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Eugene O'Neill Society

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This, the twenty-sixth issue of the Newsletter, is the first to be composed on a word processor, as the publication and its Luddite editor are joltingly wrenched into the world of mid-twentieth-century technology—without, I hope, any excessive jolts to readers' sensibilities. The resultant "justification" of right-hand margins is surely an aesthetic plus, except when accompanied by the minus of lines whose second halves abound in palmless interword oases so the appointed margin can be reached by equipment that will not hyphenate without express instruction. I have inserted a few hyphens, when the spacing became so extremely wide that it would detract from comprehension, and have tried to move some spaces to the left halves of lines; but I fear that, along with the temporary absence of italics, some problems will have to be overcome before our growing pains cease to show. However, the freedom we have now gained from our former method of cut-and-paste error correction is well worth these few accompanying dilemmas; and I am most grateful to my colleague Stuart Millner and staff members Mary Bramante and Juan Diaz for making the transition such an exciting and exhilarating experience. It is to them, rather than to Ned Lud, that I dedicate this issue.

And a rich issue it is, despite the paucity of pictures and comparative brevity of the news section. Pictures come from contributors, and none have arrived since the last issue, which appeared so late that there has been little news in the interim. But when it includes word of a new production of The Iceman Cometh, reuniting the director and star of the legendary 1956 production at the Circle in the Square, one can at least say that the news there is, is good indeed! And no apology need be made for the seven essays that comprise the bulk of this issue—four on specific plays, and three more general. The latter picture O'Neill as a national playwright who profited from his sojourn in the West and found a worthy repository for his books, manuscripts and diaries at Yale. And the former suggest rightly that not all has yet been said about O'Neill's plays in terms of influences (Jenckes), analogues (Cardullo), structure (Adler) and characterization (Waterstradt). My thanks to the seven authors for choosing the Newsletter as a vehicle for sharing their insights with O'Neillians around the world.

Since three of the essays concern later plays, this seems an appropriate time to announce the dates of the conference on "Eugene O'Neill--the Later Years" that will be held at Suffolk University in mid-1986. The four-day event will begin on Thursday, May 29, with an all-day series of meetings at which invited O'Neillians, both scholarly and theatrical, who are currently engaged in work on the man and his plays, can compare notes and share insights and plans in preparation for the O'Neill centennial in 1988. (The number of active participants on Thursday will be limited to twenty-five, but there will be room for a small number of spectators as well. Anyone who feels qualified by his or her current work to be a participant, or who would like to apply for a spectator slot, should contact the editor as quickly as possible. This is worth doing, as the editor is unaware of all the projects that are currently under way.) The full conference, open to the general public, will begin with a cocktail hour, banquet and keynote address on Thursday evening, perhaps followed by a screen presentation. (If they are available, the kinescope of the 1960 television Iceman Cometh and the new 2 1/2-hour PBS docudrama on O'Neill, directed by Perry Miller Adato, will be included in the conference roster.) The daytime hours of Friday and Saturday, May 30 and 31, and the morning of Sunday, June 1, will be devoted to paper sessions, panel discussions (including a report on the results of the Thursday meetings) and films; with Friday and Saturday nights reserved for two performances of an all-star evening of scenes from O'Neill's later plays. (As planning is still in the preliminary stages, the "all-star" designation is a bit premature, but we are hopeful.) And the conference will end, like its 1984 predecessor, with a farewell brunch at noon on Sunday. Fuller information and a preregistration form will appear in the next issue, but all who wish to participate, in whatever capacity, are urged to contact the editor as soon as possible. The price will be considerably heftier than last time, but we will make every effort to ensure that the conference provides a smashing kickoff for the centennial activities that will follow.

Brother Compaq says that my allotted space has been filled, so I will hastily conclude with best wishes and the hope that the pages to follow offer something of interest for all lovers of O'Neill. Next time, if you send some, there'll be pictures too!
THE EUGENE O'NEILL COLLECTION AT YALE* 

It was George Pierce Baker who was primarily responsible for both Yale's offer to give an honorary degree to Eugene O'Neill and O'Neill's decision to accept it. Baker pointed out to him on 5 May 1926 that the award was another mile-post in the recognition of the literary artist in America, and O'Neill replied on the 21st: "I appreciate that this is a true honor ... and that this recognition of my work really should have a genuine significance for all those who are trying, as I am, to do original, imaginative work for the theatre." He expressed his pleasure that Yale would at the same time be honoring Professor Baker through one of his students. And so Eugene O'Neill came to New Haven and on 23 June 1926 received his Doctor of Letters degree—the only honorary degree he ever accepted.

When, in 1928, his son Eugene O'Neill, Jr. had to choose a university to attend for four years, it was Yale that he selected rather than Princeton or Harvard. Gene, Jr. subsequently went on to get his Yale Ph.D. in Classics in 1936, and in 1942 was an assistant professor of Greek at Yale.

In March of that year, the parlous state of the world had driven O'Neill, at Tao House, to search out and go over his original longhand scripts and notes "with view of possible gifts and safeguarding." The initial distribution of the manuscripts was to be among three principal institutions: the Museum of the City of New York (the early plays, plus Ah, Wilderness!), Princeton (the plays of the middle period), and Yale (the later plays). (A notebook for Mourning Becomes Electra had already gone to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York.)

Between 16 April 1942, when the scripts of Mourning Becomes Electra went off, and 1950, Yale received the manuscripts of all the later plays, plus typescripts, proofs, announcements, programs, clippings, and photographs. Although the initial impulse had been Mr. O'Neill's, it was Mrs. O'Neill, to whom most of the manuscripts had been given, who gradually took over responsibility for building up the collection at Yale. In September 1950, the inclusion of a typescript of All God's Chillun Got Wings, of which the original manuscript had been given to Princeton, indicated that Mrs. O'Neill was now regarding Yale's as the primary O'Neill collection. That same Fall, this impression was further strengthened by her sending us O'Neill's rehearsal script of Ah, Wilderness!, of which the original manuscript had been given to the Museum of the City of New York. Almost from the start, some items were to be restricted: the manuscript of The Iceman Cometh, sent in 1943, was not to become available for study until after production and publication of the play (in 1946); the original manuscript of Long Day's Journey Into Night, received in the Fall of 1950, was sealed, not to be opened for twenty-five years. Almost all of these items had been channeled by Mrs. O'Neill through Norman Pearson, a friend and classmate of Eugene O'Neill, Jr., at Yale. Pearson was now teaching in the English Department and was a loyal supporter of the Library. But after Eugene O'Neill, Jr.'s suicide on 25 September 1950, Norman had written Mr. O'Neill a letter telling him that Gene's mother Kathleen Pitt-Smith was in need of financial help. Unfortunately, Mrs. O'Neill saw the letter and Norman Pearson ceased to be the channel for her gifts to Yale.

In May 1951, Mrs. O'Neill telephoned Jim Babb, the Librarian, to say that she was sending a large box and, two days later, wrote at length to explain the harrowing circumstances under which she was breaking up the Marblehead home. Obviously there was no longer any hope that O'Neill might one day again be able to write, and the material included two notebooks of play ideas, one of them containing leaves that had been excised from a similar notebook sent in 1942. Much of the material was to be placed in the "25-years-after-death" part of the collection: fifteen volumes of her own diaries; and O'Neill's Work Diary—four volumes of five-year diaries, covering the period January 1924

* A paper read, in a slightly abbreviated version, at a meeting of the Northeast Modern Language Association in Hartford, Ct., on 29 March 1985.
to 4 May 1943. There were also an autograph scenario of "Chris Christophersen" (of which other manuscript material was at Princeton); the autograph manuscript of A Moon for the Misbegotten; a series of typed poems written by O'Neill to Carlotta; and more material relating to Mourning Becomes Electra, including a long series of photographs, with accompanying notes from Dudley Nichols, that amounted to a day-by-day report of progress with the shooting of the film. (Dudley Nichols had given us in 1947 the original drawings by Albert Pyke for the sets for the film, and Mrs. O'Neill later purchased and gave to us a print of the moving-picture.)

In November 1951, another telephone call to Jim Babb from Mrs. O'Neill announced that she was shipping more manuscript material, including some unpublished and some unfinished scripts, which scholars could study and read but not copy. There were notes for some twenty-five plays, planned but unwritten, plus the autograph manuscripts of A Touch of the Poet, and the partially revised More Stately Mansions. An original corrected typescript of Long Day's Journey Into Night was sealed, not to be read until twenty-five years after O'Neill's death. Also included were one hundred twelve letters and one hundred sixty-eight telegrams from O'Neill to Carlotta, dating from 1928 to 1941, with two hundred seventy letters from her to him; and the important, long correspondence between O'Neill and his agent Richard J. Madden from 1929 to 1941, which had been turned over to the O'Neills when Madden retired.

After O'Neill's death in 1953, we received a letter from Mrs. O'Neill's attorneys asking us to continue to restrict all material that we had been holding as not open to readers. Shortly afterward, Pincus Berner of the firm came to the Library to inspect all this "twenty-five-year" material and to satisfy himself that the restrictions were being observed. Since these were a source of confusion and misunderstanding over the years until Mrs. O'Neill's death in 1969, it may be well to speak of them here. As I have said, Mrs. O'Neill had originally followed Mr. O'Neill's lead in allowing most of the material to be read by serious scholars, although notes and unfinished plays were not to be quoted. But she came to feel strongly that, since a great part of the material was written in pencil, it was imperative that this not be "pawed over" and rendered illegible for later generations of students. As for unpublished and unfinished items, she came to feel that O'Neill had written and published a great many plays and that these were quite sufficient for scholars to deal with. The period during which some of this material had been used gave rise to rumors that we were playing favorites, allowing some scholars to see things denied to others. The charge was made in print by Tom Olsson in his book on O'Neill and the Royal Swedish Theatre, but it didn't particularly bother me: we did our best to carry out to the letter Mrs. O'Neill's current instructions as long as she lived.

In the early months of 1954, Mrs. O'Neill sent us fourteen medical journals relating to O'Neill's last illness, sealed, along with some additional typescripts, bits of early O'Neill poems, more O'Neill-Carlotta correspondence, some miscellaneous photographs, and material relating to James O'Neill, Sr. She also sent a handsome leather case containing O'Neill's jewelry, including various rings that she had bought for him, and a platinum watch from Cartier's in Paris. (She was most indignant when I—in my untutored way—referred to the watch as being of stainless steel.) Also in 1954, we received from her O'Neill's correspondence with his lawyer Harry Weinberger, dating from 1923 to 1944, along with fifteen letters from him to Winfield Aronberg, Weinberger's successor. (We purchased some additional O'Neill letters to Aronberg from him in 1967.)

Later that Spring (of 1954), Mrs. O'Neill offered to allow us to select from the O'Neill library, which had been stored in Cambridge since the sale of the Marblehead house, any books that would add to our resources in the Collection of American Literature and in the central library. Thirty-seven large crates arrived in due course. I went over the entire collection with a good deal of care. O'Neill almost never made notes in his books, but he would occasionally jot down references on cards laid in. I removed all such cards, but recorded author and title of the book in which each card had been found, and selected for the Collection some two hundred twenty volumes, including fifty-five of O'Neill's own plays, mostly his personal copies, and many volumes with presentation
inscriptions to him from their authors. I made a careful list of these. The Accessions Librarian for the main library selected some six hundred volumes, but no list of them was made. The remaining books, about a thousand volumes, now occupying twenty-five of the original thirty-seven crates, were returned (and are now at C. W. Post College on Long Island).

Letters and telephone calls from Mrs. O'Neill soon became more than the Librarian himself had time to handle and the responsibility for dealing with her gradually devolved upon me. She was then still living at the Hotel Shelton on Bay State Road in Boston, in the same two-room apartment in which her husband had died. In April 1954, she asked us to return the original manuscript and corrected typescript of Long Day's Journey Into Night, which we had been holding, sealed, among the materials restricted for twenty-five years.

In March 1955, Mrs. O'Neill returned the typescript of the play to the Library and asked me to read it. I reported enthusiastically, as did others whom she allowed to read the play at that time. Gradually her conviction strengthened that publication of this masterwork would revolve interest in O'Neill the dramatist. She accordingly asked her lawyer, Walter Meserve of Boston, to discuss the matter with Random House, O'Neill's publishers in New York. Meserve's dealings were with Robert Haas, the Vice President, and a legal document was actually drawn up and signed by him voiding the original agreement of 29 April 1945 between O'Neill and the firm under which a typescript of the play had been deposited not to be published until twenty-five years after his death. But when Haas consulted Bennett Cerf, the Random House President, he found that Cerf refused to believe Carlotta's statement that O'Neill had authorized her, if she saw fit, to break the original restriction. Cerf would not allow Random House to publish the play. But Random House's loss was Yale's gain. Mrs. O'Neill promptly assigned publication rights in the play to the Yale Library—as she had every right to do as executrix of the O'Neill estate—and authorized us to make arrangements with the Yale University Press for the publication of the book. Cerf carried his opposition to Carlotta so far that, through Frederick B. Adams, Jr., then a member of the Yale Press's Board of Governors as well as a director of Random House, he tried, in vain, to get the Press to turn down the Library's request that it publish the play.

Long Day's Journey Into Night appeared on 20 February 1956. Although Mrs. O'Neill had reserved for herself the dramatic rights in the play, the royalties from its publication would go to establish a Eugene O'Neill Memorial Fund at Yale, the income to be used for the upkeep of the O'Neill collection in the Library, for the purchase of books in the drama, and for O'Neill scholarships in the Yale Drama School.

At the time of the gift to Yale of publication rights in Long Day's Journey, Mrs. O'Neill had contemplated no stage production of the play. She soon decided, however, to give to the Royal Swedish Theatre in Stockholm permission to produce it without payment of royalty. The world première took place at the time of its book publication, with spectacular success. In May, a revival of The Iceman Cometh, directed by José Quintero at the small Circle-in-the-Square Theater in Greenwich Village, with Jason Robards, Jr., in the role of Hickey, met with an excellent critical reception and Mrs. O'Neill decided that Quintero could be trusted to handle Long Day's Journey as O'Neill himself would have wished. The play, directed by Quintero, opened in Boston and, after two weeks of enthusiastic audiences there, came to New Haven for a week. The cast was brought to the Collection of American Literature (then still in the Sterling Memorial Library building) by Louis Sheaffer, publicity manager for the production, who was later to write the authoritative two-volume biography of O'Neill. Fredric March on that occasion asked me about a passage in the play that had mystified the entire cast. In the last-act confrontation between the two Tyrone brothers, words given to James Tyrone, Jr., read in the Yale Press edition: "God bless you, K.O." What did the letters stand for?

I could offer no explanation but agreed to look up the passage in O'Neill's original
manuscript. I did this as soon as the cast had left the Library and discovered that the speech as O'Neill had written it read: "... God bless you, Kid. His eyes close. He mumbles. That last drink—the old K.O." In typing the manuscript Mrs. O'Neill, her eye skipping from "Kid." at the beginning of one line to "K.O." at the start of the next, had omitted an entire line and the error had not been caught. I wrote a note to Mr. March telling him what I had found and took it around to the Shubert Theater that same afternoon, with the result that the speech was corrected for that evening's and all subsequent performances. The correction was made by the Press in the second printing of its edition.

Mrs. O'Neill's judgment proved, of course, to be completely justified, and both on the stage and as a book the play has been generally accepted as O'Neill's greatest work. At the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Yale University Press in 1983, John Ryden, its director, announced that Long Day's Journey Into Night was the Press's all-time biggest seller, having sold more than eight hundred thousand paperback and forty-five thousand cloth-bound copies.

Norman Pearson had, over the years, assembled what amounted to a complete collection of Eugene O'Neill's first editions, rounded out with programs, reviews, and books and pamphlets about him. The end of Norman's friendship with Mrs. O'Neill had removed any probability that he would be allowed to write an O'Neill biography while she was alive, and he decided in the Spring of 1957 to give his collection to Yale as a memorial to Eugene O'Neill, Jr. Although there was extensive duplication with books already given by the O'Neills themselves, the Pearson collection was important in filling in many gaps, especially before 1928, and giving us a solid base for O'Neill research. (Norman later gave the duplicates to Princeton.)

I had first visited Mrs. O'Neill at the Hotel Shelton in Boston on 11 June 1954. On that memorable occasion I had taken with me photographic copies of O'Neill's inscriptions to her, written in manuscripts and books in the Yale collection. After my return to New Haven, Mrs. O'Neill had telephoned and written me frequently and had often told me how comforting she had found these photographs, reading the inscriptions over and over, thinking of them as her "litany." Three and a half years later, in January 1958, when O'Neill's second wife Agnes Boulton Kaufman was about to publish her account of her marriage to O'Neill, Part of a Long Story, I happened to say to Mrs. O'Neill that the inscriptions were, in effect, the story of O'Neill's life with her, and she decided that she would allow them to be published. Because the Yale Press felt that the inscriptions were rather too private and personal for commercial publication, it was arranged that the Library would have the book privately printed, but would sell copies for the benefit of the O'Neill collection. The Library would pay for the publication, but Mrs. O'Neill would contribute five thousand dollars (the estimated cost of the book) for "the work of the Yale Library." This more than covered the cost of printing Inscriptions: Eugene O'Neill to Carlotta Monterey O'Neill. The book was completed in May 1960 and Mrs. O'Neill was pleased with it.

