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Roland Schäfer as Yank in the Schaubühne production of _The Hairy Ape_, reviewed in this issue. Photo by Ruth Walz.
EDITOR’S FOREWORD

By the time this issue reaches subscribers, the semi-officially designated O'Neill centennial year (October 16, 1987 - October 16, 1988) will have begun, and the "countdown to centennial" and news sections herein offer abundant evidence that the event will definitely not pass unnoticed. Conferences in Belgium, Sweden and China are scheduled for the period from mid-May to early June of 1988; and a fourth, in Tokyo, is being planned by Yoshiteru Kurokawa. (Details of the Japanese conference will be announced as soon as they are formulated.) While the Hartford Stage Company can hardly be faulted for claiming that its imminent production of A Moon for the Misbegotten will "celebrate the centennial of Connecticut playwright Eugene O'Neill," the international interest in the dramatist would suggest that he can rightly be considered a "citizen of the world"! Note, for instance, the title of the O'Neill session at this year's MLA Convention in San Francisco on Tuesday, December 29: "Eugene O'Neill and the Orient." That session, directed by O'Neill Society Secretary-Treasurer Jordan Miller, will be held at Noon in the Tamalpais Room of the San Francisco Hilton. (See this issue's Society section for details of the other Society events at MLA: meetings of the Board and membership later on the 29th, and a special trip to nearby Tao House at midday on the 28th.) America, too, of course, is well represented in the roster of centenary salutes--productions, publications, and a public television triptych: a heady blend of activities that will atone somewhat for the disregard O'Neill suffered in his homeland during his last decade and a half. And Connecticut deserves special praise, considering the Collaborations III project co-sponsored by Connecticut College in New London and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford. (See the "countdown" section in this issue.) The Newsletter is eager to publicize and laud all other such projects, big or small, and urges planners to report their projects as soon as possible.

Precentennial activities are becoming so many that the editor is finding it increasingly difficult to keep tabs on them all. In addition, spatial limitations prevent the inclusion in this issue of a number of book and performance reviews that were promised in the last issue. Apologies, therefore, to reviewers and readers; the promises will be kept in the next issue, which I hope will be in the mail by Christmas. (Note that that is not a promise. I'm learning to be prudent and wary!)

Rather than reiterate any more of what is already available elsewhere, I'd like to offer some words of advice to those who wish to contribute articles and reviews to future issues. The bulk of the present issue comprises papers that were previously delivered at conferences, but we are particularly eager to receive scholarship that has not appeared before in any forum. And publication will be likelier and speedier if a submission is well written, employs the new MLA documentation style (parenthetical references, referring to a concluding list of "works cited," rather than footnotes), and is accompanied by information about the author that can be used in compiling the "persons represented" section when the article appears. A number of submissions are still awaiting the time needed for editorial overhaul or later biographical data. I regret the delay, and urge future contributors to shorten it by checking this and previous issues and utilizing the format that has become standard. Granted, multiple formats have been accepted, and they will continue to be accepted. But uniformity is still an editorial dream hereabouts!

Another dream, though perhaps just as hopeless a hope, is for the Newsletter to become a true and complete clearing house for information about all O'Neill-related activities around the world. That's a rather grandiose ambition for a one-person operation; but it can at least approach realization if every reader remembers to report to the editor everything that he or she sees, hears and attends. Don't just attend productions of O'Neill's plays; review them, and request photographs that can accompany the reviews. (You're likely to be admitted gratis if you announce your critical intent.) Don't just send a reprint of your essays that have been published elsewhere; I certainly welcome same, but seldom have the time to abstract them all. Your own abstract will not only ease my burden; it will assure you fair and accurate representation. Remember that the Newsletter is your "letter to the world"--at least to seventeen of its countries. And the world is looking forward to your next missive! As am I.
O'Neill's biographers have often pointed out his early interest in Kipling. He is said to have called one of his classmates "Mowgli" after the hero of the Jungle Books, and there are references to Kipling's works in some of the plays themselves. Further, O'Neill once confessed that his early poems were imitative of Kipling's. But he said nothing about the influence of Kipling's stories on his plays; and since critics have perpetuated the playwright's silence, the influence has never been explored. A good starting point for such an exploration would be the Jungle Books, which O'Neill read with great zest in his teens.

The Jungle Books tell the story of Mowgli, an Indian boy, who grows up in the jungle sheltered by Father Wolf and Mother Wolf. The O'Neill play with perhaps the most in common with the Kipling story is The Hairy Ape. The protagonists of both works confront a comparable identity crisis. Each has a false sense of belonging which is shaken at a critical moment. Mowgli believes that he is as much a part of the jungle as any other animal; but he loses this sense of harmony when the wolf brothers disown him in the presence of the man-eating tiger Shere Khan. O'Neill's Yank is under a similar initial delusion that he is steel, and part of the ship's mechanism. He is sure that he "belongs" until Mildred Douglas appears in the stokehole and, watching his savage gestures, calls him a "filthy beast" with swooning aversion.

Both Mowgli and Yank make desperate attempts to regain their lost sense of belonging. Mowgli lives for a brief spell in a village as an adopted child. But the village also rejects him, for he is often found conversing with animals. When some men chase and attempt to kill him, he is compelled to return to the jungle. His search for his true home is thus an unending odyssey, and he finds the conflict between his natural human impulses and his acquired animal traits too hard to resolve. In O'Neill's play, Yank is impatient to prove to himself that he is not just a "filthy beast" but someone with a social identity and strength. But he is rejected or put to shame by all the groups with which he tries to establish rapport. His shipmates make fun of his haggard appearance: fellow prisoners ignore him as "one off his nut" (Plays III, 241); and the members of the I.W.W. suspect him of being "a spy, [a] rotten agent provocator" (Plays III, 249). Disowned and disgraced by human society, Yank tries to go back to the state of Paleolithic man, who lived in harmony with animals in forests. He extends his hand to the gorilla in the zoo in a gesture of friendship. But the gorilla, too, fails him: it crushes him to death.

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2 Gelbs, p. 67.


5 There are two books which are together called The Jungle Books. The present study is based on the following editions. Rudyard Kipling, The Jungle Book (1894; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1964), and The Second Jungle Book (1895; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1971). Hereafter these will be cited parenthetically as JB.I and JB.II respectively.
Mowgli and Yank retaliate against those who insult or ill-treat them. When his wolf-brothers desert him and become intimate with the tiger Shere Khan, Mowgli brings fire in a pot ("the red flower," as the panther Bagheera calls it) and, blowing air into it, frightens them. Later, he lures Shere Khan into a gully and has him trampled to death. When the villagers prepare to kill the couple who had adopted him, Mowgli lets all his animal companions into the village. Whereas Mowgli thus succeeds in his revenge, O'Neill's Yank doesn't. His plans fall through, no one comes to his aid, and with a vengeance he lets himself be crushed by the gorilla.

There are some nearly identical scenes in the _Jungle Books_ and _The Hairy Ape_. Towards the end of _The Second Jungle Book_, a girl confronts Mowgli and the Gray Brothers as they stray very close to the village (JB.II, 183):

>a girl in white cloth came down some path that led from the outskirts of the village. Gray Brother dropped out of sight at once and Mowgli backed noiselessly into a field of high-springing crops. He could almost have touched her with his hand when the warm, green stalks closed before his face and he disappeared like a ghost. The girl screamed, for she thought she had seen a spirit and then she gave a deep sigh.

Mildred in _The Hairy Ape_ is also dressed in white when she descends into the ship's stokehole. Her fainting at the sight of Yank dyed in coal is like the village girl's scream as she confronts Mowgli and the Gray Brother.

In the first _Jungle Book_, some gray apes befriend Mowgli and take him to a desolate, ruined city. They relax in circles in the hall of the King's Council Chamber and comment on the follies of other animals. Their slogan is, "we are great; we are free; we are wonderful" (JB.I, 48). Though this scene has no specific parallel in _The Hairy Ape_, it nevertheless foreshadows the general temper of the play. Most of the scenes in _The Hairy Ape_ present social groups, like the ship's crew, the inmates of the Blackwells Island prison, and the members of the I.W.W. collective; and almost every group indulges in a kind of loose talk and criticism like the monkeys in the Kipling story. Whereas Kipling's gray apes claim to be superior to other animals, O'Neill's men have descended to the level of apes.

There is an abundance of animal imagery in _The Hairy Ape_, which underscores the idea that machine-fettered man has made an ape of himself; and a good deal of the imagery is foreshadowed in the _Jungle Books_. The play's title obviously recalls "the gray apes," the class name by which the monkeys are known in the jungle. In Scene II, when Mildred's aunt advises her to be as artificial as a sophisticated New York-bred girl of her background usually is, Mildred agrees with her aunt and says:

>When a leopard complains of its spots, it must sound rather grotesque. (In a mocking tone) Purr, little leopard. Purr, scratch, tear, kill, gorge yourself and be happy—only stay in the jungle where your spots are camouflage. In a cage they make you conspicuous. (Plays III, 220)

Mildred's analogy has something of the song of the bear Baloo in it:

>His spots are the joy of the Leopard: his horns are the Buffalo's pride; Be clean for the strength of the hunter is known by the gloss of his hide. (JB.I, 31)

In the first conception of the play O'Neill had planned a different ending. Yank returns to his ship without his original faith but unable to find a place where he belongs better. (See Gelbs, p. 489.) This is closer to the ending of the _Jungle Books_.

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6 In the first conception of the play O'Neill had planned a different ending. Yank returns to his ship without his original faith but unable to find a place where he belongs better. (See Gelbs, p. 489.) This is closer to the ending of the _Jungle Books_.
One is further reminded here of another Kipling story, "How the Leopard Got His Spots." 7

Commenting on his play, O'Neill once said that "it was a symbol of man, who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal...." Kipling's jungle, perhaps not coincidentally, is just such a place of felt harmony. There are laws in the jungle which Mowgli learns from Baloo: such laws of nature as "Strike first and then give tongue" (JB.I, 22), and "Oppress not the cubs of the stranger" (JB.I, 31). Mowgli also enjoys this harmony with nature for a short period. But man has lost his right to live with the birds and beasts of the jungle. He has betrayed the jungle and created his own laws. Mowgli is therefore treated with a difference as he grows up, and he feels alienated from his own wolf brothers. Such is Yank's tragedy too: the gorilla cannot accept him.

O'Neill's ship is like a zoo inhabited by hairy apes. Conversely, Kipling's jungle is like a disciplined society, a place of law and order. It is this ironic reversal of the two works' respective backgrounds that lends some identical qualities to Mowgli and Yank, who are otherwise very different from each other.

The Jungle Books-Hairy Ape parallelism cannot be stretched beyond a point: Kipling's is a simple but thought-provoking fable, while O'Neill's is an innovative play that employs a number of sophisticated techniques of presentation. Further, Kipling's story does not end on a dismal note: Mowgli realizes that in village as well as jungle there are some who love him deeply, and his eventual problem is only that of making a choice. The Hairy Ape, on the other hand, is a play of terrible despair, of futile struggle: Yank's quest for identity ends in a virtual suicide. And the Jungle Books have apparently nothing to do with the age of technology, whereas the O'Neill play is essentially about the predicament of man in the machine age. Kipling, too, however, wrote a great deal about steamships, machines and the like; and some of his poems anticipate Yank's glorification of steel and the ship's engine:

"Oh where are you going to, all you Big Steamers,
With England's own coal, up and down the salt seas?" 9
"We are going to fetch you your bread and your butter,
Your beef, pork, and mutton, eggs, apples, and cheese." 10
(from "Big Steamers")

And now, if you will set us to our task,
We will serve you four and twenty hours a day!
We can pull and haul and push and lift and drive,
We can print and plough and weave and heat and light,
We can run and race and swim and fly and dive,
We can see and hear and count and read and write! 10
(from "The Secret of the Machines")
For Iron--Cold Iron--is master of men all. 11
(from "Cold Iron")

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8 Clark, p. 84.
10 Ibid., p. 729.
11 Ibid., p. 508.
Another O'Neill play that bears a fractional resemblance to the *Jungle Books* is *The Emperor Jones*. Apart from the shared jungle background, there is one situation in the Kipling story that is paralleled in the play. The villagers, including the priest, fear that Mowgli's presence in their midst is dangerous; and some of them, headed by the experienced hunter Buldeo, chase him. Buldeo shoots at Mowgli, but his usually unerring pistol misfires and the deflected bullet kills Buldeo's own buffalo. Mowgli is thereby suspected of being a sorcerer who can divert the paths of bullets. In the play, Brutus Jones recalls to Smithers how he became the Emperor of the island by his intelligence. During the "revolution" a sharpshooter hired by the leader, Lem, had aimed a shot at Jones when standing just ten feet away from him. The pistol misfired, Jones shot back and killed the hired gunman, and made the surprised islanders believe that he was impervious to all but silver bullets—a "big lie" that brought him to the throne itself.

O'Neill once recalled that the idea of the silver bullet came to him from an old circus man's story about President Sam of Haiti. When a revolution had broken out, Sam had boasted that it would take a silver bullet to kill him. One need not challenge O'Neill's account of his source to suggest that the Kipling story may also have been in his mind when he wrote *The Emperor Jones*: two sources can be complementary to each other.

These instances of parallelism between the *Jungle Books* and O'Neill's plays, together with the evidence of the playwright's early acquaintance with the older story, do not fully confirm Kipling's influence on O'Neill. Even if the influence can be suspected, its nature cannot be inferred from a few identical situations and images. Influence is a subtle process. A creative writer is simultaneously exposed to a number of works, whose scenes and details often get intermingled, fused or transformed in his mind. And this is what appears to have happened in O'Neill's case. It is therefore rather pointless to consider Kipling's influence in isolation.

O'Neill read Jack London, Conrad and Kipling around the same period—roughly from 1897 to 1908. These three writers have a lot in common: the sea and the jungle loom large as backgrounds in a number of their stories, and civilized man's regression to a primitive mode of living under compelling circumstances is a recurrent and shared theme. Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Amy Foster, and Kipling's *Jungle Books* have to be considered together in tracing the influences on *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape*. Critics have mentioned all of these works except the *Jungle Books* in relation to O'Neill's plays. In London's *Call of the Wild*, the affectionate, refined dog Buck reverts to savagery as a result of its confrontation with cruel men. The theme forms an interesting parallel to the regression of the protagonists in the two plays. Similarly, some of the scenes that Marlow encounters in the course of his voyage to the heart of the African jungle in Conrad's story foreshadow Brutus Jones's nightmares. And the ill-treatment that Yanko suffers in *Amy Foster*, following his survival of a shipwreck and arrival in a Kentish village, anticipates the humiliation that O'Neill's Yank is subjected to at every turn in life after his confrontation with Mildred. The scenes and characters in these stories probably got interfused in O'Neill's mind with memories of his own experiences in the forests of Honduras and aboard a number of ships. This collective influence seems patently manifested in *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape*. O'Neill himself once pointed out that the two plays were simultaneously conceived in an imaginative sequence, as if one were the "direct descendant" of the

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12 Gelbs, pp. 438-439.
13 Clark, p. 14; Gelbs, pp. 79-80.
Further, he denied the charge that in both plays he drew heavily upon the works of the German Expressionists Kaiser and Toller. One feels inclined to believe O'Neill's denial in the light of the collective influence of London, Conrad and Kipling. A writer of his creative potential could have drawn his inspiration from the trio's stories without any exposure to German Expressionism.

It is strange, however, that a dramatist should be influenced by short stories rather than plays. Here it is worth remembering that one of the requirements in George Pierce Baker's playwriting course at Harvard, which O'Neill took for one year, was the adaptation for the stage of a chosen short story. O'Neill seems to have become fond of this method, for he wrote down the themes of some of his plays--including *The Hairy Ape*--first as short stories. Though he did not think very highly of Baker's course, it did act as a link between fiction and drama, between the genre O'Neill enjoyed reading in his youth and the genre on which he was to devote his own creative energies.

--R. Viswanathan

15 Clark, p. 83. See also Bogard, p. 244.
16 Sheaffer, *Son and Artist*, p. 76. See also Bogard, p. 244.
17 Gelbs, p. 270.
18 Gelbs, p. 488.

**PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE**

**STEPHEN A. BLACK**, Professor of English at Simon Fraser University, spoke on "O'Neill in Mourning" at the 1986 O'Neill conference at Suffolk University in Boston. His studies of O'Neill have appeared in *American Literature*, the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, and numerous other journals.


**ALBERT E. KALSON**, Associate Professor of English at Purdue University, reviewed London productions of *Strange Interlude* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in the Spring 1984 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 30-32), and reprised his varying reactions to the two plays in the Winter 1984 issue (pp. 24-26).


