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1983

### The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter vol. 8, nos. 2, 1983

Eugene O'Neill Society

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Eugene O'Neill Society, "The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter vol. 8, nos. 2, 1983" (1983). *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*. 24.

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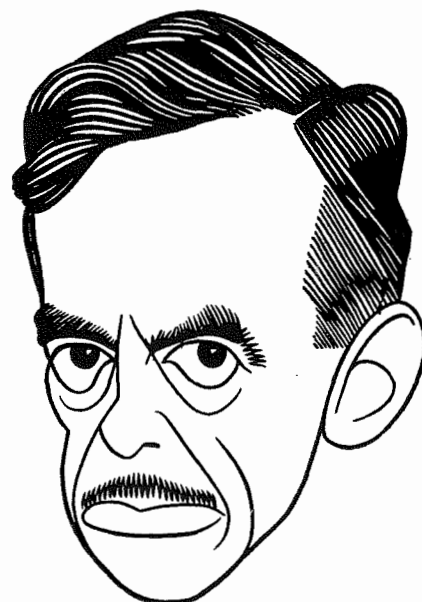


# The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

SUMMER-FALL 1984

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Caricature of O'Neill (1930) by  
Alex Gard, created to accompany  
Sidney Skolsky's sketch of "The  
Great God O'Neill" (see p. 17).

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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD: A GLANCE AT THE PAST, MESSAGES RE PRESENT AND FUTURE

Welcome to the Newsletter's 23rd issue and (at a hasty count) its 761st page! I'd no idea, in January of 1977, that the publication would win so many readers and retain their loyalty for so long, nor that so much material would be submitted that the 16 pages of that preview issue--pictureless, stapled in the corner and foldable for mailing--would look so quaintly miniscule eight years later. Even the "special double issue" that began Vol. IV--at the then-whopping size of 38 pages--seems charmingly diminutive today. Thanks to the support of Suffolk University, the Eugene O'Neill Society, and especially its actively contributing subscribers, the Newsletter, I can augur with confidence, will continue to grow in size and importance, into and well beyond the imminent O'Neill centennial in 1988. In anticipation of that growth, which already necessitates far more editorial and clerical effort than I'd even dreamed of in '77, I waft some messages to subscribers and authors.

The first is to all who bristle at the Newsletter's congenital tardiness, a failing that's likely to end only when the production staff is increased and we step resolutely into the burgeoning world of word processing. Be assured, in the interim, that if you keep me apprised of your address, every issue *will reach* you, even if its seasonable label is belied by the weather outside! If there must be displeasure, I'd rather it be aroused by tardiness than by shoddiness; and, aside from the periodic typo that craftily eludes detection until too late, shoddiness is a sin that the Newsletter has assiduously avoided.

The second message is to contributors of articles, who wait in vain for a speedy reply. Until the Newsletter establishes a board of editorial advisors to share the task of evaluating submissions--something I'll be considering in the near future--the task of evaluation, and frequently of revision, currently mine alone, will continue to be slow. Given two essays of equal importance, the better written will be published sooner: I have a number of manuscripts, all meritorious in substance, that must await the time necessary to turn them into a form that offers delight as well as instruction. I should also repeat the announcement in the last issue that, starting with Vol. IX in 1985, the new MLA rules for documentation will be in effect. (See p. 45 of the Spring 1984 issue for details.) Submissions conforming already to the new rules will see print sooner than those requiring overhaul.

Next, a message for theatergoers. If you plan to attend an O'Neill production, please consider requesting complimentary tickets, penning a review, and asking the producers for glossy photos to accompany it in a future issue. Even a seriously flawed production can throw light on the text, and the reviews most welcome would concentrate on generally applicable insights, of use to future performers and interpreters, more than on topical ephemera. And the best pictures are sharp, bright, high-definition ones that include the *mise en scène*, and groups of characters in interaction--though telling close-ups are frequently of value as well. One of the Newsletter's goals is to provide an annotated, illustrated record of O'Neill productions around the world. With your help, it can be realized.

I know it's presumptuous, after the earlier apologies, to mention again that the Newsletter subscription price will rise, in 1985, to \$10 and \$15 a year, respectively, for individual and institutional subscribers in the U.S. and Canada, and to \$15 for all overseas subscriptions. I promise to make the Newsletter worthy of its necessarily higher price; and I conclude this preface, as illustration, with a partial list of the exciting features that await you in the next issue:

- \* CASA GENOTTA: a portfolio of architect's photographs of the O'Neills' Georgia home, with commentary by Winifred L. Frazer.
- \* "*Strange Interlude*: Strange Criticism," by Frederic I. Carpenter, author of *O'Neill*.
- \* "'My Yosephine': The Music for *Anna Christie*," by Travis Bogard. (Music included.)
- \* Reviews of *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*, ed. James J. Martine, and Virginia Floyd's *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment*, just published by Ungar. Plus the usual, thrice-ennial assemblage of news, reviews and abstracts.

Do stay tuned (and subscribed), dear reader. The best *is* yet to come! --FCW.

# POLITICS, BUT LITERATURE: THE EXAMPLE OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S APPRENTICESHIP

A paper presented at the Twelfth Annual Twentieth-Century Literature Conference: Politics of Literature, held at the University of Louisville in February, 1984.

Since the time of Plato's *Republic*, there has been a strain in Western thought which has regarded politics and literature as antithetical. In the *Republic*, and in a similar way in the Puritan state of 17th-century England, the attack on the poets had its foundation in their ability to arouse the passions, an arousal which either wholly or in part was deemed contrary to the good order of the commonwealth. Paradigmatically, it was as though politics and literature were perceived as opponents in a boxing ring, the equality of the match being such that literature must not be allowed to enter the ring with politics, lest the latter be knocked out cold. This fear for the fate of politics, of course, rather suggests that the claims of literature may well be the stronger. Without arguing that that is always and absolutely the case, I would like to present an account of the playwriting apprenticeship of Eugene O'Neill as an example which not only suggests the superiority of literature over politics, but provides as well a scenario, in very concrete images, of how, in one instance at least, literature was victorious.

The period I will be discussing is the least well-known phase of O'Neill's career--the very beginning. O'Neill's interest in socialist and anarchist thought during this period has been well documented by his biographers and explicated at some length by the critics, most notably perhaps in Winifred Frazer's monograph, *E.G. and E.G.O.*, where the E.G. stands for Emma Goldman.<sup>1</sup> Also of note was the presence of O'Neill's character as one of the more interesting elements in Warren Beatty's film *Reds*. It was during the time of the events in that film, in fact, that O'Neill summed up the political phase of his life in these words: "Time was when I was an active socialist, and, after that, a philosophical anarchist. But today I can't feel that anything like that really matters."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, at the very beginning of his playwriting career, in 1913, O'Neill seems to have felt that things "like that" mattered very much indeed. At that time, O'Neill wrote both plays and poems which qualify as "political" in the broad sense of the term. Yet, less than two years later, by early 1915, he would be writing a full-length play in which the most unsympathetic character is a radical activist member of the I.W.W. In order to account for this turnabout, it is necessary to look at the thirteen plays which survive from the period--ten one-acts and three of full length. Analysis of the major thematic interests in these plays and of O'Neill's artistic development reveals the outline of a process whereby a writer consciously committed to radical beliefs may turn himself inside out by writing plays based on that commitment.

The first of these plays is a one-act, *A Wife For a Life*, whose title identifies the primary quid pro quo of the plot: a guilty husband gives up his wife to the man who saved his life, thereby expiating his personal guilt through provision for his wife's happiness. Politically, the first point to be noted is the relative absence of overt political content. It is manifested only in the recounted marriage of the original husband and wife, a marriage of convenience between an older man and a beautiful young

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<sup>1</sup> Winifred L. Frazer, *E.G. and E.G.O.: Emma Goldman and "The Iceman Cometh"*, University of Florida Humanities Monographs, 43 (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1974). See also Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1968), pp. 102-106 et passim; Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill*, enlarged ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 119-121 and 262; and Doris Alexander, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), pp. 105 and 165.

<sup>2</sup> Oliver M. Sayler, "The Real Eugene O'Neill," *Century Magazine*, 103, N.S. 81, iii (January 1922), partially rpt. in *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism*, ed. Oscar Cargill et al. (New York University Press, 1961), p. 125.

woman. This is the source of the husband's guilt, but its stereotypicality for the period makes one wonder how concerned O'Neill really was with this particular form of social injustice, especially since he seems personally to have been more interested in the theme of Fate, a theme concretized in the scenery of the single setting, and repeatedly verbalized in the dialogue.<sup>3</sup> In other words, O'Neill seems much more interested in metaphysics than in politics and social issues. Yet there is good reason to believe that the relatively apolitical nature of *Wife* was itself a ploy of O'Neill's own family politics. When his father, James O'Neill, read the play, he agreed publicly to perform in it and, further, agreed to allow his invalid son to stay at home, fully recuperate from his bout with tuberculosis, and write plays--without having to go back to work.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the apparent conflict between metaphysics and politics manifests itself again in O'Neill's next two plays. He would have to deal with it before he could develop further.

In his second play, another one-act, *The Web*, he focuses more clearly on a subject of social and political significance--prostitution. Not only was prostitution a major political issue during the period of this play's gestation,<sup>5</sup> but the plot and characters of *The Web* seem to have been drawn directly from the most popular anti-prostitution novel of the day, a novel regarded as the height of socialist fiction on this theme.<sup>6</sup> And except for one brief series of stage directions, *The Web* can be regarded as an almost brilliant reduction of a full-length novel into the one-act play form, one which successfully reinforces the socialist themes found in its source by making clear that the protagonist prostitute, Rose, is society's victim. Unfortunately, the stage directions call attention to the fact that Rose has also been "crushed" by the "ironic life force," which poses a philosophical problem. If Rose is crushed by the life force and her plight is *not* the responsibility of the "good people"<sup>7</sup> of society, then there is not much hope that either social or political action can ameliorate Rose's situation.

In *Thirst*, O'Neill's third one-act,<sup>8</sup> the conflict between metaphysics and socio-political issues, which is rather laughably incongruous in *A Wife* and a nearly-concealed but fundamental flaw in *The Web*, is successfully reconciled. O'Neill accomplished this by constructing an allegory in which the metaphysical symbolism is confined to the outdoor, ocean scenery, and the social symbolism of American race relations is contained in the relationship between the characters--a white gentleman, a white female entertainer, and a black sailor--who have been cast aboard the same lifeboat following a *Titanic*-like shipwreck.<sup>9</sup> In this play O'Neill presents the first of his advanced portraits of American blacks (a sequence which includes the well-known expressionist drama, *The Emperor Jones*); but at the end, O'Neill's parable turns apocalyptic as the white man and

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<sup>3</sup> Sheaffer, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander, p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> Henry F. May, *The End of Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912-1917* (1959; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 187 and 343.

<sup>6</sup> The novel in question is Reginald Wright Kauffman's *The House of Bondage* (1910; rpt. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: The Gregg Press, 1968); its popularity is attested to by Walter B. Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900-1954: Some Interrelations of Literature and Society*, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1956), p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> *The Web*, in Eugene O'Neill, *Ten "Lost" Plays* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 45 and 53.

<sup>8</sup> Egil Törnqvist, *A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-naturalistic Technique* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 256.

<sup>9</sup> It is this play which we see in rehearsal in Beatty's *Reds*. Louise Bryant played the role of the female dancer.

the black man kill each other and fall into a shark-infested universe.<sup>10</sup>

With *Thirst*, O'Neill achieved a kind of personal equilibrium between the conflicting forces of metaphysics and politics, such that in his next two one-acts, *Recklessness* and *Warnings*, he was able to remove or suppress any metaphysical implications almost completely. Both of these one-acts find their primary political justification in the portraits of the wealthy upper class and the poor working class, respectively. In *Recklessness*, a rich man wins a contest with his chauffeur over his wife. In a *Miss Julie*-inspired conflict between a master and a servant, O'Neill paints a stark portrait of the man of wealth as a ruthless killer, willing to sacrifice another's life to his own happiness. Here, the rich man tricks his chauffeur into racing down a mountain for medical aid to save the wife, in a car with defective steering. That the chauffeur's death leads to the wife's suicide is of little importance since the rich Arthur Baldwin has won, has preserved his way of life, and has clearly demonstrated why he is a successful capitalist.<sup>11</sup>

*Recklessness* has its mirror image in *Warnings*, in which a lowly wireless operator, diagnosed as a victim of progressive deafness, ships out again, against his will, to satisfy his wife's urgings that he must think about his family, not about himself. The shrewish and benighted wife, of course, does not see that she is really the selfish one, that her husband is concerned over his social duty to all the ship's passengers, who are in his trust.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, with the crunching echo of the *Titanic* still in the air as it were, the poor wireless operator and the ship of society are both doomed. At the end, the operator *also* commits suicide--not, however, out of personal distress, like the rich man's wife in *Recklessness*, but out of a clear sense of social guilt.

Subsequent to these two philosophically consistent one-acts, O'Neill wrote his sixth one, *Fog*. The title foreshadows the strongest scenic image in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, but in this case it symbolizes not the drug-induced stupor of addiction, but the depths of intellectual confusion. Frequently, but inadvisedly, *Fog* is paired by the critics with *Thirst*.<sup>13</sup> Both plays employ the trappings of expressionism and identify their characters generically; in this case the Poet and the Businessman--a recurring preoccupation of O'Neill's--make their first appearance. Once more survivors of shipwreck stand in for all of us, and in this instance proceed to debate the value of social action and the existence of social justice. The Poet argues for the lack of the latter and the consequent need for the former, while the Businessman disagrees. The Poet's position, however, is undermined by the fact that he and the Businessman are accompanied in the raft by a poor peasant woman and her dead baby, both of whom the Poet had previously saved from drowning. Guilt-ridden over the woman's mourning, the Poet affirms his belief in the value of social action, but only as a result of the Businessman's instigation. The Poet's real longing is for death, which by the play's end claims both the woman and her baby while, ironically, the Businessman turns out to be a voice of optimism whose good spirits seem to be confirmed by the arrival of rescuers, and whose values not only triumph but seem to be perfectly in tune with the sunshine of the natural world and its beauty, all of which is made concrete scenically.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Törnqvist, p. 174; Chester Clayton Long, *The Role of Nemesis in the Structure of Selected Plays by Eugene O'Neill* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the fate of capitalism in O'Neill's playwriting class at Harvard (Gelb, p. 274).

<sup>12</sup> Gisela Triesch, *Die Motive in Thirst and other one-act plays und ihre Verarbeitung in den späteren Werken O'Neills* (Munich: M. Hueber, 1969), p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Olivia Coolidge, *Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Scribner's, 1966), p. 116.

<sup>14</sup> Törnqvist, p. 90.

With the outcome of this symbolic drama ambiguous at best, O'Neill turned away from direct confrontation with social issues and turned to his first long play, also his first self-evident exercise in autobiographical playwriting, *Bread and Butter*. In it, the Poet and the Businessman of *Fog* metamorphose into the successful hardware merchant, Mr. Brown, and his "misguided" son, John, who more than anything wishes to be an artist--a painter--not a clerk in the family hardware store. Like Eugene O'Neill, John Brown is a talented beginner whose father, we are told, has only his own interests (and pecuniary ones at that) at heart, not his son's elevated instincts. Nevertheless, Mr. Brown is successfully prevailed upon by his prospective daughter-in-law's father to send John to art school because "there's loads of money in art."<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, John's fiancée is no more enlightened than her father, and she eventually drags him home to marriage from Greenwich Village, only to drive him to one more O'Neill suicide.

Politically, *Bread and Butter* was a dead end. Aside from the radical milieu surrounding John's Greenwich Village apartment, and the general protest which the play makes over one man's (and one woman's) restriction of another person's freedom, there is little of political significance. It is almost as if the writing of the symbolic drama *Fog*, with all its ambiguities, had served to organize O'Neill philosophically--at least temporarily--as had the writing of *Thirst*. Both allegories were followed by periods of realistic drama--*Thirst*, by the two socially-oriented one-acts, *Recklessness* and *Warnings*; and *Fog*, by the first long play and by two more, realistic one-acts.