In 1958 we had received the major portion of an archive that greatly reinforced the whole theatrical background for the O'Neill collection. That was the enormous mass of papers of the Theatre Guild, the gift of its directors Theresa Helburn, Armina Marshall, and Lawrence Langner. This contained much of the long correspondence between O'Neill and the Guild, the principal producer of his plays since 1928, along with corrected scripts of all the O'Neill plays they had produced, a selection of photographs, and an incomparable series of albums containing reviews, not only of Guild productions on Broadway but of the numerous touring-company productions all over the United States. Although the bulk of the collection came in 1958, the Guild was then still an active organization and further material was added in subsequent years. Armina Marshall gave the manuscript of "Thirst," the second play O'Neill ever wrote, in 1959, while the bulk of the O'Neill correspondence with Lawrence Langner was not actually handed over until 1960, and two inscribed copies of The Iceman Cometh came after Langner's death. Most of the O'Neill letters to Theresa Helburn came also in 1960, as the gift of her heirs.
Robert Sisk had originally been associated with the Guild, but had gone off on his own to a career in Hollywood. In 1958 he gave more than a hundred letters he had received from O'Neill and forty-three from Mrs. O'Neill. In October 1959, we received the plaster original of Edmund Quinn's portrait head of O'Neill, the gift of Quinn's widow, now Mrs. Shepherd Stevens. (A bronze cast of the head was already owned by the Drama School.) Dudley Nichols added his own O'Neill letters in November 1959, asking that they not be made available to "unworthy or sensational or hostile biographers." His eighty-six letters from Mrs. O'Neill came at the same time but were sealed until after his own and her deaths.

Gradually the income from the O'Neill Memorial Fund was becoming substantial enough so that the Library's share could be used to help in making additions to the Collection. Kenneth Macgowan, who had collaborated with O'Neill in the production of some of his early plays and had been one of his oldest friends, of course knew of the manuscript material at Yale. He could not afford to give us his O'Neill letters but, placing them with a California bookseller for sale, he suggested that they be offered first to us. Thanks to the income from the O'Neill Fund and the generosity of other friends of the Yale Library, we were able to acquire this important correspondence, consisting of more than a hundred letters and telegrams, dating from 1921 to 1950, along with some twenty-one from Mrs. O'Neill, and even one from Agnes Boulton. These were acquired in 1962 and were eventually published twenty years later by the Yale Press under the title "The Theatre We Worked For," in an edition prepared by Travis Bogard and Jackson Bryer.

In May 1956, after Long Day's Journey had been published and arrangements had been concluded between the Library and the Press for the subsequent publication of A Touch of the Poet and the one-act play Hughie (the publication rights in those plays also having been given to the Library), Mrs. O'Neill had telephoned me to ask whether we had any other completed, unpublished scripts, and I had reported to her the existence of the typescript of More Stately Mansions. She had been under the impression that it had been destroyed along with the longhand draft, and asked me to return it to her. I delivered it in person in New York on 16 May. After she had reread the play (which she herself had typed from O'Neill's first longhand script), she telephoned me. Her opinion was like O'Neill's (recorded in his Work Diary) that the script was much too complicated, and she doubted that anything could ever be done with it. This was the last I heard from Mrs. O'Neill about the play for almost a year.

In the Spring of 1957, she had telephoned Karl Ragnar Gierow, director of the Swedish Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm and informed him of the existence of More Stately Mansions. He had flown to New York, read the script, discussed it at length with Mrs. O'Neill, and had come up to New Haven to look at the notes for the play's revision that we had received along with the script. Eventually, Mrs. O'Neill had given him permission to attempt to shorten the script for possible production at the Royal Theatre. Mr. Gierow had taken the script with him back to Stockholm and, to our consternation, released to the press a sensational and completely misleading story of his "discovery" of a new full-length play by Eugene O'Neill.

Although Mrs. O'Neill had been shocked at the newspaper report and had suggested that Gierow return the typescript to her, he had apologized to us both for the newspaper release (which had of course accomplished its purpose in drawing attention to the play), and begged to be allowed to see what he could do. On 17 April, Mrs. O'Neill and I sent him a cable, signing it jointly, agreeing that he could proceed but asking that any further publicity be deferred until something definite in the way of an actable script was forthcoming. Gierow had had the typescript photographed and had returned the original to Mrs. O'Neill who, two years later, gave it back to the Library. After five years Gierow was satisfied that he had succeeded in making an actable play. When this shortened version was produced in Stockholm for the first time on 9 November 1962, Gierow could, in the printed program, assure the audience that "There is not a scene, not a passage, not a line in the drama which is presented tonight that is not by O'Neill.
himself."

Although the play was not an unqualified success in Stockholm, critics generally agreed that it was worthy of consideration as part of the canon. A year or so later Mrs. O'Neill decided that the English text could be made available for students of O'Neill's work. Again she gave the publication rights to the Library, and she and Gierow asked me to be responsible for establishing the equivalent in O'Neill's own words of the Swedish version. I devoted a good many evenings and several weekends to the task, typing the script myself. The play was published by the Yale Press on 13 March 1964, and Mrs. O'Neill inscribed my copy on the 12th of August.

Although the bold signature was as strong and handsome as ever, she had had some difficulty with the inscription, writing "1912" for "1964" in the date. Indeed her health, both mental and physical, had not been good through much of the preceding year. I had been eager that she should set down in some way her memories before it was too late and had persuaded her to talk into a dictaphone some of the details of her first meeting with O'Neill, etc. She actually completed one or two of these recordings, but found the machine difficult to cope with. I suggested that she talk to me and I would make notes of her conversation and she agreed to this arrangement. One of the resulting sessions was on her birthday, 28 December 1963, and concerned largely her own early life. Another, on New Year's Day, 1964, concerned her relationship with O'Neill.

On the very next day, I was astonished to receive a telephone call from Jane Rubin, who had for many years handled the O'Neill plays at Richard Madden, Inc., O'Neill's agents, reporting that Mrs. O'Neill was extremely upset at my "plans to write a book about her and O'Neill." I wrote her at once, explaining that I had no intention whatsoever of publishing anything about her or Mr. O'Neill. She replied, apologizing, and even suggested that we resume my note-taking sessions; but I had learned my lesson and had no desire to risk offending her again.

I continued to go to New York to see her at least once each month, and we had very pleasant lunches in the Carlton House dining room, sometimes, if the occasion was a special one, even at Quo Vadis. But her health was not improving, she was putting on weight, and tended to be more and more easily vexed, sometimes by quite trivial occurrences.

During the following Spring (of 1965), she had an extremely bothersome ear infection and was obviously in a highly nervous state. Her old friend Arthur Neergaard, who had treated her briefly in New York in 1945, was now her principal physician. On 11 May, Jane Rubin reported to me that Dr. Neergaard had found Mrs. O'Neill to be "very disturbed" and insisted that she go into the hospital immediately. One of her lawyers at Cadwalader, Wickersham and Taft did get in touch with Cynthia Chapman Stram, her only child, in case it should become necessary to use a commitment procedure, but Mrs. O'Neill was very well aware of her deteriorating physical and mental health and agreed quite readily to go into the nearby Regent Hospital at 115 East 61st Street for treatment. On 17 May, Jane Rubin reported her as being in a talkative mood, asking what had happened (the diagnosis had been "organically induced psychosis") and on 7 June there was marked improvement. I saw her at the Regent on several occasions before I left for the summer in Europe and she seemed gradually to be getting better. She was certainly not incompetent but was also in no condition to be bothered with the handling of her own affairs. On 15 July her lawyers wrote me that Mrs. O'Neill and her daughter Cynthia Stram had both agreed that Jane Rubin, as agent for the O'Neill plays, and I, as a friend and representative of Yale, should be appointed Trustees. The Trust was actually signed and notarized at the Yale Club in New York in September soon after my return from Europe.

Mrs. O'Neill seemed content to remain at the Regent, where she was well cared for, and, thinking that we had best not renew her lease at Carlton House. Jane Rubin and I in November removed most of her books, papers, and furnishings from her apartment. The books and papers went to the Yale Library on deposit; the other things were sent to
storage in New York. But in December she began to feel and act much better and insisted on going back to the hotel. Her doctors agreed that she could do this and so she returned to Carlton House.

It was during this period that she yielded to José Quintero's entreaties and authorized him to produce *More Stately Mansions*, first at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles and then at the Broadhurst in New York. Chiefly in order to build up the part of Sara and make it more worthy of Colleen Dewhurst, he had added to the Gierow script the original first scene that linked the play with its immediate predecessor in the Cycle, *A Touch of the Poet*. Since the play could not run past eleven o'clock without overtime rates having to be paid to stagehands, etc., Quintero had been forced to cut the second half of the play ruthlessly, thus sacrificing much of its effectiveness. Although the Broadway run was a respectable one--because of the stellar cast--the play was not accepted as top-drawer O'Neill and has never been widely played. A production in London for which I had great hopes was planned for 1974. This was to star the Austrian actress Elisabeth Bergner as Deborah, a role in which she had already triumphed in Berlin. Unfortunately, differences between star and director were not resolved and the production never reached London. In 1981, Esther Jackson and John Ezell devoted loving attention to the script at the University of Wisconsin, but they failed to receive the grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities which would have secured for their production the wider audience that it richly deserved.

Another gift that supplemented the O'Neill collection was the Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant papers received by her bequest in 1966. Miss Sergeant had interviewed O'Neill in 1926 and had used the interview as the basis of an essay published in her *Fire under the Andes* (1927). O'Neill had been favorably impressed and granted her a series of three interviews in New York in 1946 at the time of the production of *The Iceman Cometh*. Although there are only eight letters from O'Neill to Miss Sergeant, the unpublished notes of those interviews are interesting and valuable.

In 1967, at the suggestion of Louis Sheaffer, Mrs. O'Neill's daughter, Cynthia Stram, asked us to purchase the twenty-three letters she had from her step-father, along with some forty from her mother. No announcement was to be made of the acquisition and indeed the letters were to be sealed until after her mother's death. The O'Neill Fund enabled us to acquire the letters, which provide additional documentation on the relationship between O'Neill and his children.

In this same year (1967) we finally succeeded in closing negotiations for the acquisition of another important collection supplying dramatic background for the O'Neill papers. This was the archive and a substantial part of the library of Barrett H. Clark, who had been literary editor at the Samuel French Company and had written one of the first books about O'Neill. Negotiations with Clark's widow had begun seven years earlier, through Croswell Bowen, a Yale alumnus, who had written, with the nominal assistance of Shane O'Neill, *The Curse of the Misbegotten*. The Clark papers and books had been deposited at Yale in December 1960, and I had devoted most of my Christmas vacation to making a detailed listing of the material. From that listing an appraisal had been made by a New York bookseller. But it was difficult to come to an agreement as to the purchase price, and two other libraries eventually became involved. Fortunately, Mrs. Clark was disposed in our favor, primarily because of the presence at Yale of the O'Neill and Theatre Guild archives, and we were finally allowed to purchase the collection in 1967. Not only were there fifty-five letters from O'Neill and twenty-four from Mrs. O'Neill to Clark, but also the proofs of Clark's *Eugene O'Neill*, with O'Neill's numerous manuscript corrections, along with typescripts (made at the time of the Provincetown Playhouse production) of his adaptation of Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*. And the other letters and manuscript materials, notably of Paul Green and Lynn Riggs, were of first importance.

Mrs. O'Neill's health began to deteriorate again in 1968. On 11 September, it was necessary for her to go back into the Regent Hospital. In mid-November, she grew rapidly
worse, struck one of her nurses, and had to be transferred to the violent section of St. Luke's Hospital. There, with treatment, she soon began to improve, and was moved in January 1969 to the non-violent part of the hospital. On 24 March she was transferred to the DeWitt Nursing Home in Manhattan and, with the coming of summer, to the Valley Nursing Home in Westwood, New Jersey. When I saw her there for the last time on 11 November, she recognized me and spoke some sentences, but her attention seemed to drift away and I couldn't be sure that she always fully understood what I was saying. The doctor had reported that her physical health was good.

Exactly one week after my last visit the special nurse outside Mrs. O'Neill's room at 5:30 in the morning noticed that she was breathing heavily. She soon lapsed into a coma and died from a massive heart attack. It was ironic that, when her lawyer's telephone call to me came through, I was not in New Haven but in New York, accepting delivery from Agnes Boulton Kaufman's executors of O'Neill material that we had purchased.

This Boulton material had been offered in the course of the settlement of her estate and represented the residue of the O'Neill items that had remained in her possession at the house in Bermuda when O'Neill left his family for Carlotta. In the divorce settlement, Agnes agreed to hand over all such material, but she had obviously not done so. Over the last years of her life she had sold, chiefly through the Seven Gables Bookshop in New York, a number of manuscript items and books. We had already acquired a few important manuscripts from this source. One of the most notable was the annotated copy of Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner which constituted the original manuscript of O'Neill's adaptation of that poem for the Provincetown Players (and was the source of the text printed in the Library Gazette in October 1960). There was also a series of manuscript and typescript drafts of early poems.

The most important item in the material offered by the executors in 1969 was O'Neill's "Scribbling Diary for the Year 1925," which has since been published by the Library as part of the Work Diary. But there was also an extensive group of some two hundred seventy letters and telegrams to O'Neill dating from 1917 to 1927, from various correspondents, including John Peale Bishop, Barrett Clark, Hart Crane, Charles Demuth, Theodore Dreiser, St. John Ervine, and Waldo Frank. There was also a four-page letter of 1920 to O'Neill from his mother, and another four-page letter, undated, from his brother James. With the aid of the O'Neill Fund we were able to acquire this material. (Since most of the incoming O'Neill correspondence after 1927 was apparently destroyed, these early letters take on a special significance.) Subsequently, Barbara Burton, Agnes Boulton's daughter by her first marriage, found among her mother's books some forty-three volumes that had belonged to O'Neill, and we acquired those in May 1971.

In her will Mrs. O'Neill bequeathed to Yale "such books, papers, and other items relating to ... my husband, Eugene O'Neill, as may be selected by Donald C. Gallup...." I met with her executors in the warehouse atmosphere of Parke Bernet 84 and together we went over the contents of a great many boxes. There were books, photographs, and a few art objects, but most of the important material Mrs. O'Neill had been foresighted enough to hand over to us before she became ill. Her own correspondence relating to O'Neill in the years after his death had been on deposit at Yale since 1965.

Her will had been drawn up in 1964 by the New York law firm that she employed. The O'Neill copyrights were placed in an O'Neill Trust, with two of the firm's senior partners as trustees and with Yale University as the residuary beneficiary. Unfortunately, the tax law had been changed radically by Congress in 1969 and such private trusts had become taxable. After a single year it became apparent that only the Government would profit from the continued existence of the Trust, and it was dissolved. All the O'Neill properties were turned over to Yale, establishing a second O'Neill Fund, this one in memory of both O'Neills, with its income to be used in the same manner as the original fund. At the time of my retirement in 1980 this fund amounted to well over a million dollars.
After this final gift from Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, we received in the last decade of my curatorship additions from other sources of important O'Neill material. Some were gifts—like the group of ten letters of 1905 to Marion Welch, commemorating one of O'Neill's first romantic interests, and the letters to Russell Crouse. Others were bequests—like the letters to Norman Pearson, who died in 1975. Some were purchases, but most of those—like the letters to Eugene O'Neill, Jr., and to his mother Kathleen Pitt-Smith, and the batch of material we acquired from the estate of the O'Neills' housekeeper at Marblehead—were made possible by the income from the Carlotta Monterey and Eugene O'Neill Memorial Fund, created by Mrs. O'Neill's bequest.

It seems appropriate to end with this emphasis on Mrs. O'Neill, for my account has made clear to what a great extent she was the prime-mover behind the Eugene O'Neill collection at Yale. Indeed, she shall have the last word. In April 1954, when we were returning the manuscript and corrected typescript of Long Day's Journey to Mrs. O'Neill, Jim Babb, joking characteristically, asked me to tell her "to be careful of those manuscripts!" Of course I did as I was told and received this reply: "You give him my message: 'If it hadn't been for Carlotta there would not have been any O'Neill manuscripts in Yale!'"

--Donald Gallup

EUGENE O'NEILL IN THE WEST

Californians display a sentiment toward their State which to residents from beyond its borders can only appear as an irrational passion. Its fruits, flowers, ocean, industries, architecture are subjects of hymn-like devotion. Even its writers are adored, sometimes out of all proportion to their worth. Jack London is a cult figure. Robert Louis Stevenson, who passed through on his way to the South Seas, is, by the Californians, considered to be one of them. They have not forgotten Robinson Jeffers. They even manage to whip up affection for William Saroyan. Yet it comes as a surprise to many Californians to learn that, by their definition of the term, Eugene O'Neill was a California Writer. In their minds O'Neill is to be identified almost entirely with the gaunt coast of New England or the shabbier reaches of Manhattan. He has little to do with the cult of the artichoke or surfable oceans or any of the carefully cultivated history of gold miners and Sierra crossings.