**MARC MAUFORT**, whose doctoral dissertation at the University of Brussels was on the Melville-O'Neill connection, is a frequent writer and speaker on O'Neill. He is organizing and directing the conference on "Eugene O'Neill and the Emergence of American Drama," sponsored by the Belgian Luxembourg American Studies Association, that will be held in Han-sur-Lesse, Belgium from 20 to 22 May 1988. For information, contact Mrs. G. Lercangée, Secretary, B.L.A.S.A., Center for American Studies, Bld de l'Empereur, 4, Reizerslaan, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

**R. VISWANATHAN** is Lecturer in English at Calicut University in Kerala, India, where he earned a doctorate with a dissertation on "O'Neill and the Sea." He is the author of a number of articles on American literature, especially O'Neill, in Indian and U.S. journals. His "The Ship Scene in The Emperor Jones" appeared in the Winter 1980 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 3-5).

**PAUL D. VOELKER**, Professor of English and Drama at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland, is President of the newly established American Drama Society. A member of the Board of Directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society, Professor Voelker is serving as Society liaison for O'Neill centennial activities.
A PLANK IN FAULKNER’S "LUMBER ROOM": THE EMPEROR JONES AND LIGHT IN AUGUST*

In his University of Virginia interviews, William Faulkner responded to a variety of questions about the sources of and influences upon his works. When asked about the correspondence of Joe Christmas to Oedipus, Faulkner replied,

That's another matter of the writer reaching into the lumber room of his memory for whatever he needs to create the character or the situation, and the similarity is there but not by deliberate intent. It was coincidence—not accident but by coincidence. (72)

To another question about Joe Christmas as a Christ figure, Faulkner repeated his "lumber room" metaphor:

That's a matter of reaching into the lumber room to get something which seems to the writer the most effective way to tell what he is trying to tell. And comes back to the notion that there are so few plots to use that sooner or later any writer is going to use something that has been used. (117)

In Faulkner’s "lumber room" of building materials lay the plays of Eugene O'Neill, whose works he admired and praised in the early 1920’s. While writing short essays for The Mississippian at the University of Mississippi, Faulkner published two pieces on the current state of American drama, one of which, “American Drama: Eugene O’Neill,” evaluated O'Neill’s early achievements. He noted several relationships between O'Neill’s early sea plays and the works of Joseph Conrad and commented on the influence which one writer may have upon another: “It is not especially difficult—after a man has written and passed on—to trace the threads which were drawn together by him and put on paper in the form of his own work.” (86–87)

The threads of O'Neill’s works in Faulkner have rarely been examined, despite his open admission of familiarity with a number of them. In the O’Neill essay, Faulkner demonstrates his knowledge of the sea plays. The Emperor Jones, The Straw, Anna Christie, Gold, and Diff'rent. His intimate acquaintance with The Emperor Jones is revealed in his slightly misquoting the opening line of Brutus Jones: "Who dat dare whistle in the Emperor's palace?" (88) Faulkner also reveals his insight into the character of Jones and his understanding of the fundamental problem which made him "rise up and swagger in his egoism and cruelty, and die at last through his hereditary fears" (88).

In 1980, Judith Bryant Wittenberg, in a substantial but speculative essay, "Faulkner and Eugene O'Neill," addressed the novelist's indebtedness to the dramatist. She established clearly that Faulkner was aware of O'Neill's plays, evidenced in the short essays to which I previously referred, and in his library, which included O'Neill texts. She calculated that by the beginning of the 1930's, when Faulkner was writing his greatest works, he was probably familiar with at least twenty O'Neill plays. She noted similarities in stream-of-consciousness technique between Strange Interlude and The Sound and the Fury and parallels in the representation of families in Mourning Becomes Electra and Absalom, Absalom! (In both instances, the O'Neill play preceded Faulkner's novel in creation and in print.) She further called attention to possible personal relationships between the two authors—they travelled through the same circles in New York; shared the same editor, Saxe Commins, and the same publishers, Boni and Liveright and Random House. "Thus," she concludes, "Faulkner's life, both personal and professional, gave him access to the work and ideas of the playwright" (329).

Ben Wasson, in his "flashbacks" as he called them, provides further evidence that Faulkner knew O'Neill's work. He recounts a meeting between Faulkner and Norman Bel Geddes in which the latter brought forth the masks he had designed for a production of Dante's Inferno. As Faulkner fingered the masks, he remarked, "O'Neill had the right idea in The Great God Brown.... Those masks he used for his characters made a small play into a big one" (113).

We cannot know how carefully Faulkner read the O'Neill texts, but his early essay affirms close familiarity with The Emperor Jones, and I suggest that that play became a significant plank in his lumber room of building materials—that its "threads," to use his other metaphor, can be traced in several works. Though I shall limit my discussion in this essay primarily to one of Faulkner's novels, I must at least note three other short works which echo The Emperor Jones, especially in the ritualistic flight and pursuit of the Negro by those who would destroy him.

In "Sunset," one of Faulkner's New Orleans Sketches, a Negro, escaping from the plantation, tries to return to his native Africa; but through his racial innocence and ignorance in his flight, he is destroyed in New Orleans, believing in his superstitious fear that he is in the jungle and is threatened by wild animals and savages. At one point in this story, the Negro even counts the bullets that he has left to protect himself from hostile forces. "Red Leaves," an Indian/Negro parody of White/Negro relationships in the South, presents the flight of a Negro slave to avoid the ritualistic destiny which the Indians have planned for him—that of being buried alive with his master. This story is fully equipped with echoes of O'Neill, including the beating of drums while the Negro attempts escape. "Dry September" offers a third thematic parallel. In this story, a white mob pursues and kills the Negro, Will Mayes, for his alleged violation of an eccentric and paranoid white woman. Will Mayes is given no opportunity to flee; his pursuers destroy him ritualistically as a scapegoat example to other "niggers" in the community.

It is in Light in August, however, that O'Neill's contributions to Faulkner's lumber room reached their greatest maturity.

In O'Neill's extravagantly innovative play, Brutus Jones, a murderer and ex-convict, has taken refuge on an island populated by primitive and superstitious savages. A stranger and foreigner among them, he has invaded their community and preyed upon their superstitions, making them believe he is a god who can be destroyed only by a silver bullet. He has hoarded their priceless possessions, knowing that they will one day rise up and revolt. When the moment of rebellion arrives, Jones enters the forest and undertakes a flight during which hallucinatory scenes represent not only episodes from his own past life but also a symbolic regression through racial memory to his primal origins in Africa. In his frenzied attempt at escape, Jones loses his way in the forest and runs, full-circle, back to his point of origin to die by the silver bullets which the natives have fashioned to destroy him.

The flight of Brutus Jones in the forest, his return through racial memory, the nature
of his pursuers, the determination of Lem and his "soldiers": all evoke suggestive parallels to the Joe Christmas story in Light in August and highlight several comments which Faulkner would later make about Joe's fundamental problem.

We first see Joe Christmas through the eyes of Byron Bunch, who labels him "a stranger" (27) whose co-workers "just thought that he was a foreigner" (29). Byron's impression of Joe is tellingly descriptive:

He looked like a tramp, yet not like a tramp either. His shoes were dusty and his trousers were soiled too. But they were decent serge, sharply creased, and his shirt was soiled but it was a white shirt, and he wore a tie and stiff-brim hat that was quite new, cocked at an angle arrogant and baleful above his still face. He did not look like a professional hobo in his professional rags, but there was something definitely rootless about him; ... he carried his knowledge with him always as though it were a banner, with a quality ruthless, lonely, almost proud ... with his dark, insufferable face and his whole air of cold and quiet contempt. (27-28)

Joe's attire and appearance are totally inappropriate for work in a sawmill and incongruous in the context of his co-workers.

Compare this description of Joe on his first appearance with the introduction of Brutus Jones:

There is something decidedly distinctive about his face--an underlying strength of will, a hardy, self-reliant confidence in himself that inspires respect. His eyes are alive with a keen, cunning intelligence. In manner he is shrewd, suspicious, evasive. He wears a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs, etc. His pants are bright red with a light blue stripe down the side. Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs, and a belt with a long-barreled, pearl-handled revolver in a holster complete his make up. (5-6)

Immediately follows his first line, misquoted by Faulkner: "Who dare whistle dat way in my palace?"

Is it mere coincidence that, on their initial appearances, each's strange and incongruous costume is detailed; each's face is described as revealing arrogance and self-assurance; each's manner, which exposes his separation through loneliness or evasiveness, is commented upon; and each's self-pride is noted?

Joe appears in his own person in the fifth chapter of the novel, where we learn that Joe carries a razor in his pocket and that some mysterious "it" may already have happened or a "something is going to happen" (103). From Chapters 6 through 12, Faulkner employs a narrative technique as daringly innovative as O'Neil'ls in The Emperor Jones--both authors reconstruct the lives of their protagonists through memory: "Memory believes before knowing remembers," as Faulkner phrases it (104).

Brutus Jones enters the forest in his flight and undertakes a journey which is regressive. His memories take him back through scenes from his life--his killing of Jeff with a razor in a crap game, his killing of a prison guard with a shovel, his sale on the block during the slavery period, his galley slave days, his primitive origins in Africa in which he was to be the sacrificial scapegoat of the witch doctor. All of these memories are directly related to his racial identity and the consequences of his black blood.

Joe's memories are historically progressive, and his flight in life is marked by his confused racial identity. Faulkner suspends the ongoing action of the novel for Joe to remember and reconstruct his life in the orphanage, his childhood confusion about the
dietician, his experience with the McEacherns, his confused sexual relationships, his entrance into Mississippi, his relationship with Joanna Burden—all of which are marked by the uncertainty of his white or black blood and all of which lead to the "something" that "is going to happen" to him—the killing of Joanna.

Brutus Jones enters a haunted forest in his flight. Joe Christmas enters the endless "street," just as haunted with racial phantoms which will torment him to the end of his life:

He entered the street which was to run for fifteen years.... From that night the thousand streets ran as one street, with imperceptible corners and changes of scene, broken by intervals of begged and stolen rides, on trains and trucks, and on country wagons.... It was fifteen years long.... He thought it was loneliness which he was trying to escape and not himself. But the street ran on.... One afternoon the street had become a Mississippi country road (195-197).

Both structurally and thematically, Faulkner has presented Joe's life based upon a circle image as he remembers his life and approaches his destiny. Like Brutus Jones, he has travelled "full-circle" and is trapped within that circularity:

He is entering it again, the street which ran for thirty years. It had been a paved street, where going should be fast. It had made a circle and he is still inside it. Though during the last seven days he has had no paved street, yet he has travelled farther than in all the thirty years before. And yet he is still inside the circle. "And yet I have been farther in these seven days than in all the thirty years," he thinks. "But I have never got outside that circle. I have never broken out of what I have already done and cannot ever undo," he thinks quietly (296).

After he has killed Joanna Burden, Joe's circular routs brings him to Mottstown, where he is captured and remeets Hines, his grandfather, whom he has not seen in thirty years. Joe does not know that Hines is his blood-relative—the man who let his daughter die in childbirth, who placed Joe in the orphanage, who janitoried in the orphanage to watch Joe, who spread the first rumors that Joe had Negro blood. Hines strikes at Joe with a stick and must be restrained as he cries out, "Kill the bastard!" (302), recalling Joe's biological origin. Joe's undefined racial identity, which has haunted him from birth, is redefined by one local citizen who labels him, "Christmas! That white nigger that did the killing in Jefferson" (302). In his flight through life, Joe has, indeed, come full-circle. And his destiny lies in the hands of Percy Grimm, the imperturbable and determined avenger in the White/Negro ritual of the modern South.

Percy Grimm bears several resemblances to Lem in The Emperor Jones. Both are implacable in their assurance that justice will be done. Legalities notwithstanding, Grimm fulfills his fantasies of military leadership by insisting that his white supporters first arm themselves with guns, then appear in uniform. He organizes his "soldiers" in his own and their patient vigil. Lem believes that the inevitable will happen—"We cotch him"—and there is as much inevitability and determinism in Grimm's involvement with Joe Christmas. Grimm is like a pawn in a game of chess, waiting for "the Player" to move him.

When Joe escapes from jail and runs to Hightower's house, Grimm moves with determination and joy in pursuit. He enters Hightower's house, and Faulkner writes,

It was as though he had been merely waiting for the Player to move him again, because with that unfailing certitude he ran straight to the kitchen and into the doorway, already firing, almost before he could have seen the table overturned and standing on its edge across the corner of the room, and the bright glittering hands upon the upper edge. Grimm emptied the automatic's magazine into the table.... But the Player was not done yet. (406)
Grimm is to be moved yet once more, when, with a butcher knife, he castrates Joe and pronounces ritualistically, "Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell" (407). Joe has become the sacrificial scapegoat of racial superstition and fear. And his death involves the same inevitability as does that of Brutus Jones.

In *Light in August*, Faulkner allows Gavin Stevens a eulogistic statement about Joe's flight and his racial confusion:

> But there was too much running with him, stride for stride with him. Not pursuers: but himself: years, acts, deeds omitted and committed, keeping pace with him, stride for stride, breath for breath, thud for thud of the heart, using a single heart. (393)

Assuming Joe's black blood, Stevens explains Joe's destiny:

> It was the black blood which swept him by his own desire beyond the aid of any man, swept him up into that ecstasy out of a black jungle where life has already ceased before the heart stops and death is desire and fulfillment. (393)

At Virginia, Faulkner, commenting on Joe's quest for racial identity, noted that Joe didn't know what he was. He knew that he would never know what he was, and his only salvation in order to live with himself was to repudiate mankind, to live outside the human race. And he tried to do that but nobody would let him, the human race itself wouldn't let him. And I don't think he was bad, I think he was tragic. And his tragedy was that he didn't know what he was and would never know, and that to me is the most tragic condition that an individual can have--to not know what he was. (118)

Do not the fictional pronouncement of Gavin Stevens and Faulkner's statement about Joe's confused racial identity echo Faulkner's analysis, in his O'Neill essay, of Brutus Jones?--of the conditions "that made [him] rise up and swagger in his egoism and cruelty, and die at last from his own hereditary fears"? Both protagonists have isolated themselves and have been isolated primarily because of their racial identity, or lack thereof. And both must be sacrificed--Brutus, because of his tyranny; Joe, because he killed a white woman.

Certainly, there are many differences between the works of Eugene O'Neill and William Faulkner, between *The Emperor Jones* and *Light in August*. But let me recall what Faulkner said in his O'Neill essay: "It is not especially difficult--after a man has written and passed on--to trace the threads which were drawn together by him and put on paper in the form of his own work." Without Faulkner here to defend or refute his indebtedness to O'Neill, I have tried to note a few threads of possible influence of one literary giant upon another, of one major work upon another. Is Joe Christmas Oedipus? Christ? Brutus Jones? The answers lie in William Faulkner's lumber room.

--Donald P. Duclos

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**O’NEILL’S FIRST FAMILIES: WARNINGS THROUGH THE PERSONAL EQUATION**

In his widely-regarded book _Family, Drama, and American Dreams_, Tom Scanlan argues that "From first plays to last, O'Neill made the domestic situation his primary subject" (85). It is difficult to quarrel with that statement. Whether or not we accept the thesis of Scanlan's book, there is little reason to doubt that "family plays" are crucial to the O'Neill canon. This seems especially obvious with the hindsight derived from the appearance of _Long Day's Journey Into Night_. It is equally clear from a consideration of the three papers which are to follow this one. Each of the three plays in question--_Desire Under the Elms_, _Mourning Becomes Electra_ and _Long Day's Journey_--has, at one time or another, been regarded as the capstone of O'Neill's work. Clearly, the American family was a subject of great interest to him and a subject which tapped his most fertile veins of creativity. So it may seem a bit surprising that at the very beginning of his career, O'Neill did not immediately start in by writing family plays. It was not until his fifth play, the one-act _Warnings_, begun in the fall of 1913, that he began to create his first, true family drama. _Warnings_ is his first play to dramatize at length interactions between parents and children and between siblings.

I will return to _Warnings_ momentarily; however, with that starting point firmly in mind, I would now like to glance back over O'Neill's first four plays, _A Wife for a Life_, _The Web_, _Thirst_, and _Recklessness_. None of these four quite qualifies as family drama; but in three of them, elements of family life are explicit factors. In the first and fourth, the role of the family is the same: an offstage set of parents force their daughter into a disastrous "marriage of convenience" for the young girl's economic good. Thus, in the very first reference to parents (or a family) in O'Neill's very first script--_A Wife for a Life_--we find evidence to support Scanlan's observation that "the family destroying the individual is the more usual dramatic subject for O'Neill" (88).

Such is not the case, however, in O'Neill's second play, _The Web_. Here, it is society and/or the state which destroys both the individual and the family. _The Web_ almost qualifies as domestic drama, for the first part of the play concerns a sort of analogue of the nuclear family. The first scene presents the protagonist, Rose Thomas, interacting with her infant child; subsequently, Rose's "live-in" boyfriend Steve enters, and shortly we have a scene of domestic violence as Steve becomes furious with Rose and "hits her in the face with his fist, knocking her down" (O'Neill, "Lost," 41). Since Rose Thomas is a prostitute and Steve is her pimp, some may prefer not to consider _The Web_ domestic drama, but the classification will prove useful later on. For now, the point to be made is that the family per se is not O'Neill's primary concern in this play. _The Web_ is first and foremost a "social-problem play" on the then-topical matter of prostitution, a problem which O'Neill addresses from a rather anarchistic perspective in terms of society's destruction of individual freedom--in this case, Rose Thomas's lack of freedom to choose not to be a whore.

