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The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE:

SPRING 1981

- * A word from the assoc. ed.; a response from the ed. p. 2
- * Robert Butler on words in *The Iceman Cometh* and *Hughie* p. 3
- * FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE: REVIEWS, REPORTS, PHOTOGRAPHS
 - * Jay E. Raphael on directing *Long Day's Journey Into Night* p. 7
 - * Marshall Brooks reviews *Long Day's Journey* in New York City p. 10
 - * Survey of other critical responses to the production p. 12
 - * *Long Day's Journey* X 3: a pictorial record of three productions p. 13
 - * Frederick Wilkins on *The Iceman Cometh* in Providence p. 15
 - * Deborah Kellar Pattin on *Ah, Wilderness!* in Seattle p. 17
- * Reviews, reprints and abstracts of books and articles p. 19
- * The Eugene O'Neill Society section: minutes, meeting notes, etc. p. 27
- * News, notes and queries p. 30
- * Letters to the editor p. 34
- * Persons represented in this issue p. 35

At right: "Eugene O'Neill," a 1967
portrait by sculptor Jerome Radin.
(See note on page 2.)



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A WORD FROM THE ASSOC. ED.

Lunch hour editorial consultations between Fred Wilkins and myself are memorable not only for their content but certainly for their locations as well. Ye Olde Province Tavern, the Arch Tavern, Brandy Pete's and the North Star Bar, to name a few. They are, or were (the first two threw in the towel recently), joints, with the exception of Brandy Pete's, which is a rather tidy saloon catering to stockbrokers and other white collar sorts. And thinking about these editorial bivouacs in beer bespattered booths reminds me that I cannot think of a single publication that I have worked on where what goes on behind the scenes has not been at least as interesting or illuminating as the publication itself. Often, and sadly, this behind-the-scenes business is considerably more fascinating than what is publicly produced. On unsuccessful ventures all signs of personality and character are carefully weeded out, as if by decree, and as a consequence the results are extremely dull things to behold. Good publications do just the opposite. And the O'Neill Newsletter is a case in point.

As the Newsletter officially enters the realm of the Eugene O'Neill Society, it is only appropriate to acknowledge the fact that the excellence and liveliness of this publication are due in a very large way to the efforts of its tireless and gifted editor. Fred Wilkins' impeccable taste and care in editing have never ceased to amaze me. From the very start, the Newsletter has been intelligent, witty and thoroughly enjoyable. Rare for any sort of publication, anywhere, today. Fred's ability to incorporate so much of what makes editing the Newsletter exciting into the Newsletter itself, where it can be enjoyed by the reader, is unique. Indeed, a very special talent. I am sure Newsletter readers will agree with me in saying, as the Newsletter begins its fifth year and volume, that O'Neill scholarship has been served extraordinarily well by Dr. Wilkins; and will share my confidence that his future contributions will be as bright and imaginative.

That said, it is time to put the final touches on the present issue, as press time is nearing. Time, perhaps, for a production meeting at Brandy Pete's, "Where," a bold handwritten sign on the wall proclaims, "the Customer is Always Wrong." But Pete's food is always right--chowders especially. Fred, next Tuesday?

--Marshall Brooks

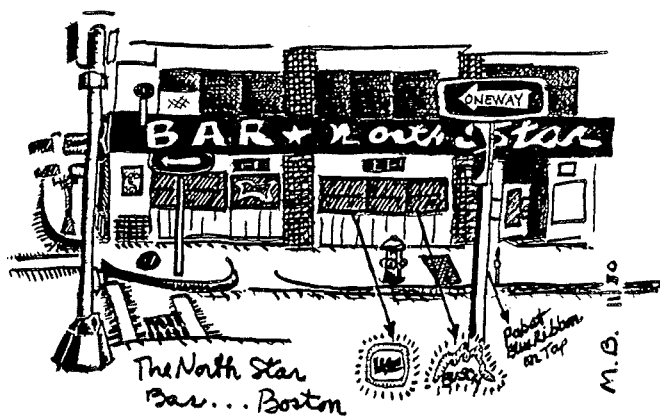
A RESPONSE FROM THE ED.

Unsolicited manuscripts--and I assure the readership that this was such--are always welcome. Thanks, Marshall. Tuesday sounds fine, but as for that promotion . . . ! --Ed.

ON THE COVER; a portrait sculpture of Eugene O'Neill, created in 1967 by Jerome Radin in honor of the opening of StageWest, the resident professional theatre company in Springfield, Massachusetts. For many years it was displayed in the theatre's lobby, and it has also been exhibited in Springfield's Museum of Fine Arts. The portrait, constructed of terra cotta with a bronze patina, is 24 inches in height. The editor is grateful to Hilda Radin, the sculptor's wife, for permitting him to share it with the Newsletter's readers.

Mr. Radin has created sculpted portraits of a number of artists and literary figures--real and fictional--including Bartok, Beethoven, Gershwin, Ravel and Don Quixote. In preparing for projects, the sculptor immerses himself in the life, times and works of the chosen subject--almost becoming that person. The cover photograph offers moving evidence of his intense and intimate understanding of the essential spirit of Eugene O'Neill.

Mrs. Radin writes, "My husband and I love the statue and we are looking for an appropriate home for it. We feel it should be seen by many people." Anyone interested in learning more about the sculpture, or in providing or suggesting a home worthy of it, can write to the Radins at 71 Plantation Drive in Agawam, MA 01001. Agawam--not the site of Nathaniel Ward's satirical volume, *The Simple Cobar of Agawam* (whose locale is Ipswich, which was formerly named Agawam too)--is south of Springfield, near the Connecticut border, in western Massachusetts.



ARTIFICE AND ART--WORDS IN THE ICEMAN COMETH AND HUGHIE

Where I feel myself most neglected is just where I set most store by myself--as a bit of a poet, who has labored with the spoken word to evolve rhythms of beauty where beauty apparently isn't....

[Eugene O'Neill in a letter
to Arthur Hobson Quinn]

I

A problem central to contemporary literature is sharply focused upon at the end of Samuel Beckett's *The Unnameable*:

... words, they're all I have, and not many of them, the words fail, the voice fails, so be it, I know that well, it will be silence, full of murmurs, distant cries, the usual silence, spent listening, spent waiting, waiting for the voice, the cries abate, like all cries, that is to say they stop, the murmurs cease, they give up, the voice begins again, it begins trying again, quick now and try again, quick now before there is none left, no voice left, nothing left but the core of murmurs, distant cries, quick now and try again, with the words that remain, try what, I don't know, I've forgotten, it doesn't matter. I never knew, to have them carry me into my story, the words that remain, my old story, which I've forgotten ...

... you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me....¹

For Beckett, and a great number of other contemporary writers, words have double and contradictory functions. They enable man to impose the constructs of his mind upon reality, thus ordering it and making it "sane." But simultaneously, words make man conscious, aware of a world outside of the mind--and this world, for Beckett and others, has no coherence or intelligibility. It is simply "the core of murmurs" expressing nothing but its own irrationality. The human voice, seen in this context, is paradoxically both a blessing and a curse--it dissolves rational order as it creates it. Hence much of Beckett's drama and fiction is at once a search for a truly human voice and also a quest for silence. Caught in the tension of such opposing impulses, the Beckett hero attempts to tell his "story," all the while cursing the fact that he has a story to relate, or suspecting finally that there is no real story to tell after all.

The tension of this double and contradictory quest can be found in most of Eugene O'Neill's plays and is particularly evident in his late work. One finds in many of O'Neill's major plays a deliberate search for silence, for pre- or post-verbal forms of experience. Lavinia Mannon and Adam Brant in *Mourning Becomes Electra* yearn for the Eden of the South Seas as an antidote for the consciousness-plagued world they are forced to live in. Edmund Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, whose stammering is a major source of frustration, articulates a similar longing when he speaks lyrically of the wordless universe of the sea:

I became drunk with the beauty and singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself--actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself! To God, if you want to put it that way. Then another time, on the American Line, when I was lookout on the crow's nest in the dawn watch. A calm sea, that time. Only a lazy ground swell and a slow drowsy roll of the ship. The passengers asleep and none of the crew in sight. No sound of man. Black smoke pouring from the funnels behind and beneath me. Dreaming, not keeping lookout, feeling alone, and above, and apart, watching the dawn creep like a painted dream over the sky

and sea which slept together. Then the moment of ecstatic freedom came. The peace, the end of the quest²

This world where "no sound of man" intrudes has a similar attraction for Yank, who at the end of *The Hairy Ape* makes a desperate attempt to merge himself with the non-verbal world of the zoo animals.

Such an attempt to avoid words and the consciousness they inspire has its own grim aspects too. Although O'Neill clearly associates peace with a pre- or post-verbal condition, he also gives it sombre overtones of death and destruction. Yank is mangled in his attempt to join the animal world. Although Mildred's words had given him a pained awareness of his own inadequacies, the animals at the zoo certainly do not provide him with an Eden or a womb. Edmund Tyrone's poetic outburst about the sea, similarly, is a very clear index to his own pronounced tendencies towards suicide. It is also notable that Brutus Jones in *The Emperor Jones* is freed from the agonies of words and awareness only at the moment of death--which is powerfully dramatized on stage in a completely non-verbal way as a series of moans, weird background noises, and the sharp crack of the pistol discharging the silver bullet which kills him. The elaborate fictive identity he had created for himself through words is dissolved by noise, and the net result is a strange, inhuman silence.

Throughout his career, O'Neill viewed man's attempt to transcend language and consciousness as suicidally motivated and doomed to failure. In the real world--as O'Neill grasped and portrayed it--man is cursed with awareness and is forced to be verbal as a way of coping with experience. And words give the O'Neill hero two distinct options. Either he may employ them to devise illusions which are debilitating, or he may use them as a means of creating and sustaining fictions which will enable him to deal humanly with a sometimes impersonal, sometimes hostile universe.

These alternative possibilities are powerfully dramatized in two of O'Neill's late plays, *The Iceman Cometh* and *Hughie*--both parables about man as word-maker. While the former play describes the potential for human destruction in words, the latter play explores the creative uses of language. Man as verbalizer has the power either to destroy himself or, magically, to create alternative modes of existence which may allow him a marginally humane identity.

² Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (New Haven, 1956), p. 153. Although this concern for words and wordlessness plays a central role in O'Neill's drama, very little critical discussion has been devoted to it. Travis Bogard compares *The Iceman Cometh* to Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* because "both are plays for voices." [*Contour in Time* (New York, 1972), p. 409.] But he discusses this mainly as a tonal device and does not concern himself with language as a key theme. Robert Whitman's "O'Neill's Search for a 'Language of the Theatre'" [*Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XVI, No. 2 (April, 1960), 154-170] is primarily devoted to a discussion of non-verbal language in O'Neill's plays and says relatively little about his use of verbal language. Likewise, Nancy Reinhardt's penetrating study of "visual and aural patterning" in *Iceman* restricts itself largely to thematic patterns and non-verbal designs such as positioning of characters, musical analogies and sound effects. ["Formal Patterns in *The Iceman Cometh*," *Modern Drama*, XVI (Sept., 1973), 119.] Indeed, it has become a critical commonplace that O'Neill had neither talent for nor interest in the complexities of verbal language. John Gassner, for example, claimed in his Introduction to *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays* that O'Neill was "without verbal virtuosity." (New York, 1964, p. 5). And Mary McCarthy has grouped O'Neill with Dreiser and Farrell as having not "the slightest ear for the word." [*Sights and Spectacles* (New York, 1956), p. 81.]

This criticism, however apt it is for O'Neill's early and middle work, is misleading in the extreme when applied to his late masterpieces, especially *The Iceman Cometh* and *Hughie*. As this paper will demonstrate, O'Neill's understanding and control of words in these plays is masterful. Indeed, the function of words became one of his major themes, and verbal language served as a rich and subtle instrument for exploring character and evoking mood.

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Malloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnameable* (New York, 1958), pp. 413-414.

Words are an essential means by which the characters in *The Iceman Cometh* can separate themselves from realities they cannot face, thus creating a shabby illusory world to hide in. In this sense, they are verbal equivalents to the elaborate masks O'Neill rather clumsily used in earlier plays such as *The Great God Brown*.³ Rocky, for example, wants to be known as "a shrewd businessman,"⁴ instead of the "dirty little Ginny pimp" (102) which Pearl reveals him to be. When his verbally constructed illusion is thus threatened, he responds with characteristic violence. Similarly, the "tarts" don't want to be known as "whores" (100) and also become violent when the latter word is applied to them. Joe is extremely sensitive to the word "nigger" (168), even though his role in the bar is precisely this. When Rocky calls him "a dooty nigger," (168) Joe threatens him with a bread knife. All of his comfortable illusions about himself are built up and protected by words. Convincing himself that "I's a gambling man" (170), he can swagger out of the bar for a brief while.

The pattern O'Neill has here created is a clear and frightening one. Violence and disorder are the real core of the lives which Rocky, Pearl and Joe lead. While words can put a comfortable veneer over these realities, words can also dissolve that veneer, precipitating actions which are essentially destructive.

Harry also builds and controls an illusory world largely through language. He has convinced himself that the tarts are "good kids" (62) and that his bar "ain't a cathouse" (Cora teasingly replies: "My, Harry! Such language!"--70). He has also reshaped his wife's identity through words until she has become "Poor Old Bessie" (50) instead of the "Goddamn'd Bitch" (132) she probably was. He is similarly able to varnish over his fear of the street and the outside world by concocting the verbal fiction that an automobile almost ran him over when he attempted to cross the road.

Hickey also denies reality and creates a world of illusion with words. First known to Harry Hope's clientele as a fiction maker (they love him for his "million funny stories"--61), he controls everyone in the play with a nearly masterful use of language. His skill with the rhetoric of salesmanship assures everyone that they can dispense with their pipe dreams and follow the course of action he has carefully devised for them. Even Larry Slade is controlled for the most part by the verbal fiction Hickey very gradually reveals. When Slade properly names him "the Iceman of Death" (182), Hickey neutralizes Slade's opposition to him by revealing the story of his wife's murder. Drawn sympathetically into Hickey's world now, Slade declares to Rocky: "Leave Hickey alone." (205) In effect, he becomes a character in Hickey's story and is therefore safely under Hickey's control.

The story of his life as it is revealed in the play shows how Hickey has used language as a method of selling himself a series of illusions which have shielded him from a knowledge of his real identity. First "a hell on wheels sport" (232), he then becomes a "drummer." Next, he becomes the epitome of middle class married happiness -- "Yes sir, as far back as I can remember, Evelyn and I loved each other" (233). Finally, he sees himself as a strange kind of Christ figure, sacrificially redeeming himself and his wife through murder.

But Hickey becomes too enraptured with his fictions and loses control of them in the end when he intuitively labels his wife "a damned bitch" (241). His rhetoric now turns on him, dissolving his illusions and revealing the core of his real self--a tormented madman. Language, which had earlier functioned as pro-

tective coating, now heightens his consciousness to an unbearable pitch. The results are predictable in O'Neill's world: madness and death.

Language fails each of the other characters in precisely the same way. The verbal house of cards each has built comes tumbling down, revealing chaos and death. Hugo's earlier statement, "I love only the proletariat" (169), is inverted by his later babbling which reduces all men to swine. In a moment of rage and frustration, Harry blurts out that he hated Bessie and all she stood for. Slade's stance of philosophical detachment is contradicted by his passionate words defending various people from Hickey's attacks. Parritt, who is afraid to drink because he suspects that alcohol will loosen his tongue and reveal him as the betrayer of his mother, is intoxicated by Hickey's story and fully confesses. His "low voice in which there is a strange exhausted relief" (241) condemns him.

The characters' rational control of language completely dissolves into incoherent noise at the play's end. The "weird cacophony" (259) of people simultaneously singing a bewildering assortment of cheap popular songs is suggestive of the garble of sounds which brings Ionesco's *The Chairs* to such a terrifying close. Hugo, in incoherently spitting out bits and pieces of Carlyle's prophecy of doom, breaks down language as he speaks it. His attempt at "poetry" is as pathetically futile as the crude political rhetoric he has spewed out throughout the play. Like so many of O'Neill's word-makers, he has only a small "touch" of the poet. His words easily disintegrate and become part of the "core of murmurs" Beckett talks about at the end of *The Unnameable*.

Larry Slade, while refusing to join in the singing at play's end, is still unable to create a meaningful alternative to it. His silence--so unlike the defiant silence of Camus' Sisyphus and so much like the pathetic silence of Beckett's tramps--is a sobering reminder that he will soon end up like Parritt, or worse, Hickey himself.

