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The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

WINTER 1982

IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Romulus Linney on the fascination of O'Neill p. 3
- * Albert Wertheim on split characters in *Days Without End* et al. p. 5
- * FOCUS ON ONE ACT PLAYS
 - * Robert K. Sarló on the first production of *The Rope* p. 9
 - * Robert Perrin on language in *Where the Cross Is Made* p. 12
 - * Stephen M. Watt on Tennyson and *The Emperor Jones* p. 14
 - * Gerald Lee Ratliff on *Fog* as a theological miscellany p. 15
 - * Esther Timár on possible sources of *Recklessness* and *In the Zone* p. 20
- * Reviews and abstracts
 - * Frederick Wilkins on "Three Lost Plays" in New York City p. 24
 - * Frederick Wilkins on *Strindberg and O'Neill: A Shared Legacy* p. 26
 - * Gerald M. Berkowitz on a *Long Day's Journey*, abridged, in Scotland p. 27
 - * Eugene K. Hanson on *Long Day's Journey* in Hollywood p. 28
 - * Doris Hart on three *Long Day's Journeys* in NYC (dissertation abstract) p. 29
 - * Abstracts of seven reviews and articles printed elsewhere p. 30
- * The Eugene O'Neill Society Section: MLA '82 and '83 p. 34
- * Frederick Wilkins reviews new books by and about O'Neill (Part Two) p. 38
- * News, notes and queries p. 45

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The "original cast" of *A Wife for a Life*:
Bill Kalmenson (Jack), Frank Nastasi (Pete)
and P.L. Carling (Older Man). See review
on pp. 24-26.

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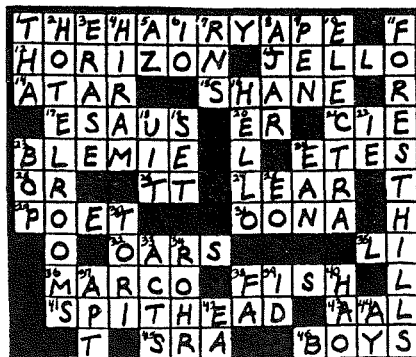
EDITOR'S FOREWORD: AN INTRODUCTION, TWO APOLOGIES AND A DATE TO REMEMBER

I find this issue a particularly exciting one, despite its paucity of pictures, because it combines personal recollection and scholarly analysis and because its "focus" section on O'Neill's one act plays suggests a number of ways in which the playwright's work can and should be studied. Romulus Linney, being himself a distinguished dramatist, has a special awareness of the mind and art of O'Neill. His comparison between his teachers' embarrassment in treating O'Neill and his own later reassessment of the man and his particular genius echoes, I am sure, the experience of many of us, and does so very movingly. It is an honor to be able to print it. Albert Wertheim, O'Neill Society President, in a more objective but no less persuasive essay, underscores O'Neill's connections with playwrights who preceded and followed him. His study will, I hope, inspire a more sympathetic look hereafter at the underrated *Days Without End*. And the mini-anthology of articles on the one-acts demonstrates a variety of fruitful avenues for O'Neill study: historical documentation (Sarló), linguistic analysis (Perrin), thematic interpretation (Ratliff), and the tracing of sources and analogues (Timar and Watt, respectively). The convergence of so many pieces on the short plays was fortuitous, but their multifarious focuses make their contiguity especially revealing. (In simpler language, my thanks to the contributors!)

Another happy revelation in this issue, in both the reviews and the news notes, is the rich abundance of new and forthcoming books by and about O'Neill. Long before the inevitable flurry at centennial time in 1988, O'Neill seems to be an extremely hot property, as he unquestionably deserves to be. If the Newsletter does no more than spread the word about what is happening and available elsewhere, it will have served its purpose. As ever, it is thanks to its dedicated readers that it is able to do so.

The first of my two apologies is to the officers and members of the Modern Language Association and the American Theatre Association, who may have inferred from the start of my announcement of the Spring 1984 O'Neill conference in Boston (Summer-Fall 1982, p. 55) that I lack appreciation for their contributions to the study and appreciation of O'Neill. In a word (or two), I don't. Were it not for MLA, the Newsletter would never have begun. And ATA's activities in anticipation of the centennial deserve, and have, my applause and full support. All I meant, when I said that O'Neill should be brought out from under their "ponderous shadow," was that he should, from time to time, have full-scale feasts of his own, and not be only a perennial course in bigger banquets. If I was misunderstood, my apologies. As for the "feast" (and the date mentioned in my title), responses have been most gratifying: many have expressed an interest in participating, and the Spring 1984 conference on "*Eugene O'Neill--the Early Years*" should be a memorable one. (For details, see pages 55-56 of the last issue.) And I can now announce, with something approaching certainty, its dates: Thursday, March 22 to Sunday, March 25, 1984. Fuller details will appear in the next issue, but I hope everyone will hasten to mark those days on next year's calendar.

The second apology is less solemn but just as sincere. Puzzlists are right to resent having to wait a third-or-more of a year to learn the correct answers to a crossword puzzle. I hasten to print, below, the answer to the last one (Summer-Fall 1982, p. 29), and assure all gamespersons that the solution to *this* issue's puzzle is included *herein*. No peeking, though!



ABOUT O'NEILL

When I was an undergraduate at Oberlin College, from 1949 until 1953, the reputation of Eugene O'Neill rested on rock bottom. The distinguished English faculty of that admirable college was pretty much persuaded that O'Neill's sun had finally set. He was generally considered, as I remember, an over-rated practitioner of a largely abandoned art form, who was finally getting critically what he deserved. The scorn engendered by O'Neill's awkward language, his newspaper tough-guy posturings, his lamentable tastes in Robert Service type poetry, his self-destructive life-style, his failure to lift melodramatic scenes into higher conflicts, and his constant crude preference for the elementary instead of the complex, was scorching.

As an eager student, trying to learn, I read the plays, noticed all these things, and agreed with my instructors.

I remember this faculty with affection and admiration, but the truth is, they were embarrassed by Eugene O'Neill. Some considered him a rube, New England style. An inept pretender. A glib poseur, whose sarcastic dramatic structures rested on bogs of sickening sentimentality. The only faculty member who had a good word to say about him was the teacher who skillfully and quietly directed the student plays, but the only O'Neill he did while I was there was one of the early sea plays, *The Long Voyage Home*, hardly a daring voyage into O'Neill's waters. I am grateful to those teachers for an otherwise first-rate education in English Literature, but I have since always wondered why we came down on O'Neill quite so hard, and why, as time proved, we were so wrong. They were all good teachers, dedicated and fair as scholars, and as readers, sensitive and understanding. I was a sensible enough student. What was it that bothered us so much?

The flaws are obvious. He is not just melodramatic sometimes, he's corny. His characters often do have a preference for sentimental poetry you can't quite believe he didn't like, too, with the right whiskey. And so on and on. But no one else, before or since in the American theatre, has come close to his achievement, and you don't have to look very far to see how few American writers can match his life's work. It seems to me only Henry James and William Faulkner did so much so well.

There were superficial reasons for the decline in his reputation. He had been commercially successful, after all, during his lifetime, as playwrights' careers go. He was not, I gather, a very pleasant man, who did anybody favors, or made any attempt to attract scholars to his work. His dramatic subjects were grandiose to say the least—a modern Greek tragedy in Civil War dress; Marco Polo with the soul of Babbitt; Apollo and Dionysus as small town Americans; Lazarus, if you please, laughing. My goodness.

This all changed when *Long Day's Journey Into Night* appeared. I was a graduate student by that time, at Yale, and we all went to see Frederic March and his wife—with a young unknown named Robards—in this "last" play of Eugene O'Neill.

Frederic March was wonderful as the father, but when I saw him, he had not yet quite mastered his lines in the last act, and had to pound the table a lot to remember them. Florence Eldridge seemed a little muted to some of us. But Robards was perfect—the living proof that O'Neill's sardonic, arrested-development drunks, given an actor who understood them, were characters of measureless depth and sensitivity, ravaged and loving and raging and descended in a direct line from that tortured young man he portrayed as himself in the early sea plays.

There wasn't much analysis of that play when the curtain came down. Even the young and self-centered graduate students of the late 1950's, with our ambitions and illusions, felt the power of the event. We sat down to our beer with reverence.

Because the play was about the man's own family. Plainly. He had put his father on the stage, and called him a miser. He had put his brother on the stage, and called him

murderous. He had put his mother on the stage, and called her a dope fiend.

And as if that weren't enough, he had put himself on the stage, a loving victim of the other three.

And he had created, out of such an adolescent, unfair scenario, a human tragedy of the first magnitude, so filled with truth and force that there seemed nothing in our memories or our books to compare it with. Gone now the awkward language, replaced by utterances tempered, razor-sharp, and soaring. Gone the maudlin reproaches and the vague pessimism, replaced by the devastating and the inevitable. Gone the melodrama and the thin characterizations, replaced by terrible human complications, those realities that theatre at its greatest can glory in, can celebrate as tragic, with an effect on human beings unlike any other creation of man.

I have never stopped marveling at this play, the greatest work of autobiographical art I know. I have never stopped wondering why the playwright my teachers disliked so much could write it.

I am not very good at suggesting categories, nor do I wish to be, since I distrust them all. But if I can say, and feel reasonably content about it, that the great writers of the past—Homer, Sophocles, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Tolstoy and Company—generally went about their work in what is called an objective manner, that is, by describing the world around them first, and injecting their personal experiences of life into it second, in disguise; and if I can say that many modern writers have found an alternative—that is, to place themselves at the center of their work, openly, and make no bones about it; then I can also say that O'Neill did both. He wrote like writers of the past, but while doing so, evolved into a writer of the present, perhaps of the future.

Someone no doubt will know better, but I can't think of any other writer who labored in fields so traditional, who then crowned his life's work with a masterpiece so utterly radical. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* moves into the territory of Kafka, Malcolm Lowry, Sylvia Plath, Jean Rhys and Company, and goes further. Only Strindberg, the author O'Neill so profoundly admired and learned from, attempted anything like it, but his autobiographical writings are marred by mental obsessions that kept him from O'Neill's achievement: the transformation of his most personal experiences into a single great work of art.

Who else did this successfully, after writing for so long in so different a manner? Ibsen? Chekhov? Shaw? The autobiography is there, as it is in the work of all writers, but classically hidden within the stories told. Will Miller? Williams? Albee? These living playwrights I admire almost as much as O'Neill, but in this area I can only hope that they will. Novelists? Poets? I can't name one.

Who, in other words, will transform the core of his life into a work entirely of our time, entirely worthy of Shakespeare, of Sophocles? And how did he do it?

Now perhaps my curiosity about my teachers and our verdicts can be satisfied. Because what bothered us most were those early spurts of awkward biography in the plays, those details O'Neill relished and would not give up. With everyone reading Camus and Sartre then, they seemed so clumsy and crude, so far from the polished shaping of life into objective artistic perception. In those days of the frozen fifties, of the objective correlative and the banishment of an artist's life from his work, my teachers and I were bothered by the stubborn remainders of adolescence in the plays, by the self-indulgence he clearly insisted on retaining, when we thought he must have known better.

And what is fascinating to me now is that those moments O'Neill insisted on preserving—and I mean the stuffing in of bad poems and the asides and too-slangy remarks, the stilted quotations and half-digested pseudo-philosophy—it is at those points I now consider him most wise, for he was keeping, in mature work, some parts of him adolescent. He was learning his lessons, but in that unique and individual way every great artist must, seeking the contradictory truth, looking past his own brilliant theatrical conventions and tours-de-force, searching for something else. What?

Instead of the dour, hateful man he no doubt could be, instead of the terrible parent and the dangerous husband, instead of that sad man he was burdened with, he sought in his work the man he most respected and wanted to be. That was indeed, absolutely, a man who was often still awkward, crude, a poseur, all those adolescent things, for in them lay powers he still had not attained. Slowly, in the long career, working out one sophisticated stage conception after another, he prepared himself, like a worker in darkness, to do something else. Finally, he did. He moved suddenly toward stark autobiography. The sublimations of the one woman surrounded by the two or three men present in so many of the earlier plays, the taste for the exotic and the grandiose, resolved themselves into the reality of his childhood life. As he went from *The Iceman Cometh* to *A Moon for the Misbegotten* to *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, he penetrated the core and mystery of his own being, and he could write, briefly but finally, as the great master and the great adolescent he always felt, at the same time, he was. He found himself.

—Romulus Linney

EUGENE O'NEILL'S *DAYS WITHOUT END* AND THE TRADITION OF THE SPLIT CHARACTER IN MODERN AMERICAN AND BRITISH DRAMA

A hallmark of Eugene O'Neill's drama is his creation of dramatic characters with two clearly distinguishable sides to their personalities. The idea of an inner voice separate from the external self, from the face put on to meet the faces that you meet, is as old as the convention of the dramatic "aside." But asides and soliloquies like those of Hamlet are merely conventions and hardly adequate representations of the voice of the human psyche. In the nineteenth century, fiction and poetry found appropriate ways to render the psyche for their readers. Stream-of-consciousness fiction, such as Poe's, and interior or dramatic monologue poetry, such as Browning's, filled that need. But for drama, the means for presenting the inner voice of a character physically present onstage and engaged in the social situations generated by the plot remained a problem. For the most part, the devices for presenting the inner voice, the stream of consciousness, onstage were developed by the giants of expressionist drama: Bronnen, Sorge, Hasenclever, Kaiser and Toller. O'Neill surely knew or knew of their work and sought to forge his own means for conveying the inner voice and consciousness of a dramatic character to a theatre audience. The use of masks in *The Great God Brown* and of the interior monologues of *Strange Interlude* are probably his best-known experiments in this endeavor. But self-conscious devices like masks and audible thinking, useful as they are, are cumbersome devices and are not the sort that can be used over and over again by a playwright.

O'Neill eventually learned that for the presentation of the division between internal and external reality, for the presentation of the split character, the actor could be more effective than special effects. Thus, the rendering of the interior self or the split personality in *A Touch of the Poet*, *Moon for the Misbegotten* and *The Iceman Cometh* is more successful than in some of the earlier, more consciously experimental plays. Without O'Neill's pioneering experimentation, however, the dramatic technique of a play like Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, in which Willy Loman moves effortlessly from the world of his present failure to the memories of his past life, would be unthinkable. Likewise, one feels the underpinnings of O'Neill's dramaturgical explorations in the directions to the actors in *Angel City* by the contemporary playwright Sam Shepard:

The term "character" could be thought of in a different way when working on this play. Instead of the idea of a "whole character" with logical motives behind his behavior which the actor submerges himself into, he should consider instead a fractured whole with bits and pieces of character flying off the central theme.... This is not the same thing as one actor playing many different roles, each one distinct from the other (or "doubling up" as

they call it), but more that he's mixing many different underlying elements and connecting them through his intuition and senses to make a kind of music or painting in space without having to feel the need to completely answer intellectually for the character's behavior.¹

For the ability to present on stage inner and outer reality, the split or fractured personality, and two time periods simultaneously, contemporary American drama must forever be in debt to Eugene O'Neill.

Among O'Neill's experiments to help him find an adequate dramatic means for expressing the divided self is a much neglected, undervalued play, *Days Without End*. This is a drama that makes an important stride in bringing the *Doppelgänger* figure, a figure well known in prose fiction, to the stage. In *Days Without End*, O'Neill's central character, John Loving, is portrayed by two identically shaped, identically clad actors. The one plays John, the other Loving. The mitosis is not as simplistic as it may first appear, for the division between John and Loving—though it is one of the outer reality, John, versus the inner voice, Loving—is more than that. In the tradition of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, it is also the division between a respectable citizen and his satanic inner self. O'Neill's division shows, moreover, on the one hand, the human need for social coordinates—marriage, friends, family, social and economic status—and on the other hand, the counter-urge for individuality unfettered by obligation, classification or duty. John and Loving portray the eternal warfare between the creative and destructive impulses in man. And, as O'Neill conveys them, John and Loving reflect the corollary armageddon between belief and atheism, between the faith of Catholicism and a Satanic scorn toward God and religion. Obviously these splits are reminiscent of a whole galaxy of O'Neill characters, though John Loving comes closest perhaps to Dion Anthony in the dichotomy between the suffering Christian saint and the the sardonic mockery of a Dionysus or Mephistopheles.

What sets *Days Without End* apart from O'Neill's other plays of divided character is that John and Loving, since they are played by two different actors, can actually carry on with one another a dialogue as well as a dialectic. And through their bitter debates, O'Neill nicely conveys the way in which John Loving, the integrated character, is nearly obliterated by the disjunction of his two selves. And when, at the close of the play, John finally subdues Loving, a three dimensional John Loving emerges, transcending his caricatured personality divisions.

For the most part, reviewers like John Anderson and John Mason Brown or critics like Travis Bogard do not find *Days Without End* an inspired or inspiring play, for they see O'Neill's double casting as a hollow dramatic gimmick.² Anderson, panning the 1934 production, wrote, "When John Loving is in the throes of spiritual agony their dialogue monkeyshines become a joint debate between the Gold Dust Twins, or as some irreverent wag remarked in the intermission, a session between Mr. Loving and his spiritual stooge."³

To be sure, O'Neill's *Doppelgänger* device is a gimmick that creates an often unrealistic psychomachia, a staged debate between John and Loving, the Apollonian and the Dionysiac, the Faustian and the Mephistophelian, the Christian and the Satanic, the ego and the alter ego, the outer self and the inner voice. Barrett H. Clark complained that, "As in a

¹ Sam Shepard, *Angel City & Other Plays* (New York: Urizen Books, n.d.), p. 6.

² John Anderson, "Days Without End," *Evening Journal* (January 9, 1934), rpt. in *O'Neill and His Plays*, ed. Oscar Cargill, N. Bryllion Fagin and William J. Fisher (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 200-202; John Mason Brown, "Days Without End," *The New York Post* (January 9, 1934), rpt. in Jordan Y. Miller, *Playwright's Progress* (Chicago: Scott Foresman, 1965), p. 80; Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 326-329.

³ Anderson, p. 201.

Medieval morality play, the characters are pure abstractions."⁴ It is, however, really only John and Loving who are abstract figures; and their cardboard qualities are italicized by the fact that they function within a dramatic world that is otherwise realistic and populated with characters who are not portrayed by two different actors, who are not divided. What seems to have been overlooked by both reviewers and critics is that John and Loving's two-dimensionality is precisely O'Neill's point; for as long as John Loving is divided, he cannot function as a human being, existing only as the caricatured, two-dimensional halves of a three dimensional person.

It is quite possible that O'Neill may have taken the idea for *Days Without End* from one of America's first practitioners of expressionism, Alice Gerstenberg. Her play *Overtures*, which was produced by the Washington Square Players in 1915, was likely not unknown to O'Neill. In Gerstenberg's one-acter, two characters, Harriet and Margaret, are portrayed by four actresses all on stage at the same time. One portrays Harriet; another Harriet's "primitive self," Hetty; a third Margaret; and a fourth Margaret's "primitive self," Maggie. As in *Days Without End*, the two sides of each character interact and maintain a dialogue; but in Gerstenberg's excellent though simpler play, the character division is limited to the dialectic of ego and id. Examining *Days Without End* in light of *Overtures*, one can quickly recognize that O'Neill deftly extends Gerstenberg's simple, psychological mitosis to encompass philosophical as well as psychological conflict, and to dramatize what was only stated some years earlier by Billy Brown in *The Great God Brown*: "Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue!"⁵

Although the double casting of *Days Without End* looks back to Gerstenberg's *Overtures*, it also looks ahead to some contemporary dramas that move beyond O'Neill's experiment. Whereas *Days Without End* was and is scorned by critics, the contemporary plays have nearly all been successful and praised for the sort of innovation for which O'Neill has been condemned. One can only wonder whether *Days Without End* would have been applauded had it been produced forty years later.

In many ways resembling O'Neill's play, Adrienne Kennedy's contemporary expressionist tragedy, *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, moves a step beyond *Days Without End*. *Funnyhouse*, which won an Obie Award in 1964, presents the fragmentation of a black woman, Sarah, through the tragic dilemma of being black, intelligent and sensitive in white America. The split between O'Neill's John and Loving is expanded in *Funnyhouse*, so that one actress plays Sarah, but four other players enact the various male and female selves into which Sarah is fragmented. Those selves include the Duchess of Hapsburg, Queen Victoria, Jesus, and Patrice Lumumba. Jesus, moreover, appears as a yellow-skinned, hunch-backed dwarf; and Lumumba is a black man whose head is split in two and who carries an ebony mask. As in so many O'Neill plays, the origin of the protagonist's problems in Kennedy's play is her parents. The problem of race and color combines with her feelings toward her parents to fragment Sarah, the main character of *Funnyhouse*, into her several irreconcilable, disparate personalities. The expressionistic techniques, the poetry and the presentation of Sarah and her four other selves in *Funnyhouse* make the character division and dramatic techniques of *Days Without End* seem like finger exercises. And whereas O'Neill's John and Loving become glued together into an integrated, whole character through John's rediscovered faith, Sarah the Negro cannot integrate her several selves, becomes psychologically unglued, and hangs herself during the final moments of *Funnyhouse of a Negro*.

