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WRESTLING WITH GOD: OLD TESTAMENT THEMES IN O'NEILL'S BEYOND THE HORIZON

The search for God is undoubtedly one of O'Neill's major preoccupations in many of his plays. In a letter to George Jean Nathan on the subject of Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill explained his feelings on religion. After the death of the old God, O'Neill wrote, science and materialism failed to give "any satisfying new one for the surviving primitive religious instinct to find a meaning for life in, and to comfort its fears of death with.... It seems to me," he wrote, "that anyone trying to do big work nowadays must have this big subject behind all the little subjects of his plays or novels, or he is simply scribbling around the surface of things and has no more real status than a parlor entertainer."1 O'Neill borrowed his "big subjects" from a variety of sources, predominantly Greek legends and Christian theology and ritual. The interest of this essay, however, lies in those "big subjects" which seem to be indebted to, and inspired by, the Old Testament. The story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac is strongly suggested in the plays which dramatize the lives of the 19th century New England Puritans--namely, Where the Cross Is Made, The Rope, and Desire Under the Elms.2 In Beyond the Horizon (1918), O'Neill's first full-length play, which depicts sibling rivalry between Robert and Andrew Mayo, we sense the compelling presence of the story of Jacob and Esau.

At first glance, it may be difficult to recognize the influence of the biblical story. Indeed, Beyond the Horizon contains no references, or direct allusions, to the Old Testament in general, nor to the Jacob and Esau narrative in particular. Furthermore, the plot of the play, particularly in its resolution, differs from the biblical narrative. Yet the influence of the Old Testament can be found in striking thematic correspondences. The story of Jacob and Esau is deeply embedded in the thematic texture of the play and becomes a metaphor, a paradigm for the strife of the Mayo brothers, and perhaps all of O'Neill's brothers. There are also other prominent biblical themes in the play--in fact, seven in all. In addition to the two brothers, there are the relationship between the brothers and their parents; the reversal of roles; the bowl of lentils; the exile; the wrestling with God; and the reconciliation.

I. THE TWO BROTHERS.

Jacob and Esau are sharply contrasted in character and aspirations. Jacob, the younger brother, is delicate and spiritual, "a plain man, dwelling in tents" (Gen., 25, 27). Midrashic literature views him as a reader and a student. Esau, by contrast, is strong and physical, "a cunning hunter, a man of the field" (Gen., 25, 27). He is a man of action and appetites. When he comes hungry from the field one day, he sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils. In Hebrew Jacob's name has two meanings, to follow and to deceive. Prior to his wrestling with God on the Yabbok river, Jacob is indeed a follower. As Elie Wiesel describes him, "Everyone made him do things--and he obeyed.... Incapable of initiative, he could never make up his mind."3 As a young man, Jacob is passive and timid. He obeys his mother when she orders him to steal from Isaac the blessing reserved for Esau. He listens to her when she advises him to escape his brother's wrath and flee to Haran. In Haran, he allows his uncle, Laban, to take advantage of him. We do not have much information on Esau, but from the little we know we can infer that, unlike his brother, he is independent and rebellious. When he marries a Canaanite woman, he openly defies his father (Gen., 26, 34-5).

The two brothers in Beyond the Horizon bear a striking resemblance to the biblical brothers. Their contrasting personalities are also suggestive of O'Neill and his brother Jamie, and of other brothers in O'Neill's plays, particularly Jamie and Edmund Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night. Robert Mayo, the younger brother, has a delicate constitu-

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tion and refined features. He is a sensitive thinker and an avid reader, with "a touch of the poet about him". Like Jacob, Robert is a dreamer. He lives intensely in his visions of "the far off and unknown," and pursues "the secret which is hidden just over there beyond the horizon" (I.i, 13). Like Jacob, who dreams of angels ascending and descending a ladder "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven" (Gen., 28, 12), Robert is in quest of revelation. His older brother, Andrew Mayo, is "husky [and] sun-bronzed," "a son of the soil" (I.i, 2). Like Esau he is "a man of the field," and like Esau, who is described as "cunning," Andrew is "intelligent in a shrewd way" (I.i, 2). Like his biblical prototype, he is rather contemptuous of the world of the imagination and of the spirit. The sea, which attracts Robert (as it did O'Neill), holds no fascination for Andrew: "You can have all the sea you want by walking a mile down to the beach," he says to Robert (I.i, 14). He derives more satisfaction from the earth than ever from "any book" (I.i, 8). Like his father, Andrew is wedded to the soil and is thus naturally destined to inherit the farm. Robert's essence lies in wandering and in the pursuit of beauty and mystery.

II. SONS AND PARENTS.

In the play, as in the biblical story, the mother dotes on the younger son, while the father loves the elder and chooses him as his heir. Isaac loves Esau because "he did eat of his venison" (Gen., 25, 28). James Mayo favors Andrew because, like him, he is a true farmer. Like Esau, Andrew is the bread winner and brings home food from the field. The biblical mother, Rebekah, loves and protects her younger son, Jacob. Kate Mayo, who had once been a school teacher and still "retains a certain refinement of movement and expression foreign to the Mayo part of the family" (I.ii, 29), loves Robert. She constantly worries about his health and is deeply upset by his plans to leave home. Later she protects him from Mrs. Atkins' blatant and malicious accusations. Both Jacob and Robert are mother's sons. Both, indeed, are strongly influenced by women later in their lives. Jacob obeys his wives, Rachel and Leah. Robert sometimes gives in to Ruth's wishes too easily, particularly at the beginning of their relationship.

III. REVERSAL OF ROLES.

When Rebekah conceives, God says to her: "Two nations are in thy womb and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen., 25, 23). The prophecy comes to pass. Jacob buys Esau's birthright with a bowl of lentils and secures the covenantal blessing from his father, Isaac: "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee" (Gen., 27, 29). Not only is the elder destined to serve the younger, but Jacob is assigned a role which is most alien to his nature. He is timid and submissive, a dreamer. In the blessing he is called upon to be a leader, a man of action and authority. He habitually withdraws from action, but in the future he will have to command and rule. Esau, the proud and independent brother, will bow down to Jacob.

In the play a similar reversal of roles and fates occurs, although the theme of usurpation is absent. Robert gives up his sea voyage for the love of Ruth: "Our love is sweeter than any distant dream," he tells her. "It is the meaning of all life, the whole world. The kingdom of heaven is within--us!" (I.i, 26). He decides to become a farmer and show his father "that I'm as good a Mayo as you are--or Andy, when I want to be" (I.ii, 44).

4Eugene O'Neill, Beyond the Horizon (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920), I.i, 2. All subsequent citations refer to this edition of the play and are included in the text in parentheses. The numbers refer, in order, to act, scene and page. Readers will discern some discrepancies between this first edition and later printings of the play, but the differences do not affect the arguments advanced in the essay.
Andrew, who is also in love with Ruth, decides to join his uncle on the ship. Both brothers thus choose a vocation which runs against their natures. Robert inherits the farm while Andrew, the son of the soil, takes off to the sea. The farmer becomes a sailor; the sailor is turned farmer. Like the biblical brothers, Robert and Andrew find themselves in roles which contradict and thwart their identities.

IV. THE BOWL OF LENTILS.

In his anger and pain, Andrew gives up his inheritance— as Esau had done, for a bowl of lentils. The biblical narrator judges Esau harshly and summarily: "And Esau despised his birthright" (Gen., 25, 34). We may say that Andrew, too, despises his birthright, the farm. As James Mayo says to him on the night of his departure: "The farm is your'n as well as mine. You've always worked on it with that understanding; and what you're sayin' you intend doin' is just skulkin' out o' your rightful responsibility" (I.ii, 50-51). In the years of his travels, Andrew's practical side, his shrewd eye for business, overrides his love for the land. At first he is engaged in legitimate wheat trade. Later, however, he drifts to speculating. As he says to Robert: "I'd always been dead set against that form of gambling before" (III.i, 143). Andrew speculates in wheat, in that which he used to grow with his hands. He is turned from a creator to a parasite, as the dying Robert tells him:

You—a farmer—to gamble in a wheat pit with scraps of paper. There's a spiritual significance in that picture, Andy.... You've spent eight years running away from yourself.... You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership.... But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray you've gotten from the truth. So you'll be punished. You'll have to suffer to win back— (III.i, 152-153)

The image of the bowl of lentils serves to illuminate, not only Andy's plight, but that of O'Neill's brother Jamie as well. In O'Neill, Arthur and Barbara Gelb compare Jamie to Andy, "an antagonist both loved and hated, a symbol of the potentially fine soul grown stunted and envious and destructive...." This destructiveness is the betrayal of the spirit. It is not the gambling money, or the love of Ruth, forgotten in six months, which induces Andy to give up his birthright, but spiteful envy. He sells his soul for no gain. For a mess of pottage.

V. EXILE.

In the play, as in the Bible, the reversal of roles and heirs results in a long and bitter separation. This is a period of exile, a period of purgatorial experiences. Esau, deprived of his inheritance and betrayed by father and brother, leaves home and defies his father's values. He marries a second Canaanite woman, a deed which flies in the face of Isaac's decree, "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan" (Gen., 28, 1), and settles in the land of Seir. Andrew, similarly, leaves home and rejects the values he has been brought up on. As a punishment, James Mayo banishes his son from his house: "And you go—tomorrow mornin'"— (I.ii, 55-56). The love between father and son is turned to anger, and in both stories the father dies before a reconciliation can occur.

Jacob is an exile in Haran, away from his mother and his home. His uncle, Laban, tricks him into working fourteen years for his daughter, Rachel. Laban, who was meant to be Jacob's protector and benefactor, becomes his exploiter. Although the details of the plot in the two stories are different, Robert, like Jacob, is deprived of the protective influence of his uncle. He is lonely and isolated on the farm. His confidence in his ability to become a Mayo is quickly shattered when he realizes how deeply he hates

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5Gelb, p. 579.
the work and how unsuited he is for farming. After his father's death, the farm deteriorates rapidly. The farmhands despise Robert and desert him one by one. His mother-in-law hounds him with accusations. And even his wife, his "Rachel," for whose love he undertook this hardship, is turned into a harsh browbeater.

Both Jacob and Robert are alienated and derided. Yet both continue to struggle. Their struggle is heroic and awe-inspiring. It is a struggle against all odds—a struggle that, by its very nature, cannot end in an unequivocal victory, a struggle with invincible powers.

VI. WRESTLING WITH GOD.

On the night preceding his meeting with Esau, a night of loneliness and untold terrors, Jacob confronts a man whose identity is unknown. The man wrestles with him until the breaking of the day, maims him, but cannot subdue him. Jacob will not let the man go until he blesses him. The man gives Jacob a new name, Israel, "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And Jacob names the place "Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen., 32, 24-32). Jacob emerges limping, but triumphant. He survives the awesome confrontation and lives on to become a patriarch and a father of multitudes.

What is the meaning of this strange and magnificent event? Jacob receives a new name, Israel: he is no longer a follower, but a "prince" who dares to confront God. He has undergone a startling transformation. As Wiesel describes it:

At Peniel he was attacked, at Peniel he responded. Jacob, the nonviolent, the timorous, Jacob the weak, the resigned, the coward who always succeeded in avoiding confrontations, particularly violent ones, suddenly resisted the aggressor, plunged into the fight and returned blow for blow. And there was nobody around to come to his rescue, or even to give him moral support, or even to admire him.6

After years of inner strife, Jacob finds in himself strength to overcome his fears: his fear of confrontation, his fear of independence, and his overriding fear of Esau. His victory is not over the aggressor but, in Wiesel's succinct phrase, "A victory over himself."7 Jacob could have run away. But he stood his ground, resisted the force, and faced what he had to face—alone. He looked into his own darkness and battled with it. At the break of day he felt that he had seen the face of God.

There is a stubborn determination in Jacob's wrestling and in his demand for a blessing: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen., 32, 26). Jacob had already been blessed by his father. But that blessing was stolen. He did not deserve it. It was not meant for him. He was not there. This time Jacob is determined to prove his worth. He pits his soul against the divine, demanding a new blessing as a sign that he has earned his birthright. This time it has to be him. And he is, indeed, worthy. He exhibits a boldness of spirit which equals the heroic confrontations of his forefathers. He comes to his own, richly deserving his new and honorable name, Israel.

Of all the themes in the play which correspond to the biblical tale, the wrestling with God seems to be the most elusive. God or religion are rarely mentioned. James Mayo is "contemptuous of all religion" (I. i, 21). So is Andrew. The spiteful and self-righteous religion of Mrs. Atkins is satirized. Robert, after the death of his daughter Mary, openly denies God: "I could curse God from the bottom of my soul—if there was a God" (III. i, 129). His bitter rejection seems to validate John Raleigh's judgment that through Robert O'Neill invoked "the non-existent Deity of the twentieth century."8

6Wiesel, p. 136.

7Wiesel, p. 138.

Upon further consideration, however, this conclusion appears to be hasty. The search for God is disguised, but it is the driving force behind Robert's actions. Throughout the play, he is engaged in a formidable struggle. His conflicts do not occur on the social level. He does not battle his wife, his brother, or his workers, and he even makes allowances for his mother-in-law. Robert's struggles occur on the spiritual plane. He seems to be locked in combat with a mysterious force. He demands an explanation for his suffering and his failures. He looks for truth, meaning, "a finer realization" (III.i, 133). He relentlessly pursues the "secret beyond the horizon." As he tells Ruth: "Life owes us some happiness after what we've been through. (Vehemently.) It must! Otherwise our suffering would be meaningless--and that is unthinkable" (III.i, 132). In the Bible, the confrontation with God is concrete, physical, stunning. In the play, it is indirect, diffused, symbolic. And yet Robert, like Jacob, is a wrestler. He believes that life has meaning and he insists on being vindicated, not by men, but by the unfathomable being beyond him.

Robert's wrestling arena is the farm. It is here that his mettle is ultimately tested. When he chooses to become a farmer, he finds out that he must carry an unbearable burden—he must live with hate. He hates the farm and Ruth hates him. How does one deal with hate? Many of O'Neill's characters escape from their problems to alcohol, drugs, pipe dreams, cruelty, or gambling. Robert is different: he does not run away. He works hard on the farm, honoring his commitment to the land, and to Ruth. He faces up to the farm, and his mistakes, daily. What may not be immediately obvious is that Robert has choices: he could sell the farm; he could lease it; he could desert it. He does not do any of these things. If he did, he would have jeopardized the lives of the three women dependent on him. He works on the farm and brings it to ruin. And yet he prevails. He made a mistake in marrying Ruth, but he tries to save the relationship and improve its quality. As he says to Ruth: "... let's both of us try to do better. We can both improve.... You know the odds I've been up against since Pa died. I'm not a farmer. I've never claimed to be one. But there's nothing else I can do under the circumstances, and I've got to pull things through somehow. With your help I can do it" (II.i, 82-83). Among O'Neill's characters, Robert is unique in accepting overwhelming hardships without giving in to escapism and defeat. This is the essence of his dignity. He had wrongly chosen to be James Mayo's heir, but he does not sell his birthright.

From one angle, Robert dies pathetically. He leaves behind him a wrecked farm, debts, and a wife broken by suffering. The final scene in the play, as Raleigh points out, "takes place in the cold, pitiless light of an October morning which throws its watery glance on the human wreckage that the Mayos have become." Unlike Jacob, who survives the confrontation at Peniel and lives on to become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, Robert dies desolate and childless. And yet the "cold pitiless light" in the final scene is mellowed by the "bright color" of the rising sun. Dawn in this play, as in Desire Under the Elms, signifies promise and revelation.

For although he lived in spiritual exile, in death Robert's struggles seem to be rewarded. He dies exultantly. At the hour of his death he finds the "comfort" O'Neill was associating with "the primitive religious instinct." It is as if he had managed at last to wrest the secret from the oblivion of death, as if he had finally grasped the mystery of existence. He attempts to leave behind him not despair, but hope: "Remember, Andy, Ruth has suffered double her share, and you haven't suffered at all.... Only through contact with suffering, Andy, will you--awaken. Listen. You must marry Ruth--afterwards" (III.i, 153). For Andy, who had lost interest in the farm and in Ruth, this is an unbearably grim commitment. And yet Robert, who is unaware of his brother's limitations, is determined to correct the mistakes of the past, and once more reverse the roles. The farmer will go back to the soil, and the woman will marry the man she had always loved. Robert's legacy signifies his victory over his own jealousy and hate, a victory over himself. He escapes from his room and climbs to the top of a roadside bank where he can see the sun rise. He frees himself from the forces that chained him and wildly asserts his independence: "I couldn't stand it back there in the room. It seemed as if all my life--
I'd been cooped in a room. So I thought I'd try to end as I might have--if I'd had the courage to live my dream. Alone--in a ditch by the open road--watching the sun rise" (III.ii, 162). He feels vindicated and, for once, worthy of respect. He has wrestled with the power beyond and prevailed. His final speech is ecstatic:

Look! Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come--(Exultantly.) And this time I'm going--I'm free! It isn't the end. It's a free beginning--the start of my voyage! Don't you see? I've won to my trip--the right of release--beyond the horizon! (III.ii, 163)

What is the essence of Robert's vision? We may borrow the biblical metaphor and say that what Robert sees in the sun is--perhaps--the face of God.

VII. THE RECONCILIATION.

In the Bible and in the play there is a moving reconciliation between the brothers. The expression of love is free and warm. In the Bible, the brothers' past bitterness seems to have vanished. Jacob has overcome his fear of Esau, and Esau has forgotten his anger: "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept" (Gen., 33, 4). Andrew comes home to his brother to support him in his sickness: "... I love Rob better'n anybody in the world and always did. There isn't a thing on God's green earth I wouldn't have done to keep trouble away from him" (III.i, 158). And yet, in both stories the reconciliation, although moving, appears tentative and incomplete.

The meeting between the biblical brothers is brief. Esau is remarkably generous, but Jacob is wary of him. He does not quite trust his brother; he is restrained and uncertain. He promises Esau to visit him in Seir, but he never does. The brothers remain distant, different, separate.

In the play, Andrew's love for Robert is put to a severe test. Will Andrew obey Robert and marry Ruth? He dislikes her intensely. He talks to her with impatience and aversion as if he were ashamed of ever having loved her. If he marries her, he will have to wrestle with the same unbearable burden of hate that Robert had had to struggle with. Is he capable of doing it? Andrew's final words to Ruth give no answer to these questions: "I--you--we've both made such a mess of things! We must try to help each other--and--in time--we'll come to know what's right to do--(Desperately.) And perhaps we--" (III.ii, 163).