The turn from expressionism to realism is itself of significance, for realistic drama normally requires (and in this case helped to promote) the creation of realistic characters--that is, characters which are rounder, deeper, more complex. And if one ignores the stylistic and thematic aspects of O'Neill's first seven plays, one can discern a clear path of progress in this direction. As the plots become more crisp, the dialogue more fluent, the scenic means of expression more expertly manipulated, so too do the characterizations become deeper, more insightful, more meaningful. What is particularly important, however, is that this progress seems to go hand-in-hand with a progressive trend toward more and more explicit autobiographical writing, first noticeable in *Recklessness* in a minor way, and then more obviously in *Fog* and *Bread and Butter*.<sup>16</sup> This trend, coupled with increased realism and depth of characterization, continues in the next two one-acts, *Children of the Sea* (later revised as *Bound East for Cardiff*) and *Abortion*, a play which clearly deals with an issue of social significance, primarily for the sake of its ability to provide an indictment of the upper classes.

With regard to O'Neill's personal political development, *Abortion* is a major play. It presents in outline the failure of a rich, upperclass college boy and baseball team captain to do the "right thing" by the town girl whom he has gotten pregnant. The play stresses the class issue--well before Dreiser's *American Tragedy*--by having the hero, Jack Townsend, clearly observe that his treatment of the town girl is exactly the opposite of his regard for his virginal, upperclass fiancée. The town girl's brother shows up in the midst of graduation festivities to tell the cad that his sister is dead, from the abortion attempt, and to exact his revenge by killing Jack. Ironically, Jack succeeds in talking the brother out of violence and going public with the story of Jack's foul behavior. But unaware of this, and unable to accept the bleak prospect of public humiliation, Jack is forced to commit suicide. What is remarkable in all this,

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<sup>15</sup> *Bread and Butter*, in Eugene O'Neill, *"Children of the Sea" and Three Other Unpublished Plays*, ed. Jennifer McCabe Atkinson (Washington, D.C.: NCR Microcard Editions, 1972), p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Timo Tiusanen, *O'Neill's Scenic Images* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 60.

however, is that Jack is very clearly one in the long list of O'Neill self-portraits which unfolds throughout his career.<sup>17</sup> O'Neill himself, it seems, gave thought more than once to how he might otherwise have terminated the relationship with his pregnant first wife.<sup>18</sup>

Exactly how conscious O'Neill was of the autobiographical parallels between himself and Jack Townsend is uncertain. Nevertheless, to the extent that O'Neill's treatment of his alter-ego protagonist functions as a type of psychological scapegoating, it is possible to discern a manner in which the veneer of social conscience, which is obviously present in the play, becomes simply a device for obscuring the deeper psychological motives truly at work. And to the extent that what may "really" be taking place is a neo-Catholic form of self-flagellation, we may be on the verge of glimpsing O'Neill's true perception of politics as a similar if less serious form of religion.

This overlapping of religion and politics is perhaps best adumbrated in O'Neill's first acknowledged masterpiece, *Bound East for Cardiff*. In this monologous elegy on friendship and the sailor's life, O'Neill touched a dramatic and literary chord which still vibrates in critical estimation. In the strong male friendship of the fighting Irishman, Driscoll, and the injured Yank, O'Neill concretized a metaphor which speaks of the grief and sorrow for a departed best friend. At the end of the play, Yank's death is seen as a victory for personal courage;<sup>19</sup> but this climactic moment of apotheosis is nowhere near as striking in the original *Children of the Sea*. In the first version, O'Neill inserts a soliloquy for Driscoll, the survivor, who confesses to a murder he had committed aboard a "starvation ship," a theme which would seem to have found its tongue on political grounds. Significantly, some months later, a politically chastened O'Neill, as a part-time Harvard student, would cut out the monologue of political activism in order, it seems, to place the dramatic focus more properly on Yank's personal heroism and triumph over his fear of death.<sup>20</sup>

For reasons which may include a visit to Mexico with John Reed in the Spring of 1914,<sup>21</sup> subsequent to *Abortion* and *Children* O'Neill made his first real effort at comedy in the little-known political satire, *The Movie Man*. This one-act is historically remarkable because it may be one of the first plays to portray the soon-to-become-stereotyped Hollywood film director. This time he is in Mexico, filming Pancho Villa's attempted revolution. O'Neill proceeds to make fools of all the principal characters, revolutionary generals and movie makers alike. But contrary to some commentaries,<sup>22</sup> this general condemnation need not be taken as a direct slap at all revolutionary and political objectives; rather, it seems clear that the audience is supposed to sympathize with the single Mexican soldier/guard who is on stage throughout the play and has only two lines, each of which serves as an editorial comment on one of the "leaders" of the revolution or of the film crew, "*Muy Loco*."<sup>23</sup>

With this political fanfare to the common man behind him, O'Neill next ventured into the American drawing-room for the first time in his career, in an attempt to try

<sup>17</sup> Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 433ff.

<sup>18</sup> John V.A. Weaver, "I Knew Him When," *New York World*, 21 February 1926; rpt. in Cargill, p. 26; O'Neill's letter to Beatrice Ashe, 9 February 1915, Berg Collection of American Literature, New York Public Library.

<sup>19</sup> Doris Falk, *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1958), p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> The speech appears in full in "*Children of the Sea*," pp. 97-98.

<sup>21</sup> Gelb, p. 262.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Bogard, p. 25n.

<sup>23</sup> *The Movie Man*, in *Ten "Lost" Plays*, pp. 171 and 184.



his hand at Shavian wit and social comment. In his second full-length play, *Servitude*, O'Neill took the dangerous step of placing himself on stage again, for the purpose this time of social satire.<sup>24</sup> The protagonist is a successful playwright who learns during the course of the drama that he has sold out the very ideals he has most espoused in his plays. Moreover, we learn that to a great extent his ideals are simply a smokescreen for palliating his urges to philander, by covering over the possible effects of guilt. This play would seem to be a watershed in O'Neill's personal political development. It suggests that he found in himself the hypocrisy, weakness and lust for material success that he had been so much pleased to find in his wealthy villains and conventional businessmen. Having turned over the rock and found himself beneath it, O'Neill proceeds in his next two plays to present his most satanic portraits of political activity.

In his first surviving one-act completed at Harvard, *The Sniper*, O'Neill presents the plight of a poor Belgian peasant who has been destroyed by both sides at the beginning of World War I; both the French and the Germans (the Prussians) help to destroy his life, his farm, his son and his wife. In the end, the peasant dies with a curse on his lips for the "good God" who has made him suffer so. Here, it seems, O'Neill has confronted directly that previously identified "ironic life force" and given it a name--God the Father.<sup>25</sup> And having shown the true principle behind the world's suffering, O'Neill proceeded in his final Harvard project--his third full-length play, *The Personal Equation*--to draw a harsh portrait of a female revolutionary, an activist organizer for the I.W.W. (rendered I.W.E. in the play), and to show her leading her apolitical boyfriend into an act of sabotage which results in his being lobotomized by a bullet from his own father's gun. At play's end the would-be revolutionary feels no guilt for her role in her boyfriend's vegetation as she pledges to provide for both him and the revolution.<sup>26</sup>

In this last portrait O'Neill presents what for him would always be his line of argument against political activists: they were always in it for personal reasons, the "Personal Equation" of the title. Consequently, their professions of values for change were totally hypocritical; and even if change were necessary, tainted activists were somehow too impure for O'Neill to permit them to bring about the revolution. Ultimately, for O'Neill, the only revolution which counted was the kind that takes place within, the kind that creates a new self.<sup>27</sup>

For O'Neill, this new self was created to a great degree by the act of autobiographical playwriting. By dissecting his own image and finding the hollow core inside, O'Neill discovered the personal emptiness of any political exercise which is truly intended for nothing more than self-glorification or self-satisfaction. Truly, O'Neill seemed to be saying, only the pure may fight for the revolution; or conversely, the only real revolution is the one fought for by him who is absolutely pure. In either case, following his statement of politics in *Equation*, O'Neill stopped writing plays for a year. It was the longest silence in his playwriting career.

--Paul D. Voelker

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<sup>24</sup> Sheaffer, p. 287.

<sup>25</sup> *The Sniper*, in *Ten "Lost" Plays*, p. 193 et passim.

<sup>26</sup> *The Personal Equation* is the only one of O'Neill's plays which seems to have escaped publication. It is found only in a typescript at the Houghton Library of Harvard University.

<sup>27</sup> Doris Alexander, "Eugene O'Neill as Social Critic," *American Quarterly*, Winter 1954; rpt. in Cargill, pp. 400-406.

## O'NEILL'S GENRES: EARLY PERFORMANCE AND LATE ACHIEVEMENT

Eugene O'Neill was both socially conditioned and psychologically destined to become a dramatist of alienation. This sketch proposes to give a bird's-eye view of the generic consequences of this predicament in his youth and maturity.

O'Neill's generic range included not only tragedy, comedy and tragicomedy; he was also keenly interested in integrating non-dramatic forms in his theatrical oeuvre. Endeavors of this kind already appear in his first period and run right through the entire canon. It is this aspect of his genre experiments that will be glimpsed at below.

### I. The Novel in the Play.

Novelistic traits crop up early and multiply quickly in O'Neill's works, as the plight of alienation led him--as it did Hauptmann--to show his characters' external worlds in epic detail. Wrestling with the alternatives of radicalism, and partially shaped by the modes of the well-made play and naturalistic tragedy, *The Personal Equation* presents the predicament of war and the plight of revolution in an epic environment and an episodic structure. The opposition of the sailing boat and the steamship, of being close to nature and toiling for the Steel Trust, appears as an awareness of changing times and the challenge of anarchism in *The Hairy Ape*, which couples ironic glow and grotesque expressivity with the dramatization of the generation novel and the chain reaction of scenes, and incorporates novelistic, short story-like and lyric qualities. Representing the pathological aftermath of World War I, advancing towards psychological realism, and elaborated in nine acts, *Strange Interlude* assumes novelistic proportions and takes on some fictional properties. (One of its chief characters, Charles Marsden, is, in fact, a novelist, and considers the story of the drama an excellent subject for a novel.) *Mourning Becomes Electra* depicts the civil war of psychology and the Oedipus and Electra complexes of Puritanical morality by blending social criticism and psychological representation and by means of a novelistic broadening of the dramatic trilogy.

The final stage in this line of development is O'Neill's monumental cycle plan, *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed*, which was intended to display the spiritual and social history of the American Dream from 1755 to 1932 in eleven plays, through five or six generations of an American family depicted with a modern realistic method. The cycle remained a torso. It was only the fifth play in the series, *A Touch of the Poet*, which O'Neill considered fully finished. Even if he completed the typescript of the sixth play, *More Stately Mansions*, and wrote an outline of the seventh, *The Calms of Capricorn*, he wished to revise and reshape them; and in 1953, the year of his death, he burned an enormous mass of cycle material.

While it is widely believed that it was O'Neill's nervous tremor and Parkinson's disease which prevented him from executing his massive project, such an inference seems faulty. After all, in the very period when he was struggling with the cycle, he wrote a number of significant and long plays (*The Iceman Cometh*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*), all outside the cycle, and all interrupting the cycle. What really happened was that, in the process of creating *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed*, the epic rebelled against the dramatic. The plan called for a series of novels rather than a cycle of plays. In works written before the cycle, O'Neill had succeeded in achieving a synthesis of the epic and the dramatic. In the cycle, though, the novelistic aspect of the project burst the framework of the dramatic sequence. O'Neill's failure in completing the cycle plan was not a personal but an epic fiasco.

## II. The Lyric in the Play.

The presentation of the world of alienation moves drama towards fiction; the expression of its opposite takes drama in the direction of the lyric. While in Greek and especially in Renaissance drama the lyric was the poetic spray of the dramatic surge, in Romantic and Symbolist drama it strove for independence. In O'Neill's early one-acter, *Fog*, the poet and the businessman are contrasted primarily on the thematic level. *Bound East for Cardiff* and *The Moon of the Caribbees* project lyricism as a dramatically organic modal milieu, an atmospheric environment. In *The Fountain* and *Marco Millions*, the lyric appears as a Romantic plane of values; in *The Great God Brown*, it functions as a symbolic sphere of worth; in *Lazarus Laughed*, it reaches the level of rhetoric and ecstasy. And in the last phase of its growing independence, in *The Last Conquest*--a projected play carrying on the style of *Lazarus Laughed* with a cosmic prophecy undermined by vacillations and doubts of world historical magnitude--the prosaic exposes the poetic, but the lyric explodes the dramatic. The play, like the cycle, remained an unfinished outline, a fragmented torso.

## III. The Short Story in the Play.

It is at this point that the significance of the dramatic use of the short story pattern emerges: the opposition between the real world of alienation and the capillarian activity of human resistance brings about an organic merger of the short story model and the dramatic mode throughout the O'Neill canon, earning him a special position in world literature. Some of the many uses of the short story in O'Neill's plays, and of the many interrelationships of the two genres, deserve special attention.

In a number of cases, especially in the dramatist's early work, a short story and a one-acter are closely related in that the turning point of the short story and the culminating point of the short play converge or coincide. Such a generic affinity appears very clearly in the complex relationship among Conrad's story *The End of the Tether*, O'Neill's one-acter *Warnings*, and his short story *S.O.S.* A number of other one-act plays by O'Neill have a similar narrative origin. *Bound East for Cardiff* goes back to Conrad's novel *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, which O'Neill read in 1911.<sup>1</sup> *Fog* shows parallels with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, where, in *The Prioress's Tale*, the crying of a dead child leads the rescuers to their destination. "That O'Neill had read Chaucer is doubtful," Travis Bogard notes; "nevertheless a source tale may be suspected for his story."<sup>2</sup> O'Neill's later-destroyed one-act comedy, *The Dear Doctor*, was based on a short story, which in turn had been pirated from a vaudeville sketch.<sup>3</sup>

Examples abound. *In the Zone*, for instance, is strongly related to Conan Doyle's short story *That Little Square Box*,<sup>4</sup> and, probably indirectly, to Poe's *The Oblong Box*.<sup>5</sup> *The Dreamy Kid* was begun as a short story; O'Neill completed about a page in this form, feeling it would throw into greater relief the psychological split in the young Negro. Later, however, he showed visible signs of dramatic concentration. Agnes Boulton remembers having seen his eyes darken, then become intense; he began "to pace the floor as the dramatist in him took over.... And as Gene talked,

<sup>1</sup> Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford, 1972), pp. 38-39; cf. pp. 34-42.

<sup>2</sup> Bogard, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Bogard, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> William Goldhurst, "A Literary Source for O'Neill's 'In the Zone'," *American Literature*, 35 (Jan. 1964), 530-534.

<sup>5</sup> Esther Timár, "Possible Sources for Two O'Neill One-Acts," *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, 6 (Winter 1982), 21-22. She also points out (pp. 20-21) narrative parallels between the first tale of the fourth day in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and O'Neill's *Recklessness*.

something else in him began to overcome the psychological aspect of the story."<sup>6</sup> In the summer of 1918, O'Neill modified and elaborated on Agnes Boulton's narrative *The Captain's Walk*, adding the idea of treasure, gold, and a map showing where the treasure was hidden. The result was the one-acter *Where the Cross Is Made*, later expanded into the four-act play *Gold*.<sup>7</sup> *The Hairy Ape* was also first composed as a short story in 1917.<sup>8</sup>

A second form of synthesis is represented by the cascade-connection of short story-oriented dramatic units in such multiple-act plays as *Servitude* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. The early *Servitude* strikes the reader as a linked series of one-act plays; the late *Moon* presents the same technique but represents it at a high level of organic unity.

