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Carlotta and Eugene O'Neill, photographed at their Georgia estate, Casa Genotta, by Carl Van Vechten on 16 May 1936. Included in the "Face of Genius" exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York. (See the news section of this issue for details.)
EDITOR'S FOREWORD: LOOKING AHEAD--1988 AND AFTER

The concatenation of two separate but complementary circumstances will affect both the immediate and the long-range future of the Newsletter; and each is of sufficient moment to justify mention at this, the conclusion of the Newsletter's eleventh year of operation. Be not afraid: the publication is in excellent health and shows no signs of weakening, even if the present issue is somewhat shorter than its recent predecessors. Indeed, the changes necessitated by the aforementioned circumstances will make it more respectable and valuable than ever. But each may be accompanied by some regret, so an up-front (and, I hope, positive) prefatory note seems advisable.

The first circumstance is my decision to step down as editor at the end of the 12th volume in 1988. Many have noted, quite rightly, that the Newsletter has never lived up (or, perhaps, down) to its name. While it has always included the notes, abstracts, and event and publication lists appropriate to a newsletter, these features have become dwarfed by the essays and review-articles that fill most of its pages. Its format is wrong for the status of journal to which it aspires, while its thrice-ennial appearance is wrong for a harbinger of things to come: most of its news is old! It would need a much larger staff to carry out either of its missions effectively, and only radical surgery can cure it of its bifurcated aims. Accordingly, I have asked the Eugene O'Neill Society to take full charge of its operation after 1988, and have suggested that the one publication become two--a quarterly newsletter that can get the news out quicker; and an annual, refereed journal, guided by a board of editors and housed in a more sophisticated chassis. I certainly won't desert the patient during its "operation": it and I have aged together most amicably. But I do feel that the scalpels and subsequent pens should be wielded by more and fresher hands, which the Society is admirably equipped to provide. With a newsletter that's quicker and a journal that's slicker, the Society will have the two public voices it needs to carry out its business with maximum efficiency and appeal. I will hope to be a member of the editorial board, but I do feel that twelve years are more than enough for one hand to be at the helm.

The second circumstance concerns only the year and volume ahead. A university press has declined publication of a volume of selected papers from the 1984 and 1986 O'Neill conferences at Suffolk University in Boston. (I won't specify the institution, except to say that it is in the Northeast.) It was the opinion of the directors and one of two outside readers that the essays were too brief and too "talky" to merit preservation between covers hard or soft. I regret the decision, not only because I agree with many conference-goers that the papers were exceptionally good, but also because it is now too late to achieve publication in book form by the end of the already-begun O'Neill centennial year. Accordingly, to speed their dissemination, I have decided, if their authors will agree, to devote the bulk of Volume XII to the publication of a majority of the papers from the two conferences--approximately nine per issue. I think that my faith in the papers' value will be shared by readers and subscribers, and I hope that a book eventually will appear, so that the essays will have the even broader readership that they deserve. (Authors of the selected papers can expect a letter requesting permission in the very near future.) Rereading the essays, I find that none of them has become seriously "dated" in the time since their delivery; and their appearance in Volume XII will assure a smashing finale for my twelve years as editor. Naturally, new material will still be welcome, and will be included in 1988 where possible. Whatever remains will be handed on to my designated successors for possible publication in 1989 and after.

I said in my foreword to this volume's first issue that the Newsletter was jauntily entering its "second decade," and, despite the news above, I have no reason to retreat from that optimistic assumption now. Whatever changes in name, shape or format the Newsletter undergoes after 1988, its spirit will continue undeterred, because that spirit comes from its caring, contributing readers, and I know they will be as genial and loyal to its future editors as they have always been to its first. Who herewith, albeit prematurely, offers his deepest gratitude to them all. --FCW
O'NEILL AND THE MARIONETTE: ÜBER AND OTHERWISE

O'Neill's interest in the marionette was reawakened by two events that took place in the late 1930s. In 1937, on her second trip to California as director of the Federal Theatre Project, Hallie Flanagan was driven by Carlotta to visit O'Neill (Flanagan 280). When she presented him with pictures and reviews from the FTP's nationwide O'Neill cycle then underway, the dramatist seemed particularly pleased by the San Francisco production of The Emperor Jones, which had been performed entirely by marionettes. He already knew about this production because he had agreed earlier to allow it to be performed royalty free, the only instance of O'Neill waiving royalties for the FTP. When the popular marionette version moved to Los Angeles for an extended engagement, he insisted that full fees be paid (White 195-6).

By then, marionette productions of his plays were no longer the novelties we might expect. Ralph Chessé, creator of the FTP Emperor Jones, had first produced the play in California in 1928, while Jerome Magon presented his version on the east coast in 1933. The Hairy Ape appeared at the New School for Social Research in 1932 and Marco Millions at Carnegie Hall in 1938. And O'Neill himself had become a marionette figure designed by Meyer Levin and Louis Bunin, who also performed their Hairy Ape both in New York and Mexico City in 1929.

The second event occurred in December 1939, when Jerome Magon sent O'Neill a book about puppetry. In thanking him, the dramatist expressed delight in adding the volume "to my theatre library," calling it "the most interesting I have ever seen on the subject" (Floyd 322). Magon had also included several photographs of his Marco Millions, about which O'Neill replied, "The sets especially catch my eye. They are excellent. And the drawing of Nicolo Polo is damned amusing." Obviously favorably impressed with Magon's work, O'Neill added, "Did you ever think of doing The Hairy Ape?" (322).

Soon thereafter, O'Neill began planning "By Way of Obit," a series of two-character plays involving one actor and one life-sized marionette. In his notes the marionette figure is called The Good Listener, whose function it is to sit quietly as the speaker describes an unseen person who has recently died. Virginia Floyd has suggested the possible influence of Magon's book as the source of inspiration for the proposed appearance of the marionette (346).

Just which puppet book published in 1938-39 Magon sent to O'Neill remains a question, for although in his two thank-you notes the dramatist calls it "A Book of Puppetry," no such work appeared under that title. The most likely candidate is Puppets and the Puppet Stage by Cyril W. Beaumont, which contains 144 pages of photographs of puppet productions from around the world, including one of Magon's The Emperor Jones, showing its use of a turntable to facilitate rapid scene changes. (See illustration below.)
Also included is a picture from De Falla's opera *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* depicting a puppet-play within a puppet-play: here large puppets sit on either side of the stage listening to a puppet performance on a smaller stage. The bigger figures are operated by masked puppeteers in full view of the audience while the smaller stage is controlled by hidden manipulators. O'Neill's idea for a play in which a life-sized marionette becomes a listener to a live actor may have originated in this photograph (Beaumont 65).

Marionettes were by no means new to O'Neill for they had played their part at the Provincetown Playhouse, which had its own staff puppeteer in the person of Remo Bufano, who was also an actor in small roles in the company. Son of Italian immigrants and a native of Greenwich Village, Bufano had literally wandered into the Playhouse, there to begin a career that would eventually rank him next to Tony Sarg as the most famous American puppeteer of the 1930s (and so he remained until his death in an aircrash in 1948). In the 1920s at both the Provincetown and the Garrick, he presented Saturday morning performances for children of fable and fairy-tale adaptations such as *The Fox and the Grapes* and *The Tinderbox*. Certainly, O'Neill knew his work.

Among the dramatists at the Provincetown in the early 1920s, poet Alfred Kreymborg wrote plays that could be performed by either actors or puppets and sometimes by actors impersonating puppets. In his author's notes to *Plays for Puppets*, Kreymborg claimed he owed a deeper debt to the marionettes who had honored him with their friendship and patience than to the living actors who had performed in his plays. His works required extensive pantomime and what he called "a type of contrapuntal ritual to be sounded" (Kreymborg vii). The Provincetown produced *Lima Beans*, the most famous of these short works, on several occasions. Described by the Gelbs as so pretentious that even the Provincetowners couldn't understand it, *Lima Beans* required a cast of four, one of whom was the curtain, whose only function was to close (Gelb 320-1). Once Kreymborg had pressed the Provincetown artistic management to become exclusively a poet's theatre, he met strong opposition and soon left. But by then, the concept of marionettes replacing actors and actors behaving like marionettes had been firmly established.

Among O'Neill's associates, Kenneth Macgowan demonstrated his interest in marionettes as early as 1921 when, in *The Theatre of Tomorrow*, he saluted Gordon Craig's project for the "Übermarionette" and his claim that drama's origins resided in the marionette. Developing his own thesis, Macgowan forecast that the essence of a new drama will not rest in the hero of old nor in the present-day superman but in "groups of men--group beings" who will replace individuals in the manner of the chorus in Greek tragedy. He predicted a particular fascination with both masks and marionettes which "involve a certain strange and enthralling sense of the mystic quality of the theatre" (Macgowan 275).

Robert Edmond Jones, in his production of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1931), designed true Übermarionettes which were carved, constructed and operated by Bufano. Performing forty feet above a stage on which sat the Philadelphia Orchestra and a full chorus under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, the marionettes were operated from a bridge by a team of masked manipulators in what remains the most impressive use of the Übermarionette in the American theatre. The ten-foot high figures may still be seen as part of the permanent collection of the Detroit Institute of the Arts.

O'Neill, in his stage directions for *The Ancient Mariner*, described as an experiment in "plastic theatre" at the Provincetown in 1924, begins the adaptation by what he calls "shadowgraphs" that appear on a large "semi-transparent white shade" (O'Neill 1 63). While images of the wedding party dance, their shadows come and go until three guests enter: "Two of them have mask-like faces of smug, complacent fullness, they walk like marionettes. The third, with the same type of face, is nevertheless alive--a human being" (63). The figure of the Albatross must also have been a puppet or movable object because O'Neill requires its wings to open "at right angles making a white cross" (770). The masked chorus closely resembles the "group beings" described by Macgowan as they play a variety of roles. O'Neill's final image is that of the wedding guests dancing with the
bride; once again they are shadows on the white shade.

The Emperor Jones remains the play most directly identified with marionettes, in part because the drama shares a direct affinity with the traditional Punch and Judy show. Both plays contain circular structures of short scenes with dramatic focus predominantly on one character whose destiny is determined by a series of events that bring the past into the present. Punch is a thief and a liar, both a coward and a braggart, cunning, confident and clever; in the course of the play he becomes the embodiment of vice, villainy and violence, a man completely self-possessed. Punch bears no guilt for his crimes of throwing his child out the window, beating his wife to death, killing a doctor, and tricking the hangman into hanging himself. Unlike Brutus Jones, he is devoid of formless fears—or so he used to be when, traditionally, he survived his wicked past, even killing the devil who came to claim his soul. In the 19th century, however, the devil was gradually replaced, first by a dragon, and then by a crocodile who appears near the end of the play, snapping its wide jaws. After a thorough battle, Punch, even then, sometimes survived by thrusting his stick in the reptile's fearsome mouth. But not in this century, when moralistic attempts to make Punch and Judy appropriate for children often result in Punch facing his fate before the green eyes of the crocodile just as Jones does.

To what extent puppets appeared in the original production is difficult to determine. The program lists no names for the Little Formless Fears nor gives any hint at their execution. Remo Bufano did not work on the production. However, William Zorach's design for the program cover suggests marionette-like images, and the text itself calls for similar visions: "They are black, shapeless, only their glittering little eyes can be seen. If they have any describable form at all it is that of a grubworm about the size of a creeping child" (O'Neill 419). Yet these creatures must both move and make sounds of "a tiny gale of low mocking laughter" (20). The movements of the gang of Negroes in Scene Four are described as "those of automatons--rigid, slow, and mechanical" (24). And in the slave auction scene the characters gather in a dumb show: "There is something stiff, rigid, unreal, marionettish about their movements" (27). In the original production these figures indeed became shadow puppets as this scene was played entirely in silhouette. It is in Scene Seven, in which the Congo Witch Doctor dances, that the "huge head of a crocodile" appears, receives the silver bullet, and then "sinks back behind the river bank" (32). Whether presented as a large mask or hand puppet, the marionette has brought Jones to the recognition that he can run no farther.

Jerome Magon, the puppeteer who sent O'Neill the book in 1939, had realized when staging a live production of The Emperor Jones that the play's "eerie, unearthly theatricality would make it an ideal vehicle for marionettes" (Magon 19). He planned what he termed an "expressionistic" production that required months to design, construct and rehearse. O'Neill's agent, Richard Madden, attended the first performance and dispatched to the dramatist a flattering report and a set of photographs. In response, O'Neill sent Magon an inscribed copy of the play. Soon thereafter, the puppeteer advertised: "The Emperor Jones, approved by Eugene O'Neill, available for bookings" (94).

Ralph Chessé, creator of the California production, had served as an assistant to designer Aline Bernstein at the Neighborhood Playhouse before dedicating his career to "serious" marionette productions of such plays as Hamlet, Macbeth, and Molière's Don Juan. He, too, held Jones to be "a perfect play for marionettes" and has revived the work frequently since 1929 (Salter 23).

The Hairy Ape's Fifth Avenue crowd are described as "a procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankenstein's in their detached, mechanical unawareness" (O'Neill 569); and, of course, the ape itself may be viewed as a form of marionette. In a similar light, one may consider the dynamo of Dynamo as a character conceived as "something of a massive female idol" which possesses a voice that is "a harsh, throaty, metallic purr" (O'Neill 3473), with switches and wires which to Reuben Light are like "the arms of a devilfish--stretching out to suck me in"
In the final moments, Reuben, his face drained of all human feeling as in a plaster mask, stretches out his arms to his "Dynamo-Mother with its whirling metal brain and its blank, oblong eyes" (488). Here the dynamo is a stationary Ubermarionette, one that breathes, sings, gives and takes life, and becomes one of O'Neill's most powerful theatrical images.

Loving, the masked figure who personifies John Loving's dead alter ego in Days Without End, walks through the play as a living marionette. Wearing John Loving's death mask, this man of conventional American good looks displays a "sneer of scornful mockery on his lips" and a stare that emerges bleak from behind his mask (O'Neill 2494). A figure seen only by John and the audience, Loving follows John throughout the play, often sitting at his side and regarding him with scornful eyes. When John eventually surrenders himself at the foot of the cross, Loving's legs "crumple under him" as if he had been crushed down and he "slumps forward to the floor and rolls over on his back, dead" (566), in doll-like fashion.

Only Hughie, as we know, exists from the projected "By Way of Obit" series of eight monologues; and, of course, as written, the listener figure of the Night Clerk is not a marionette but a role to be played by an actor. Yet aspects of the marionette remain as the Clerk sits on a stool with nothing to do. According to O'Neill, "He is not thinking. He is not sleepy. He simply droops and stares acquiescently at nothing" (O'Neill 67). As Erie Smith pursues his long defense against gloom, the Night Clerk dissolves under his own weight and soon "seems turned into a drooping waxwork, draped along the desk" (14). This stage direction, while a challenge for the living actor, could be readily realized by a marionette, as could such directions as "The Clerk's face would express despair, but the last time he was able to feel despair was back around World War days when the cost of living got so high and he was out of a job for three months" (17), or "In the vague tone of a corpse which admits it once overheard a favorable rumor about life" (18).