The reconciliation is marked by rapid, painful discoveries. In the few hours he spends with Robert, Andrew learns more about himself than he had done in his entire lifetime. He does face the truth: "we've made such a mess of things." But will he become a Robert, or will he dwindle into a Jamie who admits his weaknesses but helplessly gives in to them? Could Esau wrestle with God?

The strange biblical prophecy, "The elder shall serve the younger," shapes the lives of Jacob and Esau and casts its long shadow on their relationship. Andy, like Esau but in a more desperate way, becomes his brother's server. He is doomed by his love for his brother, and by the irreversible twists of fate. If he obeys Robert, he will be trapped by the farm and the woman. If he does not obey him, he will be tormented by his moral debt to his dead brother. Like Esau, who is told by his father that "by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother ..." (Gen., 27, 40), Andrew is condemned to a life of bondage and waste. Esau, however, creates a new life for himself in the land of Seir and is furthermore comforted by Isaac's distant promise of freedom from the rule of Jacob: "... and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (Gen., 27, 40). Andrew cannot have his own independent future, because Robert's will deprives him of choices, even the choice of his own mode of expiation, and forces him to stay on the farm.

The biblical story sheds light on the quality of love and distance, affinity and contrast between the brothers. It links their struggle to the archetypal rivalry and the archetypal search for identity. It adds richness and depth to the lives of the New
England farmers, and it becomes a vehicle for the expression of the search for God. Yet it is in the outcome of this quest that the parallel ultimately splits apart, showing the fundamental difference between the biblical promise of life and continuity, and the tragic vision of O'Neill.

In the biblical story the presence of God is never doubted. The covenantal promise, which God had given Abraham, preserves the lives of the patriarchs and ensures the continuity of the family and the community. It transcends the twists and turns of events and overrides the threatening conflicts between father and son, brother and brother. Isaac survives Abraham's sacrificial sword; Jacob escapes the wrath of Esau; and Esau ultimately frees himself from his brother's yoke. The covenantal vision, transmitted from father to son and shared by the community, is reassuring and inspiriting.

O'Neill's vision, by contrast, is grim and ambivalent. Throughout the play he seeks God, but he constantly doubts Him and questions His presence. The quest, which strengthens Jacob, exhausts Robert and finally kills him. He dies with a comforting vision and seems to have found God. But he cannot pass on to his brother his mysterious and perhaps redeeming legacy. Neither Ruth, who is beyond the "troubling of any hope," nor Andrew, can touch his secret which thus becomes a burden and a curse. Robert's God, like Ephraim Cabot's, is hard and lonesome.

In both the Bible and the play the struggles of the spirit are monumental and mysterious. In the Bible they renew the bonds between man and man, man and God. In the play they raise profoundly disturbing questions. Is Robert's endeavor rewarded? His moral victory is a poignant achievement. But can it ennoble or inspire others? Is Robert's victory a Pyrrhic victory? Is it too costly to pursue or imitate? Yet in spite of the harrowing and threatening nature of these questions, O'Neill continued to wrestle with them throughout his career, and this is the measure of his courage and achievement.

--Shelly Regenbaum

HUGHIE: SOME LIGHT ON O'NEILL'S MOON

Eugene O'Neill's one-act play Hughie (1941), the only finished work of his planned cycle, "By Way of Obit," is frequently linked to The Iceman Cometh (1939) because the two plays share the motif of the pipe-dream or the saving life-lie. Hughie connects just as importantly, however, with O'Neill's last complete play, A Moon for the Misbegotten (1942). Critically regarded as a disappointment, Moon has won ridicule from Eric Bentley, Mary McCarthy, and Ruby Cohn, who dismiss virtually all but its mythic qualities. But Hughie points to a thematic and structural continuum in the late works that helps to illuminate the final play.

Two related patterns develop through Iceman, Long Day's Journey Into Night (1940), Hughie and Moon. After O'Neill's career-long emphasis on how the closeness of love and hate dooms marriage and the family, the late plays provide a progression toward some consolation for that failure. The second pattern is structural. It inheres in the changing role of a character who listens to an exhortation at the dramatic center of the play, a "pitch" that in Hughie comprises almost all the dialogue. Although the new night clerk Hughes and Josie Hogan are technically the stage listeners in their respective plays, each becomes the agent of a consoling resolution.

These linked developments rest within O'Neill's use of the Jamie O'Neill character, a glib and charming Irish-American, dispossessed, anti-poetic, cynical about women, disintegrating in heavy drinking. Various renderings of the playwright's older brother appear as the salesman-reformer Hickey in Iceman, as the down-and-out gambler and teller of tales

Erie Smith in *Hughie*, and, in more openly biographical avatars, as Jamie Tyrone in *Journey* and *Moon*. Change in the use of the Jamie figure occurs in two ways. First, while he remains utterly alienated in *Iceman* and *Journey*, the two later plays offer him a degree of solace and provide audiences with the satisfaction of two desolate persons finally making contact. Secondly, in the last play O'Neill displaces his focus onto a more energetic and spiritually wholesome character, Josie, who represents an alternative to unremitting bleakness on the one hand and saving life-lies on the other in a godless universe. Her closing benediction is not for Jamie alone.

Characteristically for O'Neill, in these four late plays it is marriage, not just the wife, that is the destructive force. (The husband in *Ile* is as culpable as the wife in *Before Breakfast.*) *Iceman*'s Hickey has just killed his wife Evelyn, whose pity had made his life unendurable. The ghosts of their wives torment Hickey and Harry Hope, and marriage between Cora and Joe is clearly an absurd dream. In *Journey*, the failure of the Tyrone men to rescue Mary Tyrone from drug addiction does not draw them closer, and the family fails in every respect. In *Hughie*, Erie maligns the late night clerk's wife as an inadequate companion and mourner; he mocks the notion of marriage for himself; and the new clerk, who is married, is wretched. In *Moon*, marriage is impossible between Jamie and the formidable farm woman he admires; Josie's demands are more than he can bear, not because of anything she asks for but because of her wholesomeness. Rather than revive him, her love heightens his self-loathing in general and in particular his guilt for dallying with a prostitute on the train that carried his mother's coffin.

Since marriage and family fail, camaraderie is the substitute that O'Neill explores in these works. Fraternity in *Iceman* is only a fragile bulwark against desolation, but it serves. Even the "tarts" are sexless chums to the group we meet in the back room of Hope's saloon. In *Journey*, of course, the concept of fraternity is grimly ironic, given Jamie's complicated motives toward his sick younger brother. But in *Hughie*, "fraternity" between the gambler and both Hughes sustains where family fails or does not exist. Unlike *Iceman*, in which the action circles from a stupor at the "bottom of the sea" to the possibility of change, and then back to the bottom, *Hughie* advances. The emergence of a second Hughes is a positive development in contrast to *Iceman*'s bleak awakening of Larry and Parritt and the group's repudiation of Hickey.

In *Iceman* and *Journey*, characters' self-revelations are generally thwarted, deflected, unmet by like responses. One of these moments occurs when the young poet Edmund Tyrone tells his father of an experience at sea: "For a second you see--and seeing the secret, are the secret. For a second there is meaning! Then the hand lets the veil fall and you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason!" (Act IV). This "vision of beatitude" contributes nothing to the relationship of father and son; it has occurred in the past and in solitude, and James Tyrone, unlike the audience, is little affected by his son's monologue. On the other hand, Erie Smith meets with some success in his effort to recreate a situation with the "meaning" that the first Hughie had brought him. Human connection occurs as well in the dramatic present in *Moon*. At the end of Act Two, Jamie Tyrone yields to spiritual intimacy when he sobs "rackingly" on Josie's breast. As a result he feels his soul at peace, as if his "sins had been forgiven." Both *Hughie* and *Moon*, then, while less complex and resonant works than *Iceman* and *Journey*, contain lyrical moments of release from hopelessness.

All four plays are about efforts at salvage from despair. In *Iceman* and *Journey* those efforts end in calamity. In the name of friendship Hickey proselytizes the denizens of Hope's bar in order to embrace them in his guilt. As a result he adds to Evelyn's murder Parritt's suicide, Larry's spiritual death, and his own probable execution, inasmuch as two policemen hear his confession. In *Journey* the Tyrone men cannot save Mary from drugs or one another from desolation; if Edmund survives in spite of Jamie and their father, he will always be "a little in love with death." Erie, however, rescues both himself and Hughes. At the play's conclusion Erie's commitment has shifted from the dead Hughes to the living one. "His soul is purged of grief, his confidence restored," the stage directions indicate, and his new partner embarks on the dice-game "manfully," a word which,
whatever else it may mean, denotes vital responsiveness. The talisman-name Arnold Rothstein has ensured that the gratifying association will be repeated; the two characters wink at each other.

In *Moon* Jamie Tyrone, like the second Hughes, is presented as the living "dead," but Josie's efforts to warm him to interaction have limited success before he goes away. Jamie's knowledge of his rottenness is too complete to permit compromise with lies that Erie and Hughie can relish. But this final work does not conclude with a return to the "bottom of the sea" or the smothering fog. Josie's failure to win Jamie over from aloneness and death manifests a rearrangement of the pattern in *Moon*.

While the Jamie figure makes overtures in all four plays, during the action of *Moon* it becomes clear that he is also at the receiving end of exhortation. Josie is the more dynamic striver, and Jamie is only one of two characters with whom she struggles. Her father, a benign antagonist, will make her life endurable at the play's end. The shift from stupefying pain of family in *Journey* and *Iceman* to non-familial camaraderie in *Hughie* evolves to comfort within a literal family in *Moon*. Though Tyrone leaves forever, he recedes into "an exceptionally beautiful sunrise" which is the "token" of his and Josie's fleeting emotional nakedness and their long night's journey into communication. Though solace cannot revive the deteriorated Tyrone, it is dramatically present in the Hogans' affection and resilience and in the play's final lines, Josie's benediction, which articulates her own arrival at peace.

Corresponding to this increased consolation for the failure of married love is a progression in the role of the stage listener who is subjected to virtuoso persuasiveness. The persuader argues in order to transform that stage audience, and transformation through rhetoric follows a developing line through the four plays. When Hickey intends to convert his listeners to his mode of facing up to pipe-dreams, his confession produces either death or retreat to psychological safety. The best that results is the group's final assessment that their friend has been demented. The *Journey* Jamie's major speech is his fourth-act confession to Edmund that he has made the younger brother his "Frankenstein." Though he cherishes Edmund's writing talent, his envy has driven him to make his brother his partner in dissoluteness. Even as he confesses, he warns the "kid" of his continuing danger. The mixed effects of the older brother's influence--worldliness and a love for language on the one hand, health-destroying dissipation on the other--have been accomplished before the time of the play; they are not present action, and Jamie's lengthy speech, like Edmund's to their father, leaves no substantial new mark. Edmund is merely disgusted at Jamie's "shooting off his mouth" and more generally miserable.

In the last two plays O'Neill makes a lasting transformation become the immediate action. In this respect *Hughie* most resembles *Moon*. As Erie and Jamie dwell on their ghosts--the former night clerk and Jamie's mother, respectively--each is at the same time shaping his stage listener into a comforting reincarnation of the dead person. Erie's recreation of the night clerk is fruitful: with the aid of the city's oppressiveness, his monologue transforms Hughie's namesake. Similarly desperate, Jamie in *Moon* takes advantage of Josie's devotion by conjuring, in Act Three, a surrogate mother who can forgive him. Despite their bluster and misunderstandings fostered by Hogan, Jamie and Josie do communicate. She convinces him to remember his need for her without shame. Though he is mortified at recalling their intimacy and tries to undermine it with cynicism, with great struggle he corrects that subversion and leaves without the defenses he arrived with. Death-bound though he is, refashioning Josie as his mother has eased him. After the calamities wrought in *Iceman* and *Journey* by verbal manipulation, the next two plays delineate some creative metamorphosis.

But Jamie's small solace is not the play's resolution, and Erie's victory alone is not that play's resolution. The most curious way in which *Hughie* points toward *Moon* is in what O'Neill does with the role of protagonist. The stage directions in the one-act depict the inner life of Charles Hughes, for the most part independent of Erie's expostulations. This extensively detailed silent dramatization, which has consistently defied theatrical presentation, makes Hughie II more than the minor character his mere lines
suggest. In their ballet-like ritual, these two wretched men are in tandem the protagonist(s)---on the page if not yet in performance. This broadening of focus prepares for Moon.

Critics like Doris Falk who call Moon's Jamie the playwright's most undramatic protagonist are paying more attention to biography than to structure. Mythic figure though Josie may be, she is not the archetypal nurturer that Cybel is in The Great God Brown but a forceful protagonist. From the play's outset she impels the action, conspiring first against her father and then with him. Her needs advance the action: what is at stake is her home and her only chance at love. The audience honors what she wants rather than the living hell that Jamie clings to. Alongside a Jamie figure so lost to hope, O'Neill places a protagonist with the emotional strength to handle profound loss without self-pity or self-deception. Her capacity for generosity and fun is not incidental or sentimental but an alternative response to catastrophe. A reader without biographical bias would see Jamie as the major event in Josie's story. The opening scene with her fleeing brother, for example, makes little dramatic sense unless the play is hers.

The issue is not one of gender. In dramatic function Josie resembles Erie more than Jamie does. Frightened as never before, she too confronts someone who appears emotionally dead; her task too is to define her position with the replica of a man she had once trusted. On parallel courses, Josie and Erie woo their quasi-dead with prodigious wit and energy. The urgent persuasiveness, then, of the Jamie figure in Iceman, Journey, and Hughie recurs in Moon more in Josie than in the passive, enfeebled Jamie Tyrone. While, unlike Erie, she faces truth boldly, she and Erie both are able to convert their pain into a life-creating force.

In this considerable way Hughie is closer to Moon than to the other plays, and the pattern discloses that O'Neill's final expression was not simply a fantasied release of his brother's tortured spirit but a broader vision of human resourcefulness.

---Marcelline Krafchick

A NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS. As previously announced (on p. 45 of the Spring 1984 issue), the new MLA documentation style will be expected of all future submissions to the Newsletter. Footnotes like the one below will become (sigh) a thing of the past, replaced by parenthetical citations of author and page number(s), in the text itself, following quotations or other references [e.g., (Falk 175)], with full documentation appearing in an alphabetical list of "Works Cited" at essay's end. Hereafter, footnotes will be used solely for additional or tangential information that would be too interruptive in the essay-proper. The change will be gradual, as a number of excellent articles employing the old style are still awaiting publication and the editor (second sigh) despairs of having the time to convert them all to the new format. But future submitters will be likelier to see print quickly if they play by the new rules. Joseph F. Trimmer has produced a particularly clear and helpful Guide to the New MLA Documentation Style (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984, 41 pp.), but it is available only to users of Houghton Mifflin composition textbooks. It is worth looking for, but the 1984 edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers is accessible to all and merits acquisition. --Ed.

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"MY YOSEPHINE": THE MUSIC FOR ANNA CHRISTIE

In Anna Christie as well as its earlier version, "Chris Christopherson," when old Chris enters the saloon of Johnny-the-Priest, he bursts into a song which he tells the bartender he learned from an "Italian fallar" on another barge:

"My Yosephine, come board the ship. Long time Ay vait for you.
De moon, she shi-i-i-ine. She looka yust like you.
Tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee."

The song recurs through the play in fragments, at intervals when Chris is feeling elated.

There is no copyright recorded for a Josephine song with these words, and an extensive search through a variety of sea song collections proved fruitless.

However, the somewhat unexpected origin of the song is revealed in a letter written by Eugene O'Neill to his wife, Agnes from New York City. The letter is undated but was probably written December 2, 1919. In it, O'Neill tells of a visit to the Hell Hole saloon, suffering now because of prohibition so that all hands are reduced to drinking sherry. His lament ended, he continues to tell Agnes that Lefty, one of the Hell Hole bartenders, is excited because his "Josephine" song is going to be in "Chris":

...he swears - (and I believe him) - that Josephine is his own stuff, a song he made up when he was singing in a tough Wop cabaret -- "my own bull-s - t" [sic], he exclaims proudly. That it is to be heard on Broadway is a great event in his life. He offers, as soon as rehearsals start, to go up for a couple of hours every morning to instruct Corrigan how to sing it -- without desiring pay for his services! All he wants is two seats to take his girl to surprise her with his song -- on Broadway!

This little incident of the song seems to me quite touching in a way. Don't you think so? And quite characteristic. It sounds rock-bottom and I think all the hours seemingly wasted in the H[ell] H[ole] would be justified if they had resulted only in this.*

Agnes was amused and remarked in reply that Lefty's fortune was likely to be made as a great song writer. She added that the song was going to make a hit and that its story would make good publicity. "Really," she added, "there is something touching about it."

"Chris" did not make it to Broadway and Emmett Corrigan who first played him was not cast by Arthur Hopkins in "Anna Christie." There is no reason, however, to suppose that a new tune was found the next year when George Marion played the role with Pauline Lord. Marion was a perennial as Chris. He played the role in the silent film opposite Blanche Sweet and again in the sound film with Greta Garbo and Marie Dressler. There the song was preserved, sounding to be sure more like a polka than an Italian song:

"MY YOSEPHINE"

* Eugene O'Neill to Agnes Boulton, December 2, 1919. Quoted by permission of the American Literature Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
Marion sings the line "Long time I'm wait for you." He does not sing the "tchee-tchee" words which were presumably to be sung to the same tune as Chris forgets the rest of the lyrics.

--Travis Bogard

BRINGING O'NEILL'S WORKS TO LIFE IN THE DRAMA CLASSROOM

First, let me state the already well known: from the beginning of his career, O'Neill saw his works as living pieces of theatre—works intended to be performed, to come to life on the stage. His early involvement with the Provincetown Players was the initial gesture of this commitment. Later, once his reputation was established, he further demonstrated this commitment by involving himself with the Broadway productions of several of his plays. He clearly saw himself as a man of the boards and intended that his plays remain vital to the world of theatre.

Second, let me state a generalization which appears to be equally true: O'Neill's works are often isolated today in college and university classrooms, the subjects of scholarly study divorced from the stage. Certainly this study is purposeful, and certainly the analysis is enthusiastic—often creating its own "drama" as teachers and students subject the texts to rigorous analysis. Yet we must surely acknowledge that discussion of O'Neill's plays does not substitute for seeing them come to life, for seeing them performed.

Some university communities, as regular readers of the Newsletter know, produce O'Neill's plays, happily complementing the classroom study of the plays themselves. The range of texts produced and the sheer number of productions suggest that some fortunate teachers and students can see O'Neill's works as they were envisioned.

