The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter vol. 12, nos. 1, 1988

Eugene O'Neill Society

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The elder Tyrones (Jason Robards and Colleen Dewhurst) share a laugh before the fog rolls in during the Yale Repertory Theatre production of Long Day's Journey, reviewed in this issue. Photograph by Gerry Goodstein.
EDITOR'S FOREWORD: 1988 AND AFTER

1988 is unquestionably a banner year for O'Neillians. From the conferences "Eugene O'Neill and the Emergence of American Drama" in Han-sur-Lesse, Belgium, on May 20 - 22, to the session on "O'Neill at 100: Respects and Retrospects" at the Modern Language Association convention in New Orleans at the end of December, conferences around the world (in Sweden, Japan, China, India and West Germany as well as the U.S.) will acknowledge O'Neill's centennial and assess his achievement and influence. The largest collection ever of his letters, edited by Jackson Bryer and Travis Bogard, will be published by Yale University Press this summer; and two Bogard-edited volumes of his collected papers from the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University will be printed elsewhere. But even a selection of them will make this year's review issues the biggest yet, and perhaps the best. This first installment features Travis Bogard on an epistolary romance of the teenage New London blade; Paul Voelker on the first play, A Wife for a Life; Gary Jay Williams on fiction and fact in the accounts of O'Neill's Provincetown debut; Marc Maufort on the structural sophistication in the Wilderness! and, while the comedy must be viewed as his nostalgic fantasy of a faraway world, it is not clear that the play presents entirely a world that "might have been," or that O'Neill in his Academy days did not have in him a quality that might still be called virginal. At least at Richard Miller's age, seventeen.

Shaeffer notes O'Neill's schoolboy custom of writing letters to his family, friends, and acquaintances while he was at Saint Aloysius Academy between 1895 and 1899. The picture his biographers draw of him during these years is of a young man subjected to severe traumatic experiences which were to form the essential qualities of his mature character. Louis Shaeffer draws an image of him as a loner, a solitary rebel, one who refused the active life of "character-building" sports favored by the Academy's head, and who was good in history and English but poor in geometry and trigonometry. Shaeffer quotes his sources as saying "he talked very little and seldom smiled much." He did, however, like the side-liners of fun, enjoying it in a serious spirit. Bogard adds that he played the usual schoolboy pranks and that he habitually wore a mask of cynicism as he began his "quarrel with authority." Swinburne, Dowson, Fitzgerald, Wilde, and Baudelaire were the poets he admired, and during these years he made the acquaintance of New London, of Benjamin R. Tucker, whose bookstore was a mine of radical literature.

It was in this period—possibly in 1903, according to Shaeffer—that O'Neill learned of his mother's addiction to morphine on the frightening night when she fled from the house in New London and attempted to drown herself in the river. It was also in these years that Jamie took his younger brother in hand and instructed him in the life of the high jivers of low life. Somewhere in this period, presumably on a weekend in New York, Jamie arranged that Eugene should lose his virginity in a mechanical rough-and-tumble in a cheap brothel. And it was during this time, when he was fifteen in 1903, that O'Neill began to drink and to enter on a life of dereliction during the weekends away from school.

Shaeffer rightly views this as the onset of a rebellion against a difficult childhood, a rebellion that was to climax with his dismissal from Princeton and his disappearance, for a time into a world of dismal picturesque adventure. O'Neill was undoubtedly on a primrose path, but as with all adolescents, there was at the start an innocence in wickedness that somewhat tempered the darker colors of his late adolescence at Betts Academy. This was the year in which he would set the action of Ah, Wilderness! and, while the comedy must be viewed as his nostalgic fantasy of a faraway world, it is not clear that the play presents entirely a world that "might have been." or that O'Neill in his Academy days did not have in him a quality that might still be called virginal. At least at Richard Miller's age, seventeen.

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We will of course continue to print newer material as well, as space permits. And Philip C. Kolin's study in this issue offers a valuable complement to the Tuck essay, suggesting a continuum of influence that extends from Shakespeare to O'Neill to Faulkner.

I imagine that many rejoiced when Mark Twain, responding to announcements of his death, assured the world that they were "greatly exaggerated." Had he previously announced the demise himself, he may have felt as I do now, when, after announcing my retirement as editor at the end of 1988, I wish, after reconsideration, to stay on a bit longer. The question really is, how can I gracefully get my foot out of my mouth and back in the door?! I can't, really; but I want to assure the many who wrote, that I wasn't coyly soliciting the kind words they sent, though I greatly appreciated the sentiments expressed.

However, the discussions attendant on my announcement have been beneficial. The O'Neill Society should produce an annual volume of the best long work on O'Neill per annum. Shakespeare and Shaw are accorded such treatment, so why not O'Neill? And under the leadership of Jackson Bryer, an O'Neill annual is en route to actualization. The twice-annual Eugene O'Neill Newsletter will become a semiannual Eugene O'Neill Review in 1989, as we welcome the services of Steven Bloom and Yvonne Shaffer as book review and theatre review editors respectively. I will offer more news on the journal's metamorphosis in my next foreword. For the present, I beg your indulgent permission to continue as editor, and welcome you to the Newsletter's twelfth, last, and best year of all. --FCW

FIRST LOVE: EUGENE O'NEILL AND "BOUTADE"

Eugene O'Neill spent four years at Betts Academy in Stamford, Connecticut—between 1902 and 1906. The picture his biographers drew of him during these years is of a young man subjected to severe traumatic experiences which were to form the essential qualities of his mature character. Louis Shaeffer draws an image of him as a loner, a solitary rebel, one who refused the active life of "character-building" sports favored by the Academy's head, and who was good in history and English but poor in geometry and trigonometry. Shaeffer quotes his sources as saying "he talked very little and seldom smiled much." He did, however, like the side-liners of fun, enjoying it in a serious spirit. Bogard adds that he played the usual schoolboy pranks and that he habitually wore a mask of cynicism as he began his "quarrel with authority." Swinburne, Dowson, Fitzgerald, Wilde, and Baudelaire were the poets he admired, and during these years he made the acquaintance of New London, of Benjamin R. Tucker, whose bookstore was a mine of radical literature.

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The letters are addressed to a girl named Marion Welch, who lived in Hartford, but why she spent any time in New London and all in it were but faint memories of the misty past to you. I am very happy to find out that I was mistaken.

I cannot say how much missed and still miss you. New London has now relapsed into a somnambulant state which is far from pleasing and all on account of your departure.... I miss your "wind-mill motion" in the rowboat but, to be truthful, it was far from a windmill towards the end and more like...
an expert's. (Now will you be good). I have not even been up to hear the pictures at the Pequot for fear I should be overcome by pleasant memories (and the bug music).

Those pictures are exceedingly unkind to me and I hope I do not look anything like them. They are good however considering the sun was in our faces (and the subjects as you cruelly mentioned). Do not forget to send me the others and if I may ask for the millioneth [sic] time for your photo “Please! Ah! Please! I think you're the meanest girl I ever knew” But all joking aside I assure you that I want it ever so much. And let us keep up this correspondence, begun with such “earnest of success” If you know what a break it is in the dull, monotonous existence up here I feel sure you would not refuse.

I am getting to be perfect bookworm and read all the morning, swim in the afternoon as usual (you said in your letter I receive no morning baths) and read all night. Can you beat it? It has the “Cynic Tub”’s beaten to a pulp.” Oh! Excuse me my cherie [sic]. I forgot that was one of your sore points. However do not let it “prick your conscience” Hee! Hoo!

That reminds me. I have sworn off sarcasm as a bad job as you will probably notice in this letter. It is a really [sic] very contemptible thing, don’t you think so. Almost as bad as making puns....

I may be in Hartford soon “You never can tell” I have a mind to go to Trinity just so as to be near you. Now you must acknowledge that that is a horrible sacrifice.

Miss Keeney still floats around in that hat like a nymph or a Jersey cow. I can’t tell which....

Well the sand in my hour glass is about run out and I must “put on the brakes” Please send me your photo with the other pictures and thus make me even more than I am now. Your eternal slave

Eugene O’Neill

Given on the 24th day of July in the year of our Lord 1905

It is almost impossible to judge 1905 by the attitudes of the 1980s. O’Neill, like Richard Miller, was "going on seventeen." Yet even by Richard Miller’s standards—who was not incapable of an “Aw gee!”—the tone of the letter is young, unsophisticated to the point of naiveté. Perhaps Booth Tarkington’s Seventeen, written in 1916, brings us closest to the unfledged quality of the world in which O’Neill was hatching. However that may be, the image the letters offer is in some contrast to that of the tormented, masked adolescent, even though it does not deny that other self. Happily, he wrote again the following month:

Ma chère "Boutade":-

Received your most welcome letter with the pictures inclosed [sic] yesterday. The pictures are much better than the ones you send before don’t you think so? Thank you so much for your "half give-in" even though it be only a half....

Would that I might see you soon and let you complete your rowing lessons! New York was almost as slow as New London. Everyone I know was away and it was hot!! It makes me sweat to think of it.

I looked up Jenn Ingelow and read "High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire". It is fine is [sic] it? That parody on "Annabel Lee" is very clever. Am glad to hear you have learned the original. Some of the lines express my feelings exactly especially the following:

“And neither the angels in heaven above
Nor the demons down under the sea
Can ever disserve my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee”

Except her name is not Annabel Lee but M..... W..... But what is it you said one time about personal remarks?

Life up here is just the same. It makes the famous "Simple Life" look like "The Pace that Kills" To say it is slow would be using language as weak as Watts' Hymns for Infant Minds. But I go to Saratoga in a couple of days and I hope "to wake up" I was up to one of the "hops" last Saturday night and danced with the fair ones (not even fair) I was bored to death and said "Never again for little Eugene" and by the nine gods I never will unless you or someone else that I know are there.

I don’t see how anyone could go to Darwin for enjoyment. Alex. Dumas père pour le mien. I could read every book in the world and no heroes could ever replace "D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis," "Monte Cristo" and "Bussy" in my estimation. "Charlie Steele" however has a high place....

Do not let Tennis take all your thoughts because then you will forget how to row. And that would be a great misfortune in so promising a pupil. My brother and I swam the river this morning and I am some tired.

If you want to read some pretty poems I recommend Thomas Moore to you. He has written some "peaches" and I never tire reading them and have learned a few....

Write soon "ma cherie" [sic] and lit [sic] up the monotonous days of your devoted admirer

Eugene O’Neill

The unexpected praise of Monte Cristo is, of course, for the novel, not the play, but it is to be noted that in 1899 James O’Neill had appeared successfully in a dramatization of The Three Musketeers and followed it with an expensive new production of Monte Cristo which was also received with applause. Sheaffer relates that while at Saint Aloysius, O’Neill and several of his friends whom he had taken to see The Musketeers were reproached by a nun for indulging in games imitating the sword play at which James Hollow” every day is composed of 24 hours, each one equivalent to ten in any other place--but why multiply details--it is centuries since I have heard from you....

L’autre Marian was over a week ago Sunday. I took her picture and she took mine. Will send you them when they are fixed. We missed you very much and especially that persuasive way of yours “Please! Ah! Pi....ease” (You see I
The weather is so cold up here that it would cause the blush of envy and shame to mar the cheek of an iceberg. "And o'er the one half world Nature seems dead."

The other night it was clear and the moon was full (but I was'nt' [sic]) But the wind was blowing a gale and the sea was pretty high and "mon frère et moi" went out in the boat and rowed way out in the Sound. It was fine. The waves were so high that when we were on top of them we could see the mortgages on the houses in Shelter Island. All joking aside it was certainly rough and we enjoyed it immensely.

Do write soon and throw a little sunlight into the chasm of despair where lies

Your devoted slave
Eugene

She took pity on him and wrote a letter which he answered joyfully, describing a trip to Saratoga "where the 'Lid' is off for good." He won a bit on the "ponies" and then "'rustled my pile' on the slot machines." 6

Evidently, O'Neill in 1905 had yet to reach into the world of scandalous literature. There seems dead"... But the wind was blowing a gale and the sea was pretty high and "mon frère et moi" went out in the boat and rowed way out in the Sound. It was fine. The waves were so high that when we were on top of them we could see the mortgages on the houses in Shelter Island. All joking aside it was certainly rough and we enjoyed it immensely.

The letters that follow came from Betts Academy, which is now a "desert drear," as well as the places from which he wrote.

I came back last Wednesday and am now pouring [sic] over Vergil Trig etc. in an effort to compel Princeton to be charitable and let me in next year. I love this strenuous life (as you probably noticed in New London when I sat in back and let you row)

Boardman is back. He says the High School refused to endanger its reputation by taking him back. He also claims he knows you well and taught you how to skate. It seems I have a rival in the professor line?

When I was in New York I went around with Con Daly and my brother. I am now recuperating from the result. I also met Shevlin the captain of the Yale football team. He seems to me to contradict the statements that he is a bad fellow. Daly was never really "fired" as he gets his diploma and goes back to Law school to row on next years crew.

Boardman wants me to come up and stay with him sometime during Christmas. If so I will see you soon. That is a very unlooked for pleasure....

As somebody has evidently been sweeping the room with this pen I must stop. Write me soon. Your letters are the only solace to my broken heart (which I have lost and which you have found but remain indifferent to) Je t'aime ma cherie! Je t'aime! ....

The trips to New York, like several in this period, were the occasion of Eugene's introduction to the profligate ways of Jamie. Yet they sound innocent enough--friendly excursions with Varsity men who are not so bad as they have been painted. Somewhere here, no doubt, O'Neill met the prototype of Wint Selby from Ah, Wilderness!—perhaps the dissolute Boardman. Marion, in her next letter, objected to Eugene's friendship with Boardman, but O'Neill defended him, after apologizing for a delay in answering because of another trip to New York City.

What you said about my accepting Boardman's invitation would be true last year but I am glad to say he has learned a lesson and is a very good fellow. The proof of this is that he has been admitted to a very select secret society, composed wholly [sic] of what is termed, good fellows. I may mention that I also am a member and one of the framers of the constitution.

However I never had any idea of accepting his invitation (except to see you) for little old New York is good enough for me at any season. Have you any prospects of visiting there this year? If so I wish you would let me know, for I should like nothing better than to do everything I could to make your stay amusing and interesting.
Our football team played its first game Saturday with Stevens High School and won 17-0. We play Yale Freshmen next Wednesday and, I beg of you, if you wish to have a good opinion of the school, do not look up the score in the paper...I am not playing football this year but run two or three miles every day in preparation for track.

Whether the remark about his going out for the track team is more than adolescent strutting is uncertain. Sheaffer presents O'Neill as one given to long walks and solitary sessions with books, playing only "Pit-orchard and occasional games of tennis." Nevertheless, the secret society, whatever it was, somewhat belies the image of O'Neill as a determined loner, as does his account in his next letter of a roughhouse in the dormitory:

We had a fine "rough house" here a few weeks ago. It was at night. All of us stuck our heads out of the windows of our rooms about one o'clock in the morning and gave four or five Bett's cheers. Having awakened Mr. Bett's the fun began. It consisted, in the main, of wet towels and pillows and soap and pails and wastebaskets, thrown with intent to injure the visages of the Herr Professor on our floor or of any one else in the way. When Bett's arrived on the scene, "rattled their dicta" all doors were shut and the noises of the sleepers would have waked the dead. When he finally did awake us noone [sic] could give him the least information in regard to it. I am sure he would have beleived [sic] himself in under the influence of an hallucination (occasioned by some of his half-cooked hash) if the weapons of the attack had no [sic] been laying all over the hall. But to this day he does not know who were engaged in the adventure nor is he liable to find it out...

He continued to describe a trip to New York to see the "Pearl and Pumpkin" in which he admired only the scenery and a song or two. The best things to be seen on that visit were "Roger Bros. in Ireland" and "Houdini the Handcuff King" ("He certainly had me strutting is uncertain. Sheaffer presents O'Neill as one given to long walks and solitary sessions with books, playing only "Pit-orchard and occasional games of tennis." Nevertheless, the secret society, whatever it was, somewhat belies the image of O'Neill as a determined loner, as does his account in his next letter of a roughhouse in the dormitory:

He signed that letter (dated November 11, 1905) "...beleive [sic] me to be as I have been for months and always will be, Your own Eugene," but thereafter the correspondence died a natural death in one final letter, written presumably near to the Christmas holiday:

My dear Marion.

It is, I suppose, useless to ask for pardon for making you wait such a long time for an answer to your letter. All I have to say is that it got here just before our Thanksgiving vacation and I forgot it in the excitement of going to New York. I just happened to find it today in my desk and determined "to do the deed before the purpose cooled" and write you immediately. I hope I am forgiven, for I cherish the remembrance of some of the happiest days of my life (passed in a row boat in New London harbor) far too greatly to have any bitch (passed in a row boat in New London harbor) far too greatly to have any bitch.

But to throw away the pill I was smoking and to come back to earth. Our Christmas holidays begin on the twentieth of this month and maybe I won't [sic] be glad to get to old New York again.

So you went to see old worm eaten "Monte Cristo." It may be all right for those who have never seen it before but for me "Back to the Bamboo," I saw six plays during Thanksgiving vacation and we only had five days. They were all musical comedies (I always confessed to degraded tastes) Marie Cahill in "Moonshine" was the best of all.

Have read quite a few books lately. "My Friend Prospero" by Henry Harland is fine and I like it as well as the "Cardinal's Snuff Box." "The Masquerader" and "Beverly of Graustark" and "My Lady of the North." I suppose you have read all these. I want to read "The Clansman" but never can get it at the library. At this time of the year when there is nothing to do in the way of sports, good books come in very handy.

Boardman said he met you at a dance during Thanksgiving and that you were as pretty as ever.

Well please do not take my delay as an example but write soon. I leave Tuesday afternoon for New York so if you don't write me before then address your letter to Lexington Hotel, 47th St between Broadway and 6th....

The "bell invites me" to go to class so "au revoir!"

Your own
Eugene

Which, so far as the record goes, was the flat ending of the romance with "Boutade." It seems evident, however, that whatever the trauma that haunted him, whatever loneliness he felt, it is not quite sufficient to picture him as a brooding, self-isolated youngster. Nor is it certain that he was entirely as remembered by classmates recorded in Sheaffer: "moody... quite cynical... reading books about sex, plays that were pretty frank about marital problems." The Boutade letters suggest an alternative innocence. Evidently he was not going to reveal the excesses to Marion Welch, but the enthusiasm for musical comedies and for romantic adventure stories rather than fin-de-siecle poets suggests that there was, flowing side by side with the darker current, a boyhood that can only be called "regular." And it is pleasant to think that Boutade was not entirely forgotten. The rowboat on the shore in which Richard Miller and Muriel McComber plight their tentative troth was a precise memory.

--Travis Bogard

NOTES

1 Cf. Louis Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Playwright (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), chs. 5 and 6 passim.

2 Sheaffer, p. 71.

3 Marion was the daughter of a Hartford insurance doctor, George Kellogg Welch. She was two years older than O'Neill and had just graduated from high school. Her recollection of O'Neill that summer was that all her set called him "the professor," because of his intellectual interests. She added, however, that she did not tease him. The Greens lived close to Monte Cristo cottage.

4 O'Neill had been teaching her to row.

5 That is, the tub in which the Cynic philosopher, Diogenes, was said to have lived.

6 Seventeen, it will be recalled, concerns a visit similar to that made by Marion Welch. A young, baby-talking siren visits a friend for the summer, to the devastation of the small town's young male population, who cluster around her with adolescent squawking like seagulls around a garbage scow.

7 O'Neill had won a wager with his father by memorizing the role of Macbeth.
O'Neill attempted suicide with an overdose of Veronal.