A third type of inter-genre synthesis is achieved by building up the conflict of a multiple-act play with a short story-like turn at the dramatic zenith, as in *A Touch of the Poet*. (It is notable that the only play in the novel-oriented cycle which O'Neill completed to his satisfaction integrates the *short story* pattern in its dramatic structure!)

The fourth type displays total integration in a mosaic structure (e.g. *The Iceman Cometh*, and its connection with the early short story *Tomorrow*; and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, with its perfect fusion of dramatic tension, epic interest and lyric yearning). It is worth noting that the integration of the short story pattern and the dramatic fabric runs parallel with the synthesis of the lyric and the dramatic. In both cases, alienation is challenged on its own ground.

The fusion of the short story and the drama seems to have been extremely fruitful for O'Neill--in both early experiments and late achievements. It was a procedure which enabled him to represent both the network of alienation and the human potential to survive, withstand and counteract it; a pattern which Miller, Williams and Albee followed and modified; and a creative achievement which made O'Neill America's foremost dramatist of universal significance.<sup>9</sup>

--Péter Egri

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<sup>6</sup> Agnes Boulton, *Part of a Long Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), p. 176.

<sup>7</sup> Boulton, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> *The Movie Man* was first written as a one-act play, and later as a short story. [See Virginia Floyd, ed., *Eugene O'Neill at Work: Newly Released Ideas for Plays* (New York: Ungar, 1981), p. 389.] The short story version got lost. Martin Lamm once noted that although O'Neill "has written practically nothing but plays, his gift is for narrative. The one-act plays of his youth are evocative short stories, and his mammoth dramas are half-novels." [*Modern Drama* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), p. 325. Cf. Horst Frenz, *Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Ungar, 1971), pp. 61, 76, 88, 105.] To accept this view is, of course, not to deny the dramatic function of the epic aspect of the plays. The generic proximity of the short story and the one-acter is also striking in other of O'Neill's playlets which are not demonstrably connected with actual short stories--e.g., *A Wife for a Life*, *The Web*, *Thirst*, *Recklessness*, *Abortion*, *The Sniper*, *Before Breakfast*, *The Long Voyage Home*, *The Moon of the Caribbees*, *Ile*, *Shell-Shock*, *The Rope*, and partly *The Emperor Jones* and *Hughie*. [For the short-story aspect of *Hughie*, see Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 843.]

<sup>9</sup> I have discussed this problem in more detail in essays in the following publications: *Eugene O'Neill: A World View*, ed. Virginia Floyd (New York: Ungar, 1979), pp. 115-144; *Acta Litteraria*, 20 (1978), 3-28; *Hungarian Studies in English*, 13 (1980), 93-115; *Acta Litteraria*, 22 (1980), 29-71; and the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, 5 (Winter 1981), 5-10; 6 (Spring 1982), 16-24; and 6 (Summer-Fall 1982) 30-36.

EUGENE O'NEILL, *FIDEI DEFENSOR*: AN ESCHATOLOGICAL  
STUDY OF *THE GREAT GOD BROWN*

...out of this abyss of despair hope may arise,  
and ... this critical position may be the well-spring  
of human, profoundly human action and effort, and of  
solidarity, and even of progress.

--Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*

It is clear that Eugene O'Neill was not a writer who offered a study or reflection of the political and social history about him; he was a man tortured by his own life's history. The religious upbringing, the bitterness toward the father, and the great love for the mother conditioned his personality and motivated his desires and goals. The troubled mind, the neurotic insecurity, the antithetical toughness and tenderness, the drunkenness, the miserable early marriages, and the almost medieval fear of death--all of these affected his work. But it was, as Normand Berlin has stated, "his desire to relieve his personal guilt for having left the Catholic faith" that launched O'Neill into an attempt to complete a trilogy of Catholic plays in which Man would reaffirm his belief in God's salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Though O'Neill mentions *Dynamo* and *Days Without End* as the actual beginning of his projected trilogy, it is with *The Great God Brown* that his thoughts turn to the salvation of Man. *Brown* is an outgrowth of O'Neill's need to perfect his soul through religious faith in a manner similar to the German Expressionist dramas of the early twentieth century. The theme of the play concerns "the passage of man and his soul through various changes resembling ... in its formal aspect the religious drama of the middle ages."<sup>2</sup> However, the morality theme, juxtaposed to the play's psychological character delineations of the post-Freud period, the incongruity of symbols, the cleavage of story line, the inconsistency of the poetic element in the dialogue--all being submerged into an expressionistic theatrical style--caused much confusion to those viewers and critics who witnessed the original production. So much so that O'Neill felt compelled to print an explanation of the play in the *New York Evening Post* on February 13, 1926. In his attempt at clarification, O'Neill wrote:

Dion Anthony--Dionysus and St. Anthony--the creative pagan acceptance of life, fighting eternal war with the masochistic, life-denying spirit of Christianity as represented by St. Anthony--the whole struggle resulting in this modern day in mutual exhaustion--creative joy in life for life's sake frustrated, rendered abortive, distorted by morality from Pan into Satan, into a Mephistopheles mocking himself in order to feel alive; Christianity, once heroic in martyrs for its intense faith now pleading weakly for intense belief in anything, even Godhead itself.

O'Neill went on to show that Margaret was a direct descendant of the Marguerite of *Faust*, "the eternal girl-woman ... properly oblivious to everything but the means to her end of maintaining the race." Cybel, he called "an incarnation of Cybele, the Earth Mother"; and Brown, "the visionless demi-god of our new materialistic myth--a Success--building his life of exterior things, inwardly empty...." O'Neill ends his authorial explanation by saying, of Dion Anthony, that it is as "Mephistopheles he falls stricken at Brown's feet after having condemned Brown to destruction by willing him his mask, but ... it is the Saint who kisses Brown's feet in abject contrition...."

Unfortunately, O'Neill's "explanation" only added to the confusion as to exactly what *The Great God Brown* was supposed to be about. And critics are still debating whether O'Neill has written a Nietzschean play of eternal recurrence, a psychological

<sup>1</sup> Normand Berlin, *Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Grove Press, 1982), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin A. Engel, *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1953), p. 263.

examination of the corrupting influence of wealth and success, or a study of the struggle between the gratification of the senses and the denial of sensual pleasure. John Gassner expressed the problem succinctly when he wrote:

Unfortunately ... O'Neill simultaneously schematized his characters so grossly and endowed them with such complexity that the play is neither a clear character sketch nor a rounded portrait of real people. Juggling masks in a furor of melodramatic complications when Brown assumes Dion's personality, O'Neill also failed to develop a coherent story. He paid the penalty for trying to make a play perform the dual functions of an expressionistic drama and a Dostoyevsky novel.<sup>3</sup>

Not all who saw the play in 1926 neatly placed it on the shelf of mediocrity. Barrett Clark's perceptive though intuitive appreciation of the play's greatness is finely stated in the following appraisal:

O'Neill's latest produced play, *The Great God Brown*, is at present written beyond us. If he can be legitimately criticized it must be on the grounds of having given the theatre more than it is capable of showing.<sup>4</sup>

But what all the critics seemed to miss, and what O'Neill was somehow unable to explain, is that the play is a lesson in the Catholic religious sense. It is allegorical, in that it uses characters to represent abstract or spiritual meanings. Its subject matter is God, Christ and the subsequent evolution of man's Catholic religiosity.

Two sentences by Gordon W. Allport are relevant in this context:

A man's religion is the audacious bid he makes to bind himself to creation and to the Creator. It is his ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality by finding the supreme context in which he rightly belongs.<sup>5</sup>

The "context in which he rightly belongs" is, in the Catholic sense, the union with God. It is this concept that has governed all Catholic thought since the iniquitous fall of Adam, *l'homme premier*. Hence, Christianity is based on the idea that Christ's mission, his entire life, his suffering and his death occurred so that man, once having been permitted an immortal, God-like existence in Eden, may once again attain this oneness with God by re-experiencing vicariously the sufferings of Christ and confessing his mortal sins to his savior. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all iniquity."<sup>6</sup>

Man, however, at various stages in his life has ignored his chance for the Holy gates in the quest for more immediate, tangible rewards. The distance to salvation seems too great, and man must continually be reminded that "Sin is with us, if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves,"<sup>7</sup> and that "He that hideth his sins

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<sup>3</sup> John Gassner, *Masters of the Drama* (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 654.

<sup>4</sup> Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1926), p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> I John 1:9.

<sup>7</sup> I John 1:8.

shall not prosper; but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain mercy."<sup>8</sup>

It is this Catholic reaffirmation of man's sins, his periodic suffering, his struggle to obtain God, his confession and his ultimate purification, that structures the allegorical plot of *The Great God Brown*.

O'Neill, in his now famous letter to the *Post*, called Billy Brown, the "protagonist" of his play, "a visionless ... success ... building his life of exterior things, inwardly empty and resourceless, an uncreative creature of superficial preordained social grooves...." This was his protagonist--his symbol of man.

CAPTAIN. Well, what's his name?  
CYBEL. Man!

Brown is an insensitive, unquestioning, soulless shadow, void of any dignity or nobility--in Dion Anthony's own words, "Merely a successful freak, the result of some snide neutralizing of life's forces." To O'Neill, Brown represented the present state of man's existence--the contemporary commercial businessman, filling himself with money rather than a soul--a theatrical equivalent of Jay Gatsby, whose story occupied Fitzgerald in the same year.

But unlike Fitzgerald, who saw the accumulation of wealth only as corruptive, O'Neill saw it as sin. Consequently, Man (Billy Brown) had sinned, and Christ (Dion Anthony) would suffer for it, redeeming man once again. Dion is the Christ figure in O'Neill's retelling of the Biblical story. It is no coincidence that Dion, in Act II, Scene II, is found monastically immersed in Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. Dion was, in effect, imitating Christ by "taking up his own cross."

In Act II, Scene III, Dion mentions Billy Brown's original sin--committed when he had hit the four-year-old Dion on the head and destroyed the sand picture, thereby giving birth to the "evil and injustice of man." Billy must atone for that moment as well as for his life-long attempt to become what O'Neill called the "demi-god of our new materialistic [age]." He has committed sin and must suffer until cleansed. And it is the Christ figure, Dion Anthony, who will be his model as Christ was to all mankind.

Dion helps Billy by willing him his mask, which has been the symbol of torture and anguish (and not a devil-mask, as stated by the author), but which at the same time has the power to lift man from a state of sin to a state of grace. Brown dons the mask in his need to be like Dion, and his atonement begins, so that by the end of the play we see him stripped of all his worldly possessions, corporeally disshevelled, pathetic in his anguish, buried symbolically in the arms of Cybel (Mother Earth), praying to be taken out of his pit of earthly hell. Finally, in his dying breath, he is mercifully allowed the glory and exaltation of facing his Maker, and the climax of the play is reached:

(*Suddenly--with ecstasy.*) I know! I have found Him! I hear Him speak! "Blessed are they that weep, for they shall laugh!" Only he that has wept can laugh! The laughter of Heaven sows earth with a rain of tears, and out of Earth's transfigured birth-pain the laughter of Man returns to bless and play again in innumerable dancing gales of flame upon the knees of God! (*He dies.*)

Consequently, the basic criticism of O'Neill's plot--that is, the killing off of the play's seeming protagonist at the end of Act II, and the cleavage of the script into two stories, causing incoherence--is shown to be invalid. The play has all the while been about man (Billy Brown). The story is clearly only concerned with the salvation of man. It is Billy's play from beginning to end--the story of the reformation of a sinner, his epiphany, and his subsequent transfiguration.

Billy dies in the arms of Cybel; and though O'Neill saw her as the personification

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 28:13.

of the Nietzschean philosophy of "eternal recurrence," she is also his unconscious affirmation (as Mother Earth) of the Biblical command, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19-20). It is at this point that the play should end, despite Horst Frenz's belief that the "play concludes with the suggestion of the 'eternal return,' when the epilogue, presenting Margaret and her three sons four years later, takes place, like the prologue, at a dance on the pier of the casino."<sup>9</sup> I call attention to Joseph Gantman's unpublished Master's thesis in which he states, reflecting on his production of *Brown* at Yale in 1953, that "the epilogue is a dangling anticlimactic appendage.... I should have taken the bold step of cutting [it]."<sup>10</sup>

The grandeur of the theme of *The Great God Brown* has caused many critics to comment derogatorily about its language. John Gassner and Stark Young, who attended the original production, were among the first. Gassner felt that the language was not noble, brilliant or imaginative enough for the play's noble theme;<sup>11</sup> and Young called the writing "unequal, sometimes beautiful ... sometimes flat."<sup>12</sup> Louis Sheaffer, assessing the play later, expresses a similar reservation:

*The Great God Brown* is mystical, poetic, at times profound and beautifully written, other times hopelessly pretentious, and eventually so tortuous in its course and so difficult to follow that it becomes exasperating.<sup>13</sup>

All three have criticized the language because of its seeming inconsistency and periodic mediocrity. However, this vacillation between prosaic lines and brilliant, soaring lyricism reflects exactly the slow transformation of an empty man to a spiritually enriched and God-like being now ready to be accepted back into the House of God.

The dialogue at the opening of the play illustrates perfectly the mundaneness of middle class speech and the absence of spiritual elevation.

MOTHER. ...Why doesn't Billy sing?  
BILLY. ...Mine is a regular fog horn!

Such lines obviously would not satisfy the more astute reader or theatergoer, but they do exemplify the distance Man must go before his spiritual metamorphosis is complete. These are average people speaking ordinary colloquialisms. But when Dion Anthony speaks, the words are no longer of the same order, for Dion is not an ordinary man. He is the saint--the Christian martyr. He speaks poetically: "I'd like to sit where he spun what I have spend." And finally, there is the exalted classical speech of Billy Brown's last words, in Act IV, Scene II, quoted earlier: language that is unquestionably "mystical, poetic, ... profound and beautifully written."

And so, we have many levels of writing in one play. But how better for the dialogue to manifest a modern morality theme than by reflecting the play's --and its protagonist's--developing spirituality? The language in *The Great God Brown* is less inconsistent, as critics have claimed, than it is purposefully and meaningfully changing.

Still another device too cavalierly treated by critics of the play is O'Neill's innovative use of masks--the first such use for the delineation of character on the American stage, as Kenneth Macgowan mentioned in a program note for the 1926

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<sup>9</sup> Horst Frenz, *Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Ungar, 1971), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Gantman, "The Great God Brown Production Book," unpublished M.A. thesis, Yale University School of Drama, 1955.

<sup>11</sup> John Gassner, *The Theatre in Our Times* (New York: Crown, 1955), p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Stark Young, "The Great God Brown," *The New Republic*, 49 (Feb. 10, 1926), p. 329.

<sup>13</sup> Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), p. 167.



Provincetown Playhouse production:

So far as I know, O'Neill's play is the first in which masks have been used to dramatize changes and conflicts in character and also as a ... means of dramatizing a transfer of personality from one man to another.

And the use of masks has more than psychological value: it also reinforces the religious basis of the play, since the mask has had an integral part in religious rituals throughout the history of the world.

If the religious ecstasy of the Greek Dionysian festivals and the spiritual fulfillment of the Christian mass can be captured in a production of *The Great God Brown*, the play will achieve what O'Neill intended in writing it. Surely a worthy attempt, and a noble intention, since, as Samuel Selden has noted,

The best of theatre is still a kind of religious exercise. It leads to ecstasy. The playwright and the actor are ... leaders in the struggle from "sin," the sense of inadequacy, to "virtue," a feeling of potency, of protoplasmic fulfillment.<sup>14</sup>

In his early Catholic plays, O'Neill thought that the means for transcending his private agonies could be found in religious faith. He became obsessed with one major theme: Man's Relation to God. And so, his heroes became "large personalities to the extent of their desire and their courage to assume a relationship with God and of their unceasing endeavor to perfect it."<sup>15</sup>

Only *The Great God Brown* has emerged from O'Neill's Catholic cycle to become a work of distinction in this critic's judgment. Nevertheless, O'Neill never became discouraged by his "religious flops." He continued his search to find an answer to life and, I believe, even in the most desolate moments to come, never forgot the little verse he wrote in 1912:

When Truth and Love and God are dead  
It is time, full time, to die! <sup>16</sup>

--Michael E. Rutenberg

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<sup>14</sup> Samuel Selden, *Man in His Theatre* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Selden, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> Engel, p. 299.