But what of those of us who can only infrequently convince our theatre departments to stage an Ah, Wilderness! or an Emperor Jones? What of those teachers who receive gentle but firm rebuffs suggesting that one O'Neill play every few years is quite enough? Should we resign ourselves to these unfortunate situations and present O'Neill plays only from the printed page? I think not. For if we teachers are willing to make contact with teachers of oral interpretation, acting and directing classes, then we can bring life to at least selected scenes from O'Neill's plays—and emphasize the striking dramatism of his plays for our students. If we cannot introduce our students to entire plays well acted, can't we at least let them see individual scenes well performed?

To orchestrate this connection among English, speech, and theatre departments, teachers of drama in English departments must first of all consider the qualities of O'Neill's plays which make them actable and suitable for interpretation, because the "burden of proof" for arranging these activities will undoubtedly rest upon our shoulders. We must contact people in other departments clearly convinced that O'Neill's works offer oral interpreters and actors a chance to stretch themselves and learn their crafts—for essentially, they must see value in these activities too, or they will comply either reluctantly or not at all.

What, then, makes O'Neill's works so good? First (and very important for workable interpreting and acting), O'Neill's plays are filled with extended monologues and scenes between pairs of characters. A monologue by Hickey from The Iceman Cometh or a scene between Christine and Lavinia from Mourning Becomes Electra can be easily arranged with the teacher of an oral interpretation or acting class, whereas a scene with a full complement of characters would be more difficult, if not impossible, to stage.

Second, O'Neill's experiments with language (low-life cant, high-flown rhetoric, or dialect) provide a tremendous range, giving oral interpreters and actors chances to experiment with a wealth of kinds of dramatic language. Nat Bartlett's ravings in Where the Cross Is Made, the brutish neo-eloquence of Con Melody in A Touch of the Poet, and the rantings of Yank in The Hairy Ape provide real challenges for collegiate performers. Segments from plays like these are rich opportunities for performers and rich experiences for an audience of students.
Third, O'Neill's plays are filled with strong, interesting characters imbued with equally strong emotions. Quite simply, that makes good theatre. A confrontation between Edmund and Jamie in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, an impassioned speech by Hogan in *Moon for the Misbegotten*, or even the bitter harangue of Mrs. Rowland in *Before Breakfast*: all explore the emotional, sometimes irrational, and yet very human workings of characters within dramatic situations.

Fourth, many of the monologues and scenes in O'Neill's plays have self-contained rising "action" and climaxes. Such moments as Captain and Mrs. Keeney's fateful conversation in *Ile* and the revelation scene between Abbie and Eben in *Desire Under the Elms* offer their own encapsulated complications, rising action, and denouements. These self-contained sequences are important for the interpretation or acting of only portions of plays, for they allow performers a chance to work within a limited context and give an audience of students a "whole" experience.

Fifth, and finally, many of the smaller segments of O'Neill's plays are strong "mood pieces," developing--sometimes quite apart from the larger plot--intense and enlightening characterizations. Mary and Cathleen's conversation in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* provides a wrenching portrait of a woman whose illusions have been shattered and who is unable to cope with the loss. Richard and Muriel's secret rendezvous in *Ah Wilderness!* offers a tender, bittersweet look at child-like innocence and optimism. And Tyrone and Josie's coming to terms in *Moon for the Misbegotten* shows a growing sense of self-awareness. These scenes explore human psychology and interrelationships, and that, too, can make for challenging interpretation and acting, as well as enjoyable viewing.

We can contact the teachers of oral interpretation classes (typically found in speech or communications departments) to arrange for interpreted scenes from plays; we can contact the teachers of acting and directing classes (found in theatre departments, of course) and suggest that students prepare scenes from O'Neill plays. Most of all, we can contact other teachers whom we know in these departments, or we can approach our own students majoring in those departments and begin our work.

We should start by explaining what is to be gained by such interdepartmental work: students in these several areas of study would sense that our work is closely related; performing students would get a chance to "prove themselves" before real audiences; students in drama classes would see at least portions of O'Neill's work as they were intended. Then we would need to make more specific arrangements.

Together, the instructors would need to decide which scenes from which plays should be performed. Drama teachers might suggest scenes from plays on their reading lists, although they should be flexible enough to allow for scenes from other plays as well. Interpretation and acting students could feasibly attend the drama class and perform there (a table and two chairs can serve well enough if actors know those restrictions at the outset). Or a better plan is to have an "Evening of O'Neill," something like a formal production but using a variety of scenes and monologues. In that way the university at large could benefit from the efforts of the students.

Our work with O'Neill's plays in the drama classroom must include textual analysis and discussion, of course. We are, after all, teaching the texts. Yet we can enrich the reading and study of the plays if we draw upon the people in oral interpretation and acting classes. For through them we can bring portions of O'Neill's works to life.

--Robert Perrin

[EDITOR'S AFTERWORD. Professor Perrin's article is particularly welcome because it introduces a subject too seldom covered in these pages--the treatment of O'Neill and his works in the classroom. I hope that many will follow his lead, share their ideas and experiences--happy or sad--with their colleagues, and thereby aid the common cause of nurturing future audiences clamorous for revivals of O'Neill. (Note the "or sad": we can learn and benefit as much from avoidable bloopers as from epiphanic triumphs.) Letters, anecdotes, essays: all are welcome. If enough arrive to warrant it, a section on "O'Neill in the Classroom" can become a regular Newsletter feature in 1985 and after.]
O'NEILL'S STATELY MANSIONS: A VISITOR'S REMINISCENCES

[In May, 1976, Winifred Frazer delivered a lecture at the University of Florida as part of that year's series of talks by President's Scholars. Entitled "The Making of a Monograph; or, With a Little Bit of Luck, You Too Can Be a Scholar," it related the chance discovery that inspired her research into the influence of Emma Goldman on the young O'Neill--research that resulted in the well-known monograph, *E.G. and E.G.O.: Emma Goldman and The Iceman Cometh* (University of Florida Press, 1974) and bore additional fruit in two subsequent articles: "'Revolution' in *The Iceman Cometh*" (*Modern Drama*, March 1979), and "A Lost Poem by Eugene O'Neill" (*The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, May 1979).

The series of events, searches and inquiries that led to the definitive establishment of Goldman's influence (early and late) on O'Neill, and to the attribution of Hugo Kalmar's leitmotif in *The Iceman Cometh* ("The days grow hot, O Babylon!/'Tis cool beneath thy willow trees") to German socialist poet Ferdinand Freiligrath (whose words are significantly altered by the playwright), equals in complexity and excitement the best of detective yarns. And it all began with a "little bit of luck"--a photograph of O'Neill's study at Casa Genotta in Sea Island, Georgia, which revealed, amid the hundreds of indecipherable spines in a wall bookcase, the bold title of just one--the two-volume *Living My Life*, Emma Goldman's autobiography, published by Knopf in 1931. If the Knopf editor had not chosen such large lettering, the book would have suffered the anonymity of its fellows. If the photographer had stood a few inches from where he did, it would have been hidden behind a huge post, simulating a ship's mast, that stood in front of the case. Luck indeed!

The rest, as they say, is history, and the results have been a boon to subsequent O'Neill scholars. The photograph was one of a set of twenty that Professor Frazer had acquired from the Atlanta architectural firm of Abreu and Robeson. A selection from the set, showing Casa Genotta at the time of the O'Neills' occupancy, follows this extract from the 1976 lecture--a personal survey of O'Neill's American domiciles, which seems as apt a preface to the pictures that follow as it was to the tale of scholarly sleuthery it introduced when originally delivered. The editor is grateful to Professor Frazer for sharing her experiences with the Newsletter's readers and for providing the descriptive captions that accompany the photos of Casa Genotta, surely one of O'Neill's stateliest mansions! --Ed.]

Before relating the lucky events which led to the monograph *E.G. and E.G.O.: Emma Goldman and The Iceman Cometh*, I must describe an attempted project at which I had no luck. For several years I speculated about literary artists--Eugene O'Neill in particular--and the relation of their art to their environment. I asked myself whether the physical structure which O'Neill called home affected the plays he created during his residence there. O'Neill seemed to have been always in search of a home. Since he lived (he thought each time permanently) in a series of houses ranging from New England to Southern Georgia, from the far Northwest to California, from Bermuda to the Loire Valley in France, and since he wrote many dramas in different styles during his lifetime, he seemed an admirable subject for testing whether the immediate environment influences the artist's work.

I therefore visited half a dozen of the homes where America's only Nobel Prize-winning playwright had lived. His childhood home in New London, Connecticut, looks very like the Broadway and film settings for *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the autobiographical play about his family that is set there. The current owners allowed me to wander around, to look at the rooms, and to view the industry grown up on the shore of the tidal river across the street. I could envision the boy, Eugene, sitting on the porch with his nose in a heroic Irish historical novel or a Shakespearean play, but his own writing at the time was confined to imitative radical or romantic poetry printed mostly in the "Laconics" column of the local New London *Telegraph*.

Far out beyond Provincetown on Cape Cod, the isolated old Coast Guard station where Agnes and Gene lived while he wrote his early plays has long since fallen into the sea. Traveling out by dune jeep to the approximate site, I could gaze at the cold ocean where *E.G.O.* used to swim, even through the fall weather. In Provincetown, I could see the rooming house where the playwright inscribed on the ceiling a mystical passage from a tract
given him by Terry Carlin—"Before the soul can fly, its wings must be washed in the
draw of the heart!"—but no mystical insights stirred my mind.

I visited the great estate called Brook Farm in Ridgefield, Connecticut, where Eugene
and Agnes spent a few stormy years in the early twenties, and again was permitted to
wander around the grounds and the first floor of the house. About O'Neill, the present
owner knew only that he had thrown his wife down the stairs, but she did not know which
stairs, nor which wife. O'Neill, trying to play the role of lord of the manor, had even
bought a huge Irish wolfhound to add authenticity. But the great multi-roomed house with
servant quarters and the thirty-one acres of wide lawns, pasture, woodland, a four-car
garage, stable and other outbuildings could obviously not be cared for by a couple of
Greenwich Village Bohemians; and although Desire Under the Elms (1924) was set on a New
England farm, the differences between the little rocky-soiled Cabot homestead and Brook
Farm were so vast as to make unnecessary and similarities—are-coincident disavowal.

Three strikes would seem to make an out, but I persisted, hoping still that luck would
be with me. One hundred and fifty miles north of Gainesville, Florida, at Sea Island,
Georgia, is the home named Casa Genotta, Casa in honor of the Spanish architecture and
Genotta, of the perfect union of Eugene and Carlotta, newlyweds, who came in the early
thirties, thinking to have found the idyllic permanent domicile. Here it appeared that
home might have reinforced art. The only religious return-to-the-foot-of-the-cross play
by O'Neill, Days Without End, might indeed have been inspired by living in this Spanish
monastery-like structure on the sea, where it was written. Living at the elegant,
rustling Cloister Hotel on the island, and later in a rented house, the O'Neills super­
visied the building of their $100,000 "cottage."

Closed in on the sea side by high brick walls which form a courtyard and garden with
niches on either side for small religious icons, the patio-like enclosure, except for
three grated windows in the wall, protects the house and garden from the outside world on
all sides. The guest bedrooms downstairs are small, each giving on a corridor and each,
like a monk's cell, having a small peephole which may be opened from within. Having
given up liquor and with Carlotta fending off all but a few publishers, O'Neill, in
keeping with the atmosphere, lived something of a monastic existence here. But in spite
of the message of Days Without End—finding oneself in Christ—and in spite of three
visits to this home, I pursued the elusive subject without luck.

At the edge of a colder Atlantic in Marblehead Neck, Massachusetts, on a jutting rock,
stands a small house often covered with spray in a bad storm. What plays O'Neill might
have written here, with the nearby lighthouse testifying to the danger of the rocks! But
alas, he was past his productive years, and my visit proved to me only that O'Neill's love
of the sea persisted to the end of his life.

At Tao House, high in the hills west of San Francisco, Eugene O'Neill wrote his two
greatest plays—Long Day's Journey Into Night and The Iceman Cometh. Here, where he
thought to live the way of peace, the Tao, was the home I most wanted to see; but being
met at the gate by a Western hombre with rifle and a word about trespassing, I at once
retreated down the steep, twisting road. In the end O'Neill himself, as he wrote George
Jean Nathan, had parted from Tao House with relief: "We had loved it but we were getting
to hate it because we were slaves to it.... We are just eager to get away from here and
change our luck." Nothing seemed to change the luck of this hapless creator, who was
born in a Broadway hotel room and is said to have exclaimed, shortly before he died in
Boston's Shelton Hotel, "Born in a hotel room—and God damn it—died in a hotel room."

And nothing seemed to change my luck either. In spite of having hoisted all sails, I
was becalmed. So I took the folder—Eugene Gladstone O'Neill HOMES, labeled it requiescat
in pacem, and consigned it to a dead file.

Some years later a faculty development grant gave me leisure to investigate O'Neill's
taste in books. This playwright, who was aware that his initials spelled ego, was never­
theless surely influenced by what he read. I therefore disturbed the repose of the HOMES
folder to haul out some twenty eight-by-ten photographs purchased from the architectural
firm in Atlanta which had built Casa Genotta and photographed it as furnished by the O'Neill's. Several reveal filled bookcases in the halls leading to the baronial front room, in the playwright's upstairs bedroom, and particularly in his large upstairs study, three walls of which are lined with books. This study, by the way, unlike the Spanish cloister style of the lower floor, is patterned after a ship captain's cabin in memory of O'Neill's voyages as an able-bodied seaman. Jutting toward the sea, windows curve out in a bow shape. Beams across the ceiling, and, at the back, a metal spiral staircase leading to the roof, add authenticity. In view of this contrasting architecture to the Spanish loggia below, perhaps the playwright imagined it a Spanish galleon above.

Of the some 1500 volumes extending from floor to ceiling on three sides of the study, the titles of all but one are indecipherable. Blowing up some details of the photographs made the titles too blurred to read, and the negatives, which might give better results, appear to have been permanently lost from the files of the Atlanta architectural firm and the Georgia Blue Print Company from whom I purchased them. As luck would have it, however, by some fortuitous design of an Alfred Knopf editor, the title of one work is written in large letters lengthwise on the spine of each of two thick volumes. A huge post, simulating a ship's mast, stands almost in front of these two books, and one of the belaying pins attached to the mast extends down between the volumes, almost obscuring one. If the photographer had stood a few more inches to the other side of the mast, neither volume would have been visible. The work is entitled Living My Life (1931); its author, Emma Goldman.

Anarchist, feminist, spokesman for labor and the poor, Emma Goldman is mentioned in the biographies of O'Neill as being a radicalizing influence on his youth. At the time when he began to win fame as a Pulitzer Prize playwright in 1920, she had been deported from the country for anti-conscription activity prior to World War I. Consequently any connection between them was an early and tenuous one, consisting of his undocumented claim of an original poem in her little monthly magazine Mother Earth, and his friendship with her nephew and niece, Saxe Commins and Stella Ballantine. So I had no idea of making any spectacular discoveries when I casually leafed through a one-volume edition of Living My Life; but a heading caught my eye. Although the book is only slightly and abominably indexed, the editor supplies at the top of each page a heading whereby the reader can in brief follow the life of E.G., as her friends called her. After items like "I help the Welsh Players," "The conference of the unemployed," and "I learned of the massacres at Ludlow (Colorado)," I came upon, "Donald betrays our comrades." Did my mind flash to the important co-plot of The Iceman Cometh? There Donald Parritt betrays his anarchist mother and her comrades to the police. E.G.'s angry mention of Detective William J. Burns may have reminded me that O'Neill's characters also refer to Detective Burns who hired the betrayer of the West Coast anarchists charged with the 1910 bombing of the Los Angeles Times building.

If the brain is a computer, how many of the properly punched cards must be inserted for the instrument to make the needed electric connections? Maybe luck plays its part in the punching. Perhaps in my mind E.G.'s indignant exclamation—"The son of our old comrade Gertie, raised in anarchist circles and a guest in our house, turned Judas!"—superimposed itself in my mind on the curse of O'Neill's character Larry Slade: "I'd swear there couldn't be a yellow stool pigeon among them.... May his soul rot in hell!" In any case, evidence piled up that O'Neill had seen Emma Goldman as the betrayed anarchist mother in his play of old memories. I could not help speculating as well on the possibility that E.G.'s autobiography, which O'Neill possessed at Sea Island sometime between 1931 and 1936, connected the circuit in E.G.O.'s brain which led to the creation of The Iceman Cometh in 1939.

In The Iceman Cometh, Larry Slade, the old Foolosopher, "always croaking about death," is said to be the voice of the playwright. If early in the play Larry's "The best good is never to be born" is a pose, after the betrayal of Rosa Parritt, whom he had long loved, but left, he is in truth "a real convert to death." If Rosa Parritt is modeled on Emma Goldman, can it be O'Neill who suffers for her downfall? He admired her in his
youth. Did he feel he had betrayed her in turning from her ideals in his age? It is well documented that an old Irishman named Terry Carlin, a great talker, a former anarchist, a sponging hanger-on when O'Neill knew him, had been the model for Larry Slade. Terry and Eugene had hung around together at various bars and slept in uninhabited New York City tenements one winter, and had gone to Provincetown in the summer, Terry being the one to mention to the Provincetown Players that his friend had a trunkful of plays waiting to be produced. But it had not been known that Terry Carlin was a friend of Emma Goldman.

By the greatest good luck, I got to see a few odd loose copies of Mother Earth, dating between 1907 and 1916. Although few in number, they do include several dealing with the anarchist betrayal at the home of Emma Goldman. In the issue of January 1916, E.G. explains that she had allowed Terry Carlin and Donald Vose, son of her old anarchist friend Gertie Vose, to live temporarily in a little farmhouse she had been given at Ossining, north of New York City. They came to the place she rented in upper Manhattan on a day when several liberals, including Matthew Schmidt, Hutchins Hapgood, and Lincoln Steffens were there. At this time, Vose slyly obtained the address of Schmidt, one of the men he betrayed to Detective Burns. Terry Carlin no doubt told O'Neill of this incident in which E.G. felt herself to have been betrayed. Perhaps he also read her invective in Mother Earth---"Donald Vose, you are a liar, traitor, spy.... You will roam the earth accursed, shunned and hated."