Yet O'Neill lived among them for eight years—from 1936 to 1944—years that were the most significantly productive in his career. In California, he wrote the Tao House plays, Long Day's Journey Into Night, A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Iceman Cometh, Hughie, and most of the destroyed cycle, A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed. It is true that little, if any, of the western experience is reflected in the completed plays, but if the Cycle had been completed O'Neill's stage might have made more of the California scene. Four of those plays were to be set in the western United State: The Calms of Capricorn, the play which was to follow More Stately Mansions, was to describe a voyage around the Horn and, as its recently published scenario reveals, it was to climax with the entrance of a clipper ship through San Francisco's Golden Gate in the year 1858. The following play, The Earth Is the Limit, was set in San Francisco between 1858 and 1860. The action of its sequel, Nothing Is Lost Save Honor, moved between Washington, D.C., New York, and San Francisco in the years 1858 and 1860. Subsequently, The Man on Iron Horseback was to be concerned with the development of the transcontinental railroad in the period between 1876 and 1893.

O'Neill's arrival in California was in a measure accidental. In 1936, he found himself dissatisfied with his newly built, splendid residence on Sea Island in Georgia. He had made friends with Sophus Keith Winther and his wife Eline. Winther was a professor of English at the University of Washington in Seattle. His book on the playwright pleased O'Neill, and Carlotta, herself of Danish extraction, found herself drawn to the Danish professor. Both of the O'Neills admired Winther's novels of the hard lives of
Danish immigrants in the Dakota territory. Thus it was that in 1936, willing to be free for a time from the problems of writing at their Georgia home, they accepted an invitation to visit Seattle, where the Winthers would see to their comfort and where O'Neill could find material for The Man on Iron Horseback.

They arrived in Seattle in early November, and on November 12 rumors came true: O'Neill was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Press pressure made it a lively visit, and the O'Neills determined to travel south as inconspicuously as possible to the San Francisco Bay Area.

There were reasons for their coming there: Carlotta Monterey had begun life as Hazel Tharsing in Oakland, California. Living in Oakland were her mother, whom O'Neill had never met, and her daughter, whom he knew and liked. The O'Neills came to San Francisco, and almost at once—the day after Christmas—O'Neill was stricken with appendicitis and placed in Merritt Hospital in Oakland.

His illness was severe. Postoperative complications were to keep him in the hospital until March, and in that time Carlotta had opportunity to travel about and find a site for a new home in a better climate than Georgia offered. She went east in January to sell the Georgia property and upon her return began to oversee the construction of their new home in the hills above the small town of Danville, about an hour's drive east of San Francisco.

In the first years of their life together, they had thought casually of coming to California. In a letter of April 27, 1938, from a villa in Biarritz, O'Neill had written to Kenneth Macgowan that California might prove a desirable place to live. He and Carlotta had extensive travel plans:

Our plans after the end of summer are not fixed yet. We'll probably go to Germany for a while, get married there (if A[gnes] does the right thing), then to England, then to South Africa for the winter (I've always wanted to go there) and up as far in the interior as Lake Tanganyika, with a permanent house at Durban in Natal ... (where I once touched as a sailor) where I'll write another play. Then in the spring up the opposite (East coast) to Suez and the Mediterranean—then in Greece for six months and on the Bosphorus where I'll write another drama—or maybe all this writing time will be on the "Sea-Mother's Son" (keep this title to yourself!)—then, stopping at India, to Hong Kong and Peking where I'll do more writing ... and finally, two years from this Spring, back to California where C. and I expect to make our home for good. Of course there may be changes in the sequence of this itinerary.... (Theatre 178-179)

Changes there were. O'Neill, here sounding like a breathless Somerset Maugham with touches of Phileas Fogg, was merely daydreaming. He and Carlotta did journey to the Far East in September, ready to luxuriate in their unaccustomed freedom, but the voyage proved disastrous. He was unable to work. The Far East did not live up to his pictures of it. He fell ill from swimming in fetid waters. He began to drink after several years of abstinence. He quarreled with Carlotta and she left him, only to return to him when her ship and his docked together at Port Said on the return journey. His reference to a residence in California was only the finale of a dream walking.

More definitive was Carlotta's view of California in a letter she wrote to Macgowan in February 1934:

We won't go to California. I loathe the place—always have. Geographically it is marvellous (particularly north of St. Barbara!!!) but the people (generally speaking) drive me mad.--I never drank, played bridge or gold--& loathe country clubs,--so that does not make for popularity.--But I have motored over nearly every foot of that pesky state & know some lovely spots. My Mother, daughter & I own a lot of real estate there.--I wish to Heaven times would get better so we
could sell it! (Theatre 210)

What O'Neill knew about California before he came to live there is not easily
determined with precision. His father had been a fixture of theatrical stock in San
Francisco in the 1870's and his brother Jamie had been born there in 1878. Eugene had
memories of being sick in bed in San Francisco as a child (Sheaffer 71), presumably when
he was taken on tour with his father, and he had been briefly in California in 1909. In
that year he was being rusticated following his marriage to Kathleen Jenkins by being
sent to Honduras to work in a mining concern there. He shipped from Benicia, a town at
the Sacramento River delta that had once threatened to rival San Francisco as the Bay's
chief port. There is no record of any delighted response to the north Bay town or
anything else the area had to offer.

He came west again in 1912 as a super in his father's tab show version of Monte
Cristo. His biographers do not indicate that he came to San Francisco, although the tour
was booked on the Orpheum Circuit whose western hub was the Bay city. It is certain that
he went to Utah and to Colorado, perhaps absorbing through the train window some notion
of what western scenery was like. The fact that it was written with vaudeville
performance in mind suggests that there may be a connection between this trip and his
first play, A Wife for a Life, which is laid in the Arizona desert.

The sketch, which he wrote in 1913, the year following the tour, requires "A plain
dotted with sagebrush and a lonely butte outlined, black and sinister, against the
lighter darkness of a sky with stars." Add a few pieces of mining equipment and a
campfire and the set is complete. Any amateur could create it. William S. Hart films,
illustrations in the Saturday Evening Post, or a novel by Zane Grey would be sufficient
source. Scenery out of a warehouse would be adequate. But there is, in the sense that
the butte is "sinister," and in the precise differentiation between the darkness of earth
and the lighter dark of the sky, the possibility of a tenuous memory which the young
O'Neill held.

His next western venture was Where the Cross Is Made (1918) and its three-act
development, Gold (1920), both set on the California coast. The one-act version requires
a lookout at the top of a house on "A High point of land on the California coast."
"Frisco" is mentioned; the year of the action is 1900. However, the Robert Louis
Stevenson adventure story of buried treasure and ghosts that haunt a mad sea captain
makes little use of its locale. Since madness is his subject, O'Neill turns the action
inward to take advantage of the psychological thrills insanity offers.

Gold is a different matter. The final scene takes place in a captain's walk identical
to that specified for the one-act version, but the earlier acts are laid out-of-doors and
show what O'Neill felt California to be like. In one act, he presents the exterior of
the house, facing left toward the harbor. It has a porch, supported by columns and
windows with heavy green shutters, closed and barred. It is a Mannon mansion in embryo.
To get to the sea from the house, the characters cross to the edge of a cliff and go over
the edge by a ladder in order to descend to the beach. It is a clumsy set at best. The
actors presumably must, once they approach the proscenium arch, climb onto a ladder and
descend through a stage trap to the sub-stage area.

Even with such awkward elaboration, the setting is geographically murky. The cliff is
said to overlook a harbor and a wharf where a schooner ready to sail is anchored. It is,
one assumes, a deep water port, for sailors appear, saying things like "There's a fair
bit o' breeze" or "If he don't shake a leg, we'll miss the tide." There is not really
much of a hurry, for a sailor—as the action attests—can descend the cliff, board the
ship and take off in a page of dialogue. Another page and the ship has "passed the
p'int—and now—heading' her out to sea—so'east by east. By God, that be the course I
chartered for her!" (Plays 672)

"South-east by east"? From the West Coast? Some skipper! The ship is supposed to
founder in the Indian Ocean, but with that course she surely came aground in an artichoke patch near Monterey.

But this is not the only puzzle. If it be asked just where there is such a bay as the one O'Neill describes, the answer is not a ready one. San Francisco is mentioned twice in the play, but its direction from the house is not specified. The Captain is an ex-whaler, and it is true that whaling was an industry on the Pacific Coast until the 1870's. There were whaling stations at Monterey and Sausalito, but the latter town is inside the San Francisco Bay, and at Monterey, the only real harbor south of San Francisco, the high cliffs are missing. To the north of the city, except for a few river mouths, there are no deep water bays where a ship can pull to a wharf and yet be round a point and out of sight in short order. The dog-hole schooners that hauled lumber, tanbark and hides down the coasts loaded offshore and had no such harbors—as their continual shipwrecks attested.

It is not perhaps much of a mystery. The play's second act is laid inside the wharf shed on the dock. The significant feature of the setting is at the back—a large double doorway looking over the end of the wharf to the bay and the open sea beyond. Double doorways may be a standard feature of boat sheds, but the one O'Neill knew firsthand was the one in the wharf at Provincetown, Massachusetts, where his first plays were produced, and whose essential features he reproduced in at least one other short play, The Rope. Writing at first for the Provincetown Players, he kept to the spaces they could use quickly and efficiently; and in moving his action to California, he transferred not only the interior but the exterior geography. The California setting is a Stevensonian fillip, chosen primarily because it was closer to the Malay Archipelago where the treasure was buried. This perhaps made the play's time scheme easier to deal with than did a long voyage around the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn to the east coast. Yet the schooner is wrecked in the Indian Ocean, west of the Malay Archipelago. Its course, to say the least, was erratic. The truth is, of course, that that countryside with its Mannon-style house, complete with Captain's Walk, the special harbor facilities, where one sails east in order to go west and approaches the Malay Archipelago through the Indian Ocean—that is New England. O'Neill's California is somewhere on Cape Cod.

O'Neill did better with his next western venture, the dream of California that sends Simeon and Peter Cabot away from their farm to seek their fortune. In Desire Under the Elms, the idea of California is only an image—of gold in the west, linked poetically with the setting sun and a woman's golden hair—that of Jenn, Simeon's dead wife. The California of this play is an image, poetically conceived and somewhat literary, not unlike the image of the South Seas in Mourning Becomes Electra—a symbol of longing and loss to contrast with harsh realities.

The west as dream, the idea of a golden California, proved to be his final use of the far west. In the complex, contorted scenario of The Calms of Capricorn, the California gold fields form a major thematic element, counterpointing the imagery of the sea as an element in man's fate. In this strange play—one whose narrative plan suggests that it was not only the size of the undertaking and his illness that gave him trouble with the completion of the Cycle—the widowed Sara Melody Harford and her sons Ethan, Jonathan, Wolfe and Honey journey to California on the Clipper Ship "Dream of the West." It is a randy Ship of Fools. Becalmed while trying to set a record run from Boston to San Francisco, the Clipper becomes something like a brothel as a whorish sensualist named Leda seduces the majority of the male members of the cast. Her doctrine is simply, if grossly, put:

What else is [love but bodies?] ... Bodies are all right, aren't they—healthy, natural. Aren't we animals? Can you go to bed with a soul? Poetic drivel aside, love may start in heaven but it goes on or it dies in bed. (Calms 157)

Sexual possession is linked with the desire for material possession, bodily love and greed are combined in a series of quickly intercut scenes, almost cinematic in their
rhythm. Leda's sexuality is linked thematically with the sea. As the play's central protagonist, Sara's son Ethan, says to his mother:

I want nothing. It is what I need that I must have--must & will have--and will gladly pay the world for.... Victory over the sea--and so, freedom & rebirth.... I speak to you in symbols which neither of us can think but which our hearts understand, because I love you, and because I love and hate the sea, which you can understand, being also a mother. For the sea is the mother of life--is a woman of all moods for all men--and all seductive & evil--devil mother or wife or mistress or daughter or water-front drab--and it is as a sign and symbol of freedom to me that someday as captain of a ship I shall fight her storms and calms and fogs and cross-currents and capricious airs and make a faster voyage around the Horn to the Golden Gate than ever man has made--as a last gesture of victory, now when the era of American triumph over [the] sea is dying from the money panic of the greedy earthbound. (Calms 135-136)

In the scenario, O'Neill is evidently thinking his way not only through the narrative and the characters but the theme as well. Ethan's words are an experiment in the motives of his protagonist and mark O'Neill's attempt to see his way through the thematic elements which would, in the end, comprise the whole meaning of the play and perhaps of the Cycle. The theme of the greedy earthbound, expressed in sexual symbolism, had been more definitively explored in More Stately Mansions; but in the sequel, the added elements of the sea and the Golden Gate added complexity and not a little ambiguity.

There is every reason to assume that O'Neill would have clarified the thematic ambiguities in The Calms of Capricorn and More Stately Mansions as he clarified them in the one Cycle play he completed, A Touch of the Poet. His thrust was toward simplicity of statement and staging, but it took him time--often years--to achieve the cleanly wrought dramatic presentation of the plays he wrote at Tao House. All that can be reasonably assumed from the scenario is that he saw the west as somehow intertwined with the materialistic motifs of the sea and sex as a force to be conquered and possessed before it could defeat its would-be possessors.

Through the action of the shipboard scenes, O'Neill held the idea of California as a materialistic Mecca before him. In the steerage section of the ship there is a crowd of men heading for the gold fields. Unseen, they serve as a chorus to the play, singing "Sacramento" and other songs almost unceasingly. Like the foghorn in Long Day's Journey Into Night or the native chant in Moon of the Caribbees or the drums in The Emperor Jones, the gold-seekers' song preys on the nerves of the onstage characters (and on the audience). At times, as a way of indicating the intertwining themes of the sea and the dream of California gold, O'Neill called for the gold-seekers' song to blend with a sea chanty, thus: "As a background is the triumphant song of the gold-seekers, dominating a subdued, beaten sea-chanty" (Calms 175). The music is a continual hymn to a betraying dream. O'Neill notes of the singers that "their leader had heard from brother in Cal[ifornia] of big new strike and he'd gotten company together of poor neighbors--it will be like first days [i.e., 1849, six years before the play's action]--poor things. I hope they have better luck than those others, that this wonderful new strike isn't just a fairy tale" (Calms 143).

The dream of California and gold is a delusion. The west is a place where a man's dreams will be knocked out of his head (Calms 140). It becomes in the end a politician's promise as Sara's son Honey--who was to become the politician protagonist of Nothing Is Lost Save Honor--turns it to his advantage, promising the gold-seekers as they enter the Golden Gate (Calms 180-181):

there's land, the Golden Gate, and behind it hills full of gold--I promise you you'll all be rich--and you know me, Honey Harford, my word is as good as my bond.... I promise you I'll see you get everything your heart desires tomorrow.
The play was to end as "The Dream of the West" enters the Golden Gate and as Ethan with his partner in love and crime, Nancy, commit suicide by giving themselves to the sea. California remained only at the edge of the play's vision, a lure, a delusion and a cheat.

And that was the sum of the impact of the west on O'Neill's plays. The house he built in the hills above Danville resembles in some particulars a hacienda-style ranch house. It was built on the site of an old adobe farmhouse of basalt bricks that to a degree copies the former adobe structure. But the roof had black tiles in an oriental manner and the rooms were furnished with elegant oriental furniture. The oriental, not the western world gave the house its name, Tao House, and it was designed to shut the outer world from sight. High walls surround the garden and, although the rooms command a spectacular view of the great massif of one of California's impressive mountains, Mount Diablo, the windows take little advantage of it. There were no picture windows to tempt the occupants to luxuriate in the outlook. Light entered from widely spaced double-hung windows and was caught and reflected into the room by large gray and dark blue mirrors, enabling the occupants to see themselves, not the world around them.

Brightness was further subdued by dark terracotta flooring, Chinese red lacquer doors, and deep blue ceilings. The light is subaqueous, and, although one can go out of doors directly from any room in the house—as if the O'Neills knew that sometimes claustrophobia might set in—within the house there is a cavernlike quiet and darkness. O'Neill's study is the darkest and most isolated of the rooms. It is approached through three doors which shut out sound and bar intrusion. It was there that he turned away from the exterior world to explore his past and the images—memories—of New England and New York where his truth lay.

Some of Tao House found its way into his plays. The red lacquer door to the summer house in the garden of Deborah Harford in More Stately Mansions came from the doors Carlotta Monterey planned for the California home. Not long ago, the Ashland Theatre Company came from Oregon to play A Moon for the Misbegotten as a benefit for the restoration of Tao House to what it was when O'Neill lived there. It was staged in the earth by minimal stage light, but under a full moon before a dilapidated old barn that had been there long before Tao House was built. The play was never more superbly set, and the actors and audience seemed to feel that O'Neill's last play had been conceived by the sight of that barn, and that in this performance it had come home.

But so far as the west itself was concerned, O'Neill made little use of it, other than as a poetic, thematic image. California writer he was, but he remained an easterner in thought and deed.

--Travis Bogard

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When one is called upon to say why a particular playwright should or should not be thought of as a national playwright, one is necessarily called upon to say something about what precisely a national playwright is. While that is really not possible to do, the appellation has been used a good deal, and it implies that the writer in question should be recognized as a spokesman for his culture--its dreams and its defects, its aspirations and its disappointments, its past and its conception of its future. So, in view of my topic, perhaps I should begin with a brief, very rough kind of definition.

In confronting a problem like this one, I ought to state first what a national playwright is not, and then proceed to the more difficult task of saying what one is. So, what is a national playwright not? A national playwright is not, first of all, a national apologist--that is to say, a writer who would explain away his country's defects and focus on the glories of its traditions in exaggerated fashion. America has certainly had many such playwrights, especially earlier in our history, but few are remembered today, or deserve to be.