LATE FLASH!! CALL FOR PAPERS!! The topic for the O'Neill session at the 1985 MLA convention in Chicago is "O'Neill's American Forebears and Contemporaries: Studies in Relation and Influence." Completed papers or three-page abstracts/proposals should be sent, before March 1, 1985, to the session chair, Paul D. Voelker, Associate Prof. of English, U. of Wisconsin Center-Richland, Richland Center, WI 53581.

## TWO PEN PORTRAITS OF EUGENE O'NEILL, BROADWAYITE

Brief sketches of the more illustrious and notorious denizens of Broadway are nothing new; they have regularly appeared--in playbills, magazines, and the entertainment pages of newspapers--since the beginnings of star-dominated professional theatre in the United States. And some, like the two that follow, even make their way between hard covers for the enlightenment--or at least the delectation--of posterity. Given the multiple success that attended the opening of *Strange Interlude* at the John Golden Theatre on January 30, 1928--succès d'estime, de scandale and de boxoffice--it is not surprising that Eugene O'Neill quickly became a darling of such show biz caricaturists as Samuel Marx and Sidney Skolsky.

Marx's sketch, in his characteristic "all-in-one-breath-style," appeared in his *Broadway Portraits* (New York: Donald Flamm, Inc., 1929), a collection of mini-articles that had previously been printed in *New York Amusements*. Skolsky's arrived a year later in *Times Square Tintypes* (New York: Ives Washburn, 1930), a gathering of newspaper articles of his in *The Sun* and *The News*. I don't know which piece originally appeared first, but it seems likely from internal evidence that one author had seen the other's article before completing his own. Both volumes are illustrated by Alex Gard, whose full-page caricature accompanying the Skolsky essay appears on the cover of this issue. Reproduced at the right is the smaller, kinder drawing of 1929.



Given the exaggeration inherent in the caricaturist's art, neither sketch is offered here as a challenge to, or an expansion of, the biographical record so ably traced by Barrett Clark, the Gelbs and Louis Sheaffer. But they do suggest what about O'Neill was uppermost in the unscholarly public mind at an important moment in his career, and they also evidence that the craft of journalistic characterization has become, in our own later day, a considerably diminished thing. I hope that, for both reasons, readers will enjoy the brief respite they provide from the usually more serious concerns of the Newsletter! --Ed.

### "EUGENE O'NEILL, That Strange Interlude Man," by Samuel Marx.

He was born only a few steps from the Provincetown Playhouse where his first play was produced, his mother attended a convent with the mother of George Jean Nathan, his mustache is black, his hair is gray and black, his complexion is a sallow brown, he always seems embarrassed, even when he is fully dressed, he has never committed an heroic act, when he doesn't wish to be disturbed he hangs a sign on his door, it says simply, "Go to Hell!" he is the son of James O'Neill, the actor, 'Gene's early plays were rejected by George C. Tyler without being read, Tyler explained to him that "Plays by actor's sons are never good!" his favorite authors are Jack London and Kropotkin, he never goes to the theatre, but he reads every play he can get his hands on, he is a good analyst of his own work and has tremendous faith in himself, he never doubted the success of "Strange Interlude," but he wanted it done as two separate plays, he was expelled from Princeton in his freshman year, he is always seeking new methods of revealing the complete characters he draws, like the masks in "The Great God Brown" and the soliloquy in "Strange Interlude," he is the only American playwright taken seriously abroad, he can't stand restaurant food, his first long play, "Beyond the Horizon," was inspired by an idiot boy, the first job he ever held was secretary of a mail order concern, he did not hold it long, despite his liking for liquor,

he is always cold sober when he sits down to write, he hates to re-write anything, he's a sap for tall, sensuous women, he swims like a fish, has often slept well on the floor of a saloon, when the Guild rejected one of his early plays he swore never to let them produce anything else he ever wrote, he sought gold in Honduras, his family looked upon him as a tramp, he takes his hat off whenever in the presence of women, he was the world's worst actor, Luther B. Anthony predicted he would some day distribute disease germs to an audience to get them into the spirit of his plays.

"THE GREAT GOD O'NEILL,"  
by Sidney Skolsky.

Eugene O'Neill. He is the only Broadway playwright who was born in Times Square. He was born in the Barrett House, now the Hotel Cadillac, at Forty-third Street and Broadway. The date: October 16, 1888.

He always wears dark clothes.

When writing he uses either pen and ink or a typewriter. It merely depends on which is handy. Revising a play annoys him.

His father was James O'Neill--an actor famous for his portrayal of the Count of Monte Cristo. Her [sic] mother, a fine pianist, attended a convent with the mother of George Jean Nathan.

He's a great swimmer and doesn't mind cold water.

Night life doesn't appeal to him. He made one tour of the night clubs. It was his last.\*

Never attends the opening of his plays. In fact he seldom goes to a theater. He'd rather read a play than see it performed.

While at Provincetown, a feeble-minded lad of six took a great liking to him. One day while sitting on the beach the boy asked: "What is beyond the Point? What is beyond the sea? What is beyond Europe?" O'Neill answered, "The horizon." "But," persisted the boy, "what is beyond the horizon?"

Could grow a beard in ten days if he didn't shave.

His father, who said he never would be a great playwright, lived to see his son's first great success, *Beyond the Horizon*.

He hasn't touched a drop of liquor in the last three years.

In his youth Jack London, Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling were his favorite authors. Today Nietzsche is his literary idol.

He can't walk a mile without meeting an old friend who asks for money. He gives.

After the opening of *Strange Interlude* he chanced to meet an old seafaring friend. O'Neill asked what he was doing, and the friend replied: "Oh, I've married and settled down. Got a nice little business and doing pretty good. And you, Gene, are you still working the boats?"

Reads all the reviews of his plays. He claims he knows the good critics from the bad ones.

He seldom talks unless he has something to say.

While writing he hates to be disturbed. When working at Provincetown he tacked this sign outside his door: "Go to Hell."

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\* The Gelbs, on pp. 620-621 of *O'Neill* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), offer illuminating background to this cryptic paragraph. In 1926, Claire Luce persuaded O'Neill to celebrate his birthday with her at a 52nd Street nightclub, where the chore of being the center of attention grew increasingly intolerable for him. (See p. 621 for one of the playwright's best real-life exit lines.)

Is crazy about prize fights and the six-day bicycle races. When in town he will go to anything at Madison Square Garden. The only person he ever expressed a desire to meet was Tex Rickard.

His full name is Eugene Gladstone O'Neill. Lately he discarded the middle name entirely.

Once, when a mere infant, he was very ill in Chicago. George Tyler, then his father's manager, ran about the streets of that city at three in the morning for a doctor.

Is always making notes for future plays. He wrote the notes of his first plays in the memorandum section of that grand publication, *The Bartender's Guide*.

He likes to be alone.

He had three favorite haunts. One was Jimmy the Priest's saloon, a waterfront dive. He later made use of this locale in *Anna Christie*. Another was "Hell's Hole," a Greenwich Village restaurant. The third was the Old Garden Hotel, which was situated on the northeast corner of Madison Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street. Here he met many people of the sporting world. A former bicycle rider (now a megaphone shouter on a sightseeing bus) he met there is still a pal of his.

It took him three years to write *Strange Interlude*. He had only six of the nine acts completed when he sold the play to the Theatre Guild.

He is especially fond of fine linen.

When in New York he lives at a secondary hotel. A place no one would ever think of looking for him.

He has huge hands.

For every play he draws sketches suggesting designs for the sets.

Of his own work he prefers, *The Hairy Ape*, *The Straw* (this he considers the best of his naturalistic plays), *Marco Millions*, *Strange Interlude* and *Lazarus Laughed*. The last is to be produced next year by the Moscow Art Theatre.

He takes great delight in recounting droll stories. Tells them with feeling and skill.

While attending Professor Baker's class at Harvard he almost ruined the college careers of John Colton and Johnny Weaver by filling them full of beer.

Is now living in France. He does not intend to return to America for some years.

His first book, *Thirst and Other One-Act Plays*, was published at his expense.

All of his original manuscripts are in his possession despite offers in five figures for them.

He writes important messages which are not to be breathed to a soul, on the back of a postal card.

In Shanghai, on his recent trip around the world, he was called a faker posing as Eugene O'Neill.

## Eugene O'Neill's Boston

In 1914 there were at least several Eugene O'Neills living in the Boston area. Of the two listed in the 1914 Boston City Directory, one was a gasfitter, the other a commercial traveller. But still another Eugene O'Neill, who was unlikely to be listed in any such directory, was attempting "to be an artist or nothing" in Cambridge. The latter was, of course, Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, the Eugene O'Neill.

Having recently committed himself to becoming a serious playwright, Eugene G. O'Neill, age 26, during the 1914-1915 school year, was participating as a special student in George Pierce Baker's famous English 47 class, for aspiring playwrights, at Harvard. Going to class, he often could be seen conspicuously carrying a copy of his first book, Thirst and Other One Act Plays, which had been published just that summer by the Gorham Press across the river

in Boston--O'Neill's famous actor father, James O'Neill, a longtime favorite with audiences in Boston's rialto, having paid \$450 for the book's publication.

Not only did Eugene O'Neill have his own published collection of plays to display in Baker's class, but he had a rich and varied--to say the least--storehouse of personal experience to draw upon as well; his adventures at sea figuring prominently in this. The start of these great sea adventures began in Boston in 1910, when O'Neill, at the age of 21, shipped out of Boston harbor for Buenos Aires on a Norwegian windjammer, the Charles Racine. This was one of the great voyages of his life, perhaps the greatest, and one that influenced the writing of many of his most important plays, from The Hairy Ape to Long Day's Journey Into Night.

Without question, Boston played an active role, early

on, in Eugene O'Neill's personal and artistic development. Ironically, it also played a significant role in his tragic and painful end.

In 1948, O'Neill came once again to the Boston area to live, this time with his third wife, Carlotta. The O'Neills bought a small house on Boston's North Shore, in Marblehead, hard by the sea. Although O'Neill himself was pleased to be living once again close to the sea, he was far from able to fully enjoy life there. Not only was he suffering from a rare disease affecting his nervous system, which made it impossible for him to work, but his relationship with Carlotta was a painful and, at times, unbearable one. In the early 1950's, after a brief separation, O'Neill returned to live with Carlotta at the Shelton Hotel in Boston, off Kenmore Square. They lived there together in virtual seclusion overlooking the wide Charles River and the Cambridge of O'Neill's earlier days until--his health steadily worsening--the end came for him on the afternoon of 27 November 1953. He was 65. Carlotta, strictly adhering to O'Neill's request for an ultra simple funeral, saw to it that he was buried in near secrecy several miles away at Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston's Jamaica Plain.

What is left of O'Neill's Boston? A number of curious addresses mainly, and, of course, his tomb. But, of no little symbolic importance, there is also the harbor that O'Neill shipped out of in 1910 for Buenos Aires on the Charles Racine as a quasi passenger who had light work duties aboard ship. Gone are the old salts, the waterfront dives, and the windjammers, but the basic structure and shape of the harbor is the same.

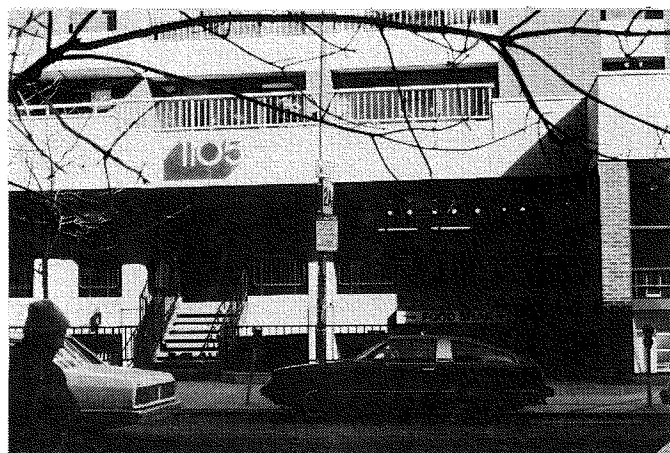
FOR A LOOK AT THE WATERFRONT: locate the intersection of Tremont and Court Streets, near Government Center. Walk down Court, which eventually turns into State St. Follow State all the way to the harbor. Or, by subway, take the Blue Line from Government Center station and get off at the Aquarium stop. Not far from the waterfront, at 340 Fanueil Hall Market Place, near trendy Quincy Market, is Durgin-Park, a restaurant that O'Neill and his Harvard cronies frequented back in the days of George Baker's English 47 course. The fare is traditional American, served in simple surroundings on red-checked tablecloths. The restaurant is a Boston institution and there are frequently lines. Phone: 227-2038.



Massachusetts Hall, Harvard Yard

Massachusetts Hall, the handsome 18th century brick building in Harvard Yard where Baker conducted his play writing class, is an easily accessible O'Neill landmark. TO GET TO HARVARD YARD: From Boston, take the subway, Red Line, to Harvard Square. Leave the Harvard Square station via the Harvard Yard exit. Massachusetts Hall is ahead of you to your right, on the other side of the iron fence, as you emerge from the station. The building presently houses the President's office.

A ten minute walk away from Harvard Yard is the site of the apartment house, at 1105 Massachusetts Avenue, where O'Neill roomed with the "psalm-singing" Ebel family for \$30 a month during his Harvard sojourn. DIRECTIONS: Leave Harvard Yard via any of the gates to the rear or right of



1105 Massachusetts Avenue

Massachusetts Hall, turning left onto Mass. Ave.; continue walking for several blocks, making certain that you keep to Mass. Ave (its identity may be confusing at times), until you reach 1105, now a high-rise concrete structure of predictable qualities.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston, at 15 Arlington Street, across from the Public Gardens, besides being one of the world's great hotels, was also home to O'Neill and Carlotta for several months in 1948. DIRECTIONS: The Ritz is about a block away from the Arlington Street stop on the Green Line branch of the subway.

For truly incorrigible saunterers who wish to see something of Boston's renowned Back Bay area while looking at the Hub O'Neill knew, proceed from the Ritz along Arlington St., heading away from the Arlington subway station, toward Beacon Street. Note on your way 8 Arlington, which is the dignified home of The Atlantic Monthly. Turn left at the intersection of Arlington and Beacon; continue your walk along Beacon. The territory here is all manner of brownstone--and brownstone related--architecture; an exciting stretch for any admirer of urban geography. 375 Beacon St. was the home of O'Neill's closest friend from the Baker class, Felton "Pinky" Elkins. According to accounts given by fellow classmates, many happy times were had by all, including O'Neill, at dinners given by Pinky and his wife at their Beacon Street home. One reveler referred to the place as a mansion, but as you will see, it's not quite that--at least from the outside.

Continue down Beacon St. After crossing Mass. Ave.

it might be prudent to stop at Brodigan's Crossroads bar for a well-earned Guinness in order to prepare for the final leg of the walking tour. The atmosphere at the Crossroads is less than O'Neillian and the place has no known connections to the playwright other than the fact that there are shamrocks on the sign outside and the beer is cold. Resuming the journey, carry on in the same direction as before, but on the opposite side of Beacon St. After several blocks, you'll notice an abrupt change in the continuity of the architecture; before long an ugly highway bridge will appear, which you pass under. Bay State Road will show shortly, veering off to the right; turn on to it when you reach it. The neighborhood that you will encounter looks like no other in Boston, really. It has the feel of some comfortable, not terribly old, obscure end of London. Several blocks down Bay State Rd., at number 91, is the former Shelton Hotel, O'Neill's last address.