III

Such silence and verbal disorder have persuaded most critics that O'Neill's final vision was totally hopeless, a philosophical and religious dead-end. Such a claim is voiced by Doris Falk:

In the last plays O'Neill walked in the valley not of death alone but of nothingness in which all values are illusions and all meaning fades before the terror of ambiguity.⁵

John Howard Lawson wrote in 1936 that "O'Neill can find no salvation outside of religion,"⁶ and critics since that time have seen little in his religious outlook that could inspire hope. Cyrus Day, for example, has brilliantly discussed *Iceman* as a powerful inversion of traditional Christianity, portraying Hickey as a failed Christ and the play itself as a grotesque and meaningless Last Supper.⁷ Tom Driver has argued that even art failed to provide O'Neill with any positive meanings:

With O'Neill not even art is a protection against the darkness of night into which we journey. As a matter of fact, art, as he suggested in *A Touch of the Poet*, is likely to be but another illusion.⁸

³ Eugene Waith has argued effectively that masks in many of O'Neill's plays are both a way of presenting a surface and perceiving the reality underneath it. ["Eugene O'Neill: An Exercise in Unmasking," *Educational Theatre Journal*, XIII, No. 3 (October, 1961), 182-191.] In "Memoranda on Masks" O'Neill claimed: "One's outer life passes in solitude haunted by the masks of others; one's inner life passes in a solitude hounded by the masks of oneself." [O'Neill and His Plays, ed. Oscar Cargill, N. Bryllion Fagin, and Richard J. Fisher (New York, 1961), p. 117.]

⁴ Eugene O'Neill, *The Iceman Cometh* (New York, 1946), p. 12. (All subsequent parenthetical citations relating to *Iceman* refer to this Vintage Books edition.)

⁵ Doris Falk, *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragical Tension* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1958), p. 201.

⁶ John Howard Lawson, *Theory and Technique of Playwriting* (New York, 1936), p. 130.

⁷ Cyrus Day, "The Iceman and the Bridegroom: Some Observations on the Death of O'Neill's Salesman," *Modern Drama*, I (May, 1958), 3-9.

⁸ Tom F. Driver, "On the Late Plays of Eugene O'Neill," *Tulane Drama Review*, III, No. 2 (December, 1958), 15.

Finding O'Neill both "anti-religious" and "anti-aesthetic,"⁹ Driver concludes that such complete negativity is a serious weakness in O'Neill's vision since its ultimate result is to encourage a sickly indifference to the existential facts of the human condition.

It is my purpose here to demonstrate that O'Neill was never really comfortable with an absolutely bleak view of the world and that he strove, even in his late work, to discover positive meanings in life and the possibility of salvation. *Hughie*, written only a year after *Ice-cream*, illustrates this vividly, for it provides a fascinating reversal of the process of verbal and moral disintegration depicted in the earlier play.¹⁰ Here O'Neill allows his characters to overcome silence, alienation, and despair by creating with words a fictive world which can be the source of creative, useful illusions.

IV

To use Conrad's terminology, the two characters in *Hughie* have enough poetry in them to create "a great and saving illusion"¹¹--a fiction which is humanizing, the only light available in an otherwise dark universe. Such humane illusions constitute for O'Neill a genuine form of art which is radically different from the paltry and transparent artifices which all the characters of *Ice-cream* use to mask their real selves and merely withdraw from reality. O'Neill, who once remarked that "a work of art is always happy; all else is unhappy,"¹² was finally able to discover in art a substantially qualified but affirmative response to life.

The parallels between the characters of the two plays are striking. Erie Smith is clearly another version of Hickey. Identified in the *dramatis personae* as "a teller of tales," he too is a con artist in mourning who had early left the innocence of small town life, expecting success in the big city. Like Hickey, he has two ways of negating the brutal realities around him--drinking and fabulating. He identifies himself as Hickey does, not only as "a Broadway sport and a Wise Guy,"¹³ but also as someone possessing a special knowledge denied most people. The latter is made clear in an early stage direction: "he and his kind imagine they are in the *Real Know*, cynical oracles of the One True Grapevine." (264)

Initially, the Night Clerk is a good deal like Larry Slade, especially as he is imagined at the very end of *Ice-cream*. Radically alienated, apathetic, and nearly silent, the Night Clerk is unable to either confront or productively work around the sometimes indifferent, sometimes hostile world of random

noises and urban emptiness which surrounds him. Just as Slade is finally portrayed as a convert to death, the Night Clerk is initially described as a "corpse." (273) Facially, there are also strong physical resemblances between the two--Slade's "gaunt Irish face" (4) becomes the clerk's "long and narrow face." (263) Both also wear a mask of absolute indifference and try to protect themselves with heavy doses of sardonic humor.

Hughie and Evelyn are also cut from essentially the same bolt of cloth because each represents an ideal of goodness for those who perceive them. Radically innocent and pure, they are presented as objects of faith which are debased by a crude world that no longer can sustain real belief. Just as Hickey was amazed by Evelyn's capacity to forgive all of his excesses and was astonished by her apparently boundless capacity to believe in him, Erie characterizes Hughie as someone who "would believe anything." (276) Indeed, Hughie's death has robbed Erie of his confidence in himself because Hughie was the only person who trusted and believed in him. (In religious terms, it is tempting to see both characters as Christ figures--Hughie as one who sustains life, and Evelyn as one who torments with an impossible ideal.)

The plays are further likened by the settings they employ. Each envisions the city as a harsh and sterile world which overwhelms with anonymity and violence. However, the bar in *Ice-cream* and the hotel in *Hughie* are retreats which shelter their inhabitants by providing a place to talk, dream and contact each other.

In a very real way, the fundamental tensions in each play are revealed sharply by these settings. The outer world of urban emptiness (silence) and violence (noise) is counterpointed against the more human world of bar and hotel. Each is a place which enables the characters to talk and define for themselves a reality they find congenial. The clerk in *Hughie*, for example, has two choices: either he can succumb to the brute life of the city; or he can respond to Erie's voice, which asks for human contact. At first he tries the former, as is revealed in the stage direction that follows Erie's remark, "You missed a lot not knowing Hughie, Pal. He sure was one grand little guy."

The Night Clerk regards him with vacant, bulging eyes full of vague envy for the blind.... The Clerk's mind remains in the street to greet the noise of a far-off El train. Its approach is pleasantly like a memory of hope; then it roars and rocks and rattles past the nearby corner, and the noise pleasantly deafens memory; then it recedes and dies and there is something melancholy about that. But there is hope. Only so many El trains pass in one night, and each one passing leaves one less to pass, so the night recedes, too, until at last it must die and join all the other long nights in Nirvana, the Big Night of Nights. And that's life.... (273-274)

Unlike Erie's voice, which is a source of value because it is centered upon genuine feelings of loss and compassion, the city noises offer a cheap release which deadens memory and leads to a final Nirvana of emotional and spiritual numbness. In this way, these meaningless sounds are exact equivalents to the awful pandemonium which concludes *The Ice-cream*. It is significant that the Night Clerk tries throughout the play to drown out Erie's voice with the garble of sounds from the city. At the very outset of the play he "wishes 492 would stop talking" and prefers instead "to listen to the noises of the street." (267) As Erie recounts the details of having dinner at Hughie's house, the clerk's mind "has hopped on an ambulance clanging down Sixth Street." (281) As Erie discusses Hughie's marriage, the clerk tries "to count the footfalls of the cop on the beat." (279) The implications of all this are clear: the clerk fears the human voice because it is a call to the pain, joy, and responsibility of human existence.

Ultimately he is compelled by Erie's voice, but only when the clatter of the city subsides and he is forced to encounter the terrible silence which is underneath such noise:

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁰ Although I would agree with Travis Bogard's contention that *Hughie* is a more positive "epilogue" to *The Ice-cream*, I would sharply disagree with his claim that language has very little to do with the play's affirmations. His view that Erie's words "spatter and drain away unheard" [*Contour in Time*, p. 420] is at variance with the text of the play, which makes it clear that Erie's story is an essential way of making human contact with the clerk. Bogard is wrong, therefore, when he asserts: "The emotional center of the play perhaps evolves less from its words than from its silence." [*Contour*, p. 419.] As I shall demonstrate, quite the reverse is true.

¹¹ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York, 1960), p. 122. Arthur and Barbara Gelb point out that Conrad was an especially strong influence on O'Neill. A great novelist of the sea, he was a model for the American playwright, whose early ambition was to be a great dramatist of the sea. They quote O'Neill as a college student: "Wilde, Conrad, and London were much nearer to me than Shakespeare at that time. And so, later, was Ibsen" [O'Neill (New York, 1962), p. 112.] The necessity of illusion is surely rooted in O'Neill's appreciation of Conrad and Ibsen, whose late plays attest to the need for "life-lies."

¹² Quoted in John Gassner's *Theatre at the Crossroads* (New York, 1960), p. 85.

¹³ Travis Bogard, ed., *The Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York, 1967), p. 284. [All subsequent parenthetical citations relating to *Hughie* refer to this Modern Library edition.]

Erie. Ain't it the truth, Charlie?

He again stares at the Night Clerk appealingly, forgetting past rebuffs. The Clerk's face is taut with vacancy: his mind has been trying to fasten itself to some noise in the night, but a rare and threatening pause of silence has fallen on the city, and here he is, chained behind a hotel desk forever, awake when everyone else in the world is asleep, except Room 492, and he won't go to bed, he's still talking, and there is no escape.

NIGHT CLERK (*his glassy eyes stare through Erie's face. He stammers deferentially*). Truth? I'm afraid I didn't get--What's the truth? (284-85)

The clerk's concerned stammer, expressing interest in "the truth" (so different from the smooth but meaningless formulae which have up until this point characterized his speech), saves him from psychological death. His words activate his mind, emotions, and imagination. They also provide him with "company," somebody who is "awake and alive" (285). Responding to Erie's need for an audience and his own need to avoid the silence of death, the clerk endows his life with purpose, thus enabling him to "live through the night." (285)

Erie's story of Hughie, therefore, is the dramatic reverse of Hickey's narrative about Evelyn. The effect is to awaken consciousness and equip both speaker and audience with the ability to cope with life in more humane ways. Unlike Hickey, whose stories are as debilitating as the cheap booze he uses to "paralyze" himself and others with, Erie can create something worthwhile with his fictions. His tales are not grounded in a compulsive and corrosive guilt but spring rather from a simple lyric desire to probe his own pain, feel his own worth, and touch other human beings. His stories have not only given interest and meaning to Hughie's drab existence; they are also responsible for saving the Night Clerk from his morbid suicidal tendencies. Unlike Hickey, who nearly destroys people by egoistically depriving them of their illusions, Erie creates warmth and meaning by giving people illusions which have a positive, life giving function:

Yeah, Hughie lapped up my stories like they was duck soup, or a beakful of heroin. I sure took him around with me in tales and showed him one hell of a time. (*He chuckles--then seriously--*) And, d'you know, it done me good, too, in a way. Sure. I'd get to seein' myself like he seen me. (284)

By the end of the play, Erie's words have created a meaningful, though temporary, bond between himself and the Night Clerk. The latter drops his "false poker face" (286) and enters into Erie's saving fiction. The brutal truth of the actual world is enriched with a higher fictive truth which touches down upon but is not overwhelmed by reality. For Erie's stories artfully straddle two worlds--that of his own direct experience, and that of pure imagination. He makes it clear that his tales are not empty pipe-dreams: "I didn't lie--not any more'n a guy naturally does when he gabs about the bets he wins and the dolls he's made." (283) In such a world, where actuality is heightened by imagination and imagination is given substance by actuality, it is possible for people to live with some dignity.

Through the magic of imagination and words, both Erie and the Night Clerk indeed become "Big Shots" (287) like Arnold Rothstein, an authentic gambler. In a very real sense, each becomes a gambler--willing to risk a genuine commitment to life. (Significantly, Joe in *Ice Man* can only talk about becoming a gambling man but doesn't have the courage to back up his words.) So the Night Clerk leaves the safe and sterile world of his isolation, and Erie resists the urge to go quietly up to his room and renew his drinking bout. Although both agree that life indeed is "a racket,"¹⁴ they resolve to "make the best of it"

(285) by imagining and sharing a world that gives each a protean identity. Fiction-making of this sort provides them with "a saving revelation." (290)

In short, Erie's tales are oddly salvific whereas Hickey's are murderous. While the story of Evelyn reveals a brutal killing, triggers a suicide, and "converts" Larry Slade to death, the story of Hughie results in the remarkable rebirth of three people. Significantly, the stage directions tell us that a "Beatific vision" (287) illuminates the clerk's blank face as he becomes part of the fiction which Erie has created. In entering such a rich fictive world, the Night Clerk, whose last name is Hughes and whose age is the same as Hughie's, literally becomes the person whom Erie had earlier lost. Erie's story, in a strangely beautiful way, performs a resurrection of a very real kind. And by recovering Hughie, his audience and friend, Erie is also reborn--he is finally "purged of his grief, his confidence restored." (293) Hickey's narrative, which masks hatred as love, results in damnation. But Erie's vignettes, which mask love¹⁵ in an artful veneer of protective cynicism, result in the only kind of salvation which O'Neill's Catholic-trained imagination could endorse late in his career.

V

Helen Muchnic, therefore, is wrong when she claims that for O'Neill "there is no distinction between useful and useless illusion."¹⁶ O'Neill's position in *Hughie* is very close to that of Robert Coover and other post-moderns who argue that the human world itself is a series of fictive constructs and that it is the task of the artist to supply mankind with truly humanizing fictions.¹⁷ In the final stages of his career, O'Neill had certainly given up the search for absolute meaning and coherence in external reality, but this did not bring him to ultimate despair. Redemption of a very private and precarious sort is possible in the tragic world of O'Neill's later plays, but only for those who can go beyond the first primitive stages of the artistic process. People like Con Melody and Hickey, who are cursed with only a "touch" of the poet, are doomed to destroy themselves and others in a world of inadequate illusions. And Edmund Tyrone's severe stammer is a revealing index to why he is one of the "fog people"--a fledgling writer who cannot deal with the confusion of his life because he lacks the verbal skill to shape an adequate response to the world. But characters like Erie Smith, whose creative imaginations endow them with more than a mere touch of poetry, can construct for themselves and others fictions which are sound and humanizing. Flawed as he is, Erie Smith is redeemed by his superior imagination and verbal artistry. And the same can be said of the playwright who created him.

--Robert Butler

in general is a "racket" and even the institution of the family is a "racket."

Erie's story transcends each of these meanings. By drawing both speaker and listener away from the emptiness of the outer world, it endows their experiences with meaning, convincing them that life is more than a mere "racket." Also, the story, which is so poetically crafted, is the diametric opposite of the random cacophony of the city. Finally, the story brings together Hughie, Erie and the clerk into a kind of human "family," a basic unit of human solidarity.

¹⁵ Although Winifred Frazer is essentially correct when she argues that the central meaning of *The Iceman Cometh* is "that belief in love is the greatest of man's illusions" [*Love as Death in The Iceman Cometh* (Gainesville, Florida, 1967), p. 4], she overgeneralizes when she claims that this was O'Neill's final position on life. The meaning of *Hughie* dramatically reverses this theme. Here, verbally crafted fictions paradoxically generate love of an admittedly frail but nevertheless genuine sort. In a world as dark and terrible as that depicted in O'Neill's last play, this is no small affirmation.

¹⁶ Helen Muchnic, "The Irrelevancy of Belief: *The Iceman and The Lower Depths*," *Comparative Literature*, III (Spring, 1951), 125.

¹⁷ Frank Gado, ed., *First Person: Conversations on Writers and Writing* (Schenectady, 1973), pp. 147-148.

¹⁴ The word "racket" is used as a motif which goes to the core of the play's meaning. Basically, it involves two important meanings. It refers on a literal level to the clatter of sounds in the city, which become a symbol of modern incoherence; while it also refers to Erie's outward cynicism that life

ON DIRECTING *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

[Mr. Raphael offers the following report of the careful thought that preceded his directing of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the University of Virginia last December and January, and of the results of that thought in the production itself. --Ed.]

The last chapter of John Gassner's *Form and Idea in Modern Theatre* is entitled "The Duality of Theatre." After analyzing the realistic and non-realistic phases of drama and theatre in the twentieth century, Gassner calls for a productive mingling of realism and theatricalism in order to "make it possible for them to function without inhibition and with a minimum of confusion." Gassner writes of esthetic distance as the "fusion of the real and the unreal, of reality and theatre." The chapter is preceded by a number of related quotations dealing with the apprehension of reality within a work of art. The last citation, from Stark Young, reads in part that the theatre "is neither realistic nor poetic; it is only good or bad, true or false." Measured on that scale, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is decidedly good theatre--and true drama. Moreover, it is a fine example of the duality which Gassner regarded as the ultimate dramatic form. Perhaps more dynamic than the synthesis, however, is the experience of the tension involved in the duality. With no loss of balance, the play continually yields up the "pull" of a number of varying impulses. Indeed, the balance continuously shifts, and ultimately O'Neill delivers--from what Randall Jarrell, in describing Chekhov, called the "Vuillard spots" of everyday existence--unique insights into the human condition. Directing *Long Day's Journey* served as an opportunity to concretize a literal and theatrical tension representative for me of the sum of O'Neill's dramatic impulses.