At the same time, a national playwright is not one who has made a reputation as the representative of and spokesman for either a region, a socio-political outlook, or a minority race. America in the twentieth century has had some distinguished regional playwrights--the best known perhaps being the late Tennessee Williams, who was first and foremost a southern playwright. I am not saying that Williams did not through his southernness speak of national concerns and attitudes, but I am saying that he always spoke as a southerner and for a southern perspective in our country. He detested much about his region, and to some extent his plays may be viewed as exposés of the excesses and repressive attitudes of that region. But being an exposé of the flaws of a region does not make the writer any less a regional writer. In a similar way, I think, Clifford Odets spoke primarily for New York City, more specifically the struggles of people living in the great depression in that city. While his subjects were of national concern, it would be difficult to consider Odets a national playwright.

Similarly, there have been playwrights of greater or lesser success who have represented any number of "isms" in our country. But by the very nature of the question at hand, it is impossible to be a truly national playwright when one is basically concerned with an "ism" or a particular socio-political or philosophical outlook. A national playwright might well be concerned with these things, but he would not be primarily associated with any one of them.

What would a national playwright be? He would certainly be widely known, highly regarded by a broad cross-section of the population. He would speak with the voice of that broad cross-section in diction or dialect, or sets of dialects, that cut across race, region, religion, socio-economic class. He would sensitively probe both the positive and the negative aspects of his society in ways that reveal the previously unrevealed, and articulate that which has not been previously articulated. I also think that a truly national playwright would be one with a substantial international reputation, for if one is a spokesman for his country, he must necessarily be representing his people around the globe. By that measure, of course, the subject of today's talk is most certainly our national playwright. His international reputation is unquestioned. Only his national reputation seems somewhat unclear.

The dramatist whose reputation in many ways leads the way for Eugene O''Neill in this country is one who is considered by many the first modern dramatist--the great Norwegian national playwright Henrik Ibsen. One interesting thing about Ibsen is that in spite of the strong national reputation he possessed, there were many in his time who despised him, and to an extent there still are. Ibsen took a deeply critical look at his society.

*An abridged version of the annual American Studies Lecture delivered at Baylor University on March 5, 1985.
and brought up subjects which many of his countrymen felt should be kept out of view. He explored what was for many a forbidden topic, the sexual mores of his time. He sought to expose hypocrisy of all kinds, especially that of men with regard to women. He sought to throw light on those hidden areas of the human make-up which were later dealt with more scientifically by the great pioneers of modern psychology. In ways I shall be suggesting, O'Neill was for America very much what Ibsen was for Norway.

What I have been saying about Ibsen also holds true for the several other late nineteenth and early twentieth century titans of the theater: August Strindberg in Sweden, Anton Chekhov in Russia, John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey in Ireland, Bernard Shaw in England, Luigi Pirandello in Italy, Federico Garcia Lorca in Spain, and Bertolt Brecht in Germany. All are true national playwrights. None speaks in glowing terms about his culture, yet all speak deeply out of that culture: penetrating it, articulating its problems, focusing on its needs—speaking always out of a kind of love, even while their tone is scathing. And, of course, it is these playwrights who are performed most extensively around the world today. The arguments over their greatness are pretty much over; the studies and productions mount.

And so we come to Eugene O'Neill, who is still not fully acclaimed as our national playwright. I suppose most Americans would acknowledge that he is, if anyone is. Nevertheless, not too many years ago, at a meeting of the Modern Language Association in Chicago, Virginia Floyd set up what she labeled an International Symposium on O'Neill's works. She called upon leading O'Neill scholars from Europe and America to assess the nature of the playwright's greatness. Anticipating a huge turnout, she asked the MLA planning committee to reserve the grand ballroom of the hotel for the occasion. I was there; so was my wife. And so were, I think, no more than a dozen others, exclusive of the several speakers. It was a surprise—perhaps; it was certainly a disappointment. One of the speakers, the noted Finnish scholar Timo Tiusanen, asked the question which is perhaps central still: "When will America acknowledge its national playwright?" O'Neill sessions are better attended at the MLA today, but there is still the kind of uncertainty about his greatness in this country, on the part of scholars anyway, and some theatregoers, that Ibsen had to endure in his country.

If we look at the criteria I set up earlier regarding national playwrights, O'Neill comes out remarkably like Ibsen. Though a critic, at times bitter, of the social and moral attitudes of his countrymen, he wrote out of a deep knowledge of his culture born of background and experience. The plays on which O'Neill's reputation rested in the 1920's and early 1930's—his most popular period—suggest the great diversity of his subjects. At times there seems a kind of New England regionalism; at other times a dedication to one or another particular philosophical perspective; at other times still, a concern with a certain social or political cause. What we realize from these earlier works is that his interests were in fact constantly shifting. And we realize that his dramatic canon was always greater than the sum of its parts.

The first basis on which O'Neill's place as our national playwright stands is the great and continuing public awareness of his work. Throughout his career, O'Neill spoke seriously to and for a wide variety of Americans—from the city to the country, from farm and factory to the ivory tower. And that awareness is fostered by continuing productions of his plays on and off Broadway, in university and community theaters, and especially on film and television. I suppose I am really saying that the proverbial "man in the street" still knows the name Eugene O'Neill better than any other name in the American theatre. That is hardly the sole basis for the designation "national playwright," but it is a necessary starting point. I wonder if any of our current crop of younger playwrights will be able to say the same.

The deeper reasons for his national place are more complex but constitute the main reason I give this talk. And while I will allude from time to time to earlier plays, I would like to focus my discussion on his last plays. For me, that Eugene O'Neill finally is our national playwright rests on the great plays which ended his career: The Iceman
Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, A Moon for the Misbegotten, and Hughie.

The subject I am going to start with here, not surprisingly, is dialect. O'Neill's major characters in these plays tend to use general American diction, and they speak a general American, not a regional, dialect. Of course, if a character is specifically identified as Irish, or English, or South African, or urban American Black, or New England Yankee, he speaks appropriately. (O'Neill is well-known for his simulation of differing dialects.) But the major characters I refer to--Larry Slade and Hickey in The Iceman Cometh, all four Tyrones (despite the Irish-isms of Father Tyrone) in Long Day's Journey, and Jim Tyrone in A Moon for the Misbegotten--all use a broad American speech and vernacular. They employ a good deal of slang, of course; but despite the fact that their slang tends to be of the period immediately preceding and following the First World War, it feels only slightly dated to most modern audiences. It always has the ring of American speech.

If we consider some of today's playwrights who stress colloquial language--Harold Pinter in England, for example, or David Mamet in the U.S.--we hear very special, remarkably unvarying qualities of diction. These playwrights are successful in hearing a distinctly national speech, but the speech they convey is really quite narrowly conceived. All the characters in a play like Mamet's currently successful Glengarry Glen Ross speak a standard, unvarying prose/poetry of obscenity and run-together sentences suggesting the single-mindedness of their avarice and their general underlying despair. The O'Neill characters are not like that. We hear varying degrees of obscenity, and we also get some of the kind of slurring of language and thought we get from Mamet. This is especially true of the central figure in Hughie, who may anticipate Mamet's characters in that he is a broken-down, despairing gambler. But O'Neill's major characters have constantly varying voices, reflecting their varying moods and the various roles they see themselves as playing.

Take Larry Slade in The Iceman Cometh as an example. Larry sounds at one moment like a member of the early 20th century American radical labor movement, at another like a foot-shuffling American stew-bum, at another like an American vaudeville stage actor, at another like a nihilistic American philosopher, at another like a despairing American adolescent, at another like a sympathetic Irish-American priest--yet at all times he is a very American amalgam known as Larry Slade. Despite the great variety of voices he uses, we never fail to recognize the integrity of this character. Larry is in the final analysis introverted and not as verbal as his alter ego in the play, Hickey, whose language is more quotable. But Larry makes my point most clearly, I think. That he is very much an American figure is obvious; and that he is convincingly multi-voiced makes his richness and depth as a character stand out sharply from the lesser characters in the play, and from the characters of more recent American dramatists.

Linked with language is the most complex phase of what I believe will be the enduring and increasing reputation of Eugene O'Neill as our national playwright--a quality which has already made him a classic in Scandinavia and other European countries but is still only grudgingly recognized as a quality of greatness at home. In approaching this phase of O'Neill's genius, I would like very briefly to juxtapose two names that I am willing to bet have never been juxtaposed before--for any reason: Frederick Jackson Turner, the American historian who proposed the famous theory of the frontier and systematically linked that phenomenon to a series of what he saw as uniquely American characteristics; and Sigmund Freud, who was almost an exact contemporary of Turner's. While O'Neill of course acknowledged being influenced by Freud, I doubt that he ever heard of Turner. But it is not influence I am concerned with here. I am simply suggesting that O'Neill's uniquely American art combines qualities we might very well associate with Turner and qualities we would very definitely associate with Freud.

In his great seminal essay of the 1890's, The Significance of the Frontier in American History (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), Turner draws attention to the idea that what characterizes Americans, as set apart from their old world ancestors, is
their "coarseness and strength... their restless, nervous energy... their buoyancy and exuberance" (p. 57). Implicitly, we get from Turner a sense of the frontiersman's ready willingness to share feelings with others, yet always a sense too of his uncompromising individualism. Of course, Turner was talking about people living under semi-primitive conditions, highly dependent on one another for physical survival, living in an atmosphere in which traditional forms of education and entertainment were unavailable. People on the frontier needed to communicate as directly as possible with one another for their physical survival. Entertainment might be a tall story or a practical joke, but never comic persiflage and rarely the subtle effort to insult or harm others through indirect statement. Almost everything Turner associates with the frontier (i.e. the American spirit) represents the opposite of European subtlety, indirectness, superciliousness, or irony.

Freud, of course, would seem to be addressing something entirely different from Turner. He is primarily concerned with that whole realm of the unspoken within an individual, those fears and anxieties associated with a person's past which are buried so deep that the individual is unwilling or unable to acknowledge them. Freud is most concerned with unearthing that realm—with bringing the unspoken terrors into the light of day so that they might not seem so terrible. In an unexpected way, his theory is rather like Turner's in being directly concerned with honesty and personal courage—though Freud's concern is with honesty and courage with one's self, while Turner's is with honesty and courage in relation to others. Furthermore, Freud's concern is with essentially private confession, even if a therapist is listening. Turner's frontiersman is one who is always public. He is a social creature, almost totally oblivious of self.

Let me state very briefly, then, the idea I am experimenting with in terms of Eugene O'Neill's being our national playwright. O'Neill, in life and in his plays, was an instinctive, uncompromising Freudian. He would have been one had he never heard the name or theories of Sigmund Freud. His entire adult life, and the whole canon of his plays, was an unrelenting assault upon his unacknowledged realm—the world of his buried fears and anxieties. I do not really need to develop this idea here, because I have already done so elsewhere, as have O'Neill's biographers. But I would like to develop the thought that the style of O'Neill's assault upon his own sub-conscious is the public style of the frontier rather than the private style of the psychiatrist's office. As everything else uniquely American, Turner and other historians tell us, is an amalgam of the European and American, O'Neill's uniquely American dramatic art blends the European (Freud's theories) with the American.

Part of what was refreshing about Eugene O'Neill's plays from the start was the unrestrained directness of his characters. This quality is of course best reflected in his sea plays, written about men who lived in an atmosphere and under conditions which parallel those of the American frontier; but it is also evident in plays written about what might be called New York sophisticates. I think in particular of his Strange Interlude, which recently enjoyed a superb revival in New York with Glenda Jackson in the leading role. This play seems concerned with people who do not express their thoughts openly, directly, or especially courageously. Yet O'Neill's great innovation in the play—its interior monologues—results in the fact that the thoughts and feelings of its characters are quite directly presented to the audience. These monologues make characters who are subtle, indirect, and dishonest with one another direct and honest with us; and the overall effect is a play which is daring in the way it has people revealing their deepest feelings.

Increasingly in his last plays, O'Neill probes hidden areas of human nature in terms that are congruent with Turner's most identifiably American qualities: honesty, courage, directness, lack of restraint, idiomatic familiarity, and the willingness to express the deepest feelings in a communal setting. I would like, in the time remaining, to explore this idea through the characters of Hickey in The Iceman Cometh, Jamie Tyrone in Long Day's Journey, and Jim Tyrone in A Moon for the Misbegotten.
Hickey is different from Jamie in that he is obviously less well educated and is identified as an Indiana "Hoosier" rather than as a Broadway "Sport" (as Jamie is). But even someone unfamiliar with O'Neill can recognize that they are essentially similar. Both Hickey and Jamie richly enjoy the company of rowdy men in bars, they are extremely generous in providing the drinks on party occasions, they are obviously late-stage alcoholics, they seem utterly without cant or prejudice in their attitudes, they are equally at home with people of all social classes and backgrounds, and they are instinctively liked by the people they associate with. They fit the image of Turner's typical American in the broad-gauged honesty and hearty friendliness so often associated with that figure.

But this is only the surface of the Hickey-Jamie figures. What makes them so memorable is that their growth as characters is directly related to the great confessional speeches they make late in their plays. These speeches are all-out, irrepressible revelations of their deepest anxieties--Freudian in the depths they probe, Turner-like in the familiarity of their diction and the open friendliness of their manner. They live out these confessions, not just for a theatre audience as in Strange Interlude, but directly in front of central fellow characters. Hickey begins his well-known last-act confession in phrases which immediately call Turner's frontiersman to mind--open, a bit raucous, and utterly honest:

Listening to my old man whooping up hell fire and scaring those Hoosier suckers into shelling out their dough only handed me a laugh. Although I had to hand it to him, the way he sold them nothing for something. I guess I take after him, and that's what made me a good salesman.


At the culmination of Hickey's long confession, he tells us of having murdered his wife on the insane assumption that he would in this way be saving her from having to believe that he would one day reform. What is most relevant in this final portion is that Hickey is here actually living through his wildly shifting emotions before his listeners as he expresses them. It is the most dramatic part of his confession, and, in the terms I have been suggesting, the most "American" as well. O'Neill's probing here is Freudian in that it goes so deeply into Hickey's "unconscious" motivation, that portion of him which he only becomes consciously aware of as he speaks--and distinctly American in the explosiveness, the unthinking familiarity, and total honesty of his chaotic reversals:

I felt as though a ton of guilt was lifted off my mind. I remember I stood by the bed and suddenly I had to laugh. I couldn't help it, and I knew Evelyn would forgive me. I remember I heard myself speaking to her, as if it was something I'd always wanted to say: "Well, you know what you can do with your pipe dream now, you damned bitch." (He stops with a horrified start, as if shocked out of a nightmare, as if he couldn't believe he heard what he had just said. He stammers) No! I never--!....(Bursts into frantic denial) No! That's a lie! I never said--! Good God, I couldn't have said that! If I did, I'd gone insane! Why, I loved Evelyn better than anything in life!

(The Iceman Cometh, pp. 241-242)

What has been revealed to us--with, in Turner's words, "the bonds of custom ... broken and unrestraint ... triumphant"--is that Hickey has what Freud would call a "bi-polar" nature. His failure has not been in realizing that he hated his wife so much as it has been his failure to acknowledge that the hatred existed side-by-side with the love. In peculiarly American terms, we are reminded that man is an emotionally and psychologically divided creature. With all the "buoyancy and exuberance" of Turner's frontiersman, Hickey reveals his capacity for great, pent-up violence: but in the same terms, he also reveals his equally pent-up love.
As Hickey's American-ness is most evident in both his diction and his remarkable openness, so the two embodiments of Jamie Tyrone take us even closer to O'Neill's vision of an American hero. Like Hickey, these Jamie figures "face the ghosts in their own closets" with an all-out directness and an American "way with words" which take us to the very heart of their own natures, and of human nature as well. Jamie is educated and uses his education as a mighty resource in conveying his feelings. His very American diction is more far-reaching than Hickey's. In Jamie's speeches we hear the sounds of the tavern, the vaudeville stage, the legitimate theatre, the race track, the great poetry of the ages, and the college philosophy seminar. He is verbally the most versatile of O'Neill's characters, as he is the most flamboyant in both gesture and statement.

Like no other O'Neill character before him, Jamie Tyrone communicates the depths of his feelings with uncompromising honesty. At the same time, he is able to give himself unstintingly to the person he feels closest to. That person in Long Day's Journey is Edmund; and the oft-quoted, deeply confessional exchange between brothers late in Act Four reveals the full range of Jamie's feeling for his brother, from the lingering hatred born of their "sibling rivalry," to the desperate love born of an awesome feeling of loneliness should he lose him. Jamie faces the "dead part of himself" uncompromisingly, even exuberantly.

Mama and Papa are right. I've been rotten bad influence. And worst of it is, I did it on purpose... to make a bum of you. Or part of me did.... That part that's been dead so long. That hates life. My putting you wise so you'd learn from my mistakes. Believed that myself at times, but it's a fake. Made my mistakes look good. Made getting drunk romantic. Made whores fascinating vampires instead of poor, stupid, diseased sobs they really are. Made fun of work as sucker's game. Never wanted you succeed and make me look even worse by comparison. Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama's baby, Papa's pet!


In thus saving "his brother from himself," Jamie is very literally yielding up his own stability, if not indeed his own life, in order that his brother may endure and succeed. Considering the probability that Jamie will indeed lose his brother as a result of this confession, it might fairly be said that no pioneer ever faced the wilderness with greater resolve than Jamie Tyrone faces that loss here. His plea that Edmund—not "forget him" is the plea of a despairing man for whom the greatest gift he can give is the remains of his own battered ego.

