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The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

SUMMER-FALL 1986

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Actress Ruby Dee, as Mary Tyrone
at the Suffolk University O'Neill
conference covered in this issue.



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"EUGENE O'NEILL--THE LATER YEARS": CONFERENCE REPORT, PART I

A throng of well over 100 from all areas of the U.S. and nine foreign countries gathered at Suffolk University in Boston on Thursday, May 29, for four days of intense discussion and convivial celebration of America's greatest dramatist, Eugene O'Neill, whose "later years" were the center of attention, as his "early years" had been at a smaller but similar conference at the same site in March 1984. Few who attended would challenge the advance contention of conference director Fred Wilkins that the event promised "something for everyone and more than enough for anyone": there was general agreement that that promise had definitely been kept.

Each attender would probably have a different list of top highlights from the four days of the conference. Many would include the Thursday-night public premiere of the new PBS documentary on the playwright, Eugene O'Neill - A Glory of Ghosts, followed by a discussion with its author (Paul Shyre), its co-producer and director (Perry Miller Adato) and two of the scholars (Normand Berlin and Travis Bogard) who had served as advisors on the project. Others might cite the 3 3/4 hour tape of The Iceman Cometh starring Jason Robards--its first showing, except in two New York City museums, since its airing on Public Television in 1960. Few would omit the moving Friday night performance of Hughie by the Los Angeles-based Eugene O'Neill Theater Festival, skillfully directed by EOTF Artistic Director Tom McDermott, in which Stan Weston (as Erie Smith) and Michael McShane (as the Night Clerk) brought out all the nuances and resonances in that diminutive masterwork. (A number of spectators spoke of it as the best Hughie they had ever seen.) Gourmets would add the Thursday lobster banquet catered by the Gloucester House restaurant. Others would cite, more generally, the feeling of shared communality that the gathering aroused in O'Neillians in various disciplines and from such widely scattered countries as Belgium, Canada, China, Egypt, England, Hungary, Japan, Sweden and West Germany. And no one would be likely to omit the stars of the Saturday night "theatrical tribute to O'Neill": playwright Israel Horowitz, a Suffolk alumnus whose first play had had its first performance on the very stage from which he spoke of his deep and lasting debt to O'Neill; director José Quintero, whose magnetic presence held the audience in rapt attention as he defined the genius of his greatest theatrical (and personal) mentor; and actress Ruby Dee, who offered what she called "sketches" toward a portrait of O'Neill's greatest female character, Mary Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night.

Of particular importance to the future was the all-day "preconference" on Thursday, May 29, chaired by Professors Jackson R. Bryer and Paul D. Voelker, during which the world's major O'Neill scholars and theatre practitioners made united plans for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of O'Neill's birth in October 1988. It marked one of the few times that the two groups have met to work together, and the results may constitute the conference's most lasting significance. Scholars signed up to aid theatre companies in producing O'Neill's works during the centennial year. Grant sources were discussed, along with the strategies requisite for tapping them. Theodore Mann, whose Circle in the Square Theatre (which he cofounded with director José Quintero) began the revival of interest in O'Neill just 30 years ago, promised a staged reading at the Circle of the winning script in a competition for the best play about O'Neill, his family and associates. And plans were begun for a world-wide series of public readings of the entire canon on O'Neill's 100th birthday--Sunday, October 16, 1988. The event, which Ted Mann aptly labeled an "O'Neillathon," will require the cooperation and participation of school, college, regional and commercial theatre groups, but it will be just the thing to ensure media coverage of that memorable anniversary. The Newsletter will try to serve as a clearinghouse and vehicle for the sharing of all subsequent suggestions, plans, offers and proposals.

Of course the main centerpiece and raison d'être of the conference was the series of fourteen daytime sessions--eleven of them comprising sets of thematically related scholarly papers (32 in all), and the other three less formal in content: panel discussions about teaching and performing O'Neill (Sessions L and N, respectively), and

an hour (Session A) during which "Memories of O'Neill & Co." were shared. For those fourteen sessions, and the Saturday night "tribute," recorders were enlisted, to ensure that the proceedings of the conference would be more quickly available than those of its 1984 predecessor. (It is now expected that a book of the best papers from both conferences will be in print by the end of 1988.)

Not all of the recorders' reports are in as yet, but those that have arrived are printed below, with the remainder to follow in the Winter 1986 issue. As recorders were given no specific instructions as to form and style, their submissions vary considerably in both structure and substance. Some report about papers; some offer abstracts of them. Some include coverage of post-paper discussions; some do not--and the editor has simply not had the time to play all the tapes and fill in any omissions. But the totality comprises as full a report of the conference as is likely to appear, and the conference director is grateful to the recorders for their diligence. Indeed, he is extremely grateful to all who made the 1986 conference such a memorable occasion.

SESSION A: MEMORIES OF O'NEILL & CO.--an informal hour of reminiscences about the playwright and his associates. Major participants: Paul Shyre, author of Eugene O'Neill - A Glory of Ghosts; and Charles Metten, Brigham Young University.

Moderator: Jordan Y. Miller, University of Rhode Island.

Recorder: Lowell S. Swortzell, New York University.

The first session opened with 31 registrants present as moderator Jordan Y. Miller introduced writer, director and actor Paul Shyre, who recalled how he first met Carlotta Monterey O'Neill in 1957-58. Hoping to gain rights to produce an Off-Broadway revival of The Hairy Ape, he was summoned to the Carlton House where in the lobby he saw Carlotta as an image in black, sitting in a throne chair, staring straight ahead. They lunched at Quo Vadis, where Carlotta ordered a Monterey cocktail and soon made clear that she did not want Ape performed (Shyre believes that, because she had created the role of Mildred Douglas on Broadway, she was reluctant to have anyone else seen in it). Instead she suggested Diff'rent, which Shyre eventually produced. The luncheon began a lasting friendship during which they met twice weekly. "If she liked you, she would do anything; otherwise, nothing," he said, adding, "If she liked you, she would take over your life for you.... An expensive tie would arrive from Sulka the next morning if she disapproved of the one you had been wearing at lunch." Calling her "the last of the great courtesans," he described her elegance and recalled how once, while walking, she fell in the street and became deeply embarrassed, fearing that people would think she was drunk when actually she was heavily medicated with Bufferin. Grandiose and generous, she gave Shyre a passport and attaché case that had belonged to O'Neill. Always addressing her as "Mrs. O'Neill," he likened his association to "being with a member of the royalty in the 19th Century. You were never bored by her."

Charles Metten recalled his year (1951) as a graduate assistant at UCLA where "you never called Kenneth Macgowan anything but 'Mr. Macgowan.'" The theatre department was just beginning and the faculty operated in a former barracks. Over Macgowan's desk hung the famous picture of the Provincetown triumvirate, but other than this reminder he was "non-pretentious about his past." As head of the playwriting program, Macgowan and his wife Edna became famous for their once-a-month "at home" suppers at which Macgowan's "fatherly" personality fully emerged. Metten believes that O'Neill may have found in their friendship the "paternal affection" which he needed from his youth and had never received. Described as a kind yet firm teacher, Macgowan was a taskmaster about details. At a student production, audience reactions were transcribed and discussed; one month later he checked the manuscript to see that the playwright had met each suggestion. Most of all, he believed that "students must be taught to feel what it is to be a caring, feeling human being."

Travis Bogard reported that he had found it difficult to get to the heart of Macgowan. Those he interviewed called him "wonderful" but gave no precise evidence except that they

liked him. Jordan Miller recalled a brief interview in California in which he praised Macgowan's "willingness" to be helpful.

Bogard also described a recent visit to Tao House by the O'Neills' chauffeur, Freeman, who spoke of his fondness for the playwright but, when asked his feelings about Carlotta, became "awfully polite," simply calling her a lady. Freeman openly hated Blemie, that "god-damned spoiled dog. I kicked it whenever I could." Bogard met Carlotta only once, at the Carlton House where she received him in a black negligee: "I forgot you were coming, dear boy." He found her not in the least austere and not at all like the usual descriptions. The Carlotta paradox may be resolved in part by the forthcoming publication of her correspondence with Saxe and Dorothy Commins which, it was reported, more than anywhere else reveals who she was in her own words.

SESSION B: PRODUCTION HISTORY.

1. "A Cold Wind from the Hell Hole: Casting and Rehearsing the 1946 Iceman," by Gary Vena, Manhattan College.
2. "Robards as Hickey: One Role and Two Performances" [1960 and 1985], by Steve Vineberg, College of the Holy Cross.
3. "Preparing the World Premiere of Long Day's Journey Into Night," by Tom J. A. Olsson, Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm.
4. "The Tyrones in Dublin: Four Journeys to the Abbey," by Edward L. Shaughnessy, Butler University.
5. "O'Neill's Late Works on the Postwar German Stage," by Ward B. Lewis, University of Georgia.

Moderator: Sheila Hickey Garvey, Dickinson College.

Recorder: Jarka M. Burian, State University of New York at Albany.

The session, attended by some fifty listeners, comprised five papers and a brief discussion period after all the papers were presented. Two of the papers focussed in detail on specific American productions of The Iceman Cometh. Gary Vena described the casting and five-week rehearsal process of the original New York production in 1946, pointing out O'Neill's intimate involvement with the day to day work on the production. Of central importance was the problematic position of Eddie Dowling, who was originally to play the role of Hickey, but finally settled for directing the play. Confronted by the intimidating presence of the author, Dowling often seemed to suppress his own directorial instincts in deference to O'Neill: "the collaboration of playwright and director was marred by a conflict of artistic temperaments and styles." The resultant production probably left each of them unsatisfied, although there seemed to be no overt clashes.

Steve Vineberg analyzed the relative effectiveness of Jason Robards' performances in the 1960 TV production (based on the 1956 off-Broadway production) and the 1985 stage revival directed by José Quintero. The earlier performance was marked by Robards' great vitality and emotional range (a grandstanding "Elmer Gantry"); the latter by Robards' age, his declining energy (a "crusty schoolmaster"), and Quintero's apparent accommodation to such attritions of time. Despite occasional moments of insight and power, Robards' performance--and the 1985 production as a whole--suffered in comparison to the earlier version: "[W]hat Quintero's [1985] Iceman puts us through is, like Robards' performance, more of a trial of our integrity as theatregoers than an emotional experience...."

Tom J. A. Olsson's paper described the groundwork and astonishing success of the 1956 production of Long Day's Journey by Sweden's Royal Dramatic Theatre (130 performances in over six years) in the context of the cordial relations between O'Neill and the Swedish theatre world. At a time when O'Neill's reputation was at its lowest, the Swedes in the late 1940s and early 1950s showed great appreciation of his works in such productions as Iceman and Moon for the Misbegotten. Coupled with his long devotion to Strindberg, these well received productions led Mrs. O'Neill to grant permission to the Royal Dramatic to produce LDJ and his other posthumous plays. Dr. Olsson also mentioned that the Swedes

plan to celebrate the O'Neill centennial with a symposium and a revival of LDJ to be directed by no less than Ingmar Bergman.

The two other papers related to the more general topic of O'Neill productions in Ireland and Germany, respectively. Edward L. Shaughnessy sketched the mixed fortunes of O'Neill on the Irish stage as a prelude to his description of four productions of LDJ by the Abbey Theatre, the first three of which were directed by Frank Dermody, who responded especially to the Irishness of LDJ. The 1959 production and its 1962 revival had the same cast and played in the same theatre, with the latter production marked by greater maturity and assurance in performance. The 1967 production was more instrumental in establishing O'Neill's stature in Ireland, largely because it played to a broader public on an extended tour prior to opening in Dublin. In contrast, the 1985 production (starring Siobhan McKenna) was less well received, partly because of what was described as its understated and uncertain direction. Nevertheless, LDJ now belongs in Ireland's "pantheon of classic plays."

Ward B. Lewis presented the broadest account of O'Neill productions in their relation to a given cultural context. Having experienced mixed success in Germany in the 1920s, admired for his exotic plots but less regarded for his dated experimentation, O'Neill was banished by the Nazis for nearly twenty years because of his "decadence." The postwar surge of interest in O'Neill was most strongly evident in 1947 West German productions of Mourning Becomes Electra, which seemed to strike a chord with the postwar zeitgeist of guilt and inexorable atonement in Germany. The situation in East Germany was more problematic, for O'Neill's fatalistic motifs were seen as unacceptable to official Marxist social optimism; it was not until 1966 that the play was revived there, now as a demonstration of the degeneration of the capitalist, bourgeois class. The production of O'Neill's late plays in the 1950s enhanced his reputation in West Germany, for he was now seen as more mature, more philosophic, more complex. By the 1960s O'Neill was, second to Shakespeare, the most produced English language dramatist in Germany.

SESSION C: BIOGRAPHICAL ILLUMINATION.

1. "Love's Labor Dispossessed: The Complexities of a Friendship" [the O'Neills and the Comminses], by Travis Bogard, University of California at Berkeley.
2. "O'Neill in Mourning," by Stephen A. Black, Simon Fraser University.
3. "Wonders in the Wings: O'Neill's Unfinished Projects," by Virginia Floyd, Bryant College.

Moderator: Steven F. Bloom, Emmanuel College.

Recorder: Michael Manheim, University of Toledo.

1 (Bogard). O'Neill's close relationship with his editor Saxe Commins began during the Provincetown period and lasted throughout O'Neill's life, though not without severe vicissitudes. After their having been drawn together as young artists with common interests, O'Neill's letters tell us that the relationship was cemented in 1921, when Commins, who was a dentist, did extensive work on O'Neill's bad teeth. As he did with others he was close to, including his wife Carlotta, O'Neill developed a dependence on Commins which became essential to his work. Beginning with "friendly assistance" in O'Neill's work, Commins began to stand in for the playwright on social occasions and even, on one memorable occasion, served as O'Neill's father-confessor.

While the relationship continued to the end, it was severely strained following O'Neill's third marriage. Carlotta, while at first extravagantly polite, resented Commins, whom she associated with all O'Neill's friends of his Provincetown and Greenwich Village days. Carlotta wanted to be the one O'Neill chiefly depended on, in his work as well as in his life--and indeed, O'Neill did come to see her as absolutely essential to him, though he was reluctant to give up his relationship with Commins.

The result was something of a stand-off until O'Neill's final years when, plagued by his tremor and unable to write, O'Neill turned to Commins to help him try to make a break

SHOTS OF SESSION GROUPS A-N,

(excluding Session M, sadly missed by the photographer).

Names listed left to right.

All conference photos are the work of John Gillooly.



Session A: Shyre, Miller, Metten, Swortzell.



Session B: Burian, Vineberg, Garvey, Lewis, Shaughnessy, Vena. (Tom Olsson, seen elsewhere in this issue, missed the cast call.)



Session C: Black, Bloom, Floyd, Bogard, Manheim.



Session D: Barlow, Gallup, Bower, Metten.



Session E: Maufort and Adler listen to . . .



. . . the words of fellow speaker Shafer.



Session F: Bermel, Manheim, Waterstradt.



Session G: Ikeuchi, Vena, Bloom, Frazer.



Session K: Robinson, Barlow, Vineberg,
Mandl, Peters.



Session H: White, Raleigh, Porter,
Bryer, Ben-Zvi.



Session L: Harris, Vena, Waterstradt,
Voelker, Bloom, Blank, Metten.



Session I: Harris, Egri, Chothia,
Krafchick, Swortzell.



Session N: Dee, Burian, Garvey, Quintero,
McDermott, Weston, Olsson, Voelker.



Session J: Berlin, Porter, Manheim, Flynn.



A full house for Sunday's Session N.

with Carlotta. One of many "bizarre jealousies" on the part of both the O'Neills at this point, that of Carlotta for Commins became particularly ugly. During this period, "the faithful Saxe Commins received blows whose motivation he did not understand, but which scarred his well-being and his trust in human relations until his death." He could never understand how tremendously important the "evil" Carlotta (as he saw her) was to what O'Neill achieved in his last years as a playwright.

2 (Black). "For one reason or another many people progress through the stages [of accepting a close one's death] very slowly, or cannot mourn or complete mourning." O'Neill was such a person and his late plays constitute a record of that condition. O'Neill was unable to complete his mourning for the deaths of his father, mother, and brother for more than two decades. Nearly all the plays he wrote in that period "carry the themes of loss and mourning," though earlier this theme is mainly represented in a character's not being able to let the process of mourning run its full course. Only in Mourning Becomes Electra does a central character actually begin the process of mourning, and that only at the close of the play. Work on the cycle, however, seems to have prepared O'Neill for the final stages of mourning, which he represents in the three great plays that end his working life.

Although the central characters in Iceman all struggle to accept the fact of death, all but one end up still denying it. Parritt alone moves past denial to acceptance, though his suicide is acceptance of the darkest kind. The writing of Long Day's Journey moved him closer to accepting death. Through Edmund, O'Neill expresses his kinship with the world of nature and finds "resignation and humility." In Moon, O'Neill expresses such resignation by speaking through the character of Josie, who can accept the inevitable death of her loved one. In this play, O'Neill finally lays to rest his brother's ghost.

3 (Floyd). O'Neill's unfinished dramatic projects suggest he was going back to the problems in "political and spiritual evolution" which played so important a part early in his career. "The Visit of Malatesta" was to be about an anarchist hero created along the lines of Larry Slade who, having fought and suffered for his beliefs in opposing Mussolini, comes to America to find his former anarchist friends no longer "mindful of their ideals." A tradition of "anarchist plays" seems to have been in O'Neill's mind, based loosely on the thoughts about man's divided nature of the philosopher Proudhon--a tradition which would culminate "in what would have been his greatest work, 'The Last Conquest,'" followed by "Blind Alley Guy." The former would carry through the "businessman/materialist versus poet/idealist dichotomy of earlier works through two opposing characters, Satan versus Christ; the latter through a single, divided hero who would function like the divided hero of Days Without End. The seeming simplicity of the opposition would be offset, however, by the dividedness of the figures representing both sides of the dichotomy. In The Last Conquest, for example, the dividedness of both Satan and Christ would be represented.