Mary Ellen Quinlan O'Neill's addiction to morphine and the responsibility for it which Eugene attached to James O'Neill was only part of a series of causal factors which aggravate and explain at the age of fourteen seems to have been the essential factor in turning the natural rebellion of a son against his father's all-out psychological war.

The war lasted for almost a decade and, as a consequence, the boy whose earliest memories were of life in the theatre, the boy who became enthralled with books and reading at an early age and who began to write poetry while a youngster in preparatory school,

did not complete his first play until he was nearly twenty-five years old.

It seems clear now, as Louis Sheaffer has hypothesized, that O'Neill had unconsciously decided to become a playwright well before the time he began to do actual writing. For a long time he appears to have really wanted to do was write. It was the only activity, primarily in the form of poetry, which retained his interest throughout his adolescence and young manhood (outside of the pleasures of liquor and women). All of his other work experiences, for one reason or another, had ended in failure. But because of the war with his father, O'Neill's interest in writing did not turn toward the drama until the complex mixture of guilt, recrimination, hatred, and love which he felt had reached a climax of personal degradation and despair.

All of the evidence suggests that his climax occurred in the early part of 1912, when Eugene O'Neill attempted suicide with an overdose of Veronal.

Upon his recovery, he returned once again, as he always had, to his family. He joined them on the Orpheum circuit, where his father was playing in the vaudeville version of his most famous role, the Count of Monte Cristo. This time Eugene found a father who was also reduced in stature, a man beginning to reckon the final accounts of his life. A life which had to be accomplished in some form before he could reasonably be expected to make a genuine truce at the end of an eight-year war. Nevertheless, subsequent events make clear that the turning point in their relationship, for it is during this same period that we find the first report of Eugene O'Neill's interest in playwriting, was the play. The War lasted for almost a decade and, as a consequence, the boy whose earliest memories were of life in the theatre, the boy who became enthralled with books and reading at an early age and who began to write poetry while a youngster in preparatory school,

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It seems clear now, as Louis Sheaffer has hypothesized, that O'Neill had unconsciously decided to become a playwright well before the time he began to do actual writing. For a long time he appears to have really wanted to do was write. It was the only activity, primarily in the form of poetry, which retained his interest throughout his adolescence and young manhood (outside of the pleasures of liquor and women). All of his other work experiences, for one reason or another, had ended in failure. But because of the war with his father, O'Neill's interest in writing did not turn toward the drama until the complex mixture of guilt, recrimination, hatred, and love which he felt had reached a climax of personal degradation and despair. All of the evidence suggests that his climax occurred in the early part of 1912, when Eugene O'Neill attempted suicide with an overdose of Veronal.

Upon his recovery, he returned once again, as he always had, to his family. He joined them on the Orpheum circuit, where his father was playing in the vaudeville version of his most famous role, the Count of Monte Cristo. This time Eugene found a father who was

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allowed his old newspaper, the Telegraph, to run a brief story which amounted to a free advertisement for the son of the famous actor. The following story appeared under the heading of vaudeville—his first effort at writing for the theatre—which he expected to sell in the fall of 1909.

Apparently O'Neill did not similarly advertise his next script, A Wife for a Life, until after it was filmed in 1909, so publicized was the sympathy and support of the film company for the young playwright. In a letter to his father, attributed to the early months of 1909, O'Neill seems to have run a similar item until O'Neill's first book, Thirst, and Other One Act Plays, appeared in August; and that item made clear that those plays were intended to appear in the theatre, not in vaudeville.

Finally, there is the type of play he chose to write. Although it has not been sufficiently remarked upon, A Wife for a Life is part of an extremely well-established and theatrically popular literary and commercial genre, the 'frontier play.' The appeal of the Western is not self-evident. Even if he were, we would be inclined to read the play for the light it sheds on that experience. In the play, in his autobiography, and in his interviews, O'Neill stresses the inexperience and which result from the preconditions he seems to have placed upon it. All of these features make A Wife for a Life unique in O'Neill's career, and the common denominator of all of them seems to be a deliberate effort on his part to achieve commercial success, to write a popular play which would make money. Nothing else, of course, could have been so well designed to appeal to James O'Neill, a man whose respect for the theatre was never wholly outweighed by either the wishes of an audience or the attraction of money. A Wife for a Life is a play the values of which James O'Neill well understood, which he might have written, and which he probably would have advised his son to write, but he was not to have asked him to write it for him.

But these speeches, as bad as they are, can be otherwise explained, especially since it is not self-evident that Jack Sloan is O'Neill's counterpart. Jack's rhetoric is typical of O'Neill's work in general and of the Campbell play: the miner who saves his partner's life and thinks of giving up the woman he loves. The possibility of such a direct source has perhaps been obscured by overemphasis on the autobiographical aspects of the play. This bias has also led to the charge that the play is lacking in objectivity, presumably because of the impassioned, prose-poetic rhetoric in which Jack Sloan proclaims his love for Yvette. One cannot even be sure if O'Neill ever did even then write speeches of a more colloquial flavor, as in this line from the third character in A Wife for a Life. Old Pete: "I seen your campfire burning and reckoned I'd bring it right over." Perhaps, then, in O'Neill's defense it should be noted that the incongruity of dialect characters mixed with pretentious prose-poets in a Western milieu is part of a long-standing tradition which can be traced back to Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo. The fault lies, if at all, in following the tradition so slavishly. But here again, O'Neill's commercial motives must be taken into account. The playwright seems to have had in mind what would probably have been disappointed if he had written in any other way.

It is now possible to see A Wife for a Life in a clearer light. That it has numerous flaws cannot be denied, but many of them seem to be the result of O'Neill's motives in writing the play. On the other hand, despite some previous opinion to the contrary, the play shows both talent and promise and comes across as a coming-out piece. It is clear that all of these features make A Wife for a Life a type of play which would establish O'Neill's ultimate reputation as a modern dramatist—a realistic tragedy. The greatest strength of the play resides in the structure of its center dramatic action, the sequence of events taking place on the ranch, which has the star quality with which O'Neill had to work. The play offers the audience a series of events—progresses during the play. It includes tension and suspense, surprise, reversal, recognition, inner conflict, self-knowledge, and in somewhat different words, the self-recognition, "I have sinned," which Robert B. Heilman has termed "the completion of self-recognition:" that the young man who saved the Older Man's life is the same man whom the Older Man had sworn to kill; that Yvette's telegram should arrive on the very day that the prospering adventure has proved so successful that it warrants the toast to "We're fools for luck for once," and "The luck was due to change." That all of this is part of a coherent design is further suggested by a speech in the opening minutes of the play which O'Neill gives to Old Pete: "You-alle ought to get rich. You know how to keep money. Now me and money could never get on no way. They cleaned me out in Lawson this time and I
reckon they'll clean me out again the next time. 34 After Pete's exit, the Older Man comments, "Poor Pete. Same old story. Been bucking the faro bank again. I suppose." This dialogue, then, which seems little more than small talk, implicitly brings out the idea of luck: while Old Pete's being "cleaned out" and the prospect of being "cleaned out" again, suggests an oblivious potential for personal failure. And it becomes possible to see a clear though rudimentary progression by which the audience as well as the Older Man come to understand the role of fate in the characters' lives, a progression which loosely parallels the Older Man's recognition of wrongdoing. It thus becomes possible to catch a glimpse of a potentially just universe, one almost medieval in its coherence. Such a universe, of course, is at great variance with the modern world view found in O'Neill's next dozen plays. This variance is perhaps the strongest indicator of his purpose in writing this play, for his father's support with a work of definite appeal for a conventional audience of the day.

Further appreciation of O'Neill's artistry in this play can be derived if we examine the theme of fate in conjunction with the most striking aspect of the play's setting: the "lonely butt... outlined, black and sinister against the lighter darkness of a sky with stars." The adjectives "lonely" and "sinister" are clearly more evaluative than descriptive, but the curious feature is their rather contradictory nature. "Lonely" and "sinister" do not seem natural companions. Yet each can be related to the final situation of the Older Man. The "black and sinister" aspect of this butt which stands by itself suggests a foreboding of loneliness as a fate to rise up in the midst of the placid surface of the Older Man's life; the "lonely" quality similarly foreshadows the state of aloneness to which he resigns himself at the end of the play.

As Travis Bogard has explained it, "the setting ... suggests the course of [the Older Man's] destiny." Bogard's emphasis is on the psychological aspect of the setting, on its "inner nature"; its "outer form" is to be a "wandering ghost in a desert of spent passion." The wasted world is all he can inherit, and the setting reflects the substance of his grief. This "desert of spent passion," however, only depicts on the broader pictorial level what is also symbolized more directly by the Older Man's life. That the Older Man is "stirring the fire in a futile attempt to start it into flame." Similarly, at the very end of the play, "he sits down by the campfire and shortly after "stirs the fire in a futile attempt to start it into flame." The Older Man's two attempts to stir the fire into flame further illuminate O'Neill's design of the play. The Older Man's attempt to stir the fire into flame provides him with an image of night, smoldering fire, and the Older Man on stage by himself. In the theatre, there is probably nothing more suggestive of the fundamental loneliness of the human condition than the lowering of the curtain on a stage which contains only one character. Implicitly, at least, O'Neill seems to have understood this effect of the Older Man's life by himself. In his very first work written for the stage, he is evidence of both the strengths which would serve him and the weaknesses which would plague him for more than thirty years; and his artistic life is bracketed by its two main characters—the confident young man finding both monetary and samoury success, and the older man poking at the ashes of his projected grandiose achievements which will never be realized.

NOTES

1 O'Neill's insistence is found in a note he wrote on the title page of the autograph manuscript of The Web, housed in the Princeton University Library. In the note, written in 1944, O'Neill classified A Wife as the first work he "wrote for the stage" and The Web as his "first play" (O'Neill's emphasis; Egil Torvquist, A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-naturalistic Technique [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969], p. 258, n. 10).


3 A Wife was copyrighted on August 15, 1913 (Torvquist, p. 258). The Web was copyrighted on October 17, 1913 (Doris Alexander, The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill [New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962], p. 38).


5 Louis Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Playwright (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1968), pp. 505, 506, 89 and 72; the Gelbs, pp. 61-62.

6 Sheaffer, p. 252.

7 Sheaffer, p. 72.

8 Sheaffer, p. 210; the Gelbs, p. 188.

9 Sheaffer, p. 214; Alexander, p. 158.

10 Sheffer, pp. 216-17; Alexander, p. 159.

11 Alexander, p. 160; the Gelbs, pp. 182-83. Sheaffer, p. 218, suggests otherwise.

12 Clark, p. 49.

13 The Gelbs, p. 189.

14 Sheaffer, p. 226.
The legend of Eugene O'Neill's discovery by the Provincetown Players in 1916 in the second summer of their existence is one of the more dramatic of many dramatic stories about the playwright's life. It is almost certainly, as I shall show, a dramatized version of what probably occurred. I will also attempt to reconstruct what probably happened in the summer of 1916.

In bare outline, the legend has O'Neill coming to Provincetown that summer with a "trunk full of plays," including Bound East for Cardiff, arriving on the Boston ferry at just that moment when the new theatre group was in need of another play to fill out its second summer bill of three one-act plays for the Wharf Theatre. The story was told in its fullest form by Susan Glaspell in her biography of her husband, George Cram Cook, The Road to the Temple, written just after his death. Speaking of July 1916, she writes:

* "We gave a first bill, then met at our house to read plays for a second. Two Irishmen, one old and one young, had arrived and taken a shack just up the street. "Terry," I said to one not young, "haven't you a play to read?" "No," said Terry Carlin, "I don't write, I just think and sometimes talk, but Mr. O'Neill has got a whole trunk full of plays," he smiled."

That didn't sound too promising, but I said: "Well tell Mr. O'Neill to come to our house at eight o'clock tonight and bring some of his plays."

This essay is the author's revision of his 1984 Conference article of the same title that appeared in Theatre Journal, 37, 2 (May 1985), 155-166. Research for it was supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to Adele Heller, President of the Provincetown Playhouse-on-the-Wharf.
Supposed to have made his dramatic debut, took place on about July 16th or 17th. Hapgood's letter places him among the Players almost three weeks before.

The fire threatened to destroy the Wharf Theatre and made hasty, late repairs necessary. Therefore, it is likely that the meeting about the second bill, at which O'Neill is after the first bill had been performed, and it is unlikely that the group would have met any earlier, because, in the days just prior to the opening of the first bill, a serious event occurred.

Glaspell's story, with its intimations of Providence in Provincetown, has been repeated, sometimes verbatim and sometimes with embellishments, by all of O'Neill's biographers--Barrett Clark, Hamlton Bass, Cresswell Bowen, Doris Alexander, Arthur and Barbara Hanau. Hapgood was also interviewed in Helen Deutsch and Stella Hapgood's 1931 The Provincetown, A Story of the Theatre.

There is, however, substantial evidence that O'Neill was in Provincetown, among the Players, well before the meeting about the second bill of plays to which Glaspell refers. There is also evidence, more circumstantial, that the group turned down several plays that O'Neill offered them before they accepted Cardiff.

That O'Neill was in the group earlier that summer is clear from a letter written that summer from Provincetown by one of the original group, journalist Butchins Hapgood. He was writing to Mabel Dodge, the legendary hostess, patron, confidante, and sometimes lover to radicals, avant-garde artists, and writers. Dodge and Hapgood had summer from Provincetown by one of the original group, journalist Hutchins Hapgood. He was, moreover, among "the summer's first bill opened on July 13th, 1916, and played on the 14th and 15th.

The first bill will have a one-act play by Reed and Neith's Winter's Night. There are Grace Potter, [Charles] Demuth, [Maryden] Bartley (visiting Jack [Reed]), [David] Carby (Bobby Rogers comes soon), Stella [Cosidency Ballantine] and her baby, Hippolyte [Havel] acting as cook for the Reed crowd. [Jack Reed's] house is full of guests. [Fred] Boyd is here helping him. Terry Carlin and [Eugene] O'Neill (son of James O'Neill) have taken [Bayard Boyesen's] studio. The play fever is on. [Jig [George Crum Cook] and Susan [Glaspell].] Neith [Boyce Hapgood] and Mary O'Brien [Vorse]. Reed, [Frederick] Burt, and O'Neill are the enthusiastic in our circle. The first bill will have a one-act play by Reed and Neith's Winter's Night. [Justus] Sheffield arrives today for two or three days with us. I am trying to compose a book on Religion, a social novel, a one-act play, and an essay! Mostly preliminary brooding....

This letter places the young O'Neill, then identifiable chiefly as the son of actor James O'Neill, in the Players sometime before July 1st. He was, moreover, among "the enthusiastic" in the group. This means that O'Neill was with them well before the meeting about the second bill of the summer to which Glaspell refers, well before Cardiff was chosen. Moreover, he was even there well before the first bill was performed and probably before its plays were selected. We know, from two sources, that the summer's first bill opened on July 13th, 1916, and played on the 14th and 15th.

Glaspell describes--perhaps sometime in late June.--Kemp did not name this play but remembered it as being "frightfully bad, trite, and full of the most preposterous hokum," and he says it won O'Neill even less favor. Kemp described the play as being "something about an American movie man who financed a Mexican revolution for the sake of filming its battles."
This play would have been O'Neill's one-act, The Movie Man, written in the spring of 1914. O'Neill was interested in the recent Mexican war; like many Village rebels of the time, he was critical of what he believed was capitalistically motivated intervention in that war. The plot of his play involves two brush American film makers who have come to Mexico seeking the cooperation of a Mexican general (modeled on Pancho Villa). Villa’s film is not wholly hokum; it was based on an actual story that is even more remarkable. It is an unconventional play, both in its form and its vision, for an American playwright in 1914-1916. Its only action is the conversation between Yank, dying in his bunker in the forecastle of the Glencairn after having been seriously injured in a fall in the hold, and his friend, Driscoll, who tends to him. No medical help for Yank is promised. It was O'Neill’s first one-act play and was not published until 1950. It is in this modern tragic vision that the play carries its germ of future work.

The meeting Kemp had with O'Neill in July 1917 was the first time that Kemp saw O'Neill, wearing an old sweater and cotton trousers, sitting motionless in a wicker chair, while he delivered in his low, deep, slightly monotonous but compelling voice the lines of a one-act play about seamen in a ship’s forecastle, the climax being the death of one of them in his bunk. Kemp had heard the actual speech of men who go to sea; we shared the reality of their lives; we felt the motion and wind, the wavebeat urge of a ship. This time no one doubted that here was a genuine playwright.

Kemp says, the group found a decisive demonstration of his talent: O'Neill, wearing an old sweater and cotton trousers, sat motionless in a wicker chair, while he delivered in his low, deep, slightly monotonous but compelling voice the lines of a one-act play about seamen in a ship’s forecastle, the climax being the death of one of them in his bunk. We heard the actual speech of men who go to sea; we shared the reality of their lives; we felt the motion and wind, the wavebeat urge of a ship. This time no one doubted that here was a genuine playwright.

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Paul Volcke has argued that in the revision of Children of the Sea into Cardiff O'Neill was only partially moving in the same direction as the earlier version. Specifically, he shifted the focus onto Yank, added greater emphasis to his courage in facing death, and made both men more sympathetic. It would be convenient for my assessment of the value of O'Neill's experience with the Players to suggest that it had no effect with the group by 1918, but the development is not so tidy. He appears to have revised Children into Cardiff just before or during his year at Harvard, 1914-1915.

The evidence for this dating is a typescript of Cardiff in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center. A brief description of the bibliographic evidence will suffice here. The typed title page is as follows: "Bound East for Cardiff / A Play in One Act / By Eugene O'Neill. / A ribbon copy, longhand corner of the title page is O'Neill's address in New London, Connecticut, written in his hand. The typescript is a ribbon copy, typed on a blue ink ribbon throughout. The entire manuscript, including the title page, has been typed on the same paper, each sheet bearing the same watermark, and all were once stapled to a gray backing sheet.

This was apparently prepared by O'Neill for George Pierce Baker, whose famous "English '47" playwriting course O'Neill took in 1914-1915. Its text is nearly that of the play as published later. (As we shall see, the published version shows further refinements.) At the time that O'Neill applied for admission to Baker's course, in July of 1914, he sent him two recently completed one-acts as samples of his work. Louis Sheaffer has speculated that one of them was Cardiff. If so, then O'Neill himself seems to have confirmed this. He told Barrett Clark that Cardiff was "written before I entered the class," and, in the note about Cardiff's place in the chronology of his plays that he provided for Richard Skinner in 1935, O'Neill said again that it "was written at Harvard. For Baker." Harvard might have been remembering his writing of Children rather than its revision of it into Cardiff, blurring the two plays together in memory. The "English '47" on the title page of the manuscript at Baker's center would seem to suggest that he revised the play while studying with Baker, not before. But in either case, it is possible that "English '47" is in parentheses and that it has been firmly crossed out by someone (O'Neill? Baker?). In either case, it is clear that the essential revision of Children into Cardiff was completed sometime in 1914-1915, well before O'Neill came to Provincetown in the summer of 1916.

We can only speculate on the question of why O'Neill did not submit this play to the Players at first. I have suggested that he first offered The Movie Man thinking it would appeal to the radical Provincetowners. It could be speculated that he did not have much confidence in Cardiff; since, according to O'Neill's report to Barrett Clark in later years, Professor Baker had once said "he didn't think Bound East for Cardiff was a play at all," and said O'Neill, "I respected his judgment." But I doubt that O'Neill was thinking of Baker that much. That speculation would serve Travis Bogard's case that Baker's influence on O'Neill was nearly disastrous, but that is a case I do not find convincing.