Finally, there is the Jim Tyrone of A Moon for the Misbegotten. I shall not dwell here on the exchanges between Jim Tyrone and old Phil Hogan early in the play, though they are quite evocative of the comic exchanges of early 20th century American vaudeville. Rather, following the emphasis I have been using for the other characters, I shall look briefly at Jim's long, late-night conversation with Josie which culminates in the great confession of this play. Jim has been drinking most of the day when he comes to keep a 9 p.m. date with Josie at some time approaching midnight. And as he gets drunker and drunker, he begins to mistake Josie for someone he refers to as a "fat blonde pig on the train"--which leads to his great confession. The story about the death of his mother. Having been "on the wagon" for two years just before her death, he describes his return to drink following her fatal stroke:

I had to bring her body East to be buried beside the Old Man... she was in her coffin in the baggage car. No matter how drunk I got, I couldn't forget that for a minute. I found I couldn't stay alone in the drawing room. It became haunted. I was going crazy.... But I'd spotted one passenger who was used to drunks and could pretend to like them, if there was enough dough in it. She had parlor house written all over her--a blonde pig who looked more like a whore than twenty-five whores, with a face like an overgrown doll's and a come-on
smile as cold as a polar bear's feet. So every night, for fifty bucks a night....


Why is this uniquely American? The experience itself is not; it is one that could befall any individual in any time or place. So could the experiences central to Ibsen's very Norwegian plays. The point, of course, must come back first to the savagery of Jim's diction, coarsely rich with popular early twentieth-century phrases; to the imagery of the train and the drawing room, with its baggage car and its porter; to the special qualities of the call girl Jim so precisely describes—and even to the fact that we are throughout all this action crossing the American continent.

But more deeply, Jim has sinned in an all-out way, confessed in an all-out way, and been forgiven in an all-out way. And if we think for a moment of the unlikely juxtaposition of Turner and Freud I have been suggesting, that may be thought of as a uniquely American way. Jim's has been a public confession—for though it is made only to Josie, there is as much of the public pronouncement to it as there is to Hickey's confession in The Iceman Cometh—and it has been unsparing in the vividness of its detail. People in Europe grow impatient with Americans because we don't seem to be able to hold anything back—the excesses of our vices, the uninhibited nature of our responses, the frankness and openness of our admissions: what Henry James (in The American Scene) calls the "absence of forms" and the "eclipse of manners" in our responses. What this play's hero admits so fully and openly are things we might not want to look at (as Ibsen's audiences did not want to look at what he presented them); but Jim Tyrone speaks as an American to Americans, and there is something about him which is ourselves. I do not mean that we necessarily have his particular problems. I do mean that the voice he gives to his anxieties, because it is such a familiar voice, beckons our own from their depths.

And so I come to the end. These remarks were hardly needed to demonstrate that Eugene O'Neill is a powerful playwright, but I hope I have also suggested that he is a uniquely American playwright. His language is fascinating because it is so familiar an American diction while it probes so deep. He diggs into the well-springs of human emotion in the fashion of the American frontiersman pushing into the wide openness of a new land. It is hard for a culture as diverse as ours to have a national playwright—but we are fortunate in that we do have one, and his name is Eugene O'Neill.

--Michael Manheim

A CABIN IN THE WOODS, A SUMMERHOUSE IN A GARDEN: CLOSURE AND ENCLOSURE IN O'NEILL'S MORE STATELY MANSIONS

"I would still like to discover if you could possibly imagine a happy ending to that tale."

--Simon to Deborah in More Stately Mansions

Although critics for some time now have attended seriously to the question of closure in fiction and poetry (see, for example, Frank Kermode's The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction, and Barbara Herrnstein Smith's Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End—both published in 1968), to my knowledge no comparable work exists on the problem of closure in drama, on how plays end. And if the drama under study is self-contained and yet forms part of a larger cycle, then the difficulty for the playwright can only be compounded. I do not intend to map out much of this uncharted territory, but if we consider much earlier cycles in English drama, at least two models for achieving closure present themselves: what I shall call the paradigm of incident (that is, of character in action) and the paradigm of image—though these two are not
necessarily antithetical. The medieval cycle plays can exemplify the first, just as Shakespeare's history cycles can the second. It hardly needs saying, of course, that many contemporary plays whose action remains unresolved, or open-ended, attain what degree of closure they do possess primarily through imagery.

The playlets in a medieval mystery cycle, whose epic sweep--sacred and profane; past, present, and to come; in time and out of it--can only adequately be apprehended by the mind of God, are fused together (as V. A. Kolve in The Plaie Called Corpus Christi, among others, has shown) by a vast network of correspondences between type and antitype, with characters and actions fulfilling what had been foreshadowed or figured forth by earlier ones. So, for instance, the Crucifixion harkens back to and completes the murder of Abel, the putative sacrifice of Isaac, and the slaughter of the Innocents. This paradigm of incident as juncture appears in the two "finished" plays from O'Neill's incomplete cycle, A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed, in such instances as Sara's initially echoing in More Stately Mansions her mother Nora from A Touch of the Poet when she claims that her "honor" comes wholly from loving her husband; or in Deborah and Simon's recitation in Mansions of Byron's "I have not loved the World, nor the World me; ... I stood/Among them, but not of them" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964, pp. 107-108). lines Con Melody was enamored of in Poet.

In his first tetralogy, Shakespeare employs (along with the central symbolic prop of the crown) ritual processions to the throne and to the grave to frame individual plays as well as to unite the cycle: 1 Henry VI begins with a funeral, 2 Henry VI with a coronation, 3 Henry VI with a "dethroning," and Richard III with another funeral, while 3 Henry VI and Richard III each end with a coronation. The journeys to throne and grave are, finally, little different: the king must die. In his second tetralogy, Shakespeare shifts the dominant image to that of the actor and the stage: the image of the Globe Theatre, the "wooden o," neatly opens and closes Henry V itself, and also rounds out the entire cycle, which had begun with Richard II as the consummate actor--a player king--in the first scene of his play carried on in a coffin in the last.

Not only does O'Neill's practice in what remains of his cycle seem closer to the Shakespearean model of unity through imagery, but the plays that precede and follow Mansions even employ a version of the theatrical metaphor: Con, in Poet, relies heavily upon the mirror--what Jan Kott has recently termed "the classic paradigm of the theatre" (The Theatre of Essence, [Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1984])--to confirm the "reality" of his dream world, just as Deborah was "always [her] own audience" (Mansions, p. 13) when she acted out roles. And in The Calms of Capricorn the clipper ship "Dream of the West" that dominates the theatre is, like Shakespeare's "wooden o," a microcosm where all are players; as Esther Jackson observed (at the March 1984 O'Neill Conference), "the ship is the stage and the stage is the ship." But my particular focus is on More Stately Mansions, and my argument, simply stated, is that in it O'Neill achieves closure through multiple images of enclosure.

While certain subsidiary images, such as Sara's pregnant body clothed in mourning (life enclosed in death) or Deborah's "skull beginning to emerge from its mask of flesh" (p. 28) (death enclosed in life), reinforce the motif of enclosure, I intend to focus on three central images, one of them a gestural movement, the others actual structures on stage at the beginning and end.

The gestural image (reminiscent of the scenic configuration that ends Act Six of Strange Interlude and shows Nina Leeds totally fulfilled as woman by the men who surround her) occurs at the end of Act Two of Mansions and dramatizes the dynamics of the struggle for possession. Simon has by this point successfully pitted wife and mother against one another, making each think that she reigns supreme in his affections. So he sits in the foreground, positioned as a wedge "between them." He understands, however, that to maintain control means to never give up playing "the game," and thus his freedom is illusory. Deborah and Sara, meanwhile, realize they no longer depend upon him alone for someone to control, and so Sara joins Deborah on the sofa where they "sit with clasped
hands ... staring defiantly at Simon" (p. 124). A few moments later, Deborah and Sara—whose position as wife has been superseded by the role as mistress that Simon prefers—advance and encircle him. He appears to have no option except surrender to mother and whore; yet when their jealousy reasserts itself, he manages to exclaim, "No!" and they retreat. Their momentary possessiveness, however, foreshadows the drama's end, for in Act Four they align themselves by again "sit[ting] together, as one" and then, with "pitying ... maternal love" in their faces, encircling him, calling him "Our beloved son! Our husband! Our lover!" (pp. 174-175). Woman—mother, wife, mistress in one—smothers man in her embrace. This presages the final image of Simon, "like a little boy" (p. 194), being comforted, helped up off the ground, and led into the house by Sara, a "passionate, possessive" mother/wife.

Unlike the Pietà configuration late in Moon for the Misbegotten, this image augurs a debilitating regression into childhood, a return to the womb and fulfillment of the Oedipal wish. By possessing and being possessed by someone outside the self, Simon has dispossessed the self. And so we have the first type of self-dispossession that the play charts.

Along with this gestural image are the two actions of literally enclosing oneself within a small onstage structure that O'Neill uses both at the very beginning and near the end of More Stately Mansions. The play opens as Sara arrives, in the autumn of 1832, at an abandoned "log cab by a lake in the woods" (p. 1)—a cabin Deborah designates as "the corpse of a dream" (p. 6), since it was there that Simon had retreated in Poet to write his now destroyed socio-political tract. (Simon's destruction of his manuscript—he reports, "I threw all I've done in the fireplace and burned it" [p. 46]—becomes prophetic of what O'Neill himself later did with much of the work on his aborted cycle.) The cabin is associated not so much with Sara as it is with Simon's Thoreauvian sojourn in the woods to dream dreams of a utopian "society where there would be no rich nor poor," man having been successfully "educated to outgrow ... spiritually ... his stupid possessive instincts" (pp. 8-9). Yet once he has committed himself to personal greed, a disillusioned Simon forgoes his Rousseauvian notion that it is civilization which corrupts, in favor of a Hobbesian vision of man as petty, selfish, rationalistic, morally deficient. Simon claims a new realism as the basis for a new morality: "what [man] is, no matter how it shocks our sentimental, moral and religious delusions about him, is good because it is true" (p. 47). What man now is, however, is no longer "naturally ... virtuous and good," but, rather, "a hog" (p. 172).

When Sara leaves the cabin, she decisively deserts any vestiges of respect for Simon's dream, concretizing Simon's own turning of his back upon the past to espouse a new ethic: strength is good and will be rewarded; weakness is bad and will be punished; life is selling oneself; love is lust. Now he can "buy" Sara as his mistress, and she can earn his business and a fine house. That she has freed herself of the values symbolized by the cabin is evidenced by her own dream of "the country estate with the great mansion" (p. 92). The disparity between cabin and mansion becomes visible not in another onstage structure but in the architect's rendering prominently displayed beside her desk in Simon's office: "a pretentious, nouveau-riche country estate on the shore of a small lake, with an immense mansion, a conglomerate of various styles of architecture, as if additions had been made at different times to an original structure conceived on the model of a mediaeval turreted castle" (p. 139). Thus the second avenue to self-dispossession—by possessing something material outside the self.

The end of More Stately Mansions is, so to speak, in its beginnings: Sara locks herself in a cabin in the woods; Deborah entombs herself in a summerhouse in a walled garden. The garden itself is a paradise lost; no amount of formal patterning, of nature "perversely ... distorted and artificial" (p. 161), can reclaim it. Cut off from time and change—from process—Deborah can feel "aloof ... and spiritually remote" (p. 14). Yet such an existence deadens: it is without lived life. The octagonal summerhouse (interestingly, its "arched door, painted a Chinese lacquer red" [p. 25], copies the paint used at Tao House, where O'Neill wrote Mansions) is itself equated with the mind.
This movement into complete interiority, into solipscism, reveals itself in the dramatist's variation on the interior monologue technique from *Strange Interlude* that imparts an aria-like aura to the play's already operatic quality. Deborah engages in "insane, interminable dialogues with self" (p. 3), as Simon later does: he "address[es] himself" because, as he says, "I have no one but myself" (p. 74). And thus the third means, somewhat paradoxical, for dispossessing the self--by withdrawing totally into the mind.

Since such an ultimate confrontation with the self can, however, be akin to madness, characters often venture down a fourth avenue to dispossession of the self: withdrawal through the romantic imagination into the world of the dream. For Deborah, "playing make-believe with romantic iniquity out of scandalous French memoirs" as mistress to Napoleon (p. 14) has functioned as an escape from both life and death: from life, because to pursue the dream has precluded embracing life; from death, because to live in the imagination has substituted for choosing physical death. Simon, too, once had a favorite fairy tale about a banished ruler who could reclaim "his lost kingdom" by finding "a certain magic door" (p. 110)--a door that became associated in his mind with the entrance to the summerhouse; yet, as Deborah warned him, the story might not have a happy ending, since across the threshold might be "a barren desert ... ruled over by a hideous old witch" who would "devour" the young king (p. 111). This possibility of an unhappy ending causes Deborah to vacillate in her decision to lose herself in the dream; sometimes she advances towards the summerhouse--image of the mind--where only the dream lives; but just as often, at least until near the close of the play, she flees from it.

How is it, then, that Deborah, whose only salvation and chance of resurrecting the life within herself came originally from rejecting the summerhouse and loving others, now willingly enters the summerhouse and even gains stature in doing so? The answer lies in her motive: she shuts herself off from the world precisely because she loves Simon enough to realize that she must do what she can to free him from his obsession with her. In a final effort to possess her and be possessed by her, Simon attempts to accompany Deborah into the garden house. If only she would take him with her, he could be reassured of the totality of her love and, Simon claims, she would repossess the self she lost when she rejected him. But Deborah knows that for him it would be a journey back to the womb-become-tomb, and so she dies a little to self that he might have a chance to live. By blocking his entrance to the summerhouse, by literally pushing him "down the steps" (p. 190), she demonstrates her love. Her chosen entombment becomes an expiatory rite, but she had first to earn the right to expiate--as Lavinia Mannon, for example, did in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. (Only by telling Peter the truth about herself--so that he would not become corrupted through marrying her, and thus saving him by sending him away, did Lavinia open herself up to the possibility of atoning for the Mannon family sins by entombing herself in the house.) The plight of the O'Neill protagonist, from the playwright's earliest days, nearly always has been a hard and lonely one, though the sight of Deborah, "look[ing] beautiful and serene, and many years younger" (p. 191), lost forever in her dream but feeling "happy" and "blessed" in her choice, perhaps recalls Nina Leeds more than Lavinia; for Nina, cleansed of destructive possessiveness by giving her son Gordon to her dying husband Sam so that he, in turn, could give Gordon in marriage to Madeline, can rest in peace in the arms of Charlie/father. In all three of these instances, what seems like diminishment at best and a kind of death-wish at worst may in fact be nearer to transcendence.

Like the characters in *Interlude*, whose mainly destructive actions spring from an ethic of searching after personal happiness, those in *Mansions* worry over and act from the drive to happiness. Early in the play, Deborah urges Simon, "Be happy!" (p. 17); Sara, too, will apparently do everything to see that he is--or thinks that he is. Near the close of the play, she even offers to "go away ... to save him," claiming she "can even wish [Deborah] to be happy so [she] can make him happy!" (p. 188). Without Simon, however, Deborah can only be happy back within the dream; while without Deborah, Simon can only be happy when Sara mothers him.

Sara ends *Mansions* as she ended *Poet*, on a note of pleading. In the earlier play, she
begged Con to return to the illusion of Major Melody for her sake. In this play, uncertain whether Deborah is indeed lost in the mind or only game-playing, Sara begs her mother-in-law—with whom she has alternately been in league and at war over Simon—for reassurance that Deborah's happiness is real, that she is not feigning in order "to save [Simon] and set him free!" (p. 193). Is Deborah, in other words, another Hickey, and is her action, like Hickey's pose of insanity in *Iceman Cometh*, only playacting to save another? The answer is left ambiguous, except we know that in the O'Neill encomium, only the rare individual, like Larry Slade at the end of *Iceman*, can face life totally without illusion—which is tantamount to being a "convert to death."

If the end of More Stately Mansions looks backward to *Mourning Becomes Electra*, it looks forward as well to *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, for the action of enclosure as a means of effecting closure remains a common dramatic strategy in O'Neill. Deborah's last action of entering the summerhouse finds perhaps its nearest parallel in Mary Tyrone's ineffably sad enclosure of herself in a drug-induced state that takes her back to her girlhood, to her dreams of being a nun or a concert pianist, to the days before she met and married James Tyrone and "was so happy for a time"—happy until she realized herself cursed by a romantic imagination that promised too much. By retreating to a past ever more distant, she, too, in a sense, gave up the writer/son, the fog of forgetfulness assuaging the pain of loss. The search for "a happy ending to [the] tale" is always suspect in O'Neill and, what is more, is generally elusive.

—Thomas P. Adler

**ANOTHER VIEW OF EPHRAIM CABOT: A FOOTNOTE TO DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS**

*Desire Under the Elms*, written and first produced in 1924, is Eugene O'Neill's first great tragedy. In fact, Travis Bogard calls it the "first important tragedy to be written in America" (Bogard 200). Inevitably the play has been much interpreted. In addition to Louis Sheaffer's discussion in his superb critical biography of O'Neill (Sheaffer 126-131), three basic analyses need acknowledgment here: Philip Weissman, a Freudian psychiatrist, has analyzed the autobiographical structure (Weissman 432-460); Edgar F. Racey, Jr., the mythic structure (Racey 57-61); and Bogard, the Nietzschean pattern (Bogard 215-225). These are useful, illuminating works and, taken together, appear to constitute a complete probing of the drama, a totality of interpretive criticism. Indeed, little does remain to be said, and the possibility of suggesting anything new seems remote. There is, however, one unnoted implication for the character of Ephraim Cabot that may help enrich both appreciation and understanding of the density of the play.