With O'Neill's interest in the impact of the traumas and events of childhood upon the mature adult, he would surely have found the character doubling in three contemporary plays from across the Atlantic of great interest. Hugh Leonard's well-received *Da* (1978) and *A Life* (1980) and Peter Nichols' earlier and far more penetrating *Forget-me-not Lane* (1971), all present adult main characters, played by one actor, viewing and commenting upon the

⁴ Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays* (New York: Dover Publications, 1947), p. 141.

⁵ Eugene O'Neill, *The Great God Brown*, in *Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 370.

scenes of their youth and upon youthful selves, played simultaneously by other actors. For both Leonard and Nichols, two actors on stage enable the dramatists to collapse the time span between present and past,⁶ to create a true memory play of the sort toward which Tennessee Williams only gestured in *The Glass Menagerie*, and to have mature characters assess their lives through observing themselves as adolescents. The result in Leonard's plays is wistful sentimentality. Nichols' play is, as John Russell Taylor has commented, "an extraordinary play ... a very theatrical play, with a central character-narrator who uses to the full possibilities of stepping in and out of the action, now becoming himself deeply involved, now stepping back sadly or ironically to comment."⁷

In 1977, Marsha Norman's *Getting Out* premiered at the Actor's Theatre in Louisville. It is almost as though *Getting Out* marries the psychological, spiritual and philosophical divisions explored by Gerstenberg, O'Neill and Kennedy with the chronological divisions presented by Leonard and Nichols. *Getting Out* is about the new start in life made by Arlene, a recently released convict in her late twenties. Throughout the play she is haunted and shadowed on stage by Arlie, her hip, delinquent, teenage self, played by a second actress. In her preface to *Getting Out*, Marsha Norman explains:

ARLIE is the violent kid ARLENE was until her last stretch in prison. In a sense, she is ARLENE's memory of herself, called up by her fears, needs and even simple word cues. ARLIE's life should be as vivid as Arlene's if not as continuous.... The change seen in ARLIE during the second act represents a movement toward ARLENE, but the transition should never be complete. Only in the final scene do they acknowledge and appreciate each other's presence.⁸

In *Getting Out*, Norman has Arlie and Arlene always on stage together but never interacting. On one level, the play is a memory play in which a reformed, mature Arlene confronts her former unregenerate, younger self. On another level, however, as with John and Loving, the two women represent contrary, conflicting impulses within the main character. When Carl, Arlie's former pimp, lover and the father of her illegitimate child, appears in Arlene's flat, Arlene is able to resist his attempt to reintroduce her to a world of vice because Arlie reenacts the sordid connection she has had with Carl a decade before. The struggle in *Getting Out* is Arlene's struggle to overcome her Arlie self. And to do so, she must learn to accept the fact that she once *was* Arlie, to make her peace with her earlier self, and recognize Arlie's positive as well as her anti-social qualities. At the end of *Getting Out*, Arlie and Arlene reminisce about a comic episode in their childhood. At that moment, the two actresses come together and simultaneously speak the punch line of the anecdote. The play then concludes with the joint laughter of Arlie and Arlene. That moment of integration and laughter brings to mind the last line of *Days Without End*, in which the newly integrated John Loving exclaims, "Life laughs with God's love again! Life laughs with love!"⁹

Recently (January 8, 1981) a new play, Peter Nichols' *Passion Play*, opened in London. The resemblances between *Days Without End* and *Passion Play* are uncanny. Like O'Neill's play, Nichols' centers on both adultery and religion, as its punning title suggests.

⁶ Another recent American play, Romulus Linney's *Childe Byron* (1977) also uses two actors to allow the ghost of Lord Byron to view himself as a boy and as a young man. There is, however, no dialogue or interaction between Byron and his youthful self.

⁷ John Russell Taylor, *The Second Wave* (London: Methuen & Co., 1971), p. 32.

⁸ Marsha Norman, *Getting Out* (New York: Avon Books, 1980), p. 5.

⁹ Eugene O'Neill, *Days Without End* (New York: Random House, 1934), p. 157.

Like John Loving, James, the main character of *Passion Play*, becomes entangled in an adulterous affair with his wife's close friend, Kate. The necessity of keeping his liaison secret from his wife, Eleanor, splits James into two roles, the dutiful husband and the passionate adulterer. And these two separate roles become separate selves, James and Jim, portrayed by two different actors. Likewise, when Eleanor learns from a meddling acquaintance of her husband's marital infidelities, she, too, becomes divided into Eleanor and Nell, the stoically calm and the jealous and angry wife, played by two different actresses.

As in *Days Without End*, the divided self has something to do with the questioning of Christianity in *Passion Play*. Nichols' James is a restorer of art currently working on the restoration of a Victorian crucifixion painting. Eleanor is a musician actively engaged in singing Handel and Bach oratorios and the Mozart Requiem. Nichols neatly uses the juxtaposition of the Christian passion with contemporary, adulterous sexual passion to illustrate the shabbiness and tawdriness of his characters.¹⁰ The eternal sexual triangle can hardly withstand comparison to that other eternal triangle, the Trinity. In both O'Neill and Nichols, modern man disaffected from Christianity becomes divided, at war with himself, and shallow. In *Days Without End*, however, a play of unusual optimism in the O'Neill canon, John Loving rediscovers and reaffirms his Catholicism, enabling him to reclaim his integrity and humanity. Peter Nichols permits James-Jim and Eleanor-Nell no reclamation, no born-again Christianity. He closes his play instead with Christmas greetings ironically heralding no salvation for his characters. They remain forever divided.

Days Without End has always been looked upon as one of O'Neill's least successful endeavors. Looking at it anew, in terms of its place in a continuum of drama from Alice Gerstenberg's *Overtones* to Marsha Norman's *Getting Out* and Peter Nichols' *Passion Play*, one can see that it may merit more recognition and praise than it has received. As is so often the case with O'Neill's experiments, *Days Without End* shows O'Neill putting his finger on a technique that is only now being refined and successfully used. What reviewers in 1934 saw as a trick or gimmick, can now be viewed as a rich dramatic device, the potential of which O'Neill may have, at least in part, understood to a greater extent than has hitherto been acknowledged.

—Albert Wertheim

NINA MOISE DIRECTS EUGENE O'NEILL'S *THE ROPE*¹

Eugene O'Neill's one-act sea-coast play, *The Rope*, was first performed on 26 April, 1918, on the last bill of the Provincetown Players' second New York season, at The Playwright's Theatre in Macdougall Street. It was directed by Nina Moise, and leading roles were taken by Otto Liveright (the publisher's brother) and the painter Charles Ellis (he would soon marry Edna St. Vincent Millay's sister, Norma). Ellis also provided a backdrop.

As with most Provincetown productions, there is little evidence about the staging: no photographs are known to have survived, and Heywood Brown seems to have written the only review. However, the script used by the director is in existence, along with a

¹⁰ See especially the opening moments of the second act: Peter Nichols, *Passion Play* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981), pp. 59-61.

¹ This is a revised version of a paper presented at the American Theatre Association's 46th Annual Convention, New York, August 1982.

series of letters from the playwright to her. In addition, I had personal conversations with both Miss Moise and Mr. Ellis in 1963. On the basis of the enumerated evidence, some comments on the original production can be made.

O'Neill's script begins with preparations by the niggardly father, Abraham Bentley, for the return of his prodigal son, Luke. Old Bentley hid the remainder of the family fortune at one end of a rope he arranged in the barn—the noose at the other end is in plain sight. He receives the young man with a mixture of obvious joy and of inarticulate urgings for Luke to hang himself. Young Bentley does not become aware of the morbid joke below the surface of his father's mutterings, and nearly kills the old man before storming out in a rage. It is the halfwitted granddaughter, Mary, who finds the gold at the end of the rope and chucks it piecemeal into the ocean.

Nina Moise, the director, was one of O'Neill's favorites among the Provincetown Players. She first joined the group near the end of its first New York season, just as the Players were growing aware of the harm caused by their chaotic operation. The group spirit was already failing, the originally sacred principles of collective play selection and of collective production under the author's supervision were breached more often than honored, and incoming scripts were getting worse. This situation cried out for expertise, Nina Moise was the competent director on the horizon, and the ice of amateurism began to crack.

Since graduation from Stanford as a drama major, Moise had wanted to act, yet always ended up directing. Again, arriving in Greenwich Village after a brief term with a Massachusetts stock company and looking for roles, she was told that the Provincetown Players needed a director. A meeting with Jig Cook, factotum of the Macdougall Street group, was arranged in a restaurant, and he promptly took her to the theatre, where David Pinski's *A Dollar* was in rehearsal on the diminutive stage. According to a letter Moise wrote in 1933, it appeared "quite evident that the actors didn't have much idea what to do or how to do it....they had a very definite idea that anything one did in life could be done on the stage. If people stood in front of each other and bumped each other in a room, why not do it on the stage—which is exactly what they were doing." Nina Moise was almost immediately put in charge of the rehearsal. Soon, Neith Boyce, author of the second play on the bill, approached her with a similar request. Finally, Susan Glaspell asked her to "please help Jig direct *Pan* in which he was playing with Edna James. I suggested he might prefer doing it himself, but she assured me he didn't and I discovered after the first rehearsal that he needed a little help. At any rate, I ended by directing that entire bill."²

Moise could not singlehandedly turn the performances professional even had she wished, yet her expert control made an impression on the Players, who were never the same thereafter. As a result of the measure of order she introduced into production methods, Moise's hold on the group grew stronger. At the next meeting she was asked to head the production committee, and by the time the second New York season began, she had been hired as production director.

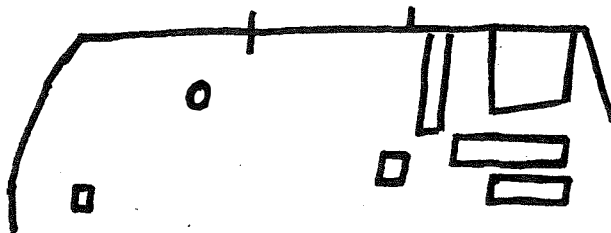
When O'Neill learned that Moise was directing *The Rope*, he wrote her on 9 April, 1918 (three days before his marriage to Agnes Boulton), expressing "complete confidence" in her direction, giving tentative advance approval to her cuts, and commenting on possible casting choices—mostly in a negative and sarcastic manner. The date of this letter, less than three weeks prior to opening, is the sole evidence as to the length of rehearsals. In a second letter, five days later, the dramatist ordered several drastic cuts reinstated.³ The script, however, recording the director's judicious surgery,

² Moise to Edna Kenton, October 16, 1933; in Kenton's scrapbook, Fales Library, New York University.

³ O'Neill's letters and Moise's script are in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Library.

testifies that it was she who was right, not he. Moise made ingenious omissions in the initial dialogue between Bentley and Annie (the slowest part of the playlet), effectively wielded her blue pencil on the old man's repetitious biblical chants, and abridged Annie's longest speeches. O'Neill (as always) protested; he thought the cutting "spoils the rhythm." Instead, he suggested, "Make the woman talk as fast as she can in a flurry of petty, nagging rage." But the production justified Moise's cuts if one can trust Heywood Broun (one usually can), who called *The Rope* "brilliant" and "glorious," adding that in it O'Neill "tells an enthralling story in a highly proficient way." (*New York Tribune*, 29 April, 1918.)

As to the staging, one must begin with a pencilled groundplan on the first page of the script, presumably in Moise's hand. It shows the barn door stage-center, a table with three benches (or two benches and a bale of hay?) and a stool, upstage left against the wall. A small circle and square stage-right may indicate additional stools.



A central location for the noose (focal point of all action) seems logical, and Moise confirmed that reasoning. Yet, the rope's position is not explicitly indicated, and Ellis (who played Luke and provided the backdrop) remembered the noose as having hung stage-right. Might it be represented by the circle? Although the script gives no clues about blocking, the location of the noose and of the barn door would have dominated all movement and business. Ellis, who was still active painting and exhibiting when I saw him in the sixties, proudly recalled the backdrop seen through the door as the best "rocks against the sea" he ever painted. That vista would have assured a strong focus against which the noose must have stood out in the foreground. A way out of this dilemma was suggested to me by David Rinear (Univ. of Oklahoma), who called attention to the difference between the two lines marking the barn door. The much longer line stage-right is not an accident, he convincingly argues, but rather an indication of the noose's position. Thus would the testimonies of Moise and Ellis—one recalling a central, the other, a stage-right location—be reconciled.

Ellis also explained that special rigging was not needed to secure the rope: there was no fly-space in the converted brownstone that served as the Playwright's Theatre for the Provincetown Players: the "bag of gold" at the nooseless end of the rope was simply placed on a board that was fastened to the ceiling. This way it stayed in place when Luke inserted his head into the noose during the climactic scene, but came loose easily when Mary tried swinging on it.

Broun commented that the play "is acted well throughout, and Charles Ellis as Luke Bentley is distinctly good." In addition to corroborating other testimony concerning Moise's effectiveness as a director, this praise calls attention to Ellis, who consistently excelled in a variety of roles, despite his belief that what he heard about "the actor's true spiritual involvement" with characters was a fraud, and all that was necessary was

technical skill. He and Norma Millay, his wife, insisted that Liveright was successful in portraying Old Bentley so as to introduce an element of love even in the most hatred-filled scenes with his son. They also recalled Edna Smith's hysterical laughter while skipping twenty-dollar gold pieces in the final scene as "bloodchilling."

—Robert K. Sarló

O'NEILL'S USE OF LANGUAGE IN *WHERE THE CROSS IS MADE*

Where the Cross Is Made is an early attempt by Eugene O'Neill to trace "the collapse of poorly tempered minds under heavy pressure into madness."¹ In this one-act play, we see Nat, a young man of about thirty, deteriorate from a reasonably normal character to a man consumed by passion for treasure. O'Neill's means to dramatize Nat's deterioration are typically dramatic: Nat's dialogue increasingly centers on the hidden treasure, and his actions become more uncontrolled as the play progresses. O'Neill even includes a highly contrived stage effect, "a dense green glow [which] floods slowly in rhythmic waves like a liquid into the room," to objectify Nat's madness.²

Although these means are effective, I would like to suggest that O'Neill's control of Nat's language patterns further emphasizes the character change. In fact, by studying the syntax of Nat's speeches, we can see that his mental collapse is paralleled by the deterioration of his language.

To analyze Nat's speeches I used Kellogg W. Hunt's *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels*³ and considered the number of words per T-Unit (sentences which are grammatically complete when terminated by a period), the number of words per clause, the number of clauses per T-unit, and the number of words per sentence. However, I added one more category for my study—fragments—feeling that, in dramatic dialogue, as an imitation of conversation, fragments were intentional and must be noted.

Because the entire play was manageable, I counted individual words in each sentence of Nat's ninety-five speech groups (series of sentences bound together as an individual speech). Within these groups I accepted answers to questions as complete T-units. In this way, some fragments were classified as complete thoughts, although they were noted only by their spoken words. For instance, "Never in the past three years," which implies that "He has never come down from his room in the past three years," was considered as a complete T-unit, but the word count was six.

To clarify the changes in Nat's language, I divided his dialogue into five parts, each corresponding to a major sequence in the play. The opening dialogue (Part I) is a conversation between Nat and Doctor Higgins, who encourages Nat to commit his father, Captain Bartlett, to an asylum. During this conversation, Nat relates his father's history (Part II). After the doctor leaves, Nat and his sister Sue discuss their father's condition (Part III). When Captain Bartlett enters, Nat's deterioration begins (Part IV). And his gradual lapse into insanity is culminated by his maniacally logical concern for finding the Captain's treasure (Part V). This step-by-step shift in conversation does, in terms of syntactic structure, reflect Nat's disintegration in thought and language. And although the sequence is compacted because of the restrictions of the one-act play, it is nonetheless revealing.

¹ Thomas H. Dickinson, *Playwrights of the New American Theater* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 66.

² Eugene O'Neill, *Seven Plays of the Sea* (1919; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 158.

³ Kellogg W. Hunt, *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels* (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p. 21.

In Part I most of Nat's dialogue comprises answers to Doctor Higgins' questions about Captain Bartlett. The average T-unit in this section contains 5.81 words with .70 clauses per T-unit, each clause containing 4.49 words. The average sentence length is 9.28 words. In terms of prose, these are especially low figures. However, for a question-response dialogue, the figures could be considered relatively normal.

Embedded in this conversation between Nat and Doctor Higgins is the narrative of Captain Bartlett's past. In relating this far-removed history, Nat assumes a more mature style. The number of words per T-unit increases to 8.66 (an increase of 2.55 words over his earlier pattern), and the number of clauses increases slightly to .92. The number of words per clause also increases—to 5.27—but the most obvious change is in the number of words per sentence, an increase to 13.41.

In his conversation with Sue, Nat resumes a language pattern similar to that used with Doctor Higgins. Nat answers fewer questions and makes more direct statements, so the number of words per T-unit increases marginally to 6.20. The number of clauses is .79 with 4.40 words per clause. With the average number of words per sentence being 9.37, this sequence closely parallels that in Part I.

When Captain Bartlett enters, and his son becomes obviously upset, we see Nat's syntax drop to its lowest level. There are 4.50 words per T-unit, .08 clauses per T-unit with 5.00 words each. Each sentence contains 4.96 words. This change in syntax closely corresponds to and implies Nat's mental breakdown. At this point in the play, Nat's language becomes fragmentary. These fragments do not answer questions, but instead represent nonsensical, incomplete word groups. Nine fragments are mixed with twenty-four complete T-units, making over one-quarter of Nat's dialogue syntactically incomplete.

After Captain Bartlett's death, when Nat becomes the sole pursuer of the treasure (Part V), his syntax becomes more standard—his madness having become more methodical. He does not re-assume his normal pattern, but instead uses T-units of 5.07 words, with .23 clauses with 3.33 words. His sentences contain 5.84 words.

In viewing Nat's language, I have reached several conclusions. When he is speaking to characters whom he does not fear (Doctor Higgins and Sue), his syntax is normal. When he is presenting a removed narrative—seen from a distant perspective—his syntax is sophisticated, almost prose-like. When he feels threatened by his father and begins to lose his control, his syntax becomes not only less mature, but also less consistent.

Much has been made of O'Neill's use of plot, setting, and character description to suggest his characters' mental conditions. Although I do not question the effectiveness of such dramatic devices to create character, it is important to note that O'Neill's use of syntax parallels these other means of development. He created language suited to his major character in *Where the Cross Is Made*, and through a systematic analysis of that language we see a technical skill which is perhaps less evident but still present in O'Neill's art.

—Robert Perrin

[Professor Perrin's tables, containing the data used for his study of Nat's language patterns in *Where the Cross Is Made*, have not been included. They are, however, available to anyone requesting them of the editor. —Ed.]

A REMINDER: "EUGENE O'NEILL--THE EARLY YEARS"
A CONFERENCE AT SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
MARCH 22 - 25, 1984

THE "FORMLESS FEAR" OF O'NEILL'S EMPEROR AND TENNYSON'S KING

A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear. . . .¹

The Emperor Jones has long been viewed as the product of O'Neill's interest in the psychoanalytic movement of the early twentieth century. Most critics, both those who reviewed it in November of 1920 and those who have studied it since, have tended to agree with Kenneth Macgowan that *The Emperor Jones* is, in effect, "a study of personal and racial psychology" largely indebted to Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*.² And while O'Neill often bridled at this notion and cited an old circus performer's story of a Haitian king and an article describing religious feasts in the Congo as the direct sources of *The Emperor Jones*,³ both the text and O'Neill's admitted familiarity with Jung's work would seem to substantiate Macgowan's statement.⁴

However, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, albeit useful in explaining Jones's fatal journey through a dark forest of superstitions and the anxiety-ridden hallucinations they induce, is not very helpful in illuminating one of the play's most significant moments—the appearance of the "Little Formless Fears" in Scene Two. Perhaps no single *direct source* exists for the term "formless fears"; O'Neill may have coined the phrase particularly for this play (he uses it in no other). Or perhaps, as both the phrase and the context in which it appears suggest, O'Neill intends this scene to echo Arthur's confusion in the misty battles of "The Passing of Arthur" in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. Both Jones and Arthur see the "formless fears" inherent in their declines. Both men have reached the ends of their reigns, both are being pursued by their former subjects, and both approach a ritualistic "passing." In addition, a good deal of biographical evidence hints at the influence of nineteenth-century poetry on O'Neill's work. As an undergraduate at Princeton, O'Neill was noted for his ability to recite poetry from memory.⁵ And in the years immediately preceding the composition of *The Emperor Jones*, O'Neill's first wife reports that his reading "consisted of nothing but poetry, Nietzsche, Ibsen, especially Strindberg—and *The Saturday Evening Post*."⁶ Certainly, O'Neill might have found "formless fears" almost anywhere; however, as I have mentioned above, Tennyson employs the phrase once (and only once) in a context remarkably similar to that of Jones's long day's journey into death. The echo of influence resonates too loudly to ignore.