The former Shelton Hotel

How many of the Boston University students who live in this building, now a dormitory, know that the man who wrote Long Day's Journey Into Night spent his last days in suite 401? It is a ghastly building, that sums up in cold characterless brick and jutting right angles the terrible disappointment of O'Neill's last painful years. Of all the myriad monuments and landmarks in Boston, none other is quite as odd or chilling as this one.

Around the corner from the Shelton, at 495 Commonwealth Avenue in Kenmore Square, is J.S. Waterman & Sons' funeral home, a turreted red-brick structure, which handled the hush-hush details of O'Neill's funeral.

FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO RIDE OUT TO VISIT THE FORMER SHELTON HOTEL, there is a subway station conveniently located in Kenmore Square on the Green Line. When leaving the station, exit to your right; outside, look for Deerfield Street, a sidestreet off the intersection of Commonwealth Ave. and Beacon St. Bay State Road crosses Deerfield after



Bay State Road, Number 91 on far left

one block; 91 Bay State Rd. is quite near this intersection.

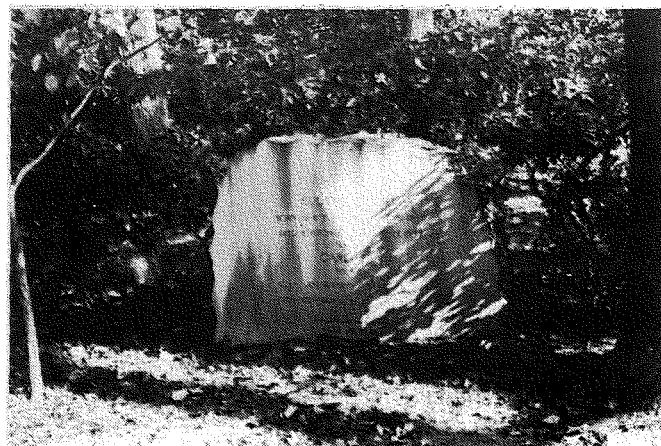
FOREST HILLS CEMETERY, WHERE O'NEILL IS BURIED, CAN BE REACHED BY: riding the subway, Orange Line, to Forest Hills station; or by taking the Arborway subway car, Green Line, to Forest Hills. Be advised, though, that some people may consider such subway travel unsafe. The cemetery located at 95 Forest Hills Avenue (524-0128) is about a half-mile walk away from the subway station.

O'Neill's gravesite is a quiet, peaceful place, situated in a park setting. His granite tombstone is large but simple, with only his--and Carlotta's--date of birth and death inscribed upon it and the words Rest In Peace.

Monody shall not wake the mariner.

This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.

Hart Crane



O'Neill's gravesite

--Marshall Brooks



## PUBLICATIONS BY AND ABOUT EUGENE O'NEILL, 1980-1983

[The following expansion of a bibliography presented at the MLA special session on O'Neill last December might have been titled "The ABC's of O'Neill Publication, 1980-1983," as its three parts are, in order, Articles, Books, and Chapters in books not entirely about O'Neill. It attempts to be an exhaustive list of all O'Neill-related publication during the first four years of the 1980s; but I am sure that, given both the worldwide interest in O'Neill and my limited time for research, it is far from complete. In December, I requested information about items I had then omitted, and much was forthcoming, especially from Charles A. Carpenter, whose own annual bibliography in *Modern Drama* is a model of the bibliographic craft at its very best. To Professor Carpenter, and to all the others who submitted additions, my deepest thanks. I will now close the books on 1980-1983 and begin a comparable collection for 1984 *et seq.*

Readers will note that the book list includes three works published in 1979. I felt that the three were too important to omit even though they fell outside the chronological limits I'd initially set. This is, of course, disrespectful to authors of 1979 *articles* about O'Neill; and now, so late in another year, it is probably also unfair to authors of 1984 books not to do the same thing for them! But I had to draw the line somewhere, and I assure the latter group prominence in the *next* such bibliography.

The December presentation included my comments about the list, entitled "Current Trends in O'Neill Publication." I have omitted those comments here, since the expanded list vitiates their generalizations. But I will send a copy of the now-outdated comments to anyone who requests them. --Editor.]

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--compiled by Frederick C. Wilkins

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MARSHALL BROOKS, editor of *Nostoc*, is associate editor, art director and layout honcho of the Newsletter.

THOMAS F. CONNOLLY, activities coordinator of the March 1984 O'Neill conference at Suffolk University, serves the Newsletter regularly as roving reviewer, while dividing the rest of his time between political and academic pursuits.

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MICHAEL E. RUTENBERG, Professor of Theatre and Film at Hunter College of the City University of New York, is the Artistic Director of The American Art Theatre, and a member of The Mystery Writers of America, The Dramatist Guild, and The Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. He discussed *The Hairy Ape* in the January 1980 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 11-15).

PAUL D. VOELKER is Associate Professor of English and Drama at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland. He is a frequent speaker at MLA and ATA conventions--most recently as chair of a panel, "What Is American About the American Drama?" at ATA last August, a convention whose O'Neill connections he will report on in the next issue. In the issue preceding this one, he suggested "An Agenda for O'Neill Studies" (pp. 11-15).

FREDERICK C. WILKINS is Professor and Chairman of the Department of English, Suffolk University; vice president of the Eugene O'Neill Society; and editor of the Eugene O'Neill Newsletter, for whose incorrigible tardiness he remains resignedly apologetic.

## THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY

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MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE AND INCLUDE A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO  
THE EUGENE O'NEILL NEWSLETTER

1. HORST FRENZ and SUSAN TUCK, eds., *EUGENE O'NEILL'S CRITICS: VOICES FROM ABROAD*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois U. Press, 1984. xx + 225 pp. \$22.50. ISBN: 0-8093-1143-7.

Given his stature and importance, Eugene O'Neill has been the subject of surprisingly few anthologies of criticism. Hastily scanning an incomplete shelf, I see only six from the past: Oscar Cargill's *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism* (1961), John Gassner's *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1964), Jordan Miller's *Playwright's Progress: O'Neill and the Critics* (1965), John Henry Raleigh's *Twentieth Century Interpretations of "The Iceman Cometh"* (1968), Ernest Griffin's *Eugene O'Neill: A Collection of Criticism* (1976) and Virginia Floyd's *Eugene O'Neill: A World View* (1979). So a new collection, whatever its merits, is to be welcomed; and the present one, though not all of its inclusions bristle with insight, is a worthy successor and complement to the six that preceded it. Only one of its major entries (by Hofmannsthal) has been anthologized before (in Cargill and Miller); many of its selections have not only been long inaccessible but appear here for the first time in English translation; and it is the first collection--at least the first *American* collection--to concentrate solely on O'Neill's reputation in lands other than his own. In addition, as I will later suggest, even if there is paste amid the gems, the totality is more than the sum of its parts.

First, a word *about* the parts. The fruit of Horst Frenz's dedicated collecting of O'Neilliana through a long and distinguished career, *Eugene O'Neill's Critics* comprises thirty articles, long and short, spanning 1922-1980, by twenty-six writers from seventeen countries. Since the authors include translators, directors and playwrights as well as scholars, O'Neill's work and achievement are assessed from a variety of perspectives. Each of the contributors is introduced in a succinct but thorough biographical headnote, and the eight-page introduction by Professor Tuck holds the book together by suggesting the unity amid the diversity that follows: "Written at various stages of O'Neill's career, the selections ... are like so many pieces of a puzzle which, fitted together, provide a picture of Eugene O'Neill's reception and reputation, his success and failure as an international dramatist" (p. xiv). There are also seventeen illustrations--twelve photos of productions, two set designs, two sketches of the playwright and one poster. (One wishes that some of the pictures had reproduced more sharply, and that there had been more careful correlation between text and illustration. E.g., a photo of Nina Andrycz and Zygmunt Kestowicz, as Abbie and Eben in the 1960 Warsaw production of *Desire Under the Elms*, appears on p. 102, accompanying an essay from Buenos Aires, while the discussion of both actors' performances doesn't appear until pp. 118-119! One suspects that the editors had no control over this.) And the book concludes with an extensive three-part bibliography: I. "Selected Critical Studies, Bibliographies and Biographies of O'Neill" (32 entries); II. "O'Neill the International Playwright: Selected Books and Articles" (252 entries--fifteen, it is gratifying to note, from the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*); and III. "O'Neill's Plays in Translation" (selected lists of published translations from 33 countries).

Of course the puzzle that Professor Tuck describes remains for the reader to solve, but the editors have aided the task in two important ways: they have included an index, so a student of one play, for instance, is spared the maddening task of having to root out all references to that work; and they have decided, wisely, to present the material chronologically, rather than dividing it along national lines. As a result of the latter choice, one notices immediately the tremendous boost that receipt of the Nobel Prize gave to O'Neill's overseas respectability. And it is for such reasons that I said the book is more than the sum of its parts: it traces the slow but steady acceptance of O'Neill as a theatrical citizen of the world--one with clear roots in the American literary tradition (Melville, Hawthorne and Poe are frequently cited as forebears) and multiple affinities with dramaturgic and philosophical movements overseas.

In addition, since five countries are represented more than once, O'Neill's reception can be traced in more specific ways as well. It is, for instance, interesting that one of his most ardent defenders and one of his most virulent detractors came from

the playwright's own ancestral homeland of Ireland. (Unfortunately, Sean O'Casey's praise can't hold a candle to the wild, windy denunciations of St. John Ervine; and one wonders why the 2½ pages by O'Casey--excerpts from three letters--were included at all, except for the fact that he was an important fellow dramatist. They seem to have little beyond a rhapsodic style to recommend them.) Here is a sample from each:

Ervin: "All his plays are contemptuous of people and denunciatory of human existence; a commination service without a hymn. He has no zest for life: it disgusts him; and he may be described as the last of the Cathari, that singular sect of Christians who loathed life, refused fertility, in principle if not in practice, and gave their greatest admiration to suicide." (p. 80)

O'Casey: "Look into this man's work closely, but look deeply as well, and you will find he is like unto the surge of a great orchestra, cancelling with its deep and thundering rhythms the tiny tinkle of the castanets ashake in the hands of the minor dancing dramatists." (p. 45)

Actually, since O'Casey's comments predate Ervine's by seventeen years, the views of the two Irish critics are the reverse of a trend discernible in the book as a whole: from rejection to affection, from vilification to veneration.

One of the most interesting leitmotifs in the collection is the difficulty O'Neill had in winning acceptance in France, and two of the three French authors offer reasons for his tardy welcome there. Maurice Le Breton, writing in 1939, noted that it would take a "serious effort" for French theatre to embrace O'Neill because "the French drama tends toward a neoclassicism," whereas "both American literature and theatre tend toward neoromanticism" (p. 65). And in 1975, writing about a French production of *The Iceman Cometh* eight years earlier, Catherine Mounier cites a comparable problem, though it faces the actor rather than the spectator and is only indirectly related to any clash of isms:

The universe of *The Iceman Cometh* is so heavily freighted with the weight of its characters' pasts, so befogged with alcohol, so isolated, that it is difficult for an actor of the French tradition (which is principally verbal) to penetrate it. (p. 165)

But the praise of Gabriel Marcel, in reviews spanning two decades (1947-1967), shows that the barrier of vastly different theatrical traditions eventually proved surmountable.

One could cite many other insights that the book provides, and probably each reader would produce a different list. Not all of its pieces are of equal merit: several, like O'Casey's, are brief and superficial; some refer hurriedly to so many plays that none gets the attention it deserves; and a few analysts, especially early ones, do not seem fully cognizant of what they are assessing. But it could be argued that a survey of O'Neill's reception abroad would be incomplete if it omitted the moments of mystification and included only epiphanies. Besides, there are more than enough substantial studies to make the book a worthy addition to any O'Neill collection. Among them, Hofmannsthal's critical treatment of O'Neill's dialogue; Alexander Tairov's scene-by-scene director's notes for his 1930 production of *All God's Chillun Got Wings* at the Moscow Kamerny Theatre; Toshio Kimura's treatment of the symbol of whiteness in four of the major plays; and Kenneth Tynan's ecstatic response to the 1958 London production of *Long Day's Journey*, which, in its vivid record of Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies' performance as Mary Tyrone, epitomizes the art of reviewing at its very best:

In this production mother is the central figure: a guileful, silver-topped doll, her hands clenched by rheumatism into claws, her voice dropping except when drugs tighten it into a tingling, bird-like, tightrope brightness. Her sons stare at her and she knows why they are staring, but: "Is my hair coming down?" she pipes, warding off the truth with a defense of flirtation. (p. 115)

In short, I welcome *Eugene O'Neill's Critics: Voices From Abroad*, congratulate its editors on a job well done (with the picky reservations specified above), and urge that all libraries acquire it. Given the rich diversity of its contents, and the modesty of its price by 1984 standards, it is a book well worth having.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

2. TOM J.A. OLSSON, *O'NEILL OCH DRAMATEN*. Stockholm: Akademilitteratur, 1977. 272 pp. ISBN: 91-7410-039-4.

What role did Swedish-American actress Signe Hasso play in an O'Neill production at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm? I'm not offering this puzzler for the next edition of "Trivial Pursuits," but suggesting, rather, the kinds of tangential delight afforded by Dr. Olsson's thorough treatment of O'Neill's relations with Sweden--the country that rescued him from the oblivion he'd largely been allotted at home--and of the productions of his plays at the Royal Dramatic and at other Swedish theatres as well as on radio. (Ms. Hasso, by the way, played Muriel in the 1935 production of *Ah, Wilderness!*) It is an important book--surely the definitive one on its subject--that abounds in facts and insights far weightier than the one with which I began. For instance, it's always revealing to learn which of O'Neill's plays have proved most successful in other countries. In Sweden, the easy winner is *Long Day's Journey* (120 performances at the RDT between 1956 and 1962), the runners-up being *Hughie* (1958, 64 performances), *Ah, Wilderness!* (1935, 60 performances), and *Strange Interlude* (1928, 54 performances). I'll leave it to others to draw whatever conclusions they choose from these performance statistics.

If potential purchasers are wary of acquiring a book in Swedish, I can assure them that there are numerous English oases (e.g., quotations from letters by Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill), a 13-page English summary (pp. 159-171), and--of special value--26 pages of valuable photographs: 52 shots of stage settings for the productions of 14 O'Neill plays at the Royal Dramatic between 1923 (*Anna Christie*--Sweden's first O'Neill) and 1962 (*More Stately Mansions*). These make the book a valuable acquisition whatever its language, and I apologize to Dr. Olsson for being so tardy in announcing its availability. Purchase requests may be sent to him at the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Box 5037, 102 41 Stockholm, Sweden. --FCW.

3. Stanford S. Apseloff, "Eugene O'Neill: An Early Letter," *Resources for American Literary Study*, 11 (Spring 1981), 109-111.

A reprint of a letter that O'Neill wrote in Provincetown on November 19, 1919, in response to Pierre Loving's request for permission to include *Ile* in an anthology of *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays* that he was editing with O'Neill's Provincetown chum Frank Shay. Prof. Apseloff, who teaches at Kent State University where the letter is housed, provides full background information and notes how perceptive the playwright was about his own work and the verdict of posterity. O'Neill asks, "why 'Ile'? I rate 'Ile' just a peg above 'In the Zone' which I care not for at all.... Even from a standpoint of popular favor, 'Bound East' has the call." And a p.s. adds another candidate: "'The Moon of the Caribees' is by far my best one-act play!--and my pet." The anthology was published in 1921. Its O'Neill selection was *Ile*! --FCW.

4. William Goldhurst, "Misled by a Box: Variations on a Theme from Poe," *Clues: A Journal of Detection* (Spring/Summer 1982), pp. 31-37.