*A paper delivered (as were the three that follow it in this issue) at the session on "Games People Play: Family Relationships in O'Neill" at the Northeast Modern Language Association Convention in Boston on April 3, 1987.*
Three of O'Neill's first four plays, then, have definite relevance to any general consideration of his domestic drama. Thirst has no such interest; it does deal, however, with themes of racial conflict and madness which later in O'Neill's career would be strikingly conjoined with his passion for domestic drama in All God's Chillun Got Wings.

Which brings us back to Warnings. For those who have met O'Neill and his work primarily through Long Day's Journey, and who have been much taken by the autobiographical O'Neill, the configuration of the family in Warnings may also come as some surprise. The Knapps have four children, not two, and three of the four are girls. There is, in fact, a fifth child, manifest only via a baby's offstage cry, and a sixth child who never appears because he has grown up and left home. This family of six children may remind you of another six-sibling family in O'Neill—the idealized Millers of the brilliant nostalgic comedy Ah, Wilderness! The Millers have two grown sons away from home and only four of their children actually appear in the play. Reference to Ah, Wilderness! reminds us of O'Neill's fondness for large families (Gelb 81), a fondness engendered as much as anything by his exposure to the Rippin family with whom the O'Neills often boarded during their summers at the Monte Cristo cottage in New London. As a result, it is not particularly surprising to observe that O'Neill most likely began and certainly finished Warnings in the late fall of 1913, while he was living with the Rippins, recuperating from his tuberculosis (Törnqvist 258, n. 12). The Warnings configuration of three daughters and one son matches exactly the configuration of Rippin children O'Neill encountered while living with them (Sheaffer 261, 265). Thus, it would appear that O'Neill's first family was a product of his living arrangements at the time. In fact, many details of the lives and personalities of all the Rippins find their way into O'Neill's first plays, most notably perhaps in Bread and Butter, O'Neill's first full-length play and his second true family play.

Bread and Butter, though deeply flawed at two key moments, is nevertheless overdue for its first recorded performance. The play is fascinating in several respects. But once again, the configuration of the family differs widely from O'Neill's own. Mr. and Mrs. Brown have five grown children, all of whom appear in the play; three sons this time, however, and only two daughters. From the biographical perspective, what is most intriguing about the Browns is how they do and do not reflect O'Neill's own home situation. The father and two of the brothers have definite parallels in James, Jamie, and Edmund Tyrone. The protagonist, John Brown, is in fact O'Neill's first fully-drawn "self-portrait." The initial description of John makes clear that he is in appearance an almost exact duplicate of O'Neill (O'Neill, "Children," 15). Moreover, although John is a painter, not a writer, his plan to persuade his father to send him to art school instead of law school is surprisingly similar to O'Neill's own situation at the time. In the play, completed in May of 1914 (Törnqvist 258), the father of John's fiancée convinces Mr. Brown that John deserves a chance to go to art school. In real life, little more than a month after he completed the play, O'Neill solicited the aid of playwright and critic Clayton Hamilton to help him persuade James O'Neill to send his younger son to "playwriting school"—that is, to Professor George Pierce Baker's famous English 47 course at Harvard. The plan worked, both in the play and in real life.

As remarkable as the parallels between John and O'Neill are, the foreshadowings of Jamie Tyrone are at least as striking. Glimpses of Jamie are actually seen in two characters. The first is John's irrepressible brother, Harry, who, just before his final exit from the play in Act I, offers this lament to his brother after borrowing a handful of cigarettes: "Stringency of the paternal money market, you know" (21). The other glimpse of Jamie appears in the guise of one of John's roommates at art school, Ted Nelson, who, after placing three glasses and a bottle of whiskey on the center table, says: "My lord, breakfast is served"; and then sings, "Ho, shun the flowing cup!" (54). The father in this play, Mr. Brown, a successful hardware merchant, is less remarkable as a sketch of James Tyrone, though he, too, is a self-made business success and does seem to bear a physical resemblance to James O'Neill in that he is "smooth-shaven, a trifle bald, [and] fifty-eight years old" (8). Perhaps what is most surprising, however, when the play is viewed from this perspective is that Mrs. Brown seems to have nothing in
common with Mary Tyrone: she is a "meek," "tired-looking woman" (8) who keeps disappearing into the background and has virtually no effect on the central struggle between Mr. Brown and John. Equally uncharacteristic is the role O'Neill accords to John's sister Bessie. Although John's other sister, Mary, has the makings of one of O'Neill's typical female shrews, she is a minor figure in the play and disappears after Act I. By contrast, Bessie, who appears in all but one act, is (O'Neill tells us) "quite adorable" (14); an attractive and effervescent young woman of a type who seldom appears in O'Neill's subsequent work. More importantly, Bessie serves as the moral touchstone of the play, giving John her vocal and whole-hearted support in his efforts to follow his dream of being a great artist rather than follow his father's plans. As the character of Bessie may suggest, there is something about the imaginative breadth of Bread and Butter which is both pleasing and very different from the intense concentration of Long Day's Journey. This breadth is seen in the overall sprawl of the play across almost four years and three sets in the space of four acts heavily populated with fourteen characters. In this respect, Bread and Butter more closely resembles Ah, Wilderness! O'Neill's creative powers are equally in evidence in his ability to individuate each of his characters and to give each of the three sons plus the father a different style of speech. By the midpoint of Act I, there are seven distinct and completely imagined characters on stage at the same time.

This moment--when O'Neill has all seven Browns on stage at once--is also fascinating from a different perspective. The group portrait provides the occasion for John to announce that he has proposed to his girl friend, Maud Steele, and she has accepted--an announcement that brings forth a shower of congratulations from the family. Properly staged, this moment can create as warm a picture of family togetherness as any in Ah, Wilderness! But the scene occurs in the first act of a play which will end in the fourth act with Maud driving her husband off stage to kill himself. Thus, O'Neill's very first long play is a somewhat autobiographical family drama, set in a small New England town, and employing the very comic to tragic rhythm which is so characteristic of both A Moon for the Misbegotten and Long Day's Journey. How different the shape of O'Neill's career and the history of American drama might have been if James O'Neill's friend, producer George Tyler, had read Bread and Butter when it was sent to him in the summer of 1914. Instead, Tyler concluded that James O'Neill was just being a typically uncritical proud father and never even opened the manuscript (Sheaffer 291).

In the same month of 1914 in which O'Neill completed Bread and Butter, he also completed his third family play, the one-act Abortion (Törnqvist 259). Here, although the wealthy Townsend family has only two children, O'Neill virtually transplanted Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Bessie and John. Like Mr. Brown, Mr. Townsend, "a tall, kindly old man of sixty or so with a quantity of white hair" (O'Neill, "Lost," 150), is another role James O'Neill could have played. There are, in fact, among O'Neill's first thirteen surviving plays, seven roles for principal male characters in their 50's and 60's. As often as the biographers have searched a few of these roles for hints about Eugene's views of his own father, it should be kept in mind that Eugene expressly created a role for James in his first play, A Wife for a Life (Alexander 182; Voelker), and during Eugene's first two years of playwriting he created six more such roles, all of which suggests that he never quite lost sight of the possibility that he might get his first play produced directly through his father's willingness to act in it.

To return to Abortion, the other three Townsends are equally apparent as transplanted Browns. Mrs. Townsend is not quite the nonentity Mrs. Brown is, but she, too, fades into the background after she exits and plays no direct role in the confrontation and reconciliation of father and son—the last, once again, a skewed portrait of O'Neill. This same family configuration of parents with two children—one son, and one daughter who is younger—appears in O'Neill's next domestic play, his second long play, Servitude. The major difference in Servitude is that it is the father, David Roylston, successful playwright and novelist, who is the Eugene O'Neill self-portrait.

Servitude was completed just before O'Neill left New London for Cambridge. Under
Baker, O'Neill completed some five new plays, but only two—The Sniper, in one act, and
The Personal Equation, in four—have survived, and both are of interest as treatments of
the family. In The Sniper, the family is once again destroyed by social forces, in this
case the outbreak of World War I and the Prussian invasion of Belgium. The family in The
Sniper contains only one child, a son, who has been killed in the fighting before the
play begins. His father, Rougon, a Belgian peasant, brings his dead son's body on stage
at the curtain's rise. Subsequently, both the mother and the son's fiancée are killed
off stage, caught in the crossfire of opposing armies. The Sniper, like The Web, is not
a true family play; O'Neill's primary concerns are to protest the war, warmongering human
nature which makes war, and the God who has created warmongering humankind. But in the
context of its predecessors, The Sniper, in its complete devastation of the nuclear
family, marks, symbolically at least, a transformation in O'Neill's concern with family
drama in his first plays.

The visual focus on a father-son relationship which characterizes The Sniper is
carried over explicitly and exclusively into The Personal Equation. O'Neill's third
surviving long play. Here the family interest is in the relationship between Thomas
Perkins, Sr., a widower, and his only child, Tom, Jr., a member of the radical
International Workers party, who is recruited to foment a seamen's strike by dynamiting
the engines of a ship on which his father is the Second Engineer.

The Personal Equation is undoubtedly the worst long play O'Neill ever wrote; the plot
is simply preposterous. But in it, O'Neill was making his most ambitious effort at
character creation to date. He was attempting to create three principal characters, each
of which is torn by an inner conflict; and in the second scene of Act III, in the
confrontation in the engine room between a son bent on destroying his father's machines,
which the old man dearly loves, and a father attempting to defend them with a revolver,
O'Neill created a situation which, properly led up to, could have culminated in profound
tragedy. But O'Neill himself does not have to shoulder all the blame for the failure;
his creaky plot, after all, was approved by Professor Baker in scenario before O'Neill
began to write the play (Sheaffer 295).

Despite these shortcomings, The Personal Equation is of interest because of O'Neill's
efforts at characterization and the play's family themes. Of the three principal
characters, Tom, Jr., is the focal point and the most complexly motivated. As a member
of the radical International Workers, Tom is in open conflict with his father, who is a
loyal employee of the steamship company against which the International Workers hope to
foment a strike. Young Tom is quite willing to accept this circumstance because he is in
open rebellion against his father, whom he deeply resents for placing his son in a series
of boarding schools in order to go to sea. In Tom Perkins, Sr., then, we see a typical
conflict in O'Neill's family plays of this period: the conflict between the father's
occupation and the demands of his family. This conflict is also central to the tragic
dilemma of James Knapp in Warnings, a ship's telegrapher faced with impending deafness.
He is torn between the economic demands of his poor working-class family and his
obligation as a crew member to do the right thing—quit his job. Similarly, David
Roylston in Servitude considers his family life to be satisfactory to the extent that it
does not interfere with his work as a novelist and playwright. Likewise, John Brown in
Bread and Butter is torn between his desire to be a serious painter and the wishes of
both his father and his fiancée that he return home, settle down, earn a living, and
raise his own family. Throughout this series of early family plays, in the terms
employed by Tom Scanlan, the traditional demands of the "family of security" (27ff) are
seen as an impediment to the individual male's need to define himself through his work.

In the case of Young Tom of The Personal Equation, his father's choice, leading to his
self-definition and his abandonment of his son, is clearly intended by O'Neill to explain
the son's resentment. O'Neill depends on the audience's awareness that the absence of a
supportive home life is sufficient to scar the deprived child quite deeply. Which is not
to say that Tom does not still love his father. Tom does, deep down, but he is not
conscious of this. Consciously, Tom believes he simply hates his father.
In his first plays, then, O'Neill's portraits of the family are repeatedly concerned with two themes. On the one hand, the family as a whole is pitted against society; outside social forces destroy the family in The Web, Abortion, The Sniper and also, to a degree, in Warnings, where symbolically, James Knapp must choose between the interests of his family and those of society, microcosmically symbolized by the passengers on Knapp's ship. O'Neill's second recurrent theme concerns the male who is destroyed by the demands of the nuclear family—a central theme in Warnings and Bread and Butter. The latter, however, is especially notable because it consciously attacks the restrictive demands of Scanlan's "family of security" and offers as an explicit alternative the family model which Scanlan has termed the "family of freedom" (27ff). These alternatives are made explicit in the following exchange between Mr. Brown and his son John.

MR. BROWN. ... What is a father for I'd like to know?

JOHN. (Shrugging his shoulders) I suppose, when a man is a willing party to bringing children into the world, he takes upon himself the responsibility of doing all in his power to further their happiness.

MR. BROWN. But isn't that what I'm doing?

JOHN. Absolutely not! You consider your children to be your possessions, to belong to you. You don't think of them as individuals with ideas and hopes of their own. It's for you to find out the highest hope of each of them and give it your help and sympathy. Are you doing this ... ? No, you're trying to substitute a desire of your own which you think would [be of] benefit ... in a worldly way. (37)

This exchange, I suspect, is one which still today a good many parents ought to hear.

One observation remains regarding O'Neill's first family plays when they are looked at collectively. Beginning with The Web, with its slum environment of pimps and whores, O'Neill steadily worked his way up the American economic class structure. The milieu of Warnings is clearly working-class or the working poor, always one step ahead of the bill collector. Bread and Butter is just as clearly set among the comfortable middle class. Finally, Abortion occurs in the environment of wealth and social privilege. In the slums of The Web, the family is virtually in disintegration; Rose and Steve are not married, he may not be the father of her child, and he beats her up. Among the working poor of Warnings, the threat of poverty is seen to drive a wedge between husband and wife, but their clashes are verbal, not physical. In the middle-class living room of Bread and Butter, the husband and wife do not fight at all, but the parents and children do. Finally, in the wealthy world of the Townsends in Abortion, not only do the parents not fight, but the father and son disagree only about means, not about ends. Both share the conviction that the family honor must be preserved. It is this shared conviction, in part, which drives the son to suicide at play's end when he realizes that, despite his best efforts, the illegal operation he has funded for his working-class girl friend will become public knowledge and hence ruin his family's reputation. At the least, a clear, if simplified, sociology of the family emerges when we examine O'Neill's first plays collectively, and a richer variety of alternatives presents itself to the student of family drama than might be expected.

--Paul D. Voelker

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In the famous stage directions for the first act of Desire Under the Elms, O'Neill describes the trees of the title:

"Two enormous elms are on each side of the house. They bend their trailing branches down over the roof. They appear to protect and at the same time subdue. There is a sinister maternity in their aspect, a crushing, jealous absorption. They have developed from their intimate contact with the life of man in the house an appalling humaneness. They brood oppressively over the house. They are like exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands and hair on its roof, and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and rot on the shingles." (202).

Travis Bogard praises O'Neill's restraint in imposing these elms as symbols on an essentially realistic play: "the novelistic rhetoric that links the elms with Eben's dead mother and with an exhausted life force holds no meaning beyond the printed page" (205). While this prelude may have its theatrical limitations, however, it does, as Normand Berlin suggests, have its resonance in the play (55). The description of the elms, which O'Neill referred to as "characters, almost" (Chothia 40), initiates a metaphoric pattern that O'Neill works with throughout. In linking the maternal--here "a sinister maternity" compounded of opposites--to the natural world, to the landscape, he prepares us for the projection of the intensities of the Freudian "family romance" onto the terrain of the Cabot farm.

O'Neill claimed to have dreamed Desire Under the Elms in its entirety. As Louis Sheaffer has pointed out, O'Neill did some borrowing--particularly from Sidney Howard's They Knew What They Wanted--as well as dreaming (126). However, O'Neill certainly drew on collective dream, on an enduring tradition of mythic and psychological fantasy, when he identified woman, and particularly the mother, with the land. Theorists who have recently focused on such imagery provide us with a context in which to consider its centrality to the play. In a celebrated essay entitled "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" Sherry Ortner suggests that for a variety of reasons, biological, social, and psychological, "women are ... identified or symbolically associated with nature, ... [while] men ... are identified with culture" (73). Women, that is, are seen as co-extensive with, or at least much closer to, the natural world. Men, on the other hand, have traditionally felt compelled to master and transcend nature in order to create and maintain culture. This division, Ortner argues, gives rise to a seemingly universal hierarchical structure that places culture and man over nature and woman. Ortner is concerned with the ways in which this analogy derives from and influences our experience. As Annette Kolodny points out in her study of the imagery that links woman and the land in American writing about the new world, "language ... contains verbal cues to underlying psychological patterns" and can therefore "be examined as a repository of internal experience and external expression" (73). Kolodny discusses the tension, fraught with suggestions of oedipal ambivalence, "between the initial urge to ... join passively with ... a maternal landscape and the consequent impulse to master and act upon that same femininity" (270). The conceptual fusion of woman and nature tends to put both in jeopardy. Kolodny's work, like that of Ortner, is a vivid reminder of the risk of metaphor.