At one point the Clerk begins to feel guilty because he hasn't been listening to the Guest: "I should have paid more attention. After all, he is company. He is awake and alive," a statement which suggests that the Night Clerk does not consider himself to be either (30). And he does not become so until near the conclusion, when the honored name of Arnold Rothstein ignites his imagination. Even here, when he joins Erie in a game of dice and becomes involved for the first time, he displays "an excited dead-pan expression" (38). The image of the marionette that originally inspired the play remains throughout, humanized in the drooping figure and dead-pan face of the Night Clerk.

Perhaps O'Neill's most significant dramatic use of the actor as a marionette comes in Act Four of The Iceman Cometh, when the habitués of Harry Hope's return and sit lifeless at 1:30 in the morning: "There is an atmosphere of oppressive stagnation in the room, and a quality of insensibility about all the people in this group at right. They are like wax figures, set stiffly on their chairs, carrying out mechanically the motions of getting drunk but sunk in a numb stupor which is impervious to stimulation" (O'Neill 7212). José Quintero, in the 1985 revival, saw this moment as a chorus of ashen-faced figures frozen in exaggerated poses of wooden arms and legs at odd angles, a stringless company of marionettes who do not regain control of their energy or equilibrium until Hickey says, "You know I must have been insane" (242). But for the thirty preceding pages they have been a group that is "sodden" (220) and "licked" (215), and of whom, as Rocky says, "dere ain't enough guts left in de whole gang to battle a mosquito!" (216). When forced to speak, "They mumble almost in chorus as one voice, like sleepers talking out of a dully irritating dream" (220).

O'Neill depicts Jimmy Tomorrow as the most dead: "More than any of them, his face has a wax-figure blankness that makes it look embalmed. He answers in a completely lifeless voice" (229). And when finished, "He stops like a mechanical doll that has run down. No one gives any sign of having heard him. There is a heavy silence" (230). O'Neill has created a mechanical doll whose confession of his life-lie literally expires into nothingness.
Critic, historian and puppeteer Peter Arnott reminds us in Plays Without People that "whenever the actor dons a mask--either literally, as in the Greek and Roman plays, or figuratively, as when playing a strongly typed part--he is abnegating his individuality and making himself a puppet" (Arnott 77). O'Neill surely shared this belief; and as he had experimented with masks, both literal and figurative, and finally in Mourning Becomes Electra entrusted actors to create on their own faces the Mannon masks of death, so he moved in his later plays to transform actors into living marionettes. Thus, in Moon for the Misbegotten, the larger-than-life Josie may be seen as the Übermarionette personified and Jim as a hollow frame of a figure waiting for the invisible strings to be released and finally set to rest. O'Neill had become drama's ultimate puppeteer who through complete control of his character is able to create the illusion of life.

--Lowell Swortzell

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O'Neill 5. The Hairy Ape in Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill.


Eugene O'Neill's source stalkers have overlooked an evident Homeric structural parallel and literary precedent for the principal myth and thematic substance behind Anna Christie, his Pulitzer Prize-winning 1921 melodrama about a spiritually redeemed statuesque prostitute; her seagoing runt of a father, Chris; and her mercurial would-be husband, the burly chauvinist Mat Burke. Winifred Frazer's observation of Burke's being "an Irish Poseidon" (283) misses the precise mark, but still alludes to an Odyssean element in the play, without citing certain narrative similarities, of which there are several.

The sea is the dominant image in both the Odyssey and Anna Christie, and its merciless wrath receives the blame for the punishment that Odysseus sustains, as well as the network of misfortune that befalls the three central players in O'Neill's drama. Odysseus is the only survivor among those with whom he departed the Trojan War, and Burke is virtually the last able man (he alone has the energy to rise to his feet) among the four who survived the sinking of their Atlantic steamship. Odysseus, it may be recalled, swam the final two days of his sea-battering before coming ashore on Skheria; and Mat has endured five days in an open boat before finding safe harbor in Provincetown. In Act IV he gives thanks to the crucifix around his neck for "bringing [him] safe to land when the others went to their death" (O'Neill 75). Odysseus has the grey-eyed Athena to thank for having "entered the palace of Alkinoos [Phaiakia's king] to make sure of [his] voyage home" in Book VI. There the enticing maiden Nausikaa, Alkinoos' daughter, is accompanied by other young women to the Skherian water's edge on Athena's pretext of washing linens, albeit Nausikaa is the only person remaining at the time of her discovering the disheveled Odysseus. Anna, who alone has recently left the scarlet company of her Minnesota sisters in prostitution, has made her way frrim New York to Provincetown. There she feels suddenly cleansed, and there too (responding to a nocturnal impulse) she has her first encounter with a similarly disheveled Burke who emerges from a thick sea fog. Nausikaa's desire to transport laundry to the Phaiakian seaside was also a nocturnal impulse, placed in her mind by Athena well before dawn. At the waterfront she finds Odysseus, who makes his way into Alkinoos' palace while enshrouded by a thick coverlet of fog.

At first, however, Odysseus conceals his modesty beneath an olive branch. So too, Mat Burke wears nothing but a pair of dirty dungarees that leave enough uncovered to reveal his Odyssean "heavy-muscled, immense strength" (O'Neill 30). Both men attribute their safe sanctuary, moreover, to other divine assistance. Mat says that he is "safe ... with the help of God" (31); and at the opening of Book VIII, Alkinoos rightly observes that "the gods' own light is on" Odysseus, who has not yet introduced himself. But Odysseus, like Mat (whose name means "gracious gift from the Lord"—Webster's 63), cleans up well. Odysseus, having "scrubbed the coat of brine from his back and shoulders/ and rinsed the clot of sea-spume from his hair," has his appearance enhanced by Athena's "making him seem/ taller, and massive too, with crisping hair/ in curls like petals of wild hyacinth,/ but all red-golden" (Book VI). Burke, later bathed and subsequently dressed in a cheap blue suit and striped cotton shirt, shows a face "beaming with good humor" (O'Neill 45).

Part of what has sustained these wandering seafarers is their remarkable stamina. Mat boasts of his "great strength," and Odysseus comments in Book VII that he has had the endurance to withstand "the worst trials that you know,/ and miseries greater yet." But they also share a honey-tongued way with words, and a flair for flattery. "Are you divine, or mortal," Odysseus queries Nausikaa in Book VI. "I never laid eyes on equal beauty/ in man or woman. I am hushed indeed." In Act II, Mat tells Anna with comparable facetiousness that he had first thought her a mermaid, and then calls her "a fine, handsome woman" (31).

Odysseus has angered Poseidon by blinding his son, the barbaric Polyphemus. Chris's nemesis, like Mat's, is what Chris habitually calls "dat ole davil sea"; Mat remarks that
the sinking of his ship is the work of "the divil's own storm" (36). And like the archetypal sailors they are, both Mat and Odysseus have generously bestowed themselves on women. As Anna says to Mat in Act IV, "You been doing the same thing all your life, picking up a new girl in every port" (73). Odysseus, though he would be disinclined to admit it, has done his share of philandering, too, having lain with the viciously dangerous Circe, and having enjoyed (despite his protestations) a long sojourn with the possessive Kalypso. "The only women you'd meet in the ports of the world who'd be willing to speak you a kind word," says Mat in Act II, "isn't women at all. You know the kind I mane, and they're a poor, wicked lot, God forgive them" (37).

Neither Nausikaa nor Anna is morally corrupt, but each harbors misgivings about men, sui generis, to the point of outright hostility. "Give you a kick when you're down, that's what men do," Anna tells her surrogate mother-confessor Marthy Owen in Act I. "Men, I hate 'em--all of 'em!" (16). Likewise, Nausikaa remarks disapprovingly to Odysseus that among the rank and file of men on her palisaded island, "plenty are insolent" (Book VI). Notwithstanding, both women have their nets into matrimonial waters, and so (for them) do their doting fathers. Still not knowing Odysseus' identity, Alkinoos pegs him as an ideal bridegroom. "Seeing the man you are, seeing your thoughts/are my thoughts," he says ceremoniously toward the conclusion of Book VII, "my daughter should be yours/ and you my son-in-law, if you remained." But Odysseus has no intention of remaining, having been conspicuously absent from Ithika for twenty years. And having been away from his Irish home for fifteen years, a vaguely similar motive drives Mat Burke back to sea and out of the arms of his tempestuous Anna Christie. In a sudden change of heart, Chris proposes that Mat take his daughter's hand in matrimony. "Ay tank," he says quite unceremoniously in Act III, "maybe it's better Anna marry you now" (61).

For Odysseus, more hard times lie in store after his somewhat wistful departure from Skheria; but return to Nausikaa he assuredly will not. Mat, as Anna says with rage in Act IV, will board a ship bound for "the other side of the earth where you'll never see me again." She is probably correct; as D. J. Stewart has remarked of the failed romance between Nausikaa and Odysseus, it is "a love affair that never quite comes off" (Stewart 65)—at least not during the four acts of O'Neill's play. And while the men float off to other adventures, they leave the company of those who are themselves displaced from their origins. Anna, her late mother and her father had migrated to America from Sweden. The Phiakians who inhabit Skheria had migrated there (so it says in Book VI) from Hyerpedia.

Withal, however, a reading of the Odyssey and Anna Christie may inform still other texts where characters not so much depart and return, but where they arrive for an interlude in the midst of a broader quest, and then depart in fulfillment of it.

—Terry Reed

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CONSPICUOUS BY HIS ABSENCE: EUGENE O'NEILL AND A 1987 PROVINCETOWN CONFERENCE

According to a press release of 10 April 1987, "Beginnings 1915: The Cultural Moment" was "a conference exploring the artistic, social and cultural issues that led to the birth of the modern American theatre." For purposes of this conference, the birth was presumed to have occurred in 1915 with the staging of four plays by a group which would come to be known as the Provincetown Players, when they formally organized in the late summer of 1916. Given this premise, the 14-17 June 1987 gathering at the Provincetown Inn on the tip of Cape Cod was a conference organized with unusual conceptual clarity.

At the center of the proceedings were the four plays first performed in the summer of 1915—"Suppressed Desires" by George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell, "Constancy" by Neith Boyce, "Change Your Style" by George Cram Cook, and "Contemporaries" by Wilbur Daniel Steele. These four plays reflect, in the words of the press release, "Major issues of the 1910's--the New Art (abstract), the New Psychology (Freud), the New Woman (who wanted the right to vote and sexual freedom), and the New Politics (emphasizing individual liberty). Panel discussions will reiterate these four themes." In fact, these "panel discussions" involved the presentation of scholarly papers, but each panel was neatly tied to a dominant theme of one of the four plays—the New Psychology to "Suppressed Desires," the New Woman to "Constancy," the New Politics to "Contemporaries," and the New Art to "Change your Style." After a keynote address on the evening of the 14th by Daniel Aaron (Professor Emeritus, English and American Literature, Harvard, and President, the Library of America), which provided an overview of the 1910s, the next two days of the conference consisted primarily of two panels each, followed in the evening by performances of the day's two pertinent one-acts.

The intellectual rigor of this structure might well serve as a model for any future conference which proposes to unite scholarly explorations of the "cultural moment" with relevant dramatic productions. Unfortunately, the realization of the concept left something to be desired. The scholarly presentations during the day did not always relate to, or even well acknowledge, the fact that the "birth" of the American theatre was the issue at the center of the conference.

In this regard, the program on the New Psychology was probably the most effective. After a brief account of Freud's chief appeal to the "intelligentsia" of the era by program chair John Burnham (Professor of History, Ohio State), Dr. Sanford Gilford (Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School) presented an anecdotal history of the arrival of Freudian thought in America, beginning with the 1909 Clark University lectures, which were attended by Emma Goldman. Subsequently, Fred Matthews (Associate Professor of History, York University, Ontario) explained how concepts of character in the drama during the period 1900-1930 changed to reflect, in part, the new Freudian notions of personality. The sequence of presentations was ideally constructed to illuminate this aspect of cultural and intellectual history for the student of drama and led perfectly to that evening's performance of "Suppressed Desires."

The subsequent panels were to fall short of this successfully integrated achievement. Presentations on the New Woman, the New Politics, and the New Art tended to be either general introductions to the topic, useful only to the uninitiated, or presentations of specialized research of interest only to the student of the topic in question. To some extent, this appeared to be the consequence of hasty searches to find substitutes for the speakers listed in the program: scholars whose work was only remotely related seemed to have been pressed into service on short notice. Though the New Woman program proceeded as listed, substitutes appeared to discuss the New Politics and the New Art. In some cases, the substitutes added immeasurably to the value of the conference. Milton Brown (Professor of Art History, CUNY), an expert on the famous Armory Show of 1913, presented slides of many works which were actually displayed at that epochal event; but in general the art history program took up far too much time in proportion to its direct contribution. Some art historians at least seem to be "prisoners" of their slide carousel.
Another important substitution was the presentation by Robert Sarlós (Professor of Theatre History, University of California, Davis) who pinch hit for Theodore Mann. Sarlós, originally scheduled to lead after-the-play discussions of the two evenings' performances, presented a superb informal account of the forces in American theatre history which led to the formation of the Provincetowners. His cogent and entertaining "lecture" on the morning of the first full day placed theatre history at the center of the conference in a way which would probably not have occurred otherwise. Unfortunately, he was then relieved of his duties as after-the-play discussion moderator. His commitment to the Provincetowners would probably have generated more useful discussion at the evenings' end but, as it turned out, such discussion took place only on the second evening, after the less interesting of the two bills. The first night's talk was cancelled due to the lateness of the hour.

For the student of American drama generally and of Eugene O'Neill in particular, the opportunity to see professional productions of four rarely produced plays was the most valuable part of the conference. Only by seeing these plays in performance can one really begin to understand the excitement which the Provincetowners must have felt on that famous evening when they first heard "Bound East for Cardiff." Of the four plays presented in 1915, only one, Neith Boyce's "Constancy," approaches the level of realistic characterization to be found in even the weakest of O'Neill's "apprentice" plays. Boyce's play should probably be much better known than it is because of its feminist slant and its solid characterizations and genuine drama. The other three plays tend to be ineffectively realized concretizations of a single idea; and one of them, "Contemporaries," is based on a gimmick which only an undergraduate theme writer would find clever. Conceptually, these three plays are on a par with O'Neill's "A Wife for a Life" and "The Movie Man." Consequently, it is little wonder that O'Neill's arrival in Provincetown turned out to be the watershed it was; only after "Cardiff" was produced in the summer of 1916 did the Provincetowners take steps to organize formally.