¹ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Passing of Arthur" (ll. 95-98), in *A Variorum Edition of Tennyson's Idylls of The King*, ed. John Pfordresher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 976.

² Kenneth MacGowan, "The New Season," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, 5 (1921), 6. For further discussion of Jung's influence on O'Neill, see Oscar Cargill, "Fusion-Point of Jung and Nietzsche," in *O'Neill and His Plays*, ed. Oscar Cargill, N. Bryllion Fagin, and William J. Fisher (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 408-414.

³ For O'Neill's discussion of direct sources for *The Emperor Jones*, see Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 438-441.

⁴ For further discussion of O'Neill's familiarity with psychoanalytic theory, see Arthur Nethercott, "The Psychoanalyzing of Eugene O'Neill," *Modern Drama*, 3 (1960), 242-256; see also Nethercott, "The Psychoanalyzing of Eugene O'Neill": Postscript," *Modern Drama*, 8 (1965), 150-155.

⁵ Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), p. 120.

⁶ Nethercott, "The Psychoanalyzing of Eugene O'Neill" (1960), p. 251.

Regarding *Idylls of the King* as an antecedent, though not necessarily a direct source, of *The Emperor Jones* could prove valuable in a number of ways. In a general sense, establishing significant parallels between O'Neill's plays and the nineteenth-century poetry he devoured as a young man might serve as a necessary corrective to a large body of criticism which narrowly views O'Neill as being influenced only by Nietzsche, the modern stage, and psychoanalysis. Further, a comparison of Brutus Jones with King Arthur would vitiate the claims that O'Neill consciously demeans Blacks through his depiction of Jones's extreme anxiety. Admittedly these claims seem to be disappearing from modern criticism of the play. Yet if we view Jones's fears as analogous to Arthur's, critics like Robert Stebbins would have difficulty persuading us that Jones is an emblem of what "all Negroes are supposed to be—creatures who stand trembling in a murky land of shadow, peopled with the ghosts that rise up out of swamps and jungles of primitive mud."⁷ The spectre of racial slur that has haunted this play would be expelled if we chose to consider Jones not as a stereotypic, knee-knocking Black plagued with laughable superstitions, but as a man, like Arthur, who sees the "formless fears" involved with being a man. O'Neill's point, as I construe it, is that these fears attack *all* men—black and white, medieval and modern, great and small.

—Stephen M. Watt

FOG: AN O'NEILL THEOLOGICAL MISCELLANY

Oddly enough, the mutual compatibility between the Christian and the apparently tragic doctrine which is suggested in Eugene O'Neill's early plays of the sea has sometimes been overlooked. More curiously still, it has been overlooked more often than not by Christians themselves. In their eagerness to behold the apocalyptic vision of God's deliverance and man's ultimate redemption, some Christians have rejected, as irreconcilable with the human spirit, what they consider the essentially "pessimistic" nature of O'Neill's dramaturgy. They exclaim that O'Neill's tragic thought contradicts the Christian heritage of serenity and resignation by allowing man "to proceed from violence to violence, and to make of human torture not so much the occasion of other things as the *raison d'être* of drama."¹

Likewise, contemporary theologians, in their zeal to afford a sardonic vision of man unable to escape his tragic destiny, have rejected the essentially religious nature of O'Neill's thought as an inexorable illusion of the human predicament; and have suggested that O'Neill's heroes are "forced through mechanical malice on the part of destiny or providence or the playwright to inevitable defeat."²

What the Christian and the theologian appear to confuse, however, is that for O'Neill irreconcilable opposites suggest a spiritual truth. They make man aware, that is, of the most fundamental law of spiritual evolution: the clash of antinomies which constitute human life and detail the progress from sin to salvation.

O'Neill's interpretation of life in these terms bears a striking resemblance to the medieval morality play. Both are concerned with the freedom of man to align himself with the forces of either good or evil, with the ultimate triumph of good; both see in the human predicament a certain degree of poetic justice; both envision a day of reckoning and a last judgment, when injustice will be redressed; and both demand ultimate allegiance to a Creator.

⁷ Robert Stebbins, "Review," *New Theatre* (1935), as quoted in Norman Kagan, "The Return of *The Emperor Jones*," *Negro History Bulletin*, 34 (1971), 162.

¹ Joseph Wood Krutch, "The God of Stumps," *The Nation*, 119 (November, 1924), 578-579.

² Pierre Loving, "Eugene O'Neill," *The Bookman*, 53 (August, 1921), 514-515.

But here the similarity between O'Neill and the morality play appears to end. Unlike the medieval moralist, O'Neill is decidedly secular in his approach to individual responsibility and retribution. He does not define "goodness" in terms of moral do's and don'ts; he declares, rather, that, since all men are involved in the sempiternal act of evil, there is none who may claim total innocence. His characters, therefore, are what he likes to term "unmoral," not "immoral."³

. That is why O'Neill's conception of drama entails a corresponding metaphysic, and that is why his characters are proof of a spiritual force which affirms man's triumph over adversity. And that is why O'Neill demands that

the playwright today must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it—the death of the old God and the failure of modern science and materialism to give any satisfying new one for man's surviving primitive religious instinct....⁴

Here, then, is the context in terms of which it becomes possible to understand O'Neill's concept of the relationship between suffering and religion: man suffers when he denies a paradisiacal vision of spiritual verity on earth and accepts the unrealistic truth of temporal existence, with its emphasis upon materialism and greed. In this respect, suffering is not a causal implication inherent in the death of the "old" God, but an unbearable consequence of there being no "new" gods.

It is precisely this miscellaneous theological thesis which leads to an examination of *Fog* (1913-1914). The play is O'Neill's earliest parabolic expression of the unbearable horror witnessed in man's being alive in a world without God. And it acknowledges that the spiritual tranquillity and sublimity available to man as a consequence of having endured the agonies of a transfiguring self-destruction provide him with an insight into the tragic nature of human frailty and help him to bear suffering without being turned to stone by the vision.

The first point to notice in considering *Fog* in this light is O'Neill's early suggestion that "the one-act play is a fine vehicle for something poetical, for something spiritual, in feeling that cannot be carried through a long play."⁵ As his words suggest, O'Neill appears to have grasped the medieval significance of the one-act play as a religious or parabolic expression of Biblical doctrine, and to have employed its specifically Christian form for his own interpretation of the basic orientation of man to the will of God. Although the mood of *Fog* is more restrained and the dialogue more succinct than in the other early sea plays, the subtle Biblical overtones of resurrection and redemption suggest that here again is O'Neill's attempt to transcend tragic despair and to tranquilize spiritual doubt by an identification of the individual self with the mystic aspects of Nature.

The setting of the play is a "lifeboat,"⁶ which appears to be drifting aimlessly off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. A dense fog lies heavily upon the sea and a "menacing silence" broods over all. Adrift on the still sea are a Man of Business, a Poet, and a Polish Woman with her dead child. The characters, however, only gradually appear to the viewer, outlined for the opening part of the drama in a medieval *tableau vivant* against the veiled raft. It is only when a "vague twilight" creeps through the dense fog that

³ Eugene O'Neill, as quoted in Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (Boston, 1968), pp. 238-239.

⁴ Eugene O'Neill, as quoted in Edwin A. Engel, *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 95.

⁵ Eugene O'Neill, as quoted in Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill* (New York, 1926), p. 40.

⁶ Eugene O'Neill, "*Fog*," in *Ten "Lost" Plays* (New York, 1942). All subsequent references are to this edition and will be given in the text in parentheses.

the shadowy figures emerge. At first, the speaking roles are indicated only as a "Man's Voice" and "Another Man's Voice." Later, as the faceless figures become faintly illuminated, they are differentiated more fully as the "Dark Man" and the "Other Man." Finally, an exchange of harsh words establishes them as a "Poet" and a "Businessman." (pp. 85-93)

Against a theological background of two men debating the ambivalent condition of pain and suffering in human existence sits the "Polish Peasant," huddling stiffly and silently at one end of the raft, clutching "something like a bundle of white clothes" in her arms, and apparently asleep. (p. 91)

The Poet, obviously speaking for O'Neill, inveighs against the "frightful injustice" in life and views the effect of the child's death on its mother as "the most horrible thing I have ever seen or even heard of" (p. 87). The Businessman, in contrast, chooses "not to think" about the predicament; he sees the small one's death as "enough to give anyone the blues, that's sure," but admits that the real discomfort is his own wet clothes and the "freezing cold" (p. 87).

It is this indifference to another's pain and suffering, this disregard for the Christian precept of Samaritan compassion, which has led one contemporary critic to remark that "social ideas are more important in this play than the characters themselves."⁷ What this critic has failed to note, however, are the moral and spiritual implications inherent in O'Neill's treatment of the contrasting values of the Poet and the Businessman.

The association of the latter with all that is successful and possible in temporal life suggests a corresponding spiritual deficiency which cannot recognize, as the Poet carefully points out, the responsibility that each member of the human community must bear for the "injustice visited upon the heads of our less fortunate 'brothers-in-Christ'" (p. 90). Likewise, it is the Businessman's "shameful indifference" to the Polish Woman's misery and his refusal to "think" about it which reveals his own spiritual meaninglessness and characterizes him as one of O'Neill's spiritually dispossessed.

O'Neill himself provides the clue to the spiritual malaise of the Businessman in his treatment of the mystic effect of the fog on the castaways and in his treatment of suffering as an essential element of redemption for those who would assume the tragic burden that leads to self-recognition and redemption.

To the Businessman, who is not inclined to look beyond surface reality, the fog is primarily a threat to his temporal life. He curses it as a "damn" fog because it clouds his vision and prevents him from seeing a distant steamer which is apparently in search of the lost passengers. His seeming fear of the fog also manifests itself when an iceberg strikes the aimlessly drifting lifeboat. Taking the iceberg for some "horrible phantom of the sea," the Businessman shrinks in fright and almost causes the raft to tip over. Only the assurance of the Poet that this "phantom" is an "ice and water reality" calms the Businessman. (p. 99)

But that reassurance is temporary, for the fog and the iceberg present decidedly moral and ethical questions to both men. If the steamer were to seek a rescue and be drawn upon the white mass of ice, which now towers above the raft like "the facade of some huge Viking temple" (p. 102), she would sink and possibly drown all of those innocent sailors who are approaching, unaware of the danger that awaits. So the Poet warns the Businessman:

The steamer, man, the steamer! Think of the danger she is in. If she were ever to hit this mass of ice she would sink before they could lower a boat.... Not a sound if you have any regard for the lives of those on board.... We can die but we cannot risk the lives of others to save our own. (pp. 100-101)

⁷ Sophus Keith Winther, *O'Neill: A Critical Study* (New York, 1934), p. 119.

But the Businessman has no regard for others. More concerned with saving his own life than in sacrificing it for the greater good of the innocent, he struggles to raise his hands to his mouth and shout a call for help:

if we don't let them know we're here they are liable to pass by us and never know it.... I'm not going to be left here to die on account of your damn-fool ideas. (p. 100)

The Businessman's call for help is only thwarted by an heroic act of the Poet, who forces his hand over the Businessman's mouth in time to stifle the outcry. "You damned coward!" snarls the Poet, cursing uncharacteristically. "I might have known what to expect" (p. 101).

The viewer might also have known what to expect from the Businessman in this situation. Like his Biblical counterpart, he has allowed material wealth and personal welfare to substitute for morality; and his willingness to risk the lives of innocent bystanders for his own selfish desires makes explicit what the parable of the businessman and the pauper teaches about ultimate redemption and salvation: it is, indeed, easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The Poet in *Fog* is apparently a combination of the Biblical pauper and an earlier self-portrait O'Neill drew of himself in a 1912 verse hymn, "The Lay of the Singer's Fall," in which the idealistic hero's faith in Truth, Love and God are slowly undermined by a sardonic "Devil of Doubt."⁸ As the hymn suggests, the ultimate meaning in life is to be found in man's inevitable progression toward death. The Singer, voicing O'Neill's theodicy that affliction arises from the fact that temporal reality is at variance with the religious conception of life as taught by the Christian doctrines of Biblical saga, attempts to give credence to this testimony in a contest for ultimate spiritual truth. Disillusionment, however, dispels the Singer's vision of bliss and eternal life, and he resigns himself to suicide.

Ironically, the Poet's own disappointment in being unable to prevent misery and suffering had also led him to contemplate suicide. "I was going to die," he reveals, "so I hid in the steerage fearing that some of the ship's officers would insist on saving my life in spite of me" (p. 94).

But when the ship struck a derelict the Poet discovered a solution to his religious dilemma. And his discovery suggests the spiritual evolution which O'Neill's religious thought had taken since the decidedly pessimistic treatment of man's fall from grace in the 1912 hymn. That solution lay in the "providential" discovery of compassion for the Polish Woman and her dead child. Seeing that the woman was "so happy in her love for her child that it would be wrong to let her die," the Poet had abandoned his idea of suicide and persuaded the woman to join him in the life raft as the sinking ship took its final plunge (p. 95). This Christian act of charity resulted in his affirmative conviction that all that has happened to him is "an omen sent by the gods to convince me my past unhappiness is past and my fortune will change for the better" (p. 95).

In addition, this subtle act of compassion, coupled with the resemblance of the poor peasant and her dead child to the Pietà figure, signals the transformation of the Poet from a man of folly, error and self-pity to a man of resolution and self-willed determination. The remainder of the playscript details the mutual concern and suffering which he shared with the Polish Woman as the dead child lay in its mother's arms, wrapped in the Poet's "ulster."

⁸ Eugene O'Neill, *Poems: 1912-1944*, ed. Donald Gallup (New Haven, 1980), pp. 38-39.

Implicit in this expression of the compassionate individual capable of self-sacrifice, and of abnegating his own desire for death so that others might live, is the Biblical suggestion of redemption and resurrection, the Biblical intimation that a "trumpet" shall sound and the dead shall be raised "incorruptible" when man affirms life as an act of Christian love and charity.⁹

O'Neill himself points to this religious motif by dramatically punctuating each of the Poet's acts of compassion and self-sacrifice with "whistle blows" that seem to be "drawing nearer" at each exhibition of love and charity. The most significant is the "deafening blast" which accompanies the Poet's assertion (p. 100) that the lives of others may not be risked to save one's own.

A further note of redemption and resurrection is apparent when the fog finally lifts and the rescue ship is able to reach the stranded craft—guided in its search by a "weird" sound: "If it hadn't been for the child crying," the rescuing Officer relates, "we would have missed you" (p. 104). Although both the Poet and the Businessman affirm that the child has been dead for twenty-four hours, the crew of the "deliverance" ship insist that the "sound" they had been steering by was "a kid sure enough." "We could hear the kid crying all the time," the Officer maintains. "It stopped just as the fog rose" (p. 105).

The Poet, redeemed apparently by his genuine love and compassion for the dead child and mother, is prepared to accept this "miracle" as an "unexpected return to life." It is only the Businessman who appears to be unaware of the significance which this miracle has with that other, more familiar, miracle: Christ's resurrection. Casting a "horrified glance" at the still figures at the end of the boat, he retreats to the rescue ship and, in the accent of one "who is rarely acknowledged to be wrong," confesses to the Officer that "what you have just finished telling us is almost unbelievable" (pp. 103-107).

O'Neill's unexpected disclosure that the Polish Woman has also died further suggests the affinity between suffering and redemption. The idea that the tragic situation may be conquered by a type of life willing and able to take suffering upon itself is inherent in the Poet's suggestive remark as he glances down at the two bodies frozen in silhouette against the now blue sky: "Poor happy woman" (p. 106).

A Biblical note is also struck when it is recalled that suffering is often likened in Old Testament parables to the care of a mother for her child, and that redemption is made possible by a God who assumes the allegorical role of "Mother Comforter" when man discovers the essentially religious nature of a "happy" death.¹⁰

To this theological discussion should be added the emphasis which O'Neill apparently places on the conclusion of the playscript. In contrast to the vague twilight and barely perceptible ocean swells which characterize the opening, "fresh morning breezes" now ripple over the water as the two boats glide swiftly away from the iceberg. The Poet, choosing to remain with the dead child and mother, sits in silence and stares at their still faces with "eyes full of a great longing" (p. 107).

As the sunrise filters through the misty fog, the Poet removes his ulster from the Polish Woman's shoulders and presses his head against her breast in a final act of compassion as the sailors from the rescue ship jump into their own boat. With a brisk "Aye, aye," they secure the towing ropes and both ships sail off into the dawn's beckoning light. (p. 106)

O'Neill's suggestion in *Fog* that suffering exists as a declaration of the religious impulse and that suffering itself is a means of resolution, or of overcoming the tragic

⁹ I *Corinthians*, 15: 51-52.

¹⁰ *Isaiah*, 17: 13.

dissonance, remains a unique thematic experiment in his early sea plays. His apparent choice of Biblical saga, however, as the model for the "rebirth" of man through acts of self-sacrifice and charity enables us to see how the concept of individual retribution is related to a universal spiritual truth, and how suffering justifies and redeems human existence.

And while *Fog* plants only the seed of suffering as the means of individual redemption from the tragic situation, it appears to represent O'Neill's earliest attempt to communicate the theological belief that pain and suffering may be exorcised through an unexplanatory metaphysical power, and that temporal life should be guided by an adherence to the Christian precepts of mutual love and charity.

Both as a result of his experimentation in *Fog* with the necessity of suffering as a transfiguration of the tragic situation, and his dramatic employment of the Biblical parable to point out the semblance of spiritual transfiguration, O'Neill has provided a clue to resolving the spectacle of misery and despair which appear with increasing regularity in his later plays. When the inevitability of suffering is grasped, and misery and despair are understood as part of a divine pattern of transfiguration, the darker side of life must appear to us permeated by a renewed belief in the immortality of the human soul.

—Gerald Lee Ratliff

POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR TWO O'NEILL ONE-ACTS

I. RECKLESSNESS

It is well known that a number of O'Neill's one-act plays have plots derived from the fiction of earlier writers. In *Contour in Time*, Travis Bogard provides a comprehensive list of the literary sources of the playlets written between 1913 and 1918, for instance.¹ But he suggests no source for *Recklessness* (1913). Virginia Floyd sums up the general opinion--that the source was autobiographical--when she says that, "as a result perhaps of his own disastrous short first marriage, O'Neill's early plays deal with sick marriages and unsatisfactory man-woman relationships: *A Wife for a Life*, *Recklessness*, *Bread and Butter*, *Abortion*."² It seems possible, however, that *Recklessness* may also have been inspired (at least indirectly) by a novella in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. There are close narrative parallels between the play and the first tale of *The Decameron's* fourth day.

Admittedly, there is no definite proof that O'Neill was familiar with Boccaccio's work at the time. However, Jean Chothia notes that at Gaylord Sanatorium, and up until the creation of his first play in 1914, O'Neill read widely in the work of Elizabethan playwrights.³ If, as is possible, that reading included Robert Wilmot's *Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund* (1591), then Boccaccio's direct influence on *Recklessness* was unnecessary, for Wilmot's source was the very tale in question!

Both tale and play tell us, at the outset, how a beautiful young woman and a man of low social rank met and fell in love. In *The Decameron* it is the lady's father, Tancred, who finds the lovers together in his daughter's room. In *Recklessness* the lady's rival, a maid, takes revenge on her wayward lover by informing her employer, Mr. Baldwin, about the secret liaison between his wife and a servant.

¹ Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), Chapters I-III.

² Virginia Floyd, ed., *Eugene O'Neill: A World View* (New York: Ungar, 1979), p. 16.

³ Jean Chothia, *Forging a Language: A Study of the Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 199.

The next event in both versions is the older man's disclosure of his knowledge and his demand for an explanation. And neither the daughter in *The Decameron* nor the wife in *Recklessness* denies anything: each accepts full responsibility for her romance. Following the unrepentant confession, the aggrieved male takes his revenge: he has the young man killed, believing that in this way he will win back the woman's love and retrieve his honor. But fate does not let him realize his plan: when the woman discovers that her lover is dead, she chooses to take her own life as well. And so the old man, instead of getting the woman back, loses her forever.

In short, the parallelism between the two plots is remarkable. And yet Boccaccio's tale is a timeless masterpiece, whereas *Recklessness* is, in the words of Louis Sheaffer, nothing more than a "conventional thriller."⁴ How can the difference be accounted for?