As an Irishman, O'Neill would have viewed betrayal as the most iniquitous of crimes. In 1912, the year in which Iceman is set, O'Neill was the same age as the betrayer, Donald Parritt. Reaching back in his memory to the days he'd spent in run-down bars with Terry Carlin, he may have remembered how Emma Goldman's cries against injustice had stirred him as a youth. Perhaps he felt guilty for the failure of the America from which he had retreated high into the California hills. The exclusive home filled with Oriental art and called Tao House provided the Eastern but not the Western way of coping with life. Emma Goldman, the radical, had been hated and deported for putting Americans in conflict with their culture. O'Neill the artist was likewise in conflict with American culture. The radical and the artist shared an alienation from the mainstream. In showing in The Iceman Cometh that man lives on dreams, O'Neill characterized both: the movement proves as false as all the other illusions, whereas the play itself, described by a critic as drumbeats on the lid of doom, is as ineffective as all art, merely the pot-smoking of the artist, as O'Neill once called his playwriting. Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman's former lover, who was imprisoned and then deported along with her, once wrote O'Neill from exile concerning the playwright's fame and his own infamy. E.G.O. replied: "As for my fame, (God help us) and your infamy, I would be willing to exchange a good deal of mine for a bit of yours. It is not hard to write what one feels as truth. It is damned hard to live it."

From the mid-thirties O'Neill had been trying to write a series of history plays to illustrate the failing of the American dream through successive generations. The over-all title, A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed, placed the blame upon Americans for their materialism and desire for power and failure to live up to the promise of the new land. One wonders if it was not E.G., the great dominating figure of his youth, whose fate proved to him what had happened to America.

--Winifred Frazer

[EDITOR'S NOTE. Just a moment of interstitial musing before the pictures, inspired by having just read for review 1,691 pages in reference works, to the accompaniment of Hamlet's reply to Polonius' "What do you read, my lord?" "Words, words, words." Aside from biblioshots in Atkinson and a lone portrait in Ranald, that's all there was. Not that I'm averse to words: the more the better. But I do feel the time is ripe for a visual O'Neill compendium like Gay W. Allen's for Melville, Justin Kaplan's for Twain, and the Whitman portrait gallery in Godine's edition of Specimen Days. The Newsletter will try to fill the bill in the interim, but someone should hop the centennial express and gather the pieces of the visual record--O'Neill, his family, friends and homes, scene designs, and shots from stage and film productions--in a book that can complement the words, words, valuable words that will continue to burgeon. There's enough for a sumptuous tome, and we need it badly.]
CASA GENOTTA IN THE EARLY 1930S:
VIEWS OF THE O'NEILLS' SEA ISLAND, GEORGIA HOME AT THE TIME OF THEIR OCCUPANCY

Top left: exterior of O'Neill's study, above dining room, protruding beyond the monastery walls toward the ocean.

Top right: entrance from inner, fenced-in courtyard.

Below: side of house, showing servants' quarters at rear.
Top left: baronial living room at opposite end of house from the dining room.

Top right: hallway leading toward dining room. Entrance to small bedroom at left.

Below: dining room, facing ocean.
Top left: stairway to second floor, showing fine stonework.

Top right: O'Neill's bedroom--above dining room, as is the study. Less spacious than Carlotta's.

Below: study, built like ship's cabin, looking out to sea.
A recent review of two London productions of O'Neill plays raises some important questions. In the Spring 1984 Newsletter, Mr. Albert Kalson reported that Long Day's Journey was well received by the London critics, but closed after a short run. Strange Interlude, on the other hand, drew large and enthusiastic audiences even though it "baffled" the critics. This led Mr. Kalson to an extended contrast and criticism of the two plays. Strange Interlude, he wrote, was really soap opera, but Long Day's Journey was "a dramatic masterpiece." The greater popularity of Interlude, he felt, was "surely because the spectators are never involved in Nina's pain and suffering as they are in the wounding of the Tyrones." Only the insensitivity of an audience nourished on "segments of Dallas and Dynasty" could explain the success of Interlude. Surely the critics, and the reviewer, could not be wrong.

This kind of criticism is not new. Fifty years ago Francis Fergusson attacked O'Neill for "lacking discipline," but recognized his "appeal to a vast audience." Twenty years later Eric Bentley tried to like O'Neill but failed, and therefore condemned him. Now Mr. Kalson reports the continuing appeal of Interlude to a large London audience, but calls it "an outdated dinosaur of a play." Unlike Mr. Bentley, he does not even "try" to like it. The chief difference between this recent criticism and the old is that now the target is no longer O'Neill, but only Interlude and the early plays.

To one who has struggled for over fifty years to answer such criticism, all of this is profoundly discouraging. And to one who has always liked and admired Strange Interlude, it becomes exasperating. The unconscious arrogance of critics who, in the face of contradictory evidence, declare their judgments to be "surely" right, arouses violent reaction. But beyond personal feelings, it expresses a form of cultural elitism. Even though it recognizes that large audiences continue to like Interlude, they must be lacking in taste and education. The finely trained critics must be right.

I have said that this kind of elitist criticism is not new, and that it has been answered by modern critics. I have expressed my personal irritation at it. But the fact remains that it will not go away. It is a hardy perennial whose roots reach deep into the distant past. Without explicit reference, it assumes the sanctified authority of the Aristotelian tradition in order to validate its personal assertions. In the continuing quarrel between ancients and moderns, it denies all value to the moderns. They lack "discipline."

All this recalls a similar experience of sixty years ago. In 1924 Irving Babbitt's course on the Masters of Modern French Criticism devoted almost three months to an exposition of Aristotle's Poetics. The next three months considered the French classical dramatists, and the Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns. Only the final third of the course reached the nineteenth century, where it praised those modern critics who best realized the old Aristotelian principles. I remember especially the lecture on Brunetière, who condemned every author who diverged from those principles. On the final exam I wrote a diatribe against Brunetière.

Some years later Irving Babbitt did me the honor of noticing my attribution of an Oriental influence on O'Neill, but only to reject it. Over the last fifty years I have devoted myself (often unconsciously) to answering Professor Babbitt's Aristotelian dogmas. Now Professor James Robinson has published his book on Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought, and Professor Beongcheon Yu, in his American Writers and the Orient, has devoted chapters both to Babbitt, and to O'Neill.

Professor Kalson's total condemnation of Strange Interlude recalls Brunetière's total condemnation of his modernist French authors. The absolute assurance of authority is the same. And the absolute rejection of opinions which do not recognize this authority is the same. One danger of all this lies, not in its appeal to traditional values, but in its total rejection of all other possible values. Another danger arises from the tendency of those, whose modernist values are thus rejected, to reject in turn all traditional
values. For the traditional standards of criticism suggested by Aristotle's *Poetics* remain valid—within limits. Only when they are imposed beyond those limits do they do harm. Since *Long Day's Journey* observes the Aristotelian principles more fully than any other O'Neill play, whereas *Strange Interlude* ignores those principles almost completely, these two may illustrate the problem.

Most familiar are the three Aristotelian Unities. The unity of time directs that the drama take place within one day. The unity of place is obvious. The unity of action, in turn, focuses upon a single plot. *Long Day's Journey* realizes these almost perfectly. The unity of time is emphasized by the title. The action takes place within the walls of the New London cottage. And the plot dramatizes the day's journey of the four Tyrones within these walls. No other O'Neill play observes so perfectly all the Aristotelian Unities. *Journey* gains much of its power from the sharpness of focus and intensity of feeling which result from them.

The story of *Strange Interlude*, on the other hand, unfolds not in one day, but over four decades. It takes place in the different places in which Nina lives. And the only unity of action which it observes is that of Nina's biography. It has often been suggested that *Interlude* is more a novel than a play. Certainly it is not a tragedy, in any sense of the word. If it is judged only by the standards of Aristotelian criticism, it fails totally. By what standards, then, can it be said to succeed?

The great difficulty lies here: no standards of judgment different from those of Aristotle's *Poetics* have ever been clearly defined and generally accepted. In the absence of such standards, we may turn to Henry James's definition of the novel: "The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel ... is that it be interesting. The ways in which it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable. They are as various as the temperament of man."

Let us examine the various ways in which *Interlude* accomplishes "this result of interesting us." For interest us it does. Even if we admit all its imperfections, it has proved its popularity in simple terms of number of performances on the New York stage. And this does not take account of its sales as a best seller. Whether one likes it or not, it has succeeded in interesting a vast number of people. It may even be argued that this is the most interesting of all O'Neill plays.

The first way in which *Interlude* succeeds beyond the normal and in spite of the traditional, is by means of its convention of spoken thoughts. Although this seems at first artificial, and sometimes merely superficial (as when the spoken thought contradicts the spoken word), it makes possible the realization of a depth psychology impossible to simple realism. And if the language of this depth psychology sometimes seems naively Freudian, it nevertheless emphasizes that the Freudian "complex" itself borrows the language of Greek mythology. By means of this new dramatic convention, *Interlude* achieves some of the dimensions of ancient myth.

The second way by which *Interlude* succeeds is by its dramatic realization of what is, in actuality, unrealistic. The central scene of the play describes Nina kissing each of her "three men," while each both observes and accepts his role as husband, or lover, or father figure. The scene seems unreal in act, and surreal in technique—if it were to be shown on Dallas or Dynasty, it would be hooted off the screen. But it succeeds in the theatre, partly because of the earlier psychological probings, and partly because its very strangeness suggests a universal truth, which may be called archetypal.

More than Freud, the psychology of Jung interested O'Neill. And Jung's theory of archetypes may suggest one principle which O'Neill used in his dramaturgy. One character or one situation is developed to its logical limits, and beyond. So Nina, in her single-minded struggle for self-realization, suggests the modern archetype of the liberated woman, and also the ancient archetype of the earth mother. Later, O'Neill projected the character of Hickey beyond the normal limits of belief, and then created a new kind of archetype in the character of Josie Hogan. This archetypal criticism has been used effectively by the poet William Everson (Brother Antoninus) to interpret some of the narrative poems of Robinson Jeffers.
Beyond the complexes of Freud and the archetypes of Jung, O'Neill developed a third way of interesting his audiences— that of comparative religion. In *Marco Millions* he explored the chief religions of the Orient. But his interest in Oriental religion was mostly comparative. He was fascinated by the conflict of the mysterious East and the materialist West, with their opposing values. The religions of India, of course, projected the values of a matriarchal society, contrasting with the patriarchal values of the West. In *Interlude* Nina suggested this dichotomy by means of her idealization of God the Mother. Fifty years ago Devoto called these "one-syllable ideas, and mostly wrong at that." Now Mr. Kalson suggests that Nina's "odd journey from God the Father to God the Mother back to God the Father" may be excused in a play offered "purely in terms of entertainment."

From all this argument a certain pattern emerges. In a sense O'Neill wrote two kinds of plays. He used two kinds of technique to dramatize two kinds of subject matter. The traditional playwright wrote *Anna Christie, Ah, Wilderness! and Long Day's Journey*, using traditional techniques to dramatize familiar situations. But the innovative playwright also wrote imaginative plays for the theatre of tomorrow. For *Marco Millions, Lazarus Laughed* and *Strange Interlude*, he invented new techniques to describe strange characters in often unrealistic situations. Almost all the negative criticism of O'Neill has focused on these strangely imaginative plays with their untraditional techniques.

The chief task of modern criticism, I would suggest, is to explore and define the means by which O'Neill dramatized the infinite complexities of depth psychology, of comparative religion, and of myth. The critic of tomorrow would go beyond the Aristotelian tradition to develop what may be called myth-criticism (bearing in mind that Aristotle's Greek *mythos* is translated as "plot" or "story"). The stories which O'Neill told sometimes recall the myths and fables of the past, but sometimes imagine new myths for the future. The strangeness of *Strange Interlude* derives from its dramatization of these unfamiliar mythical archetypes and religious concepts. And its failure (in the eyes of traditional critics) derives from its sometimes self-conscious or intrusive use of these unfamiliar materials.

But, perhaps, the very failure of O'Neill to integrate perfectly the mythical elements of *Strange Interlude* made possible the supreme achievement of his later plays. In *Iceman*, for instance, he invented the archetypal figure of Hickey to give depth and universality to the American folk tale of the traveling salesman. What raises *Iceman* to a dimension far transcending that of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is O'Neill's naturalization of a depth psychology and archetypal significance which Miller's traditional naturalism can only suggest.

Finally, if O'Neill is compared to the great playwrights of the past, it is this archetypal power and psychological depth which most distinguishes him. When compared to Shakespeare, he obviously lacks the poetic beauty and graceful comedy of the great Elizabethan. But he shares with him the ability to dramatize the power of ultimate goodness and evil. His Hickey may even realize the ultimate nature of evil more perfectly than the motiveless malignity of Iago. And his Josie Hogan may realize the redeeming power of goodness more fully than the innocent devotion of Cordelia. O'Neill explored the complexities and conflicts at the heart of human nature. And, perhaps, he began this exploration with the fascinating imperfections of *Strange Interlude*.

---Frederic I. Carpenter

WHEN STRANGERS MEET: A RESPONSE TO FREDERIC I. CARPENTER

Exactly thirty years ago, in the very same Arts Theatre in London which, coincidentally, earlier this year housed the production of *Long Day's Journey* which I reviewed in the Spring 1984 *Newsletter* (pp. 30-32), I witnessed the first English language production of *Waiting for Godot*. It was perhaps the most extraordinary theatre experience of my life. I had never heard of Beckett, and the phrase "Theatre of the Absurd" had not yet been
coined. All I knew was that word was out that something unusual was happening, and anyone who cared about the theatre had better go and have a look. While some members of the audience stormed out of the theatre while the play was still in progress, slamming doors behind them to announce their displeasure, I sat in my seat silently stunned for some minutes after the curtain fell. I was overwhelmed, uncertain whether to laugh or cry. Perhaps during the course of the evening I had done both. I have seen the play since, but I have stopped going to its frequent revivals despite the fact that I always send my students to it if there is a production within traveling distance. When one reacts as strongly as I had that first time, there is no point in seeing the play again. That initial response can never be recaptured.

I bring up Waiting for Godot because I feel it is essential before I go on that I try to convince Professor Carpenter that I have been known to react strongly to what we had better call "non-traditional" theater. I would rather eschew his term "Aristotelian" because labels frighten me, and I have spent a couple of decades as a teacher of drama—not types of drama, or theories of drama—just drama. Since Beckett's play takes place in no time and no place and has no action, I think Professor Carpenter would agree that it is "non-traditional."

My differing reactions to Long Day's Journey and Strange Interlude, which have provoked a valuable essay-response from Professor Carpenter, forcing him to give expression to some strong feelings which obviously pre-date my recent review, have, I think, little to do with the "traditional" and the "non-traditional." He accuses me of "an elitist criticism" which "assumes the sanctified authority of the Aristotelian tradition in order to validate its personal assertions." No, Professor Carpenter. I do not take refuge behind sanctified authority. My assertions are personal. Trusting to my own judgment, I state my opinions based upon a mind and a sensibility which enable me, I believe, to distinguish the true from the false.

I suspect, and I hope that this is not impertinence on my part, that Professor Carpenter once had a theatrical experience of great magnitude involving Interlude, matching my own experience with Godot, and I envy him that. I would imagine that seeing—even reading—Strange Interlude in the late 'twenties must have been an electrifying experience which could color one's reactions to that play for all time. Its innovations and its daring were, for its time, quite extraordinary. But at that time O'Neill's reach could not exceed his grasp. Professor Carpenter is good enough to point out what O'Neill was attempting in Interlude, but he refuses to admit the possibility that the attempt may have failed by any standards other than "Aristotelian."

Borrowing a phrase from Henry James, Professor Carpenter suggests the ways in which Interlude interests us. The first of these is the convention of the spoken thoughts, which he himself admits are at times superficial. The convention makes possible, he tells us, "the realization of a depth psychology impossible to simple realism." I contend, however, that there are even greater psychological depths in the dialogue of Long Day's Journey. The London audience tittered at some of the more platitudinous of the spoken thoughts. No one titters when Hamlet says, "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt..." The difference is in the language. Hamlet's soars, Nina's sits there, awkward and empty, the "stammering" to which an eloquent Edmund refers in Long Day's Journey.

According to Professor Carpenter, the "very strangeness [of a scene in Interlude] suggests a universal truth, which may be called archetypal." In Long Day's Journey it is the familiar which suggests the universal, and Mary Tyrone is as much the archetypal woman as is Nina Leeds. It is in fact the close relationship between the two plays, as I attempted to suggest in my review, that became clear to me when I had the rewarding opportunity of seeing the plays on successive nights, of reacting to the honesty of the one, the contrivance of the other.

Professor Carpenter raises the question of comparative religion. Noting that I was bothered by the play's movement from God the Father to God the Mother and back again, he offers a valuable insight about O'Neill: "He was fascinated by the conflict of the
mysterious East and the materialist West, with their opposing values. The religions of India, of course, projected the values of a matriarchal society, contrasting with the patriarchal values of the West." His two sentences make clear what O'Neill left ambiguously mystical within the play itself or perhaps merely neglected to develop. But Professor Carpenter has misconstrued my meaning when I wrote that the "author's implications in his odd journey from God the Father to God the Mother back to God the Father ... may be entirely overlooked in a production which offers Strange Interlude purely in terms of entertainment." What I was attempting to convey was something about the quality of the production. Whereas O'Neill certainly had more in mind, Director Keith Hack was obviously interested in the play merely as a vehicle for a star performance by Glenda Jackson which would attract and entertain an audience comprising for the most part tourists from the United States and abroad who were filling London's theaters nightly after their daytime shopping sprees. After all, their real reason for being in London had little to do with their passion for the theatre, more to do with the strength of the dollar. The intended profundities of Interlude were left unexplored. It was a long but curiously undemanding evening, unlike the searing experience of Long Day's Journey, and much more fun.

Can a failed play be good theatre? Yes. As I noted in my review, there were thrilling moments along the way, but we must thank the performers for those moments more than the playwright. Seeing Jackson in Interlude, I was reminded of Peter Brook's amazing production of Titus Andronicus in which Olivier's performance convinced an audience that they were witnessing a play as great as Hamlet, as great as Lear--that is, until they sat down and read the text without the aid of Brook's theatrical magic. Yet we need to see Titus Andronicus in order to fully appreciate Shakespeare's achievement in Hamlet and Lear, just as Shakespeare had to write the one before he could attempt the others. In the same way, we need to see Strange Interlude in order to appreciate O'Neill's achievement in Iceman, Misbegotten, and Long Day's Journey.