Given this fact, the question arises, what would the Provincetown Players have become without Eugene O'Neill? Would they have had the same impact on the New York theatre scene without him? Would their enterprise have lasted as long as it did without a productive playwright of O'Neill's genius? The answers may be no. Only time will tell whether the only other playwright of stature to come out of the Provincetown experiment, Susan Glaspell, has been unfairly dismissed from the canon of American drama. But whatever that verdict, it is not clear that she alone would have been able to sustain the Provincetowners' dedication to a Playwright's Theatre. The larger question, then, is whether there would ever have been a conference on the Provincetown "moment," funded by the NEH, if there had not been a Eugene O'Neill. In that context, O'Neill and his work were conspicuous by their absence. In fact, the conference almost seemed to take an anti-O'Neill turn, as if he had somehow unfairly eclipsed the intrinsic worth of all the other Provincetowners. This sense was enhanced by the appearance of Linda Ben-Zvi (Professor of English, Colorado State University) as a co-moderator (with Jackson Bryer, Professor of English, University of Maryland, College Park) of the one post-performance discussion. Ben-Zvi, a well-known champion of Glaspell's reputation, seemed to feel obliged to denigrate O'Neill's early work in order to enhance Glaspell's stature—an unfortunate and unnecessary turn of events. C. W. E. Bigsby (University of East Anglia) made clear once again why he is one of the foremost commentators on modern American drama. His after-dinner paper on Glaspell centered on a superb "feminist" reading of "Trifles." The only program devoted specifically to O'Neill was a presentation, following the closing brunch, by Barbara Gelb, who presented a well-told story of O'Neill's life before coming to Provincetown. However, since she did not attend the entire conference, she was unable to bring the several days' activities to a closing summation. Consequently, the conference, instead of ending with a sense of finality, congealed to a close, rather like the hollandaise sauce on the eggs Benedict.

For the student of O'Neill, then, the chief value of the Provincetown conference was the opportunity to "experience" the context in which "Bound East for Cardiff" first appeared and to learn about the wider cultural context out of which O'Neill's first plays
emerged. For those who were unable to attend and who wish to have a good introduction to the cultural history of the era, two of the four prepared bibliographies for the panels recommended an excellent study, *The End of American Innocence: The First Years of Our Own Time, 1912-1917*, by Henry F. May (New York: Oxford UP, 1959). On the other hand, the opportunity to witness the four plays on two consecutive nights in a makeshift theatre in Provincetown, Massachusetts, may never again present itself. That experience was priceless, and justified the entire conference for this O'Neillian.

--Paul D. Voelker

FOUR LETTERS BY EUGENE O'NEILL

In 1977 Mircea Filip published, as a memorial to the eminent Romanian critic, translator, and Americanist Petru Comarnescu, a collection of Comarnescu's writings on the theater. Since the volume contained not only previously published but also some unpublished materials, it is obvious that Filip had access to Comarnescu's private papers--including part, at least, of his correspondence. In any event, included in the volume were four letters in Romanian from O'Neill to Comarnescu--written between 1938 and 1945.

Though in Mircea Filip's introduction to the collection mention is made of the letters, there is no indication of who translated them (Comarnescu? Filip?) or of whether the originals are still extant. But since there is no reason to doubt their authenticity, it seems to us important that they become more widely available to the larger O'Neill audience.

As far as we can discover, Comarnescu has never been mentioned in American O'Neill scholarship (except indirectly), nor have the O'Neill plays in Romanian translation been given that attention that some of his other translations have. So we shall briefly introduce both, as annotation to the letters.

Comarnescu was born in Romania in 1905, coming of age at a time when the newly enlarged state was in need of a national identity to coordinate the disparate elements that now made up Greater Romania. Comarnescu felt the need early, and so, after study at the University of Southern California in 1930-31, he returned to Romania, hoping to introduce to his country an America he viewed as having successfully met the sorts of cultural challenges his own country faced. For the rest of his life--he died 22 November 1970--he pursued that goal.

Between 1934 and 1968 Comarnescu published essays on Maxwell Anderson, Pearl Buck, Dreiser, Faulkner, Sinclair Lewis, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, Whitman, Thornton Wilder and others. He translated American short stories, novels (including Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*) and poetry, and he wrote a book on Benjamin Franklin. In addition he helped to edit at least three journals and became so well known for his writings on the theater that in 1945 he was one of the favored (though unsuccessful) candidates for the directorship of the National Theater of Bucharest.

Also he was an enthusiastic and industrious O'Neillian. He translated, alone, *Strange Interlude, Before Breakfast* and *Bound East for Cardiff*, and, jointly with Margareta Sterian, *Ah, Wilderness!, Beyond the Horizon, Days Without End, Desire Under the Elms* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*. He also wrote the prefaces to two collections of O'Neill's plays in translation, including the 3-volume one of 1968 which he himself edited, and at least five journal essays and one book on O'Neill.
By the end of the period 1938-1945 covered by O'Neill's letters to him, Comarnescu had published at least four of his O'Neill essays, and either alone or with one co-translator had produced six of the ten O'Neill translations that had appeared in Romanian.

---Madeline C. Smith and
Richard B. Eaton

* * * * * * * * *

The Letters*
Tao House
Danville
Contra Costa County
California

My dear Mr. Comarnescu,

I thank you very much for your most interesting letter. Your article in the Revue Hebdomadaire was already known to me. I was impressed by its subtle criticism. I see with regret that the original was abridged by the editor of the magazine, but even in its shortened form it is far superior to most studies of my work. Accept my congratulations and my grateful appreciation.

I am delighted to know that you have translated Strange Interlude. You may consider this letter as authorization for the edition that you wish to publish and [you have] my assurance that I hereby waive all royalties for this edition. All I ask is that you send me a copy of the book for my library.

Concerning your proposal that I write an introduction to this edition, I must decline. Please do not think that this has anything to do with your specific request; certain circumstances in recent years have forced me to impose a strict rule not to write any introductions for anyone.

I am sending you separately my photograph with the autograph that you desired. I regret that I have nothing that I can send for the Revista Fundațiilor. Later on when I am at a more advanced stage in my new cycle of plays, I may have something for you. During this past year my work on this cycle was interrupted by illness.

What you tell me about an artist, Miss Margareta Sterian, having obtained permission to translate Mourning Becomes Electra amazes me.

I have no recollection of having met her in 1931, or of anyone ever asking permission to translate it into Romanian. Did she show you a written authorization from me or a contract from my agent? I believe that the lady is imagining things. But even if she had such an authorization, her failure to do anything for seven years would weaken her rights. In all the contracts that I make for translations, the translator is given two or three years, got more, in which he must find the means to publish it in some way or lose his rights.

Thank you again for your letter—and all my gratitude for your interest in my work.

Yours sincerely,
Eugene O'Neill

20 May 1938

*The translations of the Romanian "originals" were provided by Dr. Gerald J. Bobanzo and Father Raymond Samolia, for whose efforts we offer sincere gratitude. —MCS and RBE.
26 November 1938

My dear Mr. Comarnescu,

I was very happy to receive your letter of 31 October which just arrived. I am truly glad to see that your translation of Strange Interlude will be published by an organization of such importance. It gives me great pleasure to accept the conditions offered and I am prepared to write to my agent in New York to prepare a contract according to the information in your letter. As soon as he sends it, I will sign it and mail it to you.

It is also a pleasure to hear that Beyond the Horizon is in the process of translation by your friend Mr. Popa, and that it will be produced by the National Theater in Cluj. I am also happy to learn that Strange Interlude will soon be performed in the National Theater in Bucharest. I hope that these plays will be favorably received and I appreciate your willingness to pass on to me your personal opinion of the productions after you have seen them.

As far as Mourning Becomes Electra, which I regard as the best thing that I have done, I hope that you will translate it. You can consider this letter as an authorization to do it. I believe that this play will be the most successful of all my plays presented in your theaters, at least from an artistic standpoint. As far as I know, the work has been greeted with enthusiasm wherever it has been played in Europe. Of the production in Vienna I have never heard anything. It was performed exactly in the days when Hitler arrived there. I don't believe the citizens of Vienna were very interested in stage drama at that time!

I eagerly await copies of the books edited by you with translations of my works.

Again let me express my deep appreciation for your interest in my work. I sincerely hope that your help in handling my plays in your country will be of real value to you in your own career as a writer.

Sincerely,
Eugene O'Neill

My dear Mr. Comarnescu,

I did not receive your letter of 28 January till a few days ago.

I cannot understand why you didn't receive the contract for translating Strange Interlude, but without a doubt you will have received it before this letter.
I am sorry that I do not understand German and therefore cannot tell you whether the work of Koischwitz is valuable. Clark's book contains some interesting things, but as far as its critical worth is concerned it is of minor importance. In this country there are two other published books dealing with my work that are much more interesting than Clark's: one by Sophus Winther, from a left-wing materialistic point of view; the other by R. Dana Skinner, from a right-wing religious-mystical position. They are both, in general, favorable, if you can imagine such a thing!

But I don't believe it is worth your being concerned with either one of them. Perhaps what you need are facts; in that case Clark's book can give you enough.

You were erroneously informed about the existence of an autobiography. I have never written one—or any book about my work.

I am sorry to hear that you are ill. I had an operation for appendicitis two years ago.

With the best of wishes for you, with friendship.

Eugene O'Neill

March 8, 1939

12 July 1945

My dear Mr. Comarnescu,

Your two letters arrived only a few days ago. Before then I had received no other letters.

I am excited to hear of the warm reception that was given to my play Mourning Becomes Electra at the National Theater, in your translation, and of the success of the other works that you have mentioned.

The favorable acceptance given the play Mourning Becomes Electra by the public, as well as by specialists, gave me great satisfaction, but I was saddened at the thought that the Germans had destroyed your beautiful National Theater.

I was of the opinion that my agent in New York had sent you, before the war, an approval signed by me, which would give you sole rights as translator and protector of my rights of authorship in Romania. I know that I had intended to proceed in such a manner. It was at the time when your translation of Strange Interlude was published. Probably my agent did not understand my intention well enough and sent you only the approval for Strange Interlude. Anyway, to save time there is enclosed with the present letter another, which will give the sole rights, as my representative in Romania and translator of all my works not yet translated, to you. This will permit you to receive authorization and rights of authorship from the Society of Romanian Writers.

I desire sincerely to submit to the statutes of this association, and I take responsibility that what is written above does not contradict its laws. But if I have done anything without realizing it, please bring it to my attention.

As far as what I have written during the time that you have not heard anything about me, I must tell you that in the last two years I have completed nothing because of illness. Before then I continued to work with great difficulty to complete four plays (not counting those in the cycle).
I am not quite yet well enough to write about all of this in a longer letter but I will try later. You would do me a great favor if you would be good enough to express my grateful thanks to all those who contributed to the production of the trilogy Mourning Becomes Electra and the other plays.

With most grateful thanks,
Eugene O'Neill

P.S. My plays are collected under the title Complete Works [Opere Complete] in three volumes. The last edition is voluminous and I am afraid that, because of present conditions, you will not receive it for several years.

NOTES


2. Pp. 149-55. They were appended to the reprint of a 51-page introduction to Comarnescu's 1939 translation of Strange Interlude (Scrieri 97-148).


5. For a listing of the essays and translations see our appendix.


7. The full title is Revista fundațiilor regale--the journal of a society which Perry says (Bibliography 320) was under royal patronage.

8. Margareta Sterian is listed in Perry's Bibliography as co-translator with Comarnescu of five O'Neill plays published between 1943 and 1945--including Mourning Becomes Electra. See appendix.


10. Richard Madden?

11. Probably Ioan Popa who translated American works during this period: we find no translation by him of Beyond the Horizon listed in Perry, the NUC, or the Index Translationum.

12. Otto Koischwitz's O'Neill (Berlin: Junker and Dünthaupt) had been published in 1938; an essay, "O monografie germană despre dramaturgul O'Neill," had been published in the April 1939 issue of Revista fundațiilor regale.

13. Possibly a reference to the turmoil at the end of the WWII.
APPENDIX

A. Translations of O'Neill's plays into Romanian: from information found in Perry's Bibliography, the NUC, the Index Translationum and Scrieri.


3. Ah, Wilderness! [Bat-o pustia de lume],
4. Beyond the Horizon [Dincolo de zare],
5. Days Without End [Dragostea nu moare niciodată],


12. Bound East for Cardiff [Spre est, spre Cardiff],

13. Ile [Ulei],

14. In the Zone [În zonă],


17. Before Breakfast [Înaintea gustării de dimineață],


19. A Moon for the Misbegotten [Luna pentru cei dezmoșteniți]. Trans. Sergiu Fârcăsan and Aneta Dobre, and


21. Long Day's Journey Into Night [Lungul drum al zilei către noapte]. Referred to by Mircea Filip ("Prefață," Scrieri ix), but with no publication data; not found in Perry, NUC, Index Translationum. Filip also refers (140 note) to translations of Welded and Days Without End, using titles (Doi într-o singură ființă și Dragoste fără sfârșit) different from the titles of nos. 9 and 5 above. Possibly they are different translations also. In 1968 Comarnescu published his 3-volume edition of O'Neill--Teatru--which contained reprints of 17, 18, 19, and 20 above and, presumably, many others.
B. Studies on O'Neill by Comarnescu: culled from Perry's Bibliography and the "Prefaţă" to and footnotes in Scrieri.


3. "Introducere," Straniul Interludiu [Strange Interlude]. Trans. Petru Comarnescu. Bucharest: Fundaţiilor regale, 1939. [We do not know the pagination of the original but for the reprint, see end note 2].


ALBEE AND THE ICEMAN: O'NEILL'S INFLUENCE ON WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

Critics have noted Eugene O'Neill's influence on many subsequent American playwrights, yet few have linked O'Neill with one of his major successors, Edward Albee. This is not for a lack of interest in Albee and his sources: some half dozen articles argue for a "source" for Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? However, while most of these speculations have focused on the European Theatre of the Absurd, I would argue that Albee's deepest roots are really much nearer home. Albee himself provided a clue when he expressed his great respect for "late O'Neill" and cited The Iceman Cometh as one of the plays he particularly admired (Albee "Interview" 121). While the two plays are dissimilar in many ways, Albee does use drinking, social criticism and language in an O'Neillian fashion in treating the same theme of illusion versus reality. I do not suggest that Albee reached the same conclusion that O'Neill had; far from it. In writing his own work, Albee had to struggle with the iceman's dilemma of truth or illusion and reach his own conclusion, and Virginia Woolf offers a kind of rebuttal to O'Neill's stand on the same theme. Thus, these two plays form point and counterpoint on a shared philosophical conundrum.

No one similarity is sufficient to demonstrate O'Neill's influence on Albee or Iceman's contribution to Virginia Woolf, and some of the similarities are ubiquitous in literature. Nevertheless, the two playwrights use certain subjects in a particular way, and these particularities add up to an unmistakable pattern of influence.