Boccaccio stresses that Tancred and his daughter represent different sets of values, and that their ways of thinking are worlds apart. He, as Prince of Salerno, acts in accordance with the conventional social and moral rules; while his daughter, on the other hand, is a representative of the newly emerging world and ethics of the Renaissance. It is the clash of old and new moral principles that results in the death of the daughter and the ruin of the father. Boccaccio tells us that the general public share the narrator's belief in the young lovers' right to love whoever they think worthy of their esteem; and he adds that Tancred, who is not a wicked man, has the pair honorably buried together, in the same sepulchre, amid the general mourning of all the people of Salerno.

Therefore the reader of Boccaccio's tale is in a position to see and judge the events and participants from two totally different angles and points of view—that of Tancred, and that of the populace, represented by the narrator. Thus is revealed how Tancred's subjective honesty and love can be seen as cruelty and heartlessness—if regarded from another perspective.

The husband in *Recklessness*, in contrast, is a ruthless, unscrupulous businessman, who kills his wife's lover simply because his vanity has been offended. Indeed, his efforts to make the murder of the rival seem a simple road accident adds even more to the aura of petty spitefulness that surrounds his actions. In addition, the play lacks the aforementioned double point of view, so characteristic of the novellas in *The Decameron*. Without that, the play remains the dramatization of a particular incident that has no deeper, more general meaning.

Boccaccio reveals and interprets a strong social conflict of his age—indeed, of any age—in spite of the fact that his characters, setting and some elements of the plot remind one of the colorful world of the Arabian Nights. O'Neill's play, in contrast, cannot generalize the incident in spite of the sociologically accurate characters, setting and action. And this is why we feel *Recklessness* to be of little value—especially when compared with Boccaccio's novella—despite the striking connection between their plots.

II: IN THE ZONE

William Godhurst has suggested that the characters, setting and theme of O'Neill's *In the Zone* may largely be traced to the playwright's personal experience—specifically the adventures of 1910-1912, when O'Neill worked as a seaman on several ships; and a Provincetown incident in 1917, when he was arrested and jailed overnight because he had been taken for a spy on the basis of his seaside possession of a suspicious-looking black box that in fact contained his typewriter.⁵ Citing a literary source as well,

⁴Louis Sheaffer, *Son and Playwright* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), p. 273.

⁵William Godhurst, "A Literary Source for O'Neill's *In the Zone*," *American Literature*, 35 (Jan., 1964), 530-534.

Godhurst establishes a definite connection between the play and a short story, "That Little Square Box," by Arthur Conan Doyle.⁶

However, if one pursues the search for sources a step further back, one finds an earlier story that deserves consideration as well: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Oblong Box."⁷ And one is faced with two questions. Is the similarity of the two short-story titles purely a coincidence? And which of the stories seems the likelier influence on O'Neill's play? The following comments offer a possible answer to both.

In Poe's tale, an exceptional incident is recounted by a chronically curious and irrepressibly inquisitive narrator. In a long introduction he relates how oddly his newly married friend, painter Cornelius Wyatt, had acted on their sea voyage to New York. Not only had Wyatt brought an oblong box on board and deposited it in his own room to his and his bride's discomfort; but the wife was clearly common, "altogether beneath his friend," and, strangely enough, the husband, "morose" most of the time, avoided his bride. When the narrator commented upon the peculiar shape of the box, the painter lost consciousness, giving rise to the narrator's inference of madness. Poe emphasizes the narrator's sensitivity and extreme inquisitiveness; probably the other passengers had not noticed anything out of the ordinary.

Hammond, the main character in Conan Doyle's "That Little Square Box," tells how, on a sea voyage, he had mistaken as evidence of a dangerous conspiracy an innocent box that actually contained only a brace of prize pigeons. Like Poe's narrator, he is nervous, timid, and exceptionally curious. Overhearing a conversation between two men whose words included "little square box," "trigger," and "whitish granules," he had imagined a plot to blow up the ship—an impending disaster of which the other passengers and the crew seemed unaware. An old friend in whom he confided simply laughed at him, saying that Hammond "always had a way of discovering mares' nests."

O'Neill considerably heightens the tension in his version of the story by introducing several sailors who all behave similarly to Poe's and Conan Doyle's characters. And he makes the situation even more dramatic by having the seamen's fears spring, not from individual oversensitivity, but from actual conditions: their ammunition ship has arrived in the war zone and the vessel may be destroyed at any minute. It is understandable that in this taut situation they dread German spies and attack their fellow seaman Smitty, who seems to be hiding something from them. Like Hammond and Poe's narrator, they read every chance detail in the light of their basic assumption. Even Smitty's name is interpreted, by Davis, as an alias for Schmidt.

The apex of the three works is almost identical as well. In each case it is the point at which we learn what the mysterious box actually contains. In Poe's "Oblong Box," a storm precipitates the revelation. The ship is sinking, there is room only for people in the lifeboats, and yet Wyatt demands that his oblong box be taken as well. When the captain refuses his request, he rushes back to his cabin, drags the box out, ties himself to it, and plunges into the sea—"disappearing suddenly, at once and for ever." The captain's only remark is that "They will soon rise again, however, but not till the salt melts." At the crucial moment in Conan Doyle's story, Hammond realizes that the two strangers' box contains no infernal machine, only two innocent carrier pigeons. And the apex in O'Neill's play is the scene in which we learn, with the crew, that Smitty's suspect box contains letters of love and rejection.

In all three works the decisive revelation—the moment in which illusion confronts reality and the confrontation ignites some general truth—is followed by a conclusion whose functions are to explain everything and to help in assessing and reassessing the characters.

⁶ Arthur Conan Doyle, "That Little Square Box," in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (London, 1929).

⁷ Edgar Allan Poe, "The Oblong Box," in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (London, n.d.).

In Poe's last paragraph the narrator learns from the captain that Wyatt, his bride having died, had to bring her body back to New York. Since the other passengers would have opposed the transporting of a corpse, the Wyatts' maid masqueraded as the wife, whose embalmed corpse was packed with salt in the oblong box. In Conan Doyle's story, it is a newspaper article, describing a competition between two pigeons, that explains the mystery, intensifies the comic effect of the story, and proves that Hammond had indeed discovered another "mare's nest." In O'Neill's one acter, too, the dramatic turn proves how unjust and unfounded the sailors' suspicions and accusations had been. In addition, as Driscoll reads out Edith's letter accusing Smitty of wrecking her life as well as his own, her words serve as a mirror reflecting that all the sailors suffer from the same problems. And it is because of this, as well as their guilt, that the men can hardly look at each other following the sobering revelation.

Thus the conclusion of Poe's story suggests that though on the surface Wyatt had seemed a mad eccentric, he was actually a respectable, almost heroic character, who was in deep sorrow because of the loss he had suffered. The conclusion of the Conan Doyle story, in contrast, confirms what the reader had suspected all along: Hammond is shown to be ridiculous because of his never-ending worries, hysterical fears, and unfounded suspicions. We feel relieved and cannot help laughing at the man who seems to have fallen into a trap of his own construction.

O'Neill's *In The Zone*, however, takes a melodramatic turn at the end. The playwright himself appears to have offered the best criticism, though very severe, of his play:

To me it seems the least significant of all my plays.... Smitty in the stuffy, greasepaint atmosphere of *In the Zone* is magnified into a hero who attracts our sentimental sympathy. In *Moon [of the Caribbees]*, posed against a background of that beauty, and because it is eternal, which is one of the revealing moods of the sea's truth, his silhouetted gestures of self-pity are reduced to their proper insignificance, his whine of weakness is lost in the silence which it was mean enough to disturb, we get the perspective to judge him—and the others—and we find his sentimental posing much more out of harmony with truth, much less in tune with beauty, than the honest vulgarity of his mates.⁸

Consequently, the conclusion and general effect of the play is perhaps closer to Poe's story than to Conan Doyle's, although it must be remarked that Wyatt *is* almost heroic, whereas Smitty is not—he is merely "magnified into a hero." It is for this reason that *In the Zone* seems more sentimental than "The Oblong Box."

Returning to the question of the play's literary source, the close parallelism of plot, the similarity of titles and the comparable construction of the three short pieces suggest that both Conan Doyle and O'Neill must have known Poe's short story, which may have had an independent influence on both writers. This hypothesis seems to be supported by the fact that O'Neill had reread Poe's stories every summer before he began writing plays, as Jean Chothia points out.⁹ She also suggests that the volume of Poe's stories included among the books of Edmund Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was a "deliberate tribute" to Poe.¹⁰ Given the evidence of *In the Zone*, the tribute was deserved.

—Esther Timár

⁸ Eugene O'Neill, "Inscrutable Forces: A Letter to Barrett Clark," in *O'Neill and His Plays*, ed. Oscar Cargill, N. Bryllion Fagin and William J. Fisher (New York: New York University Press, 1961), p. 111.

⁹ Chothia, p. 199.

¹⁰ Chothia, p. 198.

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

1. THREE LOST PLAYS OF EUGENE O'NEILL (*A Wife for a Life*, *The Movie Man* and *The Web*), dir. Michael Fields. Lotus Theatre Group, Playhouse 46 (at St. Clement's Church, 423 West 46th Street), New York City, November 4-20, 1982.

The earliest dramatic efforts of a major playwright, even if they are flawed, trivial and fledgling work at best, deserve more than the attention of readers; they deserve the chance to prove themselves in performance. (Who knows what potential gems remain lost to us because they were rejected out of hand as irrelevant or unworkable?) So the news of the first professional New York production of three of O'Neill's earliest works was exciting indeed. And the result—while none of the long-rejected scripts proved even a minor masterpiece—was an evening (in my case, an afternoon) of considerable pleasure. And pleasure of more than an antiquarian sort: it showed that O'Neill was an intuitively brilliant playwright from the first, even before he had freed himself from the grip of what Travis Bogard, in describing *A Wife for a Life*, calls "turn-of-the-century theatre at its worst."¹ Unfortunately it also showed that, at least at the start of his career, O'Neill was more adept at melodrama and naturalism than at comedy or farce.

I often wonder, when enthusing about a performance of O'Neill, whether it is the work's significance or merely the rareness of the opportunity that arouses my approval. In the present instance, I imagine that fully polished performances in optimal theatrical environs would have been far less satisfying than this Equity "showcase" production in the cramped, ramshackle depths of St. Clement's, where the performers' enthusiasm overcame their rawness of technique and the spectator felt a pioneering exhilaration doubtless akin to that felt by early Provincetown playgoers in their nights on the wharf. Plays, players and playingspace were perfectly attuned to one another. And the sets of Stephen Caldwell, changed in full view of the audience, were appropriate and clever. For *Wife*, scarp-like cliffs flanked a deliberately unrealistic backdrop, probably quite in keeping with O'Neill's vaudeville intentions, on which enticing rays of reflected light reached up and out from a central, doubtless gold-riddled spot behind a distant butte. Before it were the "ragged tent," "smouldering campfire" (rather static in its smoulder because the light was electric), and panning tray of the Older Man, effectively played by P. L. Carling. For *The Movie Man*, the drop was removed to reveal the adobe walls of a suburban Mexican house. And for *The Web*, which followed the performance's one intermission, the cliffs and walls were removed, and we were in a larger room—a gray-walled, "squalid bedroom" on New York's Lower East Side. Whitney Quesenberry's lighting was particularly effective at *The Web*'s opening, when the evening light, shining from beyond the fire escape outside the room's two windows, threw prison-like bars across the dim tableau of the interior—certainly appropriate, given the deterministic emphases of the script and its title.

Of the three plays, the first proved best in performance. While Carling, as the Older Man, was hardly believable in his stage-whispered asides (who *could* be?!), he did make his long, exposition-laden monologues seem plausible, given his isolation in "this land God forgot." And his renunciation of revenge and wife to his young mining partner, Jack (who had once saved his life)—while Bogard is right to label it a "burst of sentimental nobility" (p. 9)—proved quite moving. (Of course I may just be a sucker for tears. At the end, when Carling sat at his again-lonely campfire,

¹ Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 9. Bogard's discussion of *Wife* (pp. 7-14) is the fullest and richest I know of, since it shows that "the sketch contains many of the elements which O'Neill was later to infuse with theatrical power" (p. 9).

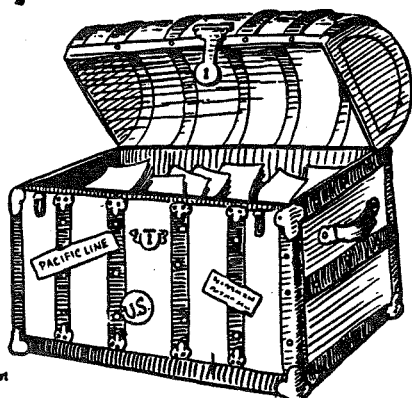
Lotus Theatre Group presents

3 'LOST' PLAYS of Eugene O'Neill

'A Wife for Life'
'The Movie Man'
'The Web'

Producer Bill Kalmenson
Director Mike Fields
Set Design Stephen Caldwell
Lighting Design Whitney Quisenberry
Costume Design CJ Simpson
Sound Tom Gould
Stage Manager HOWARD P. LEV
Production Stage Manager James Lockhart

Cast
P.L. Carling*
Bill Kalmenson
Frank Nastasi*
William Caynor Dorey*
Frank Norris
Rosemary Sykes*
Production Coordinator Susan Barclay
*Approved courtesy of Actors Equity Association
Equity Approved Showings



PLAYHOUSE 46

423 West 46th Street

November 4-6, 9-13, 16-20 at 8:00 PM

November 6, 13, 20 at 3:00 PM

Admission: \$5.00 (TDF Voucher Accepted)

Reservations: Ticket Central 279-4200



gazed at the snapshot of his wife, pocketed it and returned to his solitary whittling, he seemed to produce real ones!) Frank Nastasi was just right as old Pete, with his gleaming-eyed acceptance of adversity and his readiness to receive the Older Man's charity with a smile and a chuckle. But Bill Kalmenson effectively stole the show as Jack, the younger man, by bringing just the right amount of loping naturalness and vocal idealism to his performance, though the loud, high "Ya haw!" at his final exit undercut the sadness of the ending. The play is unquestionably overloaded with coincidence, but it does support the contention of the Older Man, who introduces a major O'Neill leitmotif—"What tricks Fate plays with us." The Lotus Group's only flaw was to change the play's title to *A Wife for Life*. Surely the title is meant to refer, not to the wife's refusal to remarry until her husband is declared legally dead, but to the Older Man's giving her up to the boy who had once saved *his* life. That demurral aside, the production was admirable in every respect, if one accepts the play as a representative of its genre, the melodramatic vaudeville sketch. From the start, O'Neill knew what he was doing.

The same cannot be said of *The Movie Man* (1914), a ham-fisted attempt at a romantico-farcical treatment of Pancho Villa's Mexican revolution and the financial involvement in it of the United States, here represented by the Earth Motion Picture Company. Pancho, renamed Gomez, has signed a contract with the American company, agreeing to stage raids and executions only when the light is right for documentary filming. But Henry Rogers, an Earth representative, falls for the buxom charms of the distraught Anita Fernandez, whose father, one of Gomez' subordinate generals, has been sentenced to execution the next morning. Rogers agrees to permit Gomez one night raid if he will free her father, and the General complies, permitting the play a happy ending. But little else about the play is happy. Gomez, beribboned and multi-medalled, is a cocky, drunken fool; Anita, beneath the sincere tears, is a coquette; and Rogers, moved more by the lady's bust than her father's plight, is hardly the hero he might sound in a synopsis of the plot. The jokes, if jokes they are, are woefully weak, and the performers lacked the necessary lightness and fleetness to blind us to the inadequacies of the script. Frank Nastasi strutted comically as Gomez, and Rosemary Sykes was flashingly temperamental as Anita, but *The Movie Man*, I fear, should return to a well-deserved oblivion. I doubt that even abler players could bring it to life.

Life, and promise, was far more evident in *The Web* (1913-1914), O'Neill's first foray into low-life lingo and his first portrait of a prostitute—Rose Thomas—who is burdened with consumption, a baby and a heartless pimp; who finds a moment of near-happiness and hope when she is rescued by a fellow loser, a burglar, who forces the pimp out of her room; and who loses everything when the pimp returns by the fire escape, shoots the rescuer, and frames Rose for the crime. Melodrama, unquestionably; and written in a language no mortals could ever have spoken. But the performance was punctuated by effective moments: the opening picture of Rose, seated stage-center, pale, vulnerable, rubbing her hands in nervousness, her orange skirt soiled and torn, her light-turquoise pumps incredibly worn, the epitome of desperate

penury (and movingly played by Sykes, in an amazing transformation from the coquettish tease of the previous play); the visceral fight between pimp (Bill Kalmenson, hood-flashy in a brown pinstripe suit) and gangster (William Gaynor Dovey, soft, mild and gentle, the idealist in the piece); and the growing intimacy between Rose and her rescuer until a bullet writes "no way" on their escape plans.

My thanks to the Lotus Theatre Group for their dedication to such an obviously non-profit venture. Non-profit *financially*, that is; for I am sure that many of us profited greatly from the chance to see and judge O'Neill's first plays where they should and must be judged—on the stage. And special thanks to Bill Kalmenson, whose study of O'Neill at Berkeley inspired the project, and who proved, as miner, film executive and pimp, to be a very natural and versatile performer.

—Frederick C. Wilkins

2. STRINDBERG AND O'NEILL: A SHARED LEGACY, presented by the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Committee and LGR Associates, Inc. Circle in the Square, 50th Street and Broadway, November 11, 1982.

No other playwright was as influential on O'Neill as August Strindberg; accepting the Nobel Prize in 1936, O'Neill called him "my inspiration down all the years." And no drama group has as impressive a record of O'Neill productions as the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden; not only have they presented more plays by O'Neill than any other company in the world, but they staged the world premieres of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1956), *A Touch of the Poet* (1957), *Hughie* (1958) and *More Stately Mansions* (1962). What better way, then, to celebrate O'Neill's birthday, trace the interrelations of the two dramatists, and honor O'Neill's Swedish champions than to watch some of Sweden's and America's finest actors perform, in alternation, scenes from each man's major works, in an evening skillfully stitched together by a narration (the work of O'Neill biographer Barbara Gelb and Strindberg scholar Harry G. Carlson) delivered by Frances Sternhagen and Max Von Sydow. And to watch it "in the gracious presence of His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustav and Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden" was icing on the richest of birthday cakes. The evening was an O'Neill-lover's dream come true.

From the start (a taste of the *Long Day's Journey* premiere as Jarl Kulle delivered a speech of Edmund Tyrone's—in Swedish—as he had in 1956) to the lacerating finale (Jason Robards' hypnotic, kinetic and justly-famed recitation of Hickey's last-act monologue from *The Iceman Cometh*), it was an evening of rare theatrical magic. One discarded for ninety minutes all critical distance and bathed in the music of two great dramatists. Besides touches of theatre history—Geraldine Fitzgerald's Mary Tyrone, Helen Hayes' Nora Melody and Colleen Dewhurst's Josie Hogan—there were new performances to savor (and wish for more of), especially the rich and piston-powerful voice of James Earl Jones in Yank's Scene-I monologue from *The Hairy Ape*:

It takes a man to work in hell. Hell, sure, that's my fav'rite climate. I eat it up! I git fat on it! It's *me* makes it *hot*!
It's *me* makes it *roar*! It's *me* makes it *move*!

Though slow, and read rather than memorized, it was a splendid embodiment of O'Neill's prelapsarian powerhouse, effectively directed (like all the American segments) by José Quintero. One hopes that someday Mr. Jones will have the chance to add Yank Smith to his roster of memorable roles. Richard Thomas was a serviceable Edmund Tyrone, and Ms. Dewhurst, in her "medley of O'Neill heroines," offered, in addition to Josie, brief passages by Christine Mannon and Nina Leeds—the last a warmly-received fillip of feminism.

The Strindberg fragments, in Carlson's translations and directed by Goran Graffman, included scenes from *The Father*, *The Ghost Sonata*, *Dance of Death* and *A Dream Play*. But it was *The Stronger* that had the most impact, largely because it is a self-contained work and also, more personally, because I'd long yearned to see it. The emptiness of compulsive gab, and the eloquence of silence, could not have been more glaringly revealed than they were by, respectively, Margaretha Bystrom (as Mrs. X) and Margaretha Krook (as Miss Y). The latter had only to smile, coolly turn her head, or produce an ironically modulated laugh to effectively demolish her oh-so-audible opponent. The old classroom puzzler--who's the title character?--was vibrantly answered!

After the performances, Ms. Dewhurst delivered a moving tribute to Ingrid Bergman, and Oona O'Neill Chaplin and Mr. Quintero presented the EOTC's Eugene O'Neill Birthday Medal for 1982 to the Royal Dramatic, whose Artistic Director, Lars Poysti, received it gratefully.

The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Committee, co-chaired by Barbara Gelb and George C. White, found a multiply regal was to celebrate the ninety-fourth anniversary of O'Neill's birth. Those who attended the gala--an s.r.o. crowd of over 700--will never forget it. [P.S. I salvaged a few copies of the evening's Playbill, which I will happily send, along with the next issue of the Newsletter, to subscribers who request one. But the supply is small, so send requests quickly!]