The English '47 typescript probably represents very nearly the text of the play as it was produced in Provincetown in July of 1916, although we cannot be sure. There exists in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection a draft of "Jig" Cook, who played Yank in the original Wharf Theatre production and again that fall in the Village production. The lines of Yank it provides are nearly identical to those in the English '47 typescript. At those points where there are differences between those typescripts and the English '47, I have noted them. In the fall of 1916, Cook's side is closer to the English '47 typescript. Shay's publication probably coincided with the November production in the Village, and so there is no reason to assume that Cook's side was the original manuscript. Cook's side does not, however, give us a complete picture of the manuscript of the summer script. Because the four-page side does not go through to the end of the play, and it does not record O'Neill's stage directions in detail.

The text of the play published that fall shows interesting differences. Practical production considerations probably account for some of them. O'Neill dropped the stage directions prescribing the forecastle dimensions as "twenty feet wide, narrowing to about six, twenty-five feet deep, and eight feet high." The Wharf Theatre would not have allowed for this, its entire interior space for stage and audience having been, as a result, about seven by fifteen by twelve. Also, virtually all dropped from the English '47 script were the stage directions calling for oilskins swaying on the cabin wall and for the footsteps of a pacing lookout to be heard from deck overhead. Neither would have been practicable nor desirable.

Subtle but significant refinements have been made in the ending of the play. In the English '47 typescript, Cook comes in from the deck to ask Driscoll to leave Yank for a moment and give him a hand, entering at the moment that Driscoll sinks to his knees beside Yank's bunk. As Driscoll kneels by the bunk, his lips moving "in some half-remembered prayer," Cook stands staring at him in 'blank amazement," then says, "Prayin'! Gawd Blimey!" After taking off his rain gear, Cook stands "scratching his head perplexedly" as the curtain falls. In the published text, O'Neill does not bring Cook in until after Driscoll has knelt beside Yank and made the attempt at the prayer. This allows Yank's death and Driscoll's compassion to have their full moment. Cook is also given a new line for his entrance: "The fog's lifted." This line would probably play, first, as a foil to the still intensity of the death scene that Cook reacts upon. It also has metaphorical possibilities, perhaps suggesting the release of Yank from his struggle or the passing of the shadow of death. O'Neill also adds stage directions for Cocky. Now when he sees Yank and Driscoll, it is not puzzlement that he registers. Rather, "an expression of awed understanding comes over his face," and as he removes his rain gear and stands scratching his head, he says, now "in a hushed whisper," the curtain line, "Gawd Blimey!" The adjustment refines the impact of the ending by clarifying Cocky's role in the play, giving him a strong image, and adding to the play's final image. It is a careful, subtle adjustment, the kind of refinement that one expects to result from a sensitive author's experience with a play in production. We know that O'Neill was involved in the Wharf Theatre production of his play; he directed it, fulfilling an obligation the group put upon its playwrights, and he also acted in the small role of the Second Mate.

After the first performance of the play on July 28th, O'Neill's potential was clear. Glaspell in her account says, "the old wharf shook with applause." Two journalists for the Boston Globe and the Boston Post, who were there at different times that summer, wrote of the deep impression O'Neill's plays had made on Provincetown audiences. The Post writer went so far as to predict a richer future for the American drama because of the Provincetown experiment, pointing to O'Neill in particular as "a young dramatist whose work was heretofore unproduced and whom they are confident is going to be heard from in places less remote." The Players opened their new theatre in the Village that fall with a revival of Cardiff, and O'Neill's work was very likely one of the major reasons for their move there.

The picture of O'Neill himself that emerges here is not that of a shy young drifter, washed ashore by the tides of fate, but rather that of a earnest young writer, aggressive in his own behalf, seeking out the group he would have heard of in his haunts of the Village. This corresponds better to Louis Sheaffer's biography in which we see O'Neill aggressively promoting his work in the early years of his career.

One question remains: why did Susan Glaspell give the account of O'Neill's debut as she did? First, Glaspell was not the first to tell it in print. Edna Kenton, an avid Post writer, went so far as to predict a richer future for the American drama because of the Provincetown experiment, pointing to O'Neill in particular as "a young dramatist whose work was heretofore unproduced and whom they are confident is going to be heard from in places less remote." The Players opened their new theatre in the Village that fall with a revival of Cardiff, and O'Neill's work was very likely one of the major reasons for their move there.

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to show, as Kenton puts it, how "the smiling Muse of drama was busy tying threads..." I suspect that the germ of the story originated with Cook himself. Glaspell thereafter refrained from placing O'Neill's arrival dramatically within the summer time frame and hence further implicating the band of destiny.

Her reasons went deep. The account occurs in her husband's biography, written in grief after his unexpected death in 1924, at the age of fifty-one. He had died in Delphi, a self-exile in his beloved Greece, with Glaspell at his side. He had departed America in 1922, deeply disappointed that, as he saw it, he and his fellow Provincetowners had failed to build what he had envisioned as not only a theatre but an alternative community. He claimed that he had fostered amateurism and creative play, and he accused his friends of succumbing to ambitious professionalism. Cook himself, however, had long been the victim of his own professional aspirations, perhaps even disappointed when his own play, The Spring, premiered by the Players and then produced uptown by him, had failed uptown at the beginning of the 1921-1922 season, unlike O'Neill's The Emperor Jones, which had moved successfully from the Provincetown Playhouse to Broadway the year before. With The Spring had gone Cook's best hope for winning the major recognition that he long had believed was his due as a writer. It was a final blow to him when O'Neill insisted that someone other than Cook be brought in to direct the Provincetown's premiere production of The Hairy Ape in the early months of 1922."

At the end of the 1921-1922 season, the Players, in emotional disarray, announced a year's interim, ostensibly for a rest. But a year later, the Executive Committee legally dissolved the original Provincetown Players. In 1923, a new group was formed, the Experimental Theatre, Incorporated, using the Provincetown Playhouse. The intent of its leaders—O'Neill, Kenneth Macgowan, and Robert Edmond Jones, was to replace Cook and his blend of communism and paternalism with a professional organization committed to finished productions, a wide range of drama, and other new art theatre aesthetic. To the distress of Glaspell, Cook and Kenton, the new group retained the name of the Provincetown Playhouse for the theatre itself, thus suggesting some continuity. Cook saw conspiracy and betrayal in all of this. From Delphi he wrote bitter letters to his old associates, some of which Glaspell never mailed. His spirits declined, and early in 1924 he contracted glanders, a disease of animals that is rare in humans, and died in January in the snowbound village of Delphi.

When Glaspell came to write his biography, it was important that the story of the Players' discovery of O'Neill be written large; important that there be a record of Cook's ephemeral contribution as the charismatic dreamer who had made the Provincetown experiment possible. There is no mention in her biography of any conflicts between Cook and O'Neill, though certainly there had been conflicts over the years; it would not have served her purpose. The Road to the Temple is an emotional biography that presents his life as a dramatic progress toward destiny, seeking to give meaning and cosmic design to his husband's life, to assure his immortality—which Cook himself had believed to be his birthright.

The kind of highly dramatic self-perception that we find in Glaspell's biography and in Cook's own papers is not uncommon among the early American moderns who made up the Players. One sees it in the lives of Jack Reed, Louise Bryant, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, and in the autobiographies of Hutchins Hapgood, Floyd Dell, and Max Eastman as they each seek new faiths. Such dramatic self-perception is another manifestation of the struggle for personal meaning in the absence of traditional meanings, significance, or any divine destiny that O'Neill saw as the modern tragic struggle.

O'Neill himself never corrected the legend. He knew his debt to Cook and would have been disinclined either to detract from Cook's achievement or to distress Glaspell, with whom he remained friends. The reality of his debt was more complex and less dramatic, but the legend had its consolations.

—Gary Jay Williams
produced late in their first season in the Village, 1916-1917.


17Voelker, "The Uncertain Origins of Eugene O'Neill's 'Bound East for Cardiff,'" Studies in Bibliography, 32 (1979), 275. Voelker has been refining his studies of the two plays and their relationship in recent papers, including one delivered at the American Society of Theatre Research at Indiana University in 1985, and has generously shared this and all his research with me.

18This hypothesis was part of my early version of this paper, presented at the Eugene O'Neill conference in March 1984 at Suffolk University in Boston.

19Librarian Dorothy Swerdlove has informed me that there is no record of the provenance of this typescript.

20Sheaffer, SP, p. 242.

21Clark, pp. 27-28; Skinner, viii.

22Clark, pp. 27-28.

23Bogard, Contour in Time, pp. 48-62. There are several testimonies by O'Neill himself to Baker's positive influence, including his praise for Baker in the unpublished letters that he wrote to Beatrice Ashe in early 1915, while he was at Harvard.

24An example is a line for Driscoll in the published text, in which he remembers giving a black eye to the piano player in Barracas (Seven Plays, p. 47). Neither Cook's side nor the English 47 typescript include it.

25Sarlés, Jig Cook and the Provincetown Players, p. 201.

26O'Neill letter to Beatrice Ashe, Tuesday, July 25th, 1916, Berg Collection, NYPL.

27This important date was first established by Sheaffer, SP, p. 348, derived from a letter that Wilbur Daniel Steele wrote to relatives on this date (Steele papers, Special Collections, Stanford University Library), in which he says he, Steele, has a play on the bill for that evening, clearly his one act play Not Smart, given his description.

28Cardiff was on that same bill. The date can also be derived from the letter, cited above, that O'Neill wrote to Beatrice Ashe on Tuesday, July 25, in which he says he is directing his play that is to be performed "next Friday and Saturday nights."


30Contradicting the Geibs' story (p. 308) that "in later years" O'Neill "acknowledged" that Jack Reed brought him to Provincetown, is a holograph note that O'Neill made in the margin of Barrett Clark's manuscript used in preparation of the 1947 edition of Clark's biography; the page is reproduced there (following p. 22). In it O'Neill says he knew none of the group until he came to Provincetown.


32An account of the sequence of events will be found in Sarlés, pp. 133-140.

33These are among Glaspell's papers in the Berg Collection, NYPL.

EUGENE O'NEILL'S INNOVATIVE CRAFTSMANSHIP IN THE "GLENCAIN" CYCLE (1914-1917)

Although Eugene O'Neill's ultimate achievement admittedly resides in the late plays of epic proportions such as The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, and A Moon for the Misbegotten, the playwright already proved an innovator, an inventor of new forms in his early and almost entirely plays of the sea. Few critics, with the notable exception of Travis Bogard and Paul Voelker, have properly assessed the merits of these seemingly naive works. A careful examination of Bound East for Cardiff, The Moon of the Caribbees and In the Zone suggests, however, important reasons for a critical re-evaluation of these embryonic dramatic experiments. Representing in many ways the first outgrowth of O'Neill's novelistic imagination, they are predicated on a highly complex and original notion of dramatic structure, one characterized by a subtle use of the interior monologue or "stream-of-consciousness." Such technique has correspondences to that displayed by Henry James in The Portrait of a Lady, where, in Chapter 42, entitled "Night Vigil," proceeding divisions converge through the focal point of the heroine's inner monologue. Similarly, O'Neill, having shaped his sea plays as a series of fragmented short scenes, allows his sailors to experience moments of illumination, taking the form of a soliloquy and conferring added coherence upon otherwise loosely-knit dramas.

Naturally, O'Neill's interior monologue, as Peter Egri has correctly observed in his examination of The Iceman Cometh, occurs in a modified context. As I shall attempt to show here, the soliloquies detectable in that early cycle are either interrupted by lines addressed to a second character or by purely factual plot incidents. While this feature often blurs the very existence of O'Neill's asides, merged as they are within the overall pattern of physical action, a thorough investigation of these short dramas nonetheless permits one to isolate passages written in the "stream-of-consciousness" mode. Such speeches share with conventional interior monologues a tendency to locate the center of gravity in the ego of the character and to lay emphasis on the free-associational, indeed oscillating emotions of the protagonist. It is to the study of O'Neill's initial endeavors to translate in the drama the novelistic "stream-of-consciousness," a feature of his style even more fully developed in Strange Interlude and The Iceman Cometh, that I want to devote these pages.

I

In Bound East for Cardiff, O'Neill focuses on a poor, dying sailor named Yank, who filters reality through the prism of his imagination. Although physical plot incidents still exist in that playlet, the central character's memory performs a predominant role in the structural framework. In other words, the dramatist constantly invites the spectator to sympathize with Yank's subjective vision of the universe, and consequently, the play owes the quality of its action to the protagonist's haunting presence.

In the first scene, which contains exposition material, a sailor named Cocky tells...
boastful stories to his unbelieving shipmates. Driscoll, in announcing that Yank has been injured, suddenly brings to an end the preceding quiet episode. Davis, yet another sailor, informs his friends of the circumstances which caused the accident:

He puts his leg over careless-like and misses the ladder and plumps straight down to the bottom. I was scared to look for a minute, and then I heard him again and I scuttled down after him (p. 36)."

After listening to Davis, the crew members, realizing that Yank will die before reaching port, gradually succumb to despondency.

O'Neill subsequently heightens the atmosphere of anguish emanating from Yank's tragic plight in the second short scene of the play. In a confrontation between Yank and Driscoll, his destitute companion, the latter painstakingly seeks to persuade the former that he will survive:

**DRISCOLL:** Are ye feelin' any better, Yank?

**YANK (in a weak voice):** No.

**DRISCOLL:** Sure you must be. You look as strong as an ox.

**YANK:** What're yuh all lyin' fur? D'yu think I'm scared to...

**DRISCOLL:** Don't be thinkin' such things! Aahil's well.

**YANK:** ...I'm dyin', I tell yuh...

**DRISCOLL:** ...Don't be worryin', Yank... (pp. 40-41).

The third division of *Bound East for Cardiff* powerfully dramatized Yank's helplessness in front of mortality. The character emerges as a victim of fate when the Captain and the second mate, who have just entered the forecastle, prove unable to bring him relief from his sufferings:

**THE CAPTAIN** (shaking his head): I'm afraid—he's very weak. I can't do anything else for him. It's too serious for me. If this had happened a week later we'd be in Cardiff in time to...

Clearly, then, in order to prepare his audience for the inevitable ending, O'Neill establishes a sense of progression within his one-act play. After witnessing the scene between Yank, the Captain and the second mate, the spectator understands that the sailor cannot avoid death any more than he can escape the narrow confines of the forecastle.

In the fourth scene, which constitutes a moving moment of illumination, Yank is eventually reconciled to the thought of his approaching demise. O'Neill remarkably structured this dramatic tableau like an "interior monologue" as Yank's mind deals successively with recollections of his past life, oncoming annihilation, remorse, and future divine retribution:

**YANK:** Remember the time we was there on the beach and had to go to Tommy Moore's boarding house to git shipped? And he sold us rotten oilskins and seaboots full of holes... And that fight on the dock at Cape Town... We won't reach Cardiff for a week at least. I'll be buried at sea... Who's that?... A pretty lady dressed in black (pp. 47-50).

In the end, Yank's hallucination takes the shape of a theatrical image summarizing the significance of the entire one-act: the "pretty lady dressed in black" can be interpreted as a symbol of the death that has threatened the hero from the beginning of the action.

The fifth part, functioning as a coda, aptly translates the final mood of dejection through a poignant visual image, that of Driscoll bending over his friend's body:

"DRISCOLL (with a great sob): Yank! (he sinks down on his knees beside the bunk, his head on his hands. His lips move in some half-remembered prayer)" (p. 50). The melancholy tone of this final scene comes to an abrupt end, however, as Cocky enthusiastically announces the lifting of the fog, a symbol of the termination of Yank's spiritual journey.

If *Bound East for Cardiff* represents O'Neill's first attempts at transposing into the drama the novelistic technique of the "interior monologue," it is even more important to recognize the playwright's ability to infuse that "stream-of-consciousness" with a scenic quality. Not only is O'Neill's "inner monologue" verbal, as in Yank's evocation of his mind through purely theatrical means of expression. Indeed, one could argue that the "pretty lady dressed in black," Yank's last vision, would achieve added dramatic impact upon the spectator if it were given a tangible scenic reality through appropriate lighting devices, an option that O'Neill's text seems to permit.

This double-sided "interior monologue," then, serves as a converging point for the successive short scenes that the drama contains. Viewed in that perspective, *Bound East for Cardiff* qualifies as a cornerstone in the development of the American theatre, which prior to 1914 had offered merely conventional and melodramatic plot lines.

**II**

In *The Long Voyage Home*, O'Neill develops a structural pattern comparable to that which he had created in *Bound East for Cardiff*. A series of short divisions, replete with physical action, again find coherence through the unifying role of Olson's central confession. Taking the form of a modified "interior monologue."

The opening scene of *The Long Voyage Home* fulfills the purpose of exposition. Joe, the proprietor of a bar, and a mysterious man named Nick seek to attract sailors in order to ship them to Shanghai. In the second part of the one-act, one observes the entrance of crew members from the S.S. Glencairn—Driscoll, Cocky, Ivan and Olson. The last spontaneously tells his shipmates that he would like to return to his native country and see his mother one last time before she dies. After the entrance of girls in the third scene, all the sailors but Olson leave for a dance. In the fourth tableau, O'Neill confronts Olson with Freda, a whore, while Joe, remaining hidden in the back of the room, functions as a figure of bad-omen for the Swedish sailor. Besides telling Freda of his childhood and of a troublesome one-affair, Olson also explains his vision of the sailor's pediment at large. Through the image of Olson's inability to escape his desperate situation expressed in a moving inner monologue, O'Neill hints at the sense of fate crushing mankind:

**OLSON:**...My mother say in all letter I should come home right away. My brother he write same ting, too. He want me to help him on farm. I write back always I come soon... but I come ashore...I get drunk...I spend all money...I have to ship away for other voyage. I feel homesick for farm and to see my people again.(p. 73)

This emotionally intense passage, which could be regarded as the central moment of illumination in the drama, synthesizes the tragic aspect of Olson's plight, i.e., the conflict between expectations and reality. In the following short divisions, Olson, unable to resist the temptation always to drink, dies in scene three. The play thus draws to a close. Indeed, in the sixth part, the hero is taken to that foreign vessel. The ending of the play derives its pathos from the indescribable pain of Driscoll's shipmates who in spite of their passion to respond to Olson's tragedy. While he imagines that the latter merely enjoys himself with girls, we, as spectators, know that the Swedish sailor's pursuit of happiness can never be fulfilled.
Like Bound East for Cardiff, then, The Long Voyage Home acquires internal unity through the filtering process of Olson's consciousness. Characteristically, Olson's "interior monologue," like that of Yank, is modified through the presence of a second speaker, in this case Freda, to whom the hero's speech is apparently addressed. Olson's confinement clearly retains the emotional intensity, the personal nature, and the oscillating structure generally associated with a novelistic "inner monologue." In contrast to Round East for Cardiff, the interior monologue of this second drama achieves its best expression in O'Neill's purely verbal rendering of his hero's rambling thoughts—a dramatic moment that continues to haunt the spectator's imagination until the play is over.

Henry James's interior monologue has seen Smitty "lookin' around sneakin'-like at Ivan and Swanson ... " (p. 89). In the interdivision immediately following, O'Neill modifies the novelistic "stream-of-consciousness," inasmuch as the Donkeyman elicits and responds to Smitty's confession:

SMITTY: ... Damn that song of theirs ... It's the beastly memories the damn thing brings up -- for some reason. We're poor little lambs who have lost our way, eh, Donk? Damned from here to eternity, what?...