Here, finally, Professor Carpenter and I meet on common ground. He writes: "But, perhaps, the very failure of O'Neill to integrate perfectly the mythical elements of Strange Interlude made possible the supreme achievement of his later plays." I say "Amen" to that. We may disagree on Interlude--he calls it a play "for the theatre of tomorrow"; I think of it as a play for yesterday--but we are in perfect accord on the genius of O'Neill and his great legacy to us all. And should Professor Carpenter have the opportunity of seeing this production of Interlude--it will apparently be on Broadway soon--he may even forgive me, especially if he manages, as I did, to attend a moving performance of Long Day's Journey the night before.

--Albert E. Kalson

[EDITORIAL INTERSTICE. Controversy may sell papers, though the Newsletter would never seek it out to boost circulation. However, the above interchange between Professors Carpenter and Kalson does raise major issues--about dramatic evaluation in general as much as about the relative merits of the early and late works of O'Neill--which other readers may wish to address. Responses and reactions, whether about the general subject or about the specific play that inspired it, will be welcome. If any are forthcoming, I will forward them in advance to Professors Carpenter and Kalson, in case they wish to re-respond.

One other recent item aroused considerable reaction, though mostly favorable. That was my review of the Provincetown Playhouse production, last September, of Hughie (pp. 37-39 of the Summer-Fall 1984 issue). My one reservation about the otherwise admirable performance was its failure to convey the inner musings of the night clerk that O'Neill relegated to stage directions. Harold Easton, in a letter in this issue, suggests a possible solution based on his own experience in the play. Here, too, other comments are happily invited. On the next page is a reprint of the program note I provided for the Provincetown production. It says nothing new, but it explains one of the reasons for my dismay: it quotes words by the night clerk that the audience didn't hear. How it must have mystified attenders who hadn't read the play!]
HUGHIE--BY WAY OF INTRO

The vast majority of playgoers remember Eugene O'Neill as a writer of unwieldy megadramas that challenge the backside as much as the mind, tax the resources of even the best endowed of acting companies, and must begin in the afternoon if the audience is to leave the theatre before midnight. The nine-act Strange Interlude; Mourning Becomes Electra, a trilogy in thirteen acts; and Lazarus Laughed with its cast of thousands: it is works such as these that have earned the playwright his cumbersome reputation. Even Long Day's Journey Into Night, surely the finest play ever penned by an American, and limiting itself to the interrelations on one day of a family of four, more than justifies the first word of its title.

The problem with this public reputation is that it is false--false because incomplete. O'Neill not only wrote some of the longest dramas in American theatrical history; he also wrote some of its best short ones, both early and late. In 1916, at the start of his legendary association with the Provincetown Players, he produced Bound East for Cardiff, the first in a series of brilliant realistic miniatures about the joys and travails of life at sea. And near the end of his career, in the early 1940s, he returned to the short form that had served him so well in the past and created, in Hughie, a work that stands confidently with the best he ever wrote. After two decades away from the genre--he had not written a one-act since 1920--he came full circle and crowned his career with what Travis Bogard has called "a perfect dramatic poem."

Hughie, which is all that O'Neill completed of an envisioned series of six plays to be collectively entitled By Way of Obit, bears interesting similarities with that first one-act of 1916. Though one is set on a British tramp steamer and the other in the lobby of a tawdry, run-down hotel in midtown Manhattan, and though the earlier play has a cast of eleven, each play's central core is a night-time duet for two men whose spiritual and emotional communion provides comfort and solace against the surrounding menaces of life and death. In Bound East, a sailor named Yank, fatally injured by a fall, is rescued from terror and afforded an easeful passage into the unknown by the consoling companionship of his shipmate Driscoll. In Hughie, the menace shifts from death to life—the life of impersonal violence, sordid shabbiness, and lonely anonymity spawned on the fringes of the modern metropolis. Two dispirited down-and-outers—a nihilistic night clerk with nothing and no one to believe in, and a third-rate gambler whose luck has run out since the death of his one admirer, the former night clerk—meet and slowly find, in one another, a reason for going on, a way (in the words of the night clerk) to "live through the night."

Both plays are amply leavened with humor, but neither posits a view of life that could be called upbeat or rosy. O'Neill may well have agreed with Hobbes that life is "nasty, brutish and short," and with T. S. Eliot that "human kind cannot bear very much reality." But in both one-acts, and in many plays between them, he showed with compassion that individuals, together, can hold the brutishness at bay; and that beliefs, even illusory ones (in The Iceman Cometh he called them "pipe dreams"), can render reality bearable, even happy.

O'Neill was to write more, and longer, before physical disability put an end to his days as an author. A Moon for the Misbegotten and the unfinished More Stately Mansions were yet to come. But Hughie seems to me the ideal keystone to his extraordinary dramatic career. Short in duration, but long and deep in implication and meaning, it deserves to stand, as it does this evening, alone. Many a long play offers less. Few, of any length, offer more.

Frederick C. Wilkins
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Editor, The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

Provincetown Playhouse
Provincetown, Mass. 02657
REVIEWS OF O’NEILL PLAYS IN PERFORMANCE


It is hardly surprising that theatrical producers would abandon The First Man or that literary critics would focus their attention on other works of the O'Neill canon. When I discovered that this early full-length play would be showcased by Stage Left, I anticipated the event with some reluctance. To my recollection, the presentation of obscure or less popular O'Neill, in the hands of a fledgling theatre company, rarely proves beneficial, either to O'Neill or to the company's reputation. On this occasion, however, the enterprising choice produced mildly engrossing results.

The protagonist of the four-act play is Curtis Jayson, an anthropologist determined to lead an expedition to Asia to discover "the first man." Jayson is burdened by two domestic responsibilities, which he painfully and unsuccessfully tries to avoid. The first, towards a dutiful wife and assistant, Martha, is revealed in his unwillingness to father another child. A conversation discloses that the couple had experienced the tragic deaths of their two young daughters several years earlier, and had promised to honor their memory by remaining childless. The second is towards Jayson's New England family whose philistine values he blatantly flaunts. When Martha announces that she is pregnant, Jayson suggests abortion. But Martha pleads that the child, certain to be a male, will serve as a "link" between them. The outcome is a curious one: Martha dies while giving birth to a son (their "first man"); and Jayson, refusing to acquiesce to his family's wishes that he acknowledge the child, entrusts it to them instead. Then he bolts out of the door to join the expedition long since under way.

As much as I tried to focus on the company's heartfelt attempt to breathe life into The First Man, I was continually distracted by the conglomerate themes, characters, and autobiographical data O'Neill was desperately trying to sort out. Most notably, the ghost of Strindberg hovers over the proceedings. The vault-like ambience of the living-room and study, unchanged through each act, suffocates all life within it, and contains the wrenching confrontations between Jayson and his wife, who closely resemble the married couple in Welded--one of O'Neill's purest Strindbergian exercises. Furthermore, intimations that Jayson may not be the father of his child are echoed by family members who function more as chorus than as fully etched characters. As for Jayson, drawn in the likeness of other tortured heroes we have come to recognize, he is passionate, stubborn, and poetic enough to believe that his dreams can only be realized in some foreign landscape. O'Neill's investigation of a similar premise, so powerfully developed in Beyond the Horizon, seems mere amateurism in The First Man.

Perhaps the most striking association between stage life and reality--Jayson's refusal to confront the newly born child--parallels the playwright's own alienation from a son (Eugene, Jr.), born shortly after his marriage to Kathleen Jenkins. Although he wrote the play while married to Agnes Boulton, the turmoil he felt in the conflicting respon-
sibilities of artist and husband was aggravated by the birth of another son, Shane, and his now inescapable role of father. The plays of this period reflect an undisguised anguish which has been heavily documented in the drama of his own life.

The mostly youngish actors at Stage Left, under the uncluttered direction of Ray Hubener, brought a much needed energy to the long-winded script. Occasionally the performance was marred by a solemnity which might have pleased O'Neill but did little to generate spontaneity in the action on stage. The fault lay in the direction. David Blackburn and Elizabeth Bove shared moments of power and credibility as husband and wife. Miss Bove was especially convincing, and her effortless and appealing manner elicited a strong response from the audience. At the performance I attended, the audience gasped audibly at the news of Martha's death—at once a tribute to O'Neill's inventiveness and to the actress's success in fashioning a character worth caring about. The one-dimensional portraits of the supporting characters, however, resulted from the playwright's weakness, in no way hidden or overcome by an inexperienced cast. A single set designed by Pat Vanderbeck served the players well, although an emphasis on primitive masks, highlighting the wall and alcove areas, seemed heavy-handed to me.

The New Vic Theatre is an attractive and intimate performing space with a roomy stage that rests at eye level with the first of some fourteen gradually elevated rows. This tightly contained atmosphere even suggests those environments in which the earlier plays were originally produced. I would hope that Stage Left, encouraged by the response of its audience, might tackle another infrequently performed American play before this season's end. It would be sad to discover its portal boarded up—the fate of so many Off-Off-Broadway enterprises.

--Gary Vena

2. ANDI (ANNA CHRISTIE), directed by George White. Theater of the Central Academy of Dramatic Arts, Beijing, China, October 16-21, 1984. [A scene from the production appears on this issue's cover, and Mr. White's New York Times report on the venture is synopsized on a later page. --Ed.]

Andi, a Sino-US hybrid of O'Neill's Anna Christie, was enthusiastically received and quite well attended here in Beijing. It opened on October 16, to commemorate O'Neill's 96th birthday, and ran for twelve performances, which was a respectable run by Chinese standards. Though in the later performances the theater was not quite full, those who attended seemed quite carried away by what they saw on the stage, for there was none of the whispering or departure during the performance that is usually found in Chinese theaters when a production is considered less than satisfactory. As a matter of fact, a large number of spectators were even moved to tears when the heroine, in Act III, screamed out her past as the two men around her both claimed to own her like a piece of property.

The title Andi is in fact an abbreviation, the first and last syllables of the Chinese translation of the title Anna Christie. Likewise, the other characters were given familiar Chinese names of two or three syllables, all easily traceable to their O'Neill originals. More significant changes were in the setting and year of the story. Instead of the waterfront in New York, Provincetown and Boston around 1910, the action of Andi was moved to the harbors of Shanghai and Ning Bo, two major seaports along the mid-east China coast, in the 1930s.

The idea to present in China an adapted rather than a translated version of O'Neill's play came from the American director, Mr. George White of the O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut. The producers—China's Theater Association and the Central Academy of Dramatic Arts—and even Mr. Huang Zhongjiang, to whom Mr. White entrusted the adaptation, had been wary of the effect of such temporal and geographical transplantation. Mr. White insisted on the change, though, and his reasons were understandable: to prove the universality of O'Neill and to make the play more easily accessible.
to those barred by historical and cultural gaps. Besides, a translated version of the play was produced just two years ago in the same theater by the same Academy, though with a different cast. And *Andi* is by no means the first attempt at adaptation.

Born of the influence of Western theater, modern Chinese drama has in its record a number of excellent adaptations of foreign plays, such as Hong Shen's *Young Mistress*’ *Pan*, based on Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and Ke Lin's *Night Lodge*, modeled on Gorky's *The Lower Depths*. These are works restructuring their models and well fitted to the Chinese cultural context.

But this adaptation of *Anna Christie* had to be different, for it was to be directed by someone who did not speak Chinese. Therefore, the production had to follow closely the original in structure, dialogue sequence and imagery, whereas the characters' nationalities and milieu were to be entirely transformed. Consequently one finds a number of incongruities inherent in the adaptation. For instance, the family entrance of the saloon in the first act was a bewilderment to the Chinese spectators, who were left at a loss as to why Lao Gui (Chris) and Mei Sou (Marthy), pronouncedly arriving together, should, and could, walk in through different entrances. Religion was another source of incongruity. That Ma Haiseng (Mat), a young Chinese sailor, should be a devout Catholic and, in Act III, insist in all seriousness on Andi swearing an oath on a cross: this seemed alien and arbitrary.

However, the most serious incongruity, one lying in the characters' temperaments, came mainly from the difference between the Chinese and American temperaments in general. A ready example is the way people express their emotions. In China it was, and still is, bad form to show emotion too openly. So, while American audiences were tickled and puzzled by the constraint and subtlety in dialogue and gesture between a couple on their wedding night in *Family*, a Chinese play recently produced at the University of Missouri and at the O'Neill Theater Center, the Chinese found Ma Haiseng's open and passionate display of his love un-Chinese, if not "unnatural." Actually, Mr. White had made several concessions to Chinese modesty: in Act II, Ma Haiseng appeared, not "stripped to the waist," as O'Neill had dictated, but in a tattered shirt; and the passionate kiss between him and Andi near the end was replaced by an embrace with some tender caresses. These alterations, however, helped little in changing the audience's impression that what they saw on the stage were but Americans wearing Chinese masks.

Mr. White, on the other hand, certainly has an eye for the kind of people he wants. Not only were the performers first-rate, but Huang Zhongjiang is unquestionably the best one could get for the adaptation. A well-known screen writer and a long-time admirer of O'Neill, Mr. Huang had, in his early life, experiences not unlike O'Neill's. For years he was a sailor roving around the world. In this play, he did all he possibly could to recapture in Chinese the sailors' life and O'Neill's spirit.

The cast for this production was exceptionally strong. Even the supporting roles were taken by famous actors and actresses of the Academy, who had earlier played leading roles in great plays like *Peer Gynt*. Lou Naiming as Mei Sou (Marthy Owen) was every inch an old-time prostitute, reminiscent of the excellent performance of Marie Dressler in the American film version of 1930. The opening scene in the saloon before any of the principal characters appeared was so well performed that, for a time, the audience were made to believe that they were seeing a real Chinese play in the style of Lao Shi's *Tea House*. (Ironically, this scene made the later incongruities all the more conspicuous.

Mr. Bao Guo'an in the role of Lao Gui (Chris) was certainly a caution, and his acting won the greatest praise of all. Ma Shuyun, in the title role, is also a performer to watch. She caught well the transitions from a cynical, worn-out prostitute to a sea-refreshed, innocent girl and then to a vulnerable, true lover. Xue Shan (Ma Haiseng), a young and less experienced actor, is smaller than the Mat described by O'Neill, yet he somehow managed to make up in youthful awkwardness for what he obviously lacked in size and strength.

The set design and lighting effects were both good, to the credit of Mr. Ming Cho Lee.
and Mr. Ian Calderon, especially in Act II, where a big barge was set against a black backdrop, with projected shades of colors creating the special mood the scene calls for. If anything, the settings in the other acts seemed a bit too realistic and familiar, which again accentuated the "misfit" in the action's transplantation.

All in all, Andi was a well-intentioned, well-cooperated and interesting production, though if Mr. White had given his complete trust to O'Neill and to present-day Chinese theatergoers, who are well exposed to Western drama, it might have been even better received. But the meaning and importance of this production reach well beyond the production itself. It is hoped that this kind of Sino-US joint venture will be widely echoed--both within and without the sphere of drama.

--Haiping Liu


The University of Massachusetts Department of Theater is to be commended for mounting a faithful, briskly paced production of Elms--the liveliest I have seen. Acting, lighting, sound, scenic design and direction combined effectively to convey the impression--certainly appropriate to O'Neill's determinist text--that the play is about freedom and liberation; more specifically, that both are ultimately illusory; that every freedom brings with it a new and different bondage.

Larry N. Lawlor's set and lighting design did much to convert the Rand Theater's deep, lofty, auditorium-wide stage into the smaller, constricting pressure cooker of an elm-dominated homestead that O'Neill envisioned. The upper area was filled with long strips of varyingly draped material of assorted widths, bearing down on the Cabot house and suggesting the foliage prescribed by the author. Granted, there was more muslin than maternity in their omnipresent overhang, and the strings and wisps suspended from them were more redolent of Spanish moss or (more appropriately) weeping willows than of elms. But one did sense the brooding proximity of the arboreal, so important to O'Neill and so seldom captured in less stylized attempts. And the silhouette they provided against the rear cyclorama, which featured the towering shape of Ephraim's beloved barn and glowed with the altering hues of the New England sky, added a visual interest above to complement the passionate conflicts played out below, and to suggest (at least to a recent rereader of Whitman) the relative significance of those passions, and the "filaments" they engender, in the "measureless oceans of space" around them.

Having no photograph of the acting area, I offer below, with apologies to Mr. Lawlor for the inaccuracies of an unskilled hand and an imperfect memory, a view-from-above of the set: the omnipresent rooms, at different levels, of the Cabot farm-house and the space in front of it where outdoor scenes were played. It is to the credit of the designer and the well-trained actors that one accepted the package as real and never questioned its peekaboo wall-lessness.
One of the delights of attending multiple productions of the same work is the mystery of whose play it will turn out to be each time—a question whose answer is frequently determined less by the script than by the balance of power among the major players. (Hamlet, Richard III and Brutus Jones are relatively secure in their preeminence; but Creon and Antigone, like the inhabitants of the Serebrovsky and Tyrone estates, must stake their claims anew with each embodiment.) In this instance, the clear winner—in terms of dominance, if not of right—was Ephraim, thanks to the considerable skills of Harry Mahnken, which far outclassed the less seasoned resources of John Campbell Finnegan (Eben) and Danielle DiVecchio (Abbie).

Not that the imbalance destroyed the ensemble. Finnegan, appropriately gauche and lanky, captured perfectly the coiled wire of pent-up rage that drives Eben in the opening scenes. And DiVecchio, effective in conveying the stone-hard greed that motivated Abbie's match with a superannuated spouse, switched convincingly between the provocative wiles she uses on Eben—first stalking him in the kitchen and then seductively luring him on the porch—and the barely concealed contempt with which she rejects Ephraim's every attempt at self-revelation and affection, as when he kneels before her on the porch and calls her his "Rose o' Sharon" (see accompanying photograph). But while the growing warmth between the two was clear in the parlor scene (it was a nice touch to have Eben don his best hat when he comes a'courtin'), neither reached anything like apotheosis at the end. (Eben's "Fergive me" to Abbie, after his return from the sheriff, was perfunctory at best, with none of the broken sobbing that O'Neill prescribes.) Hence the aforementioned undercutting of any ultimate idealism in this production.

Mahnken, in contrast, conveyed every nuance of the aging patriarch—both the loud, crusty surface and the vulnerable, introspective, less self-reliant man beneath it. When, in his bedroom confessions to his unheeding wife, he explains why he had "growed hard," the very delivery—in a voice husky but soft—showed that the hardness had never become heart-deep. And so Ephraim's success and survival on a rocky-soiled farm seemed far grander than the young lovers' solidarity in death; and his grudging praise of his son—"Purty good—fur yew!"—could here be accepted literally. Purty good—but no more.