Experimenting with form, wrestling with style, extending the "dramatic possibility": such phrases are often used to describe the plays of the early and middle years. And, all too often, O'Neill is praised for maturing or for finally "coming around" to realism in his last efforts. Such praise is, at best, simplistic. *Long Day's Journey* is dialect and chant become suggestive lyricism and a subtle linguistic web. It is also the actual masks of *The Great God Brown* become the Pirandellian visage of personality. But most importantly, it is all of the theses and devices of the other plays interfaced with the writer's own "ism"--the critical tension of the purely O'Neill, the "duality" as a metaphor and a concrete achievement. It has been reported that O'Neill often emerged from the daily labors of facing his dead and writing this play exhausted and in tears. While it is certain that he waged an emotional battle with his own human history, I have always held the private belief that part of the immense struggle was devoted to perfecting the skills necessary to finally fuse all of the variables previously explored within his imagination. This play lives because the tension in that process can be communicated theatrically. It becomes the emotional experience of the characters while remaining the energy of the writer.

Frequently, the glib and the untutored will refer to *Long Day's Journey* as the only play of O'Neill's which shows any real facility with language. Actually, the striking, even daring quality of the language of this play exists in a variety of forms throughout the canon. What is unique in this work is that the playwright has made stage dialogue yield poetry while continuously disguised as conventional speech. Here the "tension" lies in a masterful "duplicity" and in an organic understanding of the illusion of reality. For example, in Act Four, in a long monologue, Edmund tells of his memories of the sea. Tyrone compliments his son for having "the makings of a poet" and Edmund "sardonically" replies, in a frequently quoted passage, that his is just stammering; that the best he can hope for is "faithful realism." Ironically, this is the great accomplishment of the play--a seemingly faithful realism which is actually a perfect synthesis of naturalistic language and poetry. Stage speech is neither street chatter nor the stuff of the dinner table; yet, it must appear so while conveying infinitely more specialized intentions. O'Neill's ear for dialect, his preference for the exotic and the low-colloquial and for the quasi-poetry of slang and rhythmical prose suddenly become compressed, unselfconscious, and part of the

narrowly channeled energy that forms the fiber of the play. All of the usual color and eccentricity related to characterization lurks beneath the "faithful realism" to which Edmund refers. Jean Chothia, in the introduction to her linguistic study of the plays of O'Neill, *Forging a Language*, provides a straightforward treatment of this concept of "verisimilitude and dramatic artifice." She calls attention to the conventions of stage dialogue and the fact that it operates by "duplicity" in terms of the imitation of real speech. Courageously, O'Neill lays artificially representative speech alongside Swinburne, Baudelaire and Rossetti, and allows each form to comment on and complement the other. The reader and the listener become aware of the poetry in each, and again a tension is created between language which has the appearance of reality and, in Gassner's usage, "the theatrical."

During a reception following the opening of my production in December of 1980, the technical director of our theatre commented that he had never seen more accurate, verisimilar, naturalistic lighting. Moments later, the resident choreographer complimented the same lighting designer, Michael Rourke, on the "mystical quality" of the lighting and his ability to realize the subtextual character relations through color and subtle shifts of illumination. The two observations were in fact quite compatible rather than mutually exclusive: they reflected a conscious plan in the scenic and lighting design which realized visually the realistic-theatrical tension in the script.

In the early design conferences, set designer David W. Weiss, Mr. Rourke and I agreed to a mix based on three objectives: 1) a visual setting faithful to period, to certain aspects of the O'Neill biography, and especially to O'Neill's stage directions on the passage of time and the movement of the sun; 2) a "point of view" environment linked to Mary's objections to the summer house as cold, cheap and unhomelike; and 3) an expressionistic structure that would serve to make of the stage a psychological mechanism. It was my hope that, under the influence of changing light both inside and out, and in relation to the pictorial composition of the performers, the house would, though not literally move, achieve the plastic qualities of some of O'Neill's earlier, more formalistic scenic images.

David Weiss's solution revolved around a special treatment of the groundplan, the flats, and a false proscenium arch. We utilized an exceptionally sparse setting with the absolute minimum of furniture and furnishings. Each object became a territorial hieroglyph, a spatial anchor, representative of individual family members; furthermore, the overall impression was never one of warmth, comfort or planned interior decoration. The flats, untopped by a ceiling piece, rose up some twenty feet, fading gradually from a striking wallpaper pattern to absolute black and giving the impression of extending into infinity. In addition, the "walls" were joined at ninety degree angles. Despite the relief of a variety of entrance and window treatments and the natural relationship of the furniture pieces to each other and the room, the scale and symmetry effected a kinetic severity that repeatedly accented the conflicts of the play. The entire setting was embraced by a false proscenium arch designed to look like the frame of a theatre in which James Tyrone might have played *The Count of Monte Cristo*. While visible throughout the performance, the arch received specific lighting only twice--in an opening preset before establishing the morning illumination of the first scene; and at the very end when, following Mary's last speech and James's final movement, a blackout of the room itself left only the arch in a cold white light. As a theatrical metaphor, the arch made a permanent statement; and in the last few seconds it sustained the tension of the scene and created a feeling of ambiguity as to the "ending" of the drama. While the family had passed like an island into the black and fog, the theatrical statement became etched in the audience's imagistic memory.

It is certainly possible to light this show with between twenty and thirty cues for all four acts. Our lighting design employed more than 80 cues. At least one of this number, with the assistance of highly sophisticated equipment, was completed over an elapsed time of sixteen minutes. As indicated earlier, the basis for the design was an accurate tracking of the passage of the sun--direction, intensity, length of the shadows cast, color,

quality, etc. This also included the haze and the evolution of the fog visible in its increasing thickness through a large bay window. With careful picturization and the staging of specific moments in relation to the source of light, a seemingly objective and natural element contributed a visual rhythm and a source of emotional punctuation. The sunlight became as much a conspirator as the fog. On a second level, a subliminal plot led the actors with light by carefully varying the intensities within the acting areas and continuously isolating the islands of furniture and people. This provided a selective focus almost cinematic in technique. The conclusions of scenes and acts were notable for making this isolation suddenly obvious by blacking out all but the remaining figure. Sometimes with the text and sometimes in a Pinteresque silence, the performer played out his or her action in relation to the tempo of the final fadeout which served to stress and externalize the character's inner monologue. In one instance, where O'Neill scripted the inner monologue, I cut the literal statement in favor of achieving his intention mimetically. (At the end of Act II, Scene ii, Mary's lines read, "It's so lonely here. You're lying to yourself again. You wanted to get rid of them. Their contempt and disgust aren't pleasant company. You're glad they're gone. Then Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely?" Lighting, blocking, and the actress's physical expression replaced certain lines so that, while the intention was expressed, the passage simply read, "It's so lonely here. Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely?")

Movement along the theatrical continuum from the illusion of reality to overt theatrical statement was particularly effective from Mary's last entrance through the concluding beats of the play. Mary's piano playing was preceded by a shaft of light emanating from the hall (to indicate her entrance into a parlor) which fell across the central table at which the men were seated. The diagonal column traversed the stage like a beacon in the fog. Seconds after the piano playing stopped, as Edmund looked back toward the portieres, Mary's gnarled and groping hand appeared in the entranceway. This disembodied limb was slowly followed by the rest of her until she stood, weaving, white hair flowing to her knees, completely back lit and an adequate motivation for Jamie's bitter reference to the entrance of Ophelia. The last nightmarish moments utilized movement motivated in part by O'Neill's own sketch, and employed the established lighting convention by tracing Mary's path in a gentle glow. She finally came to rest on a chair placed at the down-right limits of the set, almost against the arch--a chair in which no one else had sat during the entire play. Separated in space by a circle of light, Mary seemed to float away from the rest of the family until finally she too dissolved in darkness. In a play about time, the actors' transitions communicate the dramatic tension of choice and decision but also delineate philosophical statements on the past, the present, and the future. The acting moments were enhanced by and fused with the artificial manifestation of time in the recognizable movement from day to night and in the apparent suspension of time as controlled by use of the theatrical "specials."

Much has been written about O'Neill's use of natural elements to develop both visual and aural imagery. The plaintive cry of the foghorn and the warning bells of yachts at anchor in the harbor are natural to the setting and also of extreme importance symbolically to character exposition and biography. At the opening of Act Three, O'Neill requests that a foghorn be heard at "regular intervals." Of the forty-eight cues in my sound script, 41 of them comprised an incidental score for foghorns and bells. Each cue in isolation was easily identifiable as the sound of a foghorn or the peal of a bell; but, utilizing a nucleus of five different horn blasts and the ring of three different bells, the technician accomplished an acoustic modification with each individual cue by varying the intensity, frequency and duration in recording. (In playback he also made small adjustments in direction.) In Act Four, Edmund speaks of "hearing the fog drip from the eaves like the uneven tick of a rundown crazy clock. . . ." The aforementioned process allowed me to pair a section of text with an orchestration of the sounds and to surface the quality of sound as it existed in the individual character's imagination. The technique is by no means revolutionary, nor did I assume that audiences were cognizant of the intention. However, it contributed to the objective/subjective duality and supplied the

"productive mingling of realism and theatricalism."

The ultimate success of my production depended upon the obvious--good acting. To use the late Tyrone Guthrie's word, you can't "jolly" this play. Regardless of how unique the setting and how excellent the production values, essentially the actors are clothed only by the text, in a single setting, toe-to-toe for three hours, and dependent upon their craft skills. Everything abstract about this play and everything within the director's reading must become whole in their playing. *Long Day's Journey* requires the very best of naturalistic acting--truthful, intricately motivated, and abounding with all the detail and idiosyncrasy that communicates a family ensemble. At the heart of the duality which provided the basis of my conception lies a convincing transformation and the audience's ability to seize on the truth of the performances. However, within each of O'Neill's characters lies an ambiguity--a contradiction which serves as its own duality within the performers themselves. All of the members of the Tyrone family live very close to the skin--accusing and apologizing, attacking and forgiving, telling truths and fantasies within the same beat. The director's job is to present these contradictions, not to eliminate them. Awkward prose notwithstanding, José Quintero evidences great insight when he observes,

Some plays exist in an ordinary reality. It's almost as if you happened to visit somebody where no terribly uncommon action had taken place. But although they are always labeling O'Neill as a realistic playwright, every-time I have done any of his plays, I have 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.

Doris Falk also writes about a "tragic tension." She asserts that, in addition to locating O'Neill's philosophy of the human situation in the perpetual pull of opposites, the plays reveal a psychoanalytic premise which serves as the key to the exploration of character and to the playwright's own inner conflicts. For Ms. Falk this particular "tension" is the potential link between the dramatic values of O'Neill's plays and their theatrical efficacy. As an acting coach, I encouraged my cast to find their characterizations in the text itself and to avoid the volumes of biography and critical comment. As a director, I also found more than the usual impetus to depend upon the playwright, believing the structure, style, and dialogue of *Long Day's Journey* to be an apt and complete prescription for staging the play. My production sought both to capture O'Neill's dramatic impulses and to show that his play--in its language, its visual imagery, and its sensitive character development--is an explicit and powerful statement of his ideas on "how the theatre works."

--Jay E. Raphael

[Photographs of the production appear on page 14. --Ed.]

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, dir. Geraldine Fitzgerald. New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theater, March 18, 1981 - present: A REVIEW.

Perhaps what is most striking about the Richard Allen Center's production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, now installed at Joe Papp's Public Theater, is the play itself. One cannot escape the conclusion that it is a great play. A fine cast and intelligent director in no small way prompt this thinking, to be sure. And what is more, the production demonstrates in no uncertain terms the universality of the play and O'Neill's skill as a playwright.

Director Geraldine Fitzgerald was certainly farsighted enough to appreciate the fact that black actors--or any *other* group of actors, for that matter--could play *Long Day's Journey* and make it work. And it is to O'Neill's lasting credit that while he wrote the play about members of his own family, and included in it many of the bizarre details and idiosyncratic incidents which epitomized them, he still managed to create a work of genius with undeniably broad appeal.

The Richard Allen Center's production is less an instance of taking O'Neill's play and infusing it with elements of black American experience--in fact, I saw none--than a demonstration that people, whatever their race or ethnic background, are complex, and that modern civilization frequently does little to help us understand, or live contentedly with, our natures. On the contrary, civilization seems to do everything in its power to prevent us from doing so--especially in the case of the Tyrone family.

Gloria Foster's Mary was effective and convincing. Each time that she reappeared on stage, she was that much more distant and alarmingly detached as the "poison" took its effect, till, finally, she was completely enveloped in the fog of the past and spoke in a possessed, small girl voice. One definitely felt that this Mary was by-the-book, with few surprises. Her laughter, though, was notably devastating and cutting when she recalled choice Tyrone follies; and her treatment of Jamie was extremely merciless when, on more than one occasion, she taunted him about his character and habits.

I missed out on Al Freeman, Jr.'s Jamie and saw understudy Thommie Blackwell's version instead. Mr. Blackwell is an energetic actor who put his all into the role, but he was a rather young looking and relatively trim Jamie. I found myself at times yearning for more of an old soak sort, whose hardboiled philosophy of life would flow as effortlessly from his lips as would his boozy breath. Mr. Blackwell seemed a trifle self-conscious when it came to his lines. But his performance in Act Four was inspired and forceful.

Earle Hyman's James Tyrone was memorable and special. Director Geraldine Fitzgerald, in a *Showbill* interview, credits Arvin Brown (who was responsible for the Off Broadway production of *Long Day's Journey* in 1971, in which Miss Fitzgerald played Mary) "with the insight that the Tyrone family is moved by love, not hatred." Nowhere was this more in evidence than in Mr. Hyman's performance. From the start, the elder Tyrone demonstrated affection and concern for his wife in a most touching and gentle fashion. But no matter how much love and understanding there may be in his heart, he is an utterly baffled and bewildered man. His hurt, when he finds out that Mary has once again started her habit, is truly deep and extremely painful.

Tyrone's infamous penuriousness and his set, old fashioned beliefs come across not so much as bad qualities but as eccentricities--the eccentricities of a man who, in fact, has lived a lot of life. We see clearly that Tyrone, for all of his drawbacks, is the only whole person in the play. Mary is lost to the past, Jamie to the present, and Edmund is just beginning to fit the pieces of his own life together. Life has changed dramatically since the elder Tyrone was a young man, and what was once good and true no longer washes. But Tyrone, though confounded, has not yet given up. He is a man of contradictions and strong character, a fascinating fellow. And Mr. Hyman sees to it that we don't doubt it for one minute. In the end, Tyrone has our respect, or, at the very least, our sympathy. The production was worth seeing if only for this one Tyrone.

Peter Francis-James appeared quite comfortable as Edmund. He acted truly like a son, and it was impossible to believe that Gloria Foster and Earle Hyman were not his parents, so convincingly did the three act together. But Mr. Francis-James is extremely young looking, and it is a trifle difficult to picture him under that squarerigger's bowsprit, being at one with the universe.... However, a certain innocence and naiveté are necessary to the role and play, and Mr. Francis-James provided these qualities skillfully.

Samantha McKoy as Cathleen was also quite natural, and funny as well. Her performance offered proof that O'Neill had an excellent sense of humor as a playwright and, quite remarkably, was able to exercise it liberally throughout *Long Day's Journey*.

The Richard Allen Center's production was exciting. It allowed one to meet a magnificent James Tyrone. And it underscored the fact that the "fog people" are just people--and that they cannot be classified by their skin color or by any other such criteria.

--Marshall Brooks

WHAT OTHERS SAID. Edith Oliver ("At Home Again with the Tyrones," *The New Yorker*, March 16, 1981, pp. 62, 65) found the production "generally unsatisfactory," although she approved of dividing the play into two instead of four acts. Gloria Foster was, she felt, "miscast" as Mary; and though she admired Earle Hyman's "subtlety, feeling, and intelligence," she thought that his performance "lacks the flamboyance that is essential to the role." Her highest praise--sorry, Marshall!--was for the Jamie of Al Freeman, Jr. ("smoldering, cynical, loving, and explosive"), who "is so strong that the character becomes the focus of the play, and his scenes with ... his father become fascinating duels of wits." She did not share Mr. Brooks' feeling that the production revealed the play's universality ("*Long Day's Journey* is not, I contend, the towering, larger-than-life, universal tragedy of its reputation"), and she seemed to lament most of all the absence of Gaelic brio. Of Mr. Hyman's James: "Perhaps it is the Irish element that is missing.... Come to that, the whole production could use a little more flamboyance, or perhaps Irish temperament."

As evidence of how different critical reactions can be, *Newsweek's* Jack Kroll ("Passionate Journey," April 20, 1981, p. 104) found Gloria Foster "superb as Mary, ... her Greek-mask face fixed with terrifying beauty on the past as she becomes the ghost of herself, recalling the youthful dream of purity that has been shattered by her life." And he dwelt, more than anything else, on the play's universality: "the Tyrones are not just the O'Neills transmuted into art. What happens to them is both epic and tragic; it's an emotional Iliad, an internecine war that produces the great tragic entity of the modern world--waste, pure human waste." And the cast, who "become a true family in the ultimate family play," also achieve universality: "They play it for the universal rhythms and passions that override the play's social specifics, and it works." Kroll's only reservation concerned the extensive cuts "that reduce the play to a standard two and a half hours. This work *is* a long day's journey; to have its greatest effect it needs that sense of time as emotional geology working relentlessly to accumulate its massive seismic forces, which eventually explode."