The most obvious similarity is the use of alcohol to develop the main theme. Not just occasional drinking, which might be seen in any play: these two dramas both have a bar on stage throughout the action, showing the enormous importance of drinking for the characters. In The Iceman Cometh alcohol is acknowledged as the catalyst for pipe dreaming, and all four characters in Virginia Woolf drink heavily--especially Honey, who uses alcohol to escape the reality of her confining marriage to Nick and her terror of childbirth.
The broadest reason why the characters drink excessively is to escape from the pressures of society. Albee and O'Neill, like most modern writers, deal with social criticism in a discontented world; however, Albee deals with the same topics as O'Neill, even using the same details, such as the ills wreaked by materialistic clergymen. In *The Iceman Cometh* Hickey's father was a revivalist preacher in the Midwest who raked in the money from "those Hoosier suckers" (O'Neill 232). Honey's father in *Virginia Woolf* was a revivalist preacher in the Midwest who accumulated a personal fortune while spending "God's money" (Albee Woolf 108).

Criticism of society's etiquette is manifest through the use of vulgar language. The profanity prevalent in both plays is unacceptable by polite, social standards; thus, by using it, the characters are showing their rejection of such standards. Before O'Neill, few dramatists used such amounts of common vulgarity; and listening to *Virginia Woolf*, one hears an echo of the older playwright's language. Another type of anti-social behavior present in these works is domestic violence. In both plays the protagonist attacks his wife in their home, indicating extreme discontent with their marriage. Albee's and O'Neill's depiction of the social institution of marriage is an ironic mockery of "wedded bliss."

In the two dramas a political movement, symptomatic of social unrest, threatens the established order. Three of the bar regulars in *The Iceman Cometh* are former members of the socialist-anarchist movement, intent upon overthrowing the American government; and Nick, the young man in *Virginia Woolf*, represents a political as well as a professional and sexual threat to the older man, George. The names of the men and their wives suggest George and Martha Washington of the older, Democratic nation as opposed to Nikita and Mme. Khrushchev of the younger, Communist nation.

Two minor parallels concerning parent and child liaisons also link Albee's play and *The Iceman Cometh*. The first parallel is matricide by a son—not a common topic in literature. In George's novel, which may be autobiographical, the son "accidentally" kills his mother with a shotgun; and in *The Iceman Cometh* Parritt confesses, "What I did is a much worse murder. Because she [his mother] is dead and yet she has to live [in prison]" (O'Neill 247). The second minor parallel concerns uncertainties about paternity. Parritt does not know who his father is, but he suggests that it might be Larry. In *Virginia Woolf* Martha raises the question of George's partnership in their "son". The question of paternity, though, forms only a minor point in these plays; it is not the central question it is in Strindberg's *The Father*.

The fathers in each work finally sacrifice their "sons" as a consequence of facing reality. Larry denies that he is Parritt's biological father, but he has no proof and there was a time when Larry did play a paternal role for Parritt. When Larry decides to throw off his pipe dream and accept his involvement in the real world, he condemns Parritt as guilty. Parritt accepts Larry's judgment and commits suicide, so in this way Larry has sacrificed his "son" as a consequence of facing reality. At the end of *Virginia Woolf*, George also sacrifices his illusory son as a consequence of facing reality. It is not likely that this peculiar similarity is mere coincidence, especially in light of the other parallels already noted.

Within the psychological atmosphere of Albee's and O'Neill's art, the love-hate marriage is limned. Hickey intensely loves and hates his wife. She was the only person who supported him through the troubled years; yet her proper behavior contrasts sharply with his earthy nature, thus emphasizing his earthiness and causing a guilty resentment that is only exacerbated by her continual forgiveness. The conflicting emotions cannot occupy his consciousness at the same time, so his hatred is usually suppressed. It is highly ironic that Hickey, the salesman of realism, harbors an illusion that he has no hatred for Evelyn.

Hickey shot his wife because he could no longer tolerate his ambivalent relationship with her. Yet, he willingly goes to the electric chair because the game of life is over
for him and he is eager to see her again in the afterlife. Although Cyrus Day claims that Hickey wants to be electrocuted "when he realizes that his love for his wife was an illusion, and that he killed her because he hated her" (Day 81), the truth is that Hickey's hatred of Evelyn never stays in his consciousness for more than a second. Then the hatred is suppressed again and love takes over. Hickey tells us himself, "Oh, I want to go [to the chair] ... I've got to explain to Evelyn. But I know she's forgiven me" (O'Neill 245). These final lines indicate that in the end love holds the edge in Hickey's mind, but his regard for his wife is clearly one of intense ambivalence.

Language is a major area in which O'Neill made an impression on the younger playwright, as was noted earlier in their use of profanity. Another linguistic parallel is harder to label but might be called verbal ritual. In both plays, characters tell stories that, though not written down, are nevertheless of rigorously set wording. George goes so far as to ask Martha for her "recitation" of the story of their son and cues her with the first two words of it (217). All of the pipe dreams in The Iceman Cometh are related in similarly fixed speeches. For instance, when Joe Mott tells of his past days, Harry Hope comments, "You've told that story ten million times and if I have to hear it again, that'll give me D.T.'s anyway!" (47). In both plays, verbally codified stories provide a common bond between characters.

In each work the protagonist functions as the director on stage; thus, George and Hickey perform a similar role. Hickey organizes Harry's birthday party and prods the others to act. George organizes the game of "Get The Guests" and controls the bar, an important focal point. George directs the others to their places in the final scene of Virginia Woolf and even gives Martha and Honey their cues. He controls every action on stage as he forces the others to face reality. In the middle of The Iceman Cometh, Hickey similarly controls the action as he forces the bar regulars to face reality. Both director-characters are ridiculed at some point in the play when their control breaks down, but they are the most articulate in their casts and regain control as the dominant personality. George has his special trait as the self-conscious professor, but the close parallels suggest that Albee borrowed this type of role from Iceman's protagonist.

During the final scenes of Virginia Woolf and Iceman, an attempt is made to retrieve illusion, which the dominant director-character has banished. In Virginia Woolf, Martha makes the attempt, first by trying to nullify George's "killing" of the pretend son, saying that he doesn't have the right to do so, and then by suggesting that a second illusion be substituted for the exorcised Sonny Jim. But the attempt to restore illusion fails: the crux of Virginia Woolf is that pretenses are cast out of the marriage in favor of a more honest, realistic approach. George asserts that even though one can never be certain of what is true or illusory, "We must carry on as though we did" (202) and cope unpretentiously with the world.

In The Iceman Cometh Harry Hope (appropriately, given his name) is the individual who tries to retrieve illusion. Hickey suggests that he was insane to call Evelyn a bitch, and Hope grasps at the salesman's suggestion in order to nullify Hickey's anti-illusion campaign. Thus, the survival of Hickey's illusion of not hating Evelyn is linked to the survival of the group's pipe dreams. The attempt to restore illusion succeeds in O'Neill's play, which solidifies his theme that all people need a shield of illusion in order to feel alive in this strident world. This theme is the crux of The Iceman Cometh.

The difference in thematic outcome between Virginia Woolf and The Iceman Cometh demonstrates that Albee is a determinedly independent author who adapted O'Neill's influence to suit his own purposes. As he said in the interview cited earlier, "influence is a matter of selection, acceptance, and rejection" (Albee "Interview" 121, italics added). After seeing a performance of Iceman, Albee said that O'Neill had made a strong case for illusion, but that "perhaps in the long run it was best for people to try to live with the truth" (Baxandall 92).

In addition, Albee develops the truth-illusion dichotomy in a way which is
philosophically different from that in *Iceman*. In O'Neill's play, the line separating truth from illusion is clearly drawn. This is necessary to the older playwright's design of contrasting how lively the characters are when they have their pipe dreams and how lifeless they are without them. In *Virginia Woolf*, Albee creates ambiguity to underscore his philosophical theme of the uncertainty of what is real or illusory. This major dimension of *Virginia Woolf* marks a considerable divergence from the content of *Iceman*.

However, *Virginia Woolf* still owes a substantial debt to *The Iceman Cometh*. The satire of acquisitive clergymen from the Midwest, the portrayal of a father sacrificing his "son" as a consequence of the father's facing reality, the reference to matricide, the use of protagonist as on-stage director, and the linguistic parallels between the two plays form an unmistakable pattern of influence. And both plays address the same theme, albeit with radically different conclusions. Speaking at DeKalb Community College in April 1982, Albee agreed that after completing his play, he realized that "subconsciously" he had created a thematic rebuttal to *The Iceman Cometh*. Albee struggled with the iceman's dilemma of illusion and reality and emerged with a contrasting but complementary dramatic achievement.

--David W. Berry

**WORKS CITED**


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**TWO NOTES FOR CENTENNIAL GLOBE-TROTTERS.** (1) Liberty Travel of New York City has put together a flexible group-rate package for O'Neillians interested in reduced fares to one or more of the overseas O'Neill conferences this Spring: in Han-sur-Lesse, Belgium (20-22 May), Stockholm, Sweden (24-27 May), Nanjing, China (6-9 June), and Tokyo, Japan (11-12 June). For details, call Carroll Ward at (212) 243-5158, or write to Liberty Travel, 120 Fulton St., New York, NY 10038, and ask about the "Around the World with Eugene O'Neill" package.

(2) Scholars seeking funding for the trip to Nanjing are advised by Jamie Robinson that none of the foundations and organizations that promote cultural exchange between the People's Republic and the U.S.A. will fund travel for individual American scholars to China for the sole purpose of attending conferences or conventions. The best organizations for this purpose remain the seeker's home institution, service organizations in his/her local community, and the American Council of Learned Societies. "And you should contact them quickly," Robinson urges, "if you wish to attend the conference."
Alcoholics Anonymous prescribes twelve "steps," or principles, to lead an individual from alcoholic drinking to sobriety and mental tranquility. The twelfth step urges the individual to share the benefits of his personal healing with others: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." In Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth-Century Literature, Thomas B. Gilmore attempts to fulfill the twelfth step for himself by applying the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous to literary analysis. While this first book-length study of drinking in modern literature is well-written and often demonstrates a richly suggestive interplay between "scientific knowledge" about alcoholism and literature, the chapter on O'Neill, called "The Iceman Cometh and the Anatomy of Alcoholism," is disappointing. While the inclusion of O'Neill in Gilmore's study correctly suggests the importance of drinking and alcoholism in O'Neill's drama, Gilmore's use of the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous in this particular analysis takes his twelfth step too far.

In this chapter, Professor Gilmore develops three major points about the play: (1) that Hickey's "practices, ideas, and achievements" constitute a "parody or travesty of genuine adherence to AA principles and practices"; (2) that Harry and his friends in the bar are drunks, not alcoholics; and (3) that Hickey and Larry are the only alcoholics in the play, "but for different reasons this designation must be tentative for both."

The main problem with Professor Gilmore's analysis is buried in a footnote to this chapter, in which he admits that there is no evidence that O'Neill knew anything about AA or its principles. Given this admission, it seems arbitrary at best to say that because Hickey does not adhere to AA principles, he is therefore parodying them. How can a character parody something that his creator knows nothing about? Hickey's behavior is confusing, mysterious, contradictory, and psychologically fascinating; and knowledge of the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous adds nothing to our understanding of his behavior. Gilmore claims that the viewer who is aware of AA principles will have "good reasons to doubt [Hickey's] assertions of a happy, peaceful sobriety long before his terrible self-disclosures discredit them"; but O'Neill has given the attentive viewer sufficient reasons to doubt Hickey's assertions without imposing on the play concepts of which the characters and the dramatist would be unaware.

One of Hickey's gravest violations of AA principles, according to Gilmore, is that he tries to impose his ideas on people who do not want to accept them; he tries to help change people who do not want to change. This error Gilmore attributes to Hickey's failure to understand that the others are drunks and not alcoholics, the difference supposedly being that an alcoholic experiences a conflict between his drunken conduct and the "values or standards to which he still maintains an allegiance," while a drunk lacks "values or conscience" and feels "no guilt or shame." One of the keys to the success of Iceman in performance is the development of the inner life of the characters who inhabit Harry Hope's saloon, who are on stage through much of the play. By denying them guilt and shame, Gilmore denies them a great part of their potential richness. There is more to most of these characters than Gilmore's analysis gives them credit for; and Gilmore himself may be hedging here, since his distinction stipulates that drunks feel no guilt or shame, and he acknowledges that the denizens of Harry Hope's feel "little" guilt or shame.

Gilmore sees these characters as "disreputable if not positively hostile to or
potentially destructive of society." He also suggests that their "former" pursuits,
which he calls "shady occupations"—gambling, collecting graft—"cannot be said to
display values in any generally accepted sense." Here, in judging these characters
negatively on the basis of his own traditional value system, Gilmore wrongly denies
them the "complex humanity" that he himself claims literature uniquely provides, and
more important, that O'Neill particularly imbued them with. In his denial of the
depth of these characters, Gilmore misses one of O'Neill's paramount accomplishments
in Iceman: O'Neill has endowed these characters on the periphery of our society with
a common humanity and, in effect, demands that (in the words of another American
dramatist) attention be paid to such individuals, regardless of their failure to
display values in the "generally accepted sense."

Finally, Professor Gilmore analyzes the internal conflicts within the two
"alcoholic" characters in the play, Hickey and Larry. While making some interesting,
if not especially new, observations about Hickey's divided self, essentially from a
Freudian perspective (id vs. superego), Gilmore questions whether Hickey's self "has
sufficient identity or coherence to be described as alcoholic." He explains that the
first step toward ending alcoholic drinking, according to AA, is for the drinker to
accept that he is an alcoholic, and then observes that "Hickey's personality is so
badly divided that this unitary designation may not be feasible"; Hickey is,
according to Gilmore, "an anomaly, half a drunk and half an alcoholic."

The question is, what does it matter to our understanding of Hickey whether he is
a drunk, and alcoholic, or an anomaly? This seems to be an attempt to explain an
apparent contradiction in Gilmore's analysis. On the one hand, the alcoholic must
experience conflict between his drunkenness and his values; but if this conflict
becomes too internally divisive, the self lacks integration, and therefore, the
person can no longer be considered an alcoholic. The problem here may lie in
Gilmore's hidden agenda, which is to practice AA principles—in this case to explain
why Hickey's solution to his drinking problem is insufficient. Hickey stops drinking
and achieves peace, but not the Peace AA promises. Hickey's is the peace of death,
which is unacceptable to Gilmore and AA.

Similarly, the conflict in Larry's soul is apparent, and to say that he is "an
alcoholic who would rather be drunk" does not add appreciably to our understanding of
him. That Larry is torn between cynicism/nihilism and pity/compassion is certainly
true, as is the observation that during the course of the play he is forced to
acknowledge the conflict (previously having denied the pity). Again, though, it
seems irrelevant to suggest that Larry's changes are effected by his use (unknown to
him) of AA principles. Larry does confront himself and his pipe dreams more honestly
than the others, and he does remain apart from them at the end of the play, refusing
to participate in the celebratory carousing that brings the curtain down. But are we
to conclude that Larry, the alcoholic, has permanently given up drinking because he
has adhered to AA principles and taken a "moral inventory" of his life?