--Frederick C. Wilkins

3. A FIFTY-MINUTE JOURNEY IN SCOTLAND.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the unofficial collection of almost 500 professional and amateur theatre companies that descend on the Scottish capital each August to supplement (and overwhelm) the much smaller, official Edinburgh International Festival. There are performances virtually around the clock in every playing space imaginable, from church halls to the bus garage. There is everything from Shakespeare to the avant garde; and somewhere on that continuum in the 1982 Fringe was a fifty-minute, two-actor condensation of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

That's the sort of thing that strikes one from the start as A Really Bad Idea; and, indeed, if judged solely as an attempt to squeeze O'Neill's play into a quarter of its usual running time, this version by Kate Harwood for the Floorboards Theatre Company (a London-based professional group) would have to be judged a failure. But as an independent work drawn from O'Neill's play, the way one composer might explore "variations on a theme by" another, it proved an evocative and potentially haunting study in lost hopes and the feeling of being life's victim.

Rather than attempting an abridgement of the plot, Harwood distilled some of O'Neill's recurring concerns into a string of soliloquies by James, Edmund (both played by John Banks) and Mary (Jo Anne Stoner). Roughly, the order of events was this: a short version of the opening scene between James and Mary, James' account of her family and childhood, her bitter denunciation of doctors, his description of his mother, the scene in which Edmund tries to tell her how sick he is, Edmund's fog speech, her memories of wanting to be a nun, and Edmund's reading of "She will not know" counterpointed with her final monologue. (In every case the core scene or speech was cut, rearranged and combined with lines from elsewhere in the play to bring together similar thoughts; the very skillful editing created a generally seamless stream-of-consciousness flow.) Except for the two scenes of dialogue the characters did not interact, although they were at least intermittently aware of each other's presence; one monologue would pick up the thread of thought with which the preceding one had ended, and James' memories of his sainted mother were delivered as a bitter rebuke to the unheeding Mary.

The effect of the cutting-and-pasting, and of each character's general obliviousness to the others, was a picture of three people completely at a loss to explain how their lives had reached the present tragic impasse, aware vaguely that they had once *intended* things to be different, and bemusedly (without even enough energy for it to be called compulsively) reliving the past in memory with the weak hope of finding where it all went wrong.

Unfortunately Harwood proved less adept as director than as editor, and much of her play's potential failed to be realized in this production. The staging was not quite that of a formal reading and yet not varied or natural enough to suggest an actual play. The actors sometimes seemed unsure whether they should be playing to each other, to the audience, or to their own dreams; and as a result their soliloquies didn't resonate off each other as they were evidently intended to. Jo Anne Stoner had the somewhat easier job, not only because she had only one role, but because most of her speeches were monologues to begin with, and thus flowed a little more naturally; John Banks was unable to indicate any real distinction (other than the removal of a necktie) between James and Edmund.

Still, as I suggested, this study in disorientation and the desire to give some shape to the past is a legitimate gloss on at least part of what's going on in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; and Harwood's skillful and sensitive editing created a script that might well prove much more effective in stronger hands, creating an hour of truly moving and evocative theatre.

—Gerald M. Berkowitz

4. TACKY JOURNEY IN TINSELTOWN.

A day with the Tyrones is no picnic. It is a sobering experience; at best, a somber journey. The playgoer may well leave depressed, enveloped by the dark night. The Aristotelian purgation may utterly fail: that strange satisfaction in the face of the tragic may quite elude the viewer. *Journey* can have that effect.

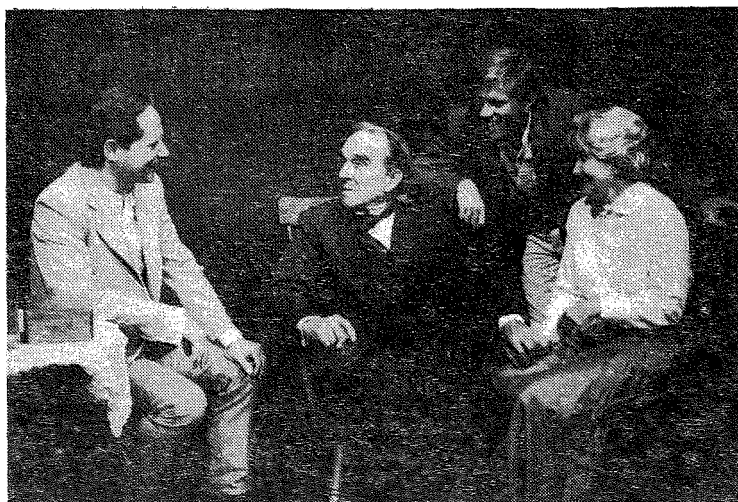
But what can be said of a poor production of a depressing, though magnificent, drama? What can one hope to experience when acting and directing, costuming and design all seem to unite to militate against the play's magnificence? The depression remains, but it seems so pointless. It becomes difficult to determine whether playwright, player, or playgoer most deserves our pity.

Such was the effect of a late spring 1982 production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the Richmond Shepard Theater Studios in Hollywood, one of the countless little theatres scattered about the Los Angeles area, providing members of the professional theatre something to do when they are not more gainfully employed on stage, screen, or television. Perhaps some other form of diversion might have been better than mounting a poor production of *Journey*.

From the first impression, everything seemed wrong. The set design appeared to cater to Mary's rude evaluation of the Tyrones' summer "home." It was a hodgepodge that made their lives appear almost shabby. True, Tyrone was cautious with his money—overly-protective of a wealth he never seemed to grow accustomed to—yes, even miserly, as Jamie constantly protests. But crude he was not; tastelessness was not a fault of his. W. Lansing Barbour's set utterly lacked that certain almost rustic charm that viewers have come to expect of the Tyrones' living room.

With the exception of Edmund's rather loud sneakers, the costuming by Halima McMaster seemed harmless enough. But, while it didn't detract from the total effect, it did nothing to lift the production from its general malaise either.

Perhaps the directorial weakness was the production's greatest fault. Even so simple yet vital a matter as blocking was full of defects. The actors bunched together as if, in deference to Tyrone's fear of the poorhouse, they were trying to conserve on lighting. And the weakness in direction was unmistakable in the evident confusion about where the front hedge was in relation to the living room, as different persons looked out in different directions to see Tyrone's and Jamie's progress on their morning's chore. More defective in the area of direction was the failure to bring out the play's strong ambivalence, the very thing that makes the family the play's main "character," alternately threatening to fall apart and yet managing somehow to survive.



Hollywood *Journey* cast (from left): Jamie (Charles Parks), James (Ford Rainey), Edmund (Randall Brady) and Mary (Eve McVeagh).

At best, Ford Rainey's performance as Tyrone was predictable acting, but it did seem to hold the production together. His voice, however, while it may not have needed a knife to cut its thick brogue, could certainly have used some sanding on the edges. Charles Parks, in spite of his yelling too much, was equally passable as Jamie. Eve McVeagh's performance as Mary was something else. Her wig seemed more platinum than silver, creating a rather confusing image. Far worse was her mask—an emotionless grin she wore throughout the play. But it was her tampering with a classic line that was her most unpardonable act. While O'Neill's language may well use some improvement, certain speeches are too familiar and too powerful to change. So it was nothing short of inexcusable for Mary to say, "Then Mother of God, why is it so lonely?"

Randall Brady as Edmund appeared to be doing a recitation of Edmund's lines. His strange way of looking down, a certain hangdog expression, was disconcerting, as if he were more ashamed than afraid of the gloomy future that faced him. His awkward posturing might have suited a younger Richard in *Ah, Wilderness!*, but not Edmund, with all his additional years and experiences.

To any performance, the playgoer brings layer upon layer of previous exposure to the play, and each new performance should enhance the total experience of that drama. If it only distracts from that experience, it has done the viewer a disservice. Perhaps *Long Day's Journey* is not meant for just any theatre company that chooses to produce it. Surely, the great classics deserve greatness in their treatment.

—Eugene K. Hanson

5. "An Historical Analysis of Three New York Productions of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*": an abstract of a 1982 doctoral dissertation (New York University, dir. Lowell Swortzell) by Doris Hart.

The purpose of this study was to provide an historical record of three major New York productions of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*: the 1956 Broadway premiere at the Helen Hayes Theatre, the 1971 off-Broadway presentation at the Promenade, and the 1976 Bicentennial production at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In addition, the investigation aimed to discover interpretations of the text made by the director, actors, and designers of each production and to learn in what ways, if any, these interpretations added to an understanding of the drama.

The study begins with an explication of the text, referring to Aristotle's six elements of tragedy: plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle.

Chapter Two presents a history of the 1956 premiere, including the director's interpretation of theme, the development of characters, information about lighting, costume and set designs, and critical reaction to the production. Similar information is presented in subsequent chapters for the 1971 and the 1976 productions.

Interviews with eleven persons involved in these presentations, including actresses Zoe Caldwell and Paddy Croft, stage managers, technical designers, plus talks presented by directors José Quintero and Jason Robards yielded valuable information. Especially helpful were materials from the Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center, including scrapbooks, reviews, and a videotape of the 1971 production.

The final chapter provides a comparison of the productions and presents conclusions of the study, among which are the following:

1. Studying productions of plays provides greater understanding of the texts.
2. Each production of *Long Day's Journey* offered insights into the drama, particularly in interpretations of the mother. In 1956, Mary was presented as a victim; in 1971, she was interpreted as aggressive and sexually attractive; in 1976, she became an instigator of problems and the central figure of the drama.
3. Revivals of outstanding plays provide deeper understanding of life in the contemporary world.
4. *Long Day's Journey* is a masterpiece which can accommodate many variations and for each generation is likely to yield new significance, which would be reflected in theatrical revivals.

--Doris Hart

6. Gordon Bordewyk and Michael McGowan, "Another Source of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*," *Notes on Modern American Literature* (Autumn, 1982), item 10 of Vol. VI.

The authors summarize the play's early stage history, mention previously suggested sources for it in O'Neill's experience and reading, and note that its creation was part of a burst of activity closely following James O'Neill, Sr.'s death on August 10, 1920—ten years after the playwright's return from Central America. But they speculate that "something besides his father's death occurred during the late summer of 1920 which prompted him to synthesize his ideas." That "something," they suggest, was the first national convention of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, held that August, which featured a "massive procession" through the streets of Harlem and an opening meeting in Madison Square Garden at which the Association's founder and leader, Marcus Garvey (the "Black Moses"), received a five minute ovation from the crowd of 20,000 to 25,000 delegates and spectators. The authors note numerous parallels—of appearance, career and

program—between Garvey and Brutus Jones, including each's adoption of "the titles and trappings of royalty." (Particularly telling is the quoted criticism of Garvey by W.E.B. DuBois, who wrote that "he pompously seized the pose.... He did not quite dare call himself King Marcus I, but he sunned himself awhile in the address of 'your Majesty.'") O'Neill could not have foreseen that Garvey's career would end in financial corruption, disgrace and deportation, but "the fate he assigns to Jones suggests that he had reservations and suspicions about Garvey and his black nationalist campaign." —FCW

7. *EUGENE O'NEILL AT WORK MEETS THE CRITICS.* Several critical responses to *Eugene O'Neill at Work: Newly Released Ideas for Plays*, ed. Virginia Floyd (New York: Ungar, 1981) have appeared since the initial review by Winifred Frazer in the Winter 1981 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 16-18). Dana Sue McDermott praised the volume as "a major addition to the current body of O'Neill scholarship" and "a unique source of information and inspiration" (*Theatre Journal*, December 1982, pp. 557-558); and John Henry Raleigh termed it "a very valuable addition to the O'Neill canon" (*Modern Drama*, December 1982, pp. 581-583). Each had some reservations—McDermott's concerning the faintness of the illustrations and the fact that "the source Work Diary, or 'W.D.' as it appears in the text, is difficult to trace"; and Raleigh's concerning the introduction, which is "full and clear" but "could have been more coherently organized"—but in both cases praise far outbalanced displeasure.

While Raleigh noted that a scholar should "consult the MSS. themselves," he called the book "a very useful overview and introduction to the considerable corpus of unpublished O'Neilliana," which reveals "how eternally dissatisfied, wayward, wide-ranging, restless, insatiable was O'Neill's creative daimon, ever on the prowl, so to speak, looking for new subjects and new dramatic ways in which to express them—that is, before he settled into the autobiographical subject, the Aristotelian form and the purely naturalistic mode of the last masterpieces."

It was precisely the "autobiographical subject," as traced by Floyd, that aroused the only critical nay, by Royston Coppenger ("The Incomplete Plays of Eugene O'Neill," *Theatre Magazine*, Summer/Fall 1982, pp. 65-69). Coppenger felt that the over-emphasis on parallels between O'Neill's life and his plays (a result, he says, of "facile psychologizing" that reduces O'Neill's career "to little more than a Freudian tic") is a disservice both to the plays (since it "can cause neglect of other aspects of the author's work") and to the man: "it is not crediting him with an undue amount of cleverness to suppose that his creative imagination was sometimes capable of generating plots and characters." Surely the work of Sheaffer, the Gelbs, Bogard and, most recently, Manheim has made O'Neill's ubiquitous autobiographicality "abundantly clear"—and Coppenger, grinding his axe with abandon, offers nothing by way of refutation. While he agrees with Raleigh that it would be best to read the notebooks themselves, even he admits that the Floyd edition provides "a portrait of O'Neill as an artist of great energy and imagination."—FCW

8. Michael Hinden, "When Playwrights Talk to God: Peter Shaffer and the Legacy of Eugene O'Neill," *Comparative Drama*, 16 (Spring 1982), 49-63.

Much of Professor Hinden's essay was delivered at a 1981 MLA special session on O'Neill, and has already been summarized in the Newsletter (Spring 1982, p. 36). The full essay makes even more clear that Shaffer "traces his lineage directly to O'Neill" (p. 50): both playwrights deal with the same themes, both utilize the same techniques, and both are "obsessed with man's longing for divinity"—a divinity that is disturbingly silent. In comparing two pairs of plays—*Equus* and *The Great God Brown*, and *Amadeus* and *The Iceman Cometh*—he finds Shaffer's the more successful of

the first pair and O'Neill's the better of the second.* Whether or not one agrees with his verdicts (I found his arguments thoroughly persuasive), the parallels he draws are irrefutable. And whether O'Neill was a direct influence on Shaffer or the cause was the shared influence of Nietzsche, the similarities between *Equus* and *Brown* are startling:

Both plays depict a search for God by characters who are divided internally as well as externally so that they appear almost as halves of a single personality; both trace the repressive effects of puritanism on the sexual and religious instincts; both employ ritualistic elements such as masks, mime, and choric voices; and both rely on the extended monologue as the principal means of revelation. (p. 53)

Alan Strang is compared to Dion Anthony, Martin Dysart to Billy Brown, and we are shown how "the apostle of Normalcy in each play ends by becoming the ritual substitute for the tortured god-seeker" (p. 55).

"It is time," Professor Hinden says in his introduction, "for critics to assess [O'Neill's] impact on more recent dramatists" (p. 49). His essay, which defies a pithy précis, is a major contribution to that assessment. —FCW

9. Michiko Kakutani, "Hospital Remembers Rebirth of O'Neill," *New York Times* (Oct. 18, 1982), p. C14.

Gaylord Hospital in Wallingford, CT, which celebrated its 80th anniversary last October, was known as the Gaylord Farm Sanitarium when O'Neill was admitted for a five-month stay in 1912. (His impressions were later recorded in *The Straw*.) The October celebration featured a reading of O'Neill's letters to the hospital—which he called "the place I was reborn in"—and his experience was offered as an inspiration for other patients, since, as Gaylord vice president Howard J. Crockett noted, O'Neill is "a fantastic example of someone who came here on his hands and knees, and left with a new sense of who he was." Gaylord's contribution to O'Neill's development, in ways other than merely medical, was the chance it offered the tubercular twenty-four-year-old, after six years of hard living and near-dying, for introspection and contemplation. This he later acknowledged:

It was at Gaylord that my mind got the chance to establish itself, to digest and value the impressions of many past years in which one experience had crowded on another with never a second's reflection. At Gaylord I really *thought about* my life for the first time, about past and future. Undoubtedly the inactivity forced upon me by the life at a san forced me to mental activity, especially as I had always been high-strung and nervous temperamentally.

The result was his decision to become a playwright, and a regimen of preparatory reading—Ibsen, Strindberg, Synge, Yeats, Lady Gregory, et al. This "second birth" was particularly important because it was, said O'Neill, "the only one which had my full approval." —FCW

10. Michael Manheim, "O'Neill's Transcendence of Melodrama in *A Touch of the Poet* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*," *Comparative Drama*, 16 (Fall 1982), 238-250.

Given the theatre of his father, especially *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and the intrigues, evasions and deceptions that filled his home life, it is undeniable

*In *Equus*, Shaffer outdoes O'Neill "in providing a concrete psychological dimension to an abstract metaphysical theme"; whereas in *Iceman* "O'Neill creates a personal dimension for Hickey that somehow seems lacking in Salieri" (p. 61).

that "Eugene O'Neill grew up on a diet of melodrama" (p. 239). And through a major portion of his career, try as he might to overcome it, melodrama was dominant in the plays he wrote:

Throughout the entire earlier canon there is an unbroken rhythm of hostility followed by guilt followed by new hostility followed by renewed guilt—all taking place in an atmosphere of plotting and counterplotting, suspicion and spying, vengefulness and accusatory outburst, sudden reversal and angry defensiveness—in short, all the characteristics customarily associated with melodrama. (p. 242)

But by the late 1930's, after he had come to terms with the memories of his family, melodrama, while it remained a staple in his dramaturgy, lost its dominating hold on it. "As O'Neill began to put his family in perspective, he was becoming more able to put his own melodramatic excesses in perspective" (p. 243).

Professor Manheim surveys a number of the early plays, showing their melodramatic emphases, and follows this with a closer study of the two plays mentioned in his title, both of which "begin with formulaic melodramatic intrigues which are spoofed or actually displaced as the plays develop" (p. 238).

A Touch of the Poet, for instance, begins as sheer melodrama—Con's foray against the uppity Harford, and Sara's plot to trop Simon into marriage—but it rejects the stock formulas when Con's action "approaches farce" ("Con sees his melodrama in serious terms while we take it in comic terms"—p. 242) and when Sara's uncertainty about her motivation, and her growing concern for her father, make her seem, by play's end, "about to become a genuinely tragic figure" (p. 243). Manheim agrees with John Henry Raleigh that the play parodies *The Count of Monte Cristo*, but he adds that the characterization of Con "is a *loving* satire of James O'Neill, Sr., and his famous role" (p. 242; *italics added*). So the transcendence is double—both generic and familial.

In *Moon*, O'Neill went a step further. While he began again with plot materials—the interrelated schemes of Hogan and his daughter—that were melodramatic in origin and intent, this play "goes beyond the gentle mocking of melodrama in *A Touch of the Poet* to an actual displacement of it as the play's basis of construction" (p. 244). After an hour and a half of "good, old-fashioned" comic intrigue, when we see beneath the surfaces of Jim and Josie and witness their long, moon-drenched duologue, *Moon* "becomes quite unexpectedly a play about confession, forgiveness, and freely given love," and the interest "moves from that associated with melodramatic intrigue to that associated with the total release of pent-up feeling—to a catharsis not unlike that associated with classical tragedy" (p. 246). Indeed, it is Manheim's contention that, because O'Neill "came to control his art as he came to understand himself" (p. 248), he was more successful in recreating "the essential effect of classical tragedy" in *Moon* than he had been, ten years earlier, in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. —FCW

11. James P. Pettegrove, "'Snuff'd out by an Article': *Anna Christie* in Berlin," *Maske und Kothurn*, 27 (1981), 335-345.

The "article" referred to in the quotation from Lord Byron is "Eugene O'Neill in Europe" by Rudolf Kommer (*New York Times*, Sunday, November 9, 1924). In it, Kommer wrote scathingly about *Anna Christie* ("Anna Christie's vivacious past is the central theme.... Alas! virginity, lost or otherwise, has no longer any interest for the European playgoer...."); he scoffed at its translation into German by Hungarian dramatist Melchior Lengyel ("his qualifications as literary go-between were limited to a Berlitz acquaintance with English and German"); he labelled the choice of so "inferior" a play as the first O'Neill production in Germany (on October 9, 1923,

at the Max Reinhardt-owned Deutsches Theater in Berlin) "one of those astounding errors of judgment not infrequently perpetrated by theatrical managers"; and he claimed that both the production and the translation were failures.