Cabot remains one of O'Neill's most remarkable creations. Of this dour, tyrannical old Puritan protagonist, his maker has surprisingly remarked, "I have always loved Ephraim so much! He's so autobiographical" (Sheaffer 130). O'Neill's "love" of the old farmer, however, is not shared by commentators on the drama, although Cabot does evoke appreciative comment and analysis as well as damnation. Doris Falk calls Ephraim "a self-centered, loveless man who has projected his own personality into that of his God, a tyrannic, ascetic, restrictive embodiment of Puritanism." She identifies Ephraim's God as "only an image of his own ego." Falk also condemns Cabot's "exploitive egotism," his pride, his "brutal lust" (Falk 94, 98).

John Henry Raleigh is somewhat less harsh in his view of Ephraim, calling him first "a great grotesque, a powerful buffoon ... an almost endearing old miser and lecher." Then Raleigh observes, "But the essence of his character is not dryness and narrowness; on the contrary, he is complex and expansive." Raleigh finds that Ephraim "has an ego of monumental proportions and is, in fact, that very God he keeps referring to and calling upon. For what he really represents is pure power, physically and emotionally" (Raleigh 54).

John Henry Raleigh
Racey points out Cabot's "rash injustice" against his second wife and the "solitary sterility which has been his lot." He suggests that Ephraim must atone for his sin by being confined, in the end, to the "rocky solitude of his farm" (Racey 60, 61).

All of these observations are, in their way, both persuasive and at least partially correct. Yet each has missed something vital. Even when Frederic Carpenter acknowledges Ephraim's "towering stature" and his "inward reality" as the "embodiment of the highest heroism of modern man" (Carpenter 108), or when Sheaffer asserts that Cabot "takes on epic dimensions" (128), or when Bogard characterizes him as a "God-driven man" (218), there remains unsaid and untouched a central truth of the character. That truth rests on the meaning of the omnipresent stones with which Ephraim has struggled all his life.

The symbolism of stone is analyzed by J. E. Cirlot as follows:

Stone is a symbol of being, of cohesion and harmonious reconciliation with self. The hardness and durability of stone have always impressed men, suggesting to them the antithesis to biological things subject to the laws of change, decay and death, as well as the antithesis to dust, sand and stone splinters, as aspects of disintegration. The stone when whole symbolized unity and strength; when shattered it signified dismemberment, psychic disintegration, infirmity, death and annihilation. Stones fallen from heaven served to explain the origin of life. (Cirlot 299).

Cirlot also discusses mythic and religious meanings of stone, recalling that many stones have been worshipped and also quoting Genesis 28.22: "And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house" (299-300).

M. L. von Franz reinforces what Cirlot says: "Self is symbolized with special frequency in the form of a stone, precious or otherwise." She also associates the crystal with stone as symbolic of the self, explaining that "The mathematically precise arrangement of a crystal evokes in us the intuitive feeling that even in so-called 'dead' matter, there is a spiritual ordering principle at work." Von Franz continues:

Perhaps crystals and stones are especially apt symbols of the self because of the "just-so-ness" of their nature.... For while the human being is as different as possible from a stone, yet man's innermost center is in a strange and special way akin to it (perhaps because the stone symbolizes mere existence at the farthest remove from the emotions, feelings, fantasies, and discursive thinking of ego-consciousness). In this sense the stone symbolizes what is perhaps the simplest and deepest experience--the experience of something eternal that man can have in those moments when he feels immortal and unalterable. (Von Franz 208-209)

Von Franz further points out that "The alchemical stone ... symbolizes something that can never be lost or dissolved, something eternal that some alchemists compared to the mystical experience of God within one's own soul" (210).

If, then, in "dead" matter there is a "spiritual ordering principle at work," the stones on the Cabot farm, the stones from which Ephraim has created walls, have an honorific significance and point to qualities in him not previously acknowledged.

A re-evaluation of the old farmer might begin with the concession that he is rightly named. "Ephraim," from the Hebrew, means "fruitful," and for Cabot the name does not always work ironically. Apart from the fact that he has not fathered the child to whom his third wife gives birth, he has lived a fruitful life, although not a balanced one. Not only has Ephraim made a stony land productive, but the stones with which he is identified do not suggest just sterility, waste, or death--meanings commonly associated with stones. Rather, those stones are the cause of Ephraim's fruitfulness and, as Cirlot and von Franz make clear, also symbols of man's concept of self and thus of life.
Additionally, Ephraim's preference for the barn and the company of the cows over his house and association with his wife and son reinforces the symbolism of the stones in his life.

The stoniness of the Cabot farm is first indicated in the stage directions when O'Neill notes that "The south end of the house faces front to a stone wall...." (O'Neill 136) Then, early in Part One, Scene One, Ephraim's son Peter, ironically named, complains, "Here--it's stones atop o' the ground--stones atop o' stones--makin' stone walls--year atop o' year--him 'n' me 'n' then Eben--makin' stone walls fur him to fence us in!" (138). He views the farm bitterly as a prison. Eben,* the youngest son, accuses his half-brothers of building stone walls in their hearts as they labor to build the actual walls on the farm because they did nothing to make life more bearable for his mother, their step-mother (142-143).

When old Cabot finally appears, O'Neill says that his face "is as hard as if it were hewn out of a boulder ..." (155). Near the end of the play, after Abbie has confessed the murder of her infant son and has told Ephraim, "An' he was Eben's son--mine an' Eben's-- not your'n!" (200), her husband asserts, hardening "his face into a stony mask," that "I got t'be--like a stone--a rock o' judgment!" (201). Then, as Ephraim tells his son and wife goodbye when they leave with the sheriff, O'Neill once more--and for the last time--describes Cabot's face as stony (205).

As earlier indicated, however, the pejorative meanings of stone may not be the essence of Ephraim's character. One of the most memorable scenes in all of O'Neill occurs when Cabot tries to convey to the uncomprehending Abbie his feelings about and knowledge of God and of the earth that is his farm. As this oddly mated couple sit side by side on their bed, with Abbie concentrating her attention on the wall that separates their bedroom from Eben's, Ephraim speaks of the fields of stones that used to constitute his farm and of the consequent "hardness" of his life and of his god. The old man, who is at times almost inarticulate, grows lyrical as he reviews the struggles of his life and his accomplishments while he has followed the admonitions of his "hard God." He remembers succumbing to temptation once when he traveled "t' broad medders, plains whar the soil was black an' rich as gold. Nary a stone. Easy. Ye'd on'y to plow an' sow an' then set an' smoke yer pipe an' watch thin's grow." But he heard "the voice of God sayin': 'This hain't wuth nothin' t' Me. Git ye back t' hum!' I got afeerd o' that voice an' I lit out back t' hum here...." Ephraim obeyed the command of his "hard God" and returned to his stony New England land. The stones he piled into walls. "Ye kin read the years o' my life in them walls, every day a hefted stone, climbin' over the hills up and down, fencin' in the fields that was mine, whar I'd made thin's grow out o' nothin' like the will o' God, like the servant o' His hand. It wa'n't easy. It was hard an' He made me hard fur it" (172).

Significantly, Ephraim acknowledges that the women who had been his wives had made him feel "lonesome." But, "The farm growed. It was all mine! When I thought o' that I didn't feel lonesome" (173). His relationship with his sons has been a tormented one, characterized by mutual loathing. "They hated me 'cause I was hard. I hated them 'cause they was soft. They coveted the farm without knowin' what it meant" (173).

When, at the end of this monologue, Abbie turns "a blank face, resentful eyes to his," Ephraim asks her, "Air ye any the wiser fur all I've told ye?" Then he adds, "Ye don't know nothin'--nor never will" (173). He complains that the house is cold and "oneasy" and departs for the barn, "whar it's warm." He will talk to the cows because "They know. They know the farm an' me. They'll give me peace" (174). Abbie, like her predecessors, has made the old man "lonesome."

Ephraim's belief in an Old Testament deity and his identification with stones associate him with the Apollonian polarity in Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy, as Bogard has pointed out, while the son who becomes his rival and supplanter and the wife who be-

*"Eben" may be a shortened form of "Ebenezer," which means literally "stone of help."
trays him with her stepson represent Nietzsche's Dionysian power. Abbie and Eben seek after the "easy God"; Ephraim remains faithful to the "hard God."

As one comes to understand the stones Ephraim has wrested from the earth and the walls he has created from those stones, one sees Ephraim less and less as a hard, life-denying old despot, Peter and Simeon less as deprived offspring, Abbie and Eben less as life-affirming lovers. The truth emerges that Ephraim is the most creative, the most fulfilled member of the Cabot family; that he is the only one who knows who he is; that he has a sense of his own identity and realizes how and where he belongs. Only Ephraim has the strength to make the earth produce; only Ephraim has the will to toil to the end of his days to preserve that productivity; only Ephraim loves the land; only Ephraim is "fruitful"; and ultimately only Ephraim values life.

It is not, of course, just the stones on the Cabot farm that are symbols; the walls that Ephraim has created from the stones also bear symbolic significance. These walls probably mark the boundaries of the farm in addition to identifying individual fields. A pattern of enclosure emerges that identifies those walls with such ancient structures as Stonehenge. Cirlot mentions the sun-symbolism of that "stone-circle" and adds, "It also partakes of circle-symbolism (that is, of the cyclic process, Oneness and perfection) ..." (300).

To O'Neill himself the stone walls stood as proof of Ephraim Cabot's faithfulness to his inheritance, of his integrity. The Gelbs have described the playwright's farm in Ridgefield, Connecticut (Brook Farm), as partial inspiration for the Cabot farm. They record that O'Neill told a young man from the Provincetown Players that the kind of stone wall that abounded on Brook Farm was what he was writing about in Desire Under the Elms. One wall that O'Neill pointed out, "Though it now ran through a weedy, uncultivated area, ... had once marked a boundary of tilled soil. These walls, he said, were symbols of the old New England farmer's roots—reproachful monuments to the farmers who left their field to go out west, where there were no stone and where farming was easier. [O'Neill then] quoted some of Ephraim Cabot's lines...." (Gelb 540-541)

Ephraim's identification with stones does not ultimately represent the hardness of his heart or of his way of life. The stones suggest more than spirit-numbing, soul-killing labor. They speak of the unity and strength which Cirlot mentions, of Ephraim's "reconciliation with self." Von Franz's comments take the affirmative meaning of stone a step beyond Cirlot's. In following the dictates of his "hard God," Ephraim has obeyed the "spiritual ordering principle"; he has experienced "something eternal"; he may indeed have "God within [his] own soul."

--Jean Anne Waterstradt

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PARALLELISM AND DIVERGENCE: THE CASE OF SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER AND LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

It is surprising that significant parallels should exist between plays as dissimilar as She Stoops to Conquer and Long Day's Journey into Night—the one a "laughing" as opposed to "tearful" or sentimental comedy, the other an American tragedy. The most obvious parallel involves the "cook-maid" in the two works. She is called Bridget in both, does not appear on stage in either, and has an all-around function in each household. In Goldsmith's play Bridget is the "cook-maid" for the Hardcastles, who live in the country and do not have so much money that they can hire a servant for each chore or one so skilled that he or she should perform only one task. (After Marlow asks that the cook be called, Hardcastle describes Bridget as the cook-maid, implying that her duties go beyond the preparation of food.) In O'Neill's play Bridget is the "first girl," a combination cook and maid, for the Tyrones. James Tyrone, the father, is cheap, so he naturally does not hire a servant for each chore: he hires Bridget and Cathleen, her assistant or the "second girl," to perform all the tasks around the house.

The parallels between the two cook-maids go beyond name and function: these two Bridgets have similar characters. In She Stoops to Conquer Hardcastle says to Marlow, who wants the cook called so that he can order a special supper: "Our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house" (Stoops 36). What Hardcastle implies is that his Bridget, being lazy, becomes cantankerous when the family has guests and she must work harder. (She will become even more cantankerous when she learns that Marlow does not want to eat what she is cooking for everyone else.) Bridget in Long Day's Journey is herself lazy and cantankerous. Mary Tyrone says of her at one point, "I must see the cook about dinner and the day's marketing. Bridget is so lazy" (Journey 29). At another point Mary calls her cook-maid a "stupid, lazy greenhorn" (61). Because Bridget is lazy, she becomes irate when she has cooked a meal and James Tyrone is late to eat it, as is his habit, or when Cathleen isn't in the kitchen to help her prepare the food. To Edmund, the younger son, Cathleen says of Bridget, "It's a wonder your father wouldn't look at his watch once in a while. He's a divil for making the meals late, and then Bridget curses me as if I was to blame" (51). Mary speaks similarly of the "first girl" to Tyrone: "I've had to calm down Bridget. She's in a tantrum over your being late again, and I don't blame her" (66). After the lonely Mary has fed Cathleen drinks for a long time in Act III, in order to have someone to talk to, the "second girl" asks, "Can I take a drink to Bridget, Ma'am? It must be near dinner-time and I ought to be in the
kitchen helping her. If she don't get something to quiet her temper, she'll be after me with the cleaver" (106). Mary, who herself does not drink, plies Cathleen and Bridget with liquor, just as Marlow, who is a teetotaler, plies his servants with it in She Stoops to Conquer.

Bridget in Long Day's Journey is talkative; Mary says, "She begins telling me about her relatives so I can't get a word in edgeways and scold her [for neglecting her work]" (29). Hardcastle tells his servant, "You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking" (27). Hardcastle thus admonishes Diggory, not only because the latter is a servant, but also because the master himself likes to do all the talking whether he is in the company of his servants or his peers. He can expatiate on any subject, but he especially likes to talk war stories: "Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain..." (33). Hardcastle shares the trait of garrulousness with James Tyrone. Jamie reveals that his father loves "listening to himself talk" (54); and Cathleen confirms this when she reports to Mary, "I went down to Mister Tyrone, like you ordered, and he said he'd come right away, but he kept on talking to that man [Captain Turner], telling him of the time when--" (62).

Hardcastle shares additional traits with James Tyrone. The former seems to be cheap, and he like the isolation of the country. Mrs. Hardcastle complains to him, "Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company" (10-11). Mary Tyrone makes similar complaints about her husband: "It's just as well we haven't any friends here [she describes their home as "this shabby place" (61); Edmund calls it "this summer dump" (141)]. I'd be ashamed to have them step in the door. But he's never wanted family friends. He hates calling on people, or receiving them" (44).

Like Hardcastle, Tyrone prefers old things, as much because he is contemptuous of the modern and nostalgic for the past (when he still had the chance to be an actor of artistic stature instead of a mere matinee idol playing the same role over and over again) as because he is cheap. Tyrone's clothing at the start of the play "is commonplace shabby. He believes in wearing his clothes to the limit of usefulness, is dressed now for gardening" (13). He buys a secondhand car, claiming "it's better than any of the new ones!" (84). His books "have the look of having been read and reread" (11), and contain the following "old" titles among them: Hume's History of England, Thiers' History of the Consulate and Empire, Smollett's History of England, Gibbon's Roman Empire, and three sets of Shakespeare. His sons' library, by contrast, contains "new" volumes (the play takes place in 1912); works, for example, by Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, Wilde, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, and Engels. Not only does Hardcastle, for his part, love his "old rumbling mansion"; he also loves "everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine" (11).

James Tyrone is a New York actor as well as a touring one who retires to New London, Connecticut (then considered the country), every summer to play the squire. He has tenants who farm his land and he buys as much property as he can afford, claiming, like a landed aristocrat, that "banks fail, and your money's gone, but you ... can keep land beneath your feet" (146). Like an affable country gentleman, Tyrone stops his gardening in front of the house to bow to passersby and chat with friends. Hardcastle is a squire, and is dedicated to his family. Unlike Tyrone, he is not, as his stepson Tony Lumpkin describes him, "a Gentleman ... [who is] for giving [others] his company ..." (26); he gives Marlow his company only because the latter is to become his son-in-law. Tyrone, unlike Hardcastle, does not give his company to his family easily, just as Mary, Edmund, and Jamie do not easily give theirs to him or to one another.

It is difficult to say with certainty whether O'Neill wrote Long Day's Journey with elements of She Stoops to Conquer consciously in mind. After all, "Bridget" was the first name of his maternal grandmother as well as of the cook-maid in Goldsmith's play. Parallels between the two plays do exist, however, and I am interested more in the
different uses to which the two playwrights put the same elements than in arguing the question of influence.

Bridget, for example, has a different function in Long Day's Journey than she has in She Stoops to Conquer. In the O'Neill play, Bridget can be seen as another Mary, as Egil Törnqvist has pointed out:

The fog affects Bridget's rheumatism as it does Mary's (41, 99). And she appears to be as much of a whiskey addict as Mary is a "dope fiend." Their desperation, made acute--or rather symbolized--by their bodily pain, stems ... from an intense feeling of loneliness. In Act I Bridget, who needs company, keeps Mary in the kitchen for a long while with "lies about her relations" (102)...