THE DONKEYMAN: ... I s'pose there's a gel mixed up in it some place, ain't there? ... That's everybody's affair, what I said. I been through it many's the time ... (pp. 16-20)

Clearly, this confrontation, revolving around Smitty's free-associational mode of thought, lends coherence to the drama, which had previously offered unrelated and melodramatic scenes. The fourth part, however, bespeaks a vivid series of contrasts to Bound East for Cardiff, from that viewpoint The Moon of the Caribbees marks a transition to In the Zone. In this play, although it still resembles Round East for Cardiff in its skillful translation of the novelistic aside by means of scenic language, O'Neill's "brooding music" represents a theatrical equivalent of Smitty's psychological turmoil, which had found an outlet in more conventional inner monologues a few moments prior to the coda.

Like its companion pieces of the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle, In the Zone relies on a fragmented type of structure. Nonetheless, it never fails to fascinate reader and spectator alike through its compelling presentation of suspense.

The first scene conveys most of the expository material as the sailors discuss the danger they are facing: their British troop steamer has reached the so-called war zone and is thus threatened, loaded as it is with ammunition, by enemy submarines. O'Neill convincingly dramatizes the sailors' fears and their concomitant suspicions concerning Smitty, a character isolated from the group. The latter progressively becomes an object of hatred for his shipmates. Indeed, in the second scene, Davis tells his friends that he has seen Smitty "lookin' around sneakin'-like at Ivan and Swanson ... " (p. 89). In the third part, the men remove, from under Smitty's bunk, a box which supposedly contains a bomb. Unnerved by such a false alarm, the Donkeyman and his colleagues that Smitty is a dangerous spy, Davis invents stories to substantiate his claim:

DAVIS (pointing to the port-hole over Paul's bunk): There. It was open when I came in. I felt the cold air on my neck an' what it. It would'a been clear's lighthouse to any sub that was watchin' -- an' we suppose to have all the ports blinded! Who'd do a trick like that? (p. 92)

When Smitty enters the forecastle in Scene IV, to check if his box is safe, the sailors' doubts are confirmed. Suddenly, in the fifth division, a heavy shock against the ship heightens the tension: the men "start to their feet in wild-eyed terror and turn as if they were going to rush for the deck" (p. 95). Unnoticed by such a false alarm, the sailors resume plotting against Smitty, tie him down in Scene VI, and reach for his keys. As his character leaves the stage, the dramatist stresses the role of the moon as an agent of fate:

SMITTY: Good night, Donk (he gets warily to his feet and walks with bowed shoulders, staggered a bit, to the forecastle entrance and goes in). There is a silence for a second or so, broken only by the haunted, saddened voice of that brooding music, faint and far-off, like the mood of the moonlight made audible) (pp. 28-29).

Such a final note, based on a theatrical mode of expression, recalls in emotional intensity Smitty's earlier inner monologues, with which it shares a concern for the hero's state of consciousness.

The Moon of the Caribbees, however, differs from Bound East for Cardiff in its more embryonic rendering of the "linguistic" aspect of the "stream-of-consciousness," evident in the shortness of Smitty's soliloquy. Here, O'Neill's modified inner monologue, which normally bridges the gap between aside and dialogue, verges towards dialogue, as the Donkeyman's and Smitty's lines interact to a greater extent than those of the characters in Round East for Cardiff. From that viewpoint The Moon of the Caribbees marks a transition to In the Zone, although it still resembles Round East for Cardiff in its skillful translation of the novelistic aside by means of scenic language. O'Neill's "brooding music" represents a theatrical equivalent of Smitty's psychological turmoil, which had found an outlet in more conventional inner monologues a few moments prior to the coda.
Because the spectator comes to know more about Smitty's past, however, this particular scene constitutes a moment of illumination, one in which O'Neill reveals part of the mystery hovering around his protagonist:

**Driscoll:** You have run away to sea, loike the coward you are because you knew I had found out the truth— the truth you have covered over with your mean little lies all the time. I was away in Berlin and blindly trusted you... (p. 100)

In part XI, the coda of *In the Zone*, Smitty sobs over his shattered love-affair while Driscoll discovers a dried-up rose in the hero's letters. The tension thus resolves itself through the sentimental symbol of the rose, which synthesizes the character's psychic ordeal.

The action of *In the Zone*, as revealed through a progression of some eleven short divisions, corresponds to an ironical process of discovery. Eventually the sailors, unable to find out truth, are obliged to recognize their utter ignorance. Here, as in the other playlets of the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle, O'Neill organizes the fragmented parts of his drama within a somewhat unusual framework, that of the central hero's consciousness, which then functions as a unifying agent. Although in the one-act the playwright does not use the "stream-of-consciousness" technique in a consistent fashion, he still manages to render the crisis from the main character's viewpoint. If we come to know about Smitty's past life through Driscoll's reading of the protagonist's letters, we can perceive Smitty's perspective in Scene XI, where he sobs in isolation. One could argue that this dramatic moment, to which all the threads of the play converge, records, like Henry James's novelistic "interior monologue," the tension manifest in the working of the individual psyche. Moreover, Smitty's emotional permeates the entire structure of the work, so that in the Zone, in spite of its heavy reliance on physical action, still retains some of the characteristics of O'Neill's "stream-of-consciousness," albeit in a more embryonic form. Even in the other dramas of the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle, if *The Moon of the Caribbees* could be called Smitty's dream, then *In the Zone* could be regarded as the same character's nightmare.

**V**

In the one-acts of the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle, O'Neill experiments with various modes of transposing to the drama the novelistic interior monologue. While in *Bound East for Cardiff* he resorts, as I have shown, to modified monologues with both linguistic and scenic variants, in *The Long Voyage Home* he adheres merely to the linguistic version of the "stream-of-consciousness." In *The Moon of the Caribbees*, the double-sided inner monologue detectable in *Bound East for Cardiff* re-emerges, with perhaps a greater emphasis on its scenic counterpart. Finally, in *In the Zone* presents some of the characteristics of O'Neill's "stream-of-consciousness," albeit in a more embryonic form. Even in the other dramas of the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle, if *The Moon of the Caribbees* could be called Smitty's dream, then *In the Zone* could be regarded as the same character's nightmare.

Critics have often compared O'Neill's asides with those used by modernists like James Joyce, especially in *Ulysses*. I submit, however, that O'Neill's early inner monologues can be better understood by comparison with those of Henry James. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, James seems to lay the foundations of the "stream-of-consciousness" method, which writers such as Woolf and Joyce would subsequently develop along more complex, indeed modernist lines. It is undoubtedly against the pioneering, realistic efforts of James that O'Neill's naturalistic soliloquies can best be measured. Through his innovative craftsmanship, then, O'Neill managed to confer unity upon the fragmented divisions of his sea-one acts. Without a skilful rendering of the characters' interior monologues, the dramatist's playlets would not have escaped the trappings of melodrama and would have centered on superficial plot incidents. Studying the plays of the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle from the viewpoint of the "stream-of-consciousness" sheds new light on the nature of the continuity linking these four one-acts. Depending on the device of the interior monologue to a lesser extent than in its companion pieces, *In the Zone* appears therefore less integrated within the overall pattern typifying O'Neill's cycle. Demonstrating in the "S.S. Glencairn" dramas deep affinities with experimental novelistic concepts, O'Neill emerges as a playwright who, at the dawn of the twentieth-century, was evolving the modes of expression recurring in various guises throughout subsequent American drama.

---Marc Maurot

**NOTES**


2 The chronology of the composition of these four playlets, commonly referred to as the "S.S. Glencairn" cycle, can be found in Egil Törnyquist, *A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-Naturalistic Technique* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 256ff. In my discussion of the structure of these dramas, I shall adopt a somewhat unusual sequence. In this fashion, however, structural resemblances between the four playlets will emerge more clearly.

3 I have discussed more fully the analogies between *Strange Interlude* and *The Portrait of a Lady* in an article entitled "Communication as Translation of the Self: Jamesian Inner Monologue in O'Neill's 'Strange Interlude' (1927)," in Gilbert Deusschere and Jean-Pierre van Noppen, eds. *Communicating and Translating: Essays in Honour of Jean Dierickx* (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1985), pp. 319-328.


7 In an article entitled "The Unity of O'Neill's 'S.S. Glencairn,'" *American Literature*, 37 (Nov. 1965), pp. 280-290. Dilworth K. Rust envisions the unity of the dramatist's perspective as "the narrative perspective of one active character (Driscoll as a unifying figure), and of thematic substance. In this respect, he detects three essential themes running through the cycle: first, the escape through irresponsibility; second, the isolation in atypical social circumstances; and, third, the defeat by a paradoxical confinement in a life of freedom. The main contribution of my paper, then, is the examination of the structural coherence of the cycle."
BEYOND SYNGE: O'NEILL'S ANNA CHRISTIE

We have two things—the circumstance and the life. Once we thought positive power was all. Now we learn that negative power, or circumstance, is half.

If you are pleased to plant yourself on the side of Fate, and say, Fate is all, then we say, a part of Fate is the freedom of man.

He who sees through the design, presides over it, and must will that which must be.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Fate" (1960)

When the Abbey Theatre made its first American tour in 1911, Eugene O'Neill, then lodging at Jimby the Priest's where he set the original of Christopher Stenson, was among the New York audience at all of the plays in the Dublin group's repertory. O'Neill was big enough then that he liked Riders to the Sea over all the others: Arthur and Barbara Gelb report that he "found himself particularly responsive to Syng'e one-act play." While Louis Sheaffer states specifically that Anna Christie, while inspired by Chris Christopherson, also owed something to Syng'e haunting Riders to the Sea.

In the brief first section of this paper, I will look at Riders to the Sea, highlighting especially those aspects of its visual and verbal texture that would appear to have impressed themselves most strongly upon O'Neill's consciousness. In the second part, I will examine Anna Christie in light of Riders, demonstrating how O'Neill both mirrors and reshapes—maybe "personalizes" would be an appropriate word—what he found in the earlier work. And in the final section I will sketch in summary fashion how O'Neill's consciousness of the notion of human freedom that O'Neill works toward in his 1921 play becomes essentially the one through which he participates with his throughout his playwrighting career, but is also the dominant one in much other modern American drama as well.

My primary purpose in looking first at Syng'e Riders is not to establish incontrovertible evidence of influence of Syng'e's short play upon O'Neill's longer one (though I think such a case could convincingly be made), but rather to indicate the parameters he would move beyond. Notice, I do not say "transcend," for I would be the first to insist that Syng'e's compressed poetic gem is infinitely superior to O'Neill's—without, at the same time, subscribing uncritically to revisionist reviewers of José Quintero's 1977 Broadway revival starring Lili Ullman, who claimed that "Anna Christie is one of the dumbest plays ever written," or that it "is such a cheap, cosmic come-on of a drama as to vie with any streetwalker." Influence, however, as Margaret Church has formulated it, is something we do not prove against. O'Neill's powerlessness to resist the timeless, ageless, endless repetition of receiving from the sea and giving back to the sea. There is only the appearance of human choice in Syng'e's world. Would it have made any difference if Maurya had tried harder to "hold [Bartley] from the sea" (p. 67) or had succeeded at least in blessing him on his way? Had she known, even before he left, that the pattern of the Aran Island women losing all their men—husbands, fathers, brothers, sons—to the sea must be fulfilled ("It's hard to be drowned any day you're drowned" (p. 93); the Seafarers' devotion to the old animisms of an inevitable cosmic order that in these people's lives incarnates itself in the sea—which has now done everything it could to [Maurya]"—can bring "rest" (p. 90).

Not only does Anna Christie mirror Syng'e's drama in its symbolism and mythology. Its archetypes, its concern with the tension between fate and free will, and its emphasis upon resignation and acceptance; but it even contains certain narrative and verbal echoes of Riders to the Sea as well. For instance, speaks of a sailor's drowning as "a good end ... quick and clean," just as the phrase "a clean burial by the grace of God"—or a slight variation of it—occurs three times in Riders (pp. 83, 93, 97); the lyrical pattern established by sentences beginning with the word "let" you that appears in Syng'e's work recurrently in Men's speeches; and Burke's lament to Anna after he's discovered the truth about her past—"You've destroyed me this day, and may you wake in the long nights tormented" (p. 137)—perhaps even echoes Syng'e's "It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, sure?" (p. 93). If Fate is a palpable presence verbally and visually in Riders, almost the first word spoken in Anna Christie is "luck" (p. 60), which becomes something of a refrain.

But the probable connection extends further and deeper than simple similarities in language. Just as Maurya had lost a husband and father—in-law and all six sons to the sea, so, too, has Chris lost a father, two brothers, and two sons, while the women's role is to "wait all 'lone" (p. 92) for the sea to either return his men to them or take them from them. And if we look for connections between the symbolic props in the two plays, perhaps it is even possible to see contrasting links between the rope in Riders that will gently lower Bartley's coffin into the ground and the rope in Anna Christie that guides Matt to the safety of Chris's barge and Anna's arms; or between Syng'e's bread that is unshared and uneaten and O'Neill's sacrament-like wine that celebrates the return of the prodigal daughter and presages her renewal. More solace and comfort, indeed, is provided at Jimby the Priest's saloon than by the ordained priest and organized church in Riders.

Yet it remains in their use of the central archetypal symbol of the sea that Syng'e and O'Neill converge most nearly, although the attitude of O'Neill's characters toward the sea is broader than that of Syng'e's. Syng'e's three major characters about the sea reflect their very divergent "theologies": Chris's...
dualistic fatalism. Mat's superstitious Catholicism, and Anna's romantic transcendentalism. If, in _Riders_, it is Maurya who by appearance and archetypal role is unified--and it is she who is "clean" on the surface, the bartender and proprietor both jokingly calling him "devil" ('the old devil!' [p. 62]; "Speak of the devil" [p. 63])--a term applied to him bitterly and tauntingly by Anna herself later in the play (p. 127). When Chris, a few pages into the play, remarks, "Ay tank, den she don't any use to say she don't know fa'der like me" (p. 67), not only will an attentive audience notice the verbal link connecting the sea as devil with Chris as a devil, but also--and here the rhyme between the two actions--they will recognize that Chris, albeit inadvertently and unconsciously at this point, is associating his own harshness as a father with the unrelenting force of the sea. By regarding the sea in totally masculine rather than in feminine terms, he denies it its life-giving and life-sustaining qualities. The sea's capacity to control life itself, to link the past rather than in feminine terms, he denies it its life-giving and life-sustaining qualities. The sea's capacity to control life itself, to link the past and the future, to create a balance between the Father and the archetypal Mother/Sea for control of the child, especially since Mat is so closely associated with the sea that brings him to Anna.

Cursing the sea as "devil" no fewer than ten times, Chris points the finger at the sea as villain, blaming it for all the evil in the world. It is a malevolent force which, he feels, has nothing to do with God, but is associated instead with some inscrutable chambre du de. Chris thinks that he has accounted for all of experience in terms of a simple division between black and white; yet believing in such a Manichean duality leaves no room for any mystery or ambivalence in the universe. His attitude, finally, can only be defeatist: "Dat ole devil, sea, sha me Yonah man ain't no good for nobody. And ay tank now it ain't no use fight with sea. No man dat live goin to beat her, py yingo!" Yet rather than actively submit, as Maurya had, Chris will try bargaining with the sea by shipping out again, offering himself up as sacrificial victim: "Ay tank if dat ole devil get me back she leave you alone den" (p. 143). But such attempts are ultimately in vain; the sea is ultimately stronger than Chris can be seen upon hearing that Mat has signed on to the same ship: "It's dat funny vay ole devil sea do her worst dirty tricks" (p. 159).

Unlike Chris, Mat accepts the possibility of the sea's being a positive rather than simply a negative force--of its being a nourishing source that frees man from constraint and materialism. It is also, of course, what brings the bustling sailor with the double standard to Anna, whom he at first sees as just a pretty girl, and envisions as some princess from a Norse saga, "fine yellow hair ... like a golden lame belief in superstition, showing Anna a crucifix given him by his mother that he 'damned then surely' for marrying a Lutheran, but 'what's the difference? 'Tis the will of God, anyway'" (p. 159). In his superficial understanding reduces the practice of the faith he professes to emptv form and ritual; when he crosses himself it is neither more nor less than Maurya's formulaic sprinkling of holy water on Michael's clothes and Bartley's corpse. He mitigates Anna's fall from grace for the wrong reason, blaming Chris for it, without "shutting off" his own complicity in her accidental death. Accepting the sea's role in Anna's misfortune, Mat accepts the sea's role in Anna's misfortune, claiming as endowed with the "great power" to "bring [him] luck" (p. 155) and desiring that she swear upon it that she has never loved anyone but him and will remain faithful.

Like Mat, Anna, too, is searching for freedom--freedom from the places where she has felt "caged up" (p. 76) or "in jail" (p. 113), as well as the freedom to control who and what she will let enter her life. Ironically, in forcing her off the sea and onto the land (wrongly considered as a gain), Mat had inadvertently cut her loose to her own wrongs, her fall. O'Neill may here be playing a variation on the legend of the mythical Saint Christopher, who carries the Christ Child safely on his back over the water; his daughter's shortening of her name to "Anna Christie" makes it close to Anna Christi, or "soul of Christ." More importantly, however, the Anna/Anna similarity joins her not just with the soul but with the Jungian feminine as well--and thus with the sea as archetypal life-giver, as it was for Synge. Anna comes quickly to "love" the sea, seeing it as the only "one big thing" in her life, and thus here to sense that she "belong[s] or "fit[s] in," and lets her "feel happy for once" (pp. 89, 90, 91, 93). Furthermore, the sea acts as the agent that leads Mat and his redeeming love to her.

Anna, nevertheless, does not view the sea simplitically as something either good or bad. She categorically rejects Chris's too facile naming of the sea as devil and his shunting off onto it the blame for all that happens. After forgiving Chris for wrongdoing, Anna, as Mat--and thus being reconciled with the father, a recurrent pattern throughout O'Neill; and after taking a risk that almost does not pay off by telling Mat the truth about her past, Chris is associating her life with the sea. Like Maurya, she knows and accepts her fate as the woman who waits and--almost undoubtedly--will mourn her loss. She is free to be alone (which is not the same as lonesome) and to suffer, if that is what the sea ordains for her. She actively submits herself to the sea and to the cyclical rhythm of birth and death that it symbolizes. Raising her glass in a communal gesture of acceptance with Mat, she toasts the sea: "Here's to the sea, no matter what!" (p. 159). In her resignation, Anna finally belongs totally to herself, breaking out of apparent meaninglessness to achieve an almost Sisyphean acceptance.

Rejecting the efficacy of any formally organized system of belief ['I ain't nothing. What's the difference?' (p. 156)], Anna actively discovers in the sea a font of wonder and mystery in which she can immerse herself, a place where she can achieve union with something larger outside herself, experiencing a kind of cosmic oneness. Even the fog can potentially bring transcendence and reconciliation. The beginning of Act Two finds Anna, accompanied by the "doleful tolling of bells" (p. 88), significantly does not occur in Synge's _Riders_, but it does presage O'Neill's later and more extensive use of the symbol. "Here's to the sea, no matter what!" (p. 159). In that play, the fog--which increasingly shrouds Acts Three and Four and is associated with Mary Tyrone's morphine-induced state of forgetfulness as well as Edmund's death-wish-like desire for immersion and annihilation--covers over the truth until "he knew his characters back to reality. In other words, the fog here, accompanied by the "doleful tolling of bells" (p. 88), significantly does not occur in Synge's _Riders_, but it does presage O'Neill's later and more extensive use of the symbol.

In her resignation, Anna finally belongs totally to herself, breaking out of apparent meaninglessness to achieve an almost Sisyphean acceptance.