The power of Desire Under the Elms is, in large measure, contingent on such imagery as these theorists hold up to scrutiny. O'Neill could be said to have collaborated in the imaginative tradition whose problematic implications they identify. However, while Desire tends to illustrate the conjunction of landscape and gender that Ortner and Kolodny describe, the play also has a distinct affinity with their critique. In 1925, O'Neill called Desire "a tragedy of the possessive--the pitiful longing of man to build

his own heaven here on earth by glutting his sense of power with ownership of land, people, money" (Sheaffer 441). While O'Neill maps out his dramatic territory using the quintessential equation "woman equals nature," he also illuminates the overweening desire to possess and to dominate that is its corollary.

Striking congruities emerge in the play as it becomes apparent that land and woman are at the heart of the struggle between Eben Cabot and his father. Blaming Ephraim for having exhausted, and thereby killed, his mother, Eben is determined to wrest from him the farm she claimed as her own. He believes that only then will her soul finally be at peace. Eben resents his father for the harshness Cabot is so proud of, and insists, "I'm Maw--every drop o' blood" (207). He claims to have learned from doing the arduous domestic tasks she used to do, to "know her, suffer he sufferin'" (209). He is in revolt against the way of life on the Cabot farm, "makin' walls--stone atop o' stone--makin' walls till yer heart's a stone...." (208-9).

Eben's brothers, Simeon and Peter, the older sons of Cabot's first marriage, are somewhat removed from the primary intensities of the play. They had felt kindly toward Eben's mother, but refuse to blame their father for her death. "No one never kills nobody," Simeon says. "It's allus somethin'. That's the murderer...." Peter agrees: "He's slaved himself t'death. He's slaved Sim 'n' me 'n' yew t' death--on'y none o' us hain't died--yit" (207). They decide to leave rather than fight over the farm when they learn that their father has married and they are likely to lose their inheritance. Likened in O'Neill's description to "friendly oxen" and "beasts of the field" (206), Simeon and Peter say of the farm animals that they "know us like brothers--an' like us" (218). Eben's brothers are not linked with the mother; nor do they aspire to the drive for mastery of the father. It seems appropriate, then, that they do not figure significantly in the highly polarized world of Desire.

It is Eben, seeing himself as his mother's heir, who engages most fully in the struggle with the father for power and possession. He has his first sexual experience with Min after he learns that both his father and his brothers had been with her. In a simile characteristic of the drama, Eben says that Min "smells like a wa'm plowed field, she's purty" (211) and later declares to his brothers: "Yes, siree! I tuk her. She may've been his'n--an' your'n, too--but she's mine now!" (214). He uses the money his mother told him Cabot had hidden, to buy their shares of the farm from his brothers. After the transaction is completed, Eben talks with "queer excitement": "It's my farm! Them's my cows!" Simeon and Peter see their father in him: "Dead spit 'n' image!" O'Neill tells us that Eben "stares around him with glowing, possessive eyes. He takes in the whole farm with his embracing glance of desire" and says, "It's purty! It's damned purty! It's mine!" (217). The restricted vocabulary (Chothia 79), appropriate to the "inexpressiveness" (O'Neill quoted in Shaeffer 159) that was a focus for O'Neill in this work, reveals all the more transparently the overlap of landscape and gender that is crucial to its realization.

That there will be a contest between Eben and his father over Abbie, Cabot's new wife, is anticipated even by Simeon, who is slow and plodding. Before we meet Abbie or know what her own intentions are, we sense that her principal role will be to mediate the relationship between father and son. Shortly after Abbie arrives at the farm, Simeon and Peter take off for California to search for gold, choosing, in Cabot's terms, an easy life, which at times tempts even the harsh, scripture-quoting patriarch himself. They leave Cabot, Abbie and Eben on the farm, which itself figures so significantly in the intensely oedipal configuration.

Abbie is a compelling character. O'Neill describes her as thirty-five, and "full of vitality." She has "about her whole personality the same unsettled, untamed, desperate quality which is so apparent in Eben" (221). Like Eben, she wants the farm. An orphan who has already endured a difficult marriage, and whose child and first husband have died, she married the 75-year old Ephraim Cabot in order to have a home. Without exonerating her, O'Neill represents her desire for the farm as different in kind from
that of the men. As she says to Eben defiantly, "Waal--what if I did need a hum?" (226). Her relation to nature as a generative force is also different from theirs. She speaks of "Nature--makin' thin's grow--bigger 'n' bigger--burnin' inside ye--makin' ye want t' grow--into somethin' else--till ye're jined with it--and it's your'n but it owns ye, too--and makes ye grow bigger--like a tree--like them elums--" (229). She envisions a mutuality of possession which is conspicuously absent on the Cabot farm. And she taunts Cabot when he talks of the sky as "purty" and like a "wa'm field up thar," asking him, "Air yew aimin' t' buy up over the farm too?" (231).

Jealous when Eben goes off to see Min, Abbie tells Cabot that her stepson tried to make love to her. Here she becomes linked with Phaedra, as she has been with Iocasta. In spite of the dramatic stature the mythic dimension adds to her role, however, she remains, like the land, essentially an object of contention between father and son. Ephraim wouldn't consider letting her inherit the farm even though all his sons have disappointed him. "Ye're on'y a woman" (234). When she reminds him that she is his wife, he says, "That hain't me. A son is me--my blood--mine. Mine ought t' get mine. An' then it's still--mine--even though I be six foot under" (234).

Abbie decides to conceive a child who could inherit the farm for her. Cabot, not knowing that she has Eben in mind as the father, is ecstatic at the possibility of a new son. His reflections at this point provide the clearest indication of the kind of symbol system that O'Neill employs with consistency throughout Desire Under the Elms. Cabot says to Abbie, "Sometimes ye air the farm an' sometimes the farm be yew. That's why I clove t' ye in my lonesomeness.... Me an' the farm has got t' beget a son!" Abbie, hearing what appears to be a barely conscious admission, tells him he's "gittin' thin's all mixed." Cabot insists, "No, I hain't. My mind's clear's a well. Ye don't know me, that's it" (236). Cabot envisions having Abbie as the farm produce a son who would guarantee him an eternity of ownership. As Abbie says, he is getting things "all mixed." The confusion he articulates, however, is a primal one.

As Cabot goes on to explain himself to his wife, whose thoughts are actually with Eben, he reveals more fully what Simeon had referred to as the "somethin'--drivin' him--t'drive us!" (207). Cabot describes himself in his youth as having been "the strongest an' hardest ye ever seen--ten times as strong an' fifty times as hard as Eben." Boasting of his achievement in making "corn sprout out o' stones" (236), he speaks of the God he worships, insisting: "God's hard, not easy! God's in the stones!" (237). He projects, as Frederick Wilkins has said, "his own hardness onto his conception of the deity" (243).

Ephraim's battle with the stony soil and his disdain for the softness of the mother of Simeon and Peter, and the mother of Eben, suggest the hierarchy that Sherry Ortner discerns. His pride derives from his mastery of the land and his sense of superiority over the women. However, his satisfaction with his way of being in the world is flawed. He suffers from a persistent unease and loneliness.

In the book, Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her, Susan Griffin suggests that man's efforts to distance himself from the feminine and from the natural world contribute to his sense of exile and homelessness. Her prologue is a meditation on man: "He says that woman speaks with nature.... But for him this dialogue is over. He says he is not part of this world, that he was set on this world as a stranger. He sets himself apart from woman and nature" (1). This passage seems to echo the revelation of Cabot's "lonesomeness," which is prefaced by his conflation of Abbie and the farm. The sequence of his reflections seems to suggest, as the theorists do, a profound connection between man's conception of landscape and gender, and the experience of alienation.

Cabot is uncomfortable in the house, the sphere of the feminine: "It's oneasy. They's thin's pokin' about in the dark--in the corners" (238). At home, he is troubled by "somethin'," which he feels "droppin' off the elums" (253)--the symbols of a "sinister," but violated maternity. His grueling work on the land, bound up as it is with assertion
and control, affords him no comfort either. He would try to console himself by remembering what he possessed: "It was all mine! When I thought of that I didn't feel lonesome" (237). But neither his periodic efforts to conjure up the exaltation of ownership, nor his attempts to seek temporary refuge in the barn with the cows, alleviate his essential isolation.

The attraction of Abbie and Eben thwarts Cabot's hope for a new heir. With thoughts of a child, and with increasing love for Eben, Abbie re-opens the parlor of Eben's mother and insists that he court her there. When with trepidation they sit together in the parlor, both Eben and Abbie sense the approval of the maternal spirit, and the easing of her cares. Eben decides that his mother accepts his union with Abbie, who insists on her similarity to the mother, because it would serve as revenge against Cabot.

After Abbie bears the child he believes is his own, Cabot arranges a celebration. His neighbors easily guess who the child's father really is. But Cabot outdoes everyone there with his age-defying dance, performing one of what John Henry Raleigh calls his "legendary feats" (55). O'Neill once said, "I have always loved Ephraim so much! He is so autobiographical" (Sheaffer 130). But while Ephraim Cabot is permitted a dazzling display of endurance, it is Eben who is granted a release from what O'Neill, in another reference to the play, called "old man Cabotism" (Sheaffer 250).

Eben, finding it difficult to respond to his newborn son, tells Abbie, "I don't like this. I don't like lettin' on what's mine's his'n. I been doin' that all my life. I'm gittin' t' the end of b'arin' it!" (253). He is ready for the ultimate confrontation with the father, which is precipitated by Cabot's disclosure that Abbie wanted a son in order to get the farm for herself. When Abbie fears that she will lose Eben, she makes a desperate effort to prove her love for him above all else, by murdering their baby. It is through the appalling act of infanticide that O'Neill resolves the violent tensions of the Cabot household. The death of the baby interrupts a bitter cycle of succession that threatens to stretch into a future where the sins of the fathers—and brother—are visited upon the children. It also shocks Eben into a transformation.

After he reports Abbie to the sheriff, Eben acknowledges his own unwitting complicity in her crime. He says, "I want t' share with ye, Abbie--prison 'r death 'r hell 'r anythin'!... If I'm sharin' with ye, I won't feel lonesome, leastways" (267). Eben's lines suggest that he is no longer in the throes of an oedipal obsession with Abbie, or with the farm. Newly able to love Abbie, he has moved beyond his father's relation to woman and the land, and the loneliness it engendered. By having the son break free from its influence, O'Neill seems to subvert the imagery that has informed the play. The son is rewarded for his renunciation of the paradigm his father had glorified. Having made it possible for his mother's spirit to rest, Eben now manages, through his determination to stand by Abbie, to earn the father's "grudging admiration," a reconciliation of sorts. When the sheriff looks around the farm "enviously," and says, "It's a jim-dandy farm, no denyin'. Wished I owned it!" (269), we are able to gauge the distance Eben has travelled from the imperatives that shape the "tragedy of the possessive."

--Bette Mandl

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THE LEGACY OF MELVILLE'S PIERRE: FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA

O'Neill's dramatization of family relationships in Long Day's Journey Into Night, his culminating masterpiece, is admittedly autobiographical. Moreover, disguised portraits of the O'Neills abound throughout the entire canon, a feature which critics have repeatedly underlined. Mourning Becomes Electra undoubtedly represents a notable exception to that pattern. In this drama, O'Neill resorts to various artistic models to depict the conflicts besieging the house of the Mannons. Besides obvious references to Aeschylus and Shakespeare, there exists a more obscure literary allusion in Mourning Becomes Electra: muted reminders of Herman Melville's neglected novel, Pierre, or the Ambiguities, that have hitherto largely escaped critical attention.

At first glance, to assert that O'Neill may have been indebted to Melville in the composition of his trilogy would seem exaggerated. And yet I submit that a direct connection is highly probable, an impression reinforced by the many analogies linking the two works. Critic Joyce D. Kennedy, who first pointed out the possible kinship between the novel and the play, conjectured that O'Neill had been introduced to Pierre by his scholarly friend Carl Van Vechten. The latter, who had strongly contributed to the Melville revival of the twenties, visited the O'Neills at Le Plessis in the summer of 1929, a period during which the dramatist drafted his play. The fact that comparable plot incidents occur in both Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra could therefore constitute a tangible result of O'Neill's and Van Vechten's conversations.


1 See her article entitled "Pierre's Progeny: O'Neill and the Melville Revival," English Studies in Canada, 3, i (Spring 1977), 103-117. This critic aims primarily at proving the influence of Pierre upon Mourning Becomes Electra and therefore concentrates on details of the plot. She restricts her thematic analysis to an examination of the two writers' satire of American capitalistic greed, leaving aside their common moral, tragic, and metaphysical concerns. These issues constitute precisely the main contribution of the present paper.
In addition, O'Neill appears to have nurtured a life-long admiration for Melville which concretized itself in a 1921 press interview. He then described the hero of Diff'rent, Caleb Williams, as an Ahab-like captain: "He belongs to the old iron school of Nantucket-New Bedford whalemen whose slogan was 'A dead whale or a stove boat.' The whale ... is transformed suddenly into a malignant Moby Dick ..." 2 In a hitherto unpublished introduction to Hart Crane's White Buildings, the playwright further alluded to Melville's mystical vision of the sea: "In Crane's sea poems ... there is something of Melville's intense brooding on the mystery of 'the high interiors of the sea.'" 3 In a private communication, Louis Sheaffer informed me that, according to Agnes Boulton, O'Neill's second wife, the dramatist was fascinated by Moby Dick. Finally, it may not be purely coincidental that in Mourning Becomes Electra Orin Mannon evokes yet another romance by Melville, Typee. In a lyrical confession, he asks his mother, "Have you ever read a book called 'Typee'—about the South Sea Islands?... I read it and reread it until finally those Islands came to mean everything that was peace and warmth and security." 4

In view of these hints, I regard the influence of Pierre upon Mourning Becomes Electra as plausible. The resemblance between the two works, however, resides primarily in a relationship of confluence, more than of influence, originating in the authors' affinity of vision. 5 Considered in that perspective, Pierre offers a privileged observation post from which to examine the "Americanness" of the family feuds O'Neill delineates. Through such an analysis, the playwright emerges as a writer imbued with both the cultural and literary heritage of his nation.

As critics have remarked, Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra possess features strongly reminiscent of the stories of Orestes and Hamlet. Both Orestes and Pierre, in attempting to avenge paternal honor, engage in conflictual relationships with their mothers. Isabel Banford, Pierre's half-sister, qualifies as a latter-day counterpart to Electra, for in leaving his manorial estate to live with Isabel as her husband, Pierre indirectly provokes the demise of his mother. Owing to his hesitations, Pierre can also be regarded as a replica of Shakespeare's romantic Hamlet. 6

2 This interview appeared in the New York Herald Tribune on February 13, 1921.

3 This introduction is preserved in the Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library. It consists of a four-page typescript with the author's manuscript corrections. Donald C. Gallup, former Curator of the O'Neill Collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, argued, in a private conversation, that this introduction had not been written by O'Neill. As no definitive evidence has been offered, however, I have chosen to quote from this piece of critical writing. Its composition, i.e. a typescript with handwritten modifications, reflects O'Neill's usual working method. Louis Sheaffer does not hesitate to lend credence to the authenticity of the manuscript. [See O'Neill, Son and Playwright (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), pp. 207-208.] The excerpt is quoted with the permission of the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.


5 The term confluence, meaning analogy, is derived from a study by Jean Weisgerber, Faulkner and Dostoevsky: Influence and Confluence, translated by Dean McWilliams (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974).

6 The link between Pierre, the Oresteia, and Hamlet is detailed by Gerard M. Sweeney in Melville's Use of Classical Mythology (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1975), pp. 102-103 and 105.
The plot of *Mourning Becomes Electra*, like that of *Pierre*, owes a great deal to the myth of Orestes. Indeed, Lavinia Mannon urges her brother Orin to take the life of Adam Brant, Christine Mannon's lover. She thus hopes to punish her mother for plotting the death of the family head, Ezra Mannon. As a result of Orin's violent deed, Christine eventually commits suicide. Further, the action of O'Neill's play also recalls that of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Lavinia's first task consists of convincing her brother of Christine's guilt. Likewise, Hamlet must dispel his own doubts before deciding to act. In short, the plot incidents devised by the writers to portray the intricacies of their heroes' family crises derive their most strikingly identical features from Aeschylus and Shakespeare.

II

While in the works of these classical authors, the incest motif performs a restricted role, in *Pierre* and *Mourning Becomes Electra* it acquires a paramount importance. Melville's and O'Neill's male characters experience odd feelings towards their domineering mothers. In *Pierre*, Mrs. Glendinning adopts an authoritarian conduct when dealing with her son and praying that he may "remain all docility to me" (p. 26). However, Pierre lives with her in perfect harmony, giving her a "courteous lover-like adoration" (p. 20). In the opening pages, Saddle Meadows, the Glendinnings' estate, could even be decoded as a symbol of the Biblical paradise. Pierre enjoys there the beauty of a "scenery whose uncommon loveliness was the perfect mould of a delicate and poetic mind ..." (p. 4).