Cathleen describes Bridget as little better than a maniac, who cannot stand being left alone: "she's like a raging divil. She'll bite my head off" (99) ... Never appearing but always (since we are constantly reminded of her presence in the dialogue and in the exits to the kitchen) lurking in the background, she comes to personify the reckless, destructive impulse within Mary, which finally "kills" her three men. (Törnqvist 240)

Bridget reinforces the tragedy of the play, then. Bridget in She Stoops to Conquer reinforces the play's comedy; she does this through contrast rather than analogy, the device employed in Long Day's Journey. She is not very communicative when she has to cook and clean for guests as well as for the family; her master, Hardcastle, is so talkative in part because he has little to do. Because he likes to talk so much and doesn't listen properly to Marlow and his friend Hastings, he never realizes that they speak to him as if he were an innkeeper instead of Kate's father: thus does this comedy of disguise take wing. Tyrone, by comparison, because he loves to hear himself talk, does not really talk to his family and thereby helps to precipitate his and their tragedy; his garrulousness derives from self-absorption more than from a need to substitute talk for work (although Tyrone, the would-be squire, shares this need to some extent with Hardcastle), whereas the reverse is true for Hardcastle, for whom talk is a way to occupy himself, almost to forget himself. One could say that, in her isolation and the garrulousness that results from it, Bridget is another Tyrone as well as another Mary--indeed, could be seen as the double of any member of the Tyrone family.

If the two Bridgets reinforce the tragedy and the comedy of their respective plays, then Mary and Marlow, in their reasons for dispensing alcohol so freely, do the same. Tragically isolated, Mary bribes Cathleen with her husband's liquor so that she will have an audience while she talks at length about her past. Mary then supplies Bridget with drink so she will not mind slaving in the kitchen while her helper sits idle and captive in the living room. Mary will cover up her theft of Tyrone's liquor by playing "Jamie's trick.... Just measure a few drinks of water and pour them in" (100). Marlow, who is to be comically reconciled with the Hardcastle family eventually, orders his servants "not to spare [Hardcastle's] cellar.... My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below" (73). Marlow, mistaking Hardcastle's home for an inn and in a merry mood over his anticipated conquest of the barmaid (really Kate Hardcastle in disguise), openly orders his servants away from him, to drink their fill and be happy. When Hardcastle confronts him with his servants' drunkenness, Marlow freely admits his responsibility for it.

Finally, what is true of Mary's and Marlow's dispensing of drink is equally true of Tyrone's and Hardcastle's love of the old. Tyrone's is in part a love of the cheap, as I have noted, and is as responsible for his family's tragedy as anything else. For instance, his engaging the cheaper hotel doctor rather than a private physician to attend to his wife after Edmund's birth led to her morphine addiction since this "ignorant quack" (Mary's words, p. 87) was happier to prescribe strong drugs for Mary's pain and be done with her than to discover the cause of her suffering and treat it. Jamie tells his father that Edmund might never have got consumption "if you'd sent him to a real doctor
when he first got sick" (30), instead of to Hardy, "a cheap old quack" (30). Hardcastle's love of the old is itself in part a love of the cheap, and is responsible for the second mistaken identity in this comedy, which is subtitled The Mistakes of a Night. The first mistaken identity occurs when Marlow and Hastings take Tony Lumpkin for a bumpkin after meeting him at an alehouse, instead of recognizing him as a squire. They follow his directions to Hardcastle's house, which they mistake for the inn that Tony mischievously tells them it is, because the house is "antique." (Their actual destination is Hardcastle's home, to which they intend to journey after they leave the "inn," and where Marlow is supposed to meet Kate, whom his father has chosen as a wife for him.) It has undergone "the usual fate of a large mansion," says Marlow. "Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn" (29). Hardcastle's house no longer looks like a mansion and he is unwilling to spend the money to make it look like one again.

The disguises in She Stoops to Conquer are worn inadvertently, as in the case of the house "disguised" as an inn or of Hardcastle himself (Tony fools Marlow and Hastings into thinking that his stepfather is an innkeeper, and they assume from his appearance that he is one); or they are worn intentionally but in everyone's best interests, as in the example of Kate, who poses first as a barmaid, then as a "poor relation" of the Hardcastles, in order to test Marlow's suitability for marriage. The disguises worn and gradually stripped away in Long Day's Journey--Mary's disguise of her drug problem and of the reasons for it, most obviously; and Tyrone's disguise of his cheapness as mere sensible thrift, whereas it is actually excessive fear of the poverty he knew as a boy--are in each instance self-imposed, may be unconsciously worn (as in Tyrone's case), and, though designed to be self-protective, they have destroyed the self and with it the family. The physical disguise of comedy is a means to an end, and is easily removed to the reconciliation and happiness of everyone. The spiritual disguise of tragedy is an end in itself--it is a way of being--and is arduously removed to the recognition and misery of all.

--Bert Cardullo

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Stoops


O'NEILL'S USE OF IRISH-YANKEE STEREOTYPES IN A TOUCH OF THE POET*

Steve Goodman, the late and very funny country music composer, wrote a song parodying the cliches of that genre in which he managed to crowd train, blue eyes, rain, pickup truck, jail and mother into one verse. In like manner, I worry about the cliches of O'Neill criticism and envision that archetypal paper which somehow combines sea, rolling fog, a drunken elder brother, a freighter and its hands, a mother on drugs, a whore-virgin and a performance of The Count of Monte Cristo. In my own title I have waved one of the red flags of O'Neill criticism--the Irish. The Irishness of O'Neill's work has been well established; the main point that I want to argue is that O'Neill wrote out of an American theatre tradition that went back to the 19th century. It is not the particular Irish-Yankee theme that interests me so much as the persistence of certain

* This is a slightly condensed version of a paper delivered during the O'Neill session at the 1984 Modern Language Association Convention in Washington, D.C. Partial support for the research was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
stage stereotypes which O'Neill found handy to his needs from the repository of dramatic practice in 19th century American theatre.

Throughout the 19th and into the 20th century, character actors like John Brougham, Barney Williams, William James Florence, Tyrone Power, W.J. Scanlon and Dion Boucicault regaled their audiences with portrayals of the pitfalls of life for the Irish in America in such vehicles as *Irish Courtship* (1798), *The Irish Wife* (1832), *The Irish Tutor* (1841), *The Irish Heiress* (1842), *The Irish Fortune Hunter* (1850), *The Good for Nothing* (1853), *Irish Assurance* and *Yankee Modesty* (1856), *Yankee Housekeeper* (1856), *The Irish Emigrant* (1860), *Irish Life* (1888), *Irish Eyes* (1889), *The Irish Gossoon* (1892), *The Irish Alderman* (1896), *An Irishman's Home* (1918), and of course *The Irish Yankee* (1856). These Irish plays and players were part of O'Neill's dramatic heritage, and *A Touch of the Poet* can be seen as a sort of homage to all those long-dead Irish character parts. O'Neill himself acknowledged his indebtedness to that theatrical tradition when he said to critic George Jean Nathan that no one could do full justice to the role of Con Melody with the exception of "Maurice Barrymore or my old man" (Gettys 885).

In addition to echoing Irish-character stage types in Jamie Cregan and Con and Nora Melody, *A Touch of the Poet* also utilizes one of the dramatic situations that fascinated American audiences in the 19th century—the courtship or encounter of an Irish boy and a Yankee girl. *A Touch of the Poet* features a possible and an impossible Irish-Yankee pairing—the possible one is between Sara Melody and Simon Harford; the impossible, between Con Melody and Deborah Harford—both reflections of the Irish boy-Yankee girl encounter of the 19th century popular comic theatre.

The popularity of such pairings is attested to by the existence of penny songsters, collections of songs printed from the touring shows of popular entertainers. One, *The Irish Boy and Yankee Girl Songster*, a collection of favorites from the repertoire of Mr. and Mrs. William James Florence, contains such titles as "The Irishman's Shanty," with its obligatory reference to pigs that "roam at their aise,/And come into the shanty whenever they please" (Florence 14-15). The Florences' exploitation of this new ethnic material began when Mrs. Florence joined her husband as a Yankee foil to his Irish character parts in such plays as *The Good for Nothing* (1853). They later toured London, Scotland and Ireland in *The Yankee Housekeeper* (1856), which introduced the comic couple to the British Isles.

Another famous husband and wife team who popularized the same stage types were Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams. In the cover illustration for their songster, *Irish Boy and Yankee Gal* (1860), he is shown in an Irish hat with a pipe and shamrock in the hatband, and she wears modified Pilgrim garb. One of the songs, "The Quilting Party," has the rousing chorus:

Yankee lasses are the U--
Niversal Airth bewitchin',
They're good and true, and handsome too,
In parlor and in kitchen. (Williams 5)

Interestingly enough, these songbooks also turn up a kind of Irish braggart soldier, Major Longbow, a comic officer from Dublin who has fought in many lands. Several versions exist of his adventures—amatory, military and gustatory. The collection entitled *Theatrical Comicalities of 1828*, the same year in which *Touch of the Poet* is set, features a song entitled "Major Longbow's Appetite," in which the major brags about eating up both Adams and Jackson men crying for elections and the disturbance they brought to this digestion:

For an Adams man kicked up a riot;
With a Jackson cove he fell a fighting;
The blows pretty fast they did fly!
So I swallowed Hunegate for a vomit!  
And I threw them all up sky high!  (Theatrical 5)

Besides the general interest in Irish and Yankee characters in the 19th century, the work of two playwrights lurks behind O'Neill's Irish Americans: John Brougham and Dion Boucicault. O'Neill's play echoes specific characters and situations from the works of both. For example, in Boucicault's Andy Blake, or The Irish Diamond (New York: Samuel French, 1856), a brother and sister are befriended when it is learned that their father had died fighting under Wellington. This recalls Con Melody's nostalgia for his moment of glory while serving under the Iron Duke at the Battle of Talavera. Their problem is similar and perhaps a common one for American immigrants: how to transfer the glory they had achieved in a European context to the new American scene. The "native" Americans or Yankees refused to recognize or give credit for any activity that took place before the immigrant came to the New World. Only what was done in America counted. In answer to this problem both playwrights invented a role for the Irish in American colonial and revolutionary history. To counter the antagonism of the Native American Know-Nothing Party, they created a heroic past for the Irish newcomers to justify their right to participate in American life.

Brougham's Irish Yankee, or The Birthday of Freedom (1856) presented a model for that genre. Set in the 1770s and the early days of the American Revolution, the play presents a main character, Ebeneezer O'Donahoo, the child of an Irish father and a Yankee mother. He is a kind of composite of Irish and Yankee stage types, and he explains: "Sure that small fragment of national bashfulness that I inherited from my father, doesn't prevent me from estimating the personal beauty which descended to me from my maternal mother" (Brougham 6). When this speech of Irish blunders and malapropisms draws comment from his Yankee listeners, he must admit: "I speak like my father and he was suspected of being an Irishman" (18).

These plays also demonstrate the era's fascination with the comic courtship or marriage of an Irish man and a Yankee woman, a subject whose popular interest is also revealed in the songsters. A play like James Pilgrim's Irish Assurance and Yankee Modesty (1856), written especially for Barney Williams, is an enlargement of the same theme. The play focuses on the comic courtship of two servants--Pat, who explains, "I was found in a basket like a lump of butter, all of a heap on St. Patrick's Day" (Pilgrim 14); and a Yankee housekeeper who introduces herself as "Nancy Stokes from Seekonk Plain, not a mite less or a grain more" (5). Each tells a story. Nancy's is of an Irish pig who "could whistle 'Paddy Carey,' and kick over the swill pail, and stick his feet through the window, and spit tobacco juice all over the carpet, and wipe his nose on the buckwheat cakes and make himself so sociable, such a critter you never did see" (9). Pat responds with a description of a Yankee cat, neat and prim. Nancy says that cat and pig should be of the same family. Pat replies, "Yes, you be the pig and I'll be the cat"--and they have sealed their marital agreement (9).

These plays and scores more that were popular in northeastern cities show the fascination with immigrant types; they raise questions and suggest solutions to immigrants' daily problems of integration and acceptance in the new society. Perhaps it was inevitable that stage Yankee and stage Irish characters should meet.

O'Neill, writing at the other end of the experience as a second generation Irish American, redrew the stereotypes to suggest not merely their inadequacy but also their culpability, as part of a propaganda of assimilation, in generating false consciousness and raising false hopes of ultimate equality and acceptance. A Touch of the Poet exhumes these Irish types and Irish-Yankee courtship scenes and exposes their raw edges and tragic potentialities. In so doing, O'Neill performed a service comparable to Shaw's in John Bull's Other Island, where he exposed the familiar scene of the wooing of an Irish colleen by an English visitor as the symbolic rape of Ireland by English imperialist interests.
The stock encounter of Irish boy and Yankee girl followed a familiar comic pattern. Essential ingredients included the boy's brogue and blunders, which raise laughter, and some variation of the staple "Is this what they mean by Blarney" question from the prim Yankee girl. The Irish boy advances relentlessly for his kiss. When he wins it, the Yankee girl usually concludes that they are more alike than different or that the differences are whimsically endearing. As I have noted, the purpose of such literature of accommodation, written to offset the hate propaganda of the "Know Nothing" or American Party, was to minimize or turn to comic advantage the differences between the new Irish immigrants and the older Yankee population.

O'Neill's play, although set at a time when the nativist and Irish antagonism was just becoming manifest (1834, the year of the burning of the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, is usually cited as the start of Know Nothing hostilities), was actually written 100 years later, with a perspective that reveals the tragic tensions in the comic routine of that stock encounter. Looking in detail at the short scene between Con Melody and Deborah Harford (O'Neill 69-72), we discover all the usual ingredients—but with what a difference!

Melody begins with a mistake, calling Mrs. Harford "Mademoiselle." He also uses the highflown circumlocutions often associated with comic Irish characters: "Permit me to say again, how great an honor I will esteem it to be of any service." And he moves inexorably towards a kiss, beginning with a seemingly casual brush of his hand on her shoulder. When he states his name and heritage, it is not unlike the braggadocio of Ebenezer O'Donahoo or Major Longbow: he boasts, "I am Major Cornelius Melody, one time of His Majesty's Seventh Dragoons." When his flowery speech recalling his glory at Talavera ends with a tribute to the fact that "there's not a man whose heart does not catch flame from your beauty," Deborah finds her response in the cultural stereotypes: right on cue, she replies, "Is this what the Irish call Blarney, Sir?" Believing that they have finally found their proper footing, Melody advances for his kiss. (Any mention of the Blarney is always interpreted as an invitation to kiss; for one receives the gift of the gab by kissing the Blarney Stone, and one uses the gift to gain kisses from something more yielding than stone.) Deborah also seems momentarily caught up in the force of their conventional roles. The stage direction describes her fascination: "He bends lower, while his eyes hold her. For a second it seems he will kiss her and she cannot help herself----." The smell of whiskey, of course, breaks the spell and, recovering, she characterizes Melody's approach to her as "this absurd performance." Nora enters and the mood is dispelled, but for a few moments O'Neill has utilized and shown the power of that "absurd performance" of Irish-boy and Yankee-girl courtship onstage. Looking for a vehicle for his expression of the Irish American experience, he found a tradition of well developed stage types and situations which he could use and transform. If, in looking at A Touch of the Poet, we find, as the Gelbs do, that "despite the period setting and historical context the play was like so many of his others, emotionally and psychologically the story of his own family" (800), this should not surprise us. As Irish immigrants to America, they had recapitulated much of the same experience.

However, as fascinating as this search for biographical resonances may be, it is too narrow for a great playwright, and it does not do justice to O'Neill as a master at reviving and transforming the American theatrical heritage. I began my remarks with a comic list of cliches of O'Neill criticism. Behind them lurks a larger and more dangerous assumption. The stress on O'Neill as a lonely, isolated giant on the American theatre scene is a damaging one for O'Neill scholarship since it calls into question the level of dramatic activity in the United States. Although it is true that O'Neill was our first world-class playwright and there has been little challenge to his pre-eminence since his death, there are other great American playwrights: Boucicault before him, and Miller and Williams since. In a larger sense, it is self-defeating to insist on the solitariness of his achievement, and it is wrong-headed to ignore the theatre tradition that he grew out of and that nurtured him. To counter this reading of O'Neill plays in
theatrical isolation, I have raised one small example of how he drew upon, used, and transformed native American dramatic character types and situations of the 19th century. Much more needs to be done to establish the depth and range of his debt to his American theatrical forebears. My own research has just begun to uncover these connections.

Since this is not merely an antiquarian exercise but part of the essential task of documenting the living interaction of theatre with its own past and future, I would like to end by suggesting the scope of O'Neill's contribution to re-visioning America in this late play that he had such grand designs for. While recreating in A Touch of the Poet a particular stage representation of American settlement and history, he transcended its specific Irish-Yankee references and provided, more broadly, a psychological and sociological model for understanding the destructive impact of American life on other cultures.

A theatre historian remarked to me recently that we can't care about A Touch of the Poet because we don't care about the Irish anymore and their whining about their troubles and problems in America. That seems too narrow a view. We know that the Irish, as the first unwanted aliens in the smug Yankee Republic, were targets for "Know Nothing" violence. They populated the first American urban slums, and their treatment and response to it set a tragic paradigm for "making it" in America. My contention is that O'Neill appropriates the Irish stage stereotypes in order to regenerate them as broader archetypes of American experience, and that the power of A Touch of the Poet comes from this central myth of American life that it depicts in a particular Irish-Yankee context.