In the brief discussion period, Jean Chothia--noting that O'Neill's earlier plays with religious themes (e.g. Lazarus Laughed and Days Without End) had not succeeded while those about family had--asked Virginia Floyd whether the last projected plays would have brought the religious theme to a fulfillment similar to that which the last completed plays provided for the family theme. Floyd said she felt they definitely would have. Normand Berlin protested that since O'Neill had obviously not wanted to do any more on the projected plays, it was a mistake to try to do anything more with them. One should certainly, he said, resist the impulse to try to complete them.

SESSION D: "A TALE OF POSSESSORS SELF-DISPOSSESSED."

1. "Two Versions of More Stately Mansions: A Comparison Study," by Martha Bower, University of New Hampshire.
 2. "O'Neill's Plans for the Cycle," by Donald Gallup, Yale University.
- Moderator: Judith E. Barlow, State University of New York at Albany.
Recorder: Charles Metten, Brigham Young University.

It was with excitement and anticipation that O'Neill scholars, directors and actors gathered to hear Martha Bower, a scholar deeply involved in studying O'Neill's cycle plays, and Donald Gallup, who from 1947 to 1980 was curator of the Collection of American Literature at Yale University. (Professor Gallup records in great detail how the O'Neill Collection came to be donated to Yale in the Summer-Fall 1985 issue of the Newsletter.) It is from the primary source O'Neill manuscripts in the Yale Collection that both Bower and Gallup have done their extensive research for the two papers presented.

Travis Bogard reminds us about the monumental O'Neill cycle when he writes in Contour in Time:

That Eugene O'Neill could not complete the historical cycle as it was designed is one of the greatest losses that drama in any time has sustained.... It was a work of astonishing scope and scale.... The two plays that have survived (A Touch of the Poet and More Stately Mansions) reveal something of the power of life that beats in it, but they show only vestiges of what its full plan realized would have provided: a prophetic epitome for the course of American destiny.

Martha Bower's paper traced "the evolution of Mansions from the earliest notes made in 1935 to the final typescript and only extant draft of the play." She discussed the self-edited 1938 typescript, the 1939 revision notes and the 1964 Yale edition. With great detail and clarity she told of O'Neill's development of theme, character, preparation, dramatic tension developed through crisis and climax, and dialogue created to forward plot structure and character relationships. She pointed out O'Neill's extensive editing and rewriting as the play evolved from "behemoth proportions to only a gargantuan length."

As the paper was being read, one was made more aware of O'Neill's careful attention to pre-planning the structure of a dramatic work, so necessary for him before ever beginning the dialogue. O'Neill always had the grand plan, the direction of the work clearly in mind before he ever "wrote" the play. Professor Bower closed her paper with these words:

I do not see the play as an "unfinished work," but as a play that O'Neill edited wisely with a sense of artistry and logic. The results of O'Neill's editing skills produce a finished product that can stand alone as a compelling theatrical piece or as an integral part of a complex structure.

While Professor Bower talked specifically of one play in the O'Neill cycle, Professor Donald Gallup traced the development of the cycle as it grew from nine to eleven full-length dramatic works, to be entitled A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed. Quoting extensively from O'Neill's Work Diary, Gallup masterfully explained the complex genealogy comprising the eleven plays: The Poor in Spirit or Pride of the Meek, Rebellion of the Humble, Greed of the Meek, And Give Me Death, A Touch of the Poet, More Stately Mansions, The Calms of Capricorn, The Earth Is the Limit, Nothing Is Lost Save Honor, The Man on Iron Horseback, and Hair of the Dog.

Professor Gallup explained:

In an introductory note to The Calms of Caricorn, I briefly outlined the story of O'Neill's attempt to write the cycle, a "vast symbolic play of the effect upon man's soul of industrialism...." It was not until January, 1935, that he really came to grips with the project as a series of plays dealing with the four Harford sons. Then his interest in their parents, Sara and Simon, caused him to go backwards in time, adding two plays dealing with them.... In October, 1940, he again surveyed the first two cycle plays, commenting that he had "tried to get too much into them, too many interwoven themes and motives, psychological and spiritual."

It was at this point, Gallup said, that O'Neill expanded the cycle to eleven plays.

After Professor Gallup's paper, the first question came from Harley Hammerman who noted, "All of this sounds just like episodes of Dallas." Did O'Neill's illness, he asked, stop him from being more imaginative? Gallup's response was, "O'Neill's greatest success came when he was focused."

The next question was from Jarka M. Burian: "How many read these cycle notes?" Gallup responded, "No one!" Carlotta said "No!" He added, "I spent a year transcribing the material; I made my material available. One or two perhaps have worked on the material."

Session D was fascinating! Our sincere gratitude goes to Professors Bower and Gallup for so sincerely sharing their research and work on O'Neill's cycle with us.

[Sessions E and F will be reported on in the next issue of the Newsletter.]

SESSION G: HUGHIE.

1. "Waiting for the Dough: O'Neill's Hughie," by Steven F. Bloom, Emmanuel College.
2. "Gambling Themselves Away: The Survival Game in Hughie," by Yasuko Ikeuchi, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan.

Moderator: Gary Vena, Manhattan College.

Recorder: Winifred Frazer, University of Florida.

Preceding the Friday night performance of Hughie, a session on this one-act consisted of the two above-listed papers. In the first, Steven Bloom contrasted Beckett's Waiting for Godot with Hughie. Whereas Vladimir and Estragon spend their time communicating with each other, Erie and Charlie never do, except tenuously at the end. Although Vladimir and Estragon even know each other's thoughts and take pleasure in contradicting as well as agreeing with one another, Erie communicates mainly with the audience rather than with the night clerk, Charlie. Beckett's nihilism is thus ameliorated by the interrelationship which gets two characters through life's trials. In Hughie, which ends with a fragile communication, O'Neill may be winking at the audience with whom he has shared the proposition that only tenuous connections are possible in a world of isolation. Waiting for the "dough" which Lady Luck may bring to Erie and Charlie promises a less permanent relationship than that of Vladimir and Estragon in Waiting for Godot.

In the second paper, Yasuko Ikeuchi, making such general comments about O'Neill as that he illustrated in Iceman and Hughie the lives of those in the lower depths who had not shared in America's wealth, that human isolation was a theme he had often dramatized, and that realism was the mode of many of his plays, concluded that the characters of Iceman and Hughie are blood brothers, who keep dreaming and gambling their souls away in illusions. Unlike classical tragic heroes, they do not struggle against fate, but succumb to a life-in-death existence.

During the discussion of the papers, a participant remarked that he thought he had been given Room 492 at the Parker House--an event which caused him some consternation in view of Erie's occupation of this room in a less auspicious hotel. There was brief discussion of whether, in view of Ikeuchi's emphasis on the lower-depths setting of Iceman and Hughie, a Hughie-type situation could occur in an affluent setting.

While agreeing that Vladimir and Estragon do get by, through their nonsensical dialogue, participants wondered whether the absence of fuller meaning to life did not negate any optimism, whereas at least Erie and Charlie are happy at the end with their new-found dream of communion and luck. Considerable agreement was expressed, however, with Bloom's contention that, even without God, the two characters in Godot have a sustaining relationship which is more hopeful than that of the two characters in Hughie.

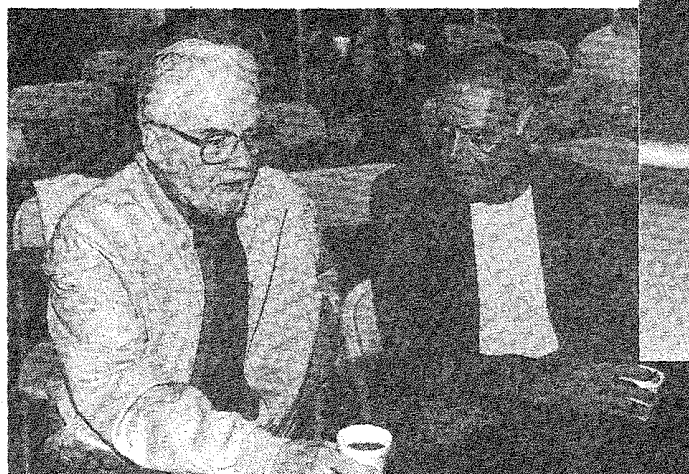
CONFERENCE CANDIDS



Tom McDermott with Perry Miller Adato and Paul Shyre, whose film, "Eugene O'Neill - A Glory of Ghosts," was the post-banquet highlight on Thursday evening, May 29.



Normand Berlin offers emphatic response to a question posed him in Session J.



Messrs. Bogard and Quintero muse over coffee before Session N on Sunday.



John Henry Raleigh, clearly undaunted by the early hour of Session H on Sat.



on Stage.

hughie.

SESSION H: MATTERS OF TIME AND PLACE.

1. "Communal, Familial and Personal Memories in Long Day's Journey," by John Henry Raleigh, University of California at Berkeley.
2. "Calendar, Memory and the Function of Ritual in O'Neill's Late Plays," by Laurin R. Porter, University of Texas at Arlington.
3. "Freedom vs. Fixity in the Plays of O'Neill," by Linda Ben-Zvi, Colorado State University.

Moderator: Jackson R. Bryer, University of Maryland.

Recorder: Leslie White, City-as-School, New York City.

In the first paper, John Henry Raleigh discussed the influences of three aspects of memory on O'Neill's masterwork. Communal memory is operational in several O'Neill plays; The Emperor Jones evidences "collective racial memory," The Iceman Cometh "collective social memory," and in the "Irish plays," Long Day's Journey and A Touch of the Poet, "the history and culture of Ireland are omnipresent for many of the characters." In Journey, the presence of communal memory is underscored by "the story of James Tyrone's childhood ... which would have made the slow-paced, simple, communal life on the green soil of Ireland ... appear to be paradisaal."

The familial memories of the Tyrones, a "long-standing family group ... with the two sons ... still living at home with their parents and having adolescent 'allowances' doled out to them by their begrudging father," are of the same "generic outline" yet unique in that "no two people, even man and wife or siblings ever remember all the same things; and when they do remember in common, as they often do, they do not remember those same things in the same way." Memory is, in this sense, "self-serving," its purpose being "to enhance ... one's ego and one's self-esteem."

In looking at the place of personal memories in Journey, "one is struck by the preponderance of the memory of Mary Tyrone; in fact one could say that for the first three acts this is what the play is about; not only is she the dominant figure in the play, the dominant thing about her is her ever-exfoliating memory." Act IV is "packed" with the "major memorials" of the three men in the play. Basically, O'Neill has "put at the center of his play an extended memory [Mayr's]," a memory which is "complex, on occasion contradictory, problematical, obsessive, regressive, a veritable 'echo-chamber lined with mirrors'." As a "counterpoint to this central memory," the memories of the men are "straightforward, unambiguous, nonobsessive ... and 'true,' i.e. they constitute a reasonably accurate reflection of the past."

Laurin R. Porter discussed the "relationship between ritual and time" in O'Neill's later works. Time is dualistic, dramatically representing both calendar and memory; "when both memory and the calendar impose burdens too heavy to bear, O'Neill falls back on ritual." Characters in The Iceman Cometh, A Moon for the Misbegotten, More Stately Mansions, The Calms of Capricorn, and A Touch of the Poet all seek to control time in their efforts to negate the passing of calendar (or linear) time, "to re-create the past" in the present, or to escape from their memories. "Whatever their stance, to a large extent the decisions of these personae are shaped by their response to time. When they have exhausted their resources, when both calendar and memory betray them, they turn to ritual in an effort to transcend the limitations of time and space."

According to Porter, "all rituals assume a pre-existing community with shared ideals, and 'the individual participant must apprehend the meaning of the ritual and the values it embodies and fully consent to its power.'" The ritual itself, then, "is an action which embodies and dramatizes the shared beliefs of a community," and the community which partakes of these ideals, or rituals, "for the moment, at least ... exists outside time." O'Neill's characters, foresaken by both calendar and memory, "turn to the ritual of confession, bearing their souls to priests of their own making in an attempt to experience the dimension of the ineffable."

The confessional ritual does not always bring peace, though. In Iceman, Hickey "doesn't believe in the power of his confessors" or "the reality of [his] revelation" about his murder of Evelyn; in effect, he "remains trapped in linear time" and "unabsolved, ... goes to his death denying the truth." In Journey, the confessional ritual fails because the characters "rely ... on memory, as if to know were sufficient, as if understanding brought change." They have also chosen a character who "is not a legitimate confessor," Edmund, "whose ideal moments ... are individual, not communal in nature." In Moon, "the confessional ritual is finally efficacious." Jim confesses to Josie, "instinctively turn[ing] to the one person who can bring him peace," and since he both chose "the right confessor" and "relinquishe[d] himself to the power of the ritual ... time's virulence is for the moment diminished; he goes to his death in peace."

In the third paper, Linda Ben-Zvi began by citing an early O'Neill poem entitled "Free." In Ben-Zvi's view, the desire for freedom is "one of the constant poles in O'Neill's plays." This theme is, however, "set against an antithetical force also at work in the shaping of an O'Neill play: the tendency toward and the desire for fixity." These two opposing "ends create the tensions and provide the imagery in many O'Neill plays, both in his early and later periods."

Ben-Zvi elucidated the contradictory pulls of freedom versus fixity throughout the O'Neill canon. In the sea plays Moon of the Caribbees, Bound East for Cardiff, and In the Zone, though the "sea locales" should connote freedom, "in none of them is an expanse of sea shown." The action of these plays takes place in "closed, cramped quarters, small crowded bunks, foreshortened areas." Ile and Where the Cross Is Made are also set in "severely restricted areas." In Beyond the Horizon, Robert "dreams of distant seas and curses the hills that confine him," yet he never "leaves home, and his fixity becomes the tragedy of the play." The freedom of the sea versus "the fixity of home" is again played out in The Hairy Ape. Yank belongs not to "the sea, the horizon, or even freedom," but to "the narrow world below deck that he controls and the men who now constitute the only family he has."

In the later plays, too, this idea of freedom versus fixity is "dominant." According to Ben-Zvi, "as O'Neill himself got older his absorption with freedom became greater and his need for fixity more pervasive." A Touch of the Poet, More Stately Mansions, The Calms of Capricorn, The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, and A Moon for the Misbegotten all contain "the recognition that freedom, if possible at all, comes not from flight but from return, not in a promising future but in a redeemed past." And this redeemed past leads to "a more lasting hoped-for freedom: the freedom that may come with death." O'Neill views death as the "ultimate freedom, and possibly the ultimate return: to security and home."

[Session I will be reported on in the next issue of the Newsletter.]

SESSION J: MATTERS OF GENRE.

1. "O'Neill's Transcendence of Melodrama in the Last Plays," by Michael Manheim, University of Toledo.
2. "The Not-So-Noble Peasant: O'Neill's Parody of 19th Century Irish-American Melodrama in A Moon for the Misbegotten," by Joyce Flynn, Harvard University.
3. "O'Neill and Comedy: The Iceman Cometh," by Normand Berlin, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Moderator: Laurin R. Porter, University of Texas at Arlington.

Recorder: Martha Bower, University of New Hampshire.

In his exploration of melodrama and tragedy in The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, and A Moon for the Misbegotten, Michael Manheim proved these late plays to be "truer tragedies" than the early plays. Manheim began his discussion by alluding to

Robert Heilman's definition of the two genres--"that melodrama involves intrigue, a mystery wherein key information is withheld until the final moments of a work, and the other ... is the polar opposition of clear conceptions of good and evil." Melodrama can also be "a drama of disaster"--one in which evil goes unpunished and the protagonist is defeated. Manheim, reflecting on Heilman's definition, explained tragedy, on the other hand, as transcending melodrama--the intrigue diminishes in importance and the concepts of good and evil "become increasingly ambiguous." The moral and psychological ambiguity of tragedy leaves it open to "fuller interpretations."

O'Neill "goes beyond melodrama" in his last three plays by his treatment of the intrigue cited above, and his manipulation of the past. In all of these plays, O'Neill sets up false expectations of intrigue which "yield gradually ... to what is central." In Moon, O'Neill all but fools the audience into thinking they are watching a melodrama which involves the entrapment of Jim Tyrone by Phil and Josie Hogan. Two thirds of the way through, that same melodramatic intrigue turns tragic. The center of that tragedy uncovers the "depths of Jim's and Josie's psychological suffering and the means by which each is able to relieve that suffering in the other." In Iceman and Journey as well, O'Neill shifts the emphasis from intrigue and suspense to the pathetic condition of the characters; thus, he brings the audience to an acute awareness of their suffering.

Manheim also revealed evidence in the three plays of "the second and ultimately more important means by which O'Neill transcends melodrama"--his use of the past, both recent and distant. O'Neill "triumphs over melodrama" by his contradictory and thus ambiguous renditions of the past--whereas in melodrama the past is knowable and constant. Jimmy Tomorrow, Hickey, Mary Tyrone, et al., become both protagonists and antagonists in melodramas that reflect the various opposing memories of the past. The dramas become tragic when as an audience we experience the characters in the present (not based on past events), and identify with their responses to life in all its complexity.

Professor Manheim presented a thorough and convincing case for O'Neill's transcendence of melodrama in the late plays, plays that have become "monuments to a belief in life as it is being and not as it has been lived."

Joyce Flynn, the second speaker, focused on the source of melodrama in O'Neill's works, and used A Moon for the Misbegotten as a point of comparison between O'Neill and two traditions: Irish ethnic identity and popular melodrama. Flynn traced this connection back to the influence of O'Neill's father, James O'Neill, who was both melodramatic actor and Irish immigrant. She sees O'Neill's plot concepts stemming from a "specifically Irish-American tradition" and one that includes the "noble peasant." Citing Boucicault's plays, The Colleen Bawn and The Amadan, Flynn described the elements of melodrama as "stark contrasts between good and evil," an evil that poses a threat to the heroine's virtue in the form of a sexual violation.

But absent from the early melodramas is the "tendency to idealize rural life and to present positively the traits and individual behavior associated with upward mobility and financial success." Two patterns of action occur in the plays set in Ireland by American writers--"dramas of return from exile, and dramas of emigration-promoting hardship set in the last century." One character usually moves on an east-west axis in a traumatic search for self. There is a "pattern of confinement and release," and a rebirth, more actual than mythic, where "the hero and heroine embark on a new kind of life."