The minor roles were well played, especially Simeon and Peter, Rick Martin and David Todd capturing all the latent comedy in the elder brothers' early scenes, though both joined the others in committing two flaws in an otherwise effective handling of O'Neill's New Englandese. "Purty" was uniformly delivered as "pritty," and "California," even when sung, lacks the rollicking allure of "Califor-ni-yeay." The crowd scene was efficiently directed, especially the hand-clapping, foot-stomping accompaniment for Ephraim's wild duel with a fiddler (Craig Eastman) who finally falls to the ground in defeat; and the group's freezing, except for a continuing undercurrent of sibilants, when important dialogue occurs elsewhere. Robert Shakespeare's sound design was unobtrusively evocative, especially in the parlor scene, whose supernatural-natural blend was echoed by metallic whirring (perhaps electronic) and a relentlessly ticking clock as Abbie nervously awaited her gentleman caller.

The original three acts, in accord with current practice, became two, the intermission coming after the first scene of Part II. An appropriate break, I thought, following Ephraim's "Pray for [God] to hearken," with husband and wife kneeling at stage-left, and preceding the electrical two-bedroom scene—the only moment when the lack of walls jarred with the author's intent.

All in all, a memorable evening of theatre—much enhanced, I should mention, by the
large, eight-page program designed and edited by Doris Abramson. Its combination of illustrations (drawings and period photographs) and commentary (including passages from Van Wyck Brooks, the Gelbs and Normand Berlin) helped to bridge the 134-year gap between a sophisticated contemporary New England audience and the elemental effusions of their fictional forebears.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

4. KEJSAR JONES, directed by Lars G. Thelestam, at the Royal Opera, Stockholm, Sweden.

On September 29, 1984, the Royal Opera had as its opening night at Rotundan (the theatre in the round) the première of a chamber opera, Kejsar Jones, with a new libretto based on Eugene O'Neill's The Emperor Jones. This music and dance drama has as composer the young Swede, Sven-David Sandström; libretto and direction by the young Finn, Lars G. Thelestam; costumes and masks by the young Finnish lady, Sunniva Thelestam; and choreography by the young Pole, Stanisław Brosowski. In short, this splendid presentation, based on the early expressionistic play written by the young O'Neill in 1920, is, altogether, a youthful production. It was proclaimed an immense success by critics and audiences.

In 1966 Mr. Thelestam became interested in The Emperor Jones when he directed the O'Neill play for the Finnish Broadcasting Company. In the early 1970s he worked at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, and the head manager at that time, Göran Gentele, became very interested in a Jones project. Gentele, however, became general manager of the Metropolitan Opera in New York; and not until 1978, when Folke Abenius was head manager of the Royal Opera in Stockholm, was new interest aroused in doing The Emperor Jones as a music drama. Then composer Sandström got involved, and he and the others who became interested in the project decided that only one person could play the leading role: the young Norwegian singer Kolbjørn Høiseth. The preparations had started.

Sven-David Sandström was born in 1942. In the beginning of his composing career he worked mostly with instrumental music, but when he got interested in great poetry, especially the English romantic poet William Blake, he became more and more interested in working with the human voice--first in pure songs, and then chamber operas. He finally found a dramatic libretto in Thelestam's Kejsar Jones.

The audience was seated in a circle around the arena stage, which, at the same time, is the place of worship in the voodoo culture. On the highest platform above the audience, the chorus stood like a wall around the stage, its members dressed in individual costumes and masks designed in a classic African style.

The action of the opera starts with the natives' escaping from the smoldering revolution; they are represented by an old woman (mezzo soprano), who has a short scene with the white man Smithers (baritone). Brutus Jones (tenor) appears and the earlier action is presented in a musical dialogue, which also brings Jones into the jungle.
Trees and stones are represented by the eight members of a mime group, Panopticon, who also symbolize the hallucinations in Jones' brain, haunted as he is by old racial memories which become more and more dominant as he tries to escape his pursuers as well as his bad conscience. Jones tries to shoot every new vision that appears, and, in doing so, he wastes all of his five bullets and even the sixth, the silver bullet meant for himself. During these scenes Jones takes off all of his gaudy uniform (one thinks of Idi Amin!), and in the end he wears only a pair of ragged shorts when he leaves the stage.

Smithers comes back, together with the native chief Lem (bass). They are followed by some native soldiers (one thinks of Fidel Castro's guerillas!). Lem has made silver bullets for his men, and after a short while they return, carrying the dead body of Brutus Jones.

Composer Sandström wrote the accompaniment for rhythm instruments—around thirty different such instruments—mainly drums played by four musicians. They, and the soloists, were conducted by the young Björn Hallman, who stood in the middle of the chorus. The performance was at the same time dramatic and tightly structured. Kolbjörn Höiseth gave his role both seriousness (in his fear) and humor (in his pompousness). Staffan Sandlund as Smithers played his role perfectly, as did the other soloists. Music and score were appropriate and made the production a composite piece of art of the highest order. Every performance has been sold out since the opening night. A tour throughout Sweden is planned for Spring 1985.

--Tom J. A. Olsson

[The illustrations on this and the preceding page are from the program booklet for Kejsar Jones at the Royal Opera in Stockholm and are probably the work of costume and mask designer Sunniva Thelestam. --Ed.]

The "Evening" was a rewarding one for the audience, who were not only treated to three works from the seed-time of modern American drama, but were also offered a slide show comprising vintage shots of the original Provincetown Players to the recorded accompaniment of comparably vintage piano music performed by "Knuckles" O'Toole. (I have this on the authority of an adjacent musicologist who could not contain his enthusiasm for O'Toole.)

The plays were well done—especially *Not Smart*, a euphemism for pregnancy among native Provincetowners circa 1916. Like *Suppressed Desires*, the play was a lively send up of the aesthetic and intellectual pretensions of the time, but it stood up well as more than just a period piece.

*The Long Voyage Home* conveyed effectively the foreboding implicit in O'Neill's text and provided a strong finale for the evening. The group did the utmost with its limited resources. Particularly fine was the set, designed by Lisa Ezrol and Michael Sid, which included the masterful detail of charring above the glass chimneys of the wall-mounted oil lamps (seen at the right in photos (c) 1984 by Mark Morelli). The lighting by Matt Giamporcaro was moody, adding to the aura of "a low dive on the London waterfront." And Prof. Scanlan, Director of the M.I.T. Drama Program, drew competent and satisfying performances from his undergraduate cast.

--- Thomas F. Connolly

**BOOK REVIEWS: REFERENCE VOLUMES, NEW AND OLD**

[Books devoted in full or in part to O'Neill, his times, and his associates are appearing with increasing frequency—a boon to scholars and fans, and a bane to at least one editor who must, for spatial and temporal reasons, postpone coverage of some of them, with apologies to authors, editors and publishers whose efforts deserve much hastier celebration. This issue's reviews are of reference works—three new one, and one standard, well-established volume that remains in print and has not previously been assessed in the Newsletter. The next issue will feature a fuller, more detailed examination by Jackson Bryer of Professor Ranald's *Eugene O'Neill Companion*, as well as reviews of Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill, edited by James J. Martine (G.K. Hall, 1984), Winifred L. Frazer's *Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Twayne, 1984), and the sections on O'Neill in C.W.E. Bigsby's *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama* (Cambridge U. Press, 1982); J.L. Styan's *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*, Vols. I and III (Cambridge U. Press, 1981); and Beongcheon Yu's *The Great Circle: American Writers and the Orient* (Wayne State U. Press, 1983); plus any other works that reach the editor's desk in the interim, which he promises will be brief.]
Louis Sheaffer, reviewing the Ranald Companion for the New London, CT newspaper The Day, offered high praise with which it would be very hard to disagree. Since it "contains the answers to virtually everything you ever wanted to know about our greatest playwright but were too lazy or didn't know how to look up," he wrote, it is not only "the indispensable reference work on O'Neill" but "one of the three or four indispensable books on the playwright." As a "massive distillation of scores of books and other writings," it will, as he suggests, be of tremendous aid to students of O'Neill while simultaneously providing "enjoyable browsing for theater buffs." And few if any scholars, not even those most intimate with the man and his work, will fail to find much food for thought in its alphabetized amalgam of plot synopses, character descriptions, essays on theatre companies associated with O'Neill, and biographical sketches of the playwright, his family, friends and associates, and a number of actors whose careers have featured memorable work in productions of his plays. Following the main, encyclopedic part of the volume are three appendices--a chronology of O'Neill's completed plays; lists, alphabetized by genre, of adaptations of O'Neill's work for other media (excluding television); and a succinct assessment by Professor Ranald of "O'Neill's Theory and Practice of the Theatre"--and the book concludes with a list of references cited, a "select bibliography of O'Neill scholarship to 1983" (preceded by a helpful six-page essay), and an index. A monumental labor of love, and indispensable indeed. An O'Neillian can almost say of it what Dryden said of The Canterbury Tales: "Here is God's plenty!"

A brief comparison with the Bernard Shaw Companion by Michael and Mollie Hardwick (London: John Murray, 1973) will highlight the superiority of the present volume. The Hardwicks begin with a chronology of Shaw's works. (Ranald's adds the date of each's first production.) They follow with plot synopses in chronological order, preceding them with an index of titles that offers little help in finding a particular play since it too is in chronological order. (Ranald's synopses are not only more easily located, being alphabetized; they are also much fuller and more detailed, and include production data, textual notes and judicious evaluative comments. The Hardwicks' synopses are so succinct--51 in 81 pages--that a newcomer to some of Shaw's plays would be bewildered by their jottings. Ranald, in contrast, jogs the memories of veterans, skillfully prepares neophytes for the reading ahead, and provides both groups with stimulating insights.) The Hardwicks next provide a "who's who" of Shaw's characters--476 of them in 58 pages: details-with-quotations that vary in length from one line to twelve. Take, as an example, the entry for one of Shaw's most intriguing women,

SZCZEPANOWSKA, LINA. Polish acrobat, strongly independent and "a remarkably good looking woman."--Misalliance.

and compare it with Ranald's two-page analysis of Nina Leeds (pp. 368-370), which traces her career and complex relationships, delineates her feelings and motivations, shows how she "represents the history of woman," suggests the influence of Strindberg on her characterization, and compares her to another of O'Neill's characters. (Granted, my comparison is unfair: Lina is less character than catalyst, whereas Nina is a protagonist who develops through nine acts and deserves more extended treatment. But even Yvette, the wife in A Wife for a Life, who is never seen, is allotted fuller coverage by Ranald than the Hardwicks devote to John Tanner and Ann Whitefield combined!) The Hardwicks conclude with a "sampler of quotations"--25 pages of Shavian pronouncements on seven subjects (the English, religion, the sexes, etc.)--and a brief life of the playwright. Ranald omits a sampler (no great loss, though one might enjoy one elsewhere); but her biographical sketch of O'Neill (26 big pages) is far richer that the Hardwicks' of Shaw (18 little pages), and is studded with asterisks that lead the reader to a wealth of tangential information (about people, plays, places and groups) available elsewhere in the volume. I like the Hardwicks' book; it's a more portable "companion," particularly helpful when summering at the Shaw Festival in Ontario. But the Ranald volume, even if housebound, will far outdistance its shelfmate in use.
Having expressed my admiration, I may perhaps be forgiven a few reservations. Not many, and none serious, but some notes that might be of use in preparing future editions. (The Companion is sure to have a long life; future developments will doubtless necessitate a second edition; and it is, I think, a sign of the book's success that it arouses such proprietary interest in the reader.)

Errors of commission are extremely few. (Mr. Sheaffer, whose knowledge of O'Neill's life is second to none, detected an exaggeration of the separation between Oona O'Neill and her mother after the former's marriage to Charles Chaplin: actually, they had several meetings, and Oona, despite geographical distance and her duties as wife and mother, never neglected Agnes. But he found Ranald's treatment of biographical subjects "generally fair and even-handed," especially in her coverage of O'Neill's much-maligned third wife, Carlotta Monterey.) Fredric March played Harry Hope, not Hickey, in the film of Iceman (p. 409). And it must be Richard Miller, not his brother Arthur, who is the playwright's alter ego in Ah, Wilderness! (p. 757). Some of the plays and adaptations suffer rather cavalier rejection: surely there is enough of at least tangential interest in The First Man, for instance, to rescue it from being dismissed as "eminently forgettable"! And the parenthetical designations accompanying proper names in the index, while they do pinpoint people's specific relations to O'Neill, are sometimes inexact (George Bellows is listed merely as "acquaintance"), sometimes inconsistent (why call the Gelbs "authors" and Louis Sheaffer "critic," when "biographer[s]" would be more specific in both cases?), and sometimes near-comic in their incompleteness: Stark Young as "director," William Zorach as "designer," John Reed as "revolutionary," and Terry Carlin--surely as much an "acquaintance" as George Bellows--offered no label at all, like Lynne Fontanne, even though her husband, Alfred Lunt, is rightly (if unnecessarily) identified as "actor." I'd urge the discarding of all such labels; the only loss would be a few gratuitous chuckles.

The omissions can hardly be called errors, since a book even twice as long could not include everything and everybody associated with O'Neill, and each reader's orientation and interests will determine what he would like to see added and what he considers expendable. Theatre and film buffs will relish the biographies of actors, while scholars might wish that they and their brethren had been accorded equal space. (That the index includes Peter Falk but omits Doris Falk is evidence of at least a slight imbalance in emphasis between two of the realms deserving treatment in an O'Neill "companion.") Why a full-page survey of the career of Greta Garbo, whose O'Neill connection is limited to one (admittedly brilliant) screen role? And why, if it is justified, is there no comparable entry for Blanche Sweet? The entry for the quintessential O'Neill performer Jason Robards is more understandable, though it should not have omitted his indelible performance as Con Melody in the latest Broadway production of A Touch of the Poet. Why, if Karl Ragnar Gierow is (rightly) included, is there no comparable entry for Donald Gallup, whose roles as curator and adapter are equally important parts of the record? (And I should add that Esther Jackson's report, at last March's O'Neill conference, on the performance of The Calms of Capricorn at Madison answered affirmatively Professor Ranald's uncertainty [p. 110] about "whether it should be produced as a play.") And why does the chronology in Appendix A include no production details for The Web and A Wife for a Life? Newsletter regulars know that they were performed in New York City a few years ago.

Such whys could multiply, and each reader will probably produce his own. I'd have welcomed an entry for Harry Kemp, the "poet of the dunes," who, because of his performance in Bound East for Cardiff, is identified in the index simply as "actor." And if Bridget, the unseen cook in Long Day's Journey, is not as worthy of inclusion as Yvette--though I think she is--certainly the catalytic gambler, Arnold Rothstein, is.

But one hates to seem a carping ingrate when confronted with such an abundance of riches as Professor Ranald provides. Her appendixed assessment of O'Neill's dramaturgic development is a masterful work of summation--especially the treatment (pp. 753-
755) of O'Neill's "experiments in myth" and his greater success as myth-user than as myth-maker. She was ably assisted by Gary Jay Williams, who provided the entries on the Provincetown Players and the Experimental Theatre, Inc. And I'll forgive her repetition of the old charge about O'Neill's lack of verbal felicity (p. 757), out of gratitude for her earlier defense of the underrated, underperformed early plays (p. viii).

We have long needed such a book, and we should be extremely grateful to Professor Ranald for creating it. Her herculean effort is unlikely to be rivaled in our time and deserves fuller coverage than I have here given it. Accordingly, a second review, by Jackson R. Bryer, will appear in the Newsletter's next issue. --Ed.


$27.50 is a hefty price for a book of 165 pages, even one as handsomely and sturdily bound as this. But the wealth of material it contains makes the price well worth paying: it is a must for any library serving a graduate English or drama program, and no toiler in the O'Neillian vineyards--be he established scholar, graduate adviser, imminent dissertator or lowly research-paper writer--will regret the investment, given the ease it provides in locating materials otherwise widely scattered and difficult or impossible to acquire. McFarland is to be commended for constructing it so well: it will get a lot of use.

The main body of the book (pp. 22-144) comprises a chronological list of the 139 dissertations all or partly on O'Neill that were completed by American doctoral candidates between 1928 and 1980, and provides the abstracts of all but the 23 that were not summarized by their authors in *Dissertation Abstracts* or (after 1969) in *Dissertation Abstracts International*. (The list is alphabetized by authors' names for years that saw more than one dissertation.) Professor Hayashi has performed a major service to scholarship, not only by gathering the abstracts in one place, but also by indexing them quadruply--by author, title, university, and subject. The first index assists one in the tangential treat of discovering where one's fellow O'Neillians began; and the fourth (the most valuable) will be a boon to enterprising scholars by helping them discover what has been done--and, more interestingly, what has not been done--in an area they wish to explore. [The editor of the Newsletter herewith issues a blanket invitation to the 23 authors of unabstracted dissertations to summarize their wares in future issues, so that the record can inch even closer to completeness. And anyone willing to acquire and survey the missing 23 is assured of congratulatory prominence for his compilation!]

A two-part introductory essay by Robert L. Tener enriches the volume with "A Review of Past Research (1928-1980)" (pp. 3-18), that traces the trends in subject and emphasis through the years and makes reference as well to the major books and articles on O'Neill (not included in any of the indexes, alas); and suggestions of "Future Opportunities" (pp. 18-21)--subjects that have been treated insufficiently or not at all. As the four pages make clear, much remains to be done. Two of the major lacunae--the lack of a definitive edition of O'Neill's plays and of a comprehensive collection of his letters--will soon be removed, thanks to the labors of Travis Bogard and Jackson Bryer. But Tener lists a number of others--textual studies, assessments of O'Neill's technical and scenic innovations, of his use of song and music, his creative process, his characterization, his influence on other writers, his reputation in Spanish-speaking countries, etc.--that await definitive investigation. Only one goof--the not in "Perhaps the time has come to leave behind the idea that he was not an autobiographical writer" (!)--mars an otherwise excellent blend of overview and advice.

Such a book naturally gets more dated with every passing semester. All the dissertations since 1980 must await a second edition; and the opening "Checklist of O'Neill's Published Plays" omits the editions, by Ticknor & Fields and Random House
respectively, of The Calms of Capricorn (1981) and Chris Christophersen (1982), surely publications that a 1983 list should include. But the plusses far outweigh such miniscule minuses. This is an important book. Buy it, or, if parsimonious, see that your library does. --Ed.