The tragedy of assimilation is the insistence that nothing of another culture can be acknowledged as valuable or worth holding on to. The false dichotomy of American history is stripped bare by O'Neill's play, which forces only one possibility on the proud, aristocratic Con Melody: forget Byron and Napoleon, Wellington and Talavera; kill your high bred mare; sink into your proper place; the hoi polloi, the American melting pot, beckons. Of course, Con Melody's resistance to that alternative makes him look ridiculous; any holdout against the new patricians of American Puritanism is made to seem powerless, futile and ultimately insane. The only possible alternatives for acceptance are purveyed in the overblown images of the American election which serves as background to the action of the play--John Quincy Adams or Andrew Jackson. In setting these electoral choices, the American ruling class defines not only its own role and culture but also the acceptable role, culture and pastimes of the lower classes: Andrew Jackson embodies the approved channels for their oppositional energies as well.

Although some see the 1828 scene and the Irish-Yankee antagonism as kitsch and more than a little dated, translation of the same conflict into more recent struggles of groups within American culture might reveal the basic power of the myth O'Neill has provided. Imagine Con Melody as a black man and you have some of the tensions of Raisin In the Sun or, more violently, Dutchman. Transfer the time to the 1940s and the place to Los Angeles and the Hispanic culture, and you are not far from the world of Zoot Suit. All of these plays portray men who are proud and are destroyed for it. They will not be allowed to enter the kingdom of the heavenly U.S. dollar with one shred of dignity intact. By gathering many old dramatic stereotypes into his characterization of the mercurial Con Melody and investing him with mythic significance, O'Neill presented a model for other rebels living in America with other codes and cultures who are ultimately destroyed by the behemoth of American mainstream hegemony. In the destruction of Con Melody O'Neill has created a brilliant, Janus-like embodiment of the tragedy of American assimilation.

--Norma Jenckes

WORKS CITED


THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION

1. MLA '85. The date and time have been announced for the special session on Eugene O'Neill at the Modern Language Association convention in Chicago next December. The session, on "Eugene O'Neill's Forebears and Contemporaries: Studies in Relation and Influence," chaired by Paul Voelker with papers by Brenda C. Murphy, Linda Ben-Zvi and Stephen Watt, will take place in Field, WT, of the Chicago Hyatt Regency from 10:15-11:30 a.m. on Friday, December 28. Paper titles were reported in the Spring 1985 issue (p. 51). The session will be listed as item 137 in the MLA convention program.

2. ELECTIONS AT ANNUAL MEETING. The 1985 Annual Meeting of the Society will also take place during the MLA convention in Chicago, at a time and place to be announced in the next issue and in a special fall mailing to the membership by Society Secretary Jordan Miller. One of the activities at this year's meeting will be the election of two officers and five Board members. The terms of President Albert Wertheim and Vice President Frederick C. Wilkins expire at the end of the year, as do those of Board members Perry Miller Adato, Travis Bogard, Eugene Hanson, Adele Heller and Esther Jackson. Nothing in the By-Laws prevents Directors from re-election: Board members may serve for as many consecutive four-year terms as they and the membership wish. But the two officers are completing their second two-year terms, and the By-Laws stipulate (Section V.4) that the maximum number of consecutive terms for President and Vice President is two. Members wishing to serve as officers or Board members, or to nominate someone else for one of the positions, should inform President Wertheim before October 1. Letters can reach him at the Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47401.

3. TAO HOUSE INVITE. The Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site in Danville, CA, best known to O'Neillians as Tao House, has become an institutional member of the Eugene O'Neill Society. Site Superintendent Phyllis P. Shaw has issued a blanket invitation to all Society members to visit Tao House: "we would love to give them a tour of the site," she writes. All who have visited in the past know what a moving experience it is; and recent renovations, bringing the house ever closer to how it was during the O'Neill's occupancy, will make a visit even more meaningful than in the past. Members who are unaware that they can, for a slightly higher fee, become members of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House as well, should write to Society Secretary Jordan Miller for details. (Department of English, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881.)
NEWS, VIEWS, AND REVIEWS

1. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS.

The Iceman Cometh, dir. José Quintero, with Jason Robards as Hickey, Donald Moffat as Larry Slade, and Barnard Hughes as Harry Hope. Eisenhower Theater, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., August 10 - September 14, 1985. The production will subsequently move to the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre on Broadway, with previews beginning September 21 and the official opening on September 29. ((Tel. 212-575-9200.)

An illustrated review will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter. Critic David Richards praised the opening performance ("The 'Iceman' Soareth," Washington Post, August 12, pp. C1, 10), doubting that Robards could possibly have been better when he first essayed the role in 1956, but concluding that the last-act monologue would have been even more "riveting" if it had not been so obvious from the first that Hickey is "death's recruiting officer": "Robards has always had a 'hail fellow well met' heartiness. But here he doesn't quite seem to be doing his own cheerful bidding. With his striped suit, his bow tie and those wide ingenuous eyes, ... he looks like a ventriloquist's dummy. When he throws up his arms to get the party rolling, you wonder if someone isn't pulling the strings. His smile is pasty, skeletal even. He's got the mark of rot on him." Richards admired the "stunningly deceptive simplicity" of Ben Edwards' set and Quintero's "daringly formal" staging—a series of tableaux, effectively complemented by the lighting of Thomas Skelton, "an artful blend of chalky whites, early-morning grays and sunshine golds, filtered through an unwashed window, [that] enhance the production's Old Master texture." Any impatience he felt as the five-hour production unfolded was overcome by the depth of the characterization ("you get the impression that you are hearing more than characters talking: souls are crying out in torment and remorse"), and by the magnitude of O'Neill's achievement: "you never doubt that he is erecting an immense play. The grandeur of that edifice, fully unveiled, is worth the tribulations of the wait." --Ed.


A Moon for the Misbegotten, dir. Martha Henry, with Clare Coulter and Michael Hogan in the leads. Tarragon Theatre, 30 Bridgman Avenue, Toronto. Opens October 8, as the first production of the Tarragon's 1985-86 season.

2. SEA PLAYS AT MONTE CRISTO. Autumn 1985 at the Monte Cristo Cottage will be devoted to O'Neill's sea plays—a series of Thursday evening readings of the early one-acts, each followed by a moderated discussion. The plays (and dates) are Moon of the Caribbees (Sept. 19), Bound East for Cardiff (Sept. 26), The Long Voyage Home (Oct. 3), In the Zone (Oct. 10), Ile (Oct. 24), Where the Cross Is Made (Nov. 7), and The Rope (Nov. 14), with an eighth evening (Dec. 5) devoted to a screening of the John Ford film, The Long Voyage Home. Moderators are Jess Adkins, Pace Univ.; Linda Herr, Connecticut College; Gitta Honegger, Yale Univ.; and Jordan Pecile, U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The readings will be by members of the community, and the sessions, all commencing at 7:30 p.m., are free and open to the public. The series, entitled "Enacting O'Neill," has been funded in part by the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund. For information, write the Monte Cristo Cottage, 325 Pequot Avenue, New London, CT 06320, or call 203-443-0051.

3. A NOTE OF APPRECIATION (from Gary Vena, Professor of English, Manhattan College, August 12, 1985):
I found Steven F. Bloom's responses to Mary McCarthy ("Drinking and Drunkenness in The Iceman Cometh," Spring 1985 issue, pp. 3-11) engrossing and informative. For years I have questioned the validity of McCarthy's criticisms of the 1946 Theatre Guild production of Iceman, always finding it difficult to separate them from her usual life-long anti-O'Neill stand. Of the more than 50 New York area reviewers who covered the opening at the Martin Beck Theatre, however, McCarthy was one of the few who focused on such performance details as individual actors' handling of drunkenness. Professor Bloom's cogent analysis incorporates McCarthy's position, so further citation is unnecessary. Nevertheless one other reviewer also bothered to comment on this aspect of the performance, for Cue Magazine, the week of October 19, 1946, just ten days after the premiere. In an observation that contrasted radically with McCarthy's, this reviewer--unnamed in the issue--thought the actors as convincing as though they had just staggered out of a Bowery saloon. Under [Eddie] Dowling's notably sensitive manipulation, they sprawl across tables, spit fire and barbed cracks at each other and lift shaking glasses of whiskey to trembling lips in a manner that is starkly real.

As long as this anonymous document exists, I choose to believe that the actors who demonstrated intoxicated behaviors in behalf of their stage characters--including such notables as Dudley Digges, E.G. Marshall, Carl Benton Reid and Russell Collins--were "starkly real" in their vivid interpretations of O'Neill's material. Indeed it is unfortunate that McCarthy's controversial reputation has kept her negative response preserved in anthologies, while the nameless Cue reviewer has disappeared. But who can really determine whether McCarthy was, at that time, more "accurate" than the reviewer for Cue? For a stage performance that was never filmed, one must consider every extant shred of documentation or evidence in reconstructing and evaluating what actually happened on stage. Thanks, Professor Bloom, for shedding newer light on this fascinating matter!

4. O'NEILL AT ATA '85. Two papers on works by O'Neill were presented during the 1985 Convention of the American Theatre Association in Toronto this August: "Harnessing O'Neill's Furies: Philip Moeller Directs Dynamo," by Ronald H. Wainscott, Department of Theater Arts, Towson State University, Towson, MD; and "O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh," by William M. Hawley, Theatre Department, University of California, Santa Barbara. The second comprised a survey of critical evaluations of Iceman. If the authors permit, their essays will appear in future issues of the Newsletter.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHIC ADDENDA. So heterogeneous was his dramatic oeuvre that few books on modern drama, whatever their subject, scope or point of view, fail to include extended comment on one or more of O'Neill's plays. Not all such general studies merit a full review in the Newsletter, but some deserve at least passing reference. One such is J. L. Styan's Modern Drama in Theory and Practice (Cambridge University Press, 1981, paperback 1983), two of whose three volumes will be of some interest to O'Neillians. Styan's commendable goal (commendable in theory at least) is to study representative modern works both as literary artifacts and as products of collaboration between playwrights and theatre artists--directors, designers, theatre companies and performers--who achieve the transformation of dramatic texts into living theatre, and inevitably influence them in the process. The first volume, Realism and Naturalism, devotes about three pages to O'Neill, whose "natural style" (p. 133), a "mode of realism, intense and obsessed" (p. 135), came only in his last plays, after he had overcome the twenty-year influence of two eclectic and avant-garde colleagues, Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones. O'Neill is excluded from the second volume, Symbolism, Surrealism and the Absurd, but reemerges in the third, Expressionism and Epic Theatre, with a chapter of his own (pp. 97-111), where Jones's influence is more fully elaborated, O'Neill's experimentation with masks is treated, and Styan makes extended comment about The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, and (more briefly) All God's Chillun Got Wings, The Great God Brown, Lazarus Laughed and Mourning Becomes Electra.
The influence of European expressionists, especially Georg Kaiser, is noted, but nowhere in Styan's treatments of O'Neill do the references to productions and performers add anything more than a perfunctory theatre-history documentation to the discussion. To one O'Neillian, at least, the trilogy is disappointing. And an expensive one as well. Between the preface and the "table of events in the theatre" which are repeated in each volume, the combined page total is 542. At $88.50 for the hardbound set ($29.85 in paperback), one has a right to expect more, not just in length but in depth.

Similarly encyclopedic, but happily more limited in scope, is Susan Harris Smith's Masks in Modern Drama (University of California Press, 1984; xi + 237 pp.; $27 cloth; ISBN 0-520-05095-9). Her book, too, studies both drama and theatre, since the mask serves a dual function "as a metaphor in the text and as a device on the stage" (p. 1). Since face masks have figured in about 225 plays from Jarry's Ubu Roi (1896) to the present, Smith has a great deal to cover, and there are times when one hears the relentless shuffle of note cards; but this is less and less the case as the book proceeds and the study has much to recommend it. One is its thematic rather than chronological approach: separate treatments of the various uses made of masks in modern theatre--satiric, ritual, psychological and social--all united at the end in a chronological list of "selected plays" and productions (357 of them, including eight by O'Neill) from 1836 to 1983. Not surprisingly, O'Neill appears repeatedly throughout the book, his protean imagination earning him coverage in each of the thematic divisions. There are valuable discussions of The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, Lazarus Laughed, The Ancient Mariner, All God's Chillun Days Without End, The Fountain, and, of course, The Great God Brown, whose deficiencies in performance Smith makes clear by comparing it unfavorably with another play that makes a similar use of "protective masking"--Brecht's Good Person of Szechwan (pp. 137-138). That use of contrast is indicative of one of Smith's greatest gifts--the ability to trace influences and affinities, many of which have not (to my knowledge) been discerned before. She is not the first to suggest the probable influence of Alice Gerstenberg's Overtones (1913) on O'Neill's subsequent use of masks; but she may be the first to detect an O'Neill influence on Jerzy Grotowski, whose Akropolis (1962) is "remarkably similar in essence to O'Neill's Lazarus Laughed" (p. 85). Such leaps and sparks make the book exciting, and Smith is more effective than Styan in using production history to illuminate texts (e.g., her coverage of the 1924-25 Russian production of The Hairy Ape on p. 29). Smith omits my favorite use of a mask (albeit an imagined one) on the modern stage--Marcel Marceau's little pantomime parable, "The Mask Maker," in which the silent protagonist, after trying on a variety of his wares, gets trapped behind a wildly smiling one and is suffocated to the accompaniment of a grotesque grin. But another work of Marceau's is discussed, O'Neill is analyzed revealingly, and Smith has produced a book that not only treats exhaustively its specific subject but reverberates meaningfully in many other areas as well. --FCW.

6. CENTENNIAL PLANS: A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION. Sunday, October 16, 1988, will mark the hundredth anniversary of Eugene O'Neill's birth in New York City, and the entire year is sure to be filled with O'Neill-related activities. For instance, plans are under way for extensive O'Neill celebrations at Florida State University and at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Connecticut. (Unfortunately I am not yet permitted to divulge any details.) Mary Henderson, Curator of the Museum of the City of New York, is preparing an O'Neill centennial exhibition that will open at the Museum on October 16, 1987, and will tour thereafter. And an international O'Neill-Strindberg symposium is being readied for 1988 at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. These are but a few of the plans now in the works that O'Neillians are eager to learn about. The editor asks that all such planners share their intentions with the Newsletter's readers. A special Centennial section will be featured in future issues as often as there is sufficient material to justify one. The Newsletter welcomes the opportunity to serve as a clearing house for centennial news, and the sooner the news is forthcoming, the less danger there will be of duplicated efforts and timing conflicts. Please send everything, from utopian whim to funded certainty. Working together, we can make 1988 the annus mirabilis that O'Neill deserves. --Ed.
7. UPCOMING: A CALENDAR OF EVENTS


*Friday, December 28, 1985: Special Session on O'Neill at the Modern Language Association convention in Chicago. (See this issue's O'Neill Society Section for hour and speakers.)

*Friday, April 4, 1986: O'Neill session ("O'Neill's Women: Biography as Theatre") at the Northeast Modern Language Association convention in New Brunswick, NJ. Papers are still welcomed for consideration. Send them to session chair Ellen Kimbel, 244 Meeting House Lane, Merion, PA 19066. (See item 6 on p. 54 of the Spring 1985 issue for more details.)

*Thursday, May 29 - Sunday, June 1, 1986: International conference on "Eugene O'Neill--the Later Years," at Suffolk University, Boston, MA. (See p. 2 for more information.)

PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

THOMAS P. ADLER, Professor of English at Purdue University, is the author of a book on Robert Anderson, chapters on Williams and Albee, and a study of the Pulitzer dramas, including O'Neill's four. At the 1984 O'Neill conference, he spoke on "Beyond Synge: O'Neill's Anna Christie." The essay in this issue was delivered at the special session on O'Neill during the 1984 MLA convention in Washington, D.C., last December.

TRAVIS BOGARD, Professor of Dramatic Art at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill (Oxford U.P., 1972), which he is currently revising for an imminent paperback edition. He is cataloging the extant letters of O'Neill, preparing an edition of selected letters with Jackson Bryer, and editing the volume of O'Neill's plays that will be a part of the Library of America series.

BERT CARDULLO is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Louisiana State University. His essay, "The Function of Simon Harford in A Touch of the Poet," appeared in the Spring 1984 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 27-28).

DONALD GALLUP was, from 1947 to 1980, Curator of the Collection of American Literature, now housed in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. He edited O'Neill's Poems, 1912-1944 (Ticknor & Fields, 1980); created a dramatized development of O'Neill's scenario for The Calms of Capricorn (Ticknor & Fields, 1982); and transcribed O'Neill's Work Diary, 1924-1943, which was published in two volumes by the Yale University Library in 1981.

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MICHAEL MANHEIM, Professor of English at the University of Toledo, is the author of Eugene O'Neill's New Language of Kinship (Syracuse U.P., 1982), and of "The Transcendence of Melodrama in O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh," in Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill, ed. James J. Martine (G.K. Hall & Co., 1984), plus a number of essays in the Newsletter and in Comparative Drama.

JEAN ANNE WATERSTRADT is Professor of English at Brigham Young University, where her Eugene O'Neill seminar has done much to arouse local interest in the playwright. (See p. 47 of the Spring 1984 issue.) Professor Waterstradt was a participant in the "Teaching O'Neill" session at the 1984 conference in Boston. The essay in this issue was delivered at a session of the Rocky Mountain MLA conference in El Paso in October 1984.
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Judith E. Barlow is an associate professor of English at the State University of New York at Albany. She is the editor of the anthology Plays by American Women, 1900–1930.

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