As Jack Kroll disputed Edith Oliver's reservations about Gloria Foster, Mel Gussow, reviewing the original opening at the Richard Allen Center ("Black Cast Stages O'Neill," *New York Times*, March 3, 1981, p. C10), shared none of Ms. Oliver's reservations about Earle Hyman, whose "mellifluous voice and grand manner," that set the "magisterial dimensions of his role early in the evening," earned his total praise. But, like Ms. Oliver, he had reservations, until the "mad scene," about Gloria Foster's Mary, which he found lacking in the necessary "fragility": "When she glances out the window and comments, 'How thick the fog is,' she makes a simple statement sound as if it were a weather report delivered by Lady Macbeth."

But Ms. Foster won particular praise from Thulani Davis ("Black Irish," *Village Voice*, March 18, 1981, p. 84) for creating a Mary Tyrone that was "unusually substantial": "Foster's occasional playfulness and snide tones give force to the idea that Mary had a few things she really wanted out of life before she deserted for the foggy shores of regret and nostalgia." And Davis disagreed with the nearly unanimous view of the other critics that, aside from Samantha McKoy's Cathleen, the performers eschewed any black mannerisms: "The actors ... do *not* ignore, as one reviewer suggested, their ethnicity. They put it to good use, converting the Tyrones into a black family of means and stature." --Ed. [Photographs of the production appear on page 14, and the Hirschfeld caricature of Earle Hyman as James Tyrone, Sr., appears on page 26.]

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY X 3: A PICTORIAL RECORD

We present, on this page and the next, scenes from three recent productions of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. On this page, three shots of the Stratford (Ont.) Festival production, directed by Robin Phillips, designed by Susan Benson, and reviewed in the Winter 1980 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 25-27).



Above: Graeme Campbell (Jamie) and Brent Carver (Edmund).

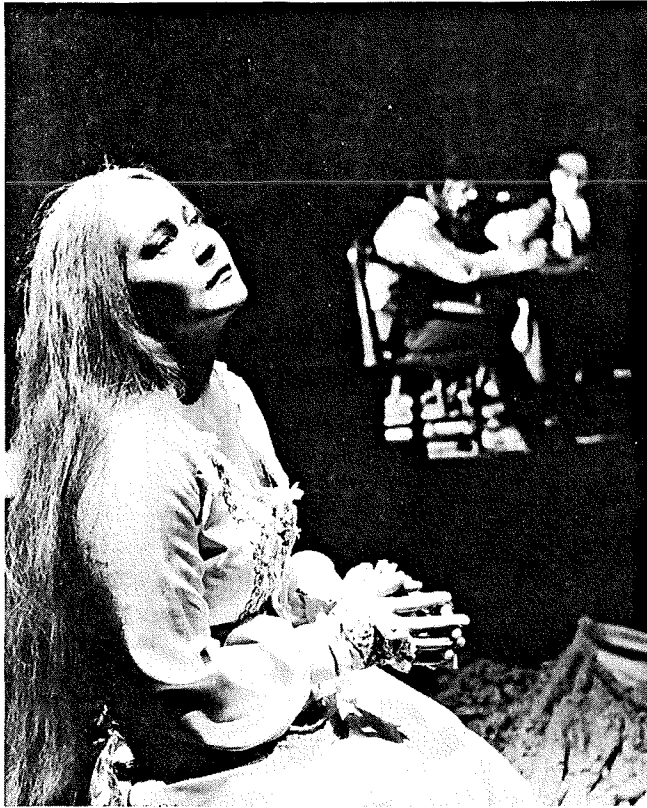
Top right: Jessica Tandy (Mary) and William Hutt (James, Sr.).

Lower right: Jamie, Mary, Edmund.

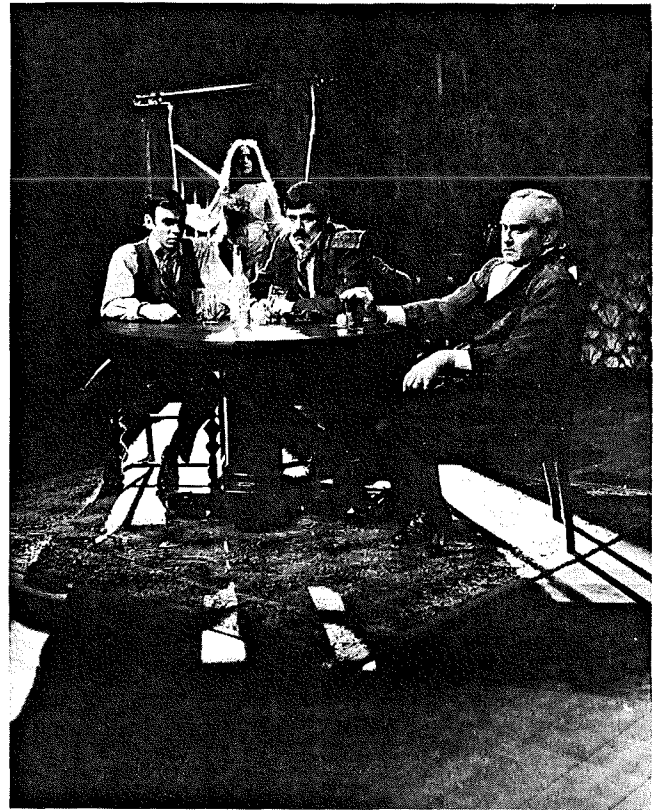
Photos by Robert C. Ragsdale, F.R.P.S.



Two scenes from the Virginia Players' production at the University of Virginia, directed by Jay E. Raphael, who reports on the production on p. 7:



Valerie Chapman as Mary Tyrone.



The Tyrone men at the moment of Mary's final entrance. From left: Jeffrey West (Edmund), Martin Beekman (Jamie), George Black (James).

Two scenes from the Richard Allen Center production in New York City, reviewed in this issue by Marshall Brooks (p. 10). Photos by Bert Andrews.



Al Freeman, Jr. (Jamie) and Gloria Foster (Mary).



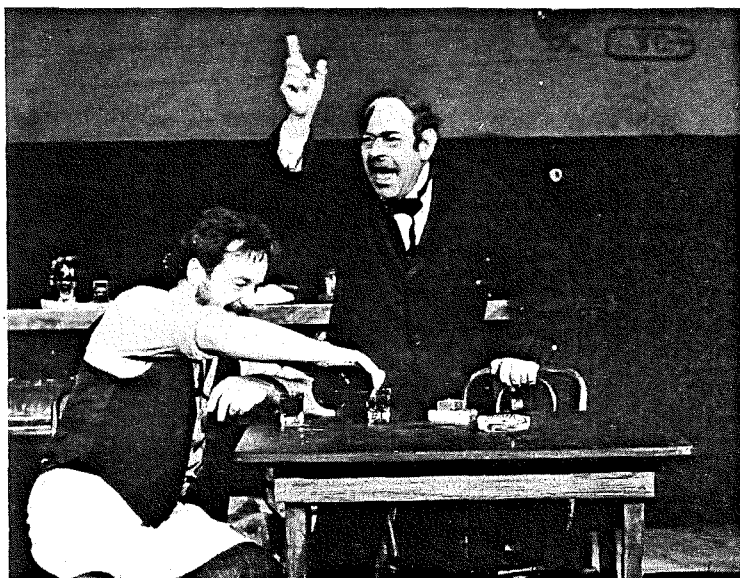
Earle Hyman (James) and Ms. Foster.

THE ICEMAN COMETH, dir. Philip Minor. Trinity Square Repertory Company, Providence, Rhode Island, January 30 - February 29, 1981: A REVIEW. (Accompanying photos by Constance Brown.)

In discussing the 17 major characters in *The Iceman Cometh* in her recent book, *Forging a Language* (reviewed in this issue), Jean Chothia notes that "each is etched sharply" but that "even more important than any one individual is how credible ... [O'Neill] makes the community appear." The comment suggests why a successful production of the play requires a group of actors who can convey the individuality of their separate roles and simultaneously subdue their disparate leitmotifs in order to blend into the "symphony" of the ensemble. And, Bejeez, what an acting company Trinity Square's artistic director Adrian Hall has assembled! Their performance of *Iceman*, under the subtle, delicate guidance of director Philip Minor (who showed patience for the play's monumental length and understanding of its necessary repetitiveness and occasional turgidity), was flawless. Though this was my first *Iceman* on stage, I doubt if I will ever see its equal.

The performance was in Trinity Square's upstairs playspace, a steep, one-third-round amphitheatre whose precipitous

island-table, in sets so believable and so true both to period and to O'Neill's instructions that I forgot completely the marvelous contribution of set designer Robert D. Soule. This *was* Harry Hope's.



Peter Gerety (Rocky) and Howard London (Hugo Kalmar)

(How could we doubt it? We'd trod through its sawdust-strewn back room to reach the stairs to our seats; and our disbelief was, under the skilled and knowing guidance of all concerned, completely suspended!)

Not that the production uncovered new truths about, or highlighted new revelations in, O'Neill's play: this was an honest and faithful realization of the script without any obtrusive directorial tamperings. Which was as it should be, since the play is perfect as it is, and the production proved the accuracy of Brooks Atkinson's description of it as "a mighty theatre work." Every participant, every beat and nuance, was ideal, and the totality was ensemble performance at its best. The play's themes--about the relative efficacy of harsh reality and comforting, sustaining illusions; and, to adopt a phrase that Hickey uses in Act Two, about "the right kind of pity"--were abundantly clear without any idiosyncratic italicizing. But the play's ideas have been discussed abundantly elsewhere and need no reiteration here.



Maurice Dolbier (Capt. Lewis), George Martin (Larry Slade), Daniel Von Bergen (Willie Oban), and Norman Smith (Gen. Wetjoen)

height focussed great (and appropriate) weight on the persons who peopled the cramped spaces of Harry Hope's bar--each individual or twosome isolated at its own

The costumes, designed by William Lane, were as effective and verisimilar as the sets. All were appropriate to their wearers: ill-sized and drab for the



Barbara Orson (Cora), Anne Scurria (Pearl), Vince Ceglie (Chuck) and Susan Payne (Margie)

destitute (e.g., Willie Oban, in a filthy, sweat-stained, once-white shirt, a knee of his trousers ripped, and toes protruding through the holes in his aged boots); tawdry and flashy for prostitutes (e.g., Cora in Act III, overdressed and befeathered, wielding a scarlet drawstring bag, her dress pushed down one shoulder beyond the borderline of propriety.) Hickey and Parritt were dressed in clean, well-fitting suits, appropriate to their roles as intrusive outsiders.

As I mentioned, the ensemble work was superb. Mr. Minor's direction deftly traced the changes in atmospheric pressure through the course of the play--from the corpse-like inertia of the opening tableau; through the tensions and eruptions of violence introduced by Parritt's aggressive insinuations, Hickey's unnerving ministrations, and the abrasive clashes between inmates snidely wise about the delusions of others but viciously defensive of their own; to the curious calm of the choral cacophony at the end.

And the individual performances were perfect too. Space doesn't permit mention of them all, and I hope that the

accompanying photographs will obviate verbal descriptions. But I must single out a few of Trinity Square's master craftsmen for particular commendation: Richard Kavanaugh's Jimmy Tomorrow, so precise in his speech, so pallid of face, a corpse in a bowler; Daniel Von Bargaen's Willie Oban, so rousing in his song (to the extent that he can remember it), and so pathetic in his literal crawling away from Larry in total terror when threatened with isolation upstairs; David C. Jones's Harry Hope, so warm in his affection for his charges, and yet so mean in his Act-Two birthday speech and so comic-pathetic in his repeated attempts to put off the march through the swinging doors and into the terrifying world outside; Barbara Orson's Cora, a real "star turn" of grand, guttural gaudiness; George Martin's Larry Slade, a gleaming, smiling bundle of cynical self-confidence at the start, as he rolls a cigarette and pontificates knowingly about everyone's self-deceptions except his own. Both the gleam of eye and the smile are gone in the second act, under the combined assaults of Hickey and Parritt; and though the smile returns at the end of the last act, it's a much sadder one, as he sits at the bar, away from the raucous choristers, and admits to being "the only real convert to death Hickey made here."



Richard Jenkins (Hickey) and Ed Hall (Joe Mott)

It is hard to forget Jason Robards' riveting performance as Hickey, though I saw only a filmed version of it on

public television years ago. (It is also hard to forget, try as one might, Lee Marvin's desecration of the role in an otherwise fine film version of more recent years.) But Richard Jenkins made the part his own, creating a character both believable and increasingly frightening. In straw hat, striped shirt, bow tie and (appropriately) black suit, he barrelled into saloon and play with a big smile, a glad hand for all, and an erratic, frantic animation that grew increasingly wild as the play progressed, giving the physical lie to the verbal gospel of peace and contentment. Seldom, except at moments of wariness, did he reveal the malaise beneath the brash, assured veneer until the great speech in the last act, when the only flaw was the whiff of choreography in his prestissimo dashes around and between the tables as he spoke. Except for that, he made it clear why he'd clung so desperately to the success of the therapy he'd pressured his erstwhile drinking buddies into attempting. Driven finally to the truth, he provided a vocally and physically stunning climax for a production that was on the boards far too briefly and deserves to be seen by a much wider audience.

Trinity Square will receive a special citation for excellence at this year's Tony Awards ceremonies. Their production of *The Iceman Cometh* showed why.

--Frederick Wilkins

AH, WILDERNESS!, dir. Daniel Sullivan. Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle, WA, Dec. 31, 1980 - Jan. 25, 1981: A REVIEW.

This was the Seattle Rep's second production of *Ah, Wilderness!*, and I am pleased to report that the production, the Rep's best work of the season, played to sold-out houses throughout its run. The cast consisted of professional actors from throughout the country, including Thomas Hill as Sid Davis, Anne Gerety as Essie Miller, Biff McGuire as Nat Miller, Constance Dix as Lily Miller, L. Michael Craig as Richard, Jeffrey L. Prather as Arthur, Susan Greenhill as Muriel, and Cheri Sorensen as Belle.

It is interesting to note that Thomas Hill, who directed the Seattle Rep's first



Richard and Belle



Sid and Lily

production of *Ah, Wilderness!* 17 years ago, returned to Seattle to play the role of Sid. Throughout his career Mr. Hill, a member of the Seattle Rep's original company, has appeared in, or directed, virtually all of O'Neill's plays.

Hill's wife, Anne Gerety, also returned to Seattle to play the role of Essie. She too was a member of the Seattle Rep's original company, and had played Essie under the direction of her husband. Ms. Gerety has appeared in many O'Neill plays, including productions at the Provincetown Playhouse.

Biff McGuire, Anne Gerety, Constance Dix, and Thomas Hill gave the best performances in the show as Nat, Essie, Lily, and Sid. The most effective scene in the play occurred in Act 2, when Nat and Sid return from the picnic to have dinner with the family. McGuire's portrayal of the reminiscient Nat, followed by Hill's rendition of Sid's blue-fish and lobster antics, and culminating in Sid's singing of "Sweet Bye and Bye," received uproarious laughter and rousing applause. Ms. Gerety gave a fine performance as Essie, especially conveying her contradictory moods--wanting to punish Richard for his drunken revels, and yet worrying and fretting over him in spite of herself. Ms. Dix was most sympathetic as the spinster-teacher, and her dilemma over Sid was quite touching and believable. (Mr. Hill and Ms. Dix appear together in the photo on the right on p. 17.)

Jeffrey L. Prather and Karen Kay Cody gave amusing and creditable performances as Arthur and Mildred, especially during the singing scene in Act 3, scene 2. Cheri Sorenson, of Tacoma, was intriguing and even sympathetic as Belle. Her astonishment at Richard's behavior in the bar was quite understandable. Belle's flaming red hair, provocative costume, and brazen manners provided an enormous contrast to Susan Greehill's angelic portrayal of Richard's true love, Muriel.

The only weakness in this otherwise excellent production was L. Michael Craig's performance as Richard. Craig's puerile characterization, and the fact that the director had him play everything for a laugh, greatly diminished the underlying sincerity that it is essential for an audience to detect in Richard. (Mr. Craig and Ms. Sorenson are seen in the photo on the left on p. 17.)