Prof. Goldhurst traces, with great narrative skill of his own, the evolution of a theme, which he calls "misled by appearances," as it appears in three works whose similarities are redolent of influence: Poe's "The Oblong Box" (1844), Conan Doyle's "That Little Square Box" (1881), and O'Neill's "In the Zone" (1916-17). Goldhurst, assessing this "literary Tinkers-to-Evers-to-Chance transaction," doesn't claim that O'Neill was directly influenced by the Poe story, but notes that "O'Neill, working from Doyle, has proceeded much as Doyle had, working from Poe" in creating variations



on the basic theme and situation. He even draws interesting conclusions from the contents of the three works' central boxes:

In each case what is inside the box may serve as a symbol of the kind of materials used by authors in successive periods of modern literature. Poe's dead lady is suggestive of Romanticism, Doyle's two pigeons are a clue to his Realism, while Smitty's mementos of an abortive romance are highly appropriate to O'Neill's Naturalism. (p. 36)

In O'Neill's play, when the contents of Smitty's box are revealed, Jack mocks Davis with a remark that, Goldhurst opines, O'Neill may have planted for future critics as a hint about his source: "Yuh're a hell of a Sherlock Holmes, ain't yuh?"! --FCW.

5. Andrew B. Myers, "'Hysteria Night in the Sophomore Dormitory': Eugene O'Neill's *Days Without End*," *Columbia Library Columns*, 28 (February 1979), 3-13.

The quotation is O'Neill's--a description, in a letter to Bennett Cerf (February 28, 1934), of the Broadway critics' treatment of *Days Without End*, which closed fifty-seven performances after its opening on January 8. Using the Random House files now housed in Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Myers traces the events of the time, and O'Neill's responses to them, in his correspondence with his new publisher--Cerf having won O'Neill away from Liveright in 1933. O'Neill defended the play, which the Random House dust jacket prophesied would "become the most controversial play he has ever written." It was, but, as Myers notes, "it was the kind of controversy that killed--both the Broadway play, shortly, and more slowly, the book." "Both as art, and as autobiography, *Days Without End* is a sorry story of his intellectual wanderings as a seeker after truth." --FCW.

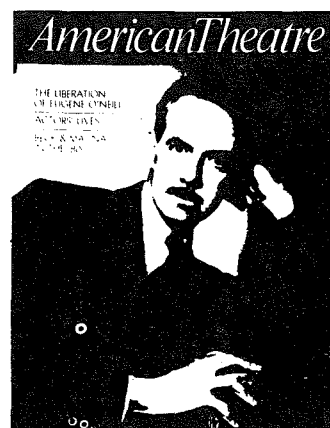
6. Elliot Norton, "30 years later, a look at Eugene O'Neill's long journey into night," *The Boston Sunday Globe* (November 27, 1983), pp. 85, 89.

Written to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of O'Neill's death (11/27/53), Norton's essay recounts the last years of the playwright's life, especially the physical, artistic, religious and marital troubles that filled his days in Marblehead and at Boston's Shelton Hotel, to which he moved on November 17, 1951, never leaving except for one hospital visit. Of Carlotta, Norton has, like many, mixed feelings. She protected O'Neill, gave him the care he needed, but there is a fine line between guardian and gorgon, and, "as the years went by, the kindly, loving helpmeet became a kind of dragon guarding the gate." The couple's destruction of uncompleted plays, the private burial ceremony, Carlotta's own last days: all familiar by now, but told with moving brevity. There is much that will never be known, especially about O'Neill's final feelings about religion. A priest called at the Shelton during the last weeks and was refused admission by Mrs. O'Neill, who later claimed that her husband wanted no clerical visitors and "would confront God--if there was a God--man to man." But Mrs. O'Neill, as Norton notes, "was not always a reliable witness." And so the rumor persists that once, near the end, when Carlotta was out, O'Neill phoned for a priest. Truth? Fiction? Norton can't tell us, but like the rest of his story (and O'Neill's), it lodges compellingly in the mind. --FCW.

7. Albert Bermel, "The Liberation of Eugene O'Neill," *American Theatre* (July-August 1984), pp. 4-9 & 42:

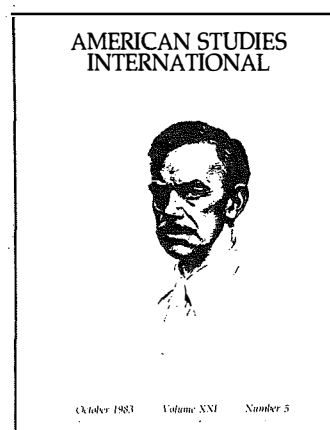
It's good to see O'Neill on the cover of the handsome new bi-monthly journal published by the Theatre Communications Group, and to read the results of Albert Bermel's "recent sampling of opinion" about "the spearhead and the godhead of American drama"--the views of 14 theatrical practitioners particularly associated with O'Neill's work (7 directors, 5 actors and 2 designers). The composite picture is one of respect for the multitude of O'Neill's artistic virtues: "daring, verve, compassion, tenacity, persuasive delineation of characters and clashes of temperament, artistic honesty, forceful deployment of a limited vocabulary, sustained flights of imagination, the

sweep of his subject matter, the inspiration of his work for other writers, the stern requirements he imposes on his interpreters, his innate Americanism as a critic of our weaknesses and beliefs" (p. 9). But O'Neill is not in danger of being treated "with too much awe," because he is "still regarded as an 'uneven' writer." Of the respondents, only director George Ferencz champions the early plays. And so, though O'Neill has been liberated from the disregard he suffered (in America) in his final years, much remains to be done, as Bermel notes in his conclusion: "The *whole body* of work awaits further liberation that will yield fresh treasures" (p. 42, *italics added*). How true. It will. And Professor Bermel's essay, accompanied by exceptionally fine illustrations, will help to set us in the right direction. --FCW.



8. Charles A. Carpenter, "American Drama: A Bibliographic Essay," *American Studies International*, 21 (October 1983), 3-52.

Professor Carpenter's massive essay, though it discusses only books (not articles) and treats only studies of drama as literature (not of drama in performance), is virtually a history, in miniature, of American drama and of reactions to it, and should not be missed by any student, scholar or devotee of the subject. Newcomers to the field will find enough items to fill their shopping lists to the bursting point, and students seeking dissertation topics can locate lacunae in the critical record--there are not a few--and help to fill them. While the survey may justify Carpenter's lament at "the shaky stature of American drama as a scholarly discipline," the



materials covered are astounding--in quantity, if not always in quality--and one admires the candor of the author's verdicts, though they will doubtless raise as many hackles as huzzahs. Four pages (24-28) are devoted to books on O'Neill (a 1930s drawing of whom, as seen above, graces the cover); and the essay concludes with a 13-page bibliography (303 items, 32 of them totally or largely about O'Neill) that whets one's appetite for Professor Carpenter's forthcoming *International Bibliography of Modern Drama Scholarship and Criticism, 1966-1980*, about ten percent of whose 27,200 entries "deal with American drama, theater, and playwrights." Incidentally, in terms of numbers of entries on individual playwrights in the imminent volume, only one American--O'Neill--ranks in the top 14--" (in a sixth-to-eighth cluster with Ionesco and Claudel), though Williams, Miller, and Albee squeeze into the top twenty. No one else--not Thornton Wilder, despite heavy German backing; not Clifford Odets, despite residual leftist appeal; not Lillian Hellman, despite the obvious--makes the top fifty." Thanks for the stats, Professor Carpenter, and for a lively, incisive survey. Dissertators, to work! --FCW.

9. Reinhold Grimm, "A Note on O'Neill, Nietzsche and Naturalism: *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in European Perspective," *Modern Drama*, 26 (September 1983), 331-334.

Noting that the senior Tyrone mentions Ibsen and Nietzsche side by side in the fourth act of *Long Day's Journey*, Grimm points out the ways in which O'Neill's play was influenced by both writers--its structure, naturalism and symbolic technique bearing a close resemblance to Ibsen's *Ghosts*; Edmund's last-act attitudes and reminiscences clearly traceable to Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*--and the ways in which both influences are partially tempered by two others: Nietzsche's philosophical

predecessor, Schopenhauer; and Ibsen's theatrical successor, Strindberg. All of this in three pages. Not for speed-readers! --FCW.

10. Joyce Deveau Kennedy, "O'Neill's Lavinia Mannon and the Dickinson Legend," *American Literature*, 49, 1 (1977), 108-113.

Sorry for the tardy mention, but I just discovered the essay via the June 1984 issue of *Abstracts of English Studies*. Kennedy opines that Lavinia Mannon may be a composite of Emily and Lavinia Dickinson--especially the former, whose paternal attachment and subsequent bereavement are markedly similar to those of Ezra Mannon's daughter. Kennedy cites the first manuscript draft of the play, in which Lavinia exhibits the "living entombment in the family homestead," the wearing of white, and the "alien existence in a world of humans" popularly attributed to Emily Dickinson. An intriguing inference, worthy of further pursuit. --FCW.

11. John Finegan, "Big Mystery of Eugene O'Neill," *Evening Herald*, Dublin, Ireland (June 16, 1984), p. 15.

The article followed a discussion between Finegan and Edward L. Shaughnessy, who was in Ireland for the summer to continue his study of the reception of O'Neill's plays in that country. The "mystery" is the infrequent appearance of O'Neill's plays on Dublin stages at a time when the works of Miller, Williams and Albee "surface [there] with unfailing regularity." Finegan notes that a number of O'Neill's plays have *never* been staged in Dublin--among them, *The Great God Brown*, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, *Marco Millions*, *Dynamo*, and *Strange Interlude*, "one of O'Neill's most compelling dramas." And of the S.S. Glencairn quartet, only *In the Zone*, produced in February 1926 by the Dublin Drama League, has ever been done there. It's a mystery, says Finegan, not only because of O'Neill's ancestral roots in Co. Kilkenny, but because "some of the greatest performances seen on the Irish stage this century have been in plays by O'Neill--such as Ria Mooney's Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey* in 1959 at the Abbey (surely the finest portrayal in the last 30 years by an Irish actress)...." Perhaps Prof. Shaughnessy's study, when published, will solve the mystery; and perhaps his visit and Finegan's article will spark an O'Neill revival. --FCW.

## THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION: MLA '84

The Eugene O'Neill Society, now officially an "allied organization" of the Modern Language Association, will hold its 1984 annual meeting, as it has in the past, during the MLA Convention, which this year will occur in Washington, D.C., after Christmas. All Society members are urged to attend the meeting, which will take place from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, December 28, in the Roosevelt Room of the Sheraton Washington Hotel. New members are welcome to join at that time, and current members may then renew for 1985, if they haven't already done so.

The annual session on Eugene O'Neill, this year directed by Society president Albert Wertheim, will take place in the Calvert Room of the same hotel on the next day, Saturday the 29th, from 9:00 to 10:15 p.m. (The Society's official debut under MLA auspices seems rigorously nocturnal!) Four speakers will address the topic, "Eugene O'Neill's 'The Possessors Dispossessed': A Touch of the Poet and More Stately Mansions." The papers and speakers are the following:

- "Con Melody and the Irish Yankee Tradition," by Norma Jenckes, Univ. of Cincinnati;
- "Drinking, Alcoholism and A Touch of the Poet," by Steven F. Bloom, Emmanuel College;
- "Closure and Enclosure in More Stately Mansions," by Thomas P. Adler, Purdue Univ; and
- "Deborah's Fairy Tale: More Stately Mansions and American History," by Susan Tuck, New Hampshire College.

The Society's executive committee will also meet during the MLA convention--probably before the aforementioned business meeting on the 28th. Board chairman Michael Hinden will inform its members of the time and place.

## REVIEWS OF O'NEILL PLAYS IN PERFORMANCE

1. *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*, directed by Margaret Booker. Intiman Theatre, Seattle, WA, June 12 - July 7, 1984.

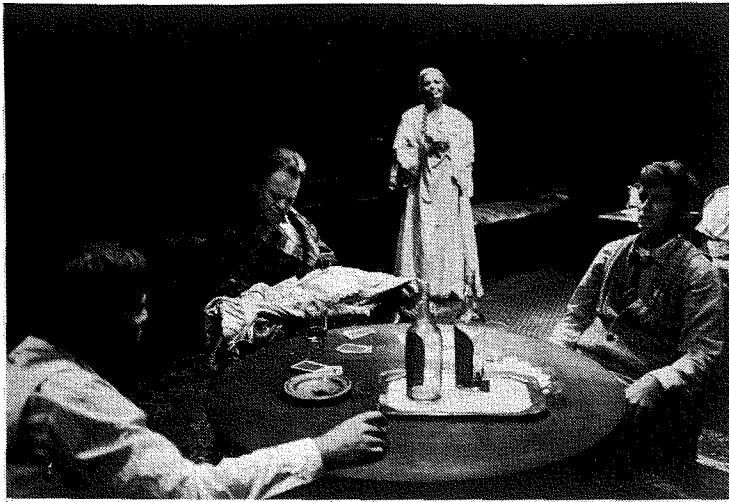
Theatrically, Seattle is very alive, with Intiman, known as "Seattle's Classic Theatre," at the forefront of that city's lively theatre. This summer it brought the Northwest Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, in a production that was somewhat different, rather slick, but not entirely satisfying.

There was a certain overall excellence about the production, especially in the technical area. The sun room of the Tyrone's summer home (scene design by David Potts) worked well in the intimate auditorium, with the suggestion of hallway and front porch on either side of the frame structure outlining the sun room. The lighting (designed by Greg Sullivan), in a play where lighting expresses much about the individual characters, as well as their gloomy progression into the deep night of the family soul, effectively created the mood of the play.

The directorial aspect of the production was not up to its general technical excellence. (Margaret Booker, who established Intiman Theatre in the early seventies, directed.) Some things were subtly changed in the overall picture of the Tyrone family that are not necessarily improvements. The concept of relationships is perhaps the greatest change from the expected. While the script puts about a decade between the ages of Tyrone and wife Mary, Barbara Bain gives the physical impression of a woman who is at least slightly older than her husband, with hair color and style, and makeup that create the feeling she might even have years on her rather jaunty spouse. While in the text Tyrone seems to hold a rather shaky, oftentimes elusive mastery of his strange household, in this production Mary's looks and her bent for a stern sense of command over the family would seem to alter the traditional relationships materially. The problem of the age difference of the pair is further complicated by what appears to be a poor understanding of the play's period: a physical relationship is displayed between Mary and Tyrone that doesn't fit a proper artist and his wife in the early part of the century. They fight, even wrestle; and Tyrone all but floors his wife in one such struggle. Such physicality doesn't seem to fit an older matinee idol whose treatment of his wife of nearly four decades is usually too gentle for her own good; nor does it fit the wife, who is ever concerned lest the boys observe any display of affection on the part of their parents. Another disturbing physical relationship is a scene between Mary and Edmund, in which Mary seems to express something other than motherly affection as she sympathizes with her son in his suffering. These atypical relations are not just different, they are disturbing to the viewer. O'Neill's play, the culmination of nearly a third of a century of learning and practicing his art, is finely crafted and allows little room for change--without the risk of destroying the delicate balance between the characters upon which the play's ultimate effect depends. The Intiman production may not destroy that balance, but it toys recklessly with it.

The weakest link in the Tyrone family chain is Ms. Bain as Mary. Added to the confusing misunderstanding about age is a poor use of voice on Mary's part. She fairly yells at Tyrone, and is totally unconvincing as a desperate woman pleading in her loneliness for inspiration from a Virgin Mary she has all but forgotten. Her prayer, her remorse, seem less than realistic. So, too, her nervousness is affected, even as she tries to prance nervously. Nor does she seem to know the distinction between being drunk and being doped. At the end of the play, she expresses neither the happiness she had felt "for a time," nor the deep sorrow that overcame her at the loss of that youthful happiness. She seems capable of expressing only a kind of ennui.