The buried incestual metaphor defining Pierre's link to his mother is duplicated in Orin's affection for Christine Mannon. As in Melville's novel, the mother's mixture of mild authority and loving gentleness forms an essential component of *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Indeed, Christine's tenderness is rooted in possession, as is evidenced in her exclamation, "Oh, Orin, you are my boy, my baby! I love you!" (p. 775). And yet, the male protagonist spontaneously confesses his erotic bond with the maternal heroine, while betraying his wish of living with her in the islands of *Typee*:

ORIN. Someone loaned me the book ... those Islands ... I used to dream I was there. And later on all the time I was out of my head I seemed really to be there. There was no one there but you and me. And yet I never saw you, that's the funny part. I only felt you all around me. The breaking of the waves was your voice. The sky was the same color as your eyes. The warm sand was like your skin. The whole island was you.... A strange notion, wasn't it? But you needn't be provoked at being an island because this was the most beautiful island in the world--as beautiful as you, Mother! (p. 776)

If Saddle Meadows functions as an image of the celestial paradise on earth, where mother and son can enjoy unmitigated bliss, the islands of *Typee* play a comparable role in O'Neill's drama. Ironically, one might get the impression that the playwright uses Melville's *Typee* in order to reproduce in his trilogy an atmosphere of happiness.

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9 All citations refer to the same edition: *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1929).
comparable to the initial chapter of Pierre. This phenomenon inevitably leads one to consider the divergences separating O'Neill and Melville in their treatment of the mother/son relationship. As a typical writer of the twentieth century, O'Neill integrates his Melvillean model into a modified context, thereby distancing himself from the meaning of his source. He demonstrates his awareness of the limited value that Orin's projects can preserve in the terrible world of New England. Whereas Melville's Saddle Meadows actually shelters the characters, Orin's allusions to Typee remain purely abstract. Moreover, his hopes are threatened by Christine's love affair with Brant. That O'Neill should debunk his character's aspirations by applying the modernist technique of literary quotation testifies to the highly innovative nature of Mourning Becomes Electra.

The two authors' rendering of the brother/sister incest motif is even more unique than that of the mother/son relationship. This theme offers considerable insight into their concept of the American family. In Pierre, the hero declares his passion for his half-sister on the first night of their stay in the city:

He moved nearer to her, and stole one arm around her; her sweet head leaned against his breast; each felt the other's throbbing ... his whole frame was invisibly trembling. Then suddenly in a low tone of wonderful intensity, he breathed: "Isabel! Isabel!" ... "Call me brother no more! ... I am Pierre and thou Isabel, wide brother and sister in the common humanity ... the demi-gods trample on trash, and Virtue and Vice are trash! ..." (pp. 378-381).

In a kindred manner, Orin Mannon suggests his secret love for Lavinia: "(... He stares at her and slowly a distorted look of desire comes over his face) ... There are times when you don't seem to be my sister but some stranger with the same beautiful hair--(He touches her hair caressingly)" (p. 853).

Significantly, both Pierre and Orin prefer to regard their sisters as strangers bearing no kinship to them. Through these portrayals of perverted love affairs, the two writers obliquely indict the Puritan environment that allowed such a desecration of parental links to occur. Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra focus on the doom of fated Puritan families whose members are stifled by a narrow code of moral principles. Being the unconscious victims of that background, Pierre and Orin adopt distorted sexual behaviors resulting in the disintegration of their lives. The Glendinning house is eventually shattered by murder and death, while the Mannons become prey to an implacable fate. Clearly, O'Neill and Melville reject the harsh set of Old Testament ethics underlying their heroes' religious system.

As with the mother/son incest motif, O'Neill seems simultaneously to adhere to Melville's view and to negate the validity of his philosophy. The dramatist's possible borrowing from Melville appears woven into a larger context, tending to complicate the situation detectable in Pierre. If in Melville's work the protagonist is motivated solely by his Oedipal longings, in Mourning Becomes Electra the source of the action proceeds from a more intricate design. At first, Peter Niles, prompted by Lavinia's indifference to his proposals, informs the young heroine of Adam Brant's affair with Christine Mannon. The report infuriates Lavinia and awakens her desire for revenge, thwarted as she feels in her secret loving admiration for Brant. She then seeks to bring Orin to murder the sea captain, after clearly evidencing Christine's guilt. Out of a thinly veiled love for his sister, Orin finally agrees to act according to her wishes.

In Pierre, that fatal step requires a lesser number of transactions. Indeed, Isabel's letter to the hero does not, as is the case in Mourning Becomes Electra, constitute the result of a series of events. With his method of amplifying the impact of his apparent model, O'Neill seems to indicate that the strange bond between Orin and Lavinia exceeds in horror and complexity that uniting Pierre and Isabel. In Mourning Becomes Electra,
the pressure of Puritanism, causing the degeneration of a genuine brother/sister relationship, deprives mankind of any hope of salvation.

IV

Not only do the two writers regard the disappearance of family cohesion as a product of American Protestantism; they also endow this gradual decline with tragic resonances. In Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra, one discovers elements of an innovative tragic form, one that seeks to ennoble the American common man. Although they remain the hereditary proprietors of manorial estates, Glendinnings and Mannons alike are subjected to the psychological woes that any New World citizen could experience. It is precisely the magnitude of the heroes' sufferings that confers upon Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra their tragic aura.

But in the end, one can only speak of near-tragedy when considering these two works. First, Pierre is written in a novelistic form which is generally not associated with pure tragedy. Second, the almost exclusively psychoanalytical nature of the characters' conflicts reduces the impact of the artists' tragic endeavors. Their creatures manifest marked Oedipal fixations, which, while they contain in themselves a tragic potential, tend to mitigate the social and metaphysical implications embedded in Aeschylus' and Shakespeare's dramas. Residing in the protagonists' psychological turmoil, the concept of fate displayed in Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra acquires an inner shape. Orin and Pierre are literally imprisoned within their own soul and prove unwilling to assume the full consequences of their public acts. Indeed, they choose to commit suicide while Lavinia, unable to face the world, buries herself alive.

This testifies, in my opinion, to Melville's and O'Neill's ironical stance, which emerges with perhaps even darker pessimism in the playwright's work. Whereas at first, the authors seemingly confer a tragic nobility upon their heroes, they subsequently deny them the benefit of any spiritual enlightenment. The two artists imply that true tragedy cannot exist in the New World, owing to the exaggeratedly private--psychoanalytical, to use a modern critical term--quality of the crises characterizing American family relationships. Thus adopting a view that corresponds to the night side of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass, Melville and O'Neill offer us a bleak picture of the possibilities of tragic elevation in America.

V

A final point of confluence between Pierre and Mourning Becomes Electra consists of their common metaphysical import. In these works, O'Neill and Melville explore the essence of the connection between members of American families and the divinity presiding over their destinies. Both come to the bitter conclusion that no God can improve the tormented relationships in which such family members are engaged. The hero of Pierre never succeeds in understanding his link with the deity, a failure best expressed through his sudden discovery of Plotinus Plinlimmon's pamphlet, "Chronometricals and Horologicals." This treatise, advising the reader not to seek to interpret God, tells of the impossibility of reconciling the horror of the human plight and divine goodness. In other words, Plinlimmon suggests, "in things terrestrial (horological) a man must not be governed by ideas celestial (chronometrical)" (pp. 298-299). Struck with the "Profound Silence" of God's voice, Pierre nearly "runs, like a mad dog, into atheism" (pp. 290 and 299). God remains indifferent to the sufferings Pierre incurs while living with his half-sister Isabel. The hero qualifies as an American Enceladus, a character who, in his efforts to attain divine status, is confined to the earth:

You saw Enceladus the Titan, the most potent of all the giants, writhing from out the imprisoning earth ... still turning his unconquerable front toward that majestic mount eternally in vain assailed by him ... Enceladus was both the son and grandson of an incest; and even thus, there had been born from the organic blended heavenliness and earthliness of Pierre, another mixed, uncertain, heaven-aspiring, but still not wholly earth-emancipated mood.... (pp. 480-483)
Orin Mannon, another New World Enceladus, feels estranged from a heavenly God and consequently gropes in the darkness of the earth. He dimly realizes that he must rely on his own strength in order to survive the psychological crisis generated by his Oedipal desires:

ORIN. And I find artificial light more appropriate for my work--man's light, not God's--man's feeble striving to understand himself, to exist for himself in the darkness! It's a symbol of his life--a lamp burning out in a room of waiting shadows! (p. 837)

In Pierre as in Mourning Becomes Electra, then, one witnesses a movement towards agnosticism. In his trilogy, with the aid of Melville's novel, O'Neill presents us with a portrait of a torn apart family bereft of the help of God, thus prefiguring the agnostic universe of Long Day's Journey Into Night.

VI

If one admits that O'Neill kept Pierre in mind while composing Mourning Becomes Electra, one is forced to note that the confluence between the two works resides in the moral, tragic, and metaphysical probings of their authors. Like James Joyce or Virginia Woolf, O'Neill apparently resorts to the technique of literary quotation, as defined by Jean Weisgerber, in order to structure his drama. Mourning Becomes Electra can be regarded as a mosaic of literary allusions, whether to Aeschylus, Shakespeare, or Melville. Moreover, comparing this trilogy with Pierre offers a new image of O'Neill as a writer belonging to the tradition of American literature. In addition, I have suggested that, in two instances, O'Neill qualifies Melville's notion of the family unit in America and amalgamates his borrowings within a highly personal framework. To this end, he manipulates ironic commentaries--his reference to Typee--and the device of amplification--evident in the complex structure in which Orin's murder is inserted. This double angle of vision reveals the profundity of the playwright's delineation of family relationships in Mourning Becomes Electra. In the process of translating the ancient patterns of Aeschylus' and Shakespeare's works to describe the American components of such conflicts, he was most probably aided by the legacy of Melville's Pierre.

--Marc Maufort


11 Jean Weisgerber, "The Use of Quotations in Recent Literature," Comparative Literature, 22 (1970), 36-45. Weisgerber posits that this technique reflects the writer's desire to comment on present human experience by reference to the past, often with ironic purposes. Moreover, it allows the reader to decode the meaning of the work by himself, thus participating actively in the process of artistic creation.

12 Although it might seem preposterous to suggest that O'Neill modified his Melvilean model, considering the fact that the influence of Pierre upon Mourning Becomes Electra remains debatable, this hypothesis gains plausibility in view of the systematic occurrence of that phenomenon throughout the dramatist's canon. In a doctoral dissertation recently submitted at the University of Brussels, entitled "Visions of the American Experience: The O'Neill-Melville Connection," I have offered numerous instances of that method. In his early sea play Ile, for example, O'Neill reshapes the thematic texture of Melville's Moby Dick in order to satirize Captain Keeney's materialism, as opposed to Ahab's idealism. In Mourning Becomes Electra, he transforms Melville's image of peaceful South Sea islands detectable in Typee in order to illustrate the elusiveness of the Mannons' dreams of a harmonious life away from the constraints of New England civilization.
THE WAR AMONG THE TYRONES*

This paper addresses the problem of how Eugene O'Neill creates the peculiarly "poetic" or "musical" or "rhythmic" effects often noticed in his best plays. The matter is a problem because it cannot be explained satisfactorily by conventional rhetorical analysis. Instead of expressing meanings through prose syntax and diction, O'Neill creates sub-verbal processes that carry meanings different from--and often opposed to--the meanings in the words and sentences themselves. How dense, subtle, and complex can be the meanings O'Neill creates through his dramatic process I hope to show by describing in detail a brief and quiet moment from the beginning of Long Day's Journey Into Night.

A concept borrowed from the clinical practice of psychoanalysis enables one to describe minutely any process of human interaction. A process is any chain of cause and effect events. A process of human interactions usually includes some responses of which people are not aware, as well as those within awareness. We react to things that are not explicitly and verbally stated by the people we are with, and regularly learn that they have not consciously intended to affect us as they have. And we move others through actions we do not deliberate.

Some of the strongest links in the chain, those that elicit the most powerful and complex consequences, are not things said or done or even thought; but are the feelings accompanying actions and thoughts. Darwin showed long ago how clearly and powerfully animals and humans express emotions and interpret those of others. By processes we variously call intuition, empathy, identification, and sympathy, we know what another feels, and react with feelings of our own, as well as with thoughts and actions. In ordinary circumstances one's sense of another person's sincerity or falseness, warmth or pretense, derives from one's intuitive perception of the fit between words or actions and the feelings that go with them.

When we come to the Tyrone family in Long Day's Journey, however, we are not in ordinary circumstances. The Tyrones seem ever driven by dread of their fears and by expectations of betrayal, by their own hatreds, and especially by guilt. They have, therefore, the strongest motives not to know their feelings. In them the isolation of feelings from thoughts or actions works in an all or nothing way. They conceal from themselves, and deny to others, benign feelings as well as those they believe malignant. Around the most trivial conversation they create an atmosphere of judicial objectivity, acting as if they would be called to answer for every phrase, every word. They act as though they might escape responsibility for the impulses and feelings underlying the verbal surface by excluding impulses and their affects from consciousness.

Psychoanalysis insists that every event has multiple causes, implying that in plays like O'Neill's, driven by a certain complexity of vision, several dynamic processes may occur at once. The great playwrights have always known how to show such interactions among their characters, and the great actors and directors can sometimes represent them in all their complexities. Literary interpreters, construing dramatic action on the basis of a play's text, have not always known how to explain what ordinary life has taught them intuitively to understand. In that regard, articulation of the psycho-dynamic process may be helpful.

Such processes are evident on any page of Long Day's Journey, but can be most easily understood in quiet passages like the following fragment from the opening scene that occurs on pages 20-21 in the Yale edition. Mary and Tyrone are at first together, talking about her good health, his good appetite, his real estate deals, their sons'...

*A somewhat different version of this paper, entitled "O'Neill's Dramatic Process," appeared in American Literature (March 1987), pp. 58-70. The present version emphasizes a psychoanalytic point of view omitted from the other. --S.A.B.
whispered conversation, Edmund's illness, the foghorn, and Tyrone's snoring. When Jamie and Edmund enter, their mother smiles and speaks "in a merry tone that is a bit forced":

MARY

I've been teasing your father about his snoring.

To Tyrone.

I'll leave it to the boys, James. They must have heard you. No, not you, Jamie. I could hear you down the hall almost as bad as your father. You're like him. As soon as your head touches the pillow you're off and ten foghorns couldn't wake you.

She stops abruptly, catching Jamie's eyes regarding her with an uneasy, probing look. Her smile vanishes and her manner becomes self-conscious. Why are you staring, Jamie?

Her hands flutter up to her hair.

Is my hair coming down? It's hard for me to do it up properly now. My eyes are getting so bad and I never can find my glasses.

The reader or audience must first be struck, not by the meaning of anything said, but by the discrepancy between the apparently trivial topic, Tyrone's snoring, and the intensity of Mary's unease; indeed by the intensity of the entire moment. Retrospectively we know that Mary's concern with the snoring and the foghorn imply the sleeplessness she experiences when resuming her morphine after a cure; but at a first reading, we only know that she didn't sleep well. The anxiety accompanying our retrospective knowledge may divert our attention from other processes in the scene and their meanings.

Mary's remark, "I'll leave it to the boys," invites Jamie and Edmund to become her allies in the quarrel against Tyrone. But immediately after giving the invitation to both sons, she excludes Jamie on the grounds that he was snoring too; he is just like his father. Jamie responds to Mary's change of mind with an "uneasy, probing look" which causes her to become extremely flustered. Jamie, in turn, "looks away guiltily" and says "Your hair's all right, Mama. I was only thinking how well you look." Once again, in retrospect, we know that Jamie suspects his mother may have gone back to her drug; but our retrospective knowledge may divert us from another motive for his "uneasy probing look": that he retaliates against her rejecting him from the alliance against his father. Her unease testifies to the effectiveness of Jamie's thrust, making him feel guilty in turn. His denial, made facing away from her, creates another kind of alliance with Mary than she had imagined: they join in feeling guiltily anxious. Meanwhile, they exclude Tyrone and Edmund from their intimacy.

Tyrone now "heartily" enters the conversation, affirming the content of Jamie's statement so emphatically that he gives the impression of wanting to abolish the tone of anxiety and guilt that links his wife and older son. He also probably wants to deflect the trend toward ganging up "on the old man" which he had anticipated on page 18. Edmund now enters the battle, agreeing with his father and brother that Mary looks "grand." The stage direction tells us that Mary "is reassured and smiles at him lovingly. He winks with a kidding grin," and adds, "I'll back you up about Papa's snoring. Gosh, what a racket!" The last remark answers Mary's original invitation for an ally against her husband. By speaking, Edmund and Tyrone try to participate in, as well as eradicate, the painful intimacy that binds Mary and Jamie.

Jamie now tries to enter the new alliance of Edmund and Mary, saying that he too had heard his father snoring, and adds a sneering quotation from Othello which provokes Tyrone to defend himself and the bard by condemning Jamie's gambling. At this moment Mary and both sons are allied against Tyrone. Mary speaks in defense of Jamie, and Edmund adds in support, "Yes, for Pete's sake, Papa! Give it a rest, can't you?" The stage direction has him slump into the chair next to his brother.