The elaborate unit set, designed by Robert Dahlstrom, consisted of tall, transparent wall panels set in realistic wood moldings. Tree branches, fireworks, wallpaper, a waterfront, and moonlight were projected onto these panels. This versatile set was easily transformed from the Miller sitting room into the dining room, bar, wharf, etc., by changes in the projections and quick shifting of furniture, stairways, doors, and lighting fixtures. In unusual divergence from O'Neill's instructions, the director set the final scene (Act 4, scene 3) in the bedroom of Nat and Essie, rather than in the sitting room. The director felt that, as in his own childhood, many important conversations between child and parents took place in the latter's bedroom. While this did provide a more intimate atmosphere, I felt it was rather awkward and should have been played in the sitting room.

The costumes, designed by Kurt Wilhelm, were authentic and attractive. The outfits worn by Essie, Lily, and Sid for their drive in the Buick were fantastic.

In spite of my disappointment with the role of Richard, I feel this production was very well done. Excellent performances by Nat, Essie, Sid and Lily, plus very good performances in the supporting roles, made for a memorable production. I am pleased that the Seattle Repertory Theatre decided to revive *Ah, Wilderness!*, and hope that other regional theatres continue this renaissance of interest in O'Neill.

--Deborah Kellar Pattin

NEWS FLASH! Philip Anglim will play Michael Cape in the José Quintero-directed production of *Welded* that is mentioned in item 2 of the News, Notes and Queries section. The production will close on July 5. For information, call 212-280-3408.

REVIEWS, REPRINTS AND ABSTRACTS OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES

1. Morris U. Burns, *The Dramatic Criticism of Alexander Woollcott* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1980), 286 pp., \$15.00.

There may be no more colorful witness to the American theatre's golden years than Alexander Woollcott (1887-1943), raconteur, reviewer, radio "personality," actor, wit, co-founder of the Algonquin Round Table, playwright, and model for the work of fellow playwrights. So Professor Burns' volume--since it comprises (1) a detailed survey of Woollcott's career and his views on "Actors and Acting," "Playwrights and Playwriting," and "Theatre Issues," liberally laced with memorable mots, (2) a bibliography of all of his published works, and (3) an alphabetized, documented list of all the theatrical productions he reviewed--deserves a place in any collection with significant holdings in American drama and drama criticism. While he admits that Woollcott was "not a critic in any but a rather general sense of the term" (being an "ardent dilettante" rather than a "profound theorist"), Burns shows how much Woollcott's views reflect the theatre of his day and how witty the reflection can frequently be. While one might lament the extreme brevity of Burns' ultimate evaluation of his subject (Chapter 5, where that evaluation had been promised, is cagily titled "Postscript" and is only slightly more than one page in length), the analysis and documentation in the rest of the book are abundant and thorough.

An O'Neill scholar might not wish to invest \$15 in a volume only eight of whose pages (85-92) are devoted solely to O'Neill; but references to the playwright are scattered throughout. Which is hardly surprising: Woollcott reviewed 18 O'Neill plays between Nov. 9, 1919 (*The Dreamy Kid*) and Feb. 5, 1928 (*Strange Interlude*); he was one of O'Neill's most dedicated early champions ("his work will be read and acted," he wrote in 1925, "long after most of the contemporary work in the American theatre is forgotten dust"); and he was also, especially after *The First Man* in 1922, one of his most feisty detractors, when he saw the O'Neill qualities he most admired--power, imagination, originality and believability--being overwhelmed by prolixity, implausibility and pretentiousness. For instance, he had praise for the mélange of dialects in *The Hairy Ape* in 1922 ("It is true talk, all of it"), but utter scorn for the "naive and tasteless pomposity" of the words assigned to the characters in *Strange Interlude* (1928)--"store dummies ... spouting all too unmistakably the words of the ventriloquial O'Neill himself."

Few O'Neill works earned as much of Woollcott's disdain as did *Strange Interlude* ("that 'Abie's Irish Rose' of the pseudo-intelligentsia"), and his responses to that play and to *Desire Under the Elms* receive the fullest treatment in Professor Burns' survey. (In both instances, reviews' titles say a great deal: "Through Darkest New England" for *Desire*, and "Giving O'Neill Till It Hurts" for *Interlude*!) *Desire*'s special staging effect--the removable walls of the farmhouse--since it was at the very least implausible, earned the initial scorn of Woollcott the devotee of theatrical realism. Any member of the Cabot household, he noted, may stroll of an evening and observe--repeatedly--how "purty" the sky is--"But the same character is not permitted to notice also that a large hunk of the wall of his home has been neatly cut away for the benefit of some Peeping Toms out in the audience." But Woollcott had to admit that, though the resultant "strain on ... illusion" was "painful," the device did permit two stunning moments: the electrical connection between Eben and Abbie in "the intensely dramatic juxtaposition of the two bedrooms" in Part Two-Scene Two; and, even more importantly,

the picture [in Part Three-Scene One] of that jeering crowd of neighbors drinking to the new baby in the kitchen below, while the still ailing mother rocks moodily in the corner. And at the same time held in suspense as an essential part of the same picture, you could see the silhouette of the cradle against the candle light in her bedroom above and, in the adjoining bedroom, the mute father of that baby twisting tormented in the lonely silence enforced

upon him. You may remember that scene when you have forgotten much that seemed weak and raucous and untrue in *Desire Under the Elms*.

Such a passage reveals the Woollcott gifts at their best: a willingness to bend his established views if theatrical impact justified it, and an infectious enthusiasm for all of theatre--nonverbal elements as much as text--and delight in writing about it.

While popular biographies of Woollcott offer a deeper, rounder portrait of the man, *The Dramatic Criticism of Alexander Woollcott* is a splendid overview of that portrait's most important ingredient. And it renews one's regret at not having been present at the Algonquin Round Table's *No Sirree!*, a revue satirizing contemporary theatre, penned and performed by its members at the 49th Street Theatre in 1922, in which Woollcott "played the part of the Second Agitated Seaman in 'The Greasy Hog,' a one-act satire of O'Neill's one-act sea plays." --Ed.

2. Jean Chothia, *Forging a Language: A Study of the Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 243 pp., \$24.50.

As the first full-scale analysis of O'Neill's developing use of language for the stage, Ms. Chothia's study deserves a place on every O'Neillian's bookshelf, though it certainly ousts none of its predecessors. First of all, the phrase "full-scale" must be qualified: it is as misleadingly broad as Ms. Chothia's subtitle, since she is extremely selective in her choice of works for detailed analysis. Of the early plays (1913-1923), only three (*All God's Chillun*, *The Hairy Ape* and *Desire Under the Elms*) are treated at length; of those of the middle period (1924-1934), only two (*Lazarus Laughed* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*, the latter of which is excessively denigrated); and of the late plays (1939-1943), another two (*The Iceman Cometh* and *Long Day's Journey*), though these last are granted a chapter each and are covered in full and revealing detail.

Secondly, a discussion of a group of plays' linguistic component, carried on without consideration of all those plays' other constituent parts, would be of limited value. But fortunately Ms. Chothia's range is much broader than her announced one: the plays she does treat are treated "holistically," and she extends her coverage well beyond O'Neill's oeuvre to consider such broader contextual elements as these:

- (1) the nature of language in prose drama, and the fallacy in the assumption that realistic dialogue is or could be an exact copy of real speech ("it operates by duplicity; it is not spontaneous but must appear to be so");
- (2) the growth in the last century of dramatists' awareness of, and experimentation with, stage speech (achieving "a finely patterned organic imagery that might justly be called 'poetic'");
- (3) the failure of academic critics to follow suit and devote the attention to modern dramatic prose that it deserves (an omission that she rectifies vis-à-vis O'Neill in the present volume);
- (4) the conditions, genres and language of American drama in the nineteenth century (an unlikely spawning ground for genius) and the revolutions effected by European influences in the early twentieth century (a diversity of influences and isms that intrigued and occupied O'Neill but that he failed to mold into a successful unity until his late period);
- (5) O'Neill's "literary biography"--what he read throughout his youth and career (admirably delineated in a select but revealing appendix on pp. 199-206 that lists, in parallel, chronological columns, the plays and the concurrent reading that was directly or indirectly influential on each of them; and shows O'Neill to have been a man whose biography *was* as literary as physical because of his penchant for "experiencing the world with a consciousness shaped by his reading"); and
- (6) the evolution of American interest in the vernacular, which became a serious element in poetry and fiction well before drama, and which O'Neill was the first to use extensively for non-comic purposes in the theatre, earning him one third of the crown shared by Twain and Whitman as co-fathers of the vernacular in American letters.

So the book, which concludes with appendices on "Irish dialect and artifice in the two last plays" (*Touch of the Poet* and *Moon for the Misbegotten*) and "A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed," copious notes, a select but valuable bibliography, and a helpful index, can hardly be accused of narrowness of focus.

The core of the work (Chapters 3-6) is a study of the relative effectiveness of the language in the three periods into which the O'Neill canon is traditionally divided; and the chart (p. xii) reproduced at the right is an extremely helpful and revealing division of the plays into several linguistic categories.

Ms. Chothia reveals a qualified fondness for the first period because of the freshness of the slang and dialect (when he avoids "the trap of virtuosity") and its effectiveness in characterizing protagonists (e.g., Jim in *All God's Chillun* and Yank in *The Hairy Ape*) whose natures and aspirations are as unsophisticated and inchoate as their speech patterns. (There's fine coverage here of how both protagonists are set off by their language, and of how O'Neill, "by giving [Jim] speech that is continually developing, ... embodies his aspiration and spiritual search.") O'Neill, she explains, deliberately chose such characters, who lacked his own articulateness, to save himself from the "formulaic language of the nineteenth century" that had been so

glaringly dominant in his earliest attempts (the "Lost Plays"). But by 1923 he had largely abandoned what he called "the dodge-question of dialect" (i.e., dodging the question of how to express himself by choosing speakers so different from himself).

Ms. Chothia agrees that the abandonment was artistically and emotionally necessary:

To allow him to develop a more personal voice, he had to develop more sophisticated characters whose vision and verbal capacity would approximate to his own and to that of his audience.

But she deplores the results of the decision--the "Standard American" of the middle period, which she divides into two parts:

- (1) those plays in which he adopted "the poetic style"; e.g., *Lazarus Laughed*, with its "monotonous exclamatory structure, [its] use of abstract nouns to give size to the thought, bald repetition [and] affirmation unfounded in the action of the play"--all of which are blamed on the playwright's incomplete adoption of Nietzschean devices; and
- (2) those plays in which he subsequently utilized "realistic dialogue"; e.g., *Mourning Becomes Electra*, in which a new monotony of style develops, replacing the discarded poeticism, that again "deadens the audience's capacity to ponder motive and deliberate on human relationships," largely because O'Neill "fails to embody his real concerns in the dialogue and action."

The greatest space and praise are allotted to the plays of the late period, in which, for reasons that Ms. Chothia is unable to define, he succeeded in combining

The linguistic medium of O'Neill's plays					
Date	Low-colloquial (NE rustic/Negro/ NY urban/immigrant)	Irish dialect/ Broadway slang	American Idiomatc	Standard English	English Poetic prose
1913-14	'The Web' 'Warnings'			'Lost Plays'	
up to 1917	'S.S. Glencairen' plays		Before Breakfast		
1918	<i>The Rope</i> <i>Horizon</i> <i>The Dreamy Kid</i>				
1919	'Chris Christopherson'	<i>The Straw</i>	<i>The Straw</i>		
1920	<i>Gold</i> <i>Anna Christie</i> <i>Jones</i> <i>Different</i>				
1921	<i>Ape</i>		<i>The First Man</i>		
1922				<i>The Fountain</i>	
1923	<i>Chillun</i> <i>Desire</i>		<i>Welded</i>		
1924				<i>Marco Millions</i>	
1925				<i>Brown</i>	
1926-7					<i>Lazarus</i>
1928-9			<i>Interlude</i> <i>Dynamo</i> <i>Electra</i> <i>Wilderness</i> <i>Days Without</i> <i>End</i>		
1929-31					
1932-3					
1934-9					
1939	<i>Iceman</i>	<i>Iceman</i>			
1940		<i>Journey</i>	<i>Iceman</i>		
1941-2		<i>Hughie</i>	<i>Journey</i>		
1942		<i>Port</i>	<i>Port</i>		
1943		<i>A Moon</i>	<i>A Moon</i>		

Completion date of each play is given. Up until 1934, the dating is taken from O'Neill's notebook (Beinecke). The dates of the late plays are taken from O'Neill's letters.

"standard English" and "low-colloquial" into the "significant form" that she dissects in the superb chapters on *Iceman* (where O'Neill "differentiates all seventeen characters who people Hope's bar and makes us interested in them so that the stage seems to teem with life") and *Long Day's Journey*, which is an even greater achievement because "the art of the caricaturist," that O'Neill mastered in sketching the seventeen figures in *Iceman*, is succeeded by an art so richly, complexly and three-dimensionally lifelike that O'Neill is essentially "confronting the audience with the pattern of its own familiar conversations and asking them to leap its gaps and understand its shared assumptions." This springs from his achievement of a "family rhythm" for the four Tyrones that seems "to root the characters together in their shared past." The result is one of those all-too-rare plays "whose action and emotion seem ... searingly close to ourselves" O'Neill had finally achieved the "real realism" he had always sought. As Ms. Chothia says, and persuasively demonstrates, in each of the late plays "we feel the presence of a creative imagination, shaping and controlling the elements of the play. Nothing is arbitrary or unfinished as it so often was in the past."

Readers wishing a more thorough coverage of the contents of *Forging a Language* should consult the reviews by Michael Hinden in *Contemporary Drama* (Winter 1980-81), pp. 374-377, and Dennis Welland in the *Times Literary Supplement* (April 4, 1980), p. 399. I agree with both critics, and have tried to avoid repeating them; but they did their work so thoroughly that I was left with little to say!

One might quibble with some of Ms. Chothia's judgments, such as her near-total rejection of all of *Mourning Becomes Electra* but its last scene. And one might regret that Hickey is treated far too briefly for a character of his magnitude. But whatever its shortcomings, this is a book to reckon with. As the author herself notes, it is not an end in itself, but an exemplary catalyst for many future studies. --Ed.

3. Richard B. Sewall, *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), xi + 209 pp.

Along with *The Trial*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was added to this new, "expanded edition" of Professor Sewall's 1959 volume because, like the Kafka novel, it "explores a central area of contemporary experience rife with tragic potential," "transcends the limits of realism on the one hand and pathos on the other," and "reaches out toward cosmic concerns...." In his introductory chapter, Professor Sewall declines to define tragedy per se because it is "not a doctrine" but a "sense of life," whose components he does delineate: an "independent, radical vision," a "contemplated and individual response to suffering," and an active, impulsive, creative grappling with existential questions that "puts to the test of action all the formulations of philosophy and religion."

In his study of the play, which is admirably summarized and anatomized on pp. 161-174, with particularly sensitive attention to stage directions, Professor Sewall shows how "the wrangling Tyrones become Everyfamily, prisoners of their own temperaments; there is no way out--except the one no one will take." He shows how the play is built on a series of encounters, all following the same pattern--"blame, counter-blame, uneasy truce"--and how, overarching this series of clashes and impermanent resolutions, the play's "progress, or 'journey,' ... is toward a deeper understanding of each other's natures on the part of the four Tyrones," who, though they lack heroic attributes, amaze us with their stamina and tenacity: "They bear it out to the end--and the end is not bitter." Among the insights gained by the characters are these: "that human beings are capable of loving and hating at the same time," and that there could be no release from their individual and familial burdens "until they could look within themselves and be honest to what they saw." Each Tyrone's agon is inextricably linked with those of the other three. All are fogbound, and none escapes it completely (neither during the play nor, we can infer, afterward), but they do, through their interaction, "have glimpses through the fog to new truth";

have moments of what Professor Sewall calls "redemptive insight." It is this "capacity for suffering--and for learning from it--on the part of the four Tyrones" that raises the play from melodrama to tragedy, and that permitted O'Neill, in the "quest for meaning" that the writing of the play constituted, to secure his own release from "fatalism, despair, bitterness." As for the fictional participants, that the end of their story is not bitter is the result of the most heartening facet of their composite portrait: "the love and loyalty that, for all the bickering, keeps them from disintegration, as individuals and as a family." --Ed.

4. Michael Hinden, "Desire and Forgiveness: O'Neill's Diptych," *Comparative Drama* (Fall 1980), pp. 240-250.

No one reading Professor Hinden's insightful essay, in which he cites a multitude of parallels and links between *Desire Under the Elms* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*--parallels not only in setting, cast, plot and theme (all of which are lucidly underscored), but also "in terms of psychology and structure"--could possibly question the profound relatedness of these two plays, which, taken together, "comprise a fascinating diptych, two panels of a single portrait or one unified action." In the later play, "certain unconscious fantasies dramatized in [the earlier] are exorcised and self-forgiven"; and the character of Jim Tyrone is shown, when compared to Eben Cabot, to be at least as close, internally, to O'Neill himself as to his brother Jamie. As Professor Hinden says, "by dramatizing Jamie's oedipal dilemma [in *Moon*], O'Neill may have been trying to come to terms with his own."