Flynn saw the second pattern in Irish-American melodrama--that of "emigration-promoting hardship"--as being more relevant to O'Neill's heritage and the families in Moon; and she made a connection between the O'Neill play and "melodramas of endangered rural Ireland," which have as a focus the right to land ownership. Flynn pointed to satire in O'Neill's simulation of earlier dramatists' Irish cottage life--Josie Hogan versus the frail vulnerable female--and saw a comparison to O'Neill in the tensions inherent in Irish-American society, as it attempted to merge with Anglican society. Flynn concluded that where O'Neill departs in Moon from the conventions of

earlier types, he may be giving us "an amused but elegiac farewell to the fine, strong things that he had come to sense in the Irish peasantry."

Turning from melodrama to comedy, Normand Berlin offered a fresh perspective on the kind of drama found in The Iceman Cometh. Although almost all of the characters, Berlin admitted, are comic/pathetic, and there is a deep sense of tragedy in the play, O'Neill weights the action and dialogue heavily on the side of comedy. Basing his responses to Iceman on his viewing of the recent Broadway production, he "thinks" the first act is hilarious comedy. Berlin's uncertainty reflects O'Neill's own, as stage directions and dialogue confirm the generic duality of the play: "the comedy breaks up and the tragedy comes on...." In addition to raising questions about the genre of the play, Berlin questioned Hickey's role. Whereas Manheim sees Hickey as protagonist and antagonist, Berlin wonders if he is "tragic protagonist" or "comic catalyst." Hickey's dual role in Iceman conjures up for Berlin lines spoken by Edmund in King Lear: "Pat! he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy." Out of Hickey's clowning comes "a sobering sense of reality" and a "moralistic drive."

Comparing Hickey to Malvolio, Professor Berlin suggested that Hickey is akin to the traditional "blocking figure" in comedy. Like his Shakespearean counterpart, Hickey aims to stop the frivolous, boozing, illusory world of the gang, and he is "almost demonic" in his insistence on the derelicts' sobriety. He is banished from the world of the revelers, but unlike Malvolio, he wishes them happiness.

Berlin concluded his discussion with the notion that Harry Hope's gang belongs to the comic world by virtue of its "social unity." They are pathetic, yes, but not isolated or unique. Their survival at play's end "allows for life." Even Larry Slade, who comes closest in Berlin's opinion to being a tragic figure, has the earmarks of a Shakespearean fool, and it is his fool's objectivity that gives him tragic vision. Manheim's and Berlin's conclusions are not far apart when they see not only tragedy in Iceman, but also reality and life. In one of the more intriguing sessions of the conference, the three panelists complemented and reinforced their respective views on genre in O'Neill.

SESSION K: WOMEN IN O'NEILL'S PLAYS.

1. "Mothers and Virgins: Mary Tyrone, Josie Hogan and Their Antecedents," by Judith E. Barlow, State University of New York at Albany.
2. "Ghost Stories: Mary Tyrone and Iceman's Absent Women," by James A. Robinson, University of Maryland.
3. "Wrestling with the Angel in the House: Mary Tyrone's Long Journey," by Bette Mandl, Suffolk University.
4. "The Great Mother in Long Day's Journey Into Night," by John G. Peters, Columbia University.

Moderator: Steve Vineberg, College of the Holy Cross.

Recorder: Jean Anne Waterstradt, Brigham Young University.

Session K was honored by a visit from Ruby Dee, who remained to hear the papers, all four of which dealt in some way with Mary Tyrone, a role that Miss Dee has played with distinction.

Judith E. Barlow's paper dealt with the maternal traits of many O'Neill women, including Essie Miller and Nora Melody, but especially Mary Tyrone and Josie Hogan. Professor Barlow asserted that "Mary Tyrone's dilemma is that she has found herself in an O'Neill play." Insofar as Mary fails in her maternal obligations, "both playwright and family condemn her." The problems that Mary confronted long ago--the physical and emotional pain of childbearing and childrearing and the guilt over the death of the baby Eugene--overcame her, and she has become unable to nurture. She is also unable to forgive the Tyrone men their transgressions. Josie Hogan, on the other hand, is the embodiment of all maternal virtues "that the male characters have been seeking throughout the O'Neill canon." Professor Barlow noted that Josie "has nurtured and protected a

succession of men of all ages." She is the standard against which O'Neill's other female characters "are measured and found wanting."

James A. Robinson's paper viewed The Iceman Cometh as "O'Neill's one last attempted escape from his familial ghosts before his direct confrontation with them" in Long Day's Journey Into Night. The four absent women in Iceman, Robinson believes, are thus various aspects of O'Neill's mother--in fact, "sketches for the character of Mary Tyrone." Bessie Hope, Marjorie Cameron, and Evelyn Hickman all point toward Mary; but Rosa Parritt, Professor Robinson maintained, is the most important Iceman sketch of Mary Tyrone because in her O'Neill "explored the psychological devastation wrought by an absent mother upon a son."

Bette Mandl's paper suggested that Long Day's Journey Into Night and Mary's place in it "invite re-vision." O'Neill has wrought, Professor Mandl said, an "authentic representation of woman at odds ... with home and family as they were structured in her day." Mary's only recourse in this situation is a retreat into illness. At the beginning of the play, when she appears to be "cured," the Tyrone men all expect her to assume the woman's traditional role in the home. Her return home marks a return to the isolation and unbearable loneliness that have been her lot ever since she married James. As Mary withdraws, she becomes unavailable to her family, especially to Edmund as he faces his potentially fatal illness. Professor Mandl concluded, however, that O'Neill gave Mary lines that exonerate all the Tyrones, that he in fact has identified her "with his own psychological and artistic purpose" in the drama.

John G. Peters' paper interpreted the character of Mary Tyrone in light of Jung's and Neumann's "Great Mother," who both nurtures and destroys. Mr. Peters asserted that Mary's nurturing role is apparent in two ways: (1) "she is implicitly a nurturer by nature of our definition of motherhood," and (2) she demonstrates her desire to nurture the Tyrone men. Furthermore, her nurturing function is reinforced by a matronly physical appearance. The destructive facet of Mary as the "Great Mother" is obvious in her return to the fog of morphine addiction, with its devastating effect on the Tyrone men. The sons are especially affected when their mother ceases to be a nurturer and becomes a "kind of spiritual destroyer." Finally, Mary's family no longer exists for her.

The discussion following the papers centered on Professor Mandl's presentation, with many observations on the problem of the balance of guilt in James and Mary. Yvonne Shafer wondered if James would seem so bad if Mary did not have such high standards. Jackson Bryer suggested that one be wary of any interpretation that emphasizes the guilt of one person over another in Journey but also said that he finds it easier to blame James more than any other family member. Professor Mandl's response pointed to mutual responsibility in Mary and James: James is a poor provider, and Mary cannot give of herself. Professor Mandl also commented on a lack of social context for Mary, who does not seem to fit anywhere. Rosalie Warren said that Mary has had no outlet such as a coffee klatsch to relieve the monotony of life among males, the monotony of just sitting home. James Robinson stated that the curtain scene tips the balance against Mary. The Tyrone men are unhappy in the final moments because Mary is happy in her morphine-induced return to girlhood innocence.

SESSION L: TEACHING O'NEILL--A PANEL DISCUSSION.

Panelists: Steven F. Bloom, Emmanuel College; James R. Harris, John Jay High School, Katonah, NY; Charles Metten, Brigham Young University; Gary Vena, Manhattan College; Jean Anne Waterstradt, Brigham Young University.

Moderator: Marvis Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center at Richland.

Recorder: Martin Blank, College of Staten Island.

Marvis Voelker chaired a lively, informative and wide-ranging discussion about teaching O'Neill, giving each of the panelists his/her allotted time, and bringing the audience into the discussion thereafter.

Steven F. Bloom, the first discussant, compared his experiences teaching O'Neill at a Catholic college for women and at an elder hostel. The reading of Long Day's Journey Into Night was an uncomfortable experience for some of the women, especially dealing with Mary's addiction. The older students wanted biographical information which they could relate to the play and theatrical information on methods of staging. Bloom also had moderate success in having students investigate character biographies and introduce themselves to the class as the characters. James R. Harris teaches one of only two high school classes dealing with O'Neill. His honors class proved so successful that Harris has been able to offer a second semester of independent study. Harris has also arranged class visits to Monte Cristo Cottage and Gaylord Farm, and field trips to Broadway productions. Charles Metten teaches the plays through their production in class, even though his students have had little or no prior theatre experience. He begins by having students sit in a circle, reading to each other. As they gain in confidence, they begin to stage the plays. The class arranges for costumes and props, and the local television station videotapes the students' work. Several of the O'Neill one-acts have been done in this manner. Gary Vena teaches the plays and emphasizes their production values; photographs and programs of productions are brought to class. Videotapes and films are used to supplement the plays read. Students also read biographical material. In all, twenty-four plays are read, including one-acts and some of the less successful longer ones, along with the great plays. Students "compile a file" as one project for class; for this assignment, one student interviewed Armina Marshall at the Theatre Guild office and arranged for her visit to the class. Jean Anne Waterstradt arranged for a symposium to celebrate O'Neill's ninety-fifth birthday in 1983. The members included undergraduate and graduate students, literature and science students, as well as foreign students. Each student developed two papers, reacted to other students' work, and read one paper at the symposium. Following the symposium, a class journal was published reflecting the work of the seminar.

In the open discussion that followed the individual presentations, cultural differences as well as difficulties with O'Neill's language were cited as problems in teaching O'Neill in foreign countries. Representatives from China and Egypt, in particular, were anxious for specific ideas that they might incorporate into their teaching. A high school student who first encountered O'Neill by appearing in a production of Take Me Along related how he went on to read the plays on his own since he could find no course in which O'Neill was taught. Many questions were raised and ideas put forth; the need for a forum for the exchange of information on teaching O'Neill was clearly suggested. The following are some of the major concerns that were voiced.

1. We should determine ways in which units of study on O'Neill might be incorporated into teacher training programs.
2. The National Park Service is sponsoring teacher workshops at Tao House. Could similar workshops be given in other parts of the country? Could materials emerging from these workshops be made available for distribution to interested teachers?
3. Exchanges between high school and college teachers should be encouraged. College teachers with experience in teaching O'Neill could be identified and serve as resource people for high school teachers.
4. NEH seminars for high school teachers might be offered.
5. We should survey colleges to identify those schools offering courses on O'Neill.
6. We should share ideas with colleagues in other disciplines--American Studies, for example--about joint ventures such as interdisciplinary programs.
7. We should encourage the teaching of O'Neill's plays in composition courses as well as in survey courses.
8. It would be helpful to identify anthologies containing specific plays.
9. High schools, as well as colleges, should be encouraged to do readings of O'Neill's plays for the centennial of O'Neill's birth as a way to excite interest in him. Study guides should be prepared for the event.

SESSION M: PATTERNS IN THE DRAMATIC CARPET, II.

1. "Confession and Artifice in Eugene O'Neill," by Michael C. O'Neill, Wilkes College.
2. "Taoism in O'Neill's Tao House Plays," by Haiping Liu, Nanjing University.

Moderator: Yvonne Shafer, Florida State University.

Recorder: Steven F. Bloom, Emmanuel College.

At 9:00 on Sunday morning, June 1, thirty people gathered (the number later grew) to hear what were to be the final two scholarly papers presented at the conference. Any second thoughts about having missed an extra hour's sleep on a Sunday morning were quickly dismissed as the audience began to see the distinctly interesting, related patterns that the two speakers would weave. Both papers would consider the spiritual, or theological, implications of O'Neill's later works--one from a Western, and specifically Catholic, perspective; the other from an Eastern, and specifically Taoist, perspective.

In the first paper, Michael C. O'Neill (no relation) asserted that Eugene O'Neill "found the stage perfectly suited for confessing his life through artifice," thus attaining an "artistic absolution." Noting the recurrence of blessings and pleas for forgiveness in many of the late plays, Professor O'Neill detects in Days Without End the "seeds" of the dramatist's quest for absolution which culminates in A Moon for the Misbegotten, where Josie Hogan becomes the embodiment of "a religious vision in which peace of soul is possible."

Professor O'Neill ultimately suggested that Eugene O'Neill created his brother Jamie "in his own image" in Moon, and then had Jamie confess for him "to a god they never knew." The "final forgiveness" in Moon, and therefore in O'Neill's work, "does not come from a god within us or outside of us, but from one another." Professor O'Neill then included the audience in the dramatist's confessional: "we too might forgive and ... we too might say, as Josie can, 'I want you to remember my love for you gave you peace for a while,'" suggesting that ultimately the audience becomes the confessor to Eugene O'Neill's penitent, providing forgiveness in the acceptance of the artifice that was his confessional.

The second paper at this session then confirmed that there is room enough in O'Neill's dramatic carpet for more than one theological pattern. Haiping Liu, Fellow at the Research Institute of Foreign Literature at Nanjing University in China, attributed the existential ambiguity of the late plays to the influence of Taoism on O'Neill's thinking. After establishing O'Neill's familiarity and fascination with Oriental philosophy, Professor Liu pointed out the specific influence of Taoism, both in O'Neill's life of hermitic isolation at Tao House, and in his creation of "tragic protagonists" in the late plays who "shun the society of the outside world and look within."

Professor Liu proceeded to illustrate how several central tenets of Taoist teaching are reflected in The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, A Moon for the Misbegotten, and Hughie. Specifically, the "interfusion of opposites," an acceptance of death, and the merging of dream and reality reflect the Taoist "ambiguity and equivalence" that characterize these late plays. Professor Liu finally contended that O'Neill attained a sense of peace and transcendence in these works that was based on his "final belief in there being no antithesis between dream and reality, truth and falsehood, good and evil, hope and despair." According to the speaker, O'Neill's "silence" as a writer after returning to New York from Tao House is explained by his Taoist awareness that "at center all things are one."

Among the few comments from the audience (limited only by the time remaining, not by lack of interest), perhaps Michael Manheim captured the impact of this session best when he noted that in the compatibility of the two papers by Professors O'Neill and Liu lies remarkable testimony to the greatness of O'Neill's artistry.

SESSION N: O'NEILL ON STAGE--A PANEL DISCUSSION.

Panelists: Jarka M. Burian, State University of New York at Albany; Ruby Dee, actress; Tom McDermott, Artistic Director, Eugene O'Neill Theater Festival; Tom J. A. Olsson, Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm; José Quintero, director and author; Stan Weston, actor and Executive Director, Eugene O'Neill Theater Festival.

Moderator: Sheila Hickey Garvey, Dickinson College.

Recorder: Paul D. Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center at Richland.

After the introduction by the moderator, Tom Olsson reminisced about the first Swedish production of All God's Chillun and the critics who praised the director for the shrinking-mask device. Olsson also noted that the same man, Swen Bartel, had done all the O'Neill translations from 1945 to 1962; in all, O'Neill's texts were followed very faithfully.

Jarka Burian showed slides of his productions of The Emperor Jones (an arena production), Hughie (in which the night clerk's thoughts were recorded), The Great God Brown, and The Iceman Cometh. Burian also commented on the style of acting necessary for O'Neill--authentic realism played in a kind of "hyper" way, with an impassioned dynamic range which goes beyond psychological realism. Responding to questions, Burian noted further that he had employed the scheme of masks in Brown as specified in the stage directions, and that the "convention" provoked no laughter. With O'Neill, he said, you have to read (and trust) the stage directions.

Ruby Dee responded to questions on her portrayal of Mary Tyrone for television. She feels a novice regarding Mary because she had such a short rehearsal period; she wants to know Mary better. To this end, she feels Mary just materializes out of the script--"I get so much out of the text." In Miss Dee's assessment, Mary is a woman without a sense of self-definition; she has no support system, no Women's Movement she can relate to. In her time, a woman's place was well defined; the stereotypes had not been shattered. Yet she loved the men in her life. Mary's situation is not dated, however, because the theme of wasted talent is ageless. Regarding the morphine, Dee used film images of drug-taking; she sees Mary taking her drugs quickly, neatly, and secretively, as if it did not happen. She also sees Mary going through three different phases with the drug--first, just a little, hardly any effect; second, euphoria; third, coming down. Commenting on translating O'Neill to the screen, Dee observed that film and videotape can deal with visual subtleties in the actor's face, can "film thought"; but O'Neill is big in gestures and feelings, almost too big for little cameras. Dee looks forward to doing Mary again and getting accustomed to her presence.

José Quintero responded to questions regarding his original production of Long Day's Journey and the current revival, his relationship with Jason Robards, his own recent revival of Iceman, the staging of More Stately Mansions, and his future goals in directing O'Neill. Recalling the first rehearsals of Long Day's Journey, Quintero noted that Fredric March had been his idol, "a myth," since he was 14. In rehearsal, March became obsessed with the idea that he would forget his lines in performance. The solution hit upon was to create an all-purpose (and usually appropriate) line that March could use to signal for a cue--"How dare you say that to me!" Regarding Mary Tyrone, Quintero said that Florence Eldridge felt that she had not achieved Mary and, as a result, never acted again. Quintero sees Mary as one of the most difficult roles to capture. In his view, Mary progresses backward during the play until she is a virginal little girl; along the way there are moments of total joy for her. Mary uses the morphine to get to the "roles" she wants to play. With regard to the play itself, Quintero remarked that Long Day's Journey is the "greatest play in the American repertory and one of the greatest plays in the English language," and that its entire structure rests on the first act.

Concerning the opening of Journey in Boston, Quintero recalled that initial reviews were bad. As a result, the "backers" wanted to make cuts; but March, who was also a backer, offered to buy out anyone who was not willing to go along with an uncut script.

(Quintero had promised Carlotta O'Neill that he would do the play as written.) Quintero concluded this portion by observing that James and Mary Tyrone are larger than life and demand passion in their portrayal, and that O'Neill is one of the few writers who can help us understand ourselves.

Responding to another question, Quintero went on to discuss his relations with Jason Robards. Their relationship in rehearsals is extremely free and open--"the freest relation with any actor I've ever had." There is no need to intellectualize: Quintero shows Robard what he has in mind and Robards just "does it." Robards, Quintero says, has an instinct for O'Neill; he understands the "texture" and has a profound knowledge of guilt. His sense of O'Neill's phrasing is absolute. Quintero has never seen another actor trust the material as implicitly as Robards trusts O'Neill. When Robards first read for the role of Hickey--despite Quintero's lack of prior enthusiasm--the reading clarified the role to Quintero.