Now Mary does a most unexpected thing by turning on Edmund "reprovingly": "Your father wasn't finding fault with you. You don't have to always take Jamie's part. You'd think
you were the one ten years older." Her words expel Edmund from the alliance against Tyrone. And since he has just criticized his father, Edmund is left alone. Like a cat who has just gotten the cream, Jamie says "boredly." "What's all the fuss about? Let's forget it."

Why does Mary turn on Edmund? In retrospect one finds several explanations in the content, the most conspicuous being that if Edmund proves to have consumption she risks feeling the loss of him to the disease that killed her father. Threats of loss so overwhelm Mary that she can do nothing but try to deny them. She pushes Edmund away when she senses that her attachment might cause pain beyond her bearing.

But the process of the scene suggests a quite different explanation for Mary's rejection of Edmund, one that operates throughout the play as well as throughout this fragment. Any stable alliance makes the Tyrones anxious, for any alliance carries the potential for one to conspire against another. The most important meaning of the scene is not whether Tyrone snores: a more important meaning is conveyed by the process of alliances that organize, disband, and reorganize around the matter of the snoring: mother and her sons; then Jamie and his mother; then Edmund, Jamie and Mary; and finally Jamie and Mary again.

The foregoing analysis leads to some conclusions about the Tyrones that cannot be reached by any other path. In the process of rejection and acceptance, each of the Tyrones feels it is better to be the one who rejects, rather than the one rejected. Regarded from this point of view, Tyrone and Edmund seem better able than Mary and Jamie to tolerate passivity, while Mary and Jamie need more desperately to control the shifts and changes occurring in the family dynamics.

On the whole, an alliance of all four Tyrones seems not to occur. Even when Edmund tells the story of Shaughnessy's pigs, where the butt of the joke is a neighbor they all detest, Mary's enjoyment is forced and Tyrone's alternates with disapproval and worry.

Alliances of three occur frequently but disintegrate at once, because one begins immediately to compete with another for the favor of the third, or one sets the other two in competition for his or her favor.

Certain alliances of two endure according to a different rhythm from that which governs alliances of three. Jamie and his mother have a permanent bond in their despair and self-loathing. Edmund and his father are aligned in having a capacity for flexibility greater than the others, which they show in working through their dispute about the sanatorium to a partial resolution.

These and other stable alliances--alliances that remain intact, despite momentary interruptions, throughout the play--serve as a rhythmic constant against which O'Neill presents the countering process of alliances that crystallize and shatter in an instant. The counterpoint of stable and unstable alliances contributes to the symphonic-like structure and effect that many, including O'Neill himself, have noticed.

The process of the play carries not only meanings, but the drama itself. By this dramatic process, O'Neill compels the audience to feel what his characters feel. The process of shifting alliances makes us feel the intolerance of any of the Tyrones to separation from the others. Every change of alliance implies rejection and loss. The threat of isolation and loss causes anxiety so intense that the Tyrones cannot convey in words alone either the strength or complexity of the experience. If they could speak clearly of their dread of separation, it would not be so serious a problem for them. O'Neill dramatizes their reaction in its very essence--its inability to be articulated. In so doing, he forces the audience to grope for meaning among the multiple uncertainties that plague the Tyrones themselves.

--Stephen A. Black
THE TYRONE FAMILY IN BRUGES: A BELGIAN LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT


A heavy fog was progressively shrouding Medieval Bruges on that dark November evening, and the town's celebrated canals were suffused with brooding mystery. It was against such an appropriate background that Julien Schoenaerts' controversial production of O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night opened at the Korrekelder Theatre. The foggy atmosphere which enveloped the city undoubtedly contributed to the success that the show had with its enthusiastic opening-night audience.

Attending the performance of an O'Neill play in Belgium is a rare opportunity. Indeed, Long Day's Journey had not been produced in this country since 1970, when it was staged in French by the Théâtre de l'Ancre in the provincial town of Charleroi. Thus while O'Neill enjoys considerable popularity in England, France and Germany, he is practically unknown to the average theatergoer in Belgium. The new version of Long Day's Journey, co-produced by the Bruges Korrekelder and the Antwerp Arenbergscouwburg theatre companies, received its premiere in Bruges in mid-September, subsequently moved to Ghent for approximately fifteen performances, and after that tryout period joined the Korrekelder repertory in Bruges from November 14, 1986 to January 10, 1987. (This reviewer attended the performance there on November 29.)

Julien Schoenaerts' vision of O'Neill's masterpiece drew both criticism and praise from Flemish drama critics. The reviewers of Het Laatste Nieuws and De Standaard rejected the "dull" characterization concept, citing the lack of energy in the performances of Mary and James Tyrone, and conceding merit only to the young actors who played their two sons. On the other hand, the critics of De Gentenaar, De Morgen, De Gazet van Antwerpen and Brugsch Handelsblad praised the non-melodramatic theatrical style that Schoenaerts had adopted and applauded his ability to preserve a delicate balance among the four protagonists. The present review will try to provide a more balanced examination of the production's qualities and defects.

At the outset it should be noted that the Korrekelder Company's repertoire readily conforms with O'Neill's dramaturgy. Since its founding in 1961, the theatre has specialized in serious avant-garde drama by Dutch, French and English authors. Over the years, it has produced such plays as Beckett's Waiting for Godot and Pinter's The Caretaker and The Lover, and has also brought to Flemish audiences works by Dürrenmatt, Orton, Hampton, Ionesco, Obaldia, Claus, Horovitz, Mauriac and Camus. As such a list might suggest, O'Neill's tragedy received the commitment of theatre practitioners dedicated to effective productions of modern masterpieces.

In addition, the theatrical space offered by the Korrekelder was certainly well-suited to the intrinsic rhythms of O'Neill's play. The constricted performance area, together with the small size of the auditorium, reinforced the intimate nature of the drama offering a powerful contrast between the narrow stage and the overwhelming intensity of the heroes' griefs. Such a space could have served admirably for the "S. S. Glencairn playlets, in which the confines of the forecastle perform an essential role in shaping the tragic mood. This set, then, reminded one of the playwright's earlier achievement and stressed the continuity existing among the various periods of O'Neill's career. Interestingly, when performed in Ghent, the play benefitted equally from a much larger stage, which, instead of stressing the intimate aspect of the drama, italicized the distance separating the protagonists and thus hinted at their profound solitude. (The accompanying photographs of the two settings will give the reader a more accurate idea of

1This information was derived from the periodical De Korre, 13, ii (November 1986).
Norbert Kaart as Edmund.

Photos courtesy of the Herman Selleslags Studio in Antwerp.

Counterclockwise from right: Schoenaerts, Decleir, Kaart and Carl Ridders as Jamie.

Set used for the larger stage in Ghent.
the dimensions of the two stages than mere words can.)

The set design in both locations conformed largely with the playwright's wishes and instructions and demonstrated Schoenaerts' excellent intuition for the type of theatrical language required by O'Neill's drama. The Bruges decor duplicated almost exactly the interior of O'Neill's boyhood home, Monte Cristo Cottage, in its present restored condition. The properties, especially the wicker chairs, combined with the miniscule proportions of the stage, offered an effective evocation of O'Neill's cramped and dreary New London house as it is remembered in the play.

Dominique Wiche's handling of costumes was equally judicious. Although, as the group photograph reveals, they did not completely jibe with the author's historical vision, they nonetheless expressed remarkably well the opposed personalities of the four Tyrones and thus offered further theatrical tensions among the characters. Edmund, for instance, was clothed in a "bohemian" fashion that betrayed his poetic inclinations. Similarly, Jamie's garments, though more redolent of the 80's than of the century's earlier decades, conveyed the elder brother's bitterness and cynicism through their dandy-like character. By contrast, the elder Tyrones were dressed more conventionally—a feature that reflected their adherence to social status and tradition. That their clothes appeared worn out and shabby underscored the disintegration of the world symbolized by James and Mary.

In addition to directing the play and designing the set, Julien Schoenaerts undertook its adaptation into Dutch and also played the role of James Tyrone. A famous Flemish actor, he began his career in 1950 as a member of the Royal Dutch Theatre Company in Antwerp, after graduating (as did his three fellow performers in Long Day's Journey) from the well-known acting school, Studio Herman Teirlinck. From 1962 to 1969, he worked for the Dutch Comedy in Amsterdam. Then he returned to Belgium, where he has continued to appear regularly on both stage and screen, performing leading roles in plays by such noted writers as Kafka, Dostoevski, Dürrenmatt, Genet, Pirandello, Shakespeare, Beckett and Pinter. Progressively, he gained renown as a fine interpreter of the classics, while establishing a solid reputation for directing as well.

Schoenaerts' gifts as translator and adapter of Long Day's Journey merit great praise. Not only does O'Neill sound superbly well in this Dutch version, which underlines the dark and brooding overtones of the dramatist's own language; but the text of the play could be fully appreciated, owing to Schoenaerts' felicitous decisions with regard to cutting. Whereas in the 1970 French version, performed in Charleroi, Edmund's celebrated sea speech was, for no apparent reason, deleted, these lines were rightly restored in this production, whose cuts removed no essential element of meaning from O'Neill's script.

In his directing capacity, Schoenaerts attempted to achieve a balance of forces between the elder Tyrones, resisting the temptation to focus excessively on either James or Mary. Moreover, he decided to delete the role of the maid, Cathleen, probably in an effort to stress the playwright's "absurdist" vision. As a result of this decision, Mary delivered the lines normally addressed to Cathleen to a character existing only in her troubled imagination, permitting Schoenaerts to concentrate on Mary's loneliness and further enhance O'Neill's theme of human isolation. This approach may not be entirely unjustified, since recent criticism has demonstrated points of confluence between O'Neill's later dramas and the work of Beckett and Camus—especially in their rendering of an ominous, disquieting universe in which man is doomed to an "exile without remedy."

Schoenaerts' directing stance, then, merits approbation inasmuch as it allowed us to follow the development that links O'Neill's plays to the surrealist experiments of such successors as Ionesco and Pinter.

Finally, as an actor, Schoenaerts also had his moments of magic. These emerged most richly in the fourth-act scene between James and Edmund. When confessing to his son with "real, if alcoholic, affection" that he liked him in spite of everything--"You're no great shakes as a son. It's a case of 'A poor thing but mine own,'"--Schoenaerts reached a sensitive emotional climax that simultaneously revealed his acting talents and underlined the love binding James and his younger son.

Surprisingly, Reinhilde Decleir as Mary Tyrone, disadvantaged perhaps by her young age, gave a less successful performance than did Schoenaerts as her husband. Still, although her version of Mary lacked rhythm and energy, she did have brilliant moments, especially in the monologue that replaced her conversation with Cathleen. Unfortunately, Mrs. Decleir did not sufficiently stress Mary's gradually intensifying dependence on morphine, preferring to offer a non-evolutionary depiction of the heroine's addiction. And she appeared to have decided--for I am certain that this was not a result of technical incompetence--not to emphasize Mary's fiery temperament. Despite these defects, Mrs. Decleir had clearly prepared her part with care and diligence.

But certainly the most brilliant acting in this production was provided by the two young Dutch actors who played the Tyrone brothers. Norbert Kaart gave a most poetic version of Edmund, one which added considerable depth to the character. In this task, he was undoubtedly aided by his genuine "Bohemian" complexion. He recited Edmund's sea speech with such intensity that any critic who still considered Edmund a minor and superficial character would have instantly revised his judgment. Carl Ridders, enlisting the help of his natural Mephistophelian looks, offered an appropriately cynical portrait of Jamie. Both Kaart and Ridders achieved their greatest success in the famous last-act scene between the two brothers. When Jamie admitted his ambivalent attitude of love and hate towards his younger brother, both attained a climax of sincerity that moved the entire audience without any recourse to melodramatic effects. Owing to this powerful rendering of the sons' roles, O'Neill's masterpiece could be seen from a perspective somewhat different from the usual--one which highlighted Edmund's and Jamie's tragic plights. In addition, both young actors handled the problem of imbibition particularly well. Steven F. Bloom has made abundantly clear that O'Neill possessed a clinically accurate knowledge of the symptoms of alcohol dependency. Bloom argues that at certain degrees of intoxication, alcoholics tend to become more loquacious and insightful than when sober. Therefore, he implies, the playwright's characters cannot be interpreted as conventional, melodramatic stage drunkards. That Kaart's and Ridders' version of alcoholism should reflect the findings of recent critical investigations points to the modernity of their acting style.

In summation, Julien Schoenaerts' production of Long Day's Journey Into Night was most meritorious in its accurate setting, its skillful translation, its judicious cutting, its "absurdist" suggestiveness, and its superb presentation of the Edmund-Jamie relationship. The fact that the part of Mary Tyrone was not consistently performed in a suitable style can be forgiven in view of the absence of a tradition of interpreting O'Neill in Belgium. Because of these various elements, I submit that Schoenaerts' production is of major importance in the historical record of O'Neill's foreign performances. It is to be hoped that such a noteworthy achievement will encourage more Belgian theatre companies to devote their energies to the plays of O'Neill, especially as the 100th anniversary of his birth is approaching.

--Marc Maufort

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UP-STAGED AND OFF-STAGED BY THE DIRECTOR AND DESIGNER:
The Hairy Ape and Desire Under the Elms in London

London marked the O'Neill centenary a little early with the coincidental openings of two of the early works in a single week in May 1987—the already celebrated German-language production of The Hairy Ape by the Schaubühne Company of West Berlin at the National Theatre, and a new production of Desire Under the Elms at the Greenwich Theatre. If anything is to be learned from these productions by the many theatrical entrepreneurs who will soon embark on their own O'Neill productions in the centennial year, it may well be this: "Place your trust in the dramatist you are supposedly honoring, not in the ingenuity of a 'creative' concept." That these plays, both about imprisonments of varying sorts, managed to break through some of the shackles imposed upon them by self-indulgent directors and designers and nearly reached their audiences in the end is testimony to the strength of these sometimes lightly regarded works.

The one-week visit of the Schaubühne Company to London's National was made possible by the corporate sponsorship of Mercedes-Benz in conjunction with both the London Festival of German Arts and the National's own International Theatre 87 series, marking the tenth anniversary of the opening of its South Bank complex. Under the direction of Peter Stein, the Schaubühne has in the last fifteen years become Germany's best-known theatrical troupe, replacing in influence even Brecht's Berliner Ensemble on the other side of the Wall. Begun in 1960 by left-wing students to produce world drama to fit their own Marxist views, the company has become, paradoxically, the showpiece of capitalistic West Berlin; and the city fathers, to demonstrate to the world that their isolated city is vibrantly progressive, have poured millions of marks into the company coffers. In 1981 they provided an extravagantly expensive structure of steel and concrete seating 1500 that is regarded as Europe's most up-to-date theatre.

Perhaps the city's lavish gift of a technically perfect theatre with endless possibilities for miracles of staging has imprisoned the company just as the industrial machine-driven world has imprisoned The Hairy Ape's Yank. O'Neill's tightly structured once-short play was produced in Berlin on November 9, 1986, in a staggeringly overblown staging that, so rumor has it, ran about five hours on opening night due to technical difficulties. The production turned the spotlight not on director Peter Stein or leading actor Roland Schäfer, but on designer Lucio Fanti, who provided settings that are in themselves a definition of "German Expressionism." The huge, steeply raked, dangerously angled sets represent a liner, seemingly the size of the QE2, distortedly pitched to such a point that it must inevitably sink, as well as a cityscape reminiscent of Fritz Lang's Metropolis come to three-dimensional life—on the bias—onstage. The difficulty on the first night was that the complicated, sophisticated machinery needed to change the sets during Yank's odyssey from ship to shore repeatedly ground to a halt, subjecting the audience to endless waits between what ought to be free-flowing scenes with rhythmical inevitability. Once the mechanics of the production were solved, Stein and Fanti's Der Haarige Affe became a critical triumph, but one in which O'Neill could hardly share since his The Hairy Ape was buried, literally, under tons of scenery.

Whereas the play's running time on opening night in London, May 11, 1987, was no quite as long as the Berlin opening, it took the entire six-night run to work out the production's bugs at the National Theatre. The first night audience this time was subjected to a 4 1/2 hour technical nightmare during which scenery buckled and threatened to collapse to audible cries from anguished stagehands; and an electrical short caused the intermission to stretch to over an hour. By the end of the week the play ran an almost bearable three hours and twenty minutes; but, despite the dialogue auf Deutsch O'Neill's voice was beginning to make itself heard.

What the audience first sees as the play begins in this production, which has to be experienced to be believed, are three huge, parallel but not-quite-level horizontal plates of welded steel that fill the enormous proscenium opening of the National
Lyttelton Theatre. The three plates mark the three playing areas of the first half of the play and represent the ship's various levels: the stokehole at stage level, the forecastle halfway up the proscenium, and the promenade deck at a level just below the proscenium arch. To the throbbing of the ship's engines, the central plate rises to reveal the cramped forecastle barely six feet high that forces the actors to bend their heads and scrunch their shoulders, suggesting their animal nature. Swaying as they move between their barred bunks, the actors naturalistically portray exhausted sailors with no choice but to adjust to the nearly uninhabitable quarters, some lurching drunkenly, some retching as they sing and swill their beer.