The keystone of this rich study is Professor Hinden's comparison of the parlor scene in *Desire* and the pietà scene in *Moon*. "The penitents who need to be forgiven in both instances [Eben in *Desire*, Jim in *Moon*] are one and the same figure: a son who fornicates in the presence of his dead mother [Eben in the parlor, Jim on the train]. ... In both cases the sexual act is the result of hatred and hostility, not love, an attack against the parent by the child." But the "desire" and "endless guilt" in the early play give way to "forgiveness" and "peace" in the later, which is "suffused with an unparalleled generosity of spirit," and in which O'Neill "revisited the scene of *Desire Under the Elms* in order to shrive his composite protagonist (and possibly himself) of complicated guilt feelings related to a mother's death." As a pair of plays concerning "the desperate cycle of guilt and forgiveness," O'Neill's diptych equals the intimacy and power of Strindberg's treatment of the same subject.

Ah, *Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey; Touch of the Poet* and *More Stately Mansions; Iceman* and *Hughie*: all have proven in the past to be pairs worthy of close, interrelated study. But after Professor Hinden's analysis, they've met their match, and he relates the new diptych's two panels superbly. --Ed.

5. Earl Hyman, who plays James Tyrone, Sr., in the Geraldine Fitzgerald-directed production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* that is reviewed in this issue, was interviewed by Carol Lawson in the *New York Times* (March 27, 1981, p. C2) and responded "with mild annoyance" to a question about blacks playing the white, Irish Tyrones. "Black. We forgot all that and went right to the meat of these people--their humanity, what makes them tick. With any three-dimensional part, the Irishness or blackness is only on the surface. The rest is internal. Otherwise, you have an ethnic play, which this is not.... The fact that the cast is black is other people's problem, not mine. Let's face it. The play has a universal theme. It's a picture of the human condition: we love each other, yet we hurt each other. We say we're sorry and then go on hurting each other forever and ever."

Mr. Hyman's affection for O'Neill began long before the present production. "I always knew I would play this role. I love O'Neill and always have--passionately. He was a Libra, and I'm a Libra. I see a lot of similarities between us--his love for his work, a touch of mysticism, the extraordinary closeness of his family, a bit of self-destructiveness." --Ed.

6. The dual influences of Strindberg and Ibsen on O'Neill were mentioned in Michiko Kakutani's *New York Times* essay, "How Ibsen Fathered the Modern Drama" (December 14, 1980, Section II, pp. 1, 4):

Certainly the most renowned of Strindberg's admirers remains Eugene O'Neill, who called him "my inspiration down all the years." For O'Neill, after all, Strindberg was not simply a literary mentor; he was also a kind of kindred spirit whose dark vision was remarkably similar to his own. Both charted the terrain of the unconscious, and both exposed and expiated their lives through their work.

It was not just by way of Strindberg, however, that Ibsen affected O'Neill. The young writer read [Shaw's] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* while in high school, and his early play *Servitude*, which one reviewer described as "what happens to a Nora after she slams the door," possesses strong echoes of both Shaw and Ibsen. There are also overtones of *The Wild Duck* in *The Iceman Cometh*, for both are concerned with the necessity of illusion

But it was the theme of the family, of hereditary guilt, that was the most lasting of Ibsen's legacies to O'Neill Ibsen, says [Rolf] Fjelde, who has translated most of Ibsen's plays, was the "first dramatist to understand the spiritual implications of Darwinism," and in that sense "O'Neill's greatest plays are Ibsenesque plays--the exploration of the family, this pressing deeper and deeper into the soul."

O'Neill's debt to Ibsen is hardly "news," but it deserves periodic reemphasis. And the two dramatists were similar, not only in the content of their plays, but in the negative responses each elicited from his first critics. Given the epigraph to Robert Butler's essay in this issue, one infers that O'Neill himself might have said, as Ibsen *did* say, "I have been more of a poet ... than people have generally been inclined to believe." --Ed.

7. Eric Pace, "Preserving the Homes Where O'Neill Lived and Worked," *New York Times* (Sunday, February 8, 1981), pp. 5, 18.

Because of the extraordinary breadth of Mr. Pace's coverage of current O'Neill-related activities, it seemed more appropriate to reprint it than to synopsise it. It appears, in its original form, on the next two pages. Filling out the second of the two pages is the Hirshfeld drawing of Earle Hyman as James Tyrone, Sr., in the production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* that is reviewed in this issue. The drawing appeared in the March 27, 1981 issue of the *Times* (p. C2), and the quotation that accompanies it is from Mr. Hyman's interview with Carol Lawson that appears on the same page and is abstracted in this issue of the Newsletter.

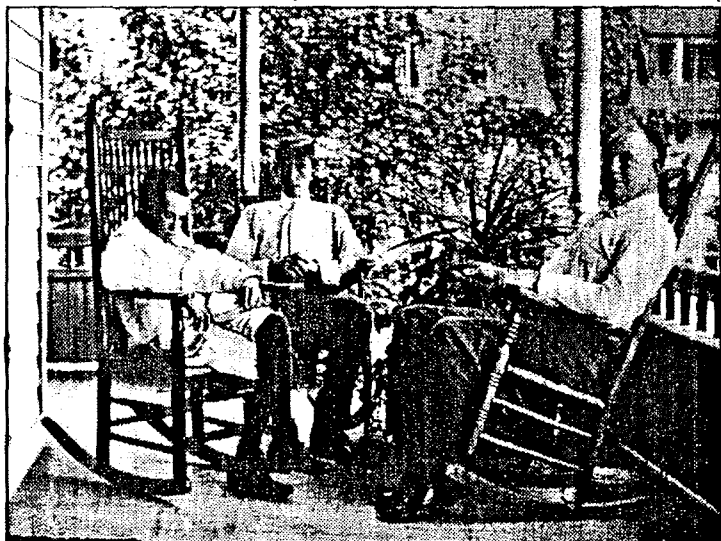
8. Jordan Pecile, "Where the Long Day's Journey Began," *The Hartford Courant Magazine* (Sunday, December 28, 1980), pp. 4-7.

An excellent survey of the genesis, subsequent decay and recent resurrection of Monte Cristo Cottage, with fitting praise for its Curator, Sally Pavetti, and its Assistant Curator, Lois McDonald, for their painstaking success at having "raised up out of the saddest ruins what must be not only New London's but one of this nation's most important literary landmarks--one that, with its environs, figures in at least ten of O'Neill's dramas."

James O'Neill, Sr.'s motives for settling there; the cottage's birth as a store-dwelling and a one-story schoolhouse clapped together and adorned with the obligatory Victorian embellishments; the treatment of the O'Neills by the neighboring gentry;

(continued on p. 27)

Theater



At left, the young Eugene O'Neill, his brother Jamie and their father James on the porch of Monte Cristo Cottage in New London, Conn. Above, Carlotta and Eugene O'Neill at Tao House, their California villa.

Below, the playwright at his Cape Cod summer house, Peaked Hill Bar in Provincetown, in 1922, with his second wife, Agnes, and their son, Shane.



Preserving the Homes Where O'Neill Lived and Worked

By ERIC PACE

Eugene O'Neill's family cottage in Connecticut is being lovingly restored, complete with an old O'Neill rocking chair. The rickety stage in Provincetown, Mass., where his plays were first performed, is to have a modern successor, a new Provincetown Playhouse combined with a Eugene O'Neill Archival Center. A continent away, the playwright's tile-roofed California villa has been taken over by the National Park Service and awaits renovation to become a magnet for his admirers.

Twenty-seven years after his death, places that are closely associated with the life and career of America's Nobel Prize-winning playwright are being increasingly studied, enshrined and otherwise memorialized in ways that supplement productions of his dramatic works here and abroad.

These off-stage commemorations have been spurred not only by the revival of interest in O'Neill's work (a revival that began in 1956 with the Circle in the Square production of "The Iceman Cometh"), but by the approaching centennial of his birth, in 1988. They have been fueled by Federal and state funds as well as private grants, and preparations are being made for a national campaign, to be launched later this year, to raise \$3.5 million in capital funding and endowment for the Provincetown project alone. Notable O'Neill enthusiasts in Washington have included Senator Alan Cranston of California, Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and Abraham Ribicoff, during his years as Senator from Connecticut.

"A lot of people have been coming alive to O'Neill," says Travis Bogard, a professor in Berkeley's Department of Dramatic Art and a director of the Eugene O'Neill Society, an international body devoted to the study of the playwright and his work, which was founded last winter.

"People have found that O'Neill has a lot to tell us about ourselves," Professor Bogard says. "All through the country students are writing dissertations about him. You never used to see that at all, really; they used to be interested in Beckett and Brecht."

Explanations of the trend are sometimes highly personal, sometimes far-reaching. Prof. Frederick C. Wilkins, chairman of the English Department at Boston's Suffolk University and the editor of the five-year-old Eugene O'Neill Newsletter, emphasizes the dramatist's power to move audiences. "I went to the first American public performance of 'Long Day's Journey Into Night' at the Wilbur Theater in Boston in the late 1950's," he recalls, "and it was a galvanizing experience."

George C. White, the founder and president of the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Center in Waterford, Conn., says: "O'Neill's plays deal in-

nately with human beings and their dreams and conflicts; he's probably the most humanistic playwright we have. His plays speak to all of us about the family; and nowadays, when world issues have become so complex, we tend to turn inward, to the family."

The O'Neill commemorative movement has gained a broad geographical scope from the fact that the restless playwright lived and worked in many places. In New London, Conn., he spent early years in his family's summer home, known as Monte Cristo Cottage, which later provided the setting for the tragic "Long Day's Journey Into Night" and the comic "Ah, Wilderness!"

Later, at Provincetown on Cape Cod, he became a member of the avant-garde summer community during World War I and saw his first play, "Bound East for Cardiff," tried out. And at Tao House, his villa in Danville, Calif., 30 miles east of San Francisco,

he wrote his masterful last plays, "A Moon for the Misbegotten," "The Iceman Cometh" and "Long Day's Journey."

Monte Cristo Cottage, an eight-room, two-story wooden building, took its name from the best-known stage role of the playwright's actor-father, James O'Neill, who spent much of his theatrical career touring in "The Count of Monte Cristo." The house, which is now open to the general public by appointment, was declared a National Landmark in 1971 with the help of Mr. Ribicoff. Three years later it was bought from its long-time owner, Lawrence A. White, by the O'Neill Theater Center, a developmental center for new playwrights. The center's head, George C. White, is a director and ex-actor who is also co-chairman of the theater administration department at the Yale drama school.

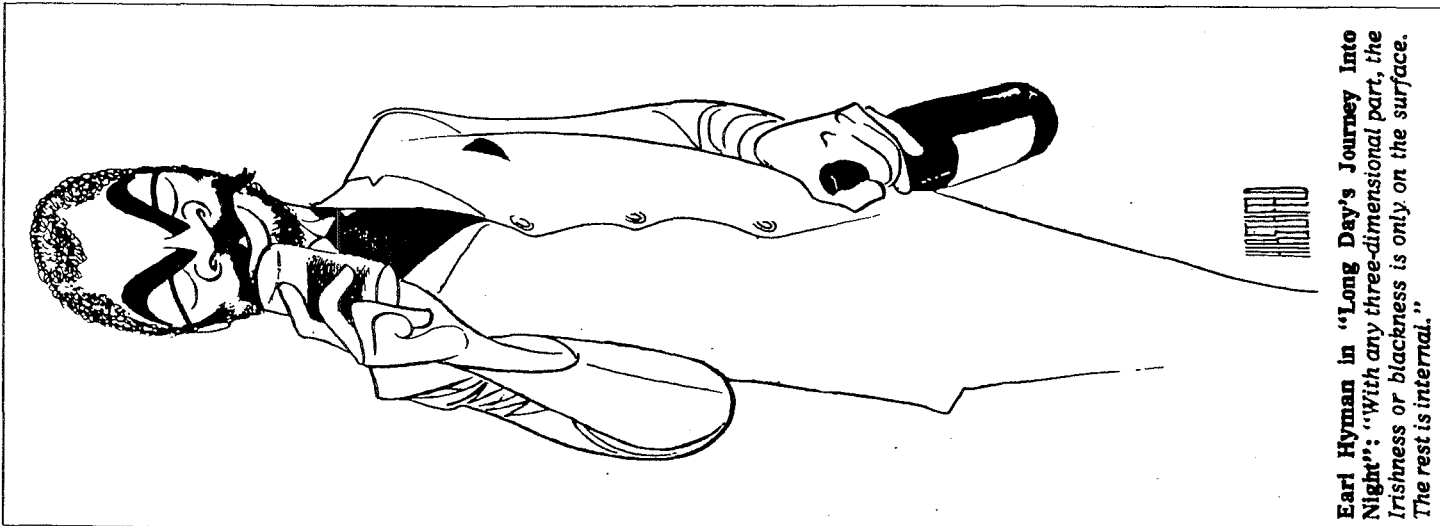
Lawrence White died not long after the sale, and George C. White—who is no kin—and associates raised money

to convert the building into a museum and meeting-place for the center. It has had more than \$120,000 worth of repairs. "It's already a gathering place of scholars and O'Neill buffs," Mr. White notes, "and is becoming more so." It is also used by the center's National Critics Institute, which provides training for working critics of literature and the arts. And it houses the center's library and theater collections.

And now Mr. White and his associates, with the help of Edgar Mayhew, a local museum curator and authority on interior decoration, have set about redecorating the house as it was during O'Neill's turn-of-the-century boyhood—a labor which Mr. White says is "lots of fun."

"It's like doing a stage set," says Mr. White. "Here was James O'Neill, a road actor during the winter, and here was a place where he put his feet up in the summer. He was successful as an

Continued on Page 18



Earl Hyman in "Long Day's Journey Into Night": "With any three-dimensional part, the Irishness or blackness is only on the surface. The rest is internal."

18 D

Continued from Page 5

actor, and he made a lot of money, but he was tight as the bark on a tree."

In planning the redecorating, Mr. White and his associates have been studying O'Neill family photographs and have talked with old-time New London residents. They have also referred to O'Neill's stage directions for "Long Day's Journey" and "Ah, Wilderness!"

The center's other current commemorative activities include producing what it calls a "media presentation" on Eugene O'Neill's years in New London, which is expected to be largely a slide show. It is being funded by the state of Connecticut and the Palmer Fund, a foundation set up by a local family.

O'Neill was still an unknown writer when he first arrived in Provincetown, Mass. But it was in Provincetown that he went on to write some of his first major plays, including "The Hairy Ape" and "Beyond the Horizon." One of O'Neill's biographers, Barbara Gelb, has observed that "in a very real sense he owed his career to Provincetown. The group of young actors and writers he fell in with there recognized his talent, and supported it with their own."

In 1977, a fire set by teen-agers demolished the converted shed that then housed the Provincetown Playhouse, a successor to the first shed used by the Provincetown Players. The following year, a panel of judges headed by I.M. Pei chose a design by William Warner for the replacement structure, which is to include a 400-seat main theater, a 100-seat theater and a museum in addition to the archival center.

The Playhouse's producing director, Adele R. Heller, hopes that the fund-

Three O'Neill Homes

raising campaign will enable the playhouse to reopen in 1982 with an O'Neill festival, including readings from plays that were originally performed in Provincetown during the First World War. The new building is to be owned by the board of trustees of the Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf, Inc. a non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

The Provincetown theater's early days are also being evoked in a study of the Provincetown Players which is

thrown open to the public on a daily basis. The present route is suitable only for sparse traffic, the Park Service says, because of its "narrow roadway, sharp curves, poor sight distance." And so the house has lately had only relatively limited use, notably as the site for the O'Neill society's first convale.

But arrangements have been made to have the access route question sorted out by an expert on the staff of the Inter-

After only seven years, failing health led him to sell the house, and, after a number of moves, he died in a hotel room in Boston. Tao House remained in private hands until 1976, when Congress declared it a National Historic Site in what Senator Cranston hailed as "something of a breakthrough for the arts in America." It was only the second such site (the first was Carl Sandburg's home in North Carolina) to win the designation purely for its connection with American letters. It was acquired by the State of California, passed into Federal hands last year, and in December a Park Service ranger moved into a caretaker's cottage on the grounds.

Back in New York, another commemorative organization, the Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill, has been celebrating O'Neill's birthday — Oct. 16 — for the past two years, with invitational galas attended by members of the professional theater community, and featuring readings and performances by celebrated actors.

The birthday gala planned for this October will include a production of the one-act, "Hughie," to be performed by Jason Robards, who created the role on Broadway in 1964. Mr. Robards is a founding member of the committee, whose members also include the actors, Geraldine Fitzgerald and Colleen Dewhurst, the director, José Quintero, and the producer, Theodore Mann, all associated with major O'Neill productions over the years — going back to 1926.

The committee, which is co-chaired by Mrs. Gelb and Mr. White, will continue its annual series of O'Neill birthday celebrations, which will culminate in a national O'Neill Centennial Celebration in 1988.