What was "snuff'd out," according to Mr. Pettegrove, was the truth, as critic after critic (Horst Frenz, Oscar Cargill, the Gelbs and Louis Sheaffer are cited) quoted Kommer and accepted his views as sound, which they weren't. He traces the career of Kommer, showing that he "had only a Berlitz acquaintance with drama and the theater"; defends Lengyel both as playwright ("without doubt a leading dramatist of the first half of this century") and as adapter, improving on O'Neill's melodrama by obeying "the logic of naturalistic tragedy" that O'Neill had flouted, and providing, in Anna's suicide, a "plausible denouement."

By giving Anna greater seriousness Lengyel intensifies her pleas for women's rights. He illuminates Anna's realization of the unfairness of her fate by erasing many of Mat's speeches. In a close translation of O'Neill's powerful articulation of personal freedom, Lengyel lifts Anna's dignity above the original, lending tragic atmosphere.

After lengthy research and correspondence with Mrs. Lengyel, Pettegrove provides many revelations, several of which refute the standard, Kommer-inspired opinions of O'Neill's critics. First of all, neither the Berlin nor the Vienna production of Lengyel's translation was unsuccessful, as Kommer claimed. Secondly, the translation was far from a dud, remaining as it did "the official version from 1923 to 1965." In addition, the translation was actually the work of Mrs. Lengyel, under her husband's supervision, after he had worked out his excisions and revisions. And the text that Lengyel had received from O'Neill in New York was not the *Anna Christie* published in July, 1922, but an earlier version, *The Ole Devil*, which O'Neill *himself* was still tinkering with at the time. The essay makes one eager to do what Pettegrove says one *should* do: engage in a "careful reading of Melchior Lengyel's version of *Anna Christie*" before passing judgment on it. —FCW

THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION: MLA '82 AND '83

I. MEETING OF THE OFFICERS AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The Officers and Board of Directors of The Eugene O'Neill Society met in the Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles, on December 28, 1982. Present were: Albert Wertheim, President; Eugene K. Hanson, Michael Hinden, Vera Jiji, members of the board.

Reports of the Secretary and the Treasurer were read. Arrangements were discussed for the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Society in New York at the 1983 MLA Convention. The board decided that next year's topic for the special session on Eugene O'Neill will be "Revaluating O'Neill: New Approaches, New Discoveries"; Michael Hinden was designated to chair the session.

There was discussion as to the Society's status in relation to the Modern Language Association. Professor's Wertheim's understanding was that the Society had been approved for official status as an "allied organization of the MLA"; but MLA officials at the convention had no record of this approval. Professor Wertheim was directed to discuss the matter further with MLA officials and to report the results of his discussion.

Future goals and undertakings of the Society were discussed, but it was agreed that no major initiatives be launched until next year's meeting, when a larger turn out is expected in New York. Professor Wertheim received the board's approval for

several proposals. The first was to recommend to the membership a dues merger option for joint participation in The Eugene O'Neill Society and The Eugene O'Neill Foundation. Each organization levies dues of \$20 annually; for an additional \$10, members of one organization would receive membership in the other. Professor Wertheim also was encouraged to pursue a second proposal to create a Eugene O'Neill Playwriting Award in conjunction with the annual "Tony" Award presentations.

The President discussed several publication projects in connection with the O'Neill Centenary. The board agreed that the Society should participate actively in any such projects.

The final piece of business was to approve recommendation to the general membership of the proposed amendments to the bylaws of the Society that were circulated last year in New York.

Michael Hinden
Acting Recording Secretary

II. MINUTES OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING.

The fourth annual meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday evening, December 28, 1982, at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Arco Plaza, Los Angeles, California. President Albert Wertheim presided. Approximately twelve Society members and friends attended.

The Secretary of the Society, Jordan Miller, was not in attendance, but the President read his report and the minutes of the 1981 meeting, which were approved and accepted. The Treasurer of the Society, Virginia Floyd, was not in attendance, but the President read her report, which was approved and accepted. According to the Treasurer's Report, the Society has a balance of \$2,946.86 as of 12/31/82.

The President remarked that there was some confusion as to the status of the Society's request to be approved officially as an allied organization of the Modern Language Association. Jordan Miller had reported that such status had been granted, but MLA officials in Los Angeles could not confirm this. In any event, plans are under way for a special session at next year's convention, sponsored by the Society. The topic will be: "Revaluating O'Neill: New Approaches, New Discoveries."

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the President presented several proposals for changes in the by-laws of the Society. The text of these proposals, concerning Section III.1: *Terms of Membership*; and Section VIII.1: *Election of Officers and Directors*, is available in the minutes of the 1981 annual meeting of the Society. The changes were moved and approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Professor Wertheim then made several announcements. Members were reminded that, in addition to next year's meeting in New York, there will be a special conference on O'Neill next spring in Boston. The conference is being organized by Professor Frederick Wilkins; details are available in the summer-fall 1982 issue of *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, pp. 55-56. It was announced that a planned essay collection on O'Neill's plays will be coordinated by Professor Wertheim in celebration of the O'Neill centenary. The collection will represent a variety of interests: scholarly, theatrical, critical. It was announced also that Professor André Weinstein of the Sorbonne is interested in essays on O'Neill for a collection entitled *Pratique de Théâtre*.

On behalf of Sally Pavetti, Jordan Pescile reported on progress at the Monte Cristo cottage in New London. Professor Pescile reported also on his script for a documentary life of O'Neill to be presented on television. 1984 is the

tentative date of completion.

Gail Cohen, representing the Hedgerow Theater, praised the Society for its interest in preserving America's theatrical heritage.

Under new business, the President proposed the creation of a Eugene O'Neill Playwriting Award, to be presented annually in conjunction with the "Tony" awards. The idea was well received, and Professor Wertheim was encouraged to contact the "Tony" committee for further discussion.

Professor Wertheim also discussed a proposal to combine membership dues of The Eugene O'Neill Society and The Eugene O'Neill Foundation. Each organization levies annual dues of \$20. Under the merger proposal, individuals retaining membership in one society could, for an additional \$10, receive membership in the other, as well. The double membership would be offered on a voluntary basis. This proposal will be voted on at next year's meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Hinden
Acting Recording Secretary

III. CALL FOR PAPERS OR PROPOSALS:

- * "Revaluating O'Neill: New Approaches, New Discoveries."
- * A Special Session at the 1983 MLA Convention in New York sponsored by The Eugene O'Neill Society.

At its meeting in Los Angeles in December, The Board of Directors of The Eugene O'Neill Society decided to issue an open invitation for papers on the topic "Revaluating O'Neill: New Approaches, New Discoveries" for panel presentation at the 1983 MLA Convention in New York. The deadline for our receipt of a one-page prospectus *or* a completed paper is *March 15*. The decision as to which papers will be included in the session will be made by April 1, 1983.

We are looking for papers in either of two categories: (1) the application of recent critical methodologies to O'Neill's work; or (2) new readings of the plays or assessments of O'Neill's career in light of the source materials recently made available from the O'Neill collection at Yale University. These would include O'Neill's *Work Diary*, his scenario for *The Calms of Capricorn*, his previously unpublished *Chris Christophersen*, his letters to Kenneth Macgowan ("*The Theatre We Worked For*"), and the items published by Virginia Floyd in *Eugene O'Neill at Work: Newly Released Ideas for Plays*. Panelists might consider the following question: In what ways should new critical methodologies or new source materials set the agenda for O'Neill studies in the decade of the playwright's centenary?

Length of papers may vary. A paper that is designed simply for oral presentation should run to no more than six or eight pages. Very often, however, papers are submitted in a form suitable for publication (at about 15-20 pages) and are later cut by the panelist for the purpose of presentation at the session. You are free to submit your paper to a journal at the same time that you submit it to us.

Please send your completed paper *or* a one-page detailed prospectus to the following address, by March 15, 1983:

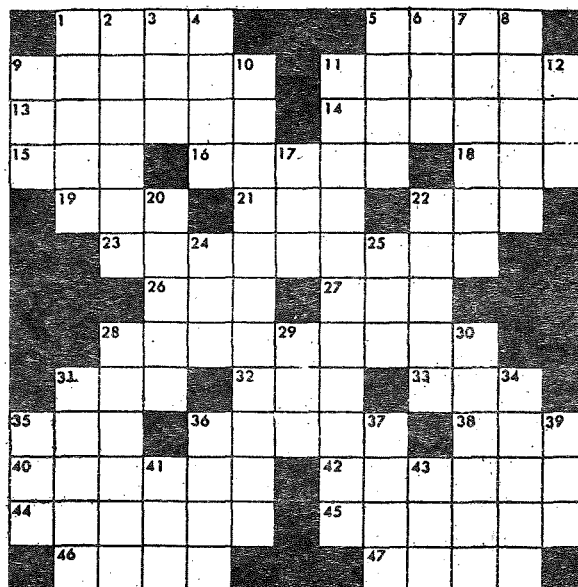
Professor Michael Hinden
Department of English
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Helen C. White Hall
600 N. Park Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Crossword No.2

By Christopher Harding

ACROSS

1. Ephraim's third born
5. Lawyer ranqué at Harry Hope's
9. Axis foes
11. Early EGO one-acter about prostitute
13. Grip tightly
14. Unit of current
15. "Yeggman" in 11 Across
16. The Helmers' M.D. and his family
18. Euripidean tragicomedy
19. Essie's brother
21. Mary Ellen O'Neill, _____ Quinlan
22. Scottish Gaelic Studies (abbr.)
23. EGO's "teller of tales"
26. In lieu of (abbr.)
27. Estimated Date of Arrival (abbr.)
28. British tramp steamer
31. Clear Indicating light (abbr.)
32. Actress who originated Cybel and Josie Hogan
33. "My country, _____"
35. Chum
36. Father of Wolfe and Honey
38. General Learning Ability (abbr.)
40. Dismay
42. Ah, Wilderness! dedicatee
44. Clannish
45. Avaricious
46. Once more
47. Kind of package



DOWN

1. Provincetown Player
2. EGO's beloved Dalmatian
3. German article
4. Prefix meaning "death"
5. Units of electrical resistance
6. Bureau of Engraving and Printing (abbr.)
7. Anchors _____!
8. Belonging to the infamous fiddler
9. One of nine in Strange Interlude
10. His middle name was Rudraighe
11. Musical version of Ah, Wilderness!
12. Cabin-boy in early EGO drama
17. Not elsewhere specified (abbr.)
20. Dentist's tool
22. Move suddenly
24. EGO one-acter on insanity
25. _____ Amin
28. Original Brutus Jones
29. Circumlunar Mission (abbr.)
30. Closer
31. Three-time Oscar-winning director
34. "The old Foolosopher"
35. Ex-cop in Iceman
36. Cole _____
37. Pushers' nemesis
39. One, no matter which
41. The Dreamy Kid
43. Oolong or pekoe

Solution located on p. 45 of this issue.

ON THE SHELF: NEW BOOKS BY AND ABOUT O'NEILL (PART TWO)

- V. James A. Robinson, *Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought: A Divided Vision*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982. 201 pp. \$17.50. ISBN: 0-8093-1035-X.

Few if any of the major American romantics have failed to find nourishment in the mystical systems of the East, and Eugene O'Neill was no exception, as Professor Robinson shows in this exhaustive and illuminating study, which acknowledges the inspiration of Frederic I. Carpenter for its thesis that the Oriental religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism—were an influence, not only on the plays of the 1920's, but throughout O'Neill's career. Because he studied the Eastern religions directly, and because the Western philosophers who most influenced him (Emerson, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Jung) were all imbued with the spirit of Oriental belief, "O'Neill's vision betrays deep and consistent affinities with Eastern mystical thought" (p. 2):

From the early sea plays through the final tragedies, ... O'Neill's affinity to Eastern mysticism informs his dynamic vision of reality, influences the values and attitudes of his protagonists, and shapes the symbolism and structure of entire plays. (p. 3)

Not that mysticism was always predominant in O'Neill, even though its appearance came as early as "the serene stillness of *The Moon of the Caribbees*" (p. 7); nor did it more than once pervade an entire play. There was, as Robinson's subtitle suggests, a constant "tension in O'Neill's vision between two contrasting philosophical traditions" (p. 3). One was the "dualistic Western tradition that divides self from God and nature" (p. 4); the other was the monism of the East, that enjoins one to reject the "false distinction created by rationalism" and to "assume a passive, meditative stance that allows an intuitive apprehension of the oneness of the universe" (p. 5). So the most characteristic work is not *Lazarus Laughed*, "O'Neill's most Eastern play" (p. 8), but *Strange Interlude*, in which "Nina Leeds' vacillation between serene, rhythmical mother god and interfering, judgmental father god duplicates O'Neill's own struggle between Eastern and Western thought" (p. 8)—a struggle that was never completely resolved, though the last plays suggest a man "resigned to the twin Western burdens of ego and history" and to the belief "that a Christian ethic of forgiveness and compassion is man's only hope" (p. 9). All this in the nine-page first chapter! Like the book as a whole, it offers struggles of its own, but struggles that are rewarding and that *can* be resolved through careful study of Robinson's commentary and the plays he discusses.

The second chapter examines O'Neill's personal library, specifically its eight books on Oriental religions, and discusses the three Eastern systems separately, since "O'Neill's divided vision ... varied according to which system influenced him more at the time of a play's composition" (p. 12). (The later chapters devoted to the plays trace these conflicting but complementary strands through the tapestry of O'Neill's oeuvre.) For instance, *Strange Interlude*'s "picture of a world in flux, and a grasping heroine who finally moves beyond desire, clearly has Buddhist thought behind it" (p. 22); whereas it was Taoism (the Eastern religion in which O'Neill's interest was the deepest and broadest) that contributed to the "polaristic vision of reality" that is "the central issue in *Marco Millions*" (p. 30). Chapter Two also offers the most succinct explanation for O'Neill's fascination with Eastern mysticism and for why it never won his total adherence:

He turned to Oriental religions to find a philosophy that accorded with his suspicion that life was one—that the ultimate reality was an amoral, immanent force which moved, like his beloved sea, in a unified, eternal rhythm. The Western man in him, however, constantly challenged that intuition. (p. 30)

The third chapter examines three Western influences on the early O'Neill—Catholicism, romanticism and American culture—that offered him, even before his study of comparative religions, a "circuitous route to the East" (p. 33), because each constituted an

"East/West mixture" (p. 34). And the result, in the plays, is "an intriguing tension: the Western imperative expresses itself in the tragic personal conflicts depicted; the Eastern impulse appears in the rhythmic structure and mystical overtones of the work" (p. 34).

Perhaps the most interesting of the three Western influences was Catholicism, since its contribution to his Eastern bent was both positive and negative: its Neoplatonic and Gnostic components introduced him to some basics of Oriental thought; while the Baltimore Catechism, with its emphasis on "God's otherness" and its "cold emphasis on dogma" (p. 39), motivated (along with unhappy experiences at home and school) his rejection of Catholicism and his Eastward search for a more affirmative belief that "offered less morality and hence less guilt" (p. 40).

The romantic philosophers and artists most influential on him (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Jung and Strindberg) are all shown to embody the same blend of East and West, as are the cited exemplars of American culture (Emerson, Thoreau, Pound and Eliot). Given that ethos, that composite "battleground between Eastern and Western approaches" (p. 38), it is not surprising that O'Neill, "a true romantic," was imbued "with the same ambivalence toward Eastern thought as his major Western predecessors and sources" (p. 73).

The remaining three chapters comprise a chronological study of eleven plays that provides an evolutionary survey of the playwright's career-long affair with the East. In the first phase (1916-1925), "traditional Western dualism dominates O'Neill's vision" (p. 86), but during it his "growing affinity" with Eastern mysticism becomes apparent. (p. 87) In *Moon of the Caribbees*, it is the Donkeyman alone "through whom O'Neill dimly foreshadows his later attraction to Oriental thought" (p. 92). Indeed, the attraction is never total in the first phase, and the East/West tension is sometimes clear in a single play, like *Anna Christie*, in which the heroine's discovery of "peace through symbolic absorption into the sea she worships" is balanced by the Western, man-against-nature emphasis in Chris's "distrust of 'dat ole davil, sea'" (p. 85). The other two early plays discussed—*The Fountain* and *Marco Millions*—epitomize, in their differences, O'Neill's "divided vision," since the former "optimistically implies the spiritual unity of East and West," while the latter "pessimistically delineates their differences" (p. 86).

Chapter Five traces "the rapid advance and subsequent recession of Orientalism in O'Neill's work between 1925 and 1928" (p. 122). While *The Great God Brown* offers little beyond "superficial" allusions to Eastern ideas (Nirvana, transmigration), it does treat its Western sources (Christian, Nietzschean and Jungian) "in an 'Eastern' manner" (p. 125). And while its conclusion "concedes that only death can resolve the oppositions of existence" (p. 132), it still "gives more expression to O'Neill's Eastern intuitions than any previous ... play" and "serves as an important preparation for the more pervasive Orientalism of *Lazarus Laughed*" (p. 125), in which the merging of "Buddha, Christ and Zarathustra into an eclectic Messiah" (p. 147) and "the focus on liberation from the ego and *maya*—the major goal of Hinduism and Buddhism" justify Robinson's claim that it is "O'Neill's most Eastern play" (p. 122). In *Strange Interlude* the Eastern influence ebbs and O'Neill returns to "a universe where conflict prevails" (p. 147)—conflict both within and between the characters. "Only after exhausting struggle do [they] attain peace; and that peace is not blissful, but resigned" (p. 147). And the "recession of Orientalism" increases in *Dynamo*, where he "repudiates Oriental thought by associating it with the modern electrical god worshipped by Reuben Light, whose devotion is psychotic and suicidal" (p. 122).

"If *Dynamo* did not purge O'Neill of his Eastern inclinations," Robinson writes, "the trip to China that followed its completion succeeded in doing so" (p. 165). After that disillusioning journey, he turned resolutely Westward and "examined [in the unfinished *Cycle*] a national history that also paid little attention to Oriental mysticism" (p. 168), the only echo being in "the Thoreauvian nature of Simon [Harford]" (p. 169).

But the disappearance of Orientalism was only temporary; it reemerged in *Ice-man* and *Long Day's Journey*, which "raise inaction to the level of art, thereby manifesting the quietism of Oriental mystical thought" (p. 170), and "view man's hopes and desires as illusions [the *māyā* of pipe dreams] that obscure the void at the heart of existence" (p. 171). While both plays, along with the "view of existence as *māyā*" in *Hughie* (p. 182), "point in some intriguing Oriental directions" (p. 174), Robinson says that "it would nonetheless be misleading to call these plays 'Eastern'" (p. 174), since they rest on a Christian humanist base—"a Christian ethic of compassion and mutual responsibility" (p. 174). Concluding that "Oriental religion was (in the words of Father Baird in *Days Without End*) 'not for the Western soul'" (p. 168),

the playwright's only consolation [was] to turn to the fundamental teaching of Christianity, and discover in compassion some mitigation of man's destiny of sorrow. (p. 179)

Professor Robinson delineates O'Neill's "divided vision" with admirable care and offers many fresh insights about the eleven plays he considers at length. His book should be required reading for all students of Eugene O'Neill.

- VI. C. P. Sinha, *Eugene O'Neill's Tragic Vision*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981. x+176 pp. \$18.50. ISBN: 0-391-02203-2.

One must applaud Dr. Sinha for his scholarship and ambition. He has set himself the triple task, awesome in a short book, of surveying all previous studies of O'Neill and his work, correcting earlier misconceptions about the man and his view of the human condition, and striving (in the words of M. Q. Towheed, who provides a foreword) "to investigate the source that contributed to the evolution of O'Neill's 'Dionysian' tragic vision which sees tragedy as a 'celebration of life' notwithstanding its horrors" (p. vii). An awesome task—and, in the last instance, a most valuable one: whatever flaws the book contains do not undermine its importance as a testament to the essential and ultimate affirmation in O'Neill's tragic philosophy of life.

In a first, introductory chapter, after dividing O'Neill's career into five periods, Sinha summarizes O'Neill criticism from the 1920s to the 1970s, noting that, while there are many references to tragedy, there had not been any previous attempt to "study," "probe," or "examine" the playwright's "tragic vision." He further claims that the critics have spawned a number of false or partial O'Neills (16 are listed on page 6), while "the 'Real' O'Neill continues to remain a mystery" (p. 6). It is Sinha's intent to correct these errors of omission and commission: to show us the "Real O'Neill," and to delineate his "tragic vision"—a term which he admits at least twice is "difficult to define." That difficulty is inadvertently demonstrated in the first chapter, when, attempting to "establish a working meaning for it," he calls it "a positive protest against the prevailing temper of meaninglessness and nihilism" in the modern age (p. 12). Because it is hard to equate vision and protest—since the latter would seem to be an effect of, and not a synonym for, the former—I'm not sure that his "working meaning" works! But later chapters overcome this initial problem.