That the play's fourth act, like its second, occurs upon "a foggy night" (p. 137) should be indication enough, however, that the ending is not artificially happy, as some detractors of the play would have it. Chris's curtain lines to the play are a somber, "Fog, fog, fog, all the bloody time. You can't see where you was going, no" (p. 160). Yet the sea, whose indescribable power Chris describes completely from her fog. It may be implausible, but its eternal recurrence provides a perceivable pattern, which in turn can evidence, as it did for Synge's characters, a cosmic order. As Emerson writes elsewhere in "Fate": "Ponvance has a wild, rough, incaIculable road to its end, and it is of no use to try to whitewash its huge, mixed instrumentalities..."
fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't [Matt's] neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we just get mixed up wrong. That's all. You ain't to blame. You're just—what you are—like me" (pp. 142, 145, emphasis mine). Although she refuses the cop-out of blaming "dat ole devil sea," she appears to allow for diminished responsibility because of the admixture of character and circumstances in our lives. Neither subscribing to the defection of Chris nor paying lip service to free will as Matt does, she develops an ethical stance which holds that our fate is our character and our character is our fate. If it if true that "things happen" over which we have little control—such as Anna's helplessness against corruption on the farm—it remains equally true that we are capable of both change and choice—up to a point. Yet what that precise point is, is decided by earlier existential choices, made by others as well as by ourselves, that shaped our character. Man, therefore, is both free and determined. Rather than adopt the determinism of Synge in Riders, whose characters seems fated by something outside of—wholly external to—themselves, O'Neill in Anna Christie seems to espouse a fatalistic attitude towards existence, an achieved stance for the characters and not simply an accepted posture, whose source, instead of being imposed from without, is internal, almost willed from within after reflection upon the human condition.

O'Neill's fully mature statement of this intersection between fate and choice occurs in Long Day's Journey. In speeches of Mary's that, in fact, echo Anna's. Urging the pravity of love, Mary tells James: "Let's... not try to understand what we cannot understand, or help things that cannot be helped—the things life has done to us we cannot excuse or explain." Or as she tells Edmund, a few pages later: "Now I have to lie, especially to myself. But how can you understand anything about it, except that one day I found I could no longer call my soul my own" (p. 92, emphasis added). She suggests that Mary Tyrone here sets forth the notion of character as possibility for choice that is inviolable. And with the passage of time, we choose one thing, and by so doing, we inevitably, in fact, define ourselves in the future all the possibilities that would have opened up if we had chosen another. In other words, with each choice we make, we effectively cut in half all our future options. This happens over and over again, resulting in a progressive diminution in the possibility of choices until, ultimately, the chance of breaking from the pattern becomes miniscule.

Elsewhere, I have referred to this as the "road-not-taken" syndrome, and it seems pervasive in much of modern American drama. We can discover it in such diverse places as Robert Anderson's impressive short play, Double Solitaire, in Stephen Sondheim's musical play Follies (both 1971), and perhaps most explicitly and eloquently stated in Edward Albee's Delicate Balance (1966), when Agnes says, echoing Anna and Mary: "Time happens, I suppose, To people. Everything becomes... too late, finally. You know it's... impossible to do, and yet, you still do, and you still achieve a level of popular success, connect O'Neill most centrally to his forerunners in the American grain. It is well known that Alexis de Tocqueville predicted early in the nineteenth century that in America the arts would veer toward symbolic, allegorical and mythic forms and that man himself, "standing in the presence of Nature and of God, with his passions, his doubts, his rare prospects and inconceivable wretchedness—would become the chief if not the sole theme of poetry." Almost immediately, Tocqueville's prediction was borne out by the American novel with its taste for allegorical romance. Yet it was not until the 1920s, with the arrival of Eugene O'Neill, that American drama was able to take its place beside prose fiction as an art form capable of engendering myth and providing a searching analysis of the national character.

Exactly what O'Neill thought of the national character was stated concisely in an interview given toward the end of his career, in 1946:

"I'm going on the theory that the United States, instead of being the most successful country in the world, is the greatest failure... Its main idea is that everlasting game of trying to possess your own soul by the possession of something outside of it, too. America is the prime example of this because it happened so quickly and with such immense resources. This was really said in the Bible much better. We are the greatest example of "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" We had so much and could have gone either way..." 3

At his death, O'Neill left unfinished a cycle of eleven plays about American history, the title of which, "A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed" indicates the idea that most preoccupied him. Unfortunately, out of this ambitious project only two plays have survived intact, A Touch of the Poet and More Stately Mansions. Recently, O'Neill's
scenario for a third, The Caimes of Capricorn, has come to light, but as far as can be ascertained, the other manuscripts were destroyed. Nonetheless, it is possible to trace O'Neill's conception by returning to the vision of his youth. Although it is unlikely that O'Neill planned the connections between his early plays as deliberately as he prepared the schema for his unrealized cycle, his work of the twenties does suggest a coherent vision of American history as an expulsion from the Garden and a fall from spiritual grace.

The outline of this historical epic is discernible in the sequence of plays beginning with Beyond the Horizon (1920), with its searching romanticism, and extending through the somber pessimism of Mounring Becomes Electra (1936). The central argument of O'Neill's work during this period is forthright and insistent, yet no less powerful for its directness. According to O'Neill, the flight of European settlers to America signaled Western culture's yearning to begin anew, to connect with nature and undo the stratifications of social class that had tainted Europe; and yet, through material acquisitiveness or Puritan rigidity, that chance was lost. This theme appears--indeed, is paramount--in such notable work as The Fountain, The Emperor Jones, The First Man, The Hairy Ape, Diff'rent, All God's Chillun Got Wings, Desire Under the Elms, Marco Millions, and The Great God Brown. Obviously, in the space available, it will be impossible to discuss any of these plays in detail. I do, however, want to suggest the scope of O'Neill's framework by commenting briefly on three of the most significant: The Emperor Jones (1920), Desire Under the Elms (1924), and The Great God Brown (1925).

The Emperor Jones has long been regarded as a probing of the "racial unconscious," a study of atavism or a documentary of black psychology--perceptions that I believe mistakenly imply an overriding racial theme. As I have argued elsewhere, the play may be read as O'Neill's first attempt to deal conceptually with American experience as a whole. To be sure, its hero is an American Black, yet Brutus Jones has acquired the external trappings of the white society that corrupted him, particularly a passion for the dollar. As he says, "De long green, dat's me every time!" The flight of Brutus Jones into the forest can therefore be said to symbolize American culture momentarily stripped of its possessions and forced to confront again the forest primeval that continues to haunt its dreams. It is significant that his journey on stage is one into history as well as into the unconscious, a flight backwards in time toward the uncovering of that original sin which, in O'Neill's view, marred the Edenic harmony of the New World. That sin was slavery, the worst manifestation of the profit motive and of the instinct to possess. In this respect, then, O'Neill is not exploring in The Emperor Jones "the collective unconscious of the American Negro" so much as he is exploring the collective conscience of Americans. Shortly before his death, Jones is transformed into a figure of great pathos. Stripped to a breechcloth, he mingles with a chorus of slaves chanting in the hold of a ghostly slave ship, divorced from time, and drifting forever toward a New World yet untainted, an image of paradise before the Fall.

To what extent did O'Neill cling to the romantic view propounded by Rousseau that man by nature was fundamentally good and that civilization had corrupted him? Years later, when he was working on the cycle, O'Neill put the following speech into the mouth of Simon Harford, the young protagonist of More Stately Mansions: "I still believe with Rousseau, as firmly as ever, that at the bottom human nature is good and unselfish. It is what we are pleased to call civilization that has corrupted it. We must return to Nature......" However, by the end of More Stately Mansions, when Simon is older and more cynical, he denigrates his youthful vision as an idealistic fallacy: "What is evil is the stupid theory that man is naturally what we call virtuous and good--instead of being what he is, g hog.... In a nutshell, all one needs to remember is that good is evil, and evil good." Which voice most resembles O'Neill's personal belief? Or does Simon's transformation parallel a change in O'Neill's view from the early to the later plays? In fact, in the context of More Stately Mansions, both speeches are interperate and unqualified. One purpose of O'Neill's cycle was to reconcile these polarities through dialectics, but to construct an answer, we need not go beyond the plays at hand. Perhaps the Emperor Jones suggests a simplistic view of American history, but O'Neill's

Mary tries to allay Edmund's fears.


Nat and Essie celebrate the Fourth of July.

Belle shows Richard a good time.

Mary and James after her return to morphine.

Edmund watches Jamie water the hooch.

Sid tells Lily his drinking days are over.
attitude toward nature and toward human nature is developed significantly in Desire Under the Elms.

Here every character is driven by a desire to possess the farm, which itself connotes the challenge and promise of the American landscape. Abbie wants the land for its security. Eben wants it for revenge. Ephraim wants it as a field for his own godlike creativity. All need to possess it, so they think, in order to be free. Yet each, in the end, is overcome by a primordial passion that possesses him: a force partly destructive, partly redemptive, that moves through all the characters, transforming them from its manipulators into its subjects.

The presence of this force is intimated by the enormous elms that brood over the house, fusing earth and sky principles so as to lend a mythic perspective to the stage. As symbols, they permit us to distinguish O'Neill's perception of the natural order from that of his nineteenth-century compatriots. Hawthorne, for example, employs a similar symbol in The House of Seven Gables—the Pyncheon Elm—which serves as a contrast between natural and human history, an image of organic continuity set against human dislocations of the moral order. I mention the comparison only to suggest that Hawthorne's vision is more beneficent than O'Neill's. In Hawthorne's romance, Clifford and Hepzibah, after their family curse is lifted, pass "from beneath the wide shelter of the Pyncheon Elm" on a pilgrimage toward life's renewal, childhood joy, and Phoebe and Holgrave seem to regain paradise in the affirmation of their love. Hawthorne tells us: "They transfigured the earth, and made it Eden again, and themselves the first two dwellers in it." In O'Neill's tragedy, Abbie and Eben similarly pass from under the shadow of the elms, and they, too, affirm their love; however, they do not regain the Garden, but are cast out from it. And Ephraim, comparing himself to the God of old, is thrown back upon an awful solitude.

Nature, particularly in the final chapters of The House of the Seven Gables, appears primarily in the guise of innocence and therefore is justly associated with the recovery of a golden age. Only loss of innocence, the awareness of sin, separates man from the Edenic state. By contrast, O'Neill's vision is more complex. In his plays nature seems endlessly stirring, a pulsing cycle of creation and destruction, a force governing desire and shaping our most profound decisions. Pagan will and Puritan conscience, nature and experience, scene and thought, are fused.

For O'Neill, then, Eden does not recall a state of pristine innocence before the Fall as in the Christian perception of the term; rather, it suggests a union with cyclical nature in its condition of mutability. In this sense for O'Neill the elms suggest a kind of pagan vitality incarnate in the New World: "Nature," in Abbie's words, "makin' thin's grow--bigger 'n' bigger--burnin' inside ye--makin' ye want t' grow--into somethin' else--till ye're jined with it--an' it's your's but it owns ye too' an' makes ye grow bigger--like a tree--like them elums" (II, i. p. 164). A passage in D. H. Lawrence's essay "Pan in America" is worth mentioning in this connection. Its description is remarkably consonant with O'Neill's image of the elms (although O'Neill could not have been familiar with it). It is in America, Lawrence writes, that "the oldest of all, Old Pan is still alive.... It is a great tree, under which the house is built. And the tree is still within the allness of Pan." Each of O'Neill's characters seeks to regain a connection with "the allness of Pan," and it is the possibility of such union that constitutes for him the recovery of the Edenic state.

But by the middle of the decade, O'Neill had come to recognize that in the modern age it would be impossible for Americans to return to a state of primordial harmony. By now the Great God Pan was dead or else irrelevant, repressed by Puritanism and ignored by industrial capitalism. That much Yank had discovered in The Hairy Ape. Having arrived at this conviction, O'Neill determined to crown his achievements of the twenties with a theatrical monument, a symbolic epic of ancient gods and modern Americans entitled, appropriately, The Great God Brown. His chief purpose in writing the play, O'Neill said...
later, "was to foreshadow the mystical patterns created by the duality of human character and the search for what lies hidden and beyond the words and actions of men and women." He had been moving toward a major effort of this nature from the beginning. Indeed, the mythic frame of The Great God Brown includes a revelation of the cause of evil in the world, explains the fall of man from paradisal unity, and even points the way toward his redemption and liberation through suffering and love.

If in The Emperor Jones O'Neill identifies America's original sin as the introduction of generation to the wilderness of Pan, he suggests in The Great God Brown that every generation repeats the sin anew through its worship of material possessions and its blindness to the creative spirit. Structured along the pattern of ancient seasonal rituals, the play is a veritable ballet of masks symbolizing the ebb and flow of man's disunified psyche in the modern world. The necessity of masking represents at the very outset a violation of the spirit. Whenever O'Neill's characters unmask during the play, their genuine personalities are exposed; yet to survive at all they must torture their features into masks of social acceptability enforced upon them by a corrupt community. In the cosmology of The Great God Brown, the origin of all suffering—the need for masking—lies in the fact that the natural self and the social self have become irreparably severed.

However, O'Neill here adds a new dimension to the myth. The self has been disintegrated within by the instinct to possess; but it has also been assaulted from without by the teachings of a repressive theology. Dionysus is the central representative of this conflict of divided souls. His name, according to O'Neill's account (in a rare public explanation of his work) derives from Dionysus and St. Anthony—the creative pagan acceptance of life, fighting eternal war with the masochistic, life-denying spirit of Christianity. Even at the commencement of the play, Dion's quest for unity is thwarted by his sense of guilt, which increases his awareness of disharmony and separation.

Midway through the play this prototype of the failed American artist drinks himself to death—and so Brown takes up his mask. Symbolically, Brown ought to be the natural complement to Dion's incompleteness: psychically, they are dual aspects of one personality. However, neither can perceive his image in the other's mask. The significance of this development is once again best explained in O'Neill's words: "Brown' is the visionless demi-god of our new materialistic myth—a Success—building his life of exterior things, inwardly empty and resourceless, an uncreative creature of superficial preconceived social grooves, a by-product forced into insignificant back waters of the deep main current of life-desire." Aftve stealing Dion's mask, Brown's course is death and eventually spiritual rebirth. Like Brutus in The Emperor Jones, like Jim Harris in All God's Chillun Got Wings, like Yank in The Hairy Ape, and like Abbe Eben, and Ephraim in Desire Under the Elms, he has a destiny to fulfill as the agent of ritual purification. Like Brutus he has been moving toward a major effort of this nature from the beginning. Indeed, O'Neill believed fervently that the theatre held the power to regenerate communal myth and in doing so to reclaim the promise of American history. This vision sustained him at least until the late thirties and the onset of the Second World War, when that faith, too, was shaken.

More recently, in part because of the acclaim bestowed upon O'Neill's later work, it has become fashionable to denigrate these early plays. Critics, looking ahead to such masterpieces as The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, A Touch of the Poet and A Moon for the Misbegotten, dismiss the earlier work as programmatic, overly symbolic, and lacking in sophisticated dialogue. Robert Brustein, whose views have been influential, writes with disparagement that O'Neill's "early drama tends to be Expressionist in its symbolic structure and Messianic in its artistic stance." Well, that is true; and yet, these early plays derive their power—and some of them truly are powerful—precisely from the playwright's "messianic" stance. Furthermore, they hold our interest not through gimmickry but through their carefully controlled symbolic forms. Of course, we ought not to overvalue literature simply because we admire its ambition. Nevertheless, I want to conclude by registering my enthusiasm for the work that O'Neill completed in the twenties. Despite individual flaws, these plays, when viewed collectively, constitute a prophetic vision without parallel on the modern stage.

—Michael Hinden

NOTES


7 Ibid., III, ii, p. 172.


Eugene O'Neill's place in the mainstream of this country's literature remains largely unexamined, while his affiliations with foreign writers are discussed again and again. Yet he was an American writer, not a foreigner. He had, for example, a decisive impact on Southern novelists. Thomas Wolfe singled him out as the beacon light in our own drama today and remembered the tortured, romantic figures of Robert Mayo and Dion Anthony when he created Eugene Gant. Carson McCullers remarked in an interview, "When someone asks me why has influenced my work, I point to O'Neill, the Russians, Faulkner, Flaubert." Flannery O'Connor's Wise Blood is surely indebted to The Hairy Ape, particularly the scene in which Enoch, who wants so desperately to belong, embraces a giant gorilla, in reality an antisocial actor in an animal suit. Finally, consider William Faulkner, who lavishly praised O'Neill in an essay written in the early twenties, Declaring O'Neill to be the one man who has influenced my work. I point to O'Neill, the Russians, Faulkner, Flaubert. 


In previous articles I have discussed the O'Neill-Faulkner connection, documenting the influence that the two novelists had on one another. Such similarities indicate that All God's Chillun made a considerable impact on Faulkner.

The black embodies only negative qualities and remains on the periphery of the action, still "unsuitable" for the role of protagonist. In The Dreamy Kid (1919), however, O'Neill found the man who could run away but cannot leave his grandmother for fear that he could flee and escape certain death. In The Emperor Jones (1920), we feel only relief when he tumbles into the shark-infested sea. 

Such is the fate of Brutus Jones, the swaggering black of The Emperor Jones (1920), who forsakes his race in order to attain his white dream of wealth and comfort. Full of pride at the image that the white has of the black, "For white his quest, for white his fate, little stealin'," he tells Smithers, "dey gits you in jail soon or late. For de big stealin' dey makes you Emperor and puts you in de Hall o' Fame when you croaks. (Remarkably) If dey's one thing I learns in ten years on de Pullman ca's listenin' to de white quality talk, it's dat same fact" (Vol. I, i, p. 178). In the course of eight scenes, however, O'Neill literally and figuratively strips Jones of his whiteness.

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like whites. Joe Christmas fails; willing himself to become a part of the black world, he also fails. Like Jim Harris, Christmas fits in nowhere; both men are, in a sense, schizophrenics, divided between white dreams and black nightmares. Black and white at war in both works, but more within the protagonists themselves than among the characters.

As children Jim Harris and Joe Christmas are insecure and out of place. When very young, Harris calls himself "Jim Crow" by whites and blacks alike, wacked because he is devoted to Ella. Gazing longingly at Ella's pink-and-white complexion, Jim confides, "I been drinkin' lots o' chalk 'n' water tree times a day.Dat Tom, de barber, he tole me he knew how to make me white, if I drink enough" (Vol. 2, I, i, p. 304). Metaphorically, Jim will continue to drink chalk water all his life, though he confesses, "Dat chalk only makes me feel kinder sick inside" (I, i, p. 304). In spite of his difficulty in graduating from high school, he is obsessed with the white—and ultimately unattainable—goal of becoming a lawyer. "I swear I know more'n any member of my class," Jim claims. "I ought to, I been studyin' like the devil, a lawyer. 'Cause I know how to make me white, if I drink enough." (Vol. 2, I, i, p. 304).

Jim is as much an outsider in his own family as he is in the classroom. His mother is a conservative who believes "[d]e white and de black shouldn't mix too close. Dere's one race, and dere's de white, and dere's de black man himself."

Jim's father is dead, his photograph providing a succinct summary of character: "[An] elderly negro with an able, shrewd face; dressed in an outlandish lodge regalia, a get-up adorned with medals, sashes, a docked hat with frills—the whole effect as absurd to contemplate as one of Napoleon's Marshals in full uniform" (II, i, p. 322). HAVING made money in a profession "suitable" to his color, Mr. Harris, too, had been apart from his son. Already acutely different from parents and sister, Joe's precarious familial ties are dissolved even when he marries white Ella Downey.