The point of placing the forecastle at the central level becomes clear as the welded steel moves back in place to blot out the scene and the upper plate rises to reveal a deck so high up in the stage's opening that much of the audience must crane to see what is happening. The audience's perspective of Mildred and her aunt at the ship's rail is that of the crew quartered far below them. Unfortunately, despite printed warnings posted throughout the lobby that the short second scene would not be completely visible to the entire audience, that it would in fact be dangerous for individuals to move about the theatre, a traffic began that continued throughout the performance. Those seated down front and at the extreme sides, fully aware that the production's unique feature was its massive sets, made sure of getting their money's worth by hunting better vantage points in a sold-out playhouse!

When Mildred, a wraith clothed in a long white dress with a high collar and cloche that barely reveal a sickly, powdery-white face punctuated by a slash of red lips, visits the stokehole, she descends from the very top of the stage down a precarious flight of stairs to the stage floor. There the bottom plate moves to reveal a row of men naked to the waist shoveling coal into the ship's furnaces—round openings through which glares a sickening, almost blinding orange light. The whole scene is as much askew as the forecastle and promenade deck, despite its taking place at stage level. The glare, the noise and the rhythmic movement cause the audience to gasp at what may well be the most overwhelming stage picture they will ever see, dwarfing even the barricades of Broadway and the West End's Les Misérables.

The stokehole scene contains the production's most imaginative, telling moment, the one contribution by the director that enhances rather than overwhelms the play. As Mildred comes face to face with Yank, her arms slowly and involuntarily rise from her sides as if to embrace the enormous, half-naked, filthy creature before her: the languid neurasthenic has been aroused by the animal within the man. Then, suddenly, revulsion replaces desire. Mildred's arms drop; she calls him a filthy beast, then faints. Here is a moment suggesting what might have been, had the director chosen to illuminate the play rather than bombard the audience's visual sense.

The latter half of the production presents a continuing parade of startling images, none of them quite as eye-opening as the stokehole scene. On the precariously raked stage, cut-outs of distorted skyscrapers move from side to center to display within their shopfront windows jewels and furs, the spoils of the rich. Yank explores Fifth Avenue, at one point even climbing a skyscraper silhouette to effect a breast-beating, arm-waving King Kong pose. Finally insinuating himself into the awareness of the previously indifferent city dwellers, whose faces are made up as red masks, Yank is encircled and beaten senseless by the Keystone Kops to the accompaniment of 1920s jazz.

The prison scene that follows presents two tiers of cells that extend from front to back at the side of the stage, ending at a barred window through which the city is visible. Yank is seen in the first cell, but only the hands of the other prisoners are visible as they reach through the bars, their voices a hollow echo. When one of the prisoners begins to read Senator Queen's speech, the top-hatted senator himself appears at the other side of the stage in front of an American flag at a dais decorated with an American eagle. As he rants—in German—the senator's speech takes on the fevered cadences of a Hitler harangue.
SCENES FROM THE SCHAUBUHNE Hairy Ape--

photographs by Ruth Walz.
After the I.W.W. scene, the production's one nearly conventional set, the zoo of the final scene consists of several two- and three-tiered circular cages tilted to the right surrounded by the city's menacing skyscrapers on a bias to the left. Several gorillas can be seen moving about their cages, but Yank confronts the single gorilla in the cage at center stage. As the entire company is utilized in the play's final scene, the curtain call, with Yank flanked by sixteen gorillas, is as visually startling as anything that has come before. The mood of the hauntingly lit final scene, with the curious low-keyed chattering adding to its eeriness, is immediately dispelled by the irresistibly comic lineup of men and women in gorilla suits. And the audience—they have no choice—laughs.

As Yank, Roland Schäfer perhaps commands the stage too well. The imposing actor is and should be the commanding figure among the other seamen, but the towering figure cannot be ignored by the New York automatons who ought to look right through him. He is not the fool the Wobblies take him for. When Schäfer adopts the pose of Rodin's Thinker early in the play, he seems in fact to be a man capable of thought, rather than O'Neill's unthinking animal. An intelligence shines through the performance despite the blackened eyes and dirt-streaked chest not quite hirsute enough for the play's epithetic title. Schäfer's intelligence, however, evokes the audience's sympathy, which tends to sentimentalize the play—no mean feat against the dehumanizing expressionistic backgrounds, but not necessarily the author's intention. What does become clear in the performance is the character's growing awareness of a nature that makes him unfit for any environment. Not even belonging in the gorilla's cage, Schäfer's Yank is alienated modern man who might find his rightful home in the emptiness of a Beckettian lunar landscape.

Oddly enough, a British actor in another American play suggests that the National might have better cast the part from its own ranks. In Alan Ayckbourn's small-scaled but more effective production of Arthur Miller's A View from the Bridge in the Cottesloe Theatre, the National's studio theatre, Michael Gambon, a bear of a man, is completely convincing as a longshoreman who willfully thrusts himself toward his own demise by a refusal to acknowledge what is obvious to those around him. Like Yank, he stubbornly, even arrogantly, insists on his own view of himself—a pipedream as fragile as that of any O'Neill character.

Those who see the Schaubühne Hairy Ape will never forget it, but what they will remember will more than likely be its startling stage pictures rather than O'Neill's play, one perhaps more suited to the dimensions of a studio space like the Cottesloe than to the vastnesses of the National's Lyttelton or the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz.

In contrast to the many disruptive performance breaks during The Hairy Ape, Desire Under the Elms, which opened at the Greenwich Theatre on May 6, 1987, is played without interruption. There are no scene changes and no intermission. Aside from the miscasting of the role of Ephraim, this Desire might have been a solid presentation of the play, but once again a director/designer concept mars the production. With Fanti's Hairy Ape sets, the audience may lose the play, but at least they know where they are. The question a spectator at the Greenwich keeps asking is, "Is this house, barn, or open land?"

Director Patrick Mason and designer Joe Vanek have chosen to ignore O'Neill's specific instructions for a unit setting comprising both exterior and interior of the Cabot homestead, but their own simplified setting leads to confusion. The stage is enclosed by two interior walls forming a right angle at upstage-center.

Within the playing area, which does not distinguish house from field, are only a few props—Ephraim's bed on one side, blankets to be used as bedrolls for his sons on the other side, and some crates and an outcropping of rock downstage center. The juxtaposition of farm and house makes this underfurnished homestead seem hardly worth fighting—and dying—for. When Eben opens the play calling God's sky "Purty" and then
spits in disgust with his immediate situation and environment. He is in fact within the walled playing area, seemingly within the house. There is nothing "pury" in sight in what is perhaps the first production of this play without a single elm onstage; and one wonders about the upbringing that the mother with whom Eben is obsessed provided him. This is a house in which there has never been a mother or any other female, a house any same Abbie might flee rather than covet, a house indistinguishable from an ill-equipped barn.

As the play progresses, the curious setting is more and more damaging. When the brothers sit to eat, they pull crates up to the rock which serves as a table. When they sleep, they stretch out on the floor. When Ephraim dances to demonstrate his virility, he ends up jumping up and down on his bed. When Abbie decides to kill the child that has come between her and her lover, she has nowhere to go. Although O'Neill indicated a second story, this one-level house has no stairs, no baby, not even a cradle for her to bend over.

What is lost is the sense of Abbie fighting for possession of all of the property. As O'Neill envisioned it, Abbie must move through the house making it her own. In one scene he has Abbie and Eben, in separate rooms, each so strongly sensing the presence of the other that they seem to be staring down the house's walls. Here there are no walls to be stared down, and they must gaze intently and directly at one another while occupying the same undivided space. When Abbie approaches Eben in this single playing area, he orders her out of "my room" by threateningly picking up a rock. There is no indication of the limits of the parlor where Eben's mother still holds sway, the last room that Abbie states "ain't mine yet." When Abbie finally lures Eben into the parlor, she sets out candles all around the playing area. Candles in the kitchen, in Ephraim's bedroom? Candles in the barn? Candles on the land? Now making no sense, the play's last line--"It's a jim-dandy farm, no denyin'. Wished I owned it!"--loses its intended irony.

O'Neill's Cabot, as imprisoned by the open land as Yank is imprisoned by an alien urban setting, makes something of that land before greed destroys him and his. The Cabot of this production is more an Irish peasant living primitively on land he has never mastered, a concept that suggests what may have attracted the director to the play. Director Mason is best known for his work with the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, specifically his five productions of plays by Irish dramatist Tom MacIntyre. The Mason-MacIntyre collaboration earned special acclaim for The Great Hunger, an almost wordless, ritualized exploration of the dehumanizing of the Irish farm laborer by tradition, church, and unyielding land. Mason has made O'Neill's mid-nineteenth-century New England an extension of twentieth-century rural Ireland. As Ephraim in Desire, Tom Hickey, who played the leading role in the MacIntyre play in Ireland in 1983 and again in its revival in 1986 which the Abbey Theatre sent to Scotland's Edinburgh Festival and London, is still the wizened, half-starved, ignorant Irishman of The Great Hunger. As Ephraim, a role played in New York revivals by Karl Malden and George C. Scott, men of obvious physical strength, Hickey seems too ineffectual to have instilled his sons with his own fear of an unloving Old Testament God, too slight to beat Eben in combat.

Colin Firth and Carmen Du Sautoy, whose chemistry had already proved effective as sensitive young man and older woman in Granada TV's adaptation of J. B. Priestley's Lost Empires, shown in the United States on PBS's Masterpiece Theatre series, are well paired as Eben and Abbie and might have fueled a more straightforward production of the play. Their plausible progression from revenge to lust to love and redemption is finally moving and deserving of a less confusing setting as well as a more physically imposing Ephraim to be a worthy antagonist. During the run of Desire Under the Elms, a production mounted earlier this year by the Greenwich Theatre, Chekhov's Three Sisters, transferred to London's West End for a successful run. This O'Neill production will have no afterlife.

--Albert E. Kalson
COUNTDOWN TO CENTENNIAL: ANNOUNCEMENTS OF COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAMS AND PRODUCTIONS


Collaborations III is a Eugene O'Neill Centennial festival consisting of lectures on O'Neill, readings and performances of his plays, exhibits of O'Neilliana, a dance performance interpreting his work, and other events sponsored jointly by Connecticut College in New London and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut, directed by Connecticut College Professors Linda Herr (Theater) and Richard Moorton (Classics), administrated by Peggy Middleton, and funded by grants and gifts from the Connecticut Humanities Council, the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, the Bowdenwein Foundation, the Thames Printing Co. of Norwich, Connecticut, and the New London Day. It is now possible to supplement the first brief notice of this Centennial celebration given in the Eugene O'Neill Newsletter (Spring 1987, p. 41) with a relatively complete calendar of events as it stands at this writing, though the many ancillary observances of the Centennial at local and regional educational institutions and other places to be coordinated with Collaborations III are too numerous to be listed here.

Collaborations III begins with a ribbon cutting in the Charles Shain Library on the Connecticut College campus at 4:00 p.m., Oct. 15, 1987, to open an O'Neill exhibit of first editions of O'Neill plays, copies of the plays autographed by O'Neill himself, O'Neill letters, playbills and pictures drawn from the collections of O'Neilliana at the Shain Library and the Monte Cristo Cottage in New London, which is also mounting a separate exhibition and will host a series of O'Neill readings during the Centennial year. On the evening of Oct. 15, the keynote lecture, "O'Neill's Sense of Tragedy," is to be given at 8:00 p.m. in Dana Hall on the Connecticut College campus by Richard Sewall, Professor Emeritus of English at Yale University. The lecture series will continue on Nov. 3, 1987, when Professor Kristin Pfefferkorn-Forbath of the Philosophy Department at Connecticut College speaks on "O'Neill and His Age" at the New London Library at 8:00 p.m. Two weeks later, on Nov. 11, the distinguished actress Geraldine Fitzgerald will lecture on "An Irish Electra: The Demons of Mary Tyrone" at 8:00 p.m. in Dana Hall (C.C.). On the three following evenings, Nov. 19, 20 and 21, the Connecticut College Theater Department production of Beyond The Horizon (with a New York guest director) will be presented at 8:00 p.m. in the Palmer Auditorium at Connecticut College.

The December calendar opens with a lecture by Professor Burton Cooper of the English Department at Boston University on "O'Neill and Film" to be delivered on Dec. 3 at 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A at Connecticut College. On Dec. 17 and 18, at 7:45 p.m., the O'Neill Theater Center will host the National Theater Institute's production of The Count of Monte Cristo under the direction of Lynn Britt, Richard Digby Day and George White.

Professor Michael Burlingame of the Connecticut College History Department ushers in 1988 with a lecture on "O'Neill and Opera: An Analysis of Musical Settings of O'Neill Plays" to be delivered on Jan. 19 at a place and time to be announced. One week later, on Jan. 26, George White, President of the O'Neill Theater Center, will lecture at Connecticut College on "O'Neill in China" (room and time T.B.A.).

The February lecture calendar features two lectures by Connecticut College Professors of German examining O'Neill's considerable influence in Germany. On Feb. 4, Rita Terras will speak on "German Translations of O'Neill" at 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A (C.C.), to be followed on Feb. 10 by Janis Solomon's lecture on "O'Neill and German Expressionism" at 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A (C.C.).

On March 3, 4 and 5, the Connecticut College Theater Department will present a production of Desire Under The Elms, with a guest actor working with Connecticut College students, at 8:00 p.m. each evening in Palmer Auditorium at Connecticut College. In coordination with this production, David Hays, Adjunct Professor of Theater at
Connecticut College will give a talk about the set of the original Broadway production of Long Day's Journey Into Night, which he designed (time and place T.B.A.). Then, focusing on O'Neill's intense interest in social issues, Professor Jane Torrey of the Connecticut College Department of Psychology will deliver a talk entitled "O'Neill on Oppression" at 8:00 p.m. on March 9 in Blaustein 210A (C.C.).

On April 12, Professor Spencer Golub of the Department of Theater Arts at Brown University will speak on "The Aesthetics of Alienation: O'Neill and the Poetics of Modernist Strangeness" at 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A (C.C.). During April the Connecticut College Dance Department will present a dance interpretation of O'Neill's Ancient Mariner with original choreography by Professor Martha Myers of the Connecticut College Department of Dance (time and place T.B.A.).

On May 10, Connecticut College Classics Professor Richard Moorton will speak on "Tragic Visions: O'Neill and the Greeks" (time and place T.B.A.).

The fall slate of activities will begin early with Professor Jordon Pecile of the Department of English at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy speaking on "O'Neill's Early Letters and the Sequel to Ah, Wilderness!" on Aug. 30, 1988, at 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A (C.C.). Next, Lowell Swartzell, Professor of Educational Theater at N.Y.U., will be featured in a talk entitled "Get My Goat: O'Neill's Views of Children and Adolescents in His Plays and Life" on Sept. 13, 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A (C.C.). Later in September, on the 27th, Roger Brown, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, will discuss "Psychological Causality and Responsibility as O'Neill Conceived Them" at 8:00 p.m. in Dana Hall (C.C.).

Sometime during the fall '88 program of Collaborations III, Bart Roccoberton, Director of the Institute of Professional Puppetry Arts at the O'Neill Theater Center, will produce The Emperor Jones with puppets (time and place T.B.A.).

The Collaborations III lecture series will conclude with two lectures in mid-October 1988. The first, on Oct. 11 by Jeffrey Sands, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will address the subject of "O'Neill's Productions During the 'Silent Years', 1934-1946" at 8:00 p.m. in Blaustein 210A (C.C.). The second, culminating lecture of Collaborations III will be delivered by O'Neill biographer Barbara Gelb, speaking on "O'Neill at 100" on Oct. 12, 1988 (date tentatively confirmed) at 8:00 p.m. in Dana Hall (C.C.). The grand finale of the New London celebration of the O'Neill Centennial will occur as George White dedicates a statue of O'Neill as a boy at the New London shore on October 16, 1988, the one-hundredth birthday of America's greatest playwright.

--Richard Moorton, Co-Director and Chairman of the Lecture Series
Collaborations III
Tel. (203) 447-7680 OR 444-1570

II. CENTENNIAL PRODUCTIONS PLANNED AT REGIONAL THEATRES.

In response to a letter from Fred Wilkins, President of the Eugene O'Neill Society, asking for information about plans and offering Society assistance in realizing and publicizing them, the following regional theatres have offered their ideas, firm or tenuous, for centennial-related performances. Fuller details, when available, will be printed, and the plans of other companies will be offered as soon as they are received.

Readers, whether or not they are members of the Eugene O'Neill Society, may wish to contact theatres that express an interest in dramaturgical counsel, and theatres whose productions they may be able and willing to review for a future issue of the Newsletter.

--Ed.
* THE HARTFORD STAGE COMPANY, Mark Lamos, Artistic Director. 50 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103. Tel. (203) 525-5601.

A new production of A Moon for the Misbegotten, directed by Jackson Phippin, is one of the six productions in the HSC's 1987-1988 season.