The recent revival of Iceman, Quintero feels, did not get a fair hearing from the critics; too much fuss was made about the length, after everybody was "gaga" over Nicholas Nickleby. All of his O'Neill productions, Quintero feels, have had to fight the ignorance and the pro-European-drama bias of the critics. They do not support excellence in the theatre; they still do not understand how O'Neill builds the strength of his plays through repetition. O'Neill is the only critic Quintero listens to, and O'Neill "does not mind the length!" The critics, Quintero feels, resent greatness and truth; they don't want to be moved, just entertained. He is disappointed with the enthusiasm for the brevity of the recent "shortened" version of Journey; nothing pleases him more than more productions of O'Neill, which reaffirm his contribution--as long as there is respect for the man and the text. In Iceman, the audience should long for the coming of Hickey. Quintero himself was surprised when it was pointed out to him that in his recent Iceman no one moved on stage for half an hour; it just happened that way, it was not a conscious risk-taking.

Responding briefly to final questions, Quintero observed that there was only one great translation of O'Neill to the screen--John Ford's The Long Voyage Home; that it is better to stage More Stately Mansions than not to, and that Deborah Harford is one of the great characters; and that as eventual projects, he would still like to direct The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, The Great God Brown and Ah, Wilderness!

Also responding to questions, Tom McDermott remarked that we should all be grateful to Quintero for keeping O'Neill alive in his productions. McDermott sees Quintero as the model of the "disappearing director," one not obsessed with making a public display of his own brilliance. Unfortunately, that approach is not currently fashionable. Critics, he feels, want to see something different; they are unable to appreciate the "hidden hand" of a director. So directors feel they must be seen as imposing themselves on the text. Regarding his foundation of an O'Neill festival, McDermott observed that American culture does not adequately appreciate its dead artists; we have a great theatre tradition which is not acknowledged. We should take great pride in our artists in order to promote reading and intelligent thought and government. In later seasons, McDermott plans to stage productions of influences on O'Neill as well as the work of newer playwrights. This year's season will include a double-bill of Hughie and Before Breakfast in repertory with A Touch of the Poet (Stan Weston will play Erie Smith and Con Melody), and possibly a production of Desire Under the Elms.

In responding to further questions, Stan Weston explained that he shared McDermott's dream of an O'Neill festival, recounted how he first became an actor, and noted that he had just returned to acting after an absence of twenty years. He had been in Beyond the Horizon in college, and upon beginning to act again he performed the role of Jamie in A Moon for the Misbegotten. Weston was afraid at first of the role of Erie Smith, which he performed at the conference on Friday night, but he discovered that the language "went in" and brought out the character, even though at first the dialogue seemed corny and overblown.

O'Neill, Weston added, presents the audience and the critics with a challenge; this frightens those who want fashion rather than experience. He closed by saying that the Suffolk University conference on O'Neill's later years and the many sessions of papers that he had attended, besides teaching him a great deal about O'Neill and his plays, showed him the remarkable love for O'Neill that exists among scholars and professors even as it does among devoted performers and directors.

A THEATRE TRIBUTE TO EUGENE O'NEILL.

Participants: Israel Horovitz, playwright; José Quintero, director; Ruby Dee, actress.

Moderator: Frederick C. Wilkins, Suffolk University.

Recorder: Scott N. Carr, Keller Theatre, Giessen, West Germany.

On Saturday, May 31, the third evening of the conference, scholars, theatre practitioners and the curious gathered at the Suffolk University Theatre for a special event. The evening was to be a "tribute" to O'Neill and held promise of being one of the high points of the four days' events. Those assembled were not disappointed.

Professor Frederick C. Wilkins, director of the conference, echoed Shakespeare's Chorus from Henry V in wishing "for a muse of fire" to introduce the evening's speakers. The tribute was to be an examination of the living tradition of O'Neill, in terms of playwriting, directing and acting, by Israel Horovitz, José Quintero and Ruby Dee, respectively.

Israel Horovitz, speaking on Eugene O'Neill's legacy, subtitled his speech "Growing Up in the Shadow Of O'Neill." He credited O'Neill with redefining American taste. Mr. Horovitz, a prolific playwright whose works have often been structured as cycles or trilogies, cited O'Neill's legacy for him as the holiness of the playwright's endeavor and pronounced O'Neill (along with Samuel Beckett) as the guiding light of his work. Mr. Horovitz referred to O'Neill as the "ultimate loner" for whom "life was to be slowed down; controlled; looked at; written." He concluded by paying homage to O'Neill as one of the most excellent of the excellent. "To me, O'Neill speaks and says, 'Protect this holy thing, playwriting, with great dignity.'"

José Quintero, in explaining the technical impact of O'Neill's work on his directing, also revealed the emotional bearing the playwright's work has had on his life. Mr. Quintero said that in staging eleven of O'Neill's plays he had found it a cardinal necessity to become "totally vulnerable to his [O'Neill's] world." He maintained that only through a trust in the material that bordered on faith would the carefully planned complexities of the playwright's work reveal themselves. He credited O'Neill with teaching him the trust and patience that he felt to be the essence of directing. Mr. Quintero maintained that his work with the broken characters and troubled souls of O'Neill's plays had led him to a deeper humanity. It also made him reassess his relationship to his own parents and helped him to a better understanding of those "two most important people." He spoke of a vast love that he found to be present in the playwright's works, and declared that the introspective challenge in O'Neill's work was not only daunting for the artist, but for the audience as well, and that some were not ready or willing to face it. He exhorted the audience not to shrink from O'Neill's challenge, but to "surrender, stretch, dare, and not be afraid of the pain as you are not afraid of the laughter."

Ruby Dee, calling the role of Mary Tyrone "a life's work," took the stage for a dramatic reading of scenes from Long Day's Journey Into Night. Ms. Dee's transformation from her own warm and dignified person to the troubled and crumbling identity of Mary Cavan Tyrone was startling and complete. Her fine acting skills captured Mary's gradual submergence into morphine and memories. As Mary Tyrone, a role that deservedly brought her the 1983 ACE Award for "Best Performance by an Actress in a Dramatic Presentation," Ms. Dee's voice was rich with beautifully brittle rhythms and melodic variety. There was



Israel Horovitz assesses the O'Neill legacy



. . . and signs a well-wisher's program.



José Quintero tells of the power of O'Neill



. . . and greets Miss Dee thereafter.



Ruby Dee speaks the words of Mary Tyrone



. . . and receives a standing ovation.

a wonderful sense of nuance and subtlety of emotion in her portrayal as she read such moments as the closing of Act Two, Scene Two ("I could no longer call my soul my own"), and Mary's memories of meeting James Tyrone for the first time (Act Three). The audience was entranced and enriched by Ms. Dee's "portrait" of Mary Tyrone.

The evening revealed more than O'Neill's deep and abiding influence on artists of the first rank. It displayed the ongoing respect for O'Neill's achievement and the acceptance of his challenges by both artists and audience.

CENTENNIAL COUNTDOWN: RESULTS OF THE MAY PRECONFERENCE

The centennial of O'Neill's birth--on Sunday, October 16, 1988--is fast approaching. In terms of planning time, given the vast amount of preparation and coordination that is required for even the tiniest venture, very little actually remains already; and any individual or group that hopes to be an integral part of the festivities had better throw her/his/its hat in the communal ring posthaste. Since publishers and theatre companies have probably all completed the schedules and committed the available resources for their 1986-1987 seasons, it is unlikely that any new ideas with target dates before the fall of 1987 can be realized. We can be grateful that O'Neill chose to be born when he did, since celebrations can be divided between the second half of the 1987-1988 theatrical and academic year and the first half of the next one! But even the fall of 1988 is not really that distant.

It is therefore fortunate that the first day of the O'Neill conference at Suffolk University last May was devoted to brainstorming sessions at which O'Neillians in the theatrical, scholarly and academic worlds could share their centenary ideas and begin to achieve some coordination that would help their achievement and avoid duplications of effort. The scholarly group was led by Jackson R. Bryer of the University of Maryland, the theatrical contingent by Paul D. Voelker of the University of Wisconsin Center in Richland. The groups met separately and together, and the results were rich, varied, and extremely promising. Two days after the meetings, Professors Bryer and Voelker presented a list of the decisions and proposals that, in their opinions, loomed largest during the day of discussion. That list is reprinted below. Two facts should be borne in mind when reading it. First, the list is extremely tentative. None of the "X will be done" statements, for all their boldness and rightness, is anything but verbalized dream until someone (e.g. you, dear reader) steps forward and commits him/herself to doing it. And secondly, the list does not claim to be exhaustive. Many other possibilities will doubtless present themselves--probably as many as there are readers.

In short, the success or failure of the O'Neill centennial depends on all of us. If you would like to participate in one of the scholarly activities on the list, or if you have an additional one to propose, write to Jackson R. Bryer, Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742 (tel. 301-454-6957). If you wish to engage in any of the theatrical activities, or to propose others, write to Paul D. Voelker, Rt. 4, Box 258, Richland Center, WI 53581 (tel. 608-647-6215). If you would like to join the Centenary Committee, or have an interest that spans the two realms, contact Professor Voelker, who has been appointed O'Neill Society liaison for centennial activities. And if you wish to share your ideas and proposals quickly with fellow O'Neillians around the world, send them to the Newsletter editor, Frederick C. Wilkins, Department of English, Suffolk University, Boston, MA 02114 (tel. 617-723-4700, ext. 272). Together, we can see that O'Neill will have the centennial he deserves. Without us, he will not. --FCW.

1. Efforts will be made throughout the country--starting immediately--to get as many professional, regional, community, high school, college and university theatres as possible to schedule O'Neill productions in 1988--and to attempt to have such productions cover the full range of the O'Neill canon.

2. A centenary volume will be published. It will integrate critical-scholarly essays on O'Neill plays with essays on those plays by theatre practitioners and interviews with theatre practitioners conducted on assignment by O'Neill experts. The scholarly and theatre pieces, insofar as is possible, will be arranged so that they complement each other and deal with the same play or plays.
3. A contest will be held to find the best play about O'Neill. The winning play will be guaranteed a staged reading at the Circle in the Square in New York City. Additional theatres will also be sought to guarantee readings of the winning play in other parts of the country.
4. At a predetermined time on Sunday, October 16, 1988 (the centenary of O'Neill's birth), readings or performances of all of O'Neill's plays will be given throughout the United States and the world--in professional and community theatres and high schools and universities: an "O'Neillathon." Possibly certificates of recognition can be awarded to all organizations which participate and which inform the Centenary Committee in advance of their participation.
5. Using as a model the gathering to be held in September 1986 at Tao House by Travis Bogard of West Coast artistic directors of regional theatres regarding plans for O'Neill Centennial productions and possible cooperative ventures, similar gatherings will be organized in other parts of the U.S.--e.g., in the Midwest (Voelker?) and in the East (possibly at the O'Neill Center or in New York City?).
6. Efforts will be made to see that O'Neill sessions will be held at scholarly meetings--regional MLAs, speech & theatre organizations, etc.--especially in 1988, but in an ongoing way beginning immediately. Specifically, the O'Neill Society will seek to have a special double O'Neill session at the 1988 Convention. These sessions may be devoted, respectively, (1) to O'Neill as a descendant of earlier American drama, and (2) O'Neill and his descendants.
 In addition, efforts will be made by Normand Berlin to promote the O'Neill Centennial at the 1986 meeting of the Theatre Communications Group at the University of Massachusetts in June.
 Foreign scholars will attempt to organize O'Neill conferences abroad and, if desirable, to request funds from USIS to defray costs of inviting American scholars to give presentations at such conferences.
7. Contacts will be made with the media: with educational television in an effort to get "Theatre in America" to do broadcasts of live O'Neill productions in 1988; with PBS to do O'Neill segments on "All Things Considered"; with "60 Minutes" and "20/20"; and with the New York Times to do a story on centennial activities.
8. UMI Research Press will be encouraged to inaugurate in 1988 a monograph series on O'Neill in their Modern Literature Monograph series, with three or four books a year to appear in such a series.
9. An effort will be made to seek NEH and/or NEA funding for O'Neill Centenary activities. Among the possibilities are funds to support humanists participating in pre- or post-play discussions or seminars regarding O'Neill productions at regional, community or professional theatres; and an "O'Neill Speakers Bank," a listing of panels (made up of scholars and theatre practitioners) or individuals available to theatres, civic groups, libraries, etc., during the centennial year to discuss O'Neill and his works from a variety of vantage points. The inviting group would match NEH funds on such occasions.
10. The O'Neill Society will make available to theatres contemplating O'Neill productions a directory of O'Neill experts and scholars--by geographical areas--who would be available to act as consultants to such productions. The Society would similarly provide such theatres with annotated bibliographies or a resource book which would

include materials on each play.

11. MLA will be approached and urged to do a book on O'Neill in their "Approaches to Teaching...." series, hopefully in time for the 1988 centennial.
12. Jackson Bryer will contact the program head of the American College Theatre Festival, to see whether a special O'Neill emphasis can be given to the program in 1988.
13. A Centenary Committee will be established. Such Committee will be composed of persons from the various constituencies which the centennial will try to reach--the scholarly and academic community, the theatre community, the media, and the foundation world.

Possible Committee Members:

Theodore Mann, Artistic Director, Circle in the Square
 Oona O'Neill Chaplin--possibly as Honorary Chairperson
 Martin Segal, former Board Chairman of Lincoln Center
 Arthur and Barbara Gelb
 Fred Wilkins--as Secretary and Central Clearing House for communications

House of Committee Activities:

Yvonne Shafer
 Tom Olsson
 Haiping Liu
 Maureen Murphy (American Irish Assn.)
 Michael Kahn

Other Possible Members:

Jason Robards
 Colleen Dewhurst
 José Quintero
 George White
 Peter Egri
 Mary Henderson
 Len Fleischer, Exxon
 Stephen Black (West Coast)
 Charles Metten (Rocky Mountain region).

THE TRAGIC COSMOLOGY OF O'NEILL'S DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS

A notion which recurs continually in modern attempts to define tragedy is that of "mystery." According to Richard Sewall, tragedy "sees man as a questioner, naked, unaccommodated, alone, facing mysterious, demonic forces in his own nature and outside" (4-5). George Steiner locates the uniqueness of the form in the "inexplicable" (128) nature of the forces that destroy the protagonist, forces "which can neither be fully understood nor overcome by rational prudence" (8); while Richmond Y. Hathorn defines tragedy as "a work of literature which has as its chief emphasis the revelation of a mystery" (223).

The admission of an irreducible core of mystery at the center of the human experience runs counter to the prevailing intellectual current of the past two centuries--the rationalism of the Enlightenment followed by the reductive positivism of its successors. And just as Nietzsche traced the decline of Attic tragedy to the advent of Socratic rationalism, so George Steiner attributes the eclipse of the form after the French classical period to modern faith in reason and science to reveal all truth and resolve every human dilemma (8). Joseph Mandel is wide of the mark in asserting that nineteenth-century naturalistic determinism is "tragic" (5104-A): fate ceases to be tragic the moment it can be reduced to knowable forces amenable to scientific analysis and control. As Steiner explains, the antithesis of tragedy lies not necessarily in comedy but in didacticism, naturalism and the literature of social criticism, a literature which reduces man's nature and experience to knowable quantities and hence views all his ills,

individual and social, as remediable (8).

In his deliberate and sustained effort to revive Tragedy on the modern stage, Eugene O'Neill, while paying lip service to the modern science of psychology, repeatedly insisted on mystery as the essence of his vision of human destiny. In 1919 he wrote to Barrett Clark, "Perhaps I can explain the nature of my feeling for the impelling, inscrutable forces behind life which it is my ambition to at least faintly shadow at their work in my plays" (qtd. in Cargill 100). Elsewhere he asserted that his interest lay in the relationship between man and God, rather than between man and man (qtd. in Krutch, Nine Plays xvii). In interpreting the latter remark, Törnqvist explains that O'Neill thought of himself as a religious playwright, not "in the strict sense that such a designation can be bestowed on Eliot or Claudel ... but in the wide sense, that what chiefly concerns him are ultimate, transcendental phenomena" (11).

There are a number of oft-quoted remarks of O'Neill's which might seem, in isolation, to indicate a conventional positivist scepticism toward the transcendental or supernatural, a rejection of mystery in favor of the science of psychology. In the manuscript version of his foreword to The Great God Brown, the playwright affirms that "if we have no Gods, [sic] or heroes to portray we have the subconscious, the mother of all gods and heroes."¹ Repeatedly, in his working diary notes for Mourning Becomes Electra, he speaks of the necessity for finding a "modern psychological approximation of the Greek conception of fate from without, from the supernatural" (qtd. in Clark 534); and he explicitly denies the existence of any supernatural element in Electra (Clark 536).

But thoughtful critics have always discerned an element of intrasigent mysticism beneath this surface allegiance to positivism. Asselineau cautions that, the playwright's disclaimers notwithstanding, the psychological view of fate at work in Electra does not "entirely supersede the traditional belief in an external fate" ("MBE as Tragedy" 147). Törnqvist explains that while O'Neill shares the naturalist's preoccupation with heredity and environment as determinants of human destiny, "positivism was foreign to O'Neill's antirationalistic, mystical mind" (29). And he points to the curious mingling of scientific and metaphysical language in such expressions as the following: "I'm always acutely conscious of the Force behind--(Fate, God, our biological past creating our present, whatever one calls it--Mystery certainly)" (qtd. in Gelb 4 and Törnqvist 17). Chabrowe sees in Desire, Strange Interlude, Electra, and Long Day's Journey Into Night "attempts to reveal man's struggle against the mysterious force that shapes his existence and limits him" (xvi). And Krutch contends that "at a time when naturalism was the literary norm, he wrote plays that were symbolic in method and mystical in intention" ("O'Neill Revolutionary" 29).