Once again, there are apparent contradictions here. According to Gilmore, it
seems that Larry "will no longer seek the refuge of drink to escape the pain of a
self with irreconcilable dualities of vision." If Hickey's "irreconcilable
dualities" disqualify him from being classified an alcoholic, why does Larry's lack
of self-integration not disqualify him from this classification? The answer seems to
be that Gilmore views Larry as stronger than Hickey because, while Hickey was driven
to "murderous hatred" by the tension of his inner conflict, Larry supposedly has
found a way to live with the tension without drinking. While Gilmore claims that
Larry has gone through a "searching and honest self-evaluation," he admits that it
does not lead to the "subsequent happiness promised by AA." Indeed, as Gilmore
acknowledges, it leads to a gloomy and genuine longing for death. It is not clear,
then, why it is useful to see Larry's behavior in terms of AA principles, if they do
not lead him to AA's goal. Even the suggestion that Larry has given up drinking at
the end of the play is unconvincing. As Gilmore himself implies, drinking never
seems as important to Larry as to the others; and while he does remain apart from the others at the end, it is not necessarily the drinking that he rejects. There is a difference between intoxication and pipe dreams: Larry rejects the pipe dreams, but tomorrow he may still have another drink.

The final paragraph of Gilmore's chapter on Iceman is perhaps the most suggestive of all:

Hickey and Larry are powerfully moving characters because O'Neill invested important elements of himself in both of them. If Hickey may represent something like the person that O'Neill feared he would become if he continued his periodic drunkenness, with his arrest of it there emerged an O'Neill more like Larry: bleakly unillusioned, wanting for years to die, yet renouncing alcohol as a relief from his awareness of the painful antinomies of self and existence.

This is one of the only references in the chapter to O'Neill's life and to his own history of alcoholism, and it is perhaps Gilmore's most interesting conclusion. Two of his other chapters, on Fitzgerald and Berryman, are concerned more with the interplay between biography and literature. In the case of Berryman, there is evidence that the poet was familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous and its principles, and so the reflection of that in the poetry is much more interesting than the rather idle and pointless speculation on their hypothetical relevance to O'Neill's works. This final paragraph in the O'Neill chapter, however, makes one wish that Gilmore had taken a fuller biographical approach here too.

In neither of the chapters on Berryman and Fitzgerald does Gilmore limit his analysis to a single work, nor should he have done so in the case of O'Neill. For even though, as he says, Iceman is "thoroughly steeped in alcohol," so too are Long Day's Journey Into Night, A Moon for the Misbegotten, and A Touch of the Poet; and many of the earlier works, including The Great God Brown, Desire Under the Elms, and Ah, Wilderness!, certainly incorporate drinking and alcoholism in interesting ways. Furthermore, while Professor Gilmore includes at least one representative work from each of the main modern literary genres, his study ignores their generic differences. That is, he never considers, for example, why dramatic form lends itself to a certain kind of depiction of alcoholism, as opposed to its depiction in fiction or poetry. Drinking and alcoholism are more significant in O'Neill's life and dramaturgy than Gilmore's limited study suggests.

Too much of Gilmore's book is like the chapter on O'Neill in that it tries too hard to convince us that the liabilities of drinking outweigh the benefits. He describes a "developing 'postmodern' attitude toward alcohol":

an attitude skeptical of its benefits, cognizant of the high cost of heavy or alcoholic drinking, doubtful that any achievements can ever justify the payment of such a price, and devastatingly inimical to the kind of willful blindness or self-deception that some alcoholic writers only a generation or two ago could use to deny their illness and its effects.

Ultimately, he suggests that no creative work can be worth the personal consequences of alcoholic drinking. This may be a valid insight into the lives of alcoholic writers, but since it devalues and denigrates, a priori, the work of writers who do drink, it is objectionable as a critical approach to literature.

O'Neill once stated that "altogether too much damned nonsense has been written about the dissipation of artists," but let us not go to the other extreme and make too little of their dissipation.

--Steven F. Bloom
The release to scholars of O'Neill's personal papers at Yale, prompting such important studies as Virginia Floyd's Eugene O'Neill at Work (Ungar 1981), has given us a remarkably detailed and closely personal look at the processes by which O'Neill functioned in the creation of his best--and worst--efforts. The man and the artist emerge in a fashion not entirely evident even in the outstanding biographical accounts of Louis Sheaffer or the Gelbs. But it has been the gradual appearance of O'Neill's letters, starting with the 30-year (1920-1951) correspondence between the playwright and Kenneth Macgowan in "The Theatre We Worked For" (Yale 1982), compiled so admirably by Jackson R. Bryer and Travis Bogard, which has provided us with an increasingly clear picture of the personal side of the artist throughout his productive lifetime, an aspect which the very private O'Neill zealously guarded from any public scrutiny. Being able to follow the nuances of the artist's feelings toward personal friends, professional acquaintances, the critics, and, to some degree, the public throughout his career is fascinating in itself. But there is in addition the awareness we gain of domestic ups and downs, and of so many of the physical and eventually totally debilitating afflictions that plagued him.

There will be much more in the eagerly anticipated second volume from the Bryer-Bogard team, but in the interim we have available from Nancy Roberts of the University of Minnesota and her father, Arthur, SUNY College at Morrisville, this fine collection of O'Neill's letters to George Jean Nathan, written between 1919 and 1949. They have been made available through the generous cooperation of Julie Haydon Nathan, and once more provide a side of the playwright which brings an increasingly rounded picture of man and artist. Unfortunately, O'Neill did not retain Nathan's letters to him, so that the volume is, perforce, one-sided. Fortunately, however, such loss does not detract in any way from the interest developed in reading this one-way correspondence.

One of the most notable contrasts between these and the Macgowan letters is the relationship between the correspondents. Both Macgowan and Nathan remained life-long friends and were among the very narrow circle approved and welcomed by Carlotta O'Neill, who herself often engaged in writing letters or postscripts on her own. But Macgowan from the start was an intimate professional associate, a man in and of the theatre as co-worker and producer; while Nathan remained the sharp-tongued journalist and critic whose acerbic wit and intolerance of artistic sham and pretense made his columns and his many books so entertaining and, from time to time, infuriating to read. Accordingly, the latter relationship began quite formally on a somewhat distant professional basis ("My dear Mr. Nathan ... Very sincerely yours, Eugene O'Neill"), during which time O'Neill continually sought and received comments and criticisms: developing finally after ten years into a genuine close friendship ("Dear George ... As ever, Gene"), with Nathan visiting the O'Neills as house guest and both sharing knowledge of each other's lives on a sometimes deeply personal basis.

Thus, in reading the Nathan letters, we see things in slightly different perspective. While O'Neill does not ask Nathan to become involved in some matters, in the way he requested Macgowan to be his John Alden with Carlotta during their initial clandestine affair, he does talk frankly and in some detail about his progress with his work, gaining, apparently (lacking the Nathan letters we must interpolate), straightforward critical comments on the manuscripts he forwarded, sometimes long before production. Often disagreement is sharp; O'Neill is sure that Nathan simply can't understand, as in the case of Days Without End, because of Nathan's atheism. (Nathan was proven quite right in the ultimate evaluation of this play as one of O'Neill's least successful efforts.) But the exchange remains friendly, even when Nathan in print lets fire his best broadsides against the
playwright.

Underneath all, however, remains O'Neill's obvious respect for and ultimate trust in Nathan's judgment. The critic was a repeatedly strong advocate of the developing O'Neill, and supported him in cases where others could not go along. Nathan was one of the few who saw The Iceman Cometh as a major, important play, despite its poor initial reception, and, again, he was completely vindicated. It is clear that Nathan's continuing championing of O'Neill, despite the terrible lapses which Nathan attacked, willy-nilly, was a strong force in aiding the playwright in his developing artistic and critical accomplishments.

The volume is generally well presented in an attractive format, printing the letters chronologically with only minor emendations such as silent spelling and punctuation corrections. The four parts—"The Protégé and the Mentor," "Colleagues," "The Nobel," and "The Masterworks"—are appropriately grouped, each preceded by an Introductory Essay orienting the reader to the conditions under which the correspondence was written. They are fortunately brief, but to the knowledgeable O'Neill scholar or even dilettante they provide little of critical significance. Some letters are headed by "Prefatory Remarks" to help explain certain of the contents, although there are superfluous observations such as noting that "This is one of the longest letters O'Neill ever wrote to Nathan," or that at a certain point Carlotta began to add notes of her own—all obvious from the texts themselves. The most serious objection might be to a kind of pedantic overkill: the authors' insistence on foot-noting a certain name or other reference every single time it occurs, even in adjacent letters. This may assist the casual browser, but to all intents and purposes, once is enough.

There are many fine photographs of both O'Neill and Nathan, a few with H. L. Mencken as well, many of which have not been widely published, if at all, and a facsimile or two of the original letters in O'Neill's tiny script. There is a very good index.

All in all, an excellent volume. Tracing the young writer's deference to the critical mentor which Nathan represented through the struggles with each play, so many of which, bad or good, O'Neill felt were his "best" up to now; watching the writer's increased confidence, his willingness to argue, yet his continual appreciation of Nathan's blunt comments; the thanks for recognition in many of Nathan's essays in periodicals and books; the sharing of developing ideas, such as his "sneak preview" of Iceman, Long Day's Journey, and others, specifically named but often requesting oaths of secrecy (he did not ever reveal that Journey was about his own family); and the long, long decline in the health and stamina of the later ailing artist—all of these provide a truly fascinating picture. How sad to see the growing frustrations at the increasing inability to write. O'Neill calls his affliction Parkinson's, although it was apparently a similar but unrelated disease. All this while the artist's mind is so full of great, unaccomplishable projects, including the monumental "cycle" which O'Neill tackles, abandons, and tackles again. The always renewed enthusiasm for each new home, then the ultimate disillusion with each and the ensuing restless move elsewhere, and the continual search for respite as the world seems to explode outside, and his own world collapses in his decreased capacities: all come forth, starkly and movingly, in this most valuable collection.

--Jordan Y. Miller


It is both appropriate and pleasing that Mary C. Henderson's history of the
American theatre devotes considerable attention to Eugene O'Neill. In the section on playwrights, several paragraphs present her opinion that "for most of the theater-conscious public throughout the world, O'Neill's name is synonymous with American theater." The large number of production photographs, posters, portraits, and sketches related to O'Neill and his work are also very welcome. Some are familiar, but some are not, and several impressive illustrations in color (such as a two-page spread of a scene from Long Day's Journey Into Night, and Robert Edmond Jones' scene design for Mourning Becomes Electra) have usually been reproduced in black and white in previous books.

The organization of the volume is by categories such as "Producers," "Designers," and "Architects," so references to O'Neill are spread throughout the book. In the section on playwrights there is a five-page summary of his work from Beyond the Horizon to Long Day's Journey into Night. The focus of attention is on the latter play, while a number of other major works are barely mentioned. For example, what many readers consider O'Neill's finest play, The Iceman Cometh, rates only a few references in the text and is dismissed with one sentence: "In 1946 O'Neill came out of retirement to attend the rehearsals of The Iceman Cometh, which was not the critical and popular success he hoped it would be." Some of the writing about O'Neill is melodramatic ("Only after an enforced stay of a few months at a sanatorium, which cleansed not only his tubercular lungs but his soul, did O'Neill decide that writing for the theater might be his salvation"), and for most O'Neill scholars there is little in the text which will be new.

But of course the book is not about O'Neill, but about its subtitle—"200 years of plays, players, and productions." The author begins with the work of 18th century producer John Hodgkinson and concludes with a tribute to Joseph Papp and a two-page picture of the New York Shakespeare Festival's Delacorte Theater in Central Park. In between are directors, choreographers, actors, playwrights, producers, designers, and architects whose work is presented in more than 350 illustrations. The design of the book is excellent and the illustrations provide interest throughout. The section titled "Beyond Broadway" describes many theatre companies outside the Broadway realm. Of special interest is a section on the Provincetown Players and O'Neill's work with them. There is a useful chronology moving from 1750 to 1980, and a very complete bibliography.

--Yvonne Shafer


In an article earlier in this issue, Paul Voelker notes that Eugene O'Neill was "conspicuous by his absence" from a Provincetown conference last summer. The same phrase comes to mind when a book with a title like this one makes not even the tiniest passing reference to O'Neill. One would expect the playwright who described "the sickness of today" as "the death of an old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfying new one for the surviving primitive religious instinct to find a meaning for life in, and to comfort its fears of death with," to be accorded a place of prominence in such a study. Surely Dynamo alone, whatever its failings as art, justifies its author's inclusion. It cannot be simply a result of aversion, since twelve pages are devoted to Strindberg, for whom Professor Wellwarth definitely carries no torch: "the whole corpus of his work might be entitled The Passion and Apotheosis of August Strindberg as Directed by Himself" (21)! One hopes that the omission was simply a result of spatial limitations, and that a second, expanded edition of the study will fill that lamentable lacuna. (Devotees of Chekhov, Gorki, Cocteau and Giraudoux—playwrights whose absence is at least acknowledged by the author—can speak for themselves.) Still, lacunae
notwithstanding, Modern Drama and the Death of God is a study of sufficient importance to merit brief mention even in this journal. (O'Neillians are not grudge bearers!)

It is Professor Wellwarth's thesis that the Copernican and French revolutions undermined irrevocably the traditional bases, respectively, of religion and society; that modern drama constitutes an "extended meditation" on the "existential rootlessness" that resulted (3); and that that meditation follows a dialectical pattern which is traced in the book's three parts--"Fragmentation," "Analysis," and "Synthesis." The fragmentationalists, confronting "the meaninglessness and chaos of reality," either lamented what they saw and retreated into the self (Strindberg's "pure subjectivism" and Pirandello's "subjective relativism") or celebrated it and confronted the welter head-on (e.g., Jarry, who "raised "artistic hooliganism to the status of a philosophy" [46]). Among Strindberg's and Jarry's successors are the expressionists, the surrealists, the Dadaists, Artaud, Camus and Beckett. The analytic antithesis to the retreat or celebration of the fragmentationalists comprised "a faith in the ability of the human being to better himself by his own efforts and to achieve a sense of his own integrity from within himself" (130). Ibsen, who "reached out and tried to transform the world" (75), was the father of this optimistic alternative, all of whose adherents (except Sartre) tended, in their later years, to discard the possibility of "human self-responsibility" (76). In Ibsen's case, the result was the discouragement inherent in the last plays, which show the "emotional paralysis" (95) attendant on "the failure of existential self-realization" (86). In the case of his major successors, Shaw and Brecht, the reaction was a movement toward what Professor Wellwarth calls "magical drama," which posits a source of melioration external to the individual--the former's "Life Force," and the latter's Communism. The third phase, synthetic drama, which is still in its infancy but represents "the trend of the future" (161), completes a circle by replacing the old, supernatural God with a new, cybernetic one, in drama that "concerns itself with the metamorphosis of man into machine" (161). Seen first in Büchner's Woyzeck, the synthetic drama is dominant in the work of such Spanish and Catalan playwrights as Manuel de Pedrolo, José Ruibal and Josep Benet i Jornet. "Once more man seeks to divorce himself from moral responsibility" (161), and gets the stage mirror he deserves--a theatrical world of gurus and automata.