Faulkner's Joe Christmas is also bereft of a place in his family. Illegitimate and disowned because his grandfather suspects black blood, Joe is sent to an orphanage where, at the age of five, he undergoes the experience that irrevocably and irredeemably shapes his future. We see in All God's Chillun that Jim Harris is attracted to everything that is the opposite of his darkness, especially Ella's pink complexion. "[A]t first, the whole thing is curiosity, but we like it all, we declare it all till we've fought the fight of our race and won it!" (II, i, p. 324). Though Jim's father is dead, his photograph provides a succinct summary of character: "[An] elderly negro with an able, shrewd face but dressed in an outlandish lodge regalia, a get-up adorned with medals, sashes, a docked hat with frills—the whole effect as absurd to contemplate as one of Napoleon's Marshals in full uniform" (II, i, p. 322). HAVING made money in a profession "suitable" to his color, Mr. Harris, too, had been apart from his son. Already acutely different from parents and sister, Joe's precarious familial ties are dissolved even when he marries white Ella Downey.

Ella Downey is as much an outsider in her own family as she is in the classroom. Her mother is a conservative who believes "[d]e white and de black shouldn't mix too close. Dere's one race, and dere's de white, and dere's de black man himself."

Ella is a woman named Bobbie, he makes one significant effort to forget about the episode with the pink toothpaste, but the interlude with her only confirms what he had learned at age five: sex is furtive, sex is disgusting, sex is punishment. All these sexual elements characterize his relationship with Joanna Burden.

We find numerous similarities between Ella Downey and Joanna Burden, the most obvious that they are white women who have relationships with black men. The reason they do so is identical, their motivation determined by a sense of superiority. At least to some extent, Ella marries Jim to bolster her own ego, shattered because she was abandoned by her white lover. To be with Jim makes her conscious of a sole virtue: her whiteness. She grasps, for example, at any way she can to make herself feel superior to Jim and his relatives; she insults Wattle and glory in her husband's diffidence in school, telling him he is not allowed to study for the bar examinations any more. Though Ella seems at times to have genuine love for Jim, she never forgets his color, a color she has been brought up to despise.

Ella views Jim as the "whitest of the whites" whom she loves, while at the same time he is the ebony Congo mask she loathes. In thus dividing Jim in two, Ella splits herself as well, into the loving Ella and the hating Ella. Frequent murderous rages alternate with declarations of love:

Don't, Jim! Don't cry, please! You don't suppose I really meant that about the examinations, do you? Why, of course, I didn't mean a word! I couldn't mean it! I want you to take examinations! I want you to pass! I want you to be a lawyer! I want you to be the best lawyer in the world! I want you to show the white men—tell them what you want to tell them, every day, everywhere! I want to shout it from the white man's rooftops that talk behind our backs—what a man I married! I want them to see how the whole world know to your white hands! I want you to climb and climb—and step on 'em, step right on their white faces! I love you. Jim! You know that?" (II, i, p. 329).

Typically, however, Ella reverts abruptly to her abusive tone as she studies the photograph of Jim's father: "'It's his Old Man—all dolled up like a circus horse! Well, then we were all nobodiless, you know, in the Old South, that's all there is to it'" (II, i, p. 330). Her shifts from loving to hating establish a rhythm that is exhausting; just as in Long Day's Journey into Night we alternate unceasingly between attacks and apologies, that rhythm is repeated to exhaustion. The reason why Ella steps forth between Ella's conscious love for Jim and her deeply rooted hatred of his color: Ella feels she is a prisoner, trapped by Jim's blackness and cut off from society. The Congo mask dominates their apartment at the same time the rooms shrink in size and threaten to smother them. This mask serves much the same function as Joe Christmas's one-time "whiter of the whites," a woman who resembled an ebony carving." Both symbolize the heritage of blackness. Ella, however, can no more accept the mask than Joe can make himself feel black by acquiring an ebony lover.

Like Ella, Joanna Burden is isolated; she is a "foreigner," a "Yankee" and a "nigger lover" who lives in a land where northerners were once considered foreign and blacks were not recognized as human beings. Called a "spinster" at forty, Joanna continues her affair with Joe Christmas after she learns of his black blood because she believes she once made his think of candy. 'You little rat!' the thin, furious voice hissed: 'you little rat! Sping you! Me little nigger bastard!' (p. 107).

Joe's future experiences with women are foreshadowed in the dietician's "pinkfoamed" closet, just as Jim Harris's are determined by his ardent eny of Ella's pink-and-white complexion, that quintessential expression of not-blackness. Christmas will remember the pink toothpaste years later when he and some white boys line up outside a barn for sex with a black girl. Joe finds himself sucking her longingly, begging her to stop. As Joe grows older, the "facts of life" make him literally sick to his stomach, and he nauseates when he learns about menstruation ("periodical filth"). In a relationship with a woman named Bobbie, Joe makes one significant effort to forget about the episode with the pink toothpaste, but the interlude with her only confirms what he had learned at age five: sex is furtive, sex is disgusting, sex is punishment. All these sexual elements characterize his relationship with Joanna Burden.

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Joanna craves blackness to enhance her own whiteness; Just declare himself a black, and "better himself" by entering a black college. Joanna, too, quietly on her various activities on behalf of blacks, but at night as a female in heat scorning and detesting their color. Faulkner describes Joanna as a "man by day, working sexual appetite, whereas O'Neill avoids sex in All God's Chillun, delicately noting that Ella and Jim lived as "brother and sister" for a long while after being united. Joe is profoundly shock by his lover's exaggerated passion. "It was as if she had invented the whole thing deliberately, for the purpose of playing it out like a play" (p. 226). Faulkner remarks, making us think of Ella and her similar penchant for game-playing. Joanna insists on intrigue, hiding notes for Joe in obscure, remote places. Often Joe must climb into her house through a window, as it to convince her their sex is forbidden:

[He] would have to seek her about the dark house until he found her, hidden, in empty rooms, waiting, panting, her eyes in the dark glowing like the eyes of cats. Now and then she appointed trysts beneath certain shrubs about the grounds, where he would find her naked, or with her half torn to ribbons upon her, in the thick thorns of rhododendron, her body gleaming .... She would be wild then, in the close, breathing halfdark without walls, with her wild hair, each strand of which would seem to come alive like octopus tentacles, and her wild hands and her breathing. "Negro Negro Negro!" (p. 227)

When Joe and Joanna make love, they struggle as though in a "black thick mool" of "black waters" or a "black abyss" (p. 225). In Joanna's mind, intercourse with a black man transforms the female completely. Faulkner and O'Neill make it very clear that the women are incapable of controlling their feelings about Joe and Jim; centuries of prejudice have erected insurmountable barriers to communication and genuine feeling.

All God's Chillun Got Wings and Light in August share more than thematic resonances and similarities among the characters, for both utilize expressionism. Considering O'Neill's play in an expressionist framework is common, but viewing Faulkner's novel in this light is unique. We find in Light in August many aspects of expressionism: grotesque characters, distorted and fragmented settings painted starkly and exclusively in black and white, swiftly changing scenes (dramatisations), a sense of suspended animation, and a pervasive dream-like atmosphere. Faulkner utilizes exaggerated, masklike figures that are characteristic of expressionism in drama in general and O'Neill's plays in particular; their movements are absurd, abrupt, and studied. The diatribe, for example, is deliberately made unreal by Faulkner's emphasis on her as a marionette, a "puppet in some burlesque of rapine and despair." (p. 114). As O'Neill does, Faulkner makes frequent use of the mask, and Christmas's face is repeatedly described as "masklike" and unreal.

All God's Chillun is binary, echoing the stark black/white dichotomy about which the drama is organized, and it is deliberately "off balance," asymmetrically composed of two acts of four and three scenes. Faulkner's novel, which tells three rather disjointed narratives, is a montage of disparate images. Such a structure repeats the theme of the inability of blacks and whites to live harmoniously together, equal in all things.

While watching Act One of All God's Chillun, the audience feels detached from the action, like onlookers in a dream; In the more realistic Act Two, there is more emotional involvement with the on-stage action. It is in the first act that we find many similarities with Light in August. As we move through these four brief scenes, we watch a late afternoon sky darken into evening and then to night. The scenes are "snapshots" that catch a moment in time, a visual dynamic action, chance meetings, short utterances, street dialect. At the end of the act it is finally morning. If the span of time that occurs during the act matched the progression of darkness and light, such a stage setting would be simply literal. What appears to be the fading of one day, however, is a prelude to the passage of time and the coming of another. Joe runs for fifteen years—"the thousand streets ran as one street"—and discovers he remains the same no matter where he goes, although he "thought it was loneliness which he was trying to escape and not himself." O'Neill's characters also try to escape, and Act One of All God's Chillun is dominated by the street setting, a visual reminder that Jim and Ella will carry their racial heritage with them wherever they go. The street is as apt a metaphor for Jim and Ella as it is for Joe and Joanna: they try to run away from something that is within and utterly inescapable.

As O'Neill does, Faulkner favors repetition, repeating an image, motif, or phrase over and over; but only one of his characters--the white--uses so much repetition as Faulkner's God's Chillun—occur again and again in Light in August. Christmas, too, sees the white world as completely different from the one blacks inhabit. Joe walks from a black shantytown—cabins "shaped blackly out of darkness" in a "black hollow"—hearing the "fecund sweet voices of negro women." Suddenly Joe senses the air of white people: the glow of the streetlights is white, there are white houses, white porches, and in "a lighted veranda four people [sit] about a card table, the white facesintent and sharp in the low light, the bare arms of the women glaring smooth and white above the trivial cards." (p. 100). Christmas even believes that the air white people breathe is "cold [and] hard," while blacks inhale air "lightless [and] black." Wherever he looks and wherever he goes, he sees these two colors and nothing else. If we were to make a move of Christmas's life, we would have to shunt it in black and white rather than technicolor in order to be true to his perception. Yet he can never possess this white world, for his invisible blackness follows him everywhere. Faulkner insistently refers to him as a shadow, appropriate for a white black whose clothes—white shirt, black trousers—symbolize his split identity.

Joe Christmas and Jim Harris and their nightmares through self-sacrifice. It is no accident that Harris's two most important speeches combine the idea of sacrifice with his
perception of himself as black. When he declares his love for Ella, he phrases his adoration in the only language available to his color:

I don't ask you to love me—I don't dare to hope nothing like that! I don't want nothing—only to wait—to know you like me—to be near you—to keep harm away—to make up for the past—to never let you suffer any more—only to lie at your feet like a dog that loves you to kneel by your bed like a nurse that watches over you sleeping—to preserve and protect and shield you from evil and sorrow—to give my life and my blood and all the strength that's in me to you—yes, be your slave—your black slave that adores you as sacred! (He has sunk to his knees. In a frenzy of self-abnegation, as he says the last words he beats his head on the flagstones.) (I, iii, p. 318)

At the play’s conclusion, Jim confesses, “Somewhere yonder maybe—our luck’ll change. But I wanted—here and now—before you—we—I wanted to prove to you—to myself—to others—myself to become a full-fledged Member” (II, iii, p. 341). But Jim can never become a full-fledged Member, whether of the bar or of the human race. Though he hopes for a salvation in death, in life he will always be “old kind Uncle Jim who’s been with [Painty Face] for years and years” (p. 342). Like Joe Christmas, Jim Harris never learns who he really is. He struggles against his color throughout the play, only to capitulate at the conclusion by becoming an Uncle Tom in the name of love and what is surely a debased sense of religion. Similarly, Joe is never able to learn who he really is: physically able to pass as white, he is spiritually incapable of doing so. Both men embrace inferiority as concomitant with their blackness.

Just as Jim sees everything in terms of his skin color, so Joe’s sense of his blackness forces him to sacrifice his life. He kills Joanna and then runs, automatically assuming the course his life had taken prior to the murder. He suddenly stops, however, and allows himself to be captured, castrated, and killed. On the last day of his life—a “black tide creep[s] up his legs, moving from his feet upward as death moves” (p. 297). Just before he is killed, there are over a dozen references to the conflict between his white and black blood (p. 393); and as he is castrated, “pent black blood,” a “black blast,” gushes out of his body (p. 407). Like O’Neill, Faulkner leaves no doubt as to the final cause of his sacrifice. He is black.

Though they look very different, Jim Harris and Joe Christmas are brothers. Jim, while a “full-blooded” black in a physical sense, wishes so desperately to be white that he denies his race, his heritage, his very being. He can see himself only through white eyes that detest his color, and his self-loathing defines his limits. Faulkner shows us that blackness is more than a skin color, for his black man is white, yet he, too, is unable to belong to the white world; his detested blackness is invisible but none the less real for that. Blackness is a way of thinking; and failure, in All God’s Chillun Got Wings and Light in August, is assured.

-- Susan Tuck

NOTES

5References to O’Neill’s plays are given parenthetically within the text and refer to the three-volume, 1982 edition published by Random House (Modern Library).
7Joseph Blotner recounts an incident that occurred in 1917, when Faulkner was twenty. In its horrific detail, it summarizes one aspect of the South in which the young novelist lived. The headless body of a young white girl was found near Memphis and, shortly thereafter, her black killer was apprehended. The “outraged community” decided to take the law into its own hands. The black victim was “chained to a log, [and] the mother of the victim implored the crowd to make him suffer ten times as much as he had made his victim suffer. The crowd roasted its willingness.” Quoting from newspaper accounts at the time, Blotner describes the lynching: “The pyre was doused with gasoline and then some 5,000 men, women, and children cheered gleefully as the match was lighted, and a moment later the flames and smoke rose high in the air.... The frenzied men cheered as their victim writhed in agony and then was stilled in death.” “Not content merely to kill, however, the mob then mutilated: ‘When the body had burned sufficiently to satisfy the lust of the executioners, one man in the crowd cut out the Negro’s heart, two others cut off his ears, while another hacked off his head’” (Joseph Blotner, William Faulkner: A Biography, 2 vols. [New York: Random House, 1974], pp. 189-90). To talk about the history of the South is to talk about blacks and such incidents as this.
10White occurs 140 times in the novel; black, 72. There are, in addition, innumerable variants of both words. See Light in August: A Concordance to the Novel, ed. Jack L. Capps (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1979).

ALL GOD’S CHILJUN GOT WINGS AND MACBETH

The materials out of which O’Neill constructed All God’s Chillun Got Wings are psychologically deep and culturally diverse. As Michael Manheim, among others, has observed: various scenes and situations in the play grow out of O’Neill’s haunting past (32). Bearing the names of O’Neill’s mother and father, Jim (Harris) and Ella (Downey) mimetically reenact the psychological conflicts—the fears, self-delusions, and guilt—found in the O’Neill household. Parallels between All God’s Chillun and Long Day’s Journey, identified by the Georges (524-35) and others, further attest to the shadows of O’Neill’s family hanging over the earlier play. O’Neill utilized sources on African primitivism and masks (e. g., Macgowan and Rosse) that he had employed in The Emperor Jones. He also went deeply into the “world of expressionism” (Tunisan 174) that is one of All God’s Chillun’s
Yet another possible influence on O'Neill, not advanced before for *All God's Chillun*, comes from Shakespeare. In other O'Neill plays Shakespeare's influence has been convincingly argued. Frenz and Mueller have observed that "in *Hamlet* (1599) and *O'Neill's* *Haml et* (1928) Roy argued that "Desire Under the Elms is nearly as close to *King Lear* in patterning, characterization and mode as it is to its Greek models" (6); and Berlin has shown that "the entire play *Hamlet* seems to have been considerably influenced by *O'Neill's* creativity" (11). Although there are some parallels in *Hamlet* and All God's Chillun, it is not parallels with this Shakespearean tragedy but rather with *Macbeth* that is of interest. In fact, what Berlin has claimed for *Hamlet*'s influence on *O'Neill's* two late plays might arguably be proposed for *Macbeth* on his impact on *1923* play.

The two plays have much in common in theme and structure. Both *Macbeth* and *All God's Chillun* offer acute psychological histories (Nethercot calls *All God's Chillun* "O'Neill's most exhaustive study of insanity" [265]) of a husband and wife caught in the web of ambition and guilt, struggling to exist amid hate and love, yet drifting tragically into chaotic isolation. Both men have fallen prey to conscience, yet写作他的 last two plays. "*Hamlet* Day's Journey into Night and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*" (312). In addition, the two plays arguably be proposed for *Macbeth* on his impact on *All God's Chillun* on Shakespearean tragedy but rather with *Macbeth* that *All God's Chillun* exerts considerable pressure on O'Neill's creative imagination when he was writing his last two plays, *Lo~ Day's Journey Into Night and A Moon for the Misbegotten* (312) .

...with *Macbeth* by...
to leave" Ella or to "send her away to some nice sanitarium" (66), neither course being acceptable to Jim. Like Macbeth he wants to believe that there is a cure ("some sweet oblivion to give him hope"). Cheering himself up, he tells Nelsete that the doctor said that "it’d be a long time before she got back her normal strength. Well, I suppose that’s got to be expected" (65). Hurtle punches Jim’s hope, though, by saying that, for a fleeting there is a vague wish, will help—"I’m going to get other doctors in to see Ella—specialists" (65-66). But then, like Macbeth ("throw physic to the dogs"), Jim attacks the doctor whose impotent medicine he cannot accept: "This one’s a damn fool." (66). For Jim the doctor’s prognosis— incurable disease; inevitable separation— is unbearable.

The ways in which the two wives behave toward their husbands also suggest marked similarity between Macbeth and All God's Chillun. Both Lady Macbeth and Ella conspire against their husbands by thrusting them into the things of a deadly ambition. Lady Macbeth knows her husband possesses the honorable ambition of military valor, but she must turn such ambition into something evil: "Thou wouldst be great. / Art not without ambition." (1.7.39-41) When he is wavering in that corrupt course, she asks: "Has the hope drunk/ Wherein you dressed yourself?" (1.7.39-41). Accepting her challenge, Macbeth soon faces the terror of his decision. Before the killing, he sees "a dagger of the mind, a false creation,/ Which is the very proper picture of my志 (2.1.38-40). Afterwards, he asks: "How is’t with me, when every noise appalls me?" (2.2.57). In her schizophrenic raving, Ella is more determined: "I don’t think him a stranger. I must either have put a mask with what you see—or it would have killed me. But now I’ve killed it. So you needn’t be afraid any more, Jim." (76).

Perhaps one of the most intriguing links between Macbeth and All God’s Chillun is the fact that both Lady Macbeth and Ella plot against their husbands’ sleep, the symbol of psychic health and peace. Acting upon his wife’s exhortation to kill the king, Macbeth bloodlessly but definitely murders Duncan. And after "all the house:/ Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor/ Shall sleep no more" (2.2.39-41). Later Lady Macbeth ironically warns her husband—"You lack the season of all natures, sleep" (3.4.142)—when it was she who implored him to murder Duncan and, with the king, Macbeth’s own sleep. Similarly, in All

heavenly guardianship of his people in Africa" (57). But tragically it is a sign of the insane root that takes reason prisoner" (64). Later, a querulous Macbeth calls them "black and midnight hags" (4.1.48) who present a "horrible sight" (122). In numerous productions, their shrill laughter evokes the witches’ infernal origins. With such laughter and grotesque grins they summon Banquo’s apparition to discredit Macbeth’s chances of fathering kings. "Banquo smiles upon me and points at them for his," observes Macbeth (1.7.49). In the height of madness, Ella is on first seeing the mask in the Harris apartment and helps to precipitate her own insanity. Giving a "stiffened scream" (57), Ella remarks, "It looks ugly to me and stupid—like a kid’s game—making faces." Ironically, the games she associates with the mask will be no less terrifying to her psyche and soul than the maddening apparitions present in their fretful game with Macbeth. When Jim offers to remove the mask, Ella confidently orders: "No, I want it here where I can give it the laugh" (58) as if, like Macbeth, she is trying to believe that the very agents involved in her own downfall. Ella the mocker, though, becomes the mocked, for in the height of madness the mask itself: "A startling transformation comes over her face. It turns the whole of her expression upside down. I can’t think of anything to say about it; I can’t think of anything to do with it or about it" (70). "Ah, but it’s no good," she exclaims, "it won’t do. It won’t do at all. I can’t bear to look at it any more, Jim." (76).