"The O'Neill centennial is enormously important for the life of Amer-

O'Neill wrote some of his first major plays in Provincetown, including 'The Hairy Ape.'

being written by Mrs. Heller's producer-son Daniel and Gary Williams, who are both affiliated with Catholic University in Washington, D.C. The book, which has been funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is to be finished this spring and is to be published by Frederick Ungar.

Yet there are limits to the respect that the country's only Nobel-winning dramatist commands. In Danville, Calif., local residents have objected to the traffic drawn by performances of plays at Tao House, and the performances have been stopped. The residents have also raised objections to the prospect of having roads improved to provide more convenient access to the villa — which is necessary if it is to be

tute for Environmental Mediation, which is funded by the Ford Foundation and other organizations. "We don't have any mutual solution yet," says Phyllis Shaw, the National Park Service's superintendent of the 14-acre site. But she says she hopes the question will be resolved by 1982.

O'Neill built the house, which has 22 rooms and a white, early-California Spanish exterior, with the cash award from his 1936 Nobel Prize for Literature. He named the villa after the Chinese religion called Taoism. After moving in late in 1937, O'Neill wrote plays that were autobiographical and anguished. (When Helen Hayes made a sentimental journey to the villa last summer, she looked around and said: "How could he have been so unhappy?")

WHO SAID IT?

"When someone asks me who has influenced my work, I point to O'Neill, the Russians, Faulkner, Flaubert."

These are the words, printed in 1959, of an American novelist, playwright, and author of short stories. A small prize, and public congratulations in the next issue, to the first reader who correctly identifies the writer.

--Ed.

ica," says Mr. Quintero, one of the committee's founding members. "By his uncompromising devotion to his art, O'Neill represents all the real artists of America. And by celebrating O'Neill, you also give encouragement and renewed energy to other artists. I think that for his centennial, every theater in the country should produce

at least one of his plays. . . . "O'Neill foresaw the enormous dependency upon materialism that America was getting into, and he made the great positive statement that a man cannot live without a dream, regardless of how shabby his dream may be, and therefore it is important to pay attention to, and enrich, that dream."

and the effect of visiting the cottage on one's understanding of *Long Day's Journey* and *Ah, Wilderness!*: all of these items and many more are included in Mr. Pecile's account, which is accompanied by excellent photographs of the cottage's exterior, the parlor, O'Neill's Provincetown desk, and the famous ballustrade in which the seven-year-old Eugene is supposed to have carved MC and been punished for it--the MC being a snide allusion to his father's theatrical vehicle, *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

Anent the snubs of the New London neighbors and their effect on the playwright, Mr. Pecile infers that they were influential on his ambition and records a confession that O'Neill later made to an old drinking buddy about why, in his youth, he'd dreamed of wealth: "so that he could hire a buggy, fill it with whores, load each whore with a bushel of dimes, and then ride with them down New London's main street, tossing money not only to the rabble but to the local gentry--those 'big frogs in a small puddle.' ... It would be his glorious way of getting even with his home town."

Anent the MC, recent restoration may have toppled that venerable legend of filial disaffection: the restorers have "uncovered a notch at the center of the C, leading some to wonder if O'Neill actually carved the word ME, a curious act of introspection." (Not *too* curious, considering the acronym that O'Neill's three initials produce: EGO!) But does it matter? As long as we interpret his plays aright, his carving can remain teasingly enigmatic!

For its pictures alone, this issue of the *Hartford Courant Magazine* is well worth having. Write to the paper (Hartford CT 06115) if you wish to acquire it. --Ed.

THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION: MLA '80, MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING, ETC.

1. MLA Special Session on Eugene O'Neill, Houston, December 27, 1980: report by Paul D. Voelker.

"Eugene O'Neill and Music" was the subject of the Special Session on O'Neill at the MLA Convention in Houston last December. In the absence of session director Thomas Marshall, Program Committee Chairman of the O'Neill Society (due to the vagaries of a much-delayed plane), Winifred Frazer, Vice President and a member of the committee, presided.

The session began with Prof. Travis Bogard's reading of a paper entitled, "Eugene O'Neill as a Singing Bird." Prof. Bogard began by citing three biographical notes--a program of recorded classical music arranged by Carlotta O'Neill at Tao House for her husband; O'Neill's own long-standing delight in his mechanical piano, "Rosie"; and O'Neill's personal record collection at Tao House, which included a variety of musical styles, among them, Calypso, Tahitian, and Jazz. Prof. Bogard further noted that O'Neill made wide and varied uses of music in his plays although, in his day, music was not ordinarily used in "straight" plays, but was rather a decadent holdover from nineteenth-century melodrama. Further, in O'Neill's day (as today) music in the theatre was affected by requirements of the musicians' union.

Prof. Bogard then proceeded to detailed historical accounts of the music composed especially for particular O'Neill plays--*The Fountain*, *Desire Under the Elms*, and the two plays with O'Neill's most elaborate musical requirements, *Lazarus Laughed* and, especially, *Marco Millions*. In addition to providing biographical notes on the various composers, Prof. Bogard pointed out that surviving scores for *The Fountain*

and *Lazarus Laughed* have not been located, but the full score for *Marco Millions*, composed by Emerson Whithorne, is housed at the Beinecke Library. (This portion of Prof. Bogard's presentation was illustrated by large photographs.)

In a more comprehensive survey of O'Neill's plays, Prof. Bogard reported that 24 require music, while 21 are "silent." Of the former, 6 use music incidentally, while 7 use it for characterization or to make an ironic point, but all 13 use music only occasionally. The remaining 11 use music more completely. Prof. Bogard then commented on some of these 11, including *Ah, Wilderness!*, *The Great God Brown*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *The Emperor Jones*, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, *The Moon of the Caribbees* (the first to present two kinds of music in conflict), and *The Iceman Cometh*.

Prof. Bogard's paper concluded with an overview of the adaptations of O'Neill's work for the musical theatre, the opera, and the ballet, including a rumor that Prince and Sondheim have been looking at O'Neill. Upon its completion, Prof. Timo Tiusanen and Dr. Dennis Rich responded to the paper.

Prof. Tiusanen began by citing a new production of *Ah, Wilderness!* in Finland and suggesting that Arthur's song is a commentary on the relationship of Sid and Lily. He further suggested that when evaluating the importance of a particular piece of music in an O'Neill play, it is important to note the scenic context, or "constage," in which it appears: it may be a comment, particularly as a psychological symbol, on any or all of the characters on stage. Prof. Tiusanen went on to relate O'Neill's use of music to his musical use of language, for example in *The Iceman Cometh*, to reach a level of expression comparable to a symphony.

Dr. Rich then stressed the point that O'Neill used music artistically from the beginning of his career. He went on to observe that O'Neill's use of music is part of a larger pattern: the use of sound and sound effects, including the musical aspects of language in the dialogue. Finally, he stressed the value of music as an analogy to O'Neill's method of playwriting.

2. Minutes of Second Annual Meeting of the Eugene O'Neill Society, submitted by Professor Paul D. Voelker. The meeting took place on the evening of December 27, 1980, in the Ebony Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, Texas.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Winifred Frazer. Secretary Jordan Miller's minutes of the previous meeting, at Tao House, were read by Prof. Paul Voelker and were accepted. Prof. Virginia Floyd's treasurer's report was read by Dr. Rich and accepted. The report showed balances on hand as of December, 1980, of \$521.42 and \$334.10 in the Society's savings and checking accounts, respectively.

Prof. Frazer then opened a discussion regarding what the Society ought to plan for its third annual meeting, to be held in conjunction with the MLA convention in New York City. Prof. Frazer reported that Sally Pavetti was preparing a multi-media presentation on the "Monte Cristo Cottage" and had suggested that the next session might be devoted to O'Neill's homes or to his life. Prof. Esther Jackson suggested that a session might be coordinated with the Drama Division of MLA, a session which would take advantage of the theatrical resources of New York and also have a wide appeal. Travis Bogard suggested that Jason Robards, José Quintero, et al., may yet be prevailed upon to appear and to talk about O'Neill. [Prof. Frazer was directed by the membership to appoint a committee to plan for the next program and annual meeting. She appointed Esther Jackson, ch., Paul Voelker, and Vera Jiji. Prior commitments later caused Prof. Jackson to withdraw. Current plans include talks on two major elements in O'Neill's dramaturgy: the extended monologue (which Prof.

Frederick Wilkins will discuss), and the split personality. The session will be held as part of the 1981 MLA Convention in New York City just after Christmas. Full information on the session, the third annual meeting, and related activities will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter. --Ed.]

3. NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD O'NEILLIANS.... If you have considered membership in the Eugene O'Neill Society, or if your membership has lapsed, do consider joining or renewing your affiliation today. Remember that one of the benefits of membership is a subscription to the Newsletter. For information on dues categories and imminent activities and an application blank, write to Secretary Jordan Y. Miller, Department of English, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881. Or call him at 401-792-5931. So you won't forget (as they say in TV record ads), do it before midnight tonight!

* * * * *

MONTE CRISTO COTTAGE OPEN!

The O'Neills' New London home is now open to visitors from 1 to 4 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays. Under the auspices of the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Center and the skillful eyes of Curator Sally Pavetti and Assistant Curator Lois McDonald, the cottage has been restored to the appearance it had when the O'Neills occupied it between 1884 and 1920. Visitors are assured of an an exciting experience--visiting the real-life site immortalized in *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. However, they must provide their own lobsters, bluefish and fog. (I remember once trading smiles with Ms. Pavetti at an O'Neill symposium when a lecturer provided his impression of the *Long Day's Journey* parlor with fog rolling through it. Such atmospheric heightening might be utilized in a theatre, but it would be improbable at 325 Pequot Avenue!) --Ed.

EDITORS' INQUIRY. We have been considering ways of enhancing the Newsletter's content, appearance and durability, and welcome the suggestions of readers. For instance, what should there be more of, and what deserves less space than is now allotted it? And would a format with folded pages (i.e., 11" x 17" sheets folded and double-stapled at the middle) be preferable to the current corner-stapled foldlessness? If you have thoughts on these or comparable matters, please let us know.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. O'NEILL AND THE "INNOCENT REBELLION." Adele Heller, Producing Director of the Provincetown Playhouse, was guest speaker at the Suffolk University Literary Society's O'Neill Week last April. In her talk on April 9th, she used historian Henry May's phrase, "innocent rebellion," to describe the exuberant artistic ambiance in America in the second decade of this century--an explosion that led, among many other manifestations, to the emergence of the Provincetown Players and their major playwright-in-residence, Eugene O'Neill, whose rapid success in the more commercial theatre of Broadway paradoxically provided the death blow for the very group with which he had first achieved prominence. Mrs. Heller's talk, which compared the era of the Provincetown Players with the present and led to a stimulating debate on whether such a phenomenon could happen in the 1980's, excited the large audience and proved to be the highlight of the week-long festivities, which also included a showing of the 1923 Blanche Sweet film of *Anna Christie*. The editor urges any school, college or group interested in learning about the cultural milieu from which O'Neill sprang to consider inviting Mrs. Heller to share her insights with them. Few O'Neillians are as knowledgeable and stimulating.
2. O'NEILL AND QUINTERO REUNITED. José Quintero's retreat from the world of O'Neill, which he announced a few years back, was fortunately short-lived. Not only did he direct an O'Neill play at a Mexico City O'Neill Festival last year; he will also give three lectures and direct a seldom-performed O'Neill work at an O'Neill festival hosted by the Drama Department of Columbia University this summer. The lectures will concern the man in general and two of his plays--*A Moon for the Misbegotten* and *The Iceman Cometh*. The play he will direct is *Welded* (1924), which he chose for reasons that he explained to Carol Lawson in the *New York Times* (April 10, 1981, p. C2): "If you want to understand O'Neill's love relationships, you have to see *Welded*. It deals with [his] expectations of a love commitment, which was absolutely passionate--and forever. This play is more autobiographical than *Long Day's Journey Into Night*." He also explained why he thinks the play an important one for *student* audiences: "Young people today are so alienated from passion. It has become archaic. O'Neill comes in and tells you it is the essence of all life: you must make commitments and embrace life with passion." *Welded*, which will have a professional cast, is scheduled to open on Wednesday, June 10, for a run of four weeks. (The editor hopes to review the production in the next issue of the Newsletter.)
3. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, has added four new Honorary Members to its Board of Directors: actresses Lillian Gish and Blanche Sweet, the latter of whom played Anna Christie in the first film version of an O'Neill play, and Eline and Sophus Winther, close friends of the O'Neill's. The Winthers recently donated to Tao House a set of priceless documents including approximately 150 letters from Carlotta O'Neill, notes on Winther's visits with O'Neill, drawings and descriptions of the lower floor of Tao House, and miscellaneous clippings about O'Neill and photographs of Eugene and Carlotta. "The National Park Service has placed the above materials in an acid-free file," reports Foundation President Walter G. Appleby in the Foundation's Spring 1981 Newsletter. "Scholars will use xeroxed acid free copies of the materials for future study." The Foundation has also taped Mr. Winther's recollections of O'Neill, from which President Appleby quotes a passage that he says "may well summarize the Foundation's zeal in their pursuit of perpetuating and preserving O'Neilliana":

Eugene O'Neill was not only one of the great writers but also one of the great men. Eugene O'Neill had integrity beyond what anyone could imagine. He never compromised on anything. He had nothing but contempt for those who thought the art of writing was in order to make money.
4. RENT-A-READING. In the aforementioned newsletter, The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, also announced the formation and availability of a theatrical group named the Tao House Masquers. So that subscribers in the area can consider this new resource for school assemblies, group functions, etc., we reprint a portion of the announcement:

The Tao House Masquers are presenting dramatic readings from the works of O'Neill and other great playwrights. The founder of the group, Director Barbara Nelson, is a graduate of Northwestern University's School of Drama and Speech. Al Gentile, also a member of the Foundation Board, is a Professor of Literature at J.F.K. University. Matt Schneider, a third member, is a graduate student at the University of California. They are now preparing a program, "Dreamers, Lovers and Poets... Young and Old," that comprises readings from Shaw's *Candida* and O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* A question and answer period follows if desired. Anyone interested in engaging the Tao House Masquers can contact Barbara Nelson at 415-837-2696.

5. ON THE TRAIL OF EUGENE O'NEILL. From June 7-20, Travis Bogard will lead a tour of many of the sites where O'Neill lived and from which he took inspiration for his plays. Sponsored by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation at Tao House, and open only to its members, the tour will begin and end in San Francisco. Included in the fortnight's itinerary are New York City (tour led by Pulitzer Prize-winning O'Neill biographer Louis Sheaffer), New Haven (tour of O'Neill memorabilia at Yale's Beinecke Library with Donald Gallup), New London (tour of the Monte Cristo Cottage with curator Sally Pavetti, and visit to the O'Neill Memorial Theater Center in nearby Waterford), Provincetown (tour led by Adele Heller, Producing Director of the Provincetown Playhouse), Boston and Bermuda. We wish Prof. B. and his trekkies a happy, sunny and insightful trip and hope to be able to print a report on the group's adventures in a future issue.
6. O'NEILL IN SONG. O'Neill's works have frequently undergone musical metamorphosis. *Anna Christie* and *Ah, Wilderness!* were transmogrified into musicals, emerging, respectively, as *New Girl in Town* (1957) and *Take Me Along* (1959); and *Ile* and *Before Breakfast* are but the latest in a sizable list of operatic adaptations. But O'Neill *himself* in song, caroling with Carlotta, and in the unlikely company of such other writers as Bernard Shaw, Groucho Marx, Errol Flynn and Lenny Bruce? Scoff not; it's happened! *Ah, Men*, a "musical entertainment" by Paul Shyre with music and lyrics by Will Holt, opened on May 11th at the South Street Theater in New York City, with Jack Betts as O'Neill and Jane White as Carlotta. The fate of this tuneful potpourri "on the male experience" will be recounted in the next issue of the Newsletter--if it proves to deserve it.
7. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. Daniel Sullivan. Seattle Repertory Theatre, Dec. 31, 1980 - Jan. 25, 1981. (See review by Deborah Kellar Pattin, with accompanying photographs in this issue.)

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. David Rotenberg. Indiana Repertory Theatre, Indianapolis, April 24 - May 16, 1981.

Ah, Wilderness! Lakewood Theater Co., Skowhegan, ME, Summer 1981. The play has been announced as "under consideration" as part of the company's ten-week summer season (June 23 - August 31). For confirmation, write to the LTC at P.O. Box 99, Skowhegan, ME 04976.

Ann Christie. New England Repertory Theatre, Worcester, MA. Scheduled as the fourth production of a six-play 1981-82 season. For dates and other information, call 617-798-0060 or write to the New England Rep at 23 Oxford St., Worcester, MA 01609.

Beyond the Horizon, dir. Charles Clubb. Theatre Exchange, New York City, March 26 - April 12, 1981.

Beyond the Horizon, dir. James Jennings. ATA Theatre, New York City. Closed on April 25, 1981.

Bount East for Cardiff, dir. Sean Skilling. A Spring 1981 production of Cup & Saucer, a Tufts University student drama group, at the Tufts Arena Theater, Medford, MA.