The second edition of American Drama Criticism appeared in 1979, and the current volume lists "interpretations of American plays published in books, periodicals, and monographs" between that time and 1983. The volume is arranged alphabetically by playwrights' names, each author's section being subdivided alphabetically by play titles, with the addition, new to this supplement, of a "general" category before the first listed play. No annotations or summaries are included, and, as the compiler's preface indicates, "the quality of the articles was not considered; the only criterion was that critical material relating to a certain play could be located in a particular book or article." One could hardly expect more, and in this instance the price need not be lamented as it will most likely be largely borne by libraries, where it will be of great value to students, scholars and critics. The compiler does not claim that the coverage is exhaustive, but I find no significant omissions, though I admit to a few moments of skimming between George Abbott, the first playwright included, and Howard Zinn, the last. The book concludes with two lists--of books indexed and journals indexed--and four indexes--of critics, adapted authors and works, titles, and playwrights. Eddleman's work was diligently done.

The O'Neill section, which I surveyed with greatest care, contains 230 entries--96 "general," and 134 spread among 25 plays, the most heavily covered being Long Day's Journey (24 entries), The Iceman Cometh (18), The Hairy Ape (16), and A Touch of the Poet (13). Eight plays have one entry each (Anna Christie, Bound East for Cardiff, Days Without End, Dynamo, Fog, More Stately Mansions, The Ancient Mariner, and Thirst), and those with none at all include Diff'rent, The First Man, Ile, Lazarus Laughed, Moon of the Caribbees, The Straw, and Where the Cross is Made. Were it not for the Newsletter, that last list would have included Dynamo, More Stately Mansions and The Ancient Mariner; each received its only treatment in these pages. The 44 items from the Newsletter include 14 in the "general" category, and from one to ten each on thirteen individual plays--ten on The Hairy Ape alone. It is heartening to see such evidence of the Newsletter's contribution--at least quantitatively--to O'Neill studies, though it is not for that reason that I urge the book's acquisition by all libraries serving programs in American drama. Its value far exceeds its boost to one editor's vanity! --Ed.


Though hardly a new or unknown item, Atkinson's monumental descriptive bibliography of the works of O'Neill, the first since Sanborn and Clark's in 1931 and the only "complete" one ever, certainly deserves a passing salute in the Newsletter, which wasn't around to salute it when it first appeared. How fortunate for newcomers to O'Neill studies that it is still in print. While one might wish that its coverage had grown along with its price, it remains an indispensable work, in that it provides "a history of the career of America's leading dramatist through the record of his publications"; and, except for the decade that separates it from the present, it can still fulfill its compiler's and publisher's goals--to "guide librarians and book collectors in purchasing O'Neill's works, furnish teachers and students of American drama with a history of his plays, and provide textual and bibliographical scholars with a chronology of the published O'Neill material." For individuals with those
interests and concerns, this is still the book to have, and bibliophiles will relish the abundant illustrations—well over a hundred—of first and rare editions, showing dust jackets, title pages, copyright notices, and comparisons of variant bindings. [Reproduced on this page are the jackets of the first American editions of The Emperor Jones (1921) and The Hairy Ape (1922), and the first of six pages of extracts from Strange Interlude—an unauthorized publication (Boston, September 1929) designed to secure clerical support for Mayor Nichols' prohibition of the play's production on the Boston stage.]

The book lists and describes—via a complex code explained in the introduction—every publication of work by O'Neill through 1974: all first editions of the plays (and important later editions) in the United States and England; published acting scripts; O'Neill material (letters, interviews, etc.) appearing for the first time in comparisons of variant to have, and bibliophiles will relish the abundant illustrations—well over a hundred—of first and rare editions, showing dust jackets, title pages, copyright notices, and comparisons of variant bindings. [Reproduced on this page are the jackets of the first American editions of The Emperor Jones (1921) and The Hairy Ape (1922), and the first of six pages of extracts from Strange Interlude—an unauthorized publication (Boston, September 1929) designed to secure clerical support for Mayor Nichols' prohibition of the play's production on the Boston stage.]

Every reader will find different causes for delight and despair. Mine included (on p. 221) information about a recent acquisition—an edition of Dynamo that uses two colors to differentiate between characters' thoughts and spoken words; and a photo (on p. 4) of the dust jacket missing from my copy of O'Neill's first book, Thirst and Other One-Act Plays (1914), even though I paid, for one copy, more than a third of what James O'Neill paid for the entire printing of 1000! But I can at least attest that the University of Pittsburgh Press has provided paper and print that are impervious to tears!

Aside from the book's necessary silence about publications since 1974 and Atkinson's indecisiveness about whether the penultimate word in the Long Day's Journey title should be capitalized (she prints it both ways in different places), Eugene O'Neill: A Descriptive Bibliography is wholeheartedly recommended. No O'Neillian bibliophile should be without it. --Ed.
O'NEILL AND AMERICAN DRAMA AT THE 1984 ATA CONVENTION: A REPORT

Every year the annual convention of the American Theatre Association seems to become more and more the one national meeting of interest for those who specialize in the drama, and the 1984 convention offered ample illustration. Of course, as the term theatre in the organization's name would lead one to expect, there were many sessions on practical aspects of theatre production and theatre programs at the convention, held last August in San Francisco. In addition, however, there were also ten programs devoted exclusively to the drama, and eleven more sessions which contained papers on the drama. Beyond that, fifteen other meetings concerned various aspects of dramatic theory and criticism, and four sessions covered television and/or film. And this listing does not include the panels devoted exclusively to theatre history or the contemporary theatre, programs which often discuss plays and playwrights as well as directors, designers, actors and theatre companies.

This year's convention was especially profitable for students of American drama. Of the 21 meetings devoted either solely or partly to papers on drama, six offered at least one paper on American drama or an American playwright, and six panels more were devoted exclusively to American drama. It would be difficult to find as many sessions of interest at the usual MLA convention. And most ATA drama sessions are indistinguishable from a typical MLA meeting, especially in terms of the type, number, and quality of the papers presented.

For readers of this Newsletter, it may be of interest that the playwright who seemed to get the most attention was an American, Sam Shepard (five papers). Next in line were Shakespeare and Shaw (one session and one other paper for each). Next were two playwrights of similar ethnic background, Boucicault and Eugene O'Neill (two papers each). Finally, there were many playwrights, mostly American, who were discussed exclusively in one paper. In addition to Molière and Ibsen, a paper was devoted to the work of each of the following: Hansberry, Harrigan, Mamet, Miller, Rabe, Wallace Shawn, and Mercy Otis Warren. There was also one theatre history paper on José Quintero and the Loft Players. Noticeably missing this year were papers on Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee.

As indicated previously in the Newsletter, two papers were devoted to O'Neill. For a panel on "The Puritan Influence in Representative American Plays," Shelly Regenbaum discussed "O'Neill's Puritans and the Promised Land." Despite the implications of the title, the paper seemed to be concerned less with the Puritans than with O'Neill's use of the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. Regenbaum detected this particular mythic underpinning in a number of earlier plays--The Rope, Where the Cross Is Made, Desire Under the Elms--and, to a lesser degree, Mourning Becomes Electra. In general, she concluded that O'Neill's use of this myth tends to lack the redemptive features found in the biblical account, features which are there due to the presence of God and/or His covenant.

A second presentation on O'Neill occurred in the meeting entitled "Directing Molière, Ibsen, and O'Neill." Apart from the presence of O'Neill's name in such august company, this session offered little to the dedicated O'Neillian. The young man who offered suggestions on directing O'Neill clearly based his advice on his own experience directing the plays in a small, religiously conservative town in the Pacific Northwest. I had no trouble with his initial suggestions that a prospective director should read about O'Neill's life and read his plays, nor with his observation that the plays have more to do with character relationships than with plot. But I began to wonder how the many directors in attendance were reacting to his advice that they keep a director's notebook. Given that this panel was sponsored by the University and College Theatre Association, the advice seemed superfluous! In any case, when the presenter got down to more specific suggestions, I must confess I had no choice but to leave the meeting or risk creating "a scene." His first specific suggestion was to cut the plays, the objective being to get performance down to two hours. He further suggested that to accomplish this, one should remove all the profanity (obviously a practical concern to any small-town director, though by today's standards O'Neill is pretty tame) and, more importantly, eliminate the repetitions. At that point I left, missing the remainder of his advice.

Other meetings were more rewarding to the student of American drama. A panel entitled "Hot and Cold War: American Theatre 1940-1980" contained three papers which summarized
admirably the treatment of preparations for World War II, the era of HUAC and the Cold War, and the Vietnam era in relevant American plays. The papers were by Albert Wertheim, Robert H. Wilcox, and Philip Chapman, respectively. A second highly effective panel, on "The Influences of Rock Music on Post-modern British and American Drama," contained thorough presentations on Sam Shepard's relation to rock music (by James M. Symons) and on the rock star as character in American plays as contrasted with his portrayal in British drama. A particularly successful theatre history panel addressed the topic, "Theatre and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America." Especially significant was Bruce A. McConachie's paper, "Legitimating an American Middle-Class: Boucicault's Well-Made Melodramas."

But the program which took the longest view addressed the question, "What is American about the American Drama?" Author Gerald Bordman addressed the question directly, surveyed the history of American drama in terms of the European influences which gave it birth, and proceeded to dismiss most identified characteristics as the product of importation rather than being really uniquely American. He concluded that the most significant contributions of American theatre might be in lighting design and the use of American music, while the most striking characteristic of American drama might be the global breadth of scene and imagination as illustrated by such titles as The Great Divide and Beyond the Horizon. Travis Bogard focused more precisely on the twentieth century and, in "The Wimp in the Shower," traced the rise of an anti-heroic American male character type in all areas of dramatic entertainment, both comic and tragic, including films, television and the drama. Next, William R. Reardon examined the question specifically in relation to responses to the U.S. Constitution by American playwrights, from colonial days to the present, and indicated that a book might be in progress on this large theme. Finally, in his response to the three papers, John Henry Raleigh cited pertinent passages from de Tocqueville on the nature of American literature and concluded that in the drama Eugene O'Neill represented the culmination and fulfillment of de Tocqueville's vision. This panel seemed to be one of the most well-attended meetings devoted to American drama, and its success led the chair to prepare a proposal for continuing the dialogue at the next ATA convention in Toronto, August 4-7, 1985. Enthusiasts of American drama will at least want to examine a preliminary program (usually available in early summer) to see if the ATA continues to offer such a large and good selection of sessions on American plays and playwrights.

--Paul D. Voelker

THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION


The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Eugene O'Neill Society was held at 5:15 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room of the Sheraton Washington Hotel. President Albert Wertheim presided.

The Minutes of the Fifth Annual Meeting as distributed in the Newsletter were approved. Reports from the Secretary and Treasurer were presented (see below) and accepted.

Al Wertheim reviewed the Society's status vis-a-vis MLA. Since we are now officially affiliated, we will continue, as this year, to have a place in the MLA Convention Program, enabling the Society to hold its Annual Meeting, a Committee (Board of Directors) meeting, and a regular session with presentation of papers, all to be appropriately listed.

The 1985 Session will be chaired by Paul Voelker. Topic will be "O'Neill's American Forbears and Contemporaries: Studies in Relationships and Influences." Papers should be submitted at once. Address: Paul Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center-Richland, Highway 14 W., Richland Center, WI 53581.

The 1986 meeting will be in New York. Jackson Bryer will be chairing the Session. No topic has been announced.

Discussion was held concerning the possibility of a publication project in anticipation of the Centennial in conjunction with the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, ASTR, and/or ATA. Some essays about the restoration work on Monte Cristo Cottage and Tao House might be included, but it would be mostly of a critical nature with some theatrical
history. The Greenwood Press is the tentative publisher. We need suggestions about
the thrust of such a volume, including topics, general theme, and so on. Assistance
will be needed for editing as well. Al Wertheim asked for suggestions and for
volunteers to assist. Adele Heller suggested formation of a Society sub-committee to
begin study of the project; Jackson Bryer agreed to undertake initial work. Consid-
erable discussion was entered concerning what the contents should be, members express-
ing hope that it would be different from other such undertakings, that it contain
emphasis on aspects of O'Neill as man of theatre, literary artist, with history of
productions, possibly some reproduction of important documents, and so on. It was
strongly felt by all that a definite design be followed. Members are encouraged to
get in touch with Al Wertheim at the following address: Department of English,
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47401.

Al Wertheim announced that the Board of Directors are planning a pre-centennial major
event, possibly a dinner, at the 1987 MLA convention.

Information was conveyed to the membership concerning the present status of Tao House
and Society combined membership. The Society is undertaking negotiations with
representatives of Tao House and Monte Cristo Cottage about a possible combined
membership. At present, however, any Society member may join Tao House by paying
the Society an additional $10, for a total of $30 in dues—but for regular members only.

Discussion was held concerning the status of Society support for the Newsletter.
Because of increased costs of publication, the Board voted to allocate $10 of regular
dues and $5 of student and emeritus dues to the Newsletter to continue its regular
delivery to all Society members. Adele Heller asked about the sources of Newsletter
support. Fred Wilkins explained that it is supported entirely through subscriptions,
both by Society members and others, with certain secretarial support for typing and
and the like rendered by the Suffolk University English Department staff.

Fred Wilkins announced a sequel to his successful meeting in March 1984 to be held in
1986 at Suffolk University. It will be concerned with O'Neill's later years. Nothing
has been permanently planned as yet and all suggestions are welcome. Contact Fred at
the English Department, Suffolk University, Boston, MA 02114.

Adele Heller announced plans for a major conference to be held in 1986 or 1987 at
Provincetown. She is working with Gordon Armstrong of the University of Rhode Island.
The theme will be on the political, economic, artistic and philosophical atmosphere
of 1915 at the time of the development of the Provincetown Players. Early plays of
O'Neill will be staged.

Al Wertheim discussed the plans that the Board has to induce the Government to strike
an O'Neill Centennial Medal. The Secretary will pursue this matter through contact
with his Congressional representative.

Jordon Pecile discussed the film that was approved by the National Endowment and for
which matching grants are being sought. It is hoped that this important film on
O'Neill will get under way this year. Perry Miller Adato has worked on another film
on O'Neill which will eventually be presented on PBS on American Playhouse.

Jackson Bryer requested that he be informed of any O'Neill letters which any member
may possess or know of for the forthcoming volume which he and Travis Bogard are
working on. Let him know before July if possible. Travis is currently putting
together a computerized subject list of all the extant letters, a total of 2800 so far.
Anybody with any idea about getting it published should let him know: Dept. of
Dramatic Art, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94724.

Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Y. Miller, Secretary.
II. FINANCIAL REPORT, 1/1/84 - 12/31/84, submitted by Virginia Floyd, Treasurer.

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III. SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1984, submitted by Jordan Y. Miller, Secretary.

The Society closed the 1984 year with 144 members, a gain of 31% over the 108 at the end of 1983. We have members from eleven foreign countries. Much of the gain came from Fred Wilkins' March conference, and while renewals are coming in now at a fairly steady rate, we have no idea how many of the new members will stay with us. We obviously need more if we are to remain a truly viable organization. A top priority will be how to add new members over the coming year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

1. DOING HUGHIE. From Harold Easton, Studio Theatre Productions, P.O. Box 519, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003, December 8, 1984.

   It was with great pleasure that I read your review of the Provincetown Playhouse production of Hughie. [See pp. 37-39 of the Summer-Fall 1984 issue. -Ed.] The failure of productions to follow O'Neill's direction for a silent but participating clerk is too common. The clerk is a responsive character, even though those responses are initially within himself.

   A thought on the inner dialogue of the character. While it is a shame that we cannot hear the clerk's beautifully written thoughts, it was our opinion that one could certainly sense them with proper production concept and direction. The clerk is of the mind; Erie is of the spoken word. Productions which interrupt Erie's words by speaking the clerk's thoughts are in error; those that fail to include the sense of them are also in error. This would suggest that perhaps the section of your review beginning "Unless we hear..." might have the word hear replaced by the word sense, or the word understand, for the clerk to be more to the production than just a "blank." Can this non-verbal concept actually be executed and tested? In a word, YES, and without, as we learned in our Edinburgh performances, the use of projections. [For Vera Jiji's review of a New York performance of the STP production of Hughie, see the Spring 1982 issue, pp. 48-49. -Ed.] As usual, O'Neill knew that what he wrote could be played, even if, in the case of Hughie, he implied that he didn't know how.

   Noting your comments on audience laughter: in our performances, about 50 in number between New York and Edinburgh, the audience did not laugh at the clerk's "impassioned outburst"--and they should not. Once the audience understands the lonely terror of the clerk, the potential comedy of each"...forced...response..." gives way to a quieter reaction by the audience, matched only by their similarly changing response to Erie as he reveals through his words his own lonely terror. This change in laughter, so linked to the clerk's and Erie's character portrayals, became our gauge of performance success or failure.
By the time these two characters come together, the audience should emotionally want them to communicate and become as one. If not, then they have not been properly shown both of the characters' needs. If not, then their sudden coming together grows out of the earlier comedic aspects of the play and cannot help but evoke out-of-place laughter. Our observations noted early a response of laughter; then, uncomfortable laughter or concerned silence; and finally, when the two characters had come together, a silent but emotional response before they began to enjoy the newly formed relationship. This gave us a clear indication that we had succeeded.

Some day, rights and money in place, we hope to remount our production. I hope that you can come this time. Hughie does work; it can be done with O'Neill's concepts intact. And, as you say, the key is presenting to the audience all three characters.

[Mr. Easton played the clerk in the STP production, which I do still hope to see. -Ed.]

2. O'NEILL IN DUBLIN, PAST AND PRESENT. From Micheal O hAodha, Member of the Board of Directors, Abbey Theatre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, Ireland, December 26, 1984.

I would like to tell you of my continuing interest in the Eugene O'Neill Newsletter.

Allow me to add one production to my friend John Finnegan's list of O'Neill productions in Dublin. [See Summer-Fall 1984 issue, p. 15. -Ed.] I attended a production of The Great God Brown by the New Theatre Group in an improvised theatre in Rutland Place, Dublin, in the late thirties. The New Theatre Group were an amateur group, with left-wing policies, who often staged interesting plays under often terrible conditions.

The main news is that the Abbey Theatre will revive Long Day's Journey Into Night in February, with Siobhan McKenna as Mary Tyrone and Godfrey Quigley as James. I hope this is the beginning of a new interest in O'Neill in Ireland. Certainly, the Abbey will do its utmost to mark the centenary in an appropriate manner.


NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. ERRATA MAGNA. A shamefaced editor apologizes to the justifiably offended, both here and beyond, for the large and small omissions that marred his report of last October's O'Neill birthday celebration in New York City ("Bogard Wins Medal," Summer-Fall 1984 issue, p. 41). Not only did he omit the full name of the sponsoring organization--the Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill--but an absent e made a considerable difference in the statement by the playwright that adorns the Committee's annually awarded medal. "It is," said O'Neill, "only the dream [not the dram!] that keeps man fighting, willing to live." Unless O'Neill was tacitly dictating a revision of his hard-won philosophy--in which case Professor Bogard is correct that "wee dram" would be more idiomatic!--contrition is in order and is herewith announced.

2. WHITE REPORTS CHINA EXPERIENCE. In "A Director Takes O'Neill All The Way to China" (New York Times, Sunday, January 13, 1985, Sec. II, pp. 4, 6), George C. White, President and founder of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT, related his experiences in directing the production of Anna Christie (retitled Andi) in Beijing, China, that is reviewed in this issue. With the cooperation of the Chinese Embassy in Washington and the Chinese Theater Association, and buoyed by the knowledge gained from a playgoing visit to China in 1980 and hosting Chinese delegations to the O'Neill Center in several recent summers, Mr. White found himself in "a theatrical world strangely similar, yet totally different from our own." (Among the differences was the attendance at rehearsals of paying "observers" who expected to be consulted for their advice. When they were not, one went directly to an actor, forcing Mr. White to lecture the cast on the importance of directorial control.) Having free choice of the play he would direct, White settled on Anna Christie as the "logical" selection: "I felt that the story of an old sailor, forced to send his daughter
away after her mother's death because he could not care for her, and her subsequent decay into prostitution would find an empathetic resonance in a country not too long removed from such practices." The changes in setting, time and character nationality, detailed in this issue's review, were made with the goals of "eliminating any possibility that audiences might view this story of a Swedish-American and an Irishman as some sort of representation of a certain kind of alien lifestyle," and of underscoring the fact that "O'Neill's eloquent portrayal of the relationship of a father and child and its accompanying love and guilt ... surmount all national boundaries."

Mr. White praised the "fantastic concentration" of his cast, who achieved in six weeks of rehearsal ("observers" notwithstanding) what they were accustomed to doing in three months. And equal local praise was showered on the work of the director, his adapter-translator Huang Zhongjiang, and his American colleagues--scene designer Ming Cho Lee, costume designer Patricia Zipprodt and lighting designer Ian Calderon. "Thanks to so many vital and valuable contributions from the artists of both sides," Mr. White concludes, "we had brought it off!" May this be but the first of many such cooperative ventures. The benefits--even if purists frown at the textual tamperings involved--can extend well beyond the realm of the theatrical. --Ed.

3. EGO at NEMLA '85. The session on O'Neill at the 1985 convention of the North-East Modern Language Association, to be held at the Sheraton-Hartford Hotel at the end of March, will be chaired by Jackson R. Bryer. Entitled "O'Neill for the Scholar and for the Public," it will take place in Suite 1220-22 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 29. Donald Gallup, former curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature, will speak on "The Eugene O'Neill Collection at Yale" and join in a panel discussion with Perry Miller Adato, director and co-producer of the soon-to-be-aired television documentary "Eugene O'Neill: A Glory of Ghosts"; Geraldine Fitzgerald, actress and director; Sally Pavetti, curator of the Monte Cristo Cottage; and Frederick C. Wilkins, editor of the Newsletter.

4. RARE BOOKS FOR SALE: a note from O'Neill biographer Louis Sheaffer. "Having more books than my apartment can comfortably accommodate, I've decided to sell my twenty-odd O'Neill first editions and a good number of rare, out-of-print books on the drama that I no longer need for research. For a list of the books, those interested can write me at 5 Montague Terrace, Brooklyn Heights, NY, 11201."

5. TREASURES OF O'NEILLIANA IN DETROIT. Thanks to Gail Cohen of the Hedgerow Theatre for sending Catalogue 40 of John K. King Books in Detroit, which lists a number of rare O'Neill items, many of them from the collection of Joseph Heidt, long time friend of O'Neill and press agent for the Theatre Guild. Included: advance galley proofs of A Moon for the Misbegotten, dated 1947, six years before the book was published ($2,000.00); a studio photo portrait of O'Neill by Pinchot (NY, 1936, 13x10½"), inscribed on mount "To Joe--with all the best there is! Eugene O'Neill Oct. '36" ($900.00); and many rare and first editions ranging in price from $8.50 for a Modern Library Nine Plays (1932) to $2,500.00 for O'Neill's own copy of the advance proof for Iceman. Also a group of holograph notes and letters by Carlotta with one letter signed by O'Neill ($1,000.00 for the lot), a set of Theatre Guild press releases ($150.00 for the baker's dozen), plus other photographs. The catalog is at least half a year old, but much may remain. The interested can call (313) 961-0622 or write to John K. King Books, P.O. Box 363A, Detroit, MI 48232.

6. BOOK-HUNTING EDITOR REPEATS PLEA FOR AID. Reviewing Atkinson's Eugene O'Neill: A Descriptive Bibliography for this issue, I was moved to repeat my long-ago plea for readers' assistance in locating the one volume in the Jonathan Cape series of editions of O'Neill's plays that was unavailable when I acquired all the others in London a half-decade ago: Strange Interlude. Not the first Cape edition, 3 1/4" x 5 1/4" and gold-stamped on a blue cloth binding; but a later, larger edition, probably 5 1/4" x 7 5/8", and silver-stamped on the blue cloth binding. The desire to obtain a good-as-new copy of that volume to join its 15 blue brethren has become something of an obsession; and I will gratefully rush a brand-new copy (still in the publisher's plastic wrappings) of a renowned two-volume biography of O'Neill to the first person who announces that he or
she can complete my set. (A monetary payment, if reasonable, can be substituted if that person already has a renowned two-volume biography of O'Neill!) --Ed.

7. PECILE TO DISCUSS *AH, WILDERNESS!* Thanks to a grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council, the Hartford (CT) Stage Company is offering a "Sundays-at-Six" speaker-and-discussion series, "Theater: Reflections of Human Experience," prior to the last Sunday evening performance of each play in its 1984-85 season. The last play, *Ah, Wilderness!*, will be discussed by Jordan Pecile, O'Neill scholar and Professor of Humanities at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, at 6 p.m. on Sunday, June 30. The hour-long session is free and open to the public, and no ticket is required. Those who wish to attend a performance as well can write or call the Hartford Stage Company, 50 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103 - (203) 527-5151.

8. NEW BOOK ON O'NEILL IN GERMANY. Verlag Peter Lang AG (Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.) has announced the publication of *Eugene O'Neill: The German Reception of America's First Dramatist* (1984, 211 pp., Vol. 50 of Germanic Studies in America, $28.95 cloth, ISBN 0-8204-0156-0). The author is Ward B. Lewis of the University of Georgia. All who attended Professor Lewis's talk at last March's O'Neill conference will be aware how qualified he is to treat the history of O'Neill's reputation in Germany and the response there to his individual plays. A review of the book will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.

9. LONG DAY'S JOURNEY ON VIDEOTAPE. NTA has released the 1962 Sidney Lumet film of O'Neill's great autobiographical drama on videotape for the price of less than 42¢ per minute. (The 170 minute tape costs $69.95.) The televersion was praised by critic Benedict Nightingale in the *New York Times* (April 8, 1984, Sec. II, p. 28):

This is everything aren't meant to be: a long, wordy play conscientiously transposed from stage to screen, shot in black and white, and offering only the most cursory glimpse of the big world outside the Connecticut house in whose living and dining rooms the action is confined. Yet, this version of Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece riveted the reviewers when it appeared in 1962, and it still seems an astonishing piece of work: intense, powerful and exquisitely acted.

It contains no less than three major performances. Ralph Richardson finds a wonderful tenderness in the character of James Tyrone.... Jason Robards, Jr. twists and seethes with self-hatred and regret [as Jamie]. And Katharine Hepburn--well, has a more variegated piece of acting ever been seen in the cinema than her study of the genteel drug addict, Mary Tyrone?

A saga of guilt, accusation, recrimination and love that looks domestic, sounds domestic, yet even on the small screen feels Aeschylean.

10. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.


*Strange Interlude*, dir. Keith Hack, with Glenda Jackson as Nina Leeds. Nederlander Theater, New York City, February 14 - April 7, 1985. (Official opening for this transplantation from London was February 21.) Tickets may be purchased ('round both world and clock) via credit card. Call CHARGIT, tel. 212-944-9300. The number of the Nederlander Theatre (208 West 41st St., NYC 10036) is 212-921-8000. A review will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.
I. ARTICLES.

Bloom, Steven F. "The Role of Drinking and Alcoholism in O'Neill's Late Plays." #1, p. 22

Bogard, Travis. "'My Josephine': The Music for Anna Christie." #3, p. 12

Cardullo, Bert. "The Function of Simon Harford in A Touch of the Poet." #1, p. 27

Carpenter, Frederic I. "Strange Interlude--Strange Criticism." #3, p. 22

Egri, Peter. "O'Neill's Genres: Early Performance and Late Achievement." #2, p. 9

Fraser, Winifred. "O'Neill's Stately Mansions: A Visitor's Reminiscences." #3, p. 15


Krafchick, Marcelline. "Hughie: Some Light on O'Neill's Moon." #1, p. 8

McDermott, Dana S. "Robert Edmond Jones and Eugene O'Neill: Two American Visionaries." #1, p. 3


Regenbaum, Shelly. "Wrestling with God: Old Testament Themes in O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon." #3, p. 2


Sheaffer, Louis. "Correcting Some Errors in Annals of O'Neill" (Part II). #1, p. 16

Voelker, Paul D. "An Agenda for O'Neill Studies." #1, p. 11

Voelker, Paul D. "Politics, but Literature: The Example of Eugene O'Neill's Apprenticeship." #2, p. 3

Wilkins, Frederick C. "Hughie--By Way of Intro." #3, p. 27

II. BOOKS REVIEWED. (Reviews by Frederick C. Wilkins.)

Atkinson, Jennifer McCabe. Eugene O'Neill: A Descriptive Bibliography. #3, p. 39


Frenz, Horst and Susan Tuck, eds. Eugene O'Neill's Critics: Voices from Abroad. #2, p. 29

Hayashi, Tetsuami, ed. Eugene O'Neill: Research Opportunities and Dissertation Abstracts. #3, p. 31

Olsson, Tom J.A. O'Neill och Dramaten. #3, p. 36

Ranald, Margaret Loftus. The Eugene O'Neill Companion. #3, p. 36

III. REVIEWS OF O'NEILL PLAYS (AND ADAPTATIONS) IN PERFORMANCE.

Andi Anna Christie (Haiping Liu) #3, p. 29

Anna Christie (Frederick C. Wilkins) #2, p. 39

Desire Under the Elms (Frederick C. Wilkins) #1, p. 34

Desire Under the Elms (Frederick C. Wilkins) #3, p. 31

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Long Day's Journey Into Night (Thomas F. Connolly) #3, p. 35

The Long Voyage Home (Thomas F. Connolly) #3, p. 35

A Moon for the Misbegotten (Frederick C. Wilkins) #1, p. 32

Strange Interlude (Albert E. Kalson) #1, p. 10

IV. MISCELLANEOUS.

Abstracts of articles published elsewhere (Frederick C. Wilkins) #2, 31-34

Bibliography of publications by and about Eugene O'Neill, 1980-1983 (Frederick C. Wilkins) #2, p. 22


Report: O'Neill and American drama at the '84 ATA convention (Paul D. Voelker) #2, p. 19

Two Pen Portraits of Eugene O'Neill, Broadwayite (by Samuel Marx and Sidnev Sklinsky) #3, p. 41
[An advance review, while unprecedented, seems appropriate for Strange Interlude, since its Broadway run, which should be seen by all fans of O'Neill, will close on April 7 (before the next issue) unless ticket sales justify extension. Hence the following. If it is efficacious, the run may be extended. And it should be: a better production is unlikely in our time.]

STRANGE INTERLUDE. NEDERLANDER THEATRE, NEW YORK CITY, FEBRUARY 21 - APRIL 7, 1985.

The news is good: Strange Interlude "lives," and anyone with even a passing interest in American drama should see it. Certainly the evening is a "must" for all O'Neillians. Not that detractors of his Freudian "woman play" will be converted; but lovers of the nine-act, 25-year behemoth are in for a treat (it's the fleetest 4½ hours on Broadway), and fence-sitters will likely drop their reservations and join the cheers of the capacity crowds that are greeting, with surprising and infectious laughter, this transplantation of the 1984 London revival.

It's amazing what a fresh, even brash approach can do to resuscitate a play generally relegated to the dustbin of "interesting" failures and quaint antiquities. What director Keith Hack has done, with the assistance of a splendid cast, composer and scenic designer, is scrape off the reverent barnacles that usually accompany the famous "spoken thoughts" and play it straight. No looming pauses; no change of position, tone or even volume; no freezing of the others as each blue-bathed thinker reveals the feelings that contradict his public utterances. Such ponderous devices do more to elicit disbelief than aid its suspension. By eliminating them, Hack has not only shortened the playing time: he has also shown that O'Neill's theatrical instincts, even at their most untraditional, were right on the mark, thanks (in this case) largely to his canny decision to start the play with a character thinking alone. Marsden's opening monologue establishes the convention in a thoroughly traditional way; and when it is extended beyond his solo scene we continue to accept it because the actors treat it so "naturally." Discovering that we have been endowed with omniscience, we relish every revelation, especially when a character's thought is at war, not only with his spoken words, but with other, conflicting thoughts.

Granted, Hack's revisionist approach doesn't reveal a flawless masterpiece; much of the attendant laughter would have horrified the playwright, who clearly took his characters' inner conflicts and attempts at analysis more seriously than the audience does. But even if O'Neill the psychologist doesn't emerge unscathed, O'Neill the man of the theatre does: he triumphs. Many an uncluttered Strange Interlude will, I am sure, follow Hack's pioneering lead.

The set, designed by Voytek with Michael Levine, features high walls of horizontal gray clapboard at rear and sides, towering over a slightly raised platform of wide planks front-to-back (also gray), around which, at the front and sides of the stage-proper, sere leaves are parsimoniously strewn. Blue cloud forms are streaked diagonally across the walls to add (with the leaves) a touch of credibility to the outdoor scenes, and flats are lowered to suggest the various settings: a wall at the rear with classical doorway flanked by glass-doored bookcases for Professor Leeds' study; a more rustic downstage wall with door, their paint peeling, for the front of the Evans home; a wall with tied-back bead curtains in its central portal for Sam and Nina's Long Island sitting room; and a low railing across the rear, with a deck and flag pole behind it, for the last-act terrace which, in this production, serves as the eighth-act setting as well. And each locale features a spare but adequate assortment of furniture and bric-a-brac that, like the costumes by Deirdre Clancy, make up in authenticity for their lack of contemporary appeal.
The incidental music by Benedict Mason, that bridges the interact pauses, complements the settings in its spareness (piano, violin and a few woodwinds) and also matches the play's own blend of neat surface realism and chaos beneath: its mélange of melodic fragments redolent of Americana--march, dance and hymn tunes (probably original, though "Bringing In the Sheaves" seemed to surface occasionally) --frequently veers contrapunctally into dissonance, in the manner of Charles Ives at his least transcendental.

But it is above all the actors who make the long evening memorable, even glorious. Glenda Jackson adopts a persistent tic--a three- or four-step upward movement of her head--that seemed real enough for one to hope it was adopted, but that failed to gauge any change in Nina's nature, since it was present from beginning to end. (One would expect it to diminish, at least, once she has achieved her goal to "pass beyond desire" and "rot away in peace" with her "nice Charlie doggy"--but it didn't.) But it is her voice that makes her ideal for the part: her ability, even at mid-sentence, to switch from mellifluous purr to venomous rasp, so appropriate for Nina, who runs the gamut of feline emotions. Every nuance of Nina's lines was lovingly revealed, and the periodic apostrophes to "Mother God" had the warm ring of long-standing conviction. I still resist the view of Nina as archetypal Everywoman, but Jackson managed to create a believable human being out of O'Neill's anthology of female stereotypes.

Nina's "three men"--semi-satirical portraits of the artist, the businessman and the scientist--are harder to humanize, but Jackson's three London co-stars did very well indeed. Edward Petherbridge almost stole the show as Charles Marsden, conveying all the repressions of the prissy penman (legs crossed, arms crossed, hands held together when one wasn't picking at the immaculate fingernails of the other) and mining every vitriolic vein in the lines with which he needles others and responds with bitchy wit to every real or supposed affront. Even the more florid, overwritten passages seemed fully believable: this was how such a writer would speak. His drunk scene in the eighth act, when he reelingly cast off all his usual inhibitions, was the evening's comic highlight. But this Marsden was no clown. He showed real pain when forced to consider that his mother may have cancer; and the tender triumph of his closing line--"God bless dear old Charlie ... who, passed beyond desire, has all the luck at last!"--brought a final glow to the evening's twenty-five years of turmoil. James Hazeldine (Sam Evans) aged convincingly from brash, likable clod to vested, paunchy, red-faced business success, and his eighth-act stroke was ghastly in its lifelikeness. Brian Cox (Ned Darrell) captured all the forces that turn a promising scientist into a self-rebuking derelict for whom we feel as much pity as scorn, even though he is burdened with the wilder of the evening's assorted "thoughts." (His "Got to go! ... can't go! ... got to go! ..." when trying to flee from Nina in Act Five, earned ubiquitous titters--only partly because of its rapid-fire delivery--that could hardly have surprised the author.) The American players in the smaller roles were serviceable at best, except for Tom Aldredge, who caught a touching quality in Professor Leeds, torn between loneliness and stoical self-reliance, that I'd never found in the text.

There is little point in niggling about the accents of the British quartet. Hazeldine's Americanese was by far the best, while Jackson made, as far as I could tell, no vocal concessions to the country of her character's birth. Between them, Cox and Petherbridge succeeded in devising speech patterns that I suspect have never before been heard anywhere on the planet! (The former, at Darrell's moments of greatest stress, betrayed the Scottish burr of his youth. The latter claims to have patterned his delivery on that of Alistair Cooke--an influence that I could not detect at the time.) But so what? They all captured the complex essences of their respective roles and achieved a level of ensemble performance seldom equalled these days in the commercial theatre.

Many a flashy production dissolves on recollection. This one had abundant surface fireworks and continued to deepen and expand in the memory afterwards. See for yourself. I've had space here to discuss only the surface. I hope, in the next issue, to say more about the depths. Others' comments, pro or con, are even more welcome.

--Frederick C. Wilkins