Unquestionably, the witches and the mask symbolize the fear that engulfs Macbeth and Ella and, with Jim. With their "strange intelligence" (1.3.76). the witches encourage and deceive Macbeth at the same time, embodying the equivocating evil he wants to avoid. The witches out for further prophecies (4.1). Macbeth believes he can come to terms with them. Yet any assurance of happiness resulting from such a diabolic encounter eludes him and works against him. Similarly, the mask for Ella—like the witches for Macbeth—seemingly promises happiness but really bores evil. Ironically enough, the mask is a wedding present from Hattie, one of O’Neill’s most powerful black envoys of a black envoys. As Hattie informs her white sister-in-law, the mask is used "in religious ceremonies by my people in Africa" (57). But tragically it is a sign of the black world Ella deems so "degenerated" (4.1.110) that it becomes the powerful symbolically bound, quite literally according to O’Neill’s stage directions (62, 72). Ella associates the mask with what she most dreads—Jim’s passing the bar (74); and on another, related level, the mask is "Jim’s inner reality—his sense of failure, his blackness" (4114). As Ella irrationally reasons, the mask is to be feared and destroyed, and so "she grabs the mask and plucks the knife through it" (75). Her

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situation in relationship to the powers of evil is similar to Macbeth's. She believes that her (temporary) conquest over the mask will give her relief and happiness, but it only plunges her and Jim further into isolation and pain. In All God's Chillun, as in Macbeth, no character can negotiate with or attempt to control the darker forces of fate which hold the upper hand.

Although some may conclude that All God's Chillun "fails to achieve tragic stature" (Carpenter 101), there is no doubt that O'Neill sought to convey a "deep, spiritual sense" through the physical pain and spiritual suffering of his protagonists, the Negro Jim and his white wife Ella. I believe O'Neill sought to enlarge and exalt their suffering by comparing it with the pain and guilt found in Macbeth, certain incidents from which seem to be echoed in All God's Chillun. But perhaps the most revealing words about O'Neill's relationship to Shakespeare as far as All God's Chillun is concerned come from T. S. Eliot, who approvingly wrote that O'Neill was "more successful than the author of Othello, in implying something more universal than the problem of race--in implying, in fact, the universal problem of differences which create a mixture of admiration, love, and contempt, with the consequent tension" (qtd. in Cargill 169).

--Philip C. Kolin

WORKS CITED

All God's Chillun


Berlin


Cargill


Carpenter


Frenz


Frenz and Mueller


Gelb


Gillett


Macbeth


Manheim


Nethercot


Roy


Tuck


Tiusanen

REVIEWS OF O'NEILL PLAYS IN PERFORMANCE


David Thacker, the artistic director of The Young Vic Theatre, contemplated with some trepidation the task of presenting London's premier production of A Touch of the Poet. Dealing with a play by an "indisputable genius of the theatre," as he put it, yet one virtually unknown to his audience (Poet had been performed only once before in England and had been in the sixties and never in London), he had the sobering responsibility of doing it right. His would be the interpretation to which critics would compare future productions.

Thacker needn't have worried. His Poet, starring Timothy Dalton as Con and Vanessa Redgrave as Nora, captured with insight and sensitivity the nuances and subtleties of a complex play. The individual performances were compelling, the ensemble deftly orchestrated from the morning routine at Melody's inn to the Nora-Sara tableau of the final scene.

A Touch of the Poet opened at The Young Vic in January 1988 for a run of three-and-a-half weeks, then moved to the West End's Comedy Theatre for another nine weeks, closing on May 14. (It could have run "for ages," Thacker told me, except that Dalton and Redgrave prefer shorter runs.) The Young Vic version was presented in the round in an intimate house that ordinarily seats only 485 (for the sell-out crowds the theatre was seating 530 per night). The Comedy is a much larger house with a proscenium stage. I saw both productions, at the invitation of the director, and am hard pressed to choose the superior one. The intimacy and spatial versatility of the Wallis in the round fostered a natural and fluid performance. The Comedy, though more formal and static, allowed Thacker to focus key scenes, to freeze moments--like the mirror episodes, for instance, and the final, powerful image of Sara sitting at Nora's feet, gazing despairingly off into space. It also allowed for a clearer articulation of spatial relations and the entrance to the bar (the steps) over against the inn's front door, a symbolically significant differentiation; the outside windows of upstairs rooms (including Simon's, lit by a candle during the final act, reminding us of his presence) above the planked facade of the bar's outer wall. (Thacker remarked that it was only after the set was designed that he discovered O'Neill's own sketch; they are remarkably similar.) The prosenium production added realistic details: a nineteenth century map of the eastern states on the wall; in the background, Con's mere whinnying and stamping and the distant wail of an early scene, for instance. Dalton did a bit of imaginary fencing, dwelling an unseen enemy. The moment was almost comic, until we saw him crumble in anguish and self-hated immediately afterward. The mirror scenes focussed this duality, especially in the Con production, when Davis portrayed him with a roar that only a howl at an almost clownish prancing before the mirror.) In the Comedy production Con was dignified and heroic as he rose to the power of Byron's lines: afterwards, as he preened and posed, the audience laughed. Both reactions are appropriate.

In both productions, however, the rhythm of dream and denial, hope and despair, key to grasping the play, was for the most part profoundly understood and accurately portrayed. Within the elisions of the play's editing (Con, the doubling of situations (Sara's repetition of Nora's self-hatred immediately afterward. The mirror scenes focussed this duality, especially in the Con production, when Davis portrayed him with a roar that only a howl at an almost clownish prancing before the mirror.) In the Comedy production Con was dignified and heroic as he rose to the power of Byron's lines: afterwards, as he preened and posed, the audience laughed. Both reactions are appropriate.

In a masterful stroke, Thacker mined the mirror for still another insight. At one point, Sara, confident of Simon's love, did a small curtsy in front of the mirror and said, "Mrs. Simon Harford, at your service." Simon's mother Deborah, too, in her long rambling scene with Sara, was caught by her own reflection in the mirror (a detail which was added in the West End version). Not only did this link both Sara and Deborah to Con in their need for illusions and dreams; it pointed out that this is finally a play about perception of ourselves in many mirrors: in the eyes of those who love and hate us, in our perception of the past, in the prop--like Con's Talavera uniform--we select to create our present personas. This accounts for the pairing of personas (Sara and Nora, for instance, represent two tendencies in Con's ambition and affection; Jamie Cregan is a shadow of Con's past self; both Con and Simon are "poets") as well as the doubling of situations (Sara's repetition of Nora's "sin"). What is finally crucial, the play suggests, is the mirror we choose.

Con finally opts to relinquish the Major Melody role, turning instead to Nora, to the fellowship of his Irish cronies, to the past and old Ned Melody in the melody. It was a transformation tragically rendered. As Dalton's Melody stumbled into the bar, covered with blood (the makeup was all too realistic), we watched with fascination and dismay the emergence of the Irish peasant. The "louish
grinning clown" of O'Neill's stage directions appeared before our eyes in an extremely powerful closing scene; and when, as Sara tried to call the Major back to life and Con cried out in anguish, "For the love of god, Sara, let me go," the pain was palpable.

It was extremely gratifying to see such an intelligent and moving interpretation of a play London had not experience before; and its enthusiastic reception by audience and press alike equally warms the heart of all O'Neillians, who are much indebted to Mr. Thacker and his fine cast.

-- Laurin R. Porter


As part of the O'Neill centennial celebrations, the Denver Center Theatre Company mounted Long Day's Journey Into Night, the second O'Neill play they have mounted in as many years. During the 1986-87 season, the company staged The Emperor Jones, directed by Donald McKayle, in collaboration with DCTC artistic director Donovan Marley and Cleo Parker Robinson's Denver-based dance ensemble company. In the case of Long Day's Journey, rather than present the play in The Stage, where Jones was mounted—a 1000-seat thrust-stage auditorium—the largest of the three theatre spaces in the Denver complex—the company decided to place O'Neill's classic in The Space, an experimental, multileveled, 400-seat theatre-in-the-round.

At first it appeared a strange choice: the play seems to demand a space commensurate with its scope and length, with its sweeping passions and violence, its monumental personal struggles. One could imagine Ah, Wilderness! in this intimate, close environment; perhaps even The Emperor Jones, remembering its initial production of cramped quarters in the Provincetown Playhouse—but not Long Day's Journey Into Night. Yet the small theatre-in-the-round worked well, and director Malcolm Morrison took full advantage of the possibilities to create an interesting and generally satisfying production.

More than in conventional proscenium performances of the play, this production was able to represent visually both the isolation and the repetitive patterns—particularly the physical patterns—of the Tyrones. Three exits led from the circular stage, each leading to some demarcated "other world" of the characters, never seen by the audience: one to the upstairs and the dreaded front room where Mary Tyrone continually retreats during the course of the day and night; a second to both the kitchen and the back parlor where Bridget oversees the cooking and serving of the family's meals; and the third to the outside. These three exits served to emphasize the differences in the possible escapes of the family members. While all ascend and descend the stairs leading to the second story, the men stay only a brief time, in order to change clothes for their frequent departures outside. For Mary upstairs is her main sanctuary, an escape from what she interprets as the prying, accusatory eyes of her family. The back parlor is also a utilitarian way-station for the men, where the family's meals; and the third to the outside. These three exits served to emphasize the differences in the possible escapes of the family members. While all ascend and descend the stairs leading to the second story, the men stay only a brief time, in order to change clothes for their frequent departures outside. For Mary upstairs is her main sanctuary, an escape from what she interprets as the prying, accusatory eyes of her family. The back parlor is also a utilitarian way-station for the men, where they eat their meals before or after trips outside. Again, it offers more for Mary. When ascent is precluded either by timing or by the suspicion of the others, she goes to the kitchen, ostensibly to oversee the preparation of the food, but usually to escape the censure she feels in the living room. The third exit is used only by the men. Mary never uses it, at least not in view of the audience, since her auto trip was a youg, attractive Mary, almost sprightly in Act I, allowing the audience to imagine the possibilities of what life before the debilitating morphine might have been. Her gradual descent into her addiction was well done. Since she began on such a high note, she had considerable room for the considerable room for the last scene she was less deranged and lost than most Mary Tyrones. The most obvious failure in her performance was in this final scene. Rather than offer a powerful or a wistful childlike revery, she seemed far too tentative. In a certain measure it was not her fault: the scene came directly after what in this production was the climax of both action and emotion: Jamie's confrontation with Edmund.

Michael Winters played Jamie with more intensity than the role is usually given. Less wise than frustrated and clearly unloved other son, he was a cynical, seething figure who finally exploded into rage, fits, and uncontrollable sobbing in his revelation to Edmund. In his first scene with Edmund, exploding as well all the pent up emotions of the entire Tyrone family.

In the last scene, when the three Tyrone men were seated at the living room table and Mary made her final entrance, the men were too spent to respond to the spectacle before them, but so too was the audience, who had not experienced the wrenching confrontation between the brothers, played beautifully, but overshadowing the other relationships in the play. And when Mary spoke her lines as if delivering a speech, the play faded out on a note of indifference rather than acute pain or understanding as it should if the actress playing Mary Tyrone is up to the ultimate demands of the role. Edmund, as played by Jamie Horton, was a strong foil for Winters' Jamie. He was an earnest young man, clearly sick and clearly attempting to seek love and reassurance space beyond. But she did not—or could not—move in that direction. "In a real home no one is lonely," she says. This production seemed to add: in a real home one might be able to go out the front door.

The unusual playing space provided another physical dimension to the play. Unlike most theatre-in-the-round, this one has upper boxes and a balcony of several rows at different heights surrounding the entire space, and at a level which required the audience to lean forward to see the action. The effect of viewing the play from above—as I did during the first act, preferring to move closer to the action for the remaining acts of the play—was like watching some sort of physical skirmish in an Elizabethan arena. From this angle the confrontations in the Tyrone home resembled some sort of ritualistic combat as the four moved around the pit below. After each exchange, one wondered who was going to remain erect and unbleeded.

Besides the unusual staging, the Denver production also experimented with the delivery of dialogue. Morrison has his actors use talk-overs, where one character begins a speech before another finishes. At first the technique was effective, if somewhat surprising; but when it continued throughout most of Act I, it became a transparent convention. Used more sparingly, it might work as a realistic measure of how people in the heat of passion may not wait for the requisite end of another person's words in order to begin their own, such as Caryl Churchill uses the device in Top Girls, for instance. In this production, the technique finally dissipated the power of O'Neill's lines, undermining rather than enhancing the dislocations among the characters which O'Neill depicts most successfully through the simple force of the words. What the resultant cacophony did allow was a heightening of the silences when no one talked, a device used in several sections of Act I, but abandoned as the director allowed O'Neill's own tempo to take over the production.

The talented actors played well together, reflecting their repertory training, but they never seemed to make the most of their speeches. The only actor brought in specifically for this performance was Carol Mayo Jenkins (the English teacher, Elizabeth Sherwood, in the television series Fame), who joined the company to play Mary. She was a young, attractive Mary, almost sprightly in Act I, allowing the audience to imagine the possibilities of what life before the debilitating morphine might have been. Her gradual descent into her addiction was well done. Since she began on such a high note, she had considerable room for the considerable room for the last scene she was less deranged and lost than most Mary Tyrones. The most obvious failure in her performance was in this final scene. Rather than offer a powerful or a wistful childlike revery, she seemed far too tentative. In a certain measure it was not her fault: the scene came directly after what in this production was the climax of both action and emotion: Jamie's confrontation with Edmund.

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-- Laurin R. Porter
from a mother who could give neither. However, he, too, was disappointing in what should be his most searing speech: his description of his son’s total futility. While not as vivid as Hortin’s delivery, which lasted longer and
more that they lost most of their beauty and rhythm. When he said “he would have been much
more successful as a sea gull or a fish,” several in the audience actually
laughed—almost understandably, since the lines seemed more a humorous aside than a
revelatory recollection of belonging.

James Lawless, as James Tyrone, offered what very well could be a flat,
disappointing portrayal. However, it almost worked since he turned the antenna
doctrine, offered an interesting slant to Tyrone’s own methods of dealing with family
matters: assume a pose. Less studied and forced were his scenes with his wife and the
knight and back parlor spaces, the director was faithful to the spirit of the play,
if not sufficiently sensitive to its power. His stage use and venue choice provided
the audience to appreciate and relish a two-part, five-hour drama bore rich fruit that
was proved true in Chapel Hill; but the second was categorically refuted. On a
premiere and on subsequent weekends, the two parts were performed on the same day with
a two-hour dinner break between them. Fluid transitions were provided by the use of
movable set pieces (tables, chairs, Ezra’s bed and later his catafalque, etc.) on the
large open stage in front of scenic designer Bill Clarke’s unit set at the rear—two
tall platforms at our left and center, and twelve steps leading up to a black Greek
doorway at the right. It took just a bit of nautical rigging to make the left
platform a believable ship’s deck; and a scrim across the top of the platforms served for
three projections of the Mannon family portraits—sometimes of various
left-center, and was witnessed, as if from above, by Lavinia and Orin, who were
lighting the guilty lovers in surrounding darkness could not have come from the
eavesdroppers’ vantage point behind them, nor could the witnesses have been
illuminated by the glow in the cabin; but, since Brant had appeared on the same
platform as the Donkeyman, the opening convention of darkness and silence had no
trouble suspending its disbelief and accepting the spatial dislocation.

One of the brilliances of O’Neill’s Americanized Orestesia, despite its length, is
its utter simplicity. Not psychological simplicity, of course: the strands of guilt
and complicity, of madness, vengeancefulness and twisted passions, are as deeply
convoluted as one could wish—perhaps even more so. But the play has a theatrical
simplicity that emulates and equals its classical sources. The overtones may be
monotone, but the work as a whole is an extended chamber piece, a series of small,
consecutive and interrelated vignettes seldom involving more than three players at a
time, frequently only two. Like King Lear, it is a small family drama writ large, one
that can be interacted with far better than the modest portions of its presentation in
it, and the delicate psychological and interpersonal nuances are lost, leaving only the
creaking hulk of Monte Cristo melodrama. Play it in full, and the characters come
to life in all their complexity, and—just as important—we come to care about them,
as we did in this virtually uncut performance.

In the PlayMakers’ staging, the trilogy’s fourteen acts were divided into two parts
with one intermission each, the second part beginning with the aforementioned
boardroom scene in East Boston (the fourth act of “The Hunted”), and the intermissions
coming at the end of “Homecoming” and after the first act of “The Haunted.” At the
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...
the steps for the last time. And she held her own in her verbal duels with her mother, which is saying a lot because Ira Thomas’s Christine was a sensational achievement.

Tenderly loving in her reunion with Orin, venomous when Lavinia interrupted it (her “What do you want?” positively dripped with vitriol!), Ms. Thomas’s Christine could change at will from sultry belle to ironic commentator, from murderess matriarch to marionette. Again, Willie,” to the latter of which Sid and Lily danced after he had won her forgiveness for the umpteenth time; perfect posters and goggies, by Jane Greenwood; and a set brimming with wicker and gingham and chints that featured, through the tall windows at the rear, a gorgeous view of the harbor and far shore beyond the house-side porch. And the performers, when sober, moved with such ease around the central pedestal table with lace cloth and the other furniture that an aura of verisimilitude was quickly established and sustained throughout the evening. And the one exterior scene—a wharf surrounded by catkins and bathed by a hazy moon, with a rocking boat in front of the wharf—made effective use of David Sbarge’s “sound design” of lapping water and a clock bell in the distance.

Aside from the showbiz fanny-wagging of Jane Macfie’s self as she gauchely set the table for the farewell meal of Richard as he awaited Muriel’s lakeside visit, the acting was superb. Jason Robards and Colleen Dewhurst were stately and amusing as O’Neill’s idealized parents; he in light grey, a strong and appropriate contrast to the conservative black of the upright intruder, Mccomber; she in an elegant coiffure that smacked of Bea Arthur’s Maude. The only weakness in either performance was in Nat’s excessively protracted “birds and bees” scene with Richard. (I had the feeling, throughout, that the pacing was a bit too slow, as if Brown were seeking Chekhovian depths that just aren’t there.) William Camp’s Mccomber was prune-perfect (he picked Richard’s poems from his small billfold as if they were a dead rat) and Annie Golden made a star turn of the small-town seductress.

Raphael Sbarge was the most believable and three-dimensional Richard I have ever seen. He was touching in his literary naiveté (“Reading Goal” was pronounced “Reading Goal!”); powerful in his tipsy barside recitation; pathetically inept in the fight that followed; gawkily ardent in the moonlight tryst; plausibly polluted in his weak-kneed return to the diner; and his pant-knee right; and positively radiant in the last scene, as he sat in profile on the porch rail, dimly illuminated by a beneficent moon.

Mr. Sbarge is an actor to watch; he will soon join his fellow stars in renown.