Desire Under the Elms. The Tacoma Actors Guild, Tacoma, WA, February, 1981.

- Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. Jay E. Raphael. The Virginia Players, Culbreth Theatre (University of Virginia), Charlottesville, VA, Dec. 5-13, 1980. (See Mr. Raphael's report on the production, with accompanying photographs, in this issue.)
- Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. David O. Glazer. Apple Corps Theatre Co., New York City, Jan. 8 - Feb. 1, 1981.
- Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. Geraldine Fitzgerald. The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St., New York City. Current production, transferred on March 18 to the Public's Anspacher Theater from the Richard Allen Center for Culture and Art at St. Peter's Church (Lexington Avenue at 53rd Street), where it had opened on March 3rd. The production will journey uptown again this summer as part of the Third Annual International Black Arts Festival (July 12 - August 2), produced by the Richard Allen Center, at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. It will then presumably return to the Public, where its run has been extended indefinitely. (See review by Marshall Brooks, with accompanying photographs, in this issue.)
- A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Old Globe Theatre, San Diego, CA, Jan 18 - Feb. 22, 1981.
- A Moon for the Misbegotten*, dir. Robert Brewer. StageWest, West Springfield, MA, Feb. 12 - March 7, 1981.
- More Stately Mansions*, dir. Ronald Miller. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dec. 15, 1980. A staged reading by members of Theatre and Drama 911, a course jointly conducted by Professors Esther M. Jackson and John Ezell. An illustrated report on this pioneering project in theatre and education will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.
- More Stately Mansions*. Irish Rebel Theatre, Irish Arts Center, New York City, through May 31. For information, call 212-757-3318.
- Welded*, dir. José Quintero. Columbia University, Summer 1981. The production, scheduled to open on June 10 for a four-week run, is part of an O'Neill Festival offered by the theater department of the university. For more on the festival, see an entry in this issue's News, Notes and Queries section.

8. RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

- Ron Butler, "O'Neill's New London Turns Back," *Boston Herald American* (Feb. 22, 1981), p. B10. A report on the many restoration projects now taking place in "the true crucible of [O'Neill's] genius" and "the one place he most considered home." Seven years ago, when a group of New Londoners proposed changing the name of Main Street to Eugene O'Neill Drive, three-time former mayor Thomas Griffin echoed the attitude of the town's citizenry to their theatrical summer neighbors in the playwright's youth: "O'Neill was a stew bum. What did he ever do besides write a few plays?" Butler's survey of current O'Neill-related renovations in New London, particularly the restoration of Monte Cristo Cottage, suggests that such sentiments as those voiced by Mayor Griffin have met with the oblivion they deserve.
- Michael Hinden, "Desire and Forgiveness: O'Neill's Diptych" [*Desire Under the Elms* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*], *Comparative Drama* (Fall 1980), pp. 240-250. (See abstract in this issue of the Newsletter.)
- Michael Hinden reviewed Jean Chothia's *Forging a Language: A Study of the Plays of Eugene O'Neill* and O'Neill's *Poems: 1912-1944*, ed. Donald Gallup, in the Winter 1980-81 issue of *Comparative Drama* (pp. 374-379).
- Eric Pace, "Preserving the Homes Where O'Neill Lived and Worked," *New York Times* (Sunday, Feb. 8, 1981), Sec. II, pp. 5, 18. (Reprinted in this issue.)

James A. Robinson, "Taoism and O'Neill's *Marco Millions*," *Comparative Drama* (Fall 1980). The essay follows Michael Hinden's on pp. 251+. An abstract will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Louis Sheaffer reviewed *Eugene O'Neill: A World View*, ed. Virginia Floyd, in the December 1980 issue of *Theatre Journal* (pp. 540-541), noting that the subtitle is unjustified as only four countries other than the United States are represented; and that the assertion of the editor of the volume, and of several represented authors, that O'Neill has not been done justice by his own country is inaccurate. But he had praise for other aspects of the work, especially the "informative pieces" by Olsson, Sienicka and Jarab, and the essays by Raleigh, Wilkins and Frenz.

9. Doris Hart, a doctoral candidate at New York University, is working on a dissertation entitled, "A Comparative Study of the Three New York Productions of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*."
10. ATKINSON ON O'NEILL ON CRITICS. The Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill presented Brooks Atkinson with a medal on Saturday, November 29th, the critic's eighty-sixth birthday. The medal, designed by Al Hirschfeld, was awarded for "enriching the universal understanding" of the late playwright's works. "My personal relations with O'Neill were very spare," Mr. Atkinson reported in accepting the tribute. "Someone asked him once what he thought of critics, and he said, 'I love every bone in their heads.'" [For a fuller report of the event, which took place at Mr. Atkinson's home in Durham, NY, see John Corry, "Brooks Atkinson Honored by O'Neill Committee," *New York Times* (Dec. 1, 1980), p. C14. --Ed.]
11. A week-long five-film tribute to Paul Robeson at New York's Public Theater in late November, 1980, included several screenings of *The Emperor Jones*. According to Carrie Rickey (*Village Voice*, Nov. 26, 1980, p. 46), this was the first time that an unabridged version of the 1933 film had ever been publicly shown. "Some of the original footage [had previously been] cut because it was considered 'racially violent'--that is, it showed a black taking a powerful instead of submissive position. Nevertheless," Ms. Rickey reports, "the Dudley Murphy picture is static, stagy--saved only by the pleasure of listening to Robeson declaim O'Neill."
12. ROBERT REDFORD'S O'NEILL CONNECTION. On a business trip to the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center last December, Robert Redford made it clear that he was no stranger to New London or, indirectly, to Eugene O'Neill. From early childhood, starting at the age of six, he made repeated visits to the Spring Street home of his grandfather, Charles Redford, who had played in pit orchestras in local theatres, had known actors Richard Mansfield and Edwin Booth, and had palled around with playwright O'Neill. "They hung out together," Redford said, recalling his grandfather's stories. "They would meet at Doc Ganey's Second Story Club. [The club was described by Morgan McGinley of the *New London Day* as "a drinking society and book discussion group in which the ability to consume whiskey and talk all night was essential to membership."] My grandfather liked O'Neill, but he thought his brother was a bum." [Sources: *The O'Neill* (Dec., 1980), pp. 11, 13, 16; and *New England Entertainment Digest* (Jan. 16, 1981), p. 3. *The O'Neill* is a quarterly publication of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. --Ed.]
13. The death, last September 9th, of director, critic and author Harold Clurman is a sad loss for the American theatre in general and for the O'Neill community in particular. His memorable direction of the first American production of *A Touch of the Poet* in 1958 was but one of his landmark O'Neill productions around the world. In a 1979 interview at the O'Neill Theater Center, Mr. Clurman said, "I rank O'Neill as the greatest American playwright. He had the greatest scope of all. In his best plays the range is terrific. He wrote about America. What he wrote about has deeper meaning, greater application than just to himself." Clurman first noticed O'Neill's writing in

Smart Set, the Mencken- and Nathan-edited literary magazine; and as a college student he attended a matinee performance of O'Neill's first play on Broadway--*Beyond the Horizon*--at the Morosco in 1920. For the last four years of his life, Mr. Clurman had been working on a critical study of O'Neill. It is to be hoped that the completed portions will be published.

14. The O'Neill community mourns the passing, on January 5th, of Arthur H. Nethercot, dedicated O'Neill scholar, whose enthusiastic support of the Newsletter was a source of strength for its editor, and whose writings on the playwright will ever remain among the best.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The editor welcomes letters on any pertinent subject, merely requesting that you indicate if a letter is not for publication. All confidences will be honored.]

1. From Jacob H. Adler, Head, Department of English, Purdue University, 24 Feb., 1981:

A few issues of the Newsletter ago, you published a letter I wrote to you commenting on an article which related A Touch of the Poet to The Wild Duck and Hedda Gabler, and pointing out a probable relationship to The Wild Duck in a much earlier play, Strange Interlude.

Now I have just been teaching A Touch of the Poet, and a possible relationship to another of Ibsen's play's occurred to me. O'Neill rather frequently gives his characters names which have a meaning. He certainly does with Con Melody, a man who "cons" people and who tries desperately to make of his life a melody when it has become a cacophony. The name is every bit as ironical, without being as obvious, as Harry Hope's in Iceman. Is it not then at least possible that the name of Con's wife is also an irony? She is Nora; and she has spent her whole life--and will continue to spend it--as Nora did, and then rebelled from doing, in A Doll's House. Nora I walked out. Nora II never will. The husband of Nora I treated her as a doll, a child, someone not his equal in maturity. The husband of Nora II treats her as a lower-class drudge, someone not his equal in social standing. Maybe O'Neill didn't have Nora I in mind; but he certainly knew his Ibsen thoroughly, as A Touch of the Poet itself demonstrates. And it's hard to believe that anyone familiar with Ibsen could even encounter, much less use, the name Nora without thinking of A Doll's House.

2. From John J. McKenna, New York City, 5 Jan., 1981:

A celebrity auction for the benefit of the New York Public Library was held on Sunday, October 19, 1980. Three lots included O'Neill material. The catalogue described them as follows:

Number 13 O'Neill, Eugene, Mourning Becomes Electra, A Trilogy. N. Y.: Horace Liveright, 1931. Lg 8vo. Full vellum. No. 469 of 550 copies (500 for sale), signed by the author. Jo Mielziner's copy, with his signature on the endpaper. Near fine in a slipcase of which only the front and back panels remain. Est. \$100 - 125

Number 26 O'Neill, Eugene, Strange Interlude. N. Y.: Boni & Liveright, 1928, 4to. Full vellum. No. 172 of 775 copies (750 for sale) on all-rag watermarked paper, signed by the author. Jo Mielziner's copy with his signature on the endpaper. (He designed the first production.) Fine in scuffed and slightly torn slipcase. Est. \$150 - 175

Number 38 O'Neill, Eugene. First editions of O'Neill's plays, as follows:

Ah, Wilderness! N. Y.: Random House, 1933 corners rubbed.

Desire Under the Elms. N. Y.: Boni & Liveright, 1925. Jo Meilziner's copy, with his signature on the endpaper. Slightly rubbed, in a slightly torn and chipped

dustwrapper; in a custom-made folding case, in morocco-backed slipcase. From Jo Mielziner's library.

The Emperor Jones, in Theatre Arts Magazine, Jan. 1921. Illustrated. First printing (before book publication). The complete issue, in original decorated wrappers, in custom-made folding case, in morocco-backed slipcase. From Jo Mielziner's library.

Strange Interlude. N. Y. : Boni & Liveright, 1938. Corners rubbed; inner hinges cracking.

The Lot: \$125 - 150

I thought that it was interesting since most of the material was Jo Mielziner's. I was not present at the auction and have no idea who the successful bidders were.

I trust that you will find this interesting enough to pass on to your readers.

3. From Edith Reid, Brooklyn, New York, 22 Dec., 1980:

I am probably the least academic and/or theatrical subscriber to your publication, never having attended a university--not even a little college--nor presently active in the theatre behind the footlights. But I am an O'Neill aficionado.

It might interest you to know that I use the Newsletter as a source of education. That is, when it arrives, I drop all other reading matter and delve into the particular plays being reviewed or commented on. In addition, I try to attend performances of any O'Neill play that you list in advance and that is playing in the Greater New York area. I did see the Classic Theatre's A Moon for the Misbegotten and loved it, even though it was a hot night (offstage as well) in a non-air-conditioned studio.

So here you have one subscriber's point of view.

[And here, Ms. Reid, you have one editor's--and his publication's--raison d'être. While it is the Newsletter's wish (if newsletters *can* wish!) to serve and unite the O'Neillians of the theatre and those of the academy, it can have no desire greater than to provide the kind of service for which you have found it useful. And how kind and thoughtful of you to let me know. Believe me, it is heartening, especially on dark days of deadline, to remember that someone is waiting for the next issue, and cares. Many thanks, FCW.]

PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

MARSHALL BROOKS, essayist, printer and softball coach, is the editor of *Nostoc* and associate editor of the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*. *Nostoc* #10, soon to be published, will comprise eight short short stories and sketches by James T. Farrell, two of which have never before been published. For price information and a catalog of all his other publishing ventures, write to Mr. Brooks, Arts End Books, Box 162, Newton, MA 02168.

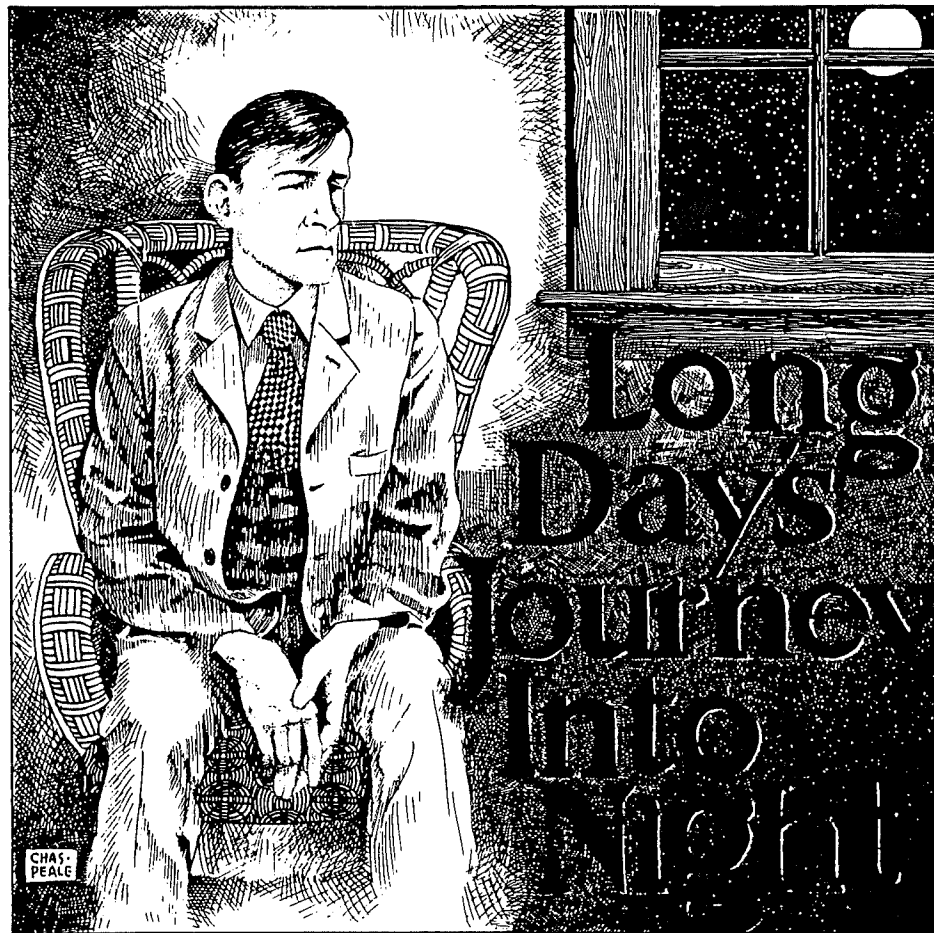
ROBERT BUTLER is an Associate Professor of English at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. His doctoral dissertation (Notre Dame, 1978) was on "Time and Narrative Design in the Major Novels of James T. Farrell," and he has published articles on Farrell, Theodore Dreiser and Ralph Ellison.

DEBORAH KELLAR PATTIN, who teaches English and drama at a high school in Tacoma, Washington, is a member of the Membership Committee of the Eugene O'Neill Society and of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House. In the May-September 1980 issue of the Newsletter, she reported on a Washington production of *A Touch of the Poet*, which she directed.

JAY E. RAPHAEL is an Assistant Professor of Drama at the University of Virginia and a member of the Publications Committee of the Eugene O'Neill Society. The "Director's Notes" in the *Long Day's Journey* program describe his affection for O'Neill: "Since 1968, when a friend casually mentioned that I might like to read the Gelb biography of Eugene O'Neill, I have been consuming all of his plays, collecting all of the biographical works and critical commentary on his considerable product, dragging my

beleaguered wife to the four corners of this country in search of obscure theatrical productions, and spending our collective salaries on first editions, memorabilia and an addictive pursuit of the man and the artist."

FREDERICK C. WILKINS, Chairman of the Department of English at Suffolk University in Boston, where he was instrumental in initiating a new major in Dramatic Arts, is editor of the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter* and a member of the Board of Directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society.



Drawing on cover of Virginia Players production discussed in this issue.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- * "Good Morning, Eugene"--a long poem by Norman Andrew Kirk, inspired by an eyewitness account of the playwright's burial in Boston's Forest Hills Cemetery;
- * "*Desire Under the Elms*: Characters by Jung"--an essay by Patrick J. Nolan;
- * Reviews and reports of new productions and publications;
- * Advance information about O'Neill Society doings in New York City next December; and
- * News, notes and queries from all over, submitted by the Newsletter's dedicated readership.