In addition to the confusion about age and the all-too physical performance--which may have been out of his control--Jack Davidson had some problems of his own as the pater familias. The voice is clear, but not always as impressive as one would expect from a stage idol. On occasion his voice seems to lapse into the brogue he'd rid himself of at the start of his acting career. Generally, his carriage is good, although he doesn't always suggest the stature of the Great Tyrone. In the final act, he



Two scenes from the *Intiman Journey*. At the left (from the left), Jamie (Bruce Gooch), James (Jack Davidson), Mary (Barbara Bain), and Edmund (Paul Donahoe), in the final scene. At the right, a tender moment ("something other than motherly affection"?) between Mary and her younger son. Photos (c) 1984 by Chris Bennion.



exhibits well the effects of a long day's toying.

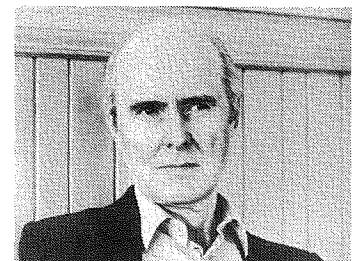
Bruce Gooch as Jamie is not quite crude enough to deserve all that hatred. He holds his liquor too well, and seems to *play* drunk rather than *be* drunk. In the final scene he sometimes delivers his lines so clearly one would think he hadn't a drop taken. As his brother Edmund, Paul Donahoe turns in the strongest performance of the cast. He sounds believably consumptive as he coughs. Whether in anger or self-pity, his voice reproduces the wanted emotion to striking effect. The dotting concern the playwright lavished on this autobiographical character Donahoe brings out well, and the ambivalence he expresses toward all the other haunted Tyrones does much to maintain the terrible tension that is that long day's journey.

On balance, *Intiman's* production of O'Neill's masterpiece, for whatever interpretive weaknesses and even occasional slips in the lines, could hardly be counted a failure. It is simply not the resounding success as conceived and crafted by the author. Above all, it does not create in the viewer the deep emotion that it might. Perhaps it is not a compliment to suggest that a play should leave the viewer very depressed. But what else--in addition to deep pity--could this drama induce? And if it does not evoke these emotions, it can at best only confuse. The *Intiman* production leaves the theatergoer more empty than depressed. In the final scene, and especially with Mary's final words, the play simply doesn't plunge the audience into the depths of anguish of these pitiable Tyrones.

--Eugene K. Hanson

2. *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*, directed by George W. Hayden. Gateway Playhouse, Wareham, MA, June 22 - July 14, 1984.

The Gateway Playhouse production featured an actor, Niels Miller, whose portrayal of James Tyrone, Sr., was as skillfully crafted as one is likely to see in a lifetime. Thanks to superb technical capabilities, his evocation of Tyrone was as gripping as a picture postcard from hell. His voice had the melliflence appropriate to the character's theat-



Niels Miller

rical renown, and his deportment had a self-effacing quality of noblesse oblige that soared as gradiloquently as his speech. Miller *was* (as O'Neill says of Tyrone) "the actor .. in all his unconscious habits of speech, movement and gesture [that] have the quality of belonging to a studied technique." And at the moment when Tyrone "knows now" of his wife's lapse, Miller eroded into the "tired, bitterly sad old man" O'Neill describes. Nothing else in the production approached--nothing *could* approach--his astonishing, electrifying performance.

Dorothy Taylor's Mary Tyrone deepened as the play progressed. At first she seemed a bit too sure of herself, though this initial confidence made her more interesting. Her morphine-induced "highs" were manifested by a tough nettlesomeness that allowed her to twist the knife in the family's back with tortured relish. Her voice, when she spoke of her past, seemed truly to go backward in time, the past droning into the present. And when she was alone, whispering to herself, one felt as if she had told herself these things a thousand times. As a result, one gained considerable pity for Mary, despite her rueful awareness of all she was inflicting upon her husband and sons. She was at once the object of our execration and our prayers.

Richard Giles managed a sensitive and sympathetic performance as Edmund, bringing to the least developed of the Tyrones the quality he most needs--that of attentive audience for the others' revelations. It is important for Edmund to concentrate, intently, on what the others are saying; and Giles provided some of the most interesting "listening" I have ever seen on a stage. When, for instance, Miller's Tyrone was movingly recounting the woes of his childhood, his love for his mother, and how he had bought "that damned play for a song," Giles was positively riveted. The long day's journey is a "learning experience" for the youngest Tyrone, and this Edmund was a fully attentive student.

As Jamie, Roger Kelly was so bad that one wished that the punches Edmund threw at him hadn't been so obviously "staged." His drunkenness was dreadful, consisting of too much stagger and not enough swagger; and his constantly wavering voice made his long monologue virtually incomprehensible--belying Jamie's intimation that he knows what he is saying no matter how inebriated he becomes.

Fortunately, the play's crushing finale, imperiled by Kelly's gaucherie, was saved by the mother's return and the father's response. Miss Taylor floated into the room, a horrific doll; and Miller's Tyrone held his ground poignantly, his body's pacing a marvel of precision as his self-conscious doze fluttered into awareness at the mention of his name and then retreated again into self-defensive stupor.

A cluttered set and erratic lighting did nothing to help the performers, though a rattan couch and chair were perfect and the taped sound of brooding fog horn and buoy bells, seeming to come from varying distances, created an appropriately littoral atmosphere. Ann Gonzalez' costumes were generally appropriate, especially Mary's dresses and a tie for Edmund that looked like one that O'Neill himself wore in a photograph c. 1912. But Tyrone should have had a real dressing gown, not a flimsy bathrobe; and Jamie--even *Kelly's* Jamie--should not have worn sleeve garters. No one with Jamie's sartorial meticulousness would ever have disported himself in such a fashion.

In sum, despite its flaws, the Gateway Playhouse offered its audiences a satisfying reading of the play, three-fourths of a fine ensemble performance, and, above all, a Tyrone of depth and grandeur.

--Thomas F. Connolly

3. *HUGHIE*, directed by John MacDonald. A Provincetown Playhouse production, performed at the Provincetown Art Association, September 20-21, 1984, as part of the 1984 Lower Cape Fall Arts Festival.

All that's required for drama, Thornton Wilder once wrote, are "a platform and a passion or two." The truth of his remark came through in this production. The

Provincetown Playhouse, while it continues to seek funds for a new theatre, must play where it can, and not always in ideal circumstances. The current challenge was to turn an open, sparsely furnished platform at one end of a large, white-walled, neon-lighted art gallery into the dingy lobby of a seedy midtown-Manhattan hotel. And the challenge was met, thanks to John MacDonald's kinetic direction of exceptional performers, the evocative lighting of Larry Buckley, and the well chosen furnishings provided by set designer Gordon Armstrong--a few faded oriental rugs, a small writing table sans drawer or chair, two other tables, a couple of potted plants (both a bit too healthy), an ancient leather Victorian chair at the center, and to the rear, at the audience's right, the darkwood arc of the night clerk's desk with a vertical array of mail slots behind it. With the added assistance of taped sounds--a series of near and distant knockings at the start, evocative of a world of empty rooms; later, the barking of dogs--disbelief was quickly and easily suspended.

Stephen Joyce, as Erie Smith, entered the gallery at our right, staggered and lurched across in front of the platform, sat wearily on the steps at the left, took one last swig from a near-empty bottle of Canadian Club, tossed it into a trash can, and resignedly mounted the steps to the lobby, his garish clothes unkempt, his straw boater at a rakish angle. With a sharply shouted "Key!" that managed momentarily to stir the near-moribund clerk, the "teller of tales" set to work, scattering words that quickly evoked two lives--his own, and his late comrade Hughie's--and littering the floor with shells from a pocketful of peanuts as he did so. Slowly, almost imperceptibly the clerk (Robert Zukerman) began to respond, peering over the armor of his half-glasses as Erie's references to gambling piqued his hunger for excitement and pierced his wall of taciturn indifference. By play's end, Erie had a new admirer, a new Hughie; and the clerk had found a hero, someone to help him "live through the night."

The quoted words are the clerk's own, from one of the numerous stage directions in which O'Neill provides *his* third of what is essentially a three-man story. And their absence from the performance was symptomatic of the one flaw in an otherwise outstanding production: the clerk, though he came to life at the end, remained an incomprehensible cipher. Of course the fault is the playwright's: he knew that what he had created couldn't be played in a conventional way, since the script, despite its abundance of dialogue for Erie, is as much a short story as a drama. Unless we hear what the clerk hears--the numerous sounds of violent activity outside the small clearing of the lobby--and also hear his nihilistic inner reactions *to* those sounds, his part in the triumvirate necessarily remains a blank. (There's just one moment when the inner thoughts spill over into dialogue. Agreeing with Erie's description of life as a "goddamned racket," he urges resignation to it "because--Well, you can't burn it all down, can you? There's too much steel and stone. There'd always be something left to start it going again." Erie is naturally jolted by this sudden, impassioned outburst, and so was the Provincetown audience. Its laughter was understandable, since it had heard neither the sounds that repeatedly draw the clerk's attention away from Erie's monologue nor the inner iceberg of which his words are but the tiny audible tip.) In a conventional production the point of view is limited to Erie's, and much of the play's richness remains untapped. Mr. Zukerman did very well with what he was allotted; his non sequiturs, when Erie's pauses forced a response from his non-listener, drew as much laughter as Erie's subsequently sarcastic retorts; and his "resurrection" near the end was fully believable. But a deadpan expression simply cannot reveal or suggest all that O'Neill tells us is churning feverishly beneath the surface; and what the night clerk was resurrected *from* remained, in this production, largely a mystery.

Of course there's more to Erie *too* than meets the ear and eye, and Stephen Joyce captured brilliantly--vocally, physically and emotionally--every nuance of the character both the jaunty, swaggering surface and the "sentimental softness behind it." One remembers his constant uneasy restlessness, the terror in his periodic failures to leave for the empty room upstairs, and, at the end, when dice rattle on the counter, the surge of a real confidence that the earlier bravado had merely *shammed*. The con man has found a new sucker (read friend), and the game of life can go on. Mr. Joyce looks very much like O'Neill's description of Erie, and his voice is rich and varied.

When he sat in the leather chair and recalled his visit to Hughie's home, one almost saw the other figures. And when he remembered the interrupted story he'd told Hughie's kids--a touchingly quiet moment in his reminiscences--he revealed another whole side of Erie: the quiet, gentle figure locked inside the wisecracking Broadway sport. If a national O'Neill company is formed, Stephen Joyce should definitely be a member. There's many a role in which he would be superb.

Two thirds of *Hughie*, which is all a traditional stage production can offer, is better than none. And the Provincetown production, though I'd wished for more, made for a memorable evening and deserved a longer run. I hope it reaches other platforms; its passions are the genuine article.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

4. *ANNA CHRISTIE*, directed by Cynthia J. Messier. Your Theatre, New Bedford, MA, September 19-29, 1984.

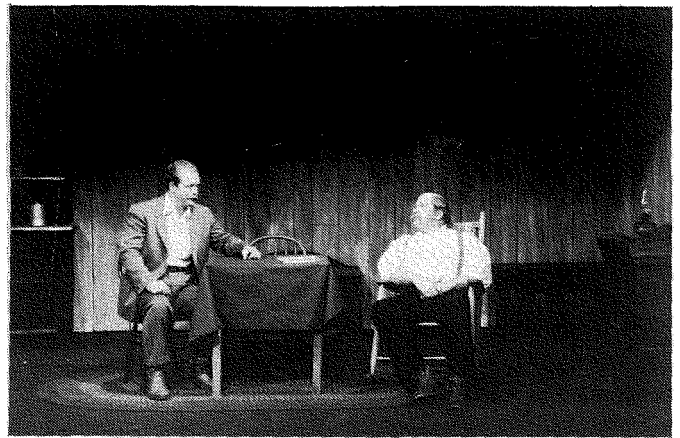
Given the current paucity of American O'Neill productions, one can seldom, even in the theatre-speckled city of his birth, attend two of his plays on successive evenings. So I jumped at the automotive chance, last month, of creating an O'Neill weekend: *Hughie* in Provincetown on Friday (reviewed above), and my very first "live" *Anna Christie* in New Bedford on Saturday. The performances' proximity did not provoke comparative insights such as Albert Kalson found when he saw two O'Neill plays on consecutive evenings in London last April [see the Spring 1984 issue, pp. 30-32]. Indeed, a newcomer to O'Neill might have questioned the claim that two plays so different could be the work of the same man. But even without the critical cross-pollination I'd hoped to accomplish, my O'Neill weekend was a most gratifying one.

Founded in 1946, Your Theatre has operated since 1979 in the building formerly occupied by the New Bedford Textile School, where the financial support of private citizens, grants, and local businesses has provided it with a technically up-to-date main theatre seating 88 and a smaller room for more intimate and experimental productions, and where it pursues its founders' goals: "to enhance the cultural life of the community [and] to develop and encourage dramatic art." That its current five-play season includes not only *Anna Christie* but Sartre's *No Exit* is evidence of its dedication to art rather than wealth; a quality that has won it a long list of regular subscribers who know that "their" theatre will make up in boldness and spunk for any deficiencies in cash. Hence this eulogistic digression about a company that, like many other community groups across the land, is keeping O'Neill theatrically alive when the majority of professional troupes accord him the status of a pariah. Hats off to his champions.

Your Theatre's poster calls *Anna Christie* "a character study of a young woman and her struggle to deserve the love she inspires." Since she has already been "transformed" by closeness to the sea *before* she inspires the immediate love of Mat Burke in the second act, I'm unsure about the description's accuracy. (Isn't it *Mat* who must come to deserve *her* love, after dumping her at the first announcement of indiscretion?) But Anna is indeed a "young woman"--just twenty, though her inland experiences have aged her prematurely and filled her with a cynicism that no harbor, not even Provincetown's, can quickly dispel. Like so many of O'Neill's later women, Anna is a challenging role for the best of actresses. Unfortunately, Linda Sue McCallester conveyed the youth but, despite appropriately tartish attire, never made Anna's story of her "past" believable--which made Mat's denunciation of her seem all the more callous. A slouch, a periodic curling or biting of lip (at moments, respectively, of cynicism and despair) and a penchant for hand rubbing do not turn an ingénue into a dispirited demi-mondaine. And a too-sweet Anna leaves a vacuum at the play's center--unless, as I began to suspect during the performance, the play, its title notwithstanding, isn't really Anna's. And the strong performances by YT's Chris and Mat reinforced that suspicion.



Edward J. Maguire, the theatre's artistic director, was just right as Chris. (I'd say he stole the show if it weren't rightfully Chris's to begin with!) Barrel-chested, and gifted with a powerful voice that managed well the tortuous dialectal challenges of the script, he captured both the outer elements of the old barge captain--the natural strength, the gauche awkwardness in society, the superstitious hatred of the "ole daval, sea"--and the balancing streak of sensitivity beneath the surface. In Act I, when he described to Anna the delights of life on a barge, he virtually danced. In Act III, when he heard Anna declare her love to Mat, the pain in his eyes needed



Gregory F. Leonard (Mat, at left), and Edward J. Maguire (Chris) in Your Theatre's *Anna Christie*

no words to support it; and the tone in which, at Mat's needling, he defended his fifteen-year desertion of his daughter fully revealed the guilt beneath the rationalization. Perhaps the best such moment came in Act IV, when Chris enters and discovers Anna and Mat in an embrace. Maguire caught perfectly the changes of mood that O'Neill prescribes--from hatred, through resignation and relief, to a convivial grin. However forced the play's "happy ending" may be, the audience loved it, and Maguire's moment of transformation made it work. Even when, as required, he shook his fists at the heavens or the sea and intoned his perennial curse, one felt that the gesture was motivated by inner fibers as much as by the playwright and director.