The second chapter begins with a brief biography of O'Neill, showing how the "objective facts of [his] early life" resulted in a "restless craving for 'love' and 'belonging'" which in turn generated "the thematics of his autobiographical tragedies" (p. 25). Add to this the social and philosophical ferment of his creative years—the Darwin- and Marx-inspired "crisis of faith among the contemporary intellectuals," the "wave of social protest," the Freud-initiated "breakdown of traditional moral values" and "increasing obsession with sex," the Depression, the Second World War, and the intellectual crosscurrents prevalent in the interwar years ("realism, primitivism, pragmatism, naturalism, expressionism")—and you have, evidently, all the necessary ingredients for the (still undefined) "tragic vision" of O'Neill:

Thus, it can be posited that the birth of tragedy in O'Neill was largely experiential—the result of an interaction between his private agonies born of the family tensions and the symptomatic cosmic anxieties of his times. (p. 29)

The third chapter discusses a variety of "external influences" on O'Neill's thinking and writing, both literary (the Greek tragic poets, Shakespeare, Ibsen, and—in O'Neill's own words—"especially Strindberg") and intellectual (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud and Jung). The coverage is revealing and sometimes exciting, as in the demonstration of Nietzsche's influence on *The Iceman Cometh*, in which "Larry Slade comes to attain the stature of a tragic hero by virtue of his awareness of the balance within himself of the Dionysiac and Apollonian elements, of death-wish, and resistance" (p. 71). I cannot agree, though, with Sinha's claim (p. 63) that "O'Neill's view of tragedy does not subscribe, even in part, to Schopenhauer's view of tragedy." His own presentation seems to refute that charge, which springs, I think, from the author's determination to prove that O'Neill, while a tragedian, is not a pessimist.

The fourth chapter, drawing on O'Neill's statements about his art, suggests his "poetics of tragedy" and emphasizes that he was neither a "defeatist" nor a "sadist":

As a dramatist, his primary concern was to manifest the "transforming power of tragedy"—how it enters into men's lives, and through purgation of emotions, purifies and ennobles the soul. (p. 89) O'Neill considered tragedy the highest form of art and man's struggle against fate his sublimest and noblest action. (p. 90) Like Aeschylus and Sophocles, O'Neill recognized that man's greatness lay in putting up an unending fight with his destiny. It was this belief in man's indomitable spirit to fight back which provided a spiritual dimension to his tragic vision. (p.91)

Like his exact contemporary T. S. Eliot, O'Neill "expressed the tragedy of modern man crushed in a mechanical, impersonal, and alien world that valued science and materialism at the cost of art and religion" (p. 87). By emphasizing the primacy of the emotions, and by shifting the tragic focus from the "inevitability of destiny" (the pattern of classical drama) and from "the 'character' of man" (the pattern of Elizabethan drama) to "the individual 'psyche' of man" (pp. 88-89), O'Neill provided, in his plays, "an affirmation of the possibility of tragedy in the twentieth century" (p. 99).

The fifth chapter studies a number of the plays, from the early sea one-acts (such as *Ile*, which "manifests the inevitability of the 'tragic' and envisions the unconquerable spirit of man in his 'glorious, self-destructive' struggle against Fate," and whose hero, Captain Keeney, "may be designated the archetype of O'Neill's tragic heroes"—pp. 113-114), through the late quartet (*Iceman*, *Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Touch of the Poet* and *Long Day's Journey*) "which constitute the core of O'Neill's tragic vision" (p. 125). By this point, the reader has come to understand the meaning of that ubiquitous phrase: it involves a persistent "undercurrent of optimism; that if man could dive deep into the core of the false ideal he might discover the true nature of reality and build a meaningful life out of his cosmic anguish. It is this healthy view of life which is the essence of O'Neill's tragic vision" (p. 138). A precursor of Sartrean existentialism, O'Neill suggests a solution for man's nihilism and fear of death: "a sincere cultivation of mutual understanding and forgiveness coupled with the love and compassion of being for one another.... His tragic vision may be said to convey the idea that one can reach the Elysium of Light and Peace only after passing through Inferno. This was what Dante did in his *Divine Comedy* and this is what O'Neill does in his later plays." (pp. 139, 141)

Dr. Sinha offers a lofty vindication of O'Neill against such detractors as Carl Van Doren, who accused him of creating "dumb, tortured persons who come in the end to worse than naught" (p. 121), and T. K. Whipple, who found O'Neill's dramatic world "thoroughly hostile to human life" (p. 122).

One wishes, though, that the book had undergone a thorough revision and that a careful proofreader had checked it before publication, for the surface flaws repeatedly distract from the important content beneath them. Sometimes the problem is an excessive use of the passive voice, as here (p. 20): "Eugene was admitted to a Catholic convent school in 1895, which was somehow disliked by him." At other times the expression causes a disconcerting illogic, as in the comment that O'Neill's parents were "married in 1875 *after* James O'Neill had established himself as a matinee idol ... in the last quarter of the nineteenth century" (p. 16, italics added). And the assertion, on the same page, that James's "commercialisation as an actor made him thoroughly materialistic and self-centered," leads one into the labyrinth of chicken-egg puzzlement: might not the causal relationship even more likely have been the reverse? And the pronoun reference in the following (p. 18) about O'Neill's parents—

The quack of a doctor, whom [James] consulted prescribed morphine to relieve [Ella] of her rheumatism which finally turned into a life-long addiction—

arouses the whimsical inference that Ella O'Neill was addicted to rheumatism! Or take this description of Con Melody's past (p. 137): "subsequently, he is discharged from the army for killing a fellow officer in a duel whose wife's modesty he had tried to outrage." One gets the picture of Major Melody assaulting the honor of a Mrs. Duel!

These problems, along with frequent misspellings (Widekind, Haftmann, and a list of Hell Hole frequenters that includes Djuna Burns, Saxe Commimo and Harry Keemp!), do not damage the fine ideas beneath them, but they deflect one's attention too regularly to be ignored. As do such locutions as "Oedipus the Rex" (p. 3).

And Sinha also becomes the victim of his own research. That research was exhaustive, and is reflected in the book's 400 endnotes and its extensive (and useful) bibliography of 257 secondary sources (from 1913 to 1975, and from Lionel Abel to Stark Young). But the abundance of quotations on every page—especially when attributions are provided only in the notes, and when Sinha makes an assertion and then quotes the same assertion by someone else—makes for a very choppy and sometimes redundant ride.

I don't wish to deride the book. Its emphasis on the upbeat element in O'Neill's tragic vision is a valuable corrective to the charges that his work reeks of undiluted pessimism. But an overhaul would make the *reader's* "haul" much easier, and I recommend one if a second edition is planned. (I should mention that the reviewer in *Choice*—June 1982, #201—praised the book as "impressive" and its author as "masterful." And I agree that, even in its present state, it would be of great value to anyone lacking access to the previous studies of O'Neill to which Dr. Sinha refers so regularly in his study.)

- VII. Eugene O'Neill, *Chris Christophersen: A Play in Three Acts (Six Scenes)*. Foreword by Leslie Eric Comens. New York: Random House, 1982. xi+148 pp. \$15.00. ISBN: 0-394-52531-0.

Chris Christophersen was the only produced O'Neill play never to have been printed. What a delight it is to have it in a book at last! (And what a value too, since one can now compare the thing-itself with the many commentaries and assessments one has read.) And to have it so beautifully packaged by Random House, sporting an impressive photo portrait of the playwright on its dust jacket (I wish its date had been indicated), and skillfully introduced by Leslie Eric Comens, literary executor of O'Neill's estate, makes the delight even greater. If there are "musts" among recent O'Neill publications, this is surely one.

The story of the play's genesis and fate is generally well known already: planned in 1918 and written in 1919, it opened in Atlantic City on March 8, 1920 (an attempt by producer George C. Tyler to capitalize on the Broadway success, a month earlier, of *Beyond the Horizon*). The production won some critical praise but little public

enthusiasm and closed in Philadelphia two weeks later, never to be performed again, O'Neill advising Tyler to "Throw [it] in the ash barrel." He later reworked the script, turning it from comedy to melodrama, shifting the focal center from Chris to his daughter, retitling it *Anna Christie*, and garnering his second Pulitzer Prize for it in 1921. (Mr. Comens is particularly helpful in describing the details of the metamorphosis.)

Fortunately, even if Tyler had obeyed the author's derogatory injunction, the play would not have been lost, for O'Neill had sent a typescript to the Copyright Office, where it was registered on June 5, 1919. And it is that typescript that is here published, permitting access to it by many who have heretofore known of it only indirectly.

And that access offered, to me at least, a revelation. I must say I found it an engrossing play, extremely well constructed, with lively and generally believable dialogue, and not deserving the six decades of neglect it has suffered. Of course, if one comes to it from *Anna Christie* its sheen is a little dimmed. Anna (here a proper, British-bred typist) and her suitor (Paul Andersen, an American officer whose sluggish complacency erodes under the spell of love) are hardly up to the Anna and Mat Burke of the later play. But Chris is the same, even if (as Travis Bogard has noted) his actions in the third act--plotting to murder Andersen, and accepting a post as bo'sun--seem implausible for a character determined to escape the sea and previously portrayed as "incapable of action." And yet, his murder plan, motivated by the needling of a malicious steward, and contemplated to save his daughter from the fate of her mother, is surely in keeping with the "invincible stubbornness" that O'Neill notes in his scene-one description of Chris. What are less plausible are his ultimate agreement to the marriage of Anna and Paul; his acceptance of the bo'sunship after vowing, at the time of his wife's death, that he would never go to sea again; and the remarkable transformation of all three characters in the final scene. It's hard to credit all that to the "dirty tricks" of "dat ole davil, sea" (or to the Londonderry air), and one must confess that the last scene is poorer than the five that precede it. Still, the sea's effect on Anna, her effect on Paul, and the lovers' effect on Chris make for a bang-up ending--even if a certain "suspension of disbelief" is necessary to buy it.

The publication of *Chris Christophersen* is cause for rejoicing. We should all be grateful to Random House and Mr. Comins for providing it.

- VII. Eugene O'Neill, *The Calms of Capricorn*. Developed from O'Neill's Scenario by Donald Gallup. With a Transcription of the Scenario. New Haven and New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1982. xvi+190pp. \$12.95. ISBN: 0-89919-093-6.

Gratitude is also doubtless due to Donald Gallup, former curator of the Collection of American Literature at Yale University, for "developing" a fleshed-out version, in play form, of O'Neill's unwritten Cycle play, *The Calms of Capricorn*, and especially for appending both the full scenario, exactly as O'Neill wrote it between April 27 and June 13, 1935, and the playwright's sketches for the interior sets he envisioned.

Any work by O'Neill is worth having, and this one is particularly important. Following *More Stately Mansions* in O'Neill's multi-play design (the events occur sixteen years later), it tells us of Sara Harford and her four sons after the death (between scenes one and two) of her husband Simon, and adds to our knowledge of O'Neill's overall plan for "A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed," which was "to trace the fortunes of an American family, the Harfords, and the effect upon them

of the corrupting power of material things" (p. vii). And the scenario offers a treasure trove of insights into his creative methods: beginning with a skeletal design, adding fragments of speech, returning to earlier sections with "second thoughts," sometimes penning whole speeches, etc. So we should be glad that what had been completed of *Calms* escaped the Marblehead demolition derby of 1951 and made it to sanctuary at Yale.

But what *had* been completed was very little: the bare bones, and very convoluted ones at that, of Sara and her sons' trip around the horn from New York to San Francisco on the clipper ship "Dream of the West." Also on board are the aging Captain's young wife Nancy; the ship's owner and his frigid, Mildred Douglass daughter Elizabeth; a loose-frocked minister; a conscience-stricken banker who has absconded with his bank's holdings and tries desperately (and successfully) to lose all his money at cards; and the banker's aggressive, amoral "companion," Leda, who admits to being "an absolutely impure woman" (p. 37) and spawns as many mishaps as her classical namesake by slicing through the masks of her fellow passengers and inciting them to reveal and act upon their true feelings while sleeping with at least three other men herself.

Ethan Harford, Sara's firstborn, is the plot's central character. Second Mate at the start of the voyage, Ethan is restlessly ambitious, eager to gain a higher position and to make it to the Golden Gate in record time. This is because of the "fierce pride" (p. 9) that he has inherited from his father and grandfather. Like them, he is (in Sara's words, p. 17) "touched with the curse of the poet" that drives him (in his own words, p. 13) "to pursue a mysterious great need behind all wants, of which the wants are delusive shadows":

I can't leave the sea unless I've conquered it first.... If I win, I possess her and she cringes and I kick her away from me and turn my back forever. If I lose, I give myself to her as her conquest and she swallows and spews me out in death. (pp. 14-15)

Ethan's obsession blinds him initially to love--"I have no interest in women" (p. 11)--but he slowly warms to Nancy, who loves him and wishes her husband were dead. And Leda "helps" them both--goading Ethan to hit (and unintentionally kill) the First Mate; and later nudging Ethan and Nancy into murdering the Captain, in a plot strand that Michael Hinden, reviewing *Calms* in *Comparative Drama*, brilliantly relates to the basic action in *Desire Under the Elms*:

For the possessive lovers Abbie and Eben, O'Neill here substitutes Nancy and Ethan; for old man Cabot, he substitutes the Captain; for Cabot's farm, the Clipper Ship as object of possession; for the murder of the baby, the murder of the Captain (they are both smothered with a pillow).

But the various, nefarious doings on the ship twice cause (or seem to cause) unnatural calms; and so, though Ethan becomes First Mate and then Captain, and weds the Captain's widow almost immediately after her husband's demise ("the funeral bak'd meats," one might say with Hamlet, "Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables"!), he loses his race to Frisco and joins his bride in a suicidal descent into the silent, victorious sea--partly out of remorse, though that is not prepared for; partly because he'd said he would, if beaten, on page 15; and also to prove to Nancy that his love for her was genuine and not acquisitive. "We'll swim out together," he says to her (before they "*disappear off rear in the fog*"). "And then the sea will be alight with beauty forevermore--because you are you" (p. 123).

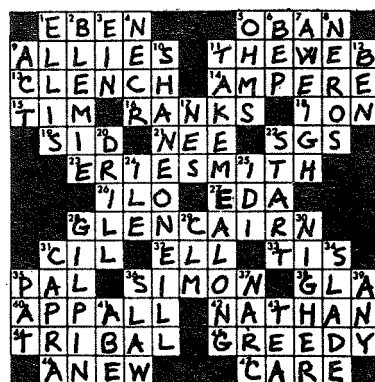
Bad writing at best. And Gallup has compounded the problem by repeatedly turning O'Neill's narrative jottings into straight dialogue that seldom rings true. He admits in his excellent introduction that "O'Neill would not have permitted its

publication and would have protested violently against the idea of its development into a play" (p. xi). Why, then, do it? Gallup explains that the purpose for the "development" was "merely to increase its readability" (p. xiii). Agreed. It does make it more readable; but it doesn't make it any better, and I can't imagine *Calms* becoming a staple in contemporary playhouses. Still, it offers much of interest--especially the character of Leda, sort of an uncomfortable Cybel turned activist, and O'Neill's adventurous use of as many as six simultaneous acting areas--and any student of O'Neill will want to have it. The author, as the spine indicates, is O'Neill/Gallup; and the events on board the *Dream of the West* would strain even the credulity of devotees of *Soap Opera Digest*. But the scenario is there, and the "development," for all its faults, provides many enticements for the mind.

If all of the above--in this issue and the last--are not enough, two other recent publications can be added to the O'Neill "shelf." Last August 18, Yale University Press reissued *Hughie* in a new paperback edition (38 pp., \$3.95), on whose cover is an appropriately fuzzy but unattributed photograph of a night clerk leaning on his small-lobby desk. While it's convenient for performers or for collectors who prefer one play per volume, the price is a bit steep for a one-act, and a teacher of an O'Neill course would probably opt for the comparative economy, and excellent introduction, of Travis Bogard's *Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Modern Library College Edition), which also includes, for \$3.25, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *A Touch of the Poet* and *Moon for the Misbegotten*. And the young O'Neill and his family appear in *The Bohemians*, Allan Cheuse's novel about John Reed (Apple-wood Books, \$12.95), all gussied up in their Long Day's Journeyalls.

But it is the appearance of two other books--John Orlandello's *O'Neill on Film* and Normand Berlin's *Eugene O'Neill*--that propel this review-article into yet a third installment come spring. (The impatient can find publication information in the "recent publications" listings herein.)

--Frederick C. Wilkins



NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. LUMET'S *JOURNEY*, TWENTY YEARS LATER. Andrew Sarris and Tom Allen reassessed the 1962 film version of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, directed by Sidney Lumet, in their *Village Voice* column, "Revivals in Focus" (November 9, 1982, p. 54), calling it "one of the near-perfect jolts from a tirelessly headstrong filmmaker, who somehow has always found a way to recharge his batteries." These are their recollections:

As a posthumous autobiographical testament to O'Neill's punishing guilt, *Journey* is weak in the rhythm of *Living* but overwhelming in its resolution of *Life*. Its serial confrontations, attacks followed by healing among a family of four, are heroically exhausting. To go the distance, Lumet sets the pace with the most genuinely O'Neill actor in American theater, Jason Robards, as he did in his scathing public-television adaptation of *The Iceman Cometh*. Oddly enough, the English [Ralph] Richardson is more tragically in tune with the import of O'Neill's tormented ménage than the mannered [Katharine] Hepburn. Also surprisingly, [Dean] Stockwell does well in the part of the younger brother. Lumet's crew, led by Boris Kaufman's high-contrast photography of Richard Sylbert's set design, beautifully modulates the gloom and doom until the cast fades out in the shadows of a single light bulb.

2. BENTLEY TRIES AGAIN--AND SUCCEEDS. Eric Bentley, who once, in an oft-reprinted essay, recorded his failure in "Trying to Like O'Neill," a playwright he also dismissed as "promising" in *The Playwright as Thinker* (1945), has revised his opinion. In a recent interview, he explains why: "The promise was fulfilled. See, we hadn't seen those plays he'd written in the '30s. Even *The Iceman Cometh* wasn't done until after the war. There were people who admired *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *Strange Interlude*, which I did not. Not much. I could see them as melodramas but not what he wanted to make them, which was high tragedy. But *The Iceman Cometh* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* are great realism.... He should have gotten the Nobel Prize after that, but he got it before." (John Calhoun, "Flamboyant and Unrepentant," *Other Stages*, December 16, 1982, p. 5.)
3. PRAISE FOR BRYANT BIO. Virginia Gardner has published a biography of Louise Bryant, entitled *Friend and Lover* (Horizon Press, 1982, 390 pp., \$18.95). O'Neill biographer Louis Sheaffer, reviewing the book in *The Day* (New London, CT, Nov. 28, 1982, p. B4), notes that such a study was needed because the movie *Reds* and the biographies of her husband, John Reed, stop with his death, and Bryant lived another 15 years. While O'Neill figures "only briefly" in Gardner's book, his relations with Reed and Bryant had a telling effect on at least two of his plays:

During Ms. Bryant's Greenwich Village period, she had a turbulent affair with ... O'Neill, even though she remained Reed's beloved and continued to live with him. O'Neill was torn between desire for Ms. Bryant and great affection for Reed. He would have his unhappy situation in mind when he wrote both *Beyond the Horizon*, in which two brothers are in love with the same girl, and *Strange Interlude*, where a man cuckolds his best friend....

The biography, says Sheaffer, is "fully annotated" and "fascinating."

4. RECENT PUBLICATIONS (exclusive of works reviewed or abstracted in this issue).
 Berlin, Normand. *Eugene O'Neill*. Published in England by Macmillan as part of their "Modern Dramatists" series (1982), its US edition is published by Grove Press (xiii+178 pp., \$9.95. ISBN: 0-394-62318-1). To be reviewed in the next issue.
- Orlandello, John. *O'Neill on Film* (Fairleigh Dickinson U. Press, 1982). 182 pp. \$27. 50. ISBN 0-8386-2291-7. Orlandello compares nine plays with their film adaptations (*Anna Christie*, *Strange Interlude*, *The Emperor Jones*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *The Long Voyage Home*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Long Day's Journey* and *The Iceman Cometh*). The book was "only mildly recommended" by the critic in *Choice* (Nov. '82), who found it "a needed contribution [but] not a very

interesting one," except when it underscores "the invalidity of the assumed necessity to 'open up' a stage work for the screen." A review will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.

The Plays of Eugene O'Neill (Random House, Modern Library Editions, 3 vols., 1982). Though incomplete because of copyright restrictions, the three volumes contain much:

- Vol. I: *Strange Interlude*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Lazarus Laughed*, *The Fountain*, *The Moon of the Caribbees*, *Bound East for Cardiff*, *The Long Voyage Home*, *In the Zone*, *Ile*, *Where the Cross Is Made*, *The Rope*, *The Dreamy Kid*, *Before Breakfast*.
 Vol. II: *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, *Marco Millions*, *Welded*, *Diff'rent*, *The First Man*, *Gold*.
 Vol. III: *Anna Christie*, *Beyond the Horizon*, *The Emperor Jones*, *The Hairy Ape*, *The Great God Brown*, *The Straw*, *Dynamo*, *Days Without End*, *The Iceman Cometh*.