This hasty outline does little justice to the intricacy of Professor Wellwarth's dense, perceptive, and ultimately troubling argument, which is studded with thoughtful and thought-provoking analyses of individual plays--especially the major works of Pirandello, Ibsen and Brecht. One can only hope that, at some future time, Eugene O'Neill will take his rightful place in their number. And, more importantly, one can also hope that Professor Wellwarth's cogent admonitions will help to lead us away from the dystopian cul-de-sac that synthetic drama drearily prophesies.

-- Frederick C. Wilkins


California's capital city, like many state capitals, is something less than a cultural mecca. For some years, however, it has had a lively though struggling professional theatre in the Sacramento Theatre Company. In observance of the centennial of O'Neill's birth, the STC mounted a production of A Moon for the Misbegotten that was more than a mere nod in the direction of imminent anniversaries or literary heritage. The production was strong theatre, and did justice to a central part of America's dramatic inheritance.

Given that a set is not just a picture for audience delectation but also functions
to create the necessary mood for the performers, Jerry Reynolds' design served both viewer and actor well. Although the STC's space is modest, Reynolds managed a farmhouse that seemed real without overwhelming the stage. While small, as a tenant house would be, it didn't demand herculean effort to imagine people actually living there. The foliage, the stone fence, the pesky boulders: all were realistic, and the litter strewn about seemed to fit a family that probably didn't keep the neatest farm in the township.

The characters' accents were, for the most part, quite convincing. The Hogans all had a lovely Irish lilt to their voices; James Tyrone's speeches were delivered with a touch of Broadway sarcasm; and T. Stedman Harder was very, very proper.

At first blush, Ingrid Gerstmann seemed a remarkable Josie. Her voice was strong, the accent pleasing, the movements true to her character. She was blustery, yet ever soft; aggressive, but not to the point of being shrewish. She could be motherly toward Mike, yet a good and gentle daughter to Phil—until she needed to put him in his place. But her character didn't seem to grow, and before long a numbing sameness took over, and the promise of the opening scene went unfulfilled.

Jack Wellington Cantwell was a great Phil Hogan--charming, scheming, more than able to hold his own against a Standard Oil millionaire, even if Josie could best him every time. Even his drunken scenes he played well, and never just for laughs. Make-up failed him, however, for with hardly a trace of grey he appeared more Josie's age than her father's. A touch of talc could have gone a long way toward making him appear the right age.

In spite of appropriate Broadway twang, Randall King failed to turn in a satisfying portrayal of Jim Tyrone. Although his accent was what one might expect from Broadway, his lack of resonance was not what one would expect on the stage. His delivery was too much recitation, as if in his desire to be sarcastic and worldly he avoided any expression of emotion.

T. Stedman Harder (played by David DiFrancesco) was stunned by the coarse country folk. Although he managed to deliver the message he brought, it was at great cost to his personal dignity in the face of these uncouth farmers. The contrasts between country gentleman and peasantry, and their skillful manipulation of His Lordship, made the scene a comic highlight of the production.

Director Kenneth Kelleher allowed no really weak moments in the performance. Even in those quiet scenes between Josie and Tyrone, the story moved well, and its deep emotional impact was not lost after all. Maurice Vercoutere's lighting design created time and mood without ever calling attention to itself, as did Michael Chapman's costumes. STC's production of Misbegotten provided the Sacramento area with a fine introduction to the anniversary year.

-- Eugene K. Hanson


Theatrical Outfit is a professional, non-profit group supported in its tenth year by the National Endowment for the Arts, city and county government and sponsored by Citicorp - Atlanta. Having succeeded with Desire Under the Elms two seasons ago, they turned this year to Moon for twenty-eight performances of an interpretation hailed unanimously by Atlanta's three major drama critics--and justifiably so--but a far cry from what O'Neill had conceived or intended.

Theatrical Outfit adapted the resources provided by a former dime store and forwent
an elevated stage or proscenium. Since the clapboard Hogan house stood several feet above the floor on blocks, performers were visible in the interior rooms, and the final audience rows were also elevated.

O'Neill's stage directions describe a two-story house with a sitting room/living room and a one-story, one-room addition comprising Josie's bedroom "tacked on at right." A path therefrom leads through a field to woods on the right and joins a dirt road at the left. In this production a number of reasons dictated alterations of O'Neill's directions. The constraints of space defined an acting area extending only about five feet from the steps of the house to the first row of the audience. The house was one-story; anything else would have towered far above the spectators. There was no available space for the suggestion of field, woods, path, or road. Josie's bedroom was left-front, and a kitchen with a wooden table and chairs took the place of the sitting room/living room at right-rear—a reversal of O'Neill's arrangement. Since Josie's bedroom was closest to the audience, the pale full moon that looked three quarters over the wall was most prominent. Entry from the road was effected at right-front through the ranks of the audience towards the kitchen rather than from the left-rear, behind the house, as O'Neill called for.

Jamie Tyrone (David Milford) was bitter and cynical as well as witty, debonair, and smooth as the city slicker in vested suit and spats, demonstrating what O'Neill prescribes as a "style set by well-groomed Broadway gamblers who would like to be mistaken for Wall Street brokers." However, he lost his claim to the central focus of the drama—primarily because of the editing of O'Neill's text.

Jose Hogan (Suzi Bass), who assumed the central stage presence, was exceptional: husky, vital, folksy. Reddish brown hair, like her brother Mike (Mike McGehee), and convincing Irish pronunciation were enhanced in fact by what the author's stage directions metaphorically describe as a "map of Ireland stamped on her face."

Although Phil Hogan (Buck Newman) inclined, in the first act, towards a parody of a New England hillbilly, O'Neill's wily schemer emerged more convincingly thereafter. Hilarious were the moments when he shook his head, and indeed his whole body, to clear his (perhaps) intoxicated mind.

A reviewer for the Atlanta Constitution referred to the players as "an exceptionally strong group with impressive rapport." This was nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the altercation with T. Stedman Harder (David de Vries) over the polluted ice pond. Harder, representing haughty, effete propriety in jodhpurs, white silk shirt, gloves, black derby and cigarette holder, was the object of ridicule in an amusing tug of war with his riding crop. Bass, Newman and de Vries in their dressing rooms earlier had played around with a line from an imagined B film: "You, I ought to pound you!" Bass injected this line as Josie and caused Newman to temporarily lose his role, but de Vries held his character as Harder.

In this production the third and fourth acts were conflated with considerable deletion to make for a playing time of just under two hours—a period which was still excessively long for some reviewers! Lost was the memorable line when Jamie begins to feel the first effects of alcohol: "The Brooklyn boys are talking again." Of more significance was the deletion of the image of the Pietà and Josie's words: "A virgin who bears a dead child in the night, and the dawn finds her still a virgin. If that isn't a miracle, what is?" Indeed, the tormented drive of Jamie O'Neill towards alcoholic self-destruction is represented in the agony and desire to avenge himself upon his dead mother; but his hatred of his father and the sense of his own loneliness were eliminated in a production more valuable as an acting tour de force than as an embodiment of O'Neill's tragicomic vision.

-- Ward B. Lewis
VIEWS OF THE REVIEWED--

Anna (Jane Gabbert-Wilson) eyes a face-off between her father (Matt DeCaro, at left) and Mat Burke (Jeffrey Baumgartner) in the Chatham Anna Christie. (R. Whitelaw photo.)

Hogan (Jack Wellington Cantwell) accosts Harder (David DiFrancesco) in A Moon for the Misbegotten, presented by the Sacramento Theatre Company.

Edging toward pieta: Jim Tyrone (Randall King) and Josie Hogan (Ingrid Gerstmann) 'neath a Sacramento moon.

Anna (Jane Gabbert-Wilson) and her beau (Jeffrey Baumgartner) in the Ohio Univ. Players' Anna Christie. Fulfillment or capitulation? (Photo by R. Whitelaw.)

Josie Hogan (Suzi Bass) and her father (Buck Newman) entertain Jim Tyrone (David Milford) in Atlanta's Moon for the Misbegotten.
The Winchester Players' production of *Ah, Wilderness!* was one that compensated for technical limitations by means of a solid ensemble performance. In fact, two performances—by Eric Mortenson as Richard Miller and Dirck Stryker as Uncle Sid—raised the production well above community theatre standards. In O'Neillian parlance circa 1906, their performances were "the goods."

Mortenson was not only the right age for the role; he also brought off the tricky task of portraying a juvenile who was genuinely jejune, and managed to endow Richard's blush of youth with a foundation of pseudo-sophistication—and all of this despite the fact that his poetic recitations had been severely trimmed by the director. Mortenson's self-conscious bombast featured just the right amount of hesitancy for an adolescent who is as "restless, apprehensive, defiant, shy, and dreamy" as O'Neill describes him. He escaped the mawkishness that can endanger the penultimate scene, and he remained engaging and likable throughout. In his best scene, the barroom encounter with Belle, he delivered his recitations (here mercifully untrimmed) with touching fervor and earnestness, and his transparent escape from Belle's advances—"I've sworn off"—brought down the house.

Dirck Stryker as Sid underscored the loneliness and isolation inherent in the character's alcoholism. This Sid seemed to be his own best audience; not that he laughed too hard or strained the humor out of his own jokes, but he seemed to be part of—or to want to be part of—a scene being played out elsewhere. In the sense of "otherness" he brought to the role, the aura of being "among the Millers but not of them," Stryker's Sid evoked echoes of another, later O'Neillian raconteur, Erie Smith. In allowing the "secret sorrow" that "oppresses" Sid to come to the fore, Stryker's performance contributed mightily to a production that, despite its deletions, uncovered many of the "vitriolic" qualities that Albert Bermel has discerned in the play.

Ellen Knight's Lily had oppressions of her own that interestingly complemented Sid's. She seemed too resigned to her fate to really care whether her beau reformed or not—too content to grasp at any straws of happiness that Sid's intermittent sobriety might offer.

Barton's success at evoking a bittersweet tone almost made up for her injudicious cutting of the text. Norah's role was virtually eliminated, as was much of the poetry, and Nat and Sid's interchanges were extremely abridged. And yet Arthur's musical recital was expanded to include "After the Ball." Peter Maust had a fine voice, but otherwise the addendum seemed superfluous. The blocking was generally effective on a set that, despite the absence of the prescribed bookcases, was too cluttered to permit much ease of movement. The only major gaffe occurred in the Fourth of July dinner scene, which Barton altered by placing Sid at the end of the table with Lily to his right, upstage, where she was completely hidden from most of the audience by Tommy, who was seated directly across from her. This prevented many from seeing any of Lily's important reactions to Sid's drunken antics.

The costumes were nondescript, except for the "paraphernalia of motoring" that O'Neill prescribed; and the lighting merits mention only because of what must have been a bizarre mistake. At play's end, when, according to O'Neill, "faint moonlight shines full in through the screen door," the audience was suddenly treated to a lunar spectacle more appropriate to a quotation of Richard's in the previous scene—about the dawn coming up like thunder out of China! But the production was a success and was warmly received by the capacity crowd—proof that O'Neill's magic can overcome technical deficiencies and even textual tamperings if the right actors are engaged.

--Thomas F. Connolly
This splendidly mounted production of Anna Christie aroused questions of irony. No one can be either surprised or outraged when an audience titters at Chris Christopherson's umpteenth imprecation of "dat ole davil sea"; but how is one to react when a serious and well-intentioned production arouses titters throughout? Questions about the audience's level of "seriousness" aside, one must ask whether Anna Christie is still a viable melodrama. The quasi-feminist reading that emerged from the Monomoy Theatre's production nearly succeeded in persuading one that the play is indeed that; yet the feminist injection flies in the face of the play's "happy" ending, de-emphasizes the alcoholism of the three principals, and turns the play into a real defeat for its title character. This was not so much a thesis production as one that was steered onto the ultimate shoals of anticlimax. Onat's reading, with its emphasis on Anna's strength, suggests that Anna Christie may not be "see-worthy" if it is allowed to hinge on Anna herself.

Jane Gabbert-Wilson's Anna seemed most concerned with finding a place where she "belonged," à la Yank and so many other O'Neill characters; yet there was a restlessness in her characterization that made her ultimate decision seem all the hollower. When she told her father to "can that stuff," one sensed the eruption of long harbored resentment; and when she shrank from his proffered embrace, one felt that Anna could not, and probably never would, fully escape from her prostitute past. Even with Mat Burke (Jeffrey Baumgartner) she was uncomfortable. Only when she was alone did she seem to be relaxed, be herself. Otherwise, Gabbert-Wilson etched a portrait of a woman who could never be at peace, who could never come to rest or "belong."

Hence the question of irony, similarly raised by the recent revival of Strange Interlude. While Anna has neither the psychological nor the dramatic pretensions of the later work, the laughter that both plays evoke today almost impels the imposition of irony. Surely Onat's feminist underpinning was ironic, given the thumpingly anticlimactic conclusion to which it led. The fourth act was presented as the second scene of Act Three, and both Anna and Mat were eclipsed in shadow as Chris (Matt DeCaro) intoned his final lines. Such an emphasis can be seen as a rejection of the ingenuous toast that Anna has offered just before: "We're all fixed now, ain't we? ... Here's to the sea, no matter what!" But Onat cannot be faulted if her attempt to usher Anna towards feminism was a failure. The problem lies in the text itself--its ambivalence, and its aggravating absence of satisfying closure. (Perhaps O'Neill should have heeded Chekhov's advice about onstage guns and retained Anna's suicide.)

One almost forgot these nagging problems when basking in the sets of Ron Gottschalk and the masterful lighting design by Timothy D. Latners. The first-act bar rested on a large platform that tilted upstage-left at nearly a forty-five degree angle and later served as the stern of the "Simeon Winthrop." Two broad, ingenious cutouts offered silhouettes of the New York and Boston waterfronts. Latners provided precisely the appropriate brightness for the moonlight in Act Two and achieved, in the final scene, one of the best lighting effects I have ever witnessed. Anna sat waiting for Chris's return, lit only by a hurricane lamp; and when he arrived and she turned up the lamp, the lights were brought up perfectly. This marvelous technical feat, which intelligently underscored Anna's isolation, was but one of a number of fine technical touches that masked, if only for a moment, the insoluble dilemmas that O'Neill has bequeathed us in Anna Christie.

--Thomas F. Connolly

That O'Neill was more than a little influenced by the theatre of his father was abundantly evident in this let 'er rip production of his New England Oresteia that more than one reviewer compared, not all unfavorably, to the likes of "Dallas" and "Dynasty." Purists, especially devotees of O'Neill's mid-career monoliths, might deplore the ripping of the text itself to a three-and-a-half hour playing time (one of the trilogy's parts per act); but few, even of those who relished the melodramatic excess, would have wished it longer. Our disbelief had already been suspended to the point of exhaustion.