Gregory F. Leonard had a harder time as Mat, since the character is such an ass--not only because this vital son-of-the-sea of Act II turns Catholic xenophobe for the improbable comic denouement, but also because of dat ole double standard he embodies in thematic service to O'Neill's feminist motif. (In Act II, he expects Anna to overlook his checkered past, and consider only her transformational influence on him, in assessing his candidacy as a mate. But in Act III, when Anna reveals a past as sordid as his own, and pleads for the same consideration from him, all she gets are a curse and a threat of violence.) But Leonard's delivery had the ring of Christy Mahon in every line--how clear, in performance, is the oft-noted influence of Synge!--and he brought great spirit to his periodic verbal and physical confrontations with Chris. Even Ms. McCallester came alive and found her most effective moment when, in Act III, the men sparring vehemently for possession of her, Anna must resist continuing victimization by shouting out her assertion of autonomy. It was the production's (as it is the play's) best moment because the ensemble playing was uniformly strong.

Cynthia Messier, YT's president, directed the production with a care for blocking and natural movement that only the minor performers defied; and she played a feisty Marthy Owen whose affection for Chris did not prevent her enjoying his discomfort in trying, diplomatically, to tell her something she'd already guessed--that Anna's arrival would necessitate her departure. (How one wishes that Marthy's role were longer. Even though her service to the play's exposition is over in the first scene, and she couldn't reemerge without being a stowaway, one misses her salty presence ever after.)

The simple sets, designed by Maguire and George Lemay--gray wooden walls; a bar at our left and a central partition in Act I; barrels, coils of rope, portholes, and a life preserver for the second-act deck scene; etc.--conveyed the play's three locales without swamping the human inhabitants, proving that, in terms of setting, less can be more. Atmosphere was enhanced by a recording of Debussy's "La Mer" before the curtains first parted, sea chanties during the two intermissions, and (I believe) some nautical sounds at the start of Act II. I'd have liked a bit more of the last, and at least a touch of the "dense fog" that O'Neill says "shrouds the barge on all sides." Slightly dimmer light isn't enough for that act's events; and if there had been fog, we might not have noticed that the bartender and postman of the first act were rescued from the sea in the second, and looking little the worse for their bout with the briny! Less, in that

instance, was only less.

But such petty cavils don't dim my gratitude to Your Theatre for giving me the chance, at last, to see *Anna Christie*; for making me reconsider some of my earlier suppositions about it; and for sharing O'Neill with their seaside neighbors. Had the playwright been there, I know he would have joined in our long and loud applause.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

## NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. **BOGARD WINS MEDAL.** Travis Bogard, Professor of Dramatic Art at the Univ. of California-Berkeley, received the 1984 Eugene O'Neill Birthday Medal, which is awarded annually to a group or individual whose efforts have enriched the "universal understanding" of O'Neill and his work. The medal was presented by Barbara Gelb, co-chairman of the Committee, at a dinner in the Helen Hull Room, Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Held on Tuesday, October 16, the 96th anniversary of O'Neill's birth, the dinner was hosted by Martin E. Segal, chairman of the Center's board of directors, who is also the Committee's treasurer. Other Committee members in attendance included Colleen Dewhurst, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Joseph Papp, Jose Quintero and Jason Robards, Jr. Prof. Bogard was honored for his celebrated study of O'Neill's oeuvre, *Contour in Time*, for his spearheading of the restoration of Tao House, and for his current work with Jackson Bryer in locating, collecting, tabulating and editing the letters of O'Neill. Previous recipients of the medal, which bears the playwright's likeness and quotes his credo--"It is only the dram that keeps man fighting, willing to live"--have been Brooks Atkinson, Jose Quintero, the Royal Dramatic Theater of Stockholm, and Jason Robards.
2. **THE O'NEILLS ON STAGE.** Few stories in American drama are as compelling as the life of the man who created its greatest works; and it seems that, as the 1988 centennial approaches, the number of productions of plays *by* O'Neill will be rivaled by the number of theatrical works *about* the man and his family. The first to be produced was *Dreams of the Son*, by Herman Daniel Farrell III, that opened at the West End Theatre (91st Street and West End) on 18 July. The play deals with O'Neill's life, including his relationships with his father, mother, brother, Louis Halliday, Agnes Boulton, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Terry Carlin, Carlotta Monterey and other. Barbara Gelb has written a one-character play, *Carlotta*, in which O'Neill's third wife may be played by Colleen Dewhurst. And Anthony Perkins may represent O'Neill in *Together*, a play by California television writers Morton Thaw and Edward Robak, which is tentatively scheduled for a New York production early in 1985. Described as "turbulent yet tender" (an apt description of the relations between Eugene and Carlotta O'Neill), the play is set in a San Francisco hotel room during several months in the fall and winter of 1936. Michael Frazier and Roger Stevens, the producers, are reportedly "optimistic" about the project, in which "six or eight actresses, some logical, some unlikely, are being talked about for Carlotta." [Enid Nemy, "1985 target date for a play about the O'Neills," *The New York Times* (August 31, 1984), p. C2.]
3. **TAO HOUSE UPDATE.** According to the *International Herald Tribune* (Mdy 23, 1984), "the National Park Service has hammered out an agreement with residents of Danville, California, to open the 14-acre hillside estate of playwright Eugene O'Neill to the public on a limited basis." Given the length and volume of the dispute between the neighbors of Tao House and the playwright's devotees, the verb may well be appropriate. But the news is heartening, even though the issue of access is still unresolved. The point of contention has been Kuss Road, the winding, private, one-lane route to Tao House. Under the new agreement, the Kuss Road Homeowners Association will permit the Park Service to transport up to 30 visitors a day, in two vans, from a parking area in downtown Danville; and will permit the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, which purchased the house in 1975, to host five major events there each year, with a maximum attendance of 60 at each. In return, the Park Service will share the cost of an electronically activated gate at the foot of Kuss Road.

That full, permanent access to Tao House remains a problem, and that feeling for the historic importance of the site is still not unanimous, was clear from the words of KRHA president William McCann: "Kuss Road will not be the final route to this monstrosity.... Not more than 30 people a day would want to see that house."

Actually, millions will see it, electronically, early in 1985, thanks to a two-hour documentary about O'Neill that will be part of a PBS series called "American Masters." The documentary's director and co-producer, Perry Miller Adato, shot footage at Tao House in mid-May, including comments by Travis Bogard, vice president and program director of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, and Jane Washburn, who used to type O'Neill's nearly indecipherable manuscripts, and who remembers him as "a marvelous, gentle man ... amusing, intense, just nice to be around." January is the tentative date for broadcast of the documentary, which will include scenes from O'Neill's works, performed by such luminaries as Jason Robards, Blythe Danner, Colleen Dewhurst and Geraldine Fitzgerald.

4. 1985 TAO HOUSE CALENDAR. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, following the sellout success of its handsomely illustrated, fact-laden calendar for 1984, has produced a 1985 edition in the same format that fully equals the brilliance of its predecessor. Edited by Darlene Blair and Lois Sizoo, the new calendar celebrates, with chronologically ordered photographs, the Foundation's just-completed first decade of activities, among them three O'Neill productions. (The cover, seen here, shows Tao House in 1944.) To get your copy, send a check for \$11.50 (\$1.50 of which will cover postage and handling) to The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526. An additional \$15 will secure you a year's membership in the Foundation and aid its work in turning Tao House into a *living* memorial to Eugene O'Neill.



1985 Calendar

5. SIC TRANSIT...; or AFTER THE MOROSCO, WHAT? Sites associated with Eugene O'Neill's theatrical career continue to disappear with lamentable regularity. As one awaits the resurrection of the Provincetown Playhouse and watches a hotelier's behemoth tower above the dark hole where Broadway's Morosco once stood, another playhouse reverberant with O'Neill association has also fallen victim to "progress." The Orpheum in Ogden, Utah, may not loom large in the biographies, but it was on its stage, on Friday evening February 2, 1912, that Eugene O'Neill first trod the boards as a member of his father's acting company in the five-scene, 40-minute vaudeville abbreviation of *Monte Cristo*. Not that the debut was heralded; unlike brother Jamie, also in the cast of eleven, Eugene got no mention when the event was reported in Ogden's *Evening Standard*. But history was in the making when first-nighters, paying a top price of 75¢, settled back to enjoy Mr. O'Neill's "engagement extraordinary" and such attendant acts as Charles F. Semon ("The Narrow Fellow"), Rice, Sully & Scott ("Fun on the Elevated Bars"), Puck & Lewis ("Nimble Footed Lyric Singers"), Ray Samuels ("The Blue Streak of Rag Time"), Wentworth, Vesta & Teddy ("Comedy Acrobats") and the Juggling Burkes.

The Orpheum, designed by Ogden architect S. T. Whitaker as a duplicate of the California Theater in San Francisco, opened on December 31, 1890, as the Grand Opera House, changed its name when it joined the Orpheum circuit in 1909, became a movie house after the vaudeville era, returned briefly to live performances in 1977, and ended its 93-year life just a year ago when, despite the efforts of a civic group, the Orpheum Theater Restoration Association, to save it, it was felled to make room for a two-level parking garage. Few who park there will realize the significance of the site in the career of a theatrical tyro who was to become America's greatest playwright. [Many thanks to Jean Anne Waterstradt for gathering the materials on which this memorial report is based. --Ed.]

## 6. NEW AND IMMINENT PUBLICATIONS.

- a. *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*, edited by James J. Martine, has just been published by G. K. Hall & Co. in Boston (\$28.50 hardbound, ISBN 0-8161-8683-9). Its contents, all new essays, were listed in the last issue of the Newsletter (p. 47); a review will be featured in the next issue.
- b. *The Eugene O'Neill Companion*, by Margaret Loftus Ranald, is scheduled for December publication by Greenwood Press of Westport, CT. (ISBN 0-313-22551-6, \$65.00 hardbound.) A review will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter, and members of the Eugene O'Neill Society should watch the mail for word of a possible discount price available only to them. Here, in advance of both publication and review, is the publisher's description of the *Companion's* contents: "In-depth synopses of [O'Neill's] complete published plays with original cast lists and key portions of his unpublished scenarios are presented with critical commentary by Ranald. Character analyses are given for all but a few minor figures. Biographical essays on members of O'Neill's circle--both family and professional associates--appear throughout the work, together with essays on individual theatrical companies, actors, actresses, and other persons intimately associated with O'Neill production and performance. The arrangement is that of a dictionary catalogue and an extensive index is provided. Three appendixes supplement the *Companion*. The first chronologically lists all completed plays. The second appendix details film, musical, and other adaptations of O'Neill's work with original cast lists. The third appendix provides a critical assessment of dramatic theory and practice, a history of O'Neill scholarship to the present day, and directions it may take in the future. In addition there is a selective bibliography of sources for continuing study of O'Neill."
- c. "Masks in the Dramaturgy of O'Neill," an essay by Edward L. Shaughnessy, will appear in the Fall 1984 issue of the *Irish University Review*, a journal published by University College, Dublin. An abstract will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.

7. BERMEL VOLUME RETURNS. Readers and teachers who enjoyed Albert Berme's *Contradictory Characters: An Interpretation of the Modern Theatre* when it was published by E. P. Dutton in 1973, will be glad to learn that it has just been reissued by the University Press of America (ISBN 0-8191-4237-9) in a paperback edition whose price of \$12.75, while naturally steeper than that of the original, makes it attractive for assigning in courses on modern drama and comparative literature. Comprising an examination of 14 plays from Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1882) to Baraka's *Dutchman* (1964), with particular emphasis on characterization and performance, the book includes a chapter on "The Family as Villain: *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (pp. 105-121) that merits the attention of anyone who must confront the Tyrones, whether in the study, classroom or theatre. The UPA's address is 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706-9990.

## 8. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.

*Ah, Wilderness!*, dir. James O'Reilly. Body Politic Theatre, Chicago, IL, Sept. 13 - Oct. 21, 1984.

*Ah, Wilderness!* San Diego (CA) Repertory Theatre, Oct. 4 - Nov. 8, 1984, in repertory with *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

*Ah, Wilderness!*, dir. Mary B. Robinson. Hartford (CT) Stage Company, May 28 - June 30, 1985.

*Anna Christie*, dir. Cynthia J. Messier. Your Theatre, New Bedford, MA, Sept. 19-29, 1984. (Reviewed in this issue.)

*Anna Christie*, dir. George C. White. A production by the Beijing acting conservatory, People's Republic of China, October 1984. [The editor hopes to have a report on this historic event, guest-directed by the president of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT, for printing in a future issue of the Newsletter.]

*Desire Under the Elms*, dir. Edward Golden. Rand Theater, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, Oct. 11-20, 1984. (To be reviewed in the next issue.)

*The First Man*, dir. Ray Huebner. New Vic Theatre, 2nd Ave. nr. 14th St., New York City, October 11-28, 1984.

*The Hairy Ape*. Wilma Theatre, Philadelphia, PA, March 12 - April 7, 1985.

*Hughie*, dir. John MacDonald. Provincetown Playhouse production at the Provincetown Art Association, Sept. 20-21, 1984. (Reviewed in this issue.)

*Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. George W. Hayden. Gateway Playhouse, Wareham, MA, June 22 - July 14, 1984. (Reviewed in this issue.)

*Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Byrdcliffe Theater, Woodstock, NY, July 10-15, 1984.

*Long Day's Journey Into Night*. San Diego (CA) Repertory Theatre. In repertory with *Ah, Wilderness!*, Sept. 6 - Nov. 8, 1984.

*Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. Arvin Brown. Long Wharf Theatre, New Haven, CT, March 1 - April 14, 1985.

*The Long Voyage Home*, dir. Robert N. Scanlan. M.I.T. Dramashop, Kresge Little Theater, Cambridge, MA, October 4-6, 1984. [The Dramashop opened its 30th year with "An Evening of Provincetown Plays," in which O'Neill's one-act was preceded by Glaspell & Cook's *Suppressed Desires* and Wilbur Daniel Steele's *Not Smart*. An illustrated report will appear in the next issue.]

*A Touch of the Poet*, dir. Steven Schachter. Berkeley (CA) Repertory Theatre, Sept. 14 - Oct. 21, 1984.

9. STRANGE INTERDICTION. The successful London production of *Strange Interlude*, starring Glenda Jackson, may make it to Broadway. Actors Equity will permit Ms. Jackson to repeat her role in New York, but it rejected several of her supporting players, and the star refused to make the journey without them. Negotiations are under way between the union and the Nederlander Organization, the goal being a two-way exchange of performers--American actors getting roles in London while the West End cast of O'Neill's drama plays here. More anon.
10. O'NEILL CENTENNIAL SERIES PLANNED IN OHIO. The September 1984 issue of *American Theatre* included a letter from Lucia Colombi, Artistic Director of The Ensemble Theatre in Cleveland Heights. Responding with gratitude to the article on O'Neill by Albert Bermel in the previous issue of *AT* (abstracted in this issue of the Newsletter), Ms. Colombi announces her theatre's plan for "a residency devoted to [O'Neill's] plays in his 1988 centennial" (p. 2). The Newsletter will report the specific works and production dates when they are available.
11. EDUCATIONAL PLANS FOR CENTENNIAL. Albert Wertheim and Vera Jiji are working on a project, in connection with the forthcoming O'Neill centennial in 1988, to bring the playwright and his works to non-traditional students.
12. LOST NOTES RECOVERED. On page 54 of the last issue, I noted with embarrassment and apology that I'd misplaced the topic of Professor Cho Mun-Ho's dissertation on O'Neill, a project that he expects to complete early in 1985. Having discovered my notes, I can now inform readers of the topic: "Eugene O'Neill's Treatment of the Despairing Inner Self in His Expressionistic Plays." Persons with an interest in the subject, especially those knowing of materials that might be of use in the project, might write to Professor Cho Mun-Ho, Dept. of English Language and Literature, College of Humanities, Kyungpook National University, Korea.
13. ERRATUM. In Albert Kalson's review of the London production of *Strange Interlude* in the last issue (Spring 1984, p. 31), the name of the scenic designer was inadvertently misspelled as Noytek. Our apologies to Voytek for that misrepresentation.