5. COLLECTION OF O'NEILL'S LETTERS PLANNED. Travis Bogard and Jackson Bryer, whose excellent collection of O'Neill's letters to Kenneth Macgowan, "*The Theatre We Worked For*," was reviewed in the last issue of the Newsletter (Summer-Fall 1982, pp. 37-39), have concluded an agreement with Yale to do a larger, more inclusive collection of O'Neill's letters. Such a volume is badly needed and will be of interest both to scholars and general readers. Bogard reports that they are currently seeking a way "to give the book a shape that is not merely chronological in design--as we focused the Macgowan book around the houses." When published, the collection will be reported on at length in the Newsletter.
6. GERMAN VOLUME IMMINENT. Dr. Ulrich Halfmann of the University of Mannheim (FRG) is preparing, for publication by Gunter Narr Verlag, Tübingen, a scholarly work entitled, *A Eugene O'Neill Source Book: A Selection of Essays and Remarks on Drama and the Theater, Playwriting and Playwrights*.
7. KAPLAN/CHAPLIN. Justin Kaplan, renowned biographer of Mark Twain, Lincoln Steffens and Walt Whitman, is currently at work on a life of O'Neill son-in-law Charlie Chaplin. References to O'Neill will be reported herein when the book appears.
8. IN MEMORIAM X3. Karl Ragnar Gierow died in Stockholm on October 31, at the age of 78. As director of the Royal Dramatic Theater of Sweden from 1951 to 1963, he oversaw the world premieres of *Long Day's Journey*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *Hughie*, and *More Stately Mansions*. An intimate of O'Neill, he had discovered an unfinished, ten-hour version of *Mansions* in the O'Neill collection at Yale and spent four years shortening it to a four-hour playing time for its 1962 premiere.

Arthur Hughes died in New York City on December 28, at the age of 89. He played Seth Beckwith, the hired man, in the Broadway premiere of *Mourning Becomes Electra* in 1931. His musical preparation for the role was recalled in the *New York Times* (January 1, 1983, p. 24):

As Seth, Mr. Hughes was required to sing the song "Shendandoah," which distressed him because he was unable to carry the tune. In their book, *O'Neill*, ... Arthur and Barbara Gelb recounted that Mr. Hughes practiced the song everywhere he went, from the street to the subway, and even called his wife to have her sing it to him over the telephone when he forgot the words. When Mr. Hughes finally sang the song for Mr. O'Neill, the playwright said: "Fine, fine! This man *can't* sing!" Recalled Mr. Hughes: "O'Neill liked the idea of the singing being a little off key."

A third death, that of actor James Broderick on November 1 at the age of 55, may not have as much meaning for O'Neillians as those of Gierow and Hughes; but the editor remembers his bewhiskered solemnity as Ephraim Cabot in a Summer 1974 production of *Desire Under the Elms*, costarring Eva Marie Saint and John Ritter, at the Berkshire Playhouse in Stockbridge, MA. It was not Broderick's first O'Neill role: he had

performed with Jason Robards in the television production of *Ice-man*. But those who know him from his *later* work in television--especially as the soft, subdued father in the "Family" series--would be amazed had they seen him earlier as O'Neill's stern New England patriarch. Calling his Ephraim "remarkably strong and honest," Elliot Norton, reviewing the Stockbridge production, described his performance vividly:

Dressed in rusty black, his hair and bristling beard iron gray, he is at once old and fierce, strong enough to throw his thirty-year-old son in a brief encounter; a little mad when he speaks with glinting eyes of the hardness and loneliness of his God; fierce and almost insanely possessive as he talks of his farm. ("O'Neill's *Desire* at Stockbridge," *Boston Herald American*, July 2, 1974, p. 14.)

9. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.

All God's Chillun Got Wings, dir. Virlana Tkacz. Horace Mann Theater (Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theatre Studies, Columbia U. Teachers College), New York City, October 21-23, 1982.

Desire Under the Elms, dir. Gregory S. Hurst. Pennsylvania Stage Company, Allentown, February 16 - March 13, 1983.

Three Lost Plays of Eugene O'Neill (*A Wife for a Life*, *The Movie Man* and *The Web*), dir. Michael Fields. Lotus Theatre Group, Playhouse 46, New York City, November 4-20, 1982. Reviewed in this issue.

A Touch of the Poet. Roberts Theater, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI, November 11-14, 1982.

A Touch of the Poet, dir. Kevin Coleman. The American Stage Company, St. Petersburg, FL, February 24 - March 27, 1983.

A Touch of the Poet, dir. Dorothy A. Schechter. The Concord (MA) Players, April 22 - May 7, 1983. (To be reviewed in a future issue.)

10. PRODUCTION DEFERRED. The production of *Strange Interlude* at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, CT, that was announced in the last issue, has been rescheduled and will be a part of the Long Wharf's 1983-84 season. Performance dates will be announced as soon as they are available.
11. TAO HOUSE GETS GRANT, SEEKS PLANNER. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, has received a grant of \$18,500 from the San Francisco Foundation. The funds will permit it to prepare a furnishings plan for the house and hire a part-time staff member whose duties will be to search for additional funding and develop a long-range plan for establishing Tao House as a center for the performing arts by the O'Neill centennial in 1988. Anyone interested in the position, whose title is Planner-Developer, can get information and application details from the Foundation at P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526.
12. NO JOKES, FOLKS. The editor's winter of discontent results from his failure to find, as he thinks he sometimes has in the past, a funny finale for the News section. The closest he's come--and the source will remain anonymous since it is the work, not of a wag, but of a typist--is a newspaper announcement of a forthcoming production of *A Touch of the Post*. Beyond the whiff of "theatre of cruelty," reviewers seeing that spelling would have a field day if they found the performances "wooden"! Better jests in the Spring, I hope.

PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE AND THE LAST

- LINDA BEN-ZVI is Associate Professor of English at Colorado State University. Her essay, "Exiles, The Great God Brown, and the Specter of Nietzsche" (*Modern Drama*, September, 1981, pp. 251-269), was summarized in the Winter 1981 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 25-26). She has also published articles in *PMLA*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Journal of Beckett Studies* and *Style*; and she is completing a book on Samuel Beckett for the Twayne Authors Series, and a book on the plays of Susan Glaspell.
- GERALD BERKOWITZ is Associate Professor of English at Northern Illinois University and author of *New Broadwayways: Theatre Across America, 1950-1980* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1982). He is listed in the *Guinness Book* as world's champion theatergoer for attending 145 performances in 25 days at the 1979 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. To set the record straight, he notes that his "1982 marathon [at the same festival] of 114 in 18 days is a fractionally higher average."
- TRUDY DRUCKER teaches modern drama at Bergen Community College in Paramus, New Jersey. Her Ph. D. is in dramatic literature, and she earned a *summa* M.A. with a thesis called "Eugene O'Neill's 'Greek Dream in Tragedy'."
- PETER EGRI, Professor and Chairman of the Department of English at L. Eötvös University in Budapest, Hungary, has completed an essay on the adoption and naturalization of European dramatic models in O'Neill's *Calms of Capricorn*. The essay will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.
- EUGENE K. HANSON teaches drama at the College of the Desert and is a member of the board of directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society. He directed the special session on "O'Neill and Film" at the MLA Convention in Los Angeles last December. A summary of the session will be featured in the next issue of the Newsletter.
- ROMULUS LINNEY is a distinguished American dramatist whose plays, including *Child Byron*, have received both popular and critical acclaim. Last July, he began a four-year term on the board of directors of the Theatre Communications Group. Mr. Linney's remarks on O'Neill at MLA session in 1981 (see Spring 1982 issue, pp. 36-37) inspired the editor's request for an essay. For the result, printed herein, he is most grateful.
- BETTE MANDL is Assistant Professor of English at Suffolk University in Boston, where she teaches courses in Modern British Fiction and Women and Literature, coordinates the University's writing-across-the-curriculum program, and directs the English Department Lecture Series. She has appeared at conventions of the National Council of Teachers of English, and published an article in the *Doris Lessing Newsletter*.
- DORIS NELSON, Associate Professor of English at California State College, Long Beach, teaches American drama and periodically conducts senior seminars in O'Neill. The essay in this issue is a revision of a paper she delivered at the 1975 MLA Convention in San Francisco.
- ROBERT PERRIN is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana State University and Associate Editor of *Indiana English*, a publication of the Indiana Council of Teachers of English. He has contributed articles to *Exercise Exchange*, *English Journal* and *College English*.
- GERALD LEE RATLIFF, Associate Professor of Theatre at Montclair (NJ) State College, is past president of the Speech and Theatre Association of New Jersey, editor of *The Cue*, a national theatre journal, and member of the editorial board of *Reader's Theatre News* and *Liberal and Fine Arts Review*. His interest in O'Neill is the result of a study of Biblical imagery and dramatic structure.
- ROBERT K. SARLOS is Professor in the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of California, Davis, and has contributed articles to *Theatre Survey*, *Educational Theatre Journal* and *Theatre Research International*. His recent book, *Jig Cook and the Provincetown Players: Theatre in Ferment*, was reviewed in the last issue of the Newsletter (pp. 40-41).
- ESTHER TIMÁR has been teaching at the English Department of the Budapest College for Foreign Trade since her graduation in 1976 from Lorand Eötvös University in the same city, where her dissertation studied the relationship between the short story and the drama in the art of O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams.
- SUSAN TUCK, a regular contributor to the Newsletter's pages, is co-editor with Horst Frenz of *Eugene O'Neill's Critics: Voices from Abroad*, slated for Fall 1983 publication by the Southern Illinois University Press.
- PAUL D. VOELKER, Associate Professor of Drama at the University of Wisconsin Center in Richland, served as literary consultant to the Milwaukee Repertory Theater Company's 1977-78 productions of *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey* and is a frequent contributor to the Newsletter's pages, his last appearance having been a review of the Guthrie Theater's 1980 production of *Desire Under the Elms* (Winter 1980, pp. 9-12).
- STEPHEN M. WATT is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He has recently completed a dissertation at the University of Illinois on "The Modern History Play in England and Ireland" and published an article on Elizabethan Emblem Books and Revenge Tragedy.
- ALBERT WERTHEIM is Professor of English at Indiana University and President of the Eugene O'Neill Society. He has published widely on Renaissance, Restoration and Modern British and American drama. During the current academic year he is an Eli Lilly Foundation Fellow, working as Assistant Director with the Berkeley (CA) Repertory Theatre.
- FREDERICK C. WILKINS professes English at Suffolk University in Boston, where his gleeful countenance denotes satisfaction that the Eugene O'Neill Newsletter, which he edits, has now completed its sixth year and volume.
- WILLIAM YOUNG is a writer who has recently taught English at Suffolk University and the University of Massachusetts-Boston. His most recent publications, in both poetry and fiction, were in the *Agni Review*.

INDEX TO VOLUME VI (1982)

(sizable entries only)

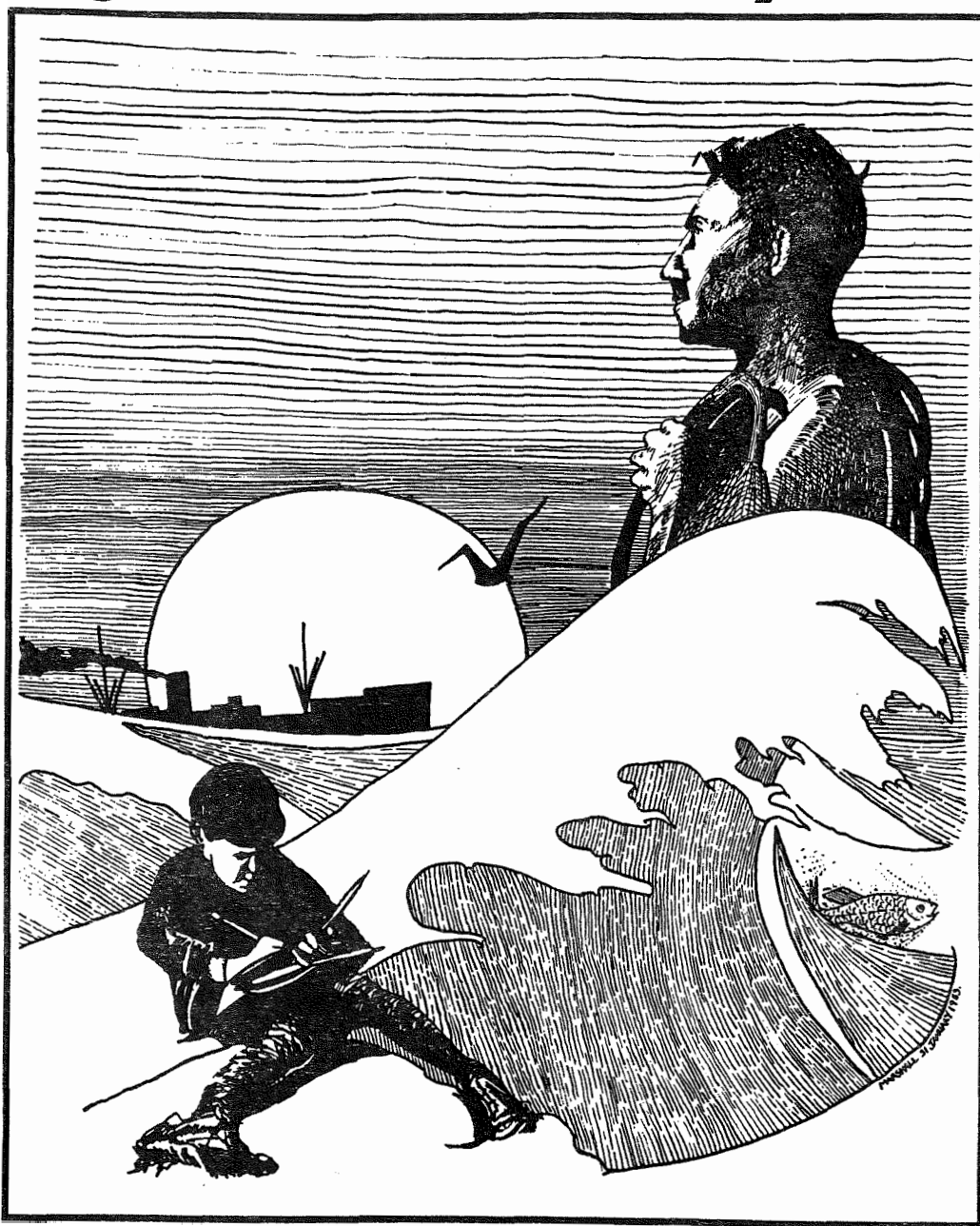
I. ARTICLES AND REVIEW-ARTICLES.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| Ben-Zvi, Linda. "Susan Glaspell and Eugene O'Neill." | #2, p. 21 |
| Drucker, Trudy. "Sexuality as Destiny: The Shadow Lives of O'Neill's Women." | #2, p. 7 |
| Egri, Peter. "The Iceman Cometh: European Origins and American Originality," Parts Two and Three. #1, p. 16; #2, p. 30 | #2, p. 30 |
| Linney, Romulus. "About O'Neill." | #3, p. 3 |
| Mandl, Bette. "Absence as Presence: The Second Sex in <i>The Iceman Cometh</i> ." | #2, p. 10 |
| Manheim, Michael. "Dialogue Between Son and Mother in Chekhov's <i>The Sea Gull</i> and O'Neill's <i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i> ." | #1, p. 24 |
| Nelson, Doris. "O'Neill's Women." | #2, p. 3 |
| Perrin, Robert. "O'Neill's Use of Language in <i>Where the Cross Is Made</i> ." | #3, p. 12 |

Ratliff, Gerald Lee. "Fog: An O'Neill Theological Miscellany."	#3, p. 15
Sarlós, Robert K. "Nina Moise Directs Eugene O'Neill's <i>The Rope</i> ."	#3, p. 9
Timár, Esther. "Possible Sources for Two O'Neill One-Acts."	#3, p. 20
Tuck, Susan. "O'Neill and Frank Wedekind," Parts One and Two.	#1, p. 29; #2, p. 17
Watt, Stephen M. "The 'Formless Fear' of O'Neill's <i>Emperor and Tennyson's King</i> ."	#3, p. 14
Wertheim, Albert. "Eugene O'Neill's <i>Days Without End</i> and the Tradition of the Split Character in Modern British and American Drama."	#3, p. 5
Wilkins, Frederick. "On the Shelf: New Books By and About O'Neill," Parts One and Two.	#2, p. 37; #3, p. 38
Young, William. "Mother and Daughter in <i>Mourning Becomes Electra</i> ."	#2, p. 15
II. PLAY.	
Wheeler, David. <i>Here Before You... Eugene O'Neill</i> .	#1, p. 3
III. BOOKS REVIEWED. (Reviews by Frederick Wilkins.)	
Asselineau, Roger. <i>The Transcendentalist Constant in American Literature</i> .	#2, p. 43
Berlin, Normand. <i>The Secret Cause: A Discussion of Tragedy</i> .	#1, p. 38
Bryer, Jackson, ed. "The Theatre We Worked For": <i>The Letters of Eugene O'Neill to Kenneth Macgowan</i> .	#2, p. 37
Manheim, Michael. <i>Eugene O'Neill's New Language of Kinship</i> .	#2, p. 41
O'Neill, Eugene. <i>The Calms of Capricorn</i> .	#3, p. 43
O'Neill, Eugene. <i>Chris Christophersen</i> .	#3, p. 42
Robinson, James A. <i>Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought: A Divided Vision</i> .	#3, p. 38
Sarlós, Robert K. <i>Jig Cook and the Provincetown Players: Theatre in Ferment</i> .	#2, p. 40
Sinha, C. P. <i>Eugene O'Neill's Tragic Vision</i> .	#2, p. 40
Weathers, Winston. <i>The Broken Word: The Communication Pathos in Modern Literature</i> .	#1, p. 40
IV. ABSTRACTS AND REPORTS OF DISSERTATIONS AND ARTICLES PRINTED ELSEWHERE.	
Bordewyck, Gordon and Michael McGowan. "Another Source of Eugene O'Neill's <i>The Emperor Jones</i> " (NMAL).	#3, p. 30
Hart, Doris. "Three New York Productions of <i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i> " (diss. abstr.)	#3, p. 29
Hinden, Michael. "When Playwrights Talk to God: Peter Shaffer and the Legacy of Eugene O'Neill" (CD)	#3, p. 31
Manheim, Michael. "O'Neill's Transcendence of Melodrama in <i>A Touch of the Poet</i> and <i>A Moon for the Misbegotten</i> " (CD)	#3, p. 32
Pettegrove, James P. "'Snuff'd out by an Article': <i>Anna Christie</i> in Berlin" (<i>Maske und Kothurn</i> .)	#3, p. 33
Survey of reviews of Jack Nicholson's O'Neill in <i>Reds</i> .	#1, p. 37
V. PRODUCTIONS REPORTED ON OR REVIEWED.	
<i>Ah, Wilderness!</i> (rev. Eugene Hanson)	#1, p. 47
<i>Before Breakfast</i> (rev. Eugene Hanson)	#1, p. 45
<i>The Hairy Ape</i> (rev. Frederick Wilkins)	#2, p. 47
<i>Hughie</i> (rev. Vera Jiji)	#1, p. 48
<i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i> (rev. Marshall Brooks)	#1, p. 42
<i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i> (rev. Gerald Berkowitz)	#3, p. 27
<i>Long Day's Journey Into Night</i> (rev. Eugene Hanson)	#3, p. 28
<i>A Moon for the Misbegotten</i> (rev. Thomas Connolly)	#1, p. 43
<i>A Moon for the Misbegotten</i> (rev. Eugene Hanson)	#1, p. 46
<i>The Moon of the Caribbees</i> (rev. Vera Jiji)	#1, p. 48
<i>Servitude</i> (rept. Paul Voelker)	#2, p. 45
"Strindberg and O'Neill: A Shared Legacy" (rev. Frederick Wilkins)	#3, p. 26
"Three Lost Plays: <i>A Wife for a Life</i> , <i>The Movie Man</i> , <i>The Web</i> " (rev. Frederick Wilkins)	#3, p. 24
VI. MISCELLANEOUS.	
Announcement of Spring 1984 Eugene O'Neill Conference in Boston	#2, p. 55
"The Baggage Coach Ahead" (poem recalled by Jim Tyrone)	#1, p. 56
Doctoral dissertations in progress	#2, p. 54
Lists of recent and forthcoming productions	#1, p. 58; #2, p. 52; #3, p. 48
Lists of recent publications on O'Neill	#2, p. 53; #3, p. 46
O'Neill Society sections	#1, p. 50; #2, p. 50; #3, p. 34
Special session on O'Neill at 1981 MLA Convention	#1, p. 35



Eugene O'Neill~~the Early Years



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