Desire Under the Elms, "the first of O'Neill's works in which the influence of Greek tragedy is clearly manifest" (Gelb 539), is charged with an uncompromisingly mystical view of the forces at work in and through human beings, forces which may manifest themselves in forms recognizable by the science of psychoanalysis--e.g. Eben's Oedipus complex--but which ultimately transcend scientific or rational explanation. And whether or not O'Neill's emphasis shifts in the course of his career from an "external" to an "internal" concept of fate, as Chabrowe suggests (102), in this play the two coincide and fuse much as they do in O'Neill's ancient models. In Greek tragedy, action appears to proceed naturally from a given quantity called "character," a complex of distinguishable human traits usually seen in part as having been shaped by past experience and perhaps even by heredity (e.g. Antigone, Hippolytus) in ways that reflect universal "laws" of the human experience. At the same time, the action appears as the product of supernatural forces, a reaction against some breach of the cosmic order. As Kitto explains, "the gods are not directing events as if from outside; they work in the events" (128, Kitto's emphasis); "the action is seen on two planes at once, human and divine" (133). Similarly, in Desire, we are made cognizant simultaneously of the dark, only partly knowable forces of the individual subconscious and of a superhuman cosmic principle working itself out through the action of the tragedy.

¹Qtd. in Falk 26 from a manuscript in the Yale University Library.

In *Desire* the leitmotif "thin" functions to reveal at every turn of the action the transcendent, inscrutable force working through the multiplicity of indentifiable human motives in the play.² The motif is established in scene two where it recurs several times in quick succession. When Eben bitterly accuses Ephraim of having killed his mother, Simeon replies, "No one never kills nobody. It's allus some thin'. That's the murderer." When Eben inquires "What's somethin'?" his brother replies "dunno." In this exchange, the basic significance of the motif is already revealed. Simeon contends not merely that people are the pawns of a force beyond their control, but that this force can only be identified as a "thin'." This recourse to the indefinite pronoun establishes from the outset the essential inscrutability of the fate at work in the play. Of course we are tempted to supply an explanation--Ephraim's grimly irrational Puritan work ethic, perhaps a function of sexual guilt or repression. But it is not his inarticulateness that makes Simeon hesitate to oversimplify the old man's motivation by naming it. And this cryptic generalization echoes throughout the play in characters' attempts to account for their own or each other's actions and to articulate the mysterious influences they sense at work around them.

Still in the second scene Simeon, in asking Eben to explain his long-standing grudge against the elder brothers, remarks that "Year after year it's skulked in yer eye--somethin'." Later in the play Ephraim, recounting to Abbie how he once left his stony New England farm for a rich and easy life in Ohio, only to abandon his crop and return home, explains, "I could 'o been a rich man--but somethin' in me fit me and fit me--the voice of God sayin': 'This hain't wuth nothin't' Me. Get ye back t'hum!'" (2.2). The tone of wonder in which he exclaims "I actooly give up what was rightful mine!" (2.2) underscores the profoundly incalculable nature of a force that could drive the intensely covetous Ephraim to such an uncongenial act.

The old man, throughout the play, is conscious of a hostile presence in the house: "They's thin's pokin" about in the dark, in the corners" (2.2). "Even the music can't drive it out," he exclaims during the festivities in honor of the baby, "somethin'" (3.1). And finally, after he learns the truth about Eben and Abbie's relationship and the child's paternity: "That was it--what I felt--pokin' around the corners--while ye lied--holdin' yerself from me--sayin' ye'd a'ready conceived.... I felt they was somethin' onnateral--somewhars--the house got so lonesome--an' cold--drivin' me down to the barn--t'the beasts o' the field" (3.4).

The mysterious influence at work on Eben and his father can be identified, at one level, with the avenging spirit of Eben's mother. Having driven Ephraim out of the house, the same "onnateral" force seems to impel Eben toward Abbie in spite of the young man's fierce resistance and to preside over their union in the parlor that is sacred to the dead woman's memory:

ABBIE: When I first come in--in the dark--they seemed somethin' here.

EBEN (simply): Maw.

ABBIE: I kin still feel--somethin'....

EBEN: It's Maw. (2.3)

Yet to equate the supernatural element of the play absolutely with the mother's ghost, as Racey does (44), oversimplifies O'Neill's tragic cosmology. Eben himself, baffled at first that his mother's ghost should seem to favor a union between him and Abbie, her rival for the land, at last thinks he discerns the spirit's purpose: "I see it! I see why. It's her vengeance on him--so's she can rest quiet in her grave!" (2.3). But we know that in fact this love, while punishing Ephraim, will also destroy the dead woman's beloved son as well as his child. The tragic catastrophe clearly transcends what could conceivably be the will of Eben's mother's ghost. I believe Abbie's frantic rejoinder here, "Vengeance o' God on the hull o' us!" (2.3), provides a clue to the underlying

²Both Racey (44) and Asselineau ("A Phase of O'Neill's Philosophy" 278-80) discuss the significance of this word in the play.

cosmology of the play. As often seems the case in Greek and Elizabethan tragedy,³ there appear to be at least two levels of superhuman forces at work here. First there are the immediate and circumscribed influences impinging directly on the characters--Cabot's Old Testament god, the ghost, the darkly irrational "Desire" of the title. But apparently these fragmentary forces partake of a larger, more remote, more inhuman and inscrutable will. This is what Abbie intimates in emending Eben's explanation of their passion as retribution on Cabot for his cruelty to the dead woman. The deity she evokes here is something much vaster than the petty tyrant Ephraim serves: it is Moira, the ultimate will of the universe itself.

When Eben learns that Abbie has murdered their child, he cries "Maw, where was ye, why didn't ye stop her?" (3.3). Again, it is Abbie who senses the truth: "She went back t'her grave that night we first done it, remember? I hain't felt her about since" (3.3). This observation not only reveals the limited scope of the ghost's influence within the larger cosmic design; it adumbrates something of the relationship between this cosmic design and human justice or morality. Kitto has explained, in analyzing Greek tragedy, that while the logos of the tragic universe includes principles we recognize as "just"--the wicked seldom if ever go unpunished--there are uncharted realms of the cosmic law which transcend human justice (148). In Desire Under the Elms, as in most tragedies, the innocent suffer with the guilty.

In the Iliad, the anthropomorphic gods, even the mightiest of them, are usually seen to be clearly subordinate to Moira. Zeus himself bows to this inexorable force at least twice in relinquishing his determination first to save the life of his son Sarpendon and later the life of Hector. Steiner maintains that the Greek Pantheon, representing the partly intelligible elements of man's destiny, serves as a "reassuring mask" between us and Fate (5-6). O'Neill's tragedy reveals a similar cosmology. The principal characters⁴ are motivated directly by demonic elements--the ghost, Ephraim's god, the "desire" of the title--which, though beyond the ken of science and reason, are in some way apprehensible and identifiable. The ubiquitous leitmotif "thin'" emerges as the common denominator linking these half-knowable forces and pointing to the ineffable mystery beyond.

--Preston Fambrough

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³ Especially in Hamlet, where the function of the ghost seems remarkably similar to that of Eben's mother: its own limited purpose, vengeance on Claudius, appears as part of a larger design--one which, in encompassing the prince's own death, runs counter to what the ghost itself could possibly desire.

⁴ As Joseph Wood Krutch reminds us in his analysis of the play, passions powerful enough to create tragedy are exceptional ("O'Neill Revolutionary" 30). Simeon and Peter, whose rational and pragmatic desire for the farm is a foil for the obsession of Eben, Abbie and Ephraim, are able to escape the vortex of dark forces impelling the other characters to their doom. And when they do escape, Simeon proclaims, "We hain't nobody's slaves from this out--nor no thin's slaves nuther" (1.4, my emphasis).

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THE CYCLE WOMEN AND CARLOTTA MONTEREY O'NEILL*

There is nothing new in the discovery that the women in most of O'Neill's plays are angels of destruction--especially in regard to the male characters. O'Neill's women characters, from the nagging Mrs. Rowland in Before Breakfast and the raving Mrs. Keeney in Ile, to the possessive Mary Tyrone in Long Day's Journey, have been consigned to the role of driving their poetic men from the homeplace to the familiar escapes of the sea, alcohol, and suicide. These and other O'Neill heroines remain housebound, and appear to be types of the mad, angelic, agoraphobic, anorexic, withdrawn female personality described by Professors Gilbert and Gubar in their book, The Madwoman in the Attic (1979). Even Anna Christie, Nina Leeds, and Lavinia Mannon, who begin as strong and independent characters, become reclusive women, tied to the domestic sphere, to their men, or to the memory of their men.

The women in the Cycle plays, although maintaining the same destructive tendencies and deference to the male ego, achieve a self-determination, an independence of spirit and an uncharacteristic ability to succeed in the materialistic male world of business and

*This paper was delivered at the O'Neill session, chaired by Ellen Kimbel, at the Northeast Modern Language Association convention in New Brunswick, NJ, on April 4, 1986. Quotations from unpublished Cycle notes, included in the Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, copyright (c) Yale University 1986, are printed with the kind permission of the Yale University Library. Quotations from Carlotta O'Neill's diaries are printed with the kind permission of Gerald Stram.

profit taking. Women like Sara Melody in A Touch of the Poet, Leda Cade in "The Calms of Capricorn," and Bessie Bowen in "Hair of the Dog" assume masculine roles, more akin to the typical male heroes of American fiction--the stoical, self-reliant killers that D. H. Lawrence makes reference to in his Studies in Classic American Literature. Frank Rich, New York Times theater critic, sees this heroic type carried over into the contemporary drama of Shepard, Mamet and Rabe, while the women characters in the plays remain the topic of locker room banter. The women in the Cycle take an active role in the shaping of their own personal and economic destinies. The men in the Cycle--Simon and Ethan Harford, Con Melody, Wolfe Harford, and Ernie Wade (Cade)--enact roles that are traditionally feminine; roles that have been ascribed to the insecure anxious authors and heroines in the Gilbert and Gubar study.

O'Neill's invention of this double role reversal pattern in the Cycle not only breaks through normal sexual stereotyping, but also appears to coincide with O'Neill's relationship with Carlotta Monterey. O'Neill's friendship with Carlotta began in earnest in 1927, the same year that the first stirrings of the Bessie character surfaced as Bessie Wilkes in "It Cannot Be Mad."¹ And I have uncovered confirmation of what some scholars have surmised: that Carlotta O'Neill is enough like Sara Melody to have been O'Neill's model. But it is my opinion that in addition to being the role model for Sara, Carlotta is indeed the woman O'Neill had in mind when he created Leda Cade and the infamous Bessie (Lou) Bowen.

Like Carlotta, Sara Melody in A Touch of the Poet is both peasant and aristocrat, has thick "dark hair," a "strong body and will," a mouth that is "too large," and a nose that is "finely modelled." Louis Sheaffer admits to similarities between Sara and Carlotta and has this to say about the two women:

Although Carlotta and Sara do not resemble one another closely, both were a blend, as the playwright said about Sara, "of what are commonly considered ... aristocratic and peasant characteristics." Carlotta, whose father was reportedly the illegitimate son of a Danish nobleman and a servant girl, looked patrician from the waist up, but she had strong hands, short sturdy legs, and a peasantlike capacity for hard work. (482)

In addition to the fact that Sara is physically and spiritually made in Carlotta's image, she is the daughter of an educated officer in the army of the Duke of Wellington and a servant girl. Throughout the play, Sara is in charge. She manages the Inn, keeps her father in check, and ministers to the invalid Simon. Early in the play, Sara comes down hard on Con for being "the easiest fool that ever came to America." She goes on to assert that if she "were a man there wouldn't be a dream I'd not make come true!" By the end of the play, Sara has achieved her goal of securing a marriage proposal from Simon, and proved herself a mighty opponent in the contests she wages with her father. Con, on the other hand, escapes into the bar, a broken man divested of his illusions and his will to live in the real world. Simon remains an invalid.

In the next play, More Stately Mansions, Simon suffers a mental breakdown. Sara nurtures Simon in the same way that Carlotta nurtured O'Neill, but does not relinquish her ambitions. This is especially apparent in the uncut version of Mansions, and Sara continues to be active in the business world in notes to other Cycle plays. For example, she bails out Honey when his political career fails in "Nothing Is Lost But Honor," and she speculates in real estate to recover Jonathan Harford's railroad losses in "The Man on Iron Horseback."

When O'Neill created Leda Cade, the "pagan earth-spirit" of "The Calms of Caricorn," he made her the supreme manipulator on board the "Dream of the West." She possesses some of the same physical traits as Sara and Carlotta, and her ambition and determination recall the above women as well. One of O'Neill's most interesting female characters, Leda has a strong appeal for both the men and women on the ship.

¹See Virginia Floyd, Eugene O'Neill at Work (New York: Ungar, 1981), pp. 172-173ff.

The shipowner's daughter, Irma (Elizabeth in the 1935 scenario) is described by O'Neill as being repulsed by the sexual immorality of Leda (Goldie in early versions), but at the same time she is attracted to her. Irma yearns "for Goldie's love, her strength [and] vitality." The captain's wife, Nancy, is attracted to Goldie's "pagan freedom from all restraint." In outlines and notes to the play succeeding Calms, "The Earth Is the Limit," O'Neill describes Goldie as having a lesbian affair with Irma. Sheaffer, in O'Neill, Son and Artist, discusses Carlotta's friendship with Elizabeth Marbury and refers to her as "one who loved her own sex." Later in the biography, Sheaffer reports that O'Neill accused Carlotta of having more than a close friendship with the masseuse at Tao House, a woman hired to provide physical therapy for her arthritis, who would on occasion stay overnight. O'Neill fired the woman when "he found them in circumstances that suggested to him a lesbian attachment" (543-46).

There are other biographical facts that link Carlotta with Leda. The latter, according to the published scenario and revisions to the scenario, was the mistress of a banker named Graber whom she met in New York and who arranged a position for her in San Francisco. Sheaffer points out that "Carlotta was the mistress of James Speyer, an elderly Wall Street banker ... who provided her with an annual income that averaged fourteen thousand dollars" (223ff). Carlotta, like Leda, had many lovers; in fact, O'Neill was her fourth husband and she continued her liaison with Speyer during and after her marriage to her third husband, Ralph Barton.

Among other intriguing facts uncovered during my examination of O'Neill's revisions to Calms is a portrait of Leda that contains other parallels between her and Carlotta. O'Neill wrote that Leda was "brought up in country--religious well-to-do people on big farm--estate up Hudson--Dutch & French Hug. & English descents--." Carlotta's patrician father became a fruit tree farmer, and her mother was from "New York Dutch, French Swiss, and German roots." O'Neill's attempt at camouflage merely reinforces the connections implicit in the above.

In early versions of the final Cycle play, "The Career of Bessie Bowlan (Bowen)," and in a later version "Hair of the Dog," the heroine, whom I prefer to call the woman hero, is a direct descendant of Sara Melody since she is the daughter of Sarah Harford Bowen, who is the daughter of Leda Cade and Honey Harford. Bessie carries on the tradition of the female pursuit of the American dream. Later named "Lou" by O'Neill, Bessie claws her way to the top of the ladder of material success by becoming the owner and president of a large car company. She also appears on a radio program with other "great leaders of industrial America."

O'Neill indirectly joins Carlotta to Bessie by ascribing an idiosyncrasy of the former to Bessie's mother, Elizabeth Bowlan. O'Neill wrote that the "only touch of feminine coquetry is in her shoes which she sends away for and has made to order." Carlotta's obsession with shoes is again documented by Sheaffer. While the mistress of Speyer, "Carlotta spent fifteen hundred dollars for a pair of sandals inlaid with semi-precious stones," and "she owned three hundred pairs of shoes" (223).

The relationship between Bessie and her husband Ernie provides more evidence that links Carlotta to Bessie and confirms the double gender role reversal that is apparent in the Cycle. Bessie is the breadwinner in the family and a ruthless business woman. She has no interest in domestic pursuits and so delivers the "children to his (Ernie's) care." Bessie dictates Ernie's every move, and humors him by building him a workshop for his inventions. O'Neill wrote that "she puts him more and more into a state of irresponsible child-like dependence." In addition to other, more familiar anecdotes pertaining to the O'Neill marriage, Carlotta's diary entries are testaments to a similar dependence on the part of O'Neill. On April 14, 1939 she wrote, "Gene prunes 2 Walnut trees in the field! It is his sense of symmetry that makes him do things like that! That is why I taught him to prune things." Carlotta, like Bessie, referred to O'Neill as her "third child," and was as comfortable in the dominant role as O'Neill was in the recessive one.

Throughout the manuscripts pertaining to the "Bessie Bowen" play and to the later "Hair of the Dog," one is reminded of the O'Neill marriage. Carlotta in her role as O'Neill's mother and manager kept him away from his friends and the outside world in order that he continue to be a productive writer. The electrically controlled gate at the end of the long drive leading up to Tao House serves as a metaphor for Carlotta's control over O'Neill's social life. While O'Neill used his solitary confinement to create great plays, Ernie applied his talent to mechanical inventing. Like Carlotta and Eugene, the couple in the Cycle play engage in the extremes of bitter argument and terms of endearment.

Following O'Neill's path of isolation and depression, Ernie almost succeeds in committing suicide when he crashes his experimental plane. He ends his days blind, paralyzed and dependent on his wife. The story of his last days sounds very familiar. Simon Harford, an invalid in Poet and a madman in Mansions, dies of pneumonia in Calms. Wolfe Harford, Leda's husband in "The Earth Is The Limit," commits suicide. Ethan Harford leaps to his death in Calms, and O'Neill himself ends his days shut away from the world--a specter devoid of physical and mental power.

The case for Carlotta's being the inspiration for Bessie is strengthened by the likeness of Ernie Wade to his creator. O'Neill's description of Ernie in the notes to the "Bessie Bowen" play make this dramatically clear:

Ernie Wade is twenty-two, about 5 [feet] 6 inches in height, with a wiry, undernourished body, round sloping shoulders, a thin neck with prominent Adam's apple, small feet and fine hands with long artist's fingers. His face is narrow with high prominent cheekbones, unkempt brown hair that keeps falling raggedly over his eyes, a well-shaped forehead, a small sensitive mouth with lean, pointed jaw, large aquiline nose, scanty eyebrows and short eye-lashes, big day-dreaming abstracted brown eyes. His manner is diffident and shy, mockingly ingratiating, silent, unless spoken to, usually halting in speech but occasionally, when encouraged to speak, breaking out into spells of excited volubility.... A general impression of instability, immaturity, of a likable boy who has never grown up as a complete personality, a large part of him still held by adolescent romantic dreams, yet who also possesses a keen intelligence along the line in which he functions in practical life--his bent for machinery.

