97-127.)
- Scheller, Bernhard. "O'Neill und die Rezeption spätbürgerlich-kritischer Dramatik," in Brüning, Eberhard, et al., *Studien zum amerikanischen Drama nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1977, pp. 265-273.
- Törnqvist, Egil. "O'Neill's Work Method." *Studia Neophilologica*, 49 (1977), 43-58.
- Watson, James G. "The Theater in *The Iceman Cometh*: Some Modernist Implications." *Arizona Quarterly*, 34 (Autumn 1978), 230-238.
- Welch, Dennis M. "Hickey as Satanic Force in *The Iceman Cometh*." *Arizona Quarterly*, 34 (Autumn 1978), 219-229.

11. O'NEILL FESTIVAL COMETH IN ILLINOIS. On May 7, 1980, Lake Forest Academy-Ferry Hall, a prestigious college preparatory school in the suburbs of Chicago, will devote its annual Fine Arts Festival to Eugene O'Neill. Organized by Carla-Maria Sullwold, Chairman of the Arts, and by members of the Fine Arts Department, the festival, which will be an all-day, all-school effort and will take place both indoors and on the school's extensive grounds, is open to the public. All arts classes will prepare culminating activities concerning O'Neill, and members of the other academic disciplines will be asked to participate in the event by teaching about O'Neill and his era in their classrooms.

The events will include several one act plays, some workshop productions and readings of scenes from the longer O'Neill plays, the film of *The Iceman Cometh*, a photography exhibit of O'Neill's life and times, a gallery show inspired by themes in O'Neill's work, a lecture on the architecture of O'Neill's homes, an original piece of choreography based on *Desire Under the Elms*, and selections from *Take Me Along*, the musical version of *Ah, Wilderness!* Additional lectures on O'Neill's life and the history of his times are being considered. For further information, contact Ms. Sullwold at the Academy, 1500 West Kennedy Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045. Tel. (312) 234-3210.

12. O'NEILL FORGOTTEN? That's what actor-director Charles Hallahan thinks, and he's doing his best to jog our memories. Lawrence Christon reported Hallahan's views and activities in an issue of the *Los Angeles Times* last winter:

The appearance of *Bound for Cardiff* and *Hughie* at the Theater of Arts is a reminder that, with the exception of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, which played the Ahmanson and Colony theaters last year, Eugene O'Neill seems to have become a forgotten playwright. "Americans don't give a damn," said Charles Hallahan, who will direct the first play and appear in the second. "We tend to take him for granted or else produce him badly. The 'Electra Trilogy' that was done on PBS recently was treated in modern style that made no attempt to solve the characters' behavioral problems, so it came off like a soap opera.

"The impetus to do these plays came from a trip some of us took to Russia last year. I was with ACT in San Francisco, and when we mounted *Desire Under the Elms* I was amazed at how high Russian audiences got from seeing O'Neill, and how much they knew about him."

13. When the Theater Hall of Fame, housed in Broadway's Uris Theater, held its first awards ceremony in six years last November 18, five of the fifty-one initiates summoned memories of monumental O'Neill activities in the past. The five (in alphabetical order): Harold Clurman, Katherine Hepburn, Sir Laurence Olivier, José Quintero, and Jason Robards. Worthies all! We applaud the much-deserved tribute.
14. Paul Voelker, resident O'Neill consultant to the Milwaukee Repertory Theater Company during its 1976-77 production package of *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, reports the results of an audience survey conducted during the two-play run. Of the 1,353 persons who responded, 97% attended both productions. 21% preferred *Journey*, 47% preferred *Wilderness*, and 26% expressed no preference. 71% said they wanted to see more O'Neill plays, and 62% said that their wish to see more O'Neill was a result of the MRTC project. (Only 47% had seen an O'Neill play before.)
15. The reopening of Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, under a new six-member board of directors, has been postponed until the fall of 1980. Richmond Crinkley, the Beaumont's executive director, has announced (*New York Times*, October 25, 1979, p. C15) that a new production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is "being discussed" as part of an eight-play first season.

PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

NORMAND BERLIN, Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and recipient of the University's Distinguished Teacher Award, teaches Shakespeare, Elizabethan-Jacobean drama, modern drama, and O'Neill. He has published two books—*The Base String: The Underworld in Elizabethan Drama and Thomas Sackville*—and about two dozen articles ranging from medieval literature to modern drama and film. He is seeking a publisher for a third book, *The Secret Cause: A Discussion of Tragedy* (which contains a section on *Desire Under the Elms*) and is working on a book on O'Neill for the "Modern Dramatists" series published by Macmillan of London.

BILL COSTLEY, poet and journalist, has had work appear in numerous publications across the country. Most recently, his poetry appeared in "Lynn Voices"—a collaborative collection of poems and pictures about Lynn, Massachusetts—in *Radical America* magazine. Mr. Costley grew up in Lynn—a former shoe manufacturing center—and now lives in the Boston area.

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. The current essay on *The Emperor Jones* marks Professor Hinden's third straight January appearance in the Newsletter—an anniversary that the editor celebrates with praise! The previous essays were "Ironie Use of Myth in *The Hairy Ape*" (January 1978, pp. 2-4) and "'Splendid Twaddle': O'Neill and Richard Middleton" (January 1979, pp. 13-16).

- JOSEPH JURICH teaches English at Boston State College, where he has developed a course on "Mark Twain and the Realists." He has published reviews in CCC, bibliographical entries in the *Annual Bibliography on the College Teaching of English* (NCTE), and an article, with Herbert Bergman, "The Study of Life: Walt Whitman on Education," in *University College Quarterly* (Michigan State University). Having finished a study of "The Persisting Heresies of Mark Twain," he vows to complete soon an introductory poetry text.
- JAMES A. ROBINSON, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Maryland, has published articles on Edith Wharton and Nelson Algren. His "Christianity and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*" appeared in the May 1978 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 1-3). He is presently finishing the rough draft of a book tentatively entitled "Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought," a project that was described on page 23 of the January 1978 issue of the Newsletter.
- MICHAEL E. RUTENBERG, Professor of Theater at Hunter College of the City University of New York, has been a participating director at the Actors' Studio, a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, and artistic director at various summer stock theatres. He is the author of *Edward Albee: Playwright in Protest* (1970), and is currently at work on a critical analysis of the plays of Sam Shepard.
- PAUL D. VOELKER, Associate Professor of Drama at the University of Wisconsin Center in Marshfield, served as literary consultant to the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre's 1977-78 productions of *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. His previous Newsletter contributions include "O'Neill and George Pierce Baker" (September 1977, pp. 4-6), a review of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (January 1978, pp. 15-17), and an abstract of his essay, "Eugene O'Neill's Aesthetic of the Drama" (September 1978, pp. 14-15).
- BERNARD J. VYZGA, Assistant Professor of Drama and Resident Scene Designer at the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, was scenic artist for the 1977 PBS production of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. In the same year, he was represented in the "Scene and Costume Design" exhibit at the Forbes Street Gallery in Pittsburgh, where he was also the scenic artist for the 1978 Pittsburgh Opera production of *Aida*. He has designed sets for numerous regional theatres including Mountain Playhouse in Jennerstown, PA, and Stage/West in West Springfield, MA.

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