I have yet to see a complete Electra, but I would guess, on the basis of the two abridgements I have seen that only if O'Neill's text is presented as written and his directions are followed to the letter, can the true note of tragedy be struck and the towering passions of the protagonists be believed. And my impression, after the Trinity Rep production, is that a proscenium stage is an essential ingredient. Trinity's upstairs theatre, where the performance took place, had the actors surrounded on three sides by the audience. As a result, the façade of the Mannon mansion, with its four massive pillars, splendidly designed by Robert D. Soule on a raised platform at stage-rear, was present for both exterior and interior scenes--certainly a strain on believability, which was even more strained in the second act's shipboard scene. Brant stood by a set-piece at center-stage (the chantyman's role was deleted), near his cabin, which was entered through a trap door in the floor, causing all of the important indoor part of the scene to be not only invisible but almost completely inaudible as well. Otherwise, the production was quite successful and showed the exceptional skills of Trinity Rep's acting and production teams.

John F. Custer's lighting design and Paul Nelson's music (largely electronic, I inferred) did much to enhance the melodramatic goings-on. The two combined most effectively in the scene of Ezra Mannon's death. Lying on his bed upstage-left, and trying to rise to strangle Christine, Ezra finds that one of his arms is paralyzed. He beats at it with his other fist, as a bright spot etches his anguish and a sudden, sharp soprano dissonance fills the theatre--and then spot, shriek, and Ezra's life fade out together. The melodramatic combination was riveting--unequivocally the finest theatrical death scene I have ever witnessed. Earlier and later there were a few audience groans at the overwrought music, redolent of Elvira at the Wurlitzer; but at that moment the entire house was frozen in awed silence.

The acting company, skillfully directed by Edward Payson Call, lived up to its reputation as one of the best ensembles in the country. Barbara Orson, frequently cast in comic roles, was an astoundingly effective Christine--haughty, magisterial, acrid in her vengeance against Ezra, and pathetic in her clearly deep love for Adam Brant. Richard Kneeland won our sympathy for Ezra by showing all of the warmth and loneliness beneath the military façade. Richard Kavanaugh, though a bit broad of beam and tremulous of voice for a paramour, was effective as Adam Brant, especially in his proud defense of his mother. David PB Stevens brought just the right whining weakness to the role of Orin, and Jennifer Van Dyck succeeded completely in making believable the changes in Lavinia from stony spinster to sultry swaggerer to stoical self-immolator. Of the smaller roles, only that of Seth was below par. David C. Jones, a marvelous Harry Hope at Trinity a few years back, was winningly glint-eyed as a revealer and concealer of secrets, but he offered no evidence that he knew a thing about gardening, and his near-monotone delivery of "Shenandoah" was as un-nautical as it was unmusical.

All in all, Trinity Rep's **Mourning Becomes Electra** was memorable as melodrama but less than the tragedy that O'Neill intended and envisioned, and that might have been
SCENES FROM TRINITY REP'S Mourning Becomes Electra:

Lavinia, primly dressed and coiffed before her trip to the South Seas, rejects the overtures of her mother, Christine (Barbara Orson).

Orin (David PB Stevens), his mind shattered by guilt, is impervious to the pleas of his sister Lavinia (Jennifer Van Dyck), whose costume and hair show the effect of the pair's sojourn in the "blessed isles" of the South Seas.

Christine (Barbara Orson) incites her lover, Adam Brant (Richard Kavanaugh), while the portrait of Ezra Mannon hangs behind them.

Adam Brant (Richard Kavanaugh) appeals to the stern, unyielding Vinnie (Jennifer Van Dyck).

Christine (Barbara Orson) endures (just barely) an embrace from husband Ezra (Richard Kneeland).

PHOTOS BY ROBIN DUNN BLOSSON
achieved if the same group had presented the full text on a proscenium stage. Or perhaps it can't be achieved. I'm still waiting to find out, but Trinity Rep provided a full-blooded appetite-whetter in the interim.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

NEWS, NOTES, ABSTRACTS, AND SPECIFICS

1. "THE FACE OF GENIUS: IMAGES OF EUGENE O'NEILL" is the title of an exciting centennial exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street, New York City 10029. Organized by Patrick Hoffman, Assistant Curator of the Museum's Theatre Collection, the exhibit opened on October 17 and will continue until May 8, 1988. This extraordinary collection of photographs and drawings, many of which were donated to the Museum by Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, is the first of two special exhibits planned by the Museum of the City of New York. The second, scheduled to open in the Fall of 1988, will feature the original manuscripts of O'Neill's sea plays and other one-acts. The photos on the next page and on this issue's cover are included in the present exhibit, and are reproduced here with the kind permission of the Museum.

2. THE "BIG THREE" ARE NOW FOUR. Move over, Belgium, Sweden and China: you have a new partner! Hosei University in Tokyo will host an international symposium on O'Neill's works as contemporary theatre, on Saturday and Sunday, 11-12 June 1988. The symposium is being organized by Yoshiteru Kurokawa, Professor of American Theatre at Hosei University. For more detailed information, write to Professor Kurokawa, 4-24-19, Wakabayashi, Setagaya, Tokyo, Japan, 154.

3. CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN INDIA. R. Viswanathan, Lecturer in English at Calicut University in Kerala, India, whose essay on Kipling's James Books and O'Neill appeared in the last issue of the Newsletter (pp. 3-7), writes of his efforts to see that the O'Neill centenary is heralded in India. "I intend to translate two short plays into the local language, Malayalam—one to be broadcast over the radio and the other to be staged. I am also preparing to organize a seminar at the Calicut University Department of English, which will feature papers by some teachers who have done special reading in O'Neilliana." We salute the efforts, are confident of their success, and look forward to an after-the-event report giving all the details. -Ed.

4. CENTENNIAL SYMPOSIUM IN CALIFORNIA. Saint Mary's College in Morgana, CA, will host an O'Neill centennial symposium from Thursday, February 11 to Sunday, February 14, 1988. Lecturers include Robert K. Sarlóš ("Eugene O'Neill and the Provincetown Players: Watershed in the American Drama") on the 11th; Daniel Cawthon ("Major Themes in O'Neill's Plays") on the 12th; and Michael Krasny ("O'Neill's Place in Modern American Theatre") on the 13th. Also featured will be a festival of O'Neill films (including Long Day's Journey, Electra, and Iceman), a guided tour of Tao House on Sunday morning, and, that afternoon, a performance of A Touch of the Poet by the Walnut Creek Civic Arts Repertory Company. For information about fees, etc., call (415) 376-7521, or write to Prof. Daniel Cawthon, Chairman of Performing Arts, Saint Mary's College, P.O. Box 283, Moraga, CA 94575.

5. THE LEGACY OF EUGENE O'NEILL will be the subject of the keynote address delivered by former O'Neill Society President Albert Wertheim (Indiana University) at the 1988 Comparative Drama Conference at the University of Florida next March 24-27. For information about the conference, contact its director, Prof. Karelisa Hartigan, Dept. of Classics, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

Robert Edmond Jones (left) discusses his set designs with Kenneth Macgowan (standing) and O'Neill, at O'Neill's home in Bermuda in the 1920s. It is not known who took this shot of the Provincetown Playhouse triumvirate.

A studio shot by Nicholas Muray in 1926, the year in which The Great God Brown opened at the Greenwich Village Theatre. Muray was O'Neill's most frequent portraitist during the years of his greatest popularity.
'Bi-Centenary' Studies in Confluence and Influence." Send queries or proposals to Professor Voelker, University of Wisconsin Center-Richland, Richland Center, WI 53581. Phone: (608) 647-6186. The deadline for submissions is 15 February 1988.

7. MORE ON O'NEILLIANA IN ST. LOUIS: a follow-up news note 11 in the last issue (p. 49). Harley Hammerman's extensive O'Neill collection went on display at the Washington University Library in St. Louis on November 1, where it will remain on exhibit to the end of January 1989. Also featured on campus were a student production of an O'Neill work and an O'Neill centennial symposium organized by Society member Henry Schvey, new Chair of WU's Performing Arts Department.

8. O'NEILL AT SETC '88. The 1988 annual convention of the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC), to be held in Atlanta March 1-6, will host the second in a series of panels on "American Theatrical Realism." The topic for the 1988 panel, to be chaired by Dr. Betty Jean Jones of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is "Realism in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill." Information on the papers to be delivered can be obtained from Dr. Jones, Department of Communication and Theatre, UNC-Greensboro, NC 27412-5001.

9. O'NEILL AT NEMLA '88. Martha Bower of the University of New Hampshire will chair the O'Neill session at the 1988 convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association in Providence, RI, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 24 in the Providence Marriott. The session topic, "Theatricality' and Experiment in O'Neill's Middle Years," will be addressed by three speakers: Ellen Kimbel, Penn State University-Ogontz ("Strange Interlude: The Play and the Critics"); Bette Mandl, Suffolk University ("Theatricality and Otherness in All God's Chillun Got Wings"); and playwright-actor Paul Shyre ("Behind the Masks: O'Neill"). Steven Bloom of Emmanuel College will serve as Secretary and will (the editor hopes) provide a summary of the proceedings in a future issue.

10. TEACHERS AT TAO HOUSE. A Fall Teachers Conference, co-sponsored by the National Park Service and the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, was held on three Saturdays in the Fall of 1987 at Tao House. The first day (September 19), on "O'Neill, the Man," was directed by Travis Bogard, University of California, Berkeley. The second (September 26), on "O'Neill, the Playwright," was directed by William Reardon, University of California, Santa Barbara. The third (October 10), devoted to "Plays in Depth," was co-directed by Raymon Stansbury, Diablo Valley College, and Edward R. Weingold, Artistic Director of the Civic Arts Repertory Company in Walnut Creek, CA.

11. "THE IRISHNESS OF EUGENE O'NEILL" was the title of a talk delivered by Virginia Floyd at the New England Section of the American Conference for Irish Studies, held at Fitchburg (MA) State College on Saturday, October 24, 1987. It was the first paper in a session on "Irish Theatre in America," chaired by Dr. Floyd.

12. O'NEILL AT NETC. Fred Wilkins hosted a special session, entitled "Eugene O'Neill: A Pre-Centennial Primer," at the 1987 convention of the New England Theatre Conference in New Haven, CT, on Saturday, November 7. ("Primer" was intended to convey, at least in print, both its short- and long-I meanings: an introduction to the man and his works for neophytes, and a chance to "prime" the assembled for the many centennial activities that are ahead. And the three speakers were ideal at doing both.) Sally Thomas Pavetti, Curator of the Monte Cristo Cottage in New London, described the renovation of the O'Neill's summer home to its appearance in their day; related the cottage to the plays it figures in---Ah, Wilderness! and Long Day's Journey; and outlined the imminent activities of the Collaborations III group and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Jordan Miller, of the University of Rhode Island, surveyed the ups and downs---frequently simultaneous---of O'Neill's critical reputation. And playwright Paul Shyre, who wrote the script for the PBS docudrama Eugene O'Neill---A Glory of Ghosts, offered insights into the playwright's later years, many of them gained from Mr. Shyre's long friendship with Carlotta Monterey.
O'Neill. The session concluded with a free-for-all discussion that definitely got the celebration ball rolling for a group of "primed" participants. --FCW.

13. "EUGENE O'NEILL: ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER" was the subject of a session at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association at the Sheraton-Boston Hotel on November 7. The titles of papers presented were "Eugene O'Neill and the Sea Plays" (Robert Willebrink, University of Central Arkansas), "Eugene O'Neill: The Religious Impulse, 1914-1923" (Gerald Lee Ratliff, Montclair State College), "Expressionism and Eugene O'Neill" (Ronald Shields, Bowling Green State University), and "A Deconstructive Analysis of Desire Under the Elms" (Joel Murray, Indiana-Purdue University, Fort Wayne).

14. O'NEILL IN THEATRE ANNUAL. As was noted in an insert to the last issue, the 1988 edition of The Theatre Annual will comprise a celebration of the centennial of O'Neill's birth. The editor of this special issue is Paul Voelker, Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland.

15. "EUGENE O'NEILL IN MOURNING" is the title of an essay by Stephen A. Black that appeared in the Winter 1988 issue of Biography (pp. 16-34). The author offers the following abstract of his essay.

The article offers a modification of Louis Sheaffer's principal interpretive thesis concerning O'Neill's life—that the playwright remained his parents' son all his life. As Sheaffer puts it in the Foreword to his first volume:

Unfortunately for O'Neill the man, but fortunately for O'Neill the writer, he never really "left" his mother and father. The evidence is to be found again and again in his writings, ultimately most clearly, most hauntingly in the posthumously released A Long Day's Journey Into Night. Hence my stressing of this element of his make-up, as reflected in the title O'Neill, Son and Playwright.

Sheaffer continues to make the point central throughout his second volume, which he calls O'Neill, Son and Artist.

The article presents evidence that O'Neill had reached emotional independence around 1918, his changed relation with his father from that time being one mark of belated emancipation. It distinguishes between the lifelong dependency of Jamie and the prolonged dependency of Eugene, who was finally able to make his own career and families as his brother never could.

The article claims that the preoccupation one finds in the plays with the O'Neill family members derives not from a lifelong dependency, but from a process that appears quite similar—mourning. For just as O'Neill was finally struggling free from his prolonged dependency, there began a 39-month-long trauma when all the other members of his parental family would die. The three deaths coming so close together, and the deaths of Ella and Jamie coming unexpectedly and in grotesque circumstances, plunged the playwright into a state of melancholia which would take O'Neill twenty years to work through.

The article traces the course of mourning through the plays written in the remainder of his working life, claiming that the more one understands the course of O'Neill's mourning, the better the plays may be known; and further, that major aspects of most of the plays remain inscrutable until one grasps the author's underlying preoccupation. It accepts the widely held three-phase model of mourning: that one first denies a loss; then accepts it, plunging into despair; and then, at last, gives up one's ghosts. In the three great last plays, O'Neill finally allows his dead to be dead. --S.A.B.
16. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS.


Patrick Nolan, Memory in Modern American Drama, 1920-1940. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, forthcoming. (It should be no surprise that Professor Nolan's book contains a substantial chapter on O'Neill.)


17. TEACHER OF THE YEAR? [We offer no such ennial encomia, nor do we think it fair to O'Neill's legion of pedagogic promoters to slight the many by lauding a few. But sometimes we hear of a classroom approach that merits both praise and emulation. And one such instance was brought to our attention by Karen Illingworth, who earned an M.A. in Theatre at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1986, and took an O'Neill course during her last semester. The teacher was Dr. Betty Jean Jones; and Ms. Illingworth's reminiscence of the course, slightly abridged, suggests that if such as award were a tradition, Dr. Jones would definitely be in the running! -Ed.]