In all but his short stature and "bent for machinery," Ernie is O'Neill's double. This image of the playwright appears even closer to him than the portrait of Edmund in Long Day's Journey.

The Cycle women, Sara, Leda, and Bessie, share Carlotta's extremes in looks and personality, her drive, her relentless pursuit of glory through the achievements of her husband, and the reversal of the traditional feminine role in her marriage to O'Neill. By the end of his life, O'Neill, like the Cycle men--Simon, Ethan, Con, Wolfe, and Ernie--is a recluse stripped of the will to live. Like the women authors of the 19th Century, described in Gilbert and Gubar's study, who experienced an "anxiety of authorship," O'Neill followed the Cycle's male creative artists into depression, madness, withdrawal, anorexia and finally premature death.

Carlotta, on the other hand, is a type of the Cycle women she inspired. Gallantly, she survived her husband, his depressions, his ill-health, and his tantrums to realize success in the material world and to enjoy the legacy she persuaded O'Neill in 1952 to bequeath to her. In so doing, she became a paradigm of the brazen ambition of Sara Melody, the earthy strength of Leda Cade, and the relentless drive of Bessie (Lou) Bowen. Echoing Lou Bowen's cry of "Start again!" at the end of "Hair of the Dog," Carlotta played a major role in O'Neill's posthumous international success. It was O'Neill who ultimately became the madman "in the attic" of the Shelton Hotel--possessed by his woman, dispossessed of his creative genius and his sense of self. Curiously enough, when

O'Neill first conceived of the feisty Bessie Bowen, he wanted Carlotta to play the part.

--Martha Bower

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REVIEWS OF O'NEILL PLAYS IN PERFORMANCE

1. LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, directed by Jonathan Miller. Broadhurst Theatre, New York City, April 21 - June 29, 1986. [Following its Broadway run, the production transferred to London, where it opened at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on Monday, August 4. It is scheduled to move to Tel Aviv in October. Since the production is still "on the boards," the use of the present tense in the following review seems justified. --Ed.]

This is a short Long Day's Journey Into Night, a feature apparently meant to make the drama more appealing, or at least less intimidating, to the theatregoing public. A short Long Day's Journey, however, is a contradiction in terms: you can no more make O'Neill's Journey a short one than spend a cold day in Hell--an apt metaphor, since it suggests the second, and related, problem with the current revival. Not only is this a short Long Day's Journey; it is also a very cold Long Day's Journey.

Director Jonathan Miller has cut the play's running time from the usual four hours or so to about two hours and forty minutes, not by making extensive cuts in the text (although there are some unfortunate ones), but primarily by using overlapping dialogue. When the Tyrones speak, nobody listens; everybody talks at once. Now, Miller is quite right that, realistically, in the heat of family arguments, one person rarely has the courtesy to wait for another to complete a well-crafted speech; and this is an acceptable notion with reference to the Tyrones. Furthermore, it is certainly true that much of what the Tyrones say to each other is repetitious, often ritualistic; so that the characters barely do attend to each other's words since they have heard them so many times before.

So it is true, then, as Miller contends, that we do not miss any especially important lines of dialogue because of this approach. To say, however, that if we do not miss any dialogue, then we do not miss any of O'Neill is to fail to recognize that the essence of O'Neill's drama does not lie in the words themselves. To say that, since it is all so repetitious anyway, we do not have to hear all of the repetitions, is to deny what is now so well-known about O'Neill's dramaturgy: he wrote for the theatre, not for the easy chair, and he certainly meant for an audience to experience the repetition, which is a central reality of the lives of his characters. So even if

a little or none of it is actually deleted, the problem is that if the audience cannot hear it, if they do not endure it, then the theatrical fabric of the drama is torn.

It is not the overlapping dialogue alone, though, that moves the play along to its conclusion in under three hours; in fact, a limited amount of that device might have worked quite nicely without destroying the play's texture. There is more madness to Miller's method: he seems to have directed the drama as if the actors were playing "Beat the Clock." This production simply moves too fast; I had the impression that each performance represented a challenge to the cast to bring the play in under three hours. But O'Neill's drama cannot be approached as one would approach the Boston Marathon. The Tyrones do not live a fast-paced life; theirs is a world of stasis, paralysis. To understand the Tyrones, you must spend time with them, their time, at their pace. You have to understand the "horrible burden of Time weighing on your shoulders and crushing you to the earth," as Edmund puts it, quoting Baudelaire. The Tyrones cannot escape this burden, try as they may; and by allowing the audience to escape an hour and twenty minutes early, Miller denies us the full experience of the play.

The pace-setter in this production, especially for the first three acts, is Bethel Leslie in the role of Mary Tyrone. Apparently the idea here was that rapid speech might be symptomatic of her morphine intoxication, and I would not argue with Dr. Miller about the accuracy of that diagnosis. In performance, however, there are at least two problems with this notion. First, Ms. Leslie speaks very rapidly from the opening curtain, when Mary has just begun to take the morphine again, and the pace only increases from then on. There are not enough variations to indicate how much morphine she has taken, or to indicate the onset of withdrawal symptoms, and she never seems to attain that peaceful sense of calmness which, presumably, is what she is after by taking the drug in the first place. She remains nervous and high-strung at virtually all times. Second, her rapid-fire delivery becomes rather monotonous, making her a distant and cold Mary Tyrone. Now, while these are certainly aspects of the character, in Ms. Leslie's portrayal they define the character. Ms. Leslie's performance is admirable, given the interpretation; she speaks the lines just about as rapidly as one imagines is humanly possible. What is gained in time, though, is lost in feeling, and this has significant effects on the impact of the entire production.

One of the achievements of this interpretation, in fact, is to reiterate the central importance of Mary in the dynamics of the drama. She is the one to whom the others react; she is the one around whom the drama revolves; and the actress can, therefore, set the pace and establish the mood of the entire production. In this case, ironically, Ms. Leslie's Mary has a negative effect, setting too fast a pace, and establishing too cold a mood.

Because Mary seems so detached and cold, we have little sympathy for her, and therefore we have too much for James. Granted, O'Neill does seem to be more severe toward his mother than his father in the text, and he does give the father his confessional moment and the subsequent implied forgiveness from his son. Still, this production oversimplifies the situation. As Mary says, everyone is to blame, and no one is to blame; yet in this production it is much too easy to blame Mary.

Aside from Ms. Leslie's portrayal of Mary, another factor that contributes to this effect is Jack Lemmon in the role of James Tyrone. Mr. Lemmon is a very fine actor, and he has some wonderful moments in this play. One of the most memorable comes towards the end of Act Two, Scene One, when James returns from working outside, after Jamie and Edmund have had clear evidence of Mary's return to morphine. After Mary's first speech with James in the room, the stage directions state that "Tyrone knows now. He suddenly looks a tired, bitterly sad old man," and this is exactly what happens. When Mr. Lemmon turns to the audience here, after observing the now obvious signs of his wife's condition, he is indeed a man transformed, shot through by a reality that visibly shakes him to his very soul. He is suddenly deflated, all the

SCENES FROM BROADWAY'S 1986 LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT--



Dark-clad director Jonathan Miller sits beside his cast. Standing, left to right: Jodie Lynne McClintock (Cathleen), Peter Gallagher (Edmund) and Jack Lemmon (James). Seated, left to right: Kevin Spacey (Jamie) and Bethel Leslie (Mary).



James, after a tippie, ponders on the evanescence of his youthful promise.



Jamie, Mary and Edmund behind patriarch James.



A tender moment between Mary and James.

life taken out of him by this one glimpse of his wife and the recognition of her return to the "cursed poison." From this point on, Mr. Lemmon noticeably deteriorates, looking more and more like a lost, broken old man. This deterioration culminates with a nice small touch in Act Four, when after threatening Edmund with his belt, James returns the belt to its place on the waistband of his pants, missing most of the belt loops. This action is a subtle sign of drunkenness in a man who holds his liquor well, and it results in a physical feature of his appearance at the end of the drama that makes him seem all the more pathetic.

The moment of deflation, in Act Two, Scene One, is moving, but at the same time, indicative of the overall interpretation of the play. Tyrone is the wounded victim, portrayed from the outset as a basically good man who occasionally becomes defensive and obstinate. Much of his behavior is meant to be humorous, such as his careful attention to his liquor supply; but beneath the humor, there must be an awareness of his responsibility for the family's situation. This gets lip service because it is in the script, but Tyrone seems to be more exonerated than held accountable. Some of this may have to do with Jack Lemmon's persona, developed especially in various film roles over the years. He often plays the victim; he often seems put upon, whether by larger political forces, as in Missing, or by a sloppy, inconsiderate roommate, as in The Odd Couple. Mr. Lemmon's Tyrone responds to much of his trouble by grunting and groaning, and mumbling inaudibly, which seems terribly inappropriate. James is not essentially a complainer, and he is certainly not a mumblor. He is a proud man who makes a point of projecting his words, even if his pride is sometimes inappropriate and his words sometimes reveal his weaknesses. If he is a victim, his own stubbornness is at least partially responsible. Indeed, it can easily be argued that James has a stake in maintaining Mary's dependence on morphine, and that he has done little to really help her; she, after all, gives him a good reason to get drunk. Long Day's Journey requires a delicate balance between James and Mary, so that one recognizes the complexities of both characters and their relationship.

For instance, for all his responsibility for her condition, James does truly love her; he enjoys teasing her playfully and being physically attentive to her. This should be apparent early in the play, before she moves away from him, beyond his reach. In this production, however, she is far away from the outset. It is a common observation about the play that the opening of Act Two, Scene Two provides a revealing contrast to the opening of Act One, partially in that James and Mary enter separately in the later scene, whereas in the first they enter together, with James's arm around Mary's waist. In Miller's production, the play opens with James and Mary already on stage, standing apart, separate. In spite of some physical contact later in the opening scene, Mary's distance from her husband is established immediately.

This distance is also a serious problem in Mary's relationship with her sons, especially with Edmund, who believes that Mary takes the morphine to get "beyond our reach, to be rid of us, to forget we're alive." He is, of course, correct; Mary does build a "blank wall" around herself. This is a process, though; the audience should see her build the wall, and therefore, she must begin within the family's reach in order to move beyond it. In the text, she is especially attentive to Edmund's health, even if her concern is ambivalent; and she does vacillate between mothering him and denying that there is anything wrong with him. It may not be necessary to go to the extreme of excessive physical contact, as in the 1962 film with Katharine Hepburn; yet without a sense of any warmth or affection between mother and son, with virtually no physical contact, it is more difficult to feel Edmund's pain when Mary "departs" at the end of the play. It is hard to understand why Edmund even bothers to beg for her attention by the end of this production, since we saw him receive so little maternal affection previously. In the text, Mary is certainly often cold and distant, but she is also sometimes maternal and nurturing, or at least tries to be; but this production seems determined to prove how hard it must be to have an automaton for a mother.

Mary's coldness, conveyed mostly by avoiding eye contact while speaking rapidly and

unfeelingly, also has ramifications for Jamie. Although his attachment to his mother is less explicit than Edmund's, and more effectively sublimated beneath his cynical defenses, Jamie does try to believe this time; he must believe in Mary in order to begin to believe in himself. It is therefore important for him, too, that Mary seem to be within reach, especially at the beginning. The home should feel like a home to him and his father; Mary should seem to be a mother to her sons. Since Ms. Leslie misses the nurturing, maternal quality of Mary's character from the beginning, Jamie's cynicism tends to seem entirely justified. It is difficult to imagine why he would be anything but cynical with such a cold, distant mother. But this oversimplifies matters: Jamie's cynicism should be part of the family's problems, not an easily understandable and acceptable solution for him.

Among the cuts that Miller has made in the text is Jamie's recitation of "A Leave-taking" in the last scene of the play. It would not make sense, though, for this Jamie to attempt to reach out for his mother at the end, so he is virtually eliminated from the final scene. His last memorable line in this production is "The Mad Scene. Enter Ophelia," which is played mostly for laughs, so that Jamie seems too unaffected by his mother's condition; he is too much the devil-may-care cynic. While Kevin Spacey gives an excellent performance as Jamie, and even captures flashes of the self-hatred that lies beneath the cynical bitterness (especially in the climactic confessional scene with Edmund), yet he is denied his proper "leave-taking," and thus remains the sneering cynic, rather than the bitter, broken, lost young man he should be at the play's end.

It is, indeed, in these final moments of the production that Mr. Miller has most egregiously cut and altered the text, doing a great disservice to its potential impact. First, Jamie announces his mother's entrance, wobbling drunkenly on the sofa as she descends the staircase. Granted, "The Mad Scene. Enter Ophelia" is meant to provide momentary relief from the wrenching confessions of Act Four, but the line should also suggest the anticipated horror of what is yet to come. Here, Mary descends wearing her wedding gown, rather than dragging it behind her; she looks disheveled, confused, and rather old, not "youthful" at all. Since she wears the dress over her clothing, she looks rather ridiculous, not innocent and "girlish," thus adding inappropriately to the humorous impact of Jamie's line. In addition, Mary should not wear the gown, so that it is clear that she has now returned to a time in the past before she married James Tyrone. Giving up the gown to him, as indicated in the stage directions, is doubly symbolic of what she feels she has done with her life, as well as of her wish to return to a time before the wedding, before she wore the gown, to a time when she was happy. The impact that O'Neill intended the scene to have is weakened by Miller's decision to eliminate this visual image, and it is certainly more difficult to feel, as some do, that Mary has perhaps at least attained some sense of peace at the end. This is, however, consistent with Miller's totally unfavorable view of Mary in the production.

Furthermore, during this final scene, only Edmund tries to reach Mary, whereas in the text he is the last of the three men to try, and he almost breaks through. These final attempts to reach her serve to isolate each character in succession, punctuated by Jamie's resigned refrain, "It's no good." In the text, they also attempt to have a final drink together, which is then cut off by Mary's final speech. In this production, the drink is not suggested. With the audience's attention thus focused on Mary, the men do not seem as affected by her "departure" as they should be. Finally, after her last line, Mary stands behind James, puts her arms around his neck from behind to embrace him, and he groans, giving him the last "word" in the play, and fixing in that final moment, the impression that the entire production creates--that Mary is the cause of the family's woes, and that James is the enduring victim. Just when Mary should be most distant, and each character isolated, Miller has her make contact.

Generally, the depiction of the younger Tyrones is much more satisfying than that

of the elders (although the fault lies not in the stars, but in the director, I suspect). In addition to Mr. Spacey's fine performance as Jamie, Peter Gallagher sensitively plays an appropriately understated Edmund. His illness never distracts from the ritualistic patterns within the family, yet is always subtly in evidence, reminding the characters and audience of the fragility of this young man, and thus of the romantic dreams that he espouses. Mr. Gallagher performs admirably in the absence of a mother who should lure him as well as reject him. In the final act, his coat seems a necessary and appropriate form of protection, not so much from the elements as from his mother.

One weak moment for Mr. Gallagher seems, again, more of a directorial problem than an acting deficiency. This comes in the fourth act, when Edmund angrily calls his father a "stinking old miser." In the speech leading up to that line, Mr. Gallagher becomes enraged to the point of violently overturning a chair, which seems excessive at this point, for this character, in his condition. It detracts from his violent outburst, later, at Jamie, in protection first of his mother, then of his father. It is, perhaps, an attempt to make us feel some contempt for Tyrone; but here, too, the effect is to show Tyrone as the victim, this time of a rash and violent son. It remains difficult to understand such rage directed physically at the kindly, victimized Mr. Lemmon.

One of the best scenes in this production, on the other hand, is the beginning of the confrontation between Edmund and Jamie when the latter returns home in Act Four. As they sit together, drunkenly laughing over Jamie's antics at Mamie Burns', there is a genuine feeling of brotherly love and camaraderie between them, suggestive of many previous nights of drunken affection. It is a warm and moving scene, which makes Jamie's threatening confession to Edmund all the more powerful and poignant. The only problem with Jamie's confession is his angry outburst towards the end. In fact, all three male characters have moments of enraged outburst; and in all three cases the outburst seems overdone, somehow unbelievable. Again, I think this has something to do with the pace of the production. Although it is true that alcoholics experience sudden and unexpected mood changes, these outbursts are not so much "changes" as they are peaks of mounting frustrations, resentments, or self-loathing, which take more time to develop than Miller allows. Even in anger, the Tyrones are rather slowly aroused, and when they are, the anger is often tempered by ambivalence, or guilt.

Jodie Lynne McClintock does very well as Cathleen, providing an appropriately respectful sounding board for Mary in Act Three, while also conveying an uneasy suspicion about Mary's behavior. Her drunkenness is believable and humorous, enjoyed with a lightness that is in obvious contrast with the increasingly somber intoxication of the Tyrones.

The costumes by Willa Kim are fine, the use of white providing an effectively stark contrast to the bleakness of the lives portrayed. The lighting by Richard Nelson is very effective at dimly illuminating these scenes of darkening hopes. The only problem is the apparent lack of fog, which is a design problem that involves the scenery by Tony Straiges.

The furniture in the house clearly suggests that no particular expense has been incurred to make this home especially stylish or comfortable. The main problem, though, is that there is entirely too much room. This is a spacious set, especially surprising to anyone familiar with Monte Cristo Cottage. Walls of vertical wooden panels suggest ceilings that are too high. Furthermore, the fog never seems to roll in to form that impenetrable wall around the house; at least, from where I was sitting, off to the left in the audience, out of view of the windows, the fog was nonexistent. While the lighting did change from a rather promising bright morning, with light streaming in through the windows, to a rather gloomy dimness at the end, the fog was noticeably missing, again eliminating an important symbolic stage image from the text.