* THE NEW ROSE THEATRE (Portland's Classic Repertory Theatre), Michael Griggs, Artistic Director. 904 S.W. Main Street, Portland, OR 97205. Tel. (503) 222-2495.

Anna Christie or A Touch of the Poet will be the opening show of the NRT's 1988-1989 season. Mr. Griggs would welcome the assistance of any knowledgeable O'Neillian in the area, as he hopes to "create a special project" in connection with the production. He also brought Wilkins' letter to the attention of the fifteen-member Portland Area Theatre Alliance, which he serves as President, and offers positive results: "At least two others have expressed interest in full productions of O'Neill during their seasons--Storefront Theatre and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which hopes to open a Portland company in 1988-89. Other theatres are considering smaller-scale participation on October 16."

* ONE ACT THEATRE CO., Simon L. Levy, Artistic Director. 430 Mason Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. Tel. (415) 421-5355.

To celebrate the O'Neill Centennial, the OATC has commissioned its playwright-in-residence, Michael Lynch, to adapt O'Neill's short story "Tomorrow." In the new play, entitled Jimmy Tomorrow, Mr. Lynch (author of "San Joaquin Blues," "The Dead End Kid" and "Taco Jesus") "explores the early mind of O'Neill just before his emergence as one of the world's greatest dramatists. Real characters in the story double as characters from some of O'Neill's greatest plays." Previews on May 20, 21 and 24, 1988. Opens May 25; closes June 19. (Best to check in advance, as the season brochure lists later dates.)

* PLAYMAKERS REPERTORY COMPANY, Milly Barranger, Executive Producer, David Hammond, Artistic Director. The University of North Carolina, Graham Memorial Building 052-A, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Tel. (919) 962-1122.

PRC's "O'Neill Celebration," opening in January 1988, comprises a full mounting of the complete Mourning Becomes Electra, divided into two separate evenings: Part One on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday and Sunday matinees; Part Two on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. There will be a two-hour intermission between the two parts on Saturdays and Sundays. Previews January 26/27 and 28/29; opens January 30, last performance of Part Two on February 28. Direction by Mr. Hammond, with set and costume design by Bill Clarke.

* DENVER CENTER THEATRE COMPANY, 1245 Champa, Denver, CO 80204. Tel. (303) 893-4100.

A new production of Long Day's Journey Into Night will be performed from January 8 to February 12, 1988, following previews on January 4-7.

* THE BERKSHIRE PUBLIC THEATRE, Frank Bessell, Artistic Director. 30 Union Street, P.O. Box 860, Pittsfield, MA 01202. Tel. (413) 445-4631.

The BPT is considering several O'Neill plays, from which it will choose one as a centennial production, with a performance possible on the actual centennial date of Sunday, October 16, 1988. Anna Christie, The Emperor Jones, Marco Millions and The Great God Brown are the contenders--with the nod, if casting and other considerations are favorable, probably going to Brown. (A future issue will include the winner and performance dates.) Mr. Bessell is also pursuing the possibilities of filming two of O'Neill's plays, Mourning Becomes Electra (on location in New England) and Beyond the Horizon --but those are longer-term projects that will extend well beyond the centenary celebrations.

* * * * * * *

III. PLAYS AND PROGRAMS IN UTAH, reported by Charles Metten of Brigham Young University.
* Long Day’s Journey Into Night and Ah, Wilderness! Act I in reader’s theatre format, with the same actors playing James/Nat, Mary/Essie, Jamie/Uncle Sid, and Richard/Edmund. Directed by Charles Metten, at the Maeser Building Theatre, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, at 7:30 p.m. on November 19-21, 1987. The event, part of the BYU Honors Program, is open to the public.

* "Eugene O'Neill on Film": screenings of the major plays on film throughout the 1987-1988 academic year. Organized by Don Marshall, Humanities Department, Brigham Young University. Open to the public.


* Anna Christie, directed by Sandra Shotwell. Babcock Theatre, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, October 8-17, 1987.

* * *

IV. E.G.O. ON P.B.S.


THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION: MLA '87 and '88

Four events are planned to regale O'Neillians during the 1987 Convention of the Modern Language Association just after Christmas. Three of them are listed as part of the official MLA proceedings:

* "Eugene O'Neill and the Orient," a program arranged by the Society and directed by Jordan Y. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer. Four papers are scheduled:

"O'Neill's Orientalism: A Backward Glance," by Frederic I. Carpenter, Univ. of California, Berkeley, Emeritus;

"O'Neill's Indian Elms," by James A. Robinson, Univ. of Maryland; and

"Authentic Tidings of Invisible Things: Beyond James Robinson's O'Neill and Oriental Thought," by Frank R. Cunningham, Univ. of South Dakota.

TIME: Noon - 1:15 p.m., Tuesday, December 29.
PLACE: Tamalpais, San Francisco Hilton.

* Closed Meeting of the Society’s Board of Directors.
TIME: 5:15-6:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 29.

* Annual Business Meeting of the Society.
TIME: 7:15-8:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 29.
PLACE: Toyon, San Francisco Hilton.

The fourth event, about which details will be sent to members by Secretary Miller in November, will be a bus trip to nearby Tao House, coordinated by the National Park Service and the Eugene O'Neill Foundation. Tao House, featuring a box lunch and a tour of the newly renovated house and its striking environs. No agenda is planned, but all who joined in the Society's previous visit will attest to the value of such a pilgrimage. The Society will foot the bill for the trip to and from the house, but members are asked to pay for their own lunches. (The cost will be announced in the aforementioned November mailing from the Secretary.)

The business meeting on the 29th will include initial voting on several proposed amendments to the by-laws, and elections for all positions (Board and officers) that expire at the end of 1987. While most incumbents are eligible to run again, additional nominations can be made from the floor. Members seeking the glory of office should inform Board Chairman Michael Hinden of their interest. (Department of English, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.)

The 1988 annual meeting will be held, in conjunction with that year's MLA Convention, in New Orleans just after Christmas. Frederick C. Wilkins will chair the paper session, whose umbrella title is currently "Centennial Essays on Eugene O'Neill." Wilkins welcomes suggestions, both for essays and for a less leaky umbrella! (Department of English, Suffolk University, Boston, MA 02114.)

NEWS, NOTES AND INSIGHTS

1. THE BIG THREE. May and June of 1988 will be a rich if exhausting season for barnstorming O'Neillians, what with nearly back-to-back conferences in Belgium, Sweden and the People's Republic of China. The speakers at the Belgian conference in Han-sur-Lesse from 20 to 22 May were listed in the last issue (p. 53). For further details about the event, which is sponsored by the Belgian Luxembourg American Studies Association, note the address in the illustrated ad elsewhere in this issue.

   The Nanjing conference on "Eugene O'Neill: World Playwright" (6-9 June) has issued fewer details thus far, but the scholarly and theatrical components sound both exciting and well balanced, and those who wish to attend or learn more can find the address of the conference director, Liu Haiping, in the conference's boxed ad elsewhere in this issue.

   The Stockholm event in between (24-27 May) is a Nobel Symposium co-sponsored by the Royal Dramatic Theatre, whose bicentennial the event commemorates, and the Nobel Foundation. Its subject is "Strindberg - O'Neill - Modern Theatre." Among the scholarly participants will be Harry G. Carlson, John Henry Raleigh, Egil Törnvqvist, Virginia Floyd, Travis Bogard, Donald Gallup, Tom J. A. Olsson, Edward L. Shaughnessy, and Paul Voelker. Theatrical participants scheduled to perform and/or speak include Jason Robards, Geraldine Fitzgerald, José Quintero, Arvin Brown and Ingmar Bergman. For a detailed program, write to Dr. Tom J. A. Olsson, Organisation Committee, Nobel Symposium, Royal Dramatic Theatre, Box 5037, Stockholm 102 41, Sweden.

2. O'NEILL AT CONFERENCES. In addition to "big three" and the annual O'Neill session at MLA this December (see details in this issue's Society section), O'Neill continues to be prominent in other conferences as well. Here are a few, past and future.

   * American Culture Association's 1987 meeting in Montreal last March: a Drama Division session, "Reflections on O'Neill and Shepard," featured papers by Duane L. Vorhees ("Hitler: Jung: O'Neill--Psychoanalysis Dramatized") and Henry L. Schvey ("A Comparison of the Family Plays of Eugene O'Neill and Sam Shepard").
New England Theatre Conference, Park Plaza Hotel, New Haven, CT, November 6-8, 1987: Frederick C. Wilkins will host a session entitled "Eugene O'Neill: A Pre-Centennial Primer," featuring informal remarks and discussion by scholar Jordan Y. Miller, Monte Cristo Cottage curator Sally Thomas Pavetti, and actor-playwright Paul Shyre, author of the television docudrama Eugene O'Neill: A Glory of Ghosts. Saturday, November 7, from 4:15 to 5:30 p.m. in the Park Plaza.


Northeast Modern Language Association Convention, Providence, RI, March 24-26, 1988: this year's O'Neill session, directed by Martha Bower, will be devoted to "Theatricality and Experiment in O'Neill's Middle Years." Speakers and titles will be listed in the next issue of the Newsletter.

QUINTERO WINS AWARD. The 53rd annual New York Drama League Awards, announced on May 7, 1987, featured a special award, and a well-earned one, to director José Quintero for his "unique" contribution to American theatre with his revivals of the plays of Eugene O'Neill in the 1950's and 60's. Mr. Quintero, who may direct a production of Marco Millions in the People's Republic of China next year, is currently convalescing at his home after surgery. The editor takes the liberty of sending him, herewith, from the millions whose lives he has so deeply touched, the warmest of wishes for a speedy recovery.

AUDIO ELMS IN ENGLAND. The Greenwich production of Desire Under the Elms, reviewed in this issue, was not the only British appearance of that play in the last year or so. In July of 1986, the BBC's Radio 3 offerings included an adaptation of the play by Michael Bakewell, directed by Ronald Mason. Malcolm Hay, reviewing the performance in Plays and Players (September 1986, p. 48), found the play more melodramatic than classical ("the basic ingredients are those of Jacobean tragedy or an average episode of Dallas"), but he liked the direction and the principal actors, and, unlike Albert Kalson in Greenwich, he could "see" the elms!

Robert Beatty made a convincing Ephraim, ... [but] it was Sara Badel and Kerry Shale, in the key roles of stepmother and stepson torn between mutual suspicion and physical attraction, who succeeded so well in projecting their characters that for a few moments they almost had me believing in the plot.

MANILIUS CONNECTION: a note from Peter L. Hays, Professor of English, University of California, Davis.

The following piece of information may be old news for life-long O'Neill scholars, but I am happy to share it with others. I have been trying unsuccessfully for years to identify Professor Leeds' Latin quotation at the end of Act One of Strange Interlude:

"Stetit unus in arcem
Erectus capitis victorque ad sidera mittit
Sidereos oculos proplusque adspectat Olympum
Inquiritque Iovem;" . . .
Finally, Professor David Traill of our Classics Department located it for me. O'Neill is quoting from Book IV of Marcus Manilius's *Astronomica*, lines 905-908, a five-volume text no longer read even by Latin scholars. O'Neill may have encountered it in the edition by A. E. Housman (in Latin, but with notes in English); book four was published in 1920. Or perhaps he had a Latin teacher fond of Manilius. The context of the passage, as translated by G. P. Goold in the Loeb Classical edition, does fit *Interlude*: "triumphantly directing to the stars his star-like eyes, looks ever more closely at Olympus and inquires into the nature of Jove himself; nor does he rest content with the outward appearance of the gods, but probes into heaven's depths and, in his quest of a being akin to his own, seeks himself among the stars" (11. 906-910). [The use of "adspectat" in the third-quoted Latin line strengthens Housman's candidacy as source. Professor Hays notes that that is the spelling in the 1920 volume, whereas the Loeb edition has the more "modern" form, "aspectat." One would expect Professor Leeds, old-school traditionalist, to use the older form anyhow. In the same vein, Professor Hays adds, "that Professor Leeds is reading a text few other Latinists do, or even know about, is a sign of his pedantry." --Ed.]

6. NEW AND RECENT BOOKS. (Most will be reviewed in future issues.)


7. NEW AND RECENT ARTICLES IN BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.


Hoffman, Gerhard. "Eugene O'Neill: Realismus, Expressionismus, Mystizismus." In Hoffman (see previous entry), pp. 76-120.

Ji, Ouyang. "Daoist Ideas in O'Neill's Play About Marco Polo." China Reconstructs (North American Edition), 36 (June 1987), 26-28. [Marco Millions not only reflects O'Neill's great interest in and study of Eastern religions in general in the early 1920s; it also epitomizes, in its characters and conflicts, the basic tenets of Daoism specifically.]


8. FOUR 1987 DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON O'NEILL.


9. O'NEILL TURNS TWENTY-FIVE. Harper & Row has issued a new printing of O'Neill, the biography by Arthur and Barbara Gelb, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its original publication in 1962.

10. CARLOTTA AT THE CAPITAL. My Gene, the play by Barbara Gelb that was reviewed in the last issue of the Newsletter (pp. 19-21), opened a four-week run at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater in Washington, D.C., on June 8, with Colleen Dewhurst repeating her performance as Carlotta Monterey O'Neill.

11. O'NEILLIANA IN ST. LOUIS. Washington University in St. Louis will present an exhibition of O'Neill manuscripts and artifacts, complemented by a presentation sponsored by the university's Bookmark Society, to commemorate the 1988 centennial of O'Neill's birth. The exhibition, which will take place some time in the first half of 1988, comprises the extensive O'Neill collection of Harley J. Hammerman, M.D. Persons interested in knowing the specific dates of the exhibition or the contents of Dr. Hammerman's collection can write to him at 211 Hewlett Ct., Creve Coeur, MO 63141. The editor hopes that Dr. Hammerman's reminiscences as an ardent O'Neill collector will be featured in a future issue of the Newsletter.

12. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS (see also this issue's "countdown" sec.).


Long Day's Journey Into Night and Ah, Wilderness!, starring Colleen Dewhurst and Jason Robards, in rotating repertory. Yale Repertory Theater, New Haven, CT, March 22 - May 21, 1988, followed by performances at the International Arts Festival in New York City that summer. [Reports vary about this package--whether it will entail two plays, or one play, and if one play, which play. Fuller information will be provided as production date approaches.]


IN MEMORIAM. Clarence Brown, who directed Greta Garbo in the 1930 film of Anna Christie, died in a Santa Monica, CA hospital on August 17, at the age of 97. The editor is sorry to have to report as well the passing of James R. Chance of New York City on June 10. A member of the Eugene O'Neill Society and a Friend of Monte Cristo Cottage, Mr. Chance will be remembered by many who attended the 1986 O'Neill conference in Boston for his jaunty air and his infectious enthusiasm for O'Neill and his plays. The Society sends its condolences to his family. We have lost a cherished friend.

In order to obtain further information about this conference or to receive registration forms, please contact:
Mrs. G. Lercangée
Secretary B.L.A.S.A.
Center for American Studies
Bld de l'Empereur, 4, Keizerslaan
1000 Brussels, Belgium.
ATTENTION, PLAYWRIGHTS!! ATTENTION, O'NEILLIANS!!

The EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY is proud to announce its sponsorship of

A CONTEST

to commemorate the 1988 centennial of the playwright's birth!

What is sought is a play about O'Neill, his friends, family and associates. There are no restrictions on specific subject, choice of events, length of play, or size of cast. Nor is there any proscription on the introduction of fictional episodes, or on the slight tampering with biographical facts, if such devices serve dramatic or thematic ends. (The play's artistic quality is at least the equal in importance to its documentary accuracy.) Nor, indeed, need the play be new; but it can not have been previously performed.

The winning script will be given a special staged reading at the CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE in New York City, and will be subsequently published (if the victor permits) in the EUGENE O'NEILL NEWSLETTER.

All entries will be evaluated by a panel of three distinguished judges: playwrights ROMULUS LINNEY and MILAN STITT and Pulitzer Prize-winning O'Neill biographer LOUIS SHEAFFER. There will be one winner, and the decision of the judges will be final.

The deadline for submissions is MONDAY, MAY 2, 1988. (Entries postmarked later than May 2 will be ineligible.) A Contestant should send four copies of his/her script (a typed original and three clear photocopies) to

Frederick C. Wilkins
The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter
Suffolk University
Boston, MA 02114

Copies will be forwarded to the judges, whose decision will be announced on or before Monday, July 4, 1988. The staged reading at the CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE will take place at a pre-announced date and hour in October 1988.

Before sending scripts, entrants should (1) have them copyrighted and (2) secure any necessary permissions to quote from the writings of O'Neill or others, if such quotations are used. (Notice of both should be included with scripts in a cover letter.) Contestants should also retain copies of their plays: submitted material will not be returned.

The EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY offers its warmest gratitude to THEODORE MANN, Artistic Director of the CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE, for suggesting the contest and promising a reading for the winning entry. The event promises to be a major part of the 1988 O'Neill Centennial celebrations.

PLAYWRIGHTS: TO WORK!!