I'd always been bothered that classroom references to O'Neill were usually fleeting and often patronizing. The length of his plays and the sophistication of his characterization, it was implied, put O'Neill beyond the reach of even advanced students. The falsity of that assumption was proven to me and eight fellow graduate students when, in the Spring of 1986, we were offered an intimate, experiential approach to O'Neill in a course in Applied Directing conducted by Dr. Betty Jean Jones. Her untraditional approach offered us an opportunity to truly experience O'Neill and to appreciate the accuracy of his title as America's greatest playwright.

Continuing the legacy of her mentors--Professors Esther Jackson and John Ezell at the University of Wisconsin, where she earned her doctorate--Professor Jones combined literary analysis with attention to theatre history. O'Neill's dramatic vision and the effect of his plays in performance, in an approach that she hopes will ultimately produce the next generation of American theatre practitioners.

At an early meeting, Dr. Jones provided a list of O'Neill's major plays, and each of us was required, after discussion on our own, to choose one play that we would analyze and from which we would select a scene to direct. The chosen nine were Moon for the Misbegotten, The Iceman Cometh, Mourning Becomes Electra, Marco Millions,
Strange Interlude, The Great God Brown, More Stately Mansions, All God's Chillun, and (the one I had wanted and succeeded in claiming) Long Day's Journey Into Night.

Dr. Jones's emphasis on the role of the dramaturg necessitated our beginning early in the semester to understand the complete script, even though our practical work would be limited to one extracted scene. The classes were unusual because we were developing theories and ideas—from using masks to examining character motivation—that we would put into practice at rehearsals beginning in late February.

We were urged not to over-involve ourselves in the scenic elements, since we were limited to a small laboratory theatre; but we knew it was necessary to create a certain amount of atmosphere for the actors and the audience. And we had to find acting students who were both available and of the right sex. (The last was not always possible, and a female had to play Kublai Kaan because there just weren't enough males to go around.)

I had chosen a scene involving all four Tyrones, but because of this lack of males I had to change my choice to the scene between Mary and Cathleen, and to cut the lines of James Tyrone. Another problem was one of age: how could a twenty-year-old actress be believable as Mary? (My Mary didn't challenge Geraldine Fitzgerald, et al., but she did a creditable job as a credible Mary.)

Time was of the essence—with the nine scenes scheduled for performance on four Mondays in April—and much of it was out-of-class time: rehearsing, pulling from the costume stock and choosing props and set pieces. Class time was devoted to working out and communally solving difficult interpretive problems that we were encountering during rehearsals.

For myself, I was feeling pretty good about all the hard work, and I certainly knew more about nine plays of O'Neill than I had thought one semester could bring. The scene from Long Day's Journey was not without incident. Poor Mary had to grope around in semi-darkness due to the failure of the lab theatre's main fuse. And the only decent fog horn I could find—in an attempt to establish the aforementioned atmosphere—sounded more bovine than oceanic. But the actors pulled it off, and many in the audience thought our jerry-rigged lighting had set an effective mood. I felt, ultimately, that the scenes best lending themselves to student production were those from The Great God Brown and All God's Chillun, though the extract from Marco Millions made me eager to see a full production.

We all came away with a better understanding of actor/character relationships and development, the rhythms and tempos within a scene—and all within the framework of O'Neill. Any departure from the usual format of professorial lectures is welcomed by students, but in this case we were challenged and enlightened and we learned to depend on one another in our exploration of the heart of O'Neill's art. I hope that others will follow Dr. Betty Jean Jones's lead and allow students, by becoming involved with the works of O'Neill, to fall in love with them as we did.

18. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.


The Hairy Ape, dir. George Ferencz, with score by Max Roach and featuring Sam Tsoutsouvas in the title role. Berkeley (CA) Repertory Theatre, November 5-29, 1987. [Ferencz's imaginative staging, making use of two movable scaffolds with the audience seated on both sides of the action, was first tried out in a New York City production in the 1970s. This latest version was performed at the Theater Artaud in San Francisco. Bernard Weiner, praising the production in the San Francisco Chronicle (November 9, p. F6), liked especially the initial movements and sounds of the ensemble--divided between the avian and the anthropoid; the wild but theme-related costumes; the italicizing effect of sound and lighting; and the sympathy for the protagonist aroused by the charismatic Tsoutsouvas. -Ed.]


A Touch of the Poet, dir. Betty Jean Jones. University of North Carolina at Greensboro, November 4-8, 1987. [The production was the topic of convention
sessions at the North Carolina Theatre Conference, which took place in Greensboro during the production's run. A commemorative program was published to accompany the production (featuring substantive articles by Dr. Jones, Ronald R. Miller, Robert M. Calhoon, and Karen Illingworth), and the Sunday matinee on November 8 was followed by an open community forum featuring Dr. Ronald Miller of the University of California-Santa Barbara, who spoke on "A Touch of the Poet: Values, Character and Culture in the Drama of Eugene O'Neill." Such para-performance activity is extremely valuable, since it builds an informed and discerning audience, and Dr. Jones is to be commended for carrying out a complex task so successfully. -Ed.)


19. JACKSON INTERLUDE REDUX. Glenda Jackson, acclaimed for her performance as Nina Leeds in London's West End and on Broadway, brought her incandescent performance to the television screen in a three-evening PBS miniseries on January 18-20, 1988. While the 4 1/2 hours, divided, may lack the impact of the stage totality, few would balk at the relative ease of three 90-minute episodes. This is not a film of the stage production but a much recast and redirected entity. The television version, directed by Herbert Wise, retained only Jackson and Edward Petherbridge (as Charles Marsden) of the Broadway cast. Professor Leeds is now Jose Ferrer, with Ken Howard and David Dukes, respectively, as Nina's husband and lover. English settings provide the outdoor locales for the expanded film treatment--the Thames near Oxford for the regatta scene, and a house in Kent subbing as an upstate New York manor. The famous "asides" are handled in a way appropriate to the tubular medium: the actors speak their thoughts, "but with a filtering technique in the recording [to] give these words a slight but noticeably different timbre from the [public] speeches," according to Charles Champlin in the Los Angeles Times ("Jackson's Thirst for Challenge," Calendar Section, September 20, 1987, pp. 3, 42).

20. A RESOURCE FOR SCHOLARS OF O'NEILL FILMS. In his tireless search for O'Neill letters, Jackson R. Bryer came up empty-handed at the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. But he did get a reply from Museum Archivist Samuel A. Gill that might be of interest to delvers into the relations between O'Neill and "Hollywood." Gill mentioned a research guide compiled by Anthony Slide in 1976 on the subject of "Eugene O'Neill on Film." Here is the relevant part of Mr. Gill's letter:

"This research guide provides an alphabetical listing of all O'Neill plays which had appeared in film form up to 1976, with year of release and production information ... and source information regarding material held by the Academy, 16mm film rental source, print preservation source, screenplays and other items in our repositories, and a few selected bibliographic notes.

"I might add that since the compilation of this research guide, the Academy has received the Production Code Administration files of the Motion Picture Association of America, containing files on many of the films included in this list, which would provide ... scholars ... with an inside look at how the Production Code responded to aspects of the play and/or script drafts in order to be acceptable to the Code and to meet censor board requirements.

"In addition, there is a sizeable clippings file on Eugene O'Neill in the Biography Files, and a substantial number of photographic stills on all of the MGM films in the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Collection of photographs which is MGM's archival set of stills preserved here at the Academy."

Interested scholars can contact Mr. Gill at the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972. Tel. (213) 278-4313.
21. O'NEILL'S FAVORITE O'NEILL FILM IN WELLESLEY. The Long Voyage Home (1940), which the playwright called "the best picture made from my stuff," will have two free showings (at 2 and 7:30) at the Wellesley (MA) Free Library, 530 Washington Street, on Thursday, April 14, 1988. The library is on both routes 16 and 135 near Wellesley Square, two miles west of Wellesley Hills. For further details, call Ted Kingsbury at (617) 235-7478. And tell him the Newsletter sent you!

22. AN ENCOUNTER AT WOODSTOCK: a reminiscence by William I. Oliver, Department of Dramatic Art, University of California, Berkeley.

This occurred some years ago (possibly the summer of 1948) while I was a young actor working at the Woodstock Playhouse in New York.

Having finished a performance or rehearsal, I went to a local bar to celebrate my pay day. I stood at one end of the bar and ordered a drink. Then I noticed another man at the bar. He was quite drunk. His speech was slurred and labored, as if his lips were numb. After a while, and probably due to some exchange between myself and the bartender, who knew I worked at the Playhouse, the drunk "chimed in" with a question or two about the current play. He was at pains to let us know that he "knew about theatre."

When I finished my drink the man insisted on buying me another. There was no escaping his offer. After a few remarks about the local Playhouse, he returned to his affirmations "that he really knew about theatre." He dropped several names of plays and authors. It was becoming obvious that he probably knew something about the theatre.

Then, quite abruptly, he sighed/belched and turned quite maudlin. Perhaps maudlin is not quite the right word ... Yes, he felt sorry for himself, but his self pity was laced with anger. His life was a waste, etc., etc. Then he looked up into my face and blinked and said ... "You know ... you know ... wha' my trouble is? My trouble's that ... that I'm my father's son!" Then he nodded for emphasis. I glanced at the bartender, who shrugged. Feeling I had to keep up my end of this conversation since he had bought me a drink, I asked the man who his father was. He replied, "Djeen O'Neill."

I glanced at the bartender again and he raised his eyebrows and shrugged. After that exchange the drunk returned to his painfully labored talk about the theatre.

It was a few years later that I saw a TV program (possibly on Dumont TV) interviewing a group of scholars and critics on questions concerning Greek tragedy or some such thing. I was impressed by the appearance of the same drunk I had met in Woodstock. The drunk had been, in fact, Eugene O'Neill's son. What was heart-breaking was the fact that the poor man was again drunk. Once O'Neill made his opening remarks, the camera proceeded to do an adroit dance around him for the rest of the program. However, try as they might to keep the camera off O'Neill, he kept trying to speak and one could hear the slurred and drunken remarks off camera.

When I learned the details of his death, I was again reminded of the misery of the drunk at the bar in Woodstock. I would venture to say that he considered his achievements as a critic and editor of the Collected Greek Plays to be of no real consequence. It's as though his life had been hollowed-out by his father's achievement.

23. GILPIN ON STAGE. The Emperor Charles, a play by Spencer Vibbert starring Charles Dumas as actor Charles Gilpin, played in New York City last fall, at the Church of the Holy Trinity on East 88th Street, where performances by the Triangle Theater Company ended on November 29. C. Gerald Fraser, interviewing the playwright and star
in the *New York Times* (November 28, 1987, p. 9), revealed that, in a strange way, history was repeating itself. O'Neill had eventually fired Gilpin when the actor wouldn't stop changing lines, particularly lines he considered racially demeaning. And Dumas found himself doing the same thing with Vibbert's script. "Instead of 'highfalutin bleeping mick playwright' I would say 'highfalutin Irish playwright,' and I was making the exact same kind of adjustment. I'm not doing it now; I'm trying to use the language and fit into my character." It may not be for that reason, but Mr. Dumas, unlike Mr. Gilpin, retained his starring role until the end of the run!
PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

DAVID W. BERRY, who teaches at West Chester University in Pennsylvania, has published articles in the Colby Library Quarterly, the Kansas School Board Journal and Brandywine Magazine, and is currently completing a study of Moll Flanders.


THOMAS F. CONNOLLY is a Lecturer in English at Suffolk University, a doctoral candidate in theatre at Tufts University, and a frequent reviewer of O'Neill productions for the Newsletter.

RICHARD B. EATON and MADELINE C. SMITH teach English at West Virginia University and Christopher Newport College, respectively. The article in this issue is "an offshoot of an annotated bibliography of O'Neill (a kind of updating of Miller) that we have been laboring over for a couple of years and that is tentatively slated for completion in the spring of 1988" (RBE).

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

KAREN ILLINGWORTH, a 1986 graduate of the MA Theatre program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, served as dramaturg for the recent UNCG production of A Touch of the Poet directed by Dr. Betty Jean Jones.

WARD B. LEWIS, a frequent reporter on O'Neill productions in the South, is Professor of German at the University of Georgia. His book, Eugene O'Neill: The German Reception of America's First Dramatist, was published in 1984 by Peter Lang.

JORDAN Y. MILLER, Professor of English Emeritus at the University of Rhode Island and Secretary-Treasurer of the Eugene O'Neill Society, is the author of Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic and Playwright's Progress: O'Neill and the Critics.

TERRY REED, Professor of English at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, is the author of the volumes on S. N. Behrman and Truman Capote in Twayne's American Authors Series, and is completing a study of Herman Wouk that is scheduled for 1988 publication by Greenwood Press.

YVONNE SHAFER, former editor of Ibsen News and Comment, the official publication of the Ibsen Society of America, is the author of four books--most recently, Approaches to Teaching Ibsen's A Doll House, a highly praised volume that she edited for MLA.

LOWELL SWORTZELL is Professor of Educational Theatre at New York University, where he recently completed the latest edition of his graduate seminar on the Theatre of Eugene O'Neill. An earlier version of his essay in this issue was presented, with slide illustrations at the conference on O'Neill's "later years" at Suffolk University in Boston on May 31, 1986.

PAUL D. VOELKER, Professor of English and Drama at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland, is President of the American Drama Society and a member of the Board of Directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society.

FREDERICK C. WILKINS, Chair and Professor of English at Suffolk University, is President of the Eugene O'Neill Society and editor of the Eugene O'Neill Newsletter.
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ASSORTED AFTERTHOUGHTS AND ADDENDA

PAPERS, PLEASE, FOR 12/88. The topic for the Eugene O'Neill session at the 1988 MLA Convention in New Orleans next December is "EUGENE O'NEILL AT 100: RESPECTS AND RETROSPECTS." Since the occasion marks the centennial of the playwright's birth, short, general papers on his achievement, influence and place in American and world drama are preferred to longer studies of one or a few specific plays. Papers or richly detailed proposals should be sent to the session chair, Frederick Wilkins, Dept. of English, Suffolk University, Boston, MA 02114. The deadline for receipt of submissions is March 15, '88. Completed papers are especially welcome, but all responders will be treated with equal cordiality. Include academic or other affiliation and, even if the paper is undone, a spiffy title for printing in the Convention program.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC BEHEST. Francine Lercangée and Marc Maufort are preparing an annotated bibliography on O'Neill, to be published by Garland late in 1989. They would appreciate information about unindexed, current, or forthcoming books, articles, dissertations and other publications, as well as copies of works and dissertation abstracts. If you can aid the cause, please contact Mr. Maufort, whose address is B.P. 10, Woluwé 3, Bruxelles, Belgium.

NOSTRA CULPA! Apologies to our readers, to critic Marc Maufort and to the Korrekelder Theatre Company for our failure to follow through in pictures with what was promised in words in the last issue (pp. 32-33). To rectify that error, we print herewith the shot of the Bruges set for _Long Day's Journey_, which is, as Mr. Maufort mentioned, markedly different from the Tyrones' more spacious quarters in Ghent (last issue, p. 33). --Ed.