In addition, in the middle rear of the stage, the staircase leads up towards stage left; but with no wall behind it, just blackness, it seems to be leading nowhere. While it is true that other characters do climb and descend these stairs during the play, the staircase really should be Mary's, and it does, in fact, lead somewhere quite real--the spare room--and through it, to her past. To have the staircase so visible, with characters bouding up and down, and with action occurring right on the steps, detracts from the haunting effect of the sounds from above, and of those on the stairs, especially in Act Four. There is a similar problem with the placing of the piano prominently in the foreground downstage right. When other characters sit at it, stand around it, and touch it, it too becomes less exclusively Mary's. The piano is supposed to be something that Mary has not touched in years, a part of her past that the others would avoid, so that when we hear her playing it at the end, the effect is much more haunting. In this production, these important effects are lost. The location of the stairs and the piano right on stage, however, saves time, of course, and helps to move the action along, which for this production is all-important. To be haunting, after all, takes too much time.

If more people sit through this faster version of Long Day's Journey than would sit through a more than four-hour version, however, then perhaps this production may serve an important function. Such a reinterpretation of a great play breeds debate and controversy, and therefore publicity and curiosity; it raises interesting and important questions about the text, about the nature and structure of the drama itself. Perhaps some of the people in the audience, who may never have considered it otherwise, will now wonder what the "original" is really like. In many ways, Mr. Miller's production betrays O'Neill's text, but perhaps it will prompt another director to assemble another fine cast soon for another major production, to prove Jonathan Miller wrong--about the audience and about the play--perhaps another director who trusts O'Neill and will serve the text.

--Steven F. Bloom

2. A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN, produced by the Asolo State Theater, Sarasota, Florida, Winter 1986.

The Asolo Theater is housed in a most attractive 18th-century court playhouse in Sarasota on the grounds of the Ringling art museum. Ringling, being the flamboyant circus man he was, collected a number of large, colorful works by Rubens and others of that era, which form the core of a fine collection. He also transported from Asolo, Italy, considerable portions of the court playhouse of the ruling house. (In late years, architects from Asolo have come to study this structure in order to reproduce it in its original Italian setting.)

For the past 27 years a professional repertory company of the theater has produced a season of 18th century and modern plays, including Desire Under the Elms and Long Day's Journey, and perhaps others by O'Neill. As a state theater, they also tour through Florida and southern Georgia. They are thus one of many such partly-publically supported theaters, which are bringing professional theater to rural areas throughout the country to an extent unknown since the demise of the Federal Theatre in 1939. (Two other State Theaters which also tour schools and local communities are the Hippodrome in Gainesville and the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami.)

Thus I saw Moon on February 10, 1986, in the auditorium of the St. Johns River Community College, Palatka, sponsored by the Arts Council of Palatka. Palatka is forty miles from the seat of the University of Florida in Gainesville and in the midst of farmland, where fields of potatoes and cabbage are grown. Does O'Neill play in Hickville? I can testify that he does.

Having previously seen only the tv portrayal of Moon, I do not know how it is usually staged, but I was impressed by the efficiency of this production. Two clapboard sections, partly cutting off the view of the Hogan main room, but still allowing characters to be seen in it, provided the permanent staging, so different from early productions of Desire, with a wall having to be removed and replaced for different scenes. In other words this touring set served the play perfectly. Although Nora Chester was not as large as O'Neill made Josie out to be, she did convey the impression of great strength, and one did feel that she could hold her own, not only with her brother Mike Hogan, but with her father as well.

In the argument between Professors Miller and Manheim as to whether the play is "flawed," as Judith Barlow claims, I am most impressed, after seeing this production, with the close relationship between Josie and her father, Phil Hogan. It is not exactly incestuous, but it is so close that the jibing at each other is almost sexual. (One is reminded of Lear's "birds in a cage" wooing of Cordelia.) From the opening of the play, when Josie slams her brother to the ground for calling Phil an "old hog," to the last, when she tells her father, "I'll get your damned breakfast," and he replies, "Now you're talking," as he enters the house through her bedroom, the play is theirs. Jim Tyrone, you might say, pops in and out. Regardless of my facetiousness, I do wonder how O'Neill came by this close daughter-father portrayal. It couldn't have been him and Oona. Carlotta certainly didn't trade quips with whatever father she had. It couldn't have been from any Hogan-type families he knew. Did Agnes and her father engage in affectionate by-play? We know where O'Neill got Jim Tyrone all right, but the mystery of what I see as the crux of the play remains. Mannon and his daughter Lavinia furnish no clues.

In any case the audience found the play very moving. Dane Knell as Phil Hogan, Terry Layman as James Tyrone, and Marc Durso as both Mike Hogan and Mr. Harder, complemented the acting of Nora Chester to make for an evening of superb theater in the heart of cracker land in north central Florida.

--Winifred L. Frazer

3. A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN, directed by Thomas F. Bradac. Grove Theatre Company, Gem Theatre, Garden Grove, CA, April 11 - May 10, 1986.

A weak link might seem like little more than a bother in the performance of many a play; in playing O'Neill it usually threatens disaster. It is, perhaps, a tribute to his writing: tight, with scant room for improvising. In short, O'Neill is the artist's dream, the dabbler's nightmare.

While the Grove Theatre Company's presentation of A Moon for the Misbegotten at the Gem Theatre in Garden Grove, California, hardly fell apart, it didn't really hold together, either. There were many strengths in the production, but just enough weaknesses to compromise what might have been an outstanding performance.

The chief weakness was in casting two of the roles, and in the failure of one of those two performers to match the quality found in the production as a whole. Daniel Bryan Cartmell as Phil Hogan was not without talent, but simply didn't fit the part. Instead of impressing one as a billy goat, this hulk seemed more like an ox of a man, a very gentle ox. He towered over Josie so that only her tongue could save her. He lacked the anxiety of a man whose sons have deserted him, and whose only daughter seems destined for lifelong spinsterhood. And genuine anger seemed beyond his capacity to express.

The casting of Cartmell as Phil might have been overlooked, however, since he did a creditable job under the circumstances. But the unfortunate selection of Russ Terry

as James Tyrone, Jr. could hardly be ignored. Suave in his dark beard, he seemed to belong more to Pigalle than to Broadway. More distinguished than dissolute, he knew his lines but appeared to have little real acquaintance with his character. His passionless recitation of the story of his mother's death was the low point of the performance. It was as if he had strayed onto the stage, not from Manhattan, but from another play altogether.

In stark contrast to these questionable choices, Cherie A. Brown as Josie was an excellent one. She had just the right trace of Ireland left in her voice, and her expression of emotions, as varied as mother-love and feminine fury, was very convincing. In the late-night scene with her drunken beau, her passion was achingly real.

The minor roles were also well-acted. Wayne C. Watkins as T. Stedman Harder showed the scorn of the rich and the fright of the suddenly defenseless; none of the humor in his scene was lost. The brief appearance of Danny Oberbeck as Mike Hogan proved a good beginning for the play. His accent matched Josie's so well, they seemed cut from the same cloth.

Thomas F. Bradac's direction was generally good, despite those initial errors in casting; there were few places where flaws were evident. Possibly the one glaring failure in direction was getting the drunks to act more like drunks. Phil and Tyrone held their liquor too well. The choice of music was also strange: the use of Gregorian chants seemed out of place.

The set design (by Gil Morales) put a lot of house on the Gem's small stage. The unpainted clapboard house with its two entrances served very well in a play where the set has important functions. Elms brooded over the house--a nice O'Neill touch. The costumes (designed by Karen J. Weller) also worked well, especially in the case of Josie, whose transformation from farmhand to lady was, as it should be, striking.

The later plays of O'Neill are demanding fare. This is not to say that they shouldn't be attempted, but to suggest that the possibilities for something less than resounding success may be quite real. The Gem's production of A Moon for the Misbegotten demonstrated once again the perils and the promise of mounting such a remarkable drama.

--Eugene K. Hanson

4. AH, WILDERNESS!, directed by David Devries. Presented by the Alliance Theatre School of Atlanta at the Fifth Annual Theatre Festival, Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, Madison, Georgia, August 8-10, 1986. Stage design by Bill Harrison, lighting and sound design by David Brewer, costume design by Yvonne K. Lee.

As a contribution to the theme "Celebrating American Humor," O'Neill's work was performed three times during a festival underwritten by state and federal endowments as well as commercial sponsors and inaugurated by the governor. The site was a rural town of 3,500 inhabitants known for its Victorian architecture and fine antebellum homes spared by Sherman's decision to skirt the town on his march to the coast.

A massive (Romanesque Revival) two story brick building erected in 1895 and fully restored since the time it served as one of the first graded schools in the South contains the Cultural Center including art galleries, a museum, and the theatre. An audience of four hundred enjoys excellent acoustics under the original chandelier ("Bailey's Improved Reflector") in an area with original heart pine floors and wainscoting on walls, balcony, and ceiling in natural finish.

The players were members of the Theatre School of the Alliance Theatre Company, an

institution which bills itself as the leading non-profit resident theatre in the Southeast. The School selects twenty university-trained actors for the Actor Intern Program to receive professional guidance for one or two years. A member of the faculty of the school directed interns in Ah, Wilderness! It might be expected a priori that the single greatest drawback would be the age of the members of the troupe--most in their mid-twenties. This fact reflected upon the depth of their acting experience as well as the ability to appear a generation older than they were. Essie and Nat (Anne Dudenhofer and Allen O'Reilly) overcame these handicaps, even though the father sometimes lacked conviction when angry (with McComber) or attempting to be firm (with Richard). Lily and Sid (Wendy Bennett and Neil Williams) simply did not look their parts, and Williams' attempt to bear himself in a slow, portly fashion created a hunchback. Mildred (Laura Tietjen) was bouncy, pretty, eye arresting--not exactly what O'Neill had in mind.

The audience, of course, saw the work with the eyes of today. Sexism and the double standard fairly leapt from Nat's lines when he admonished Richard for sending "filthy" poems to a decent young girl unable to cope with such things as we males can. Contemporary attitudes support more closely those prevalent during the days of Teddy Roosevelt than O'Neill might have ever expected; the spectator sides with Muriel in her assertion that only a wicked (or stupid) woman (or man) smokes as does Belle. Nat's trepidation before the discussion/confrontation with Dick concerning contraception was archaic and meaningless. And Richard was so perfectly adolescent and fresh faced in his innocence that he represented an imagined ideal without resemblance to anything reflected among young people today.

Particular moments and scenes were especially good--even though they were sometimes not interpreted in a way entirely consistent with the text. Indeed, perhaps for this very reason was McComber so successfully amusing. Clothed in black with a high collar causing him to resemble a clergyman, he constituted a parody of small town morality and outraged priggishness--a far cry from that "old buzzard," "a thin dried-up little man with a head too large for his body perched on a scrawny neck." The characterization of Wint Selby was excellent; and one was struck by the fact that the dialogue, so wrong at this moment ("these dead Janes around here"), came to life most effectively immediately thereafter in the scene at dinner with bluefish and Sid's drunkenness. His confession after the sobering afternoon nap bore a penetrating touch of O'Neill's experience and art. The barroom scene with Belle was most amusing and became even more so as the salesman ingratiated himself into the presence of the two. The conclusion of the work, however, left something to be desired through its failure to mark the distance between generations. The audience was unable to recognize that Richard was trying to imagine his parents as lovers while he looked at them during this moonlit night; lost was a feeling for strangeness, disgust, and then finally "a smile of shy understanding and sympathy" as they reflected themselves in his face.

The play was a great success. All performances were sold out, including the Saturday matinee, and advance ticket sales for the festival throughout the state amounted to three thousand, a figure nearly equal to the population of Madison, Georgia.

--Ward B. Lewis

THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION

I. SOCIETY ACTIVITIES AT MLA '86.

As in the past, the 1986 annual meeting of the Eugene O'Neill Society will be a part of the Modern Language Association convention, whose English sessions will this year be held at the Marriott Marquis in New York City (1535 Broadway, 10036) from 27 to 30 December. The meeting will take place on the morning of Tuesday,

December 30, immediately following the annual meeting of the Society's officers and board of directors, and immediately preceding this year's O'Neill paper session, which will be chaired by Jackson R. Bryer. Here are the details of our triple bill of convention-ending activities which, as theatre historians will surely note, will occur atop the dust of the Morosco Theatre, where O'Neill's first Broadway production (of Beyond the Horizon) had its premiere on February 20, 1920.

8:30-9:45 a.m., Suite 3748, Marriott Marquis:

Closed meeting of the Society's officers and board of directors.

10:15-11:30 a.m., Gotham, Marriott Marquis:

Paper session on "O'Neill: The Composition Process," Professor Bryer presiding.

Titles and speakers:

1. "The Evolution of Bound East for Cardiff: From Conrad's Novel to the Theater on the Wharf," Paul D. Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center, Richland.
2. "The Shifting Shapes of O'Neill's Cycle Plays: A Case Study of The Calms of Capricorn," Martha Bower, University of New Hampshire.
3. "O'Neill's Scenarios: The Beginning of the Journey," Judith E. Barlow, State University of New York, Albany.

Noon - 1:15 p.m., Gotham, Marriott Marquis:

Annual Business Meeting of the Society, President Wilkins presiding.

All Society members, and all who wish to become Society members (new memberships and renewals can be arranged on the spot) are urged to attend the 10:15 meeting and the noon session. Despite the "bitter end" of the Morosco, we plan to conclude the MLA convention with more bang than whimper!

- II. VIRGINIA FLOYD RESIGNS AS TREASURER. For reasons of health and geography (she is moving to Florida), Virginia Floyd has had to announce her resignation as Treasurer of the Society, a position that she has held with distinction and aplomb since the Society's birth. The President has accepted her resignation with deep regret, and will ask the Board, in accordance with the by-laws, to name a successor at its meeting on 30 December. In the interim, Secretary Jordan Y. Miller will assume the organization's fiscal reins. The Society has no more loyal and dedicated member, and the field of O'Neill studies has no more productive scholar, than Virginia. We salute her for her outstanding accomplishments as Treasurer, wish her well in the new home to which she will move later this fall, and know that she will remain as active a member and scholar as she has been in the past. Her new address will be 2536 Longboat Drive, Naples, FL 33942. --FCW.
- III. PAPERS SOUGHT FOR MLA '87. Jordan Y. Miller will chair the O'Neill session at the December 1987 MLA convention in San Francisco. The general subject is "O'Neill and the Orient"--his interest in it, its influence on him, etc.--and Professor Miller hopes to hear very soon from anyone interested in presenting a paper at that session. Send papers, abstracts, prospectuses, inklings, whatever, to him at the Department of English, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881 (tel. 401-792-4660).

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. NEW STYLE, OLD STYLE; or, WHAT THE MLA HATH WROUGHT! The "new documentation system" adopted by the Modern Language Association, fully described in Achert and Gibaldi's MLA Style Manual (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1985), and currently endorsed (and periodically enforced) by the editor of the

Newsletter, is a blessing for the typist and works well for the small, general essay whose few, parenthetical references can be easily located in a short list of "works cited" at the end. Granted, it has entailed much effort during the transitional phase; and when this editor once sighed in public about the work he faced in turning old-style submissions into new-style publications, he was jocosely rebuked (perhaps rightly) by the editor of a fellow journal that had chosen (perhaps wisely) to eschew the new and hold with the old, whose tacit response was "you asked for it!" True, indeed; and the Newsletter will continue to "ask" for the new style whenever possible.

But then along comes an essay, and a fine one (a study of Philip Moeller's direction of Dynamo, by Ronald H. Wainscott, which will appear in the Winter issue), that is not only rigorously old-style but bristles with a total of 97 footnotes that cite, at hasty count, well over 50 sources! What is an editor to do? It is an important essay; it merits publication; but it would take a team of amanuenses a good part of a year to do it over in the new style, and the result would be so pocked with parenthetical interruptions that the concentration of even the most dogged reader would be taxed beyond endurance! Having no such team anyhow, the editor opts for coexistence.

In short, this news item (the last on the subject, I hope) heralds "the return of the vanishing footnote" in the Newsletter. Professor Wainscott's essay will appear as it was written, except that the notes will be clumped together at the end, so the browser can enjoy a leisurely, uncluttered read; the typist can retain her admirable cool; and the researcher need not look far for the source of every quotation and factual tidbit. Everyone, it is hoped, will be happy, and the Newsletter will be able to provide its readers with all kinds of discourse. For the Newsletter, the result of the old style-new style battle is a draw: it will embrace both! --Ed.

2. THE EUGENE O'NEILL THEATER FESTIVAL. (A note by Eugene K. Hanson.)

America's apparent reluctance to own up to her greatest playwright may be one more bit of evidence of the truth of the ancient adage: A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own people. Many an American would, unfortunately, respond to mention of the author with, "Eugene Gladstone Who?" Even the New England town where he spent many a youthful summer remains reluctant to admit his one-time citizenship there. As O'Neill enthusiasts gear up to celebrate the centennial of his birth, one of the primary tasks facing them is making America aware, educating a nation about the life and works of its foremost dramatist.

Three Californians have determined to do their part in this effort, by founding The Eugene O'Neill Theater Festival. Originally conceived as a centennial project, the Festival has grown in concept until it is now envisioned as an ongoing venture that may in future embrace the production of other playwrights, especially new writers, as well.

Slated to begin production this fall, the Festival has actually had its maiden run already, a production of Hughie at the May conference at Suffolk University. The Festival has engaged the Melrose Theatre in Los Angeles for a season that will include A Touch of the Poet, Hughie, and Before Breakfast, to be performed in rotation during October and November. The Melrose is an eighty-seat equity-waiver theatre.

Behind this adventurous undertaking are three persons who have come to a deep respect of O'Neill as artist. Serving as Artistic Director of the Festival is Tom McDermott, a West Coast theatrical director. Actor Stan Weston is the Executive Director, and his wife Judith Johnston Weston is the Executive Producer. In addition to the fall season in Los Angeles, the Festival hopes to bring O'Neill to other locales as funding permits and interest grows.

Stan Weston, who played Erie Smith at the conference in Boston, will repeat the role in Los Angeles. He will also play Con Melody in A Touch of the Poet. Weston, who has acted in New York and San Francisco, received a San Francisco Drama Critic's Circle Nomination for his portrayal of Jim Tyrone in A Moon for the

Misbegotten. Weston's interest in O'Neill was first sparked in his teens, when he saw the film of The Hairy Ape and a stage production of Desire Under the Elms. In college he played Andrew in Beyond the Horizon. He finds acting O'Neill a "searing, passionate, exalting, and exhausting experience."

Tom McDermott, the son of an acting family, has directed award-winning productions in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Recognizing that "we don't honor our artists," he felt the need to honor "such an important figure" with a festival dedicated to him, modeled after the Shaw Festival in Canada. His dreams for the Festival include the possibility of using Los Angeles' extensive park system, as New York City does in its summer festivals, to produce O'Neill in the park.

Rounding out the trio is Judith Johnston Weston, currently Vice President of the Hospital Council of Northern California, in charge of government, community, and media relations. As an amateur actress, she has learned to respect the works of O'Neill, who, she says, "rips us wide open." One of her major concerns as Executive Producer will be fundraising for the Festival.

3. O'NEILL ON BROADWAY: THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT. The fate of O'Neill during last year's Broadway season would suggest that long plays, even great long plays, are destined to have short runs--even, evidently, if they are Dickensian, and even if the director opts for polyphonic abbreviation. Give a play the time it needs to reveal its full resonance, as José Quintero did in his revival of Iceman; or try by brisk delivery and overlapped speeches to hasten the final curtain, as Jonathan Miller did in his production of Long Day's Journey; and you lose the audience, largely because critics seem equally condemnatory of both approaches. Corroboration of these views is provided by Robert Cooperman, who studied both plays with Margaret Ranald in a graduate seminar at Queens College, attended both productions, and sent us the following note last June.

Last month, I had the privilege of seeing the Broadway production of Long Day's Journey Into Night. Despite the less than enthusiastic reviews (from Frank Rich and John Simon, primarily), I enjoyed the production immensely. The critical response that Journey received illustrates the serious predicament that directors of O'Neillian plays must face. That is, how does one compensate for the lengthy playing time that O'Neill requires? If, like Jonathan Miller, you choose to speed up the dialogue in order to resemble speech patterns common to heated discussions, critics will damn you for a lack of reverence to every syllable O'Neill wrote. It is almost as though every word must be clearly heard even at the expense of realism. I don't think that Miller's version lost anything because of the overlapping dialogue. In fact, the general sense of frustration that permeates Long Day's Journey is accentuated by the fact that not any of the Tyrones listen to each other, although they each so desperately want to be heard.

If, on the other hand, you choose to take a more traditional, leisurely pace (à la the recent production of The Iceman Cometh), the same critics will complain that O'Neill must be cut. I believe that cutting would be a criminal act and would certainly show a lack of reverence for O'Neill. I would rather speed up an intact script than unceremoniously cut a play to make up time. If carefully done (Miller really only speeded up the speeches of lesser importance), the play's greatness will remain. I felt that both Long Day's Journey and Iceman were marvelous productions, which goes to prove that O'Neill, if handled correctly, can be a rewarding experience.

4. AFTER ATA, WHAT? Evidently a lot--perhaps more than before. Not only was there a 1986 national conference despite the lamented demise of the American Theatre Association; but its proceedings included a positive and promising discussion about the formation of a new group that will be of particular interest to readers of the Newsletter.

The National Educational Theatre Conference, hosted and sponsored by New York University, was held from 17 to 20 August in New York City. From 2:40 to 4:00 p.m. on the 18th, Paul D. Voelker led the third in his series of annual panel

discussions on the subject, "What Is American About the American Drama?" This year's panelists--Walter Meserve, Vera Mowbray Roberts, Rosemary Bank, and Margaret Wilkerson--addressed Professor Voelker's proposal for the establishment of an American Drama Society.

Expectations are high that such a Society, surely a much needed one, will soon become a reality. Developments will be reported in future issues; but the eager can secure speedier information from Professor Voelker, Rt. 4, Box 258, Richland Center, WI 53581.

5. CENTENNIAL PLANNING SESSION AT MONTE CRISTO COTTAGE. The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center will host a conference in O'Neill's boyhood home on Thursday, October 9. Its purpose is to coordinate east coast plans for the celebration of O'Neill's centennial year, 1987-88. Artistic directors and literary managers of the leading professional theaters in the east will join with the heads of university drama departments and noted O'Neill scholars to discuss the possibilities that the O'Neill centenary may offer to producing organizations, to educational institutions, and (perhaps most importantly) to creative combinations of the two realms. "It is our hope," writes George C. White, President of the O'Neill Center, "that, by working together in an informal way, theaters and universities will coordinate their plans for celebrating the centennial year and, by doing so, will build audiences for each other and increase not only public relations but also public awareness of O'Neill's importance to the history of American theater." For information, call 203-443-5378. The conference will be reported on in the next issue of the Newsletter.
6. O'NEILL AT SCA '86. A panel on "The O'Neill Legacy: Assessment and Assumption," sponsored by the Theatre Division of the Speech Communication Association, will be featured at the 1986 SCA convention at Chicago's Palmer House on November 13-16. (The panel will be held from 4 to 5:20 p.m. on Friday, November 14 in Sandburg Wing 1, 7th floor.) Chaired by Margaret Dunn of Kean College, the panel will have the following speakers and topics:
 - Gerald Ratliff, Montclair State College: "The 'Parabolic' Nature of 'Suffering' in Eugene O'Neill."
 - Paul D. Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center-Richland: "The Rhetoric of Race in O'Neill's Thirst."
 - Dina Wills, Lehigh University: "Mother Through the Eyes of O'Neill and Strindberg."
7. O'NEILL SESSION AT NEMLA '87. "'The Games People Play': Family Relationships in O'Neill" is the subject of the O'Neill session at the 1987 Northeast Modern Language Association Convention to be held in Boston in the first week of April. From the extremely large number of papers and abstracts he received, session chair Frederick Wilkins has selected the following four speakers and titles for the session:
 - Paul D. Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center-Richland: "O'Neill's First Families: Warnings through The Personal Equation."
 - Bette Mandl, Suffolk University: "Family Ties: Landscape and Gender in Desire Under the Elms."
 - Marc Maufort, University of Brussels: "The Legacy of Melville's Pierre: Family Relationships in Mourning Becomes Electra."
 - Stephen A. Black, Simon Fraser University: "The War Among the Tyrones."

Fred wishes there were time enough to include more of the excellent papers he received, apologizes to the authors of excellent papers that had necessarily to be rejected, and hopes to feature a number of their studies in future issues of the Newsletter.

8. RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON O'NEILL--AND EARLIER ITEMS PREVIOUSLY UNNOTED.

Acharya, Shanta. "Beyond the 'New Woman' in O'Neill's Strange Interlude." Triveni: A Journal of the Indian Renaissance, 49:4 (1980). 57-65. (The following abstract, by David W. Atkinson, appeared in the June 1986 issue of Abstracts of English Studies.)

The "new woman," as represented by Nina Leeds in O'Neill's Strange Interlude, finds her own solutions and determines her own fate. Nina's declaration of sexual freedom is a revolt against all restrictions. Her self assertion underlines the central theme that human life has no meaning except for what the individual projects on it.

Alvis, John. "On the American Line: O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra and the Principles of the Founding." Southern Review, 22:1 (Winter 1986), 69-85.

Egri, Peter. Chekhov and O'Neill: The Uses of the Short Story in Chekhov's and O'Neill's Plays. Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1986. 183 pp. ISBN 963-05-3651-X. \$18.00, cloth. Distributed in the U.S. by Humanities Press International, Inc., Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. To be reviewed in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Gelb, Barbara. "How Eugene O'Neill's Father Shaped His Son's Vision." The New York Times, April 27, 1986. Sec. II, pp. 1, 26.

On the occasion of last season's Broadway revival of Long Day's Journey Into Night, Mrs. Gelb surveyed the personal and professional career of the real-life model for the patriarch in that play ("O'Neill's Lear")--James O'Neill, Sr., the playwright's father--emphasizing "how vital an influence the acting career of the father ... was to become on the writing career of the son." Not only does the elder O'Neill appear repeatedly in various guises in the playwright's works (Ephraim Cabot and Cornelius Melody are among those manifestations), but the plots and themes that the dramatist chose, even the length of his plays, all reflect "the aura and flavor of the theater of the late 19th century, James O'Neill's life's blood, that helped shape his son's theatrical genius." "James," Mrs. Gelb notes, "was a man destined to be outshone by his son, but the son--not thankless--chose to immortalize the father" in the role of James Tyrone. --FCW.

Lewis, Ward B. "O'Neill and Hauptmann: A Study in Mutual Admiration." Comparative Literature Studies, 22 (1985), 231-243.

"Love and Admiration and Respect": The O'Neill-Commins Correspondence, ed. Dorothy Commins, with foreword by Travis Bogard. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986. xxi + 248 pp. ISBN: 0-8223-0668-9. \$32.50, cloth. To be reviewed in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Manheim, Michael. "O'Neill's Early Debt to David Belasco." In Theatre History Studies, 6 (1986), available (@ \$6.00) from THS, Theatre Arts Dept., Box 8182, University Station, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND 58202.

Seidel, Margot. Aberglaube bei O'Neill. Frankfurt: Lang, 1984. 155pp.

Scarton Badino, Margareth M. "The Self-Destructiveness of an Idealist: A Study of Mary Tyrone in O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night." Estudos Anglo-Americanos, 5-6 (1981-1982), 118-136.

Sheaffer, Louis. "Eugene O'Neill, Closet Poet." The American Voice, No. 3 (Summer, 1986), 118-128.

A new literary quarterly is always welcome; and when it is as handsomely printed and packaged as The American Voice, edited by Frederick Smock and

published by Sallie Bingham, it merits rejoicing. The fiction, poetry, photographs and essays are of a consistently high order, and the asking price (\$12 per annum, \$3.50 for a single issue) is refreshingly modest. The address for subscribers and contributors is Suite 1215 Heyburn Building, Broadway at Fourth Avenue, Louisville, KY 40202. It is of course Mr. Sheaffer's essay that earns the journal a special welcome in these pages.

I had hoped for a definitive refutation of the still-prevalent attacks on the playwright's abilities as a dramatic stylist, and Mr. Sheaffer does note that the plays "contain passages that attain the intensity and eloquence of verse," and that his "imaginative use of stagecraft" justifies his being called "a poet of the theater" (p. 128). But it is O'Neill's poetry per se that is Mr. Sheaffer's main subject--the verse that he wrote both early and late in his career, that has been masterfully compiled and edited by Donald Gallup in Poems, 1912-1944 (Ticknor & Fields, 1980), and that, had O'Neill's "hopeless hope" been granted, would constitute his supreme claim to renown. Surveying O'Neill's life-long poetic output--from the early sentimental love verse and parodies printed in the New London Telegraph, to the inscriptions to Carlotta and the particularly touching "Fragments" of 1942, Mr. Sheaffer concludes that the Gallup volume "adds nothing to [O'Neill's] literary stature" (p. 123), but that it is nevertheless "significant as autobiography, noteworthy for intimate glimpses of the inner man" (p. 124). Revealing biographical insights abound, naturally; among them, O'Neill's repeated deprecations of his own work. He was his own severest critic, and much of the verse he later rejected as "stuff" and "junk" is unquestionably weak. But Mr. Sheaffer shows that there is gold amid the dross and that O'Neill's "touch of the poet" was sometimes the genuine article. --FCW.

9. KEMP BIOGRAPHY PUBLISHED. Harry Kemp: The Last Bohemian, a critical biography of the poet of the Provincetown dunes, has been published by the Bucknell University Press. (ISBN 0-8387-5086-9.) The author is William Brevda, who teaches English at the University of Mississippi.

10. DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN PROGRESS.

Fletcher, Louis. Eugene O'Neill on the Operatic Stage. New York University, Program in Educational Theatre, 1987. Dir. Lowell S. Swortzell.
Sands, Jeffrey E. Main Currents of Thought in O'Neill Criticism. University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana), 1987. Dir. Burnet Hobgood.

11. RECENT O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS.

Ah, Wilderness!, dir. Janet O'Donnell. East Coast Theater Co., Kennebunk, Lower Village, ME. In repertory, June 19 - Aug. 2, 1986.
Beyond the Horizon, dir. Joe DeGuglielmo. Nucleo Eclettico Theater, Boston, MA. Closed Aug. 2, 1986.
Desire Under the Elms, dir. David Mold. Open Door Theater, Jamaica Plain, MA. August 7 - Sept. 6, 1986.
A Moon for the Misbegotten, dir. Pam Pepper. Pennsylvania Stage Company, Allentown, PA, May 7 - June 8, 1986.
A Touch of the Poet. Detroit (MI) Repertory Theatre, May 15 - June 22, 1986.

12. GELB PLAY IMMINENT. Barbara Gelb's eagerly awaited My Gene is scheduled to begin performances at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York City on January 6. The one-woman play about Carlotta Monterey O'Neill (and her husband) will star Colleen Dewhurst, and will be directed by Andre Ernotte.
13. "EUGENE AND CARLOTTA O'NEILL AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM" is the title and subject of the 1987 wall calendar produced by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation at Tao House. Purchasers of previous Tao House calendars know how beautiful the Foundation's

efforts are; and this year's edition, featuring rare shots of the O'Neills with various dogs, cats, chickens, etc. (Blemie, of course, included), will be as much of a collector's item as its predecessors. And the profits will be used toward the continuing restoration of Tao House--certainly a worthy cause dear to any O'Neillian's heart. This year's price is \$7.50 per calendar, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling--\$3.00 if one is ordering more than two. Checks payable to The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, should be sent to the Foundation at P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526.

14. IN MEMORIAM. The deaths of Norma Millay Ellis at 92 on May 14 and Blanche Sweet at 90 on September 6 saddened the O'Neill community and made still smaller the surviving circle of the playwright's personal and professional associates. Ms. Millay, the widow of painter Charles Ellis and sister of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, was an original member of the Provincetown Players; and Ms. Sweet was praised by O'Neill for her performance of the title role in the 1923 silent film version of Anna Christie, the first stage-to-screen adaptation of an O'Neill play. Viewers of the film Reds will also remember Adele Nathan, the author of children's books, who was one of the "witnesses" enlisted by director Warren Beatty. Ms. Nathan, who had met O'Neill in Provincetown near the start of his career and subsequently produced one of his plays, died on July 24 at the age of 86.
15. O'NEILL? (A note from Louis Sheaffer.)

Some time ago the Washburn Gallery on East 57th Street in New York phoned me about a certain painting in its show at the time of early works by Stuart Davis, after a few persons maintained that it was a portrait of Eugene O'Neill. The gallery thought that I could validate the subject of the oil.

As soon as I entered the gallery I found the likeness so striking--piercing dark eyes, high forehead, an expression almost Van Gogh-like in its intensity--that I was instantly ready to swear that it could only be O'Neill. Till I noticed that it was dated 1914, at least a year before the artist and the fledgling playwright could ever have met. O'Neill did not start hanging around Greenwich Village till fall 1915, and he first turned up in Provincetown in the summer of 1916.

The one who probably sat for the portrait was artist Charles Demuth, who resembled O'Neill in having a long lean face and a moustache, but the strong, brooding expression came from the artist, not his model, for Davis was at the time under Van Gogh's influence. He and Demuth became friends in Provincetown in 1914. Years later Charles Demuth and, to a lesser extent, his friend Marsden Hartley would sit as the chief models for Charles Marsden in O'Neill's Strange Interlude.

Now owned by a private collector, the Davis portrait, which is currently part of a touring exhibition, bears the cautious legend: "Stuart Davis, Portrait of a Man (Eugene O'Neill?), 1914, oil on canvas."



PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

STEVEN F. BLOOM, Assistant Professor of English at Emmanuel College and assistant director of the 1984 and 1986 O'Neill conferences in Boston, has published a number of essays on the playwright. His "Empty Bottles, Empty Dreams: O'Neill's Use of Drinking and Alcoholism in Long Day's Journey Into Night" appeared in Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill, ed. James J. Martine (G.K. Hall, 1984).

MARTHA BOWER, Instructor of English at the University of New Hampshire, delivered two papers on O'Neill's Cycle plays in 1986--at the NEMLA Convention in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and at the O'Neill conference in Boston--and will serve as Secretary of the O'Neill session at the 1987 NEMLA Convention in Boston next April. She is editing the complete script of More Stately Mansions for publication by Yale University Press.

PRESTON FAMBROUGH is Associate Professor of English at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas. His interests are the nineteenth-century novel and twentieth-century drama, and his recent scholarship includes "The Ironies of Flaubert's Free Indirect Discourse," to be published next year in the West Virginia University Philological Papers, and "Hubris and Bestiality: A Tragic Archetype," which appeared this summer in Neohelicon.

WINIFRED L. FRAZER, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Florida and former President of the Eugene O'Neill Society, is the author of numerous articles and monographs on O'Neill. Her Mabel Dodge Luhan was published by Twayne in 1984.

EUGENE K. HANSON is Professor of English at the College of the Desert, a member of the board of directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society, and a regular reviewer of O'Neill productions for the Newsletter. His weekly column on drama appears in The Desert Sun (Palm Springs, CA).

WARD B. LEWIS, Professor of German at the University of Georgia, is the author of Eugene O'Neill: The German Reception of America's First Dramatist (Peter Lang, 1984), a subject that he spoke on at the 1984 and 1986 O'Neill conferences in Boston.

EUGENE O'NEILL, FROM THE STREET

Quite by accident, my wife and I found ourselves in front of the Broadhurst Theatre one balmy morning last July in New York City, as we were casually making our way over to Madison Avenue, on foot, from the Garment District. Several stories above our heads loomed a simple blue billboard with white lettering advertising the Jonathan Miller-directed production of Long Day's Journey, which was running below at the theatre. The positioning of the board especially struck me, curiously balanced as it was on a sharp corner of the building. And there were the words, too, "Long Day's Journey Into Night" written almost across the sky.

Just a block or so away from the Broadhurst, we made another accidental discovery amidst all the footfalls, celebrity sandwiches* and unwatchable movies of Times Square: the bronze plaque marking the site of O'Neill's birthplace. It is difficult to imagine anyone being born on or near the corner of 43rd and Broadway, whether the year of birth be 1888 or 1986. But there the plaque rests on a wall, a small reminder as to what is possible in our world.

*E.g., "The Merv Griffin."

--Marshall Brooks



The Broadhurst Theatre, W. 44th St., New York.



O'Neill's birthplace plaque, near W. 43rd and Broadway.