Perhaps the best acting of all was that of the other “couple,” Sid and Lily, played by George Hearn and Elizabeth Wilson. Ms. Wilson made it clear that Lily’s pursed lips at Sid’s promise to reform was long-practiced and likely to recur: that she was both uncomfortable in her role as live-in spinster and simultaneously content with her lot as long-suffering mother hen. Mr. Hearn was not only the best singer I have ever encountered as Sid; he was also able to elicit fresh laughs from the dinner scene. First he attacked the soup with knife and fork, then stood and drank it from the bowl, afterward licking both his fingers and the bowl. And finally, with a sprig of parsley behind his ear, he conducted the singalong with his lobster, earned one more rejection from Lily, and wozily departed. His later tears earned Lily’s perennial forgiveness, but one felt that Sid, too, was quite content with the relationship as it was. Mr. Sbarge’s Heurn was a major contribution to a thoroughly delightful production.

Ben Edwards’ set for Long Day’s Journey used the same windows at the rear and the same large windows at the front, through which sunlight moved, from morning sunlight through evening sunlight, through the late afternoon sun to blackness at night. Thanks to Jennifer Tipton’s exceptional lighting design. The interior, however, was quite different, with a door at our right, a small parlor at the left, and the addition of a second, central bookcase with a framed engraving of Shakespeare on the mantle. For all her villainy, it was hard to be unaffected by her scream during the dinner scene: “Bedelia” on the piano in the backdrop of the beachhouse; and Arthur’s renditions of “Love’s Old Sweet Song” and “Waltz Me Around Again, Willie,” to the latter of which Sid and Lily danced after he had won her forgiveness for the umpteenth time; perfect posters and goggies, by Jane Greenwood; and a set brimming with wicker and gingham and chints that featured, through the tall windows at the rear, a gorgeous view of the harbor and far shore beyond the house-side porch. And the performers, when sober, moved with such ease around the central pedestal table with lace cloth and the other furniture that an aura of verisimilitude was quickly established and sustained throughout the evening. And the one exterior scene—a wharf surrounded by catkins and bathed by a hazy moon, with a rocking boat in front of the wharf—made effective use of David Sbarge’s “sound design” of lapping water and a clock bell in the distance.

The central table was used most tellingly to reveal the slow disintegration of the family unit. In the first scene, the four Tyrones sat around it in initial camaraderie, until the conversation led first to Edmund’s moving away, and then to Mary’s. By the family’s return from lunch, tensions had cancelled all such unity. As
they entered, the four spread about the room—Edmund at a desk to our left, Jamie at an upstage-center window, James at the downstage-right screen door, and Mary, alone, at the table. The family, except for moments of confession in the last act, was now irreversibly fragmented. Mr. Quintero knows all the Tyrones to their depths, and the blocking, throughout, revealed the tensions among them as effectively as their words did.

It may be that the rigors of repertory are too much for any actors, given the wrenching revelations of Long Day's Journey, which I saw on an evening after the senior Tyrones had spent more than four afternoon hours as the senior Millers. That may explain the low energy level of the parents. Ms. Dewhurst was stately in stance and voice as Mary. From her first entrance in earrings and a silver-gray gown, to her final return in a blue-yellow nightgown and trailing her wedding dress, she was consistently erect and regal. But there was little passion in her delivery. The first-scene discussion with Edmund was underplayed: her "I hate doctors" speech, which Katharine Hepburn shouted almost too loudly in the Lumet film, was so quiet here as to be virtually inaudible; and the final scene, except for her savage "No" when Edmund forces the truth on her that he has consumption, was too bland to be excused as the effect of morphine.

Mr. Robards was easily the best of the men in a performance far superior to his James in Brooklyn in the 1970s. He has mellowed into the part without losing any of the old-school mannerisms and broad gestures of the stoody star James Tyrone has become. His fourth-act confession was touching in its honesty, and his earlier after-lunch scene with his wife—hugging her as he says, "For the love of God, Mary"—was, in its earnest intensity, the most moving moment in the production. Campbell Scott had a rich, deep voice as Edmund but little more, even though he is Ms. Dewhurst's real-life son; and Jamey Sheridan exuded little of the spineless alcoholic in Jamie. He could trip, exhort and tongue-lash on cue, but he never succeeded in persuading one that he was anything but a talented if inexperienced actor.

All in all, the casting of the junior roles and the seeming exhaustion of one of the senior performers prevented Quintero's heart-felt interpretation of O'Neill's greatest tragedy to soar. It was a worthy centennial tribute to O'Neill, but one that needed more work before it could equal the triumphant rightness of Ah, Wilderness!

-- Frederick C. Wilkins

Mary Lechter (Muriel McComber) and Michael Wells (Richard Miller), in a production of Ah, Wilderness! directed by Robert Moss at The Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. The caption states that the two are "sampling the electric surge of young love," but William Rosendfeld, reviewing the March 16–April 17 production in the Washington Post, decried their "tedious adolescent flirting." The scene, Kevin Conway, the costumes by Ric Thomas Rice. Photo by Jillian Ainsworth.
Judith Weston reported on the Los Angeles Eugene O'Neill Theatre Festival. The productions undertaken during the year were, unfortunately, not financially successful, although generally acclaimed. The Festival has been invited to China and hopes to secure grants for the trip. They may perform *Hugle* back to back with a Chinese version, with the hope of bringing both back to this country.

Fred Wilkins will chair the Special Session on O'Neill at the 1988 MLA Convention in New Orleans. The title: "Eugene O'Neill at 100: Prospects and Respects." Papers should reflect general overviews of the life and canon. Submission of papers is welcomed from all and should be sent to Fred by mid-March 1988.

Joanne Bowling presented the proposed round-the-world tour for 1988, encompassing all four O'Neill celebrations in Belgium, Sweden, China, and Japan. Liberty Travel of New York (where she works under the name of Carroll Ward) has put together a complete package. Further information will be sent to all members of the Society early in 1988. The proposed all-inclusive price is currently $3795. The entire package need not be taken, but can be broken into individual portions as desired.

Mike Hinden informed the meeting of Fred Wilkins' desire to step down as editor of the *Newsletter* at the end of 1988 after 12 years at the job. The Board has reluctantly accepted his resignation, which is recognized as a crucial issue for the Society. Since it was felt by the Board that no single person would likely want to undertake editing the *Newsletter* as it now stands, the publication might be broken into two parts, including a more modest quarterly newsletter which would omit all scholarly articles, but would continue to convey all Society information, news on performances, etc., as at present, plus an annual journal to be refereed and of genuinely scholarly nature. Mike explained certain of the financial problems for such ventures, since the present Newsletter costs are not fully covered by subscription and dues payments, needing some underwriting by the host institution. The Board recommended exploring the two-publication possibility. Jackson Bryer has been informally approached as editor of the Annual and would be interested provided an editorial board is formed to help, but there still remains the question of financial support from the University of Virginia. Board members will be at the Strindberg/O'Neill Festival in Stockholm, with which our International Secretary for Europe, Tom Olson, is working. May 25-27. Liu Haiping, our International Secretary for the Orient, has organized a conference, "Eugene O'Neill - World Playwright," to be held in Nanjing, China, June 6-9. Several of us have been asked to participate. There will be a conference in Japan at Hosei University in Tokyo, June 11-12. Joanne Bowling, one of our members and a New York travel agent, has prepared a tour package which will be explained later in this meeting for those wishing to attend one or more of these events.

An outstanding program has been under way since October of 1987 and will extend into October 1988, titled "Collaborations Three," in which Connecticut College, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and Monte Cristo Cottage have combined their efforts in series of readings, productions, lectures, and symposia, including a planned puppet performance of The Emperor Jones by the Institution of Professional Puppetry Arts, an affiliate of the Theater Center.

Productions of O'Neill plays have appeared around the country. The Society has contacted over 200 academic and amateur producing companies, encouraging their participation in the centennial celebrations.

The Secretary has not received any requests for information quite as startling as that from the White House last year, but the Society does continue to receive inquiries from students, libraries, and sundry organizations about any "free" material we might have. Many inquiries seek general reference information from our non-existent library. All inquiries are, of course, answered, but the only thing we have, aside from informing them about the existence of the *Newsletter*, is our application blank, with its brief history and outline of the Society's aims and purposes.

Our results from general advertising continued to be disappointing during 1987, with virtually no response from costly inserts in pertinent publications. We have decided to abandon all such undertakings. We are growing by word of mouth and more people hear of us through the various directories of organizations in which we are included than through any expensive advertising.

Our members continue in their research and publication. One outstanding volume issued in 1987 was Nancy Roberts' book written with her father, *As Ever, Gene*, an edition of the letters of O'Neill to George Jean Nathan. Other important things are in the mail--more letters edited by Jackson Bryer and Travis Bogard. The instance--and they will be reported on subsequently in this meeting by those who are doing the work. Your Secretary is pleased to report that the Shoestring Press is interested in a centennial revision of his Bibliography, aimed for the post-centennial year in order to catch as much of the important new writing as possible after the fact.

The Society is in good financial shape and experiencing steady growth. It has been a rewarding year.

Respectfully submitted by Jordan Y. Miller, Secretary.
III. Financial Report, 1/1/87-12/31/87.

DEBIT

Publication - E. O'N. Newsletter $1,855.00
Filing Fee for Non-profit Corp. 10.00
Tao House dues disbursement 320.00
Tao House disbursement, lunches 250.00
Monte Cristo Cottage dues disbursement 40.00
Printing 262.21
Postage and Bulk Mailing Fee 227.01
Mailing list, Theatre Comm. Group 25.00
Secretarial help 47.50
Miscellaneous secretarial expenses ___ 50.00

$3,086.72

Balance Savings 12/31/87 5,700.41
Balance Checking 12/31/87 1,240.00
TOTAL DEBIT $10,027.13

CREDIT

Balance, Savings 1/1/87
Balance, Checking 1/1/87
Dues payments 1987
Dues payment toward 1988
Interest on savings 1987

$10,027.13

Respectfully submitted by Jordan Y. Miller, Acting Treasurer.

IV. Proposed Amendments to the By-Laws

Approved by the Membership at its Annual Meeting of December 29, 1987. Subject to final approval and incorporation into the by-laws at the Annual Meeting in New Orleans in 1988.

Section V.4: Terms of Office and Election of Officers

Present Reading

c) Other Officers shall serve a term of four (4) years with the possibility of re-election for one, but not more, consecutive term of office.

Change to Read

c) The Secretary and/or Treasurer shall serve terms of four years, with the possibility of re-election for an indefinite number of consecutive terms.

Section V.3: Remuneration of Officers

Present Reading

Officers shall receive no compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for reasonable personal expenditures incurred on behalf of the Society.

a) Expenditures that exceed $100 per annum must be approved by the Directors.

Change to Read

a) Officers shall receive no compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for reasonable personal expenditures not to exceed $100 per annum incurred on behalf of the Society.

b) Personal expenditures by officers that exceed $100 per annum must be approved by the Directors.

Section V.3: Remuneration of Officers and Expenditure of Society Funds

a) Officers shall receive no compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for reasonable personal expenditures not to exceed $100 per annum incurred on behalf of the Society.

b) Personal expenditures by officers that exceed $100 per annum must be approved by the Directors.

c) Expenditures that exceed $100 each, such as advertising, purchase of mailing lists, and other exceptional costs, must be approved by the Directors.

d) Routine expenditures for postage, office supplies, stationery, fees, secretarial help and the like shall be at the discretion of the Secretary and/or Treasurer.

Section V.4: Terms of Office and Election of Officers

Change present d) to e) and add the following:

d) International Secretaries, as appointed officers, shall serve indefinite terms at the discretion of the Directors.

V. Officers and Board of Directors

OFFICERS

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Boston, MA 02114

Vice-President (two-year term, 1988-1989)
Michael Manheim
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Strafford, VT 05072

Secretary-Treasurer (one-year interim 1988)
Jordan Y. Miller
Department of English
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

(This is the Society's official business and mailing address.)

International Secretaries (Europe and Orient)
Tom J. A. Olsson
Royal Dramatic Theatre
Stockholm, Sweden

Liu Haiping
Nanjing University
People's Republic of China

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Four-year term, 1986-1989
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Berkeley, CA 94708

Adèle R. Keller
Provincetown Playhouse
Provincetown, MA 02657

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University of South Dakota
Vermillion, SD 57069

Eugene K. Hanson
College of the Desert
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Michael Hinden (Chairman of Board)
Department of English
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706

Sally Thomas Pavetti
Monte Cristo Cottage
325 Pequot Avenue
New London, CT 06320

John Henry Raleigh
Department of English
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94728

Permanent Honorary Board Member
Virginia Floyd
2536 Longboat Drive
Naples, FL 33942

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THE YOUNG O'NEILL IN TV FILM. Public Television's "American Playhouse" series featured a one-hour drama about O'Neill's youth on April 6, 1988. Entitled "Journey Into Genius," it was written by Lanie Robertson and produced and directed by Calvin Skaggs. Framed by O'Neill's vigil at the deathbed of his actor-father in 1920, when the 32-year-old playwright had just won a Pulitzer Prize for Beyond the Horizon, the film recaps the key events in his life prior to his emergence as a Broadway dramatist. Eschewing the treatment common to such television fare, Skaggs and Robertson permit their characters periodically to address the audience directly, and add to the aura of verisimilitude by offering vintage-seeming black and white vignettes amid the handsome color of the whole. Matthew Modine was both likable and believable as O'Neill, though some critics, mistaking irony for earnestness, accused the character of smugness when, for instance, he says to the camera, "One must have chaos within oneself to give birth to a dancing star. -- Nietzsche." The only anachronism this viewer sensed in a film otherwise true to its period and characters was in the role of George Pierce Baker, whose "rapping" with his students smacked more of 1988 than of 1912. Otherwise, the film was a thorough success and merits more performances. No O'Neillian should miss it. --Ed.

O'NEILL AT ACA '88. Two papers on O'Neill were presented at separate "sea" sessions at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the American Culture Association in New Orleans on March 23. At a 9 a.m. session, Bert Bender, Professor of English at Arizona State University in Tempe, traced the connection "From Two Years Before the Mast to The Hairy Ape"; and at a 3:30 p.m. session, John Antush, English chair at Fordham University, spoke on "Eugene O'Neill's Anna Christie.

O'NEILL ON STAGE. A program entitled "Biographical Portrait of Eugene O'Neill by Himself and His Friends" was presented by the National Theater Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT, on April 14 and 15, 1988.

O'NEILL BRUNCH AT ATCA CONVENTION. The American Theater Critics Association, meeting last February for its annual mini-convention in New York City, dedicated its traditional Sunday brunch to Eugene O'Neill. Guest speakers were George C. White, President of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT; Margaret Luftus Kanald, author of The Eugene O'Neill Companion; and Lois Erickson McDonald, Assistant Curator of the Monte Cristo Cottage in New London. The lively discussion touched on productions, restorations of the O'Neill plays in New London and California, Caspar Neher sketches for O'Neill sets which are available only in Vienna, from a letter from O'Neill to Arthur Miller, and an envisioned sculpture exchange. The O'Neill Theater Center, which has commissioned a bronze sculpture of the young O'Neill that will be unveiled in the New London harbor on O'Neill's 100th birthday (Sunday, October 16, at 1:00 p.m.), hopes to exchange copies of the sculpture with Sweden and Russia for copies, respectively, of statues of Strindberg and Chekhov.

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O'NEILL AT ASTR '88. There will be a special centennial session on O'Neill at the 1988 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Theatre Research, to be held at the Columbus campus of Ohio State University on November 10-13.

O'NEILL SESSION AT MLA '88. Frederick C. Wilkins has announced the authors and titles of papers to be delivered at the O'Neill centennial session during the 1988 Modern Language Association Convention in New Orleans next December. The session, entitled "Eugene O'Neill at 100: Respect and Retrospects," will feature four presentations:

* "O'Neill's Shakespeare," by Normand Berlin, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst.
* "The Playwright as Lord of Touraine: O'Neill and French Civilization," by Marc Maufort, Univ. of Brussels.
* "O'Neill: A Tragedian for all Seasons," by Martha Bower, Univ. of New Hampshire; and

photo exhibit, "The Face of Genius: Images of Eugene O'Neill," on loan from the Museum of the City of New York, opening at the Lyman Allyn Museum of Connecticut College on October 2; and a gala centennial weekend culminating on Sunday, October 16, with the unveiling of a statue of the young O'Neill in New London harbor. For full details, write to the Monte Cristo Cottage, 325 Pequot Avenue, New London, CT 06320. Tel. (203) 443-0051. Collaborations III's activities have been made possible in part by grants from the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.
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* "The Right Kind of Pity: O'Neill's Gift to American Drama," by Michael Hinden, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.

If the MLA complies with the Eugene O'Neill Society's request, the session will be followed by a cash bar, permitting the celebrants to toast O'Neill and one another.

11. CALL FOR PAPERS. I. The Mid-Hudson MLA Conference, to be held at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY on 28-29 November 1988, will feature a session on Modern Drama directed by John V. Antush. Papers on any aspect of modern drama are welcomed by Professor Antush, English Department, Fordham University, Bronx, NY 10458. The deadline for finished papers and 100-word abstracts is 15 July.

12. CALL FOR PAPERS. II. Steven F. Bloom will direct the O'Neill session at the 1989 convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association in Wilmington, Delaware, next March. The session title is "Heirs Apparent and Inapparent: O'Neill's Influence and Legacy," and Professor Bloom welcomes proposals and papers on O'Neill's influence on the work of other dramatists. Send papers or detailed abstracts to him at the English Department, Emmanuel College, 400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115. The deadline for submissions is 15 September.

13. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.


Anna Christie. Horse Cave Theatre, Horse Cave, KY. In repertory, July 15 - August 28, 1988. For specific dates write to Box 215, Horse Cave, KY 42749-0215. Tel. (502) 788-1200.


Before Breakfast and Hugie. South Street Theater, 424 West 42nd Street, New York City, opened May 17, 1988. [Length of run uncertain. For information, call (212) 279-4200.]


Desire Under the Elms (Lubov yod Vissani), dir. Mark Lamos. Pushkin Theatre, Moscow, Spring 1988. (See news note in this issue.)


In the Zone and Ile. Leamy Hall Auditorium, Mohegan Community College, New London, CT, February 25-27, 1988. (Performed by cadets of the U.S.Coast Guard Academy.)


Marco Williams. American Conservatory Theatre, 450 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, opening in October. Tel. (415) 673-6440.


Mourning Becomes Electra. College Theater, City College of San Francisco. 50 Phelan Ave., San Francisco, CA, 94112, September 16 - November 6, 1988. Call for specific information. The three parts will be performed separately on different evenings, and will run in repertory with Aeschylus' Oresteia, the latter performed by the Julian Theatre. Tel. (415) 239-3100/3122.


14. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS.


O'Neill, Michael C. "Confession as Artifice in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill." Renaissance, 39:3 (Spring 1987), 430-441. (A revision of a paper presented at the 1986 conference on O'Neill's "later years" at Suffolk University in Boston.)

Quintero, José. "Carlotta and the Master." New York Times Magazine (May 1, 1988), pp. 56-67. A chronicle of his relationship with O'Neill's widow by O'Neill's finest director, who is himself a master at evocative and moving narration. Carlotta on the years after 1953: "we thrived on the treacherous giddiness of the high wire, and it is very difficult to adjust to the unwonted loneliness of the ground" (p. 64). Quintero's assessment of Carlotta: "she had loved O'Neill more deeply than anyone else, and ... she had paid dearly for that love" (p. 65).


15. JOURNAL OFFERS O'NEILL ISSUE FOR CENTENNIAL. The Recorder, the official publication of the American Irish Historical Society, will devote one of its 1988 issues to O'Neill. Information on how to obtain a copy when it is published in November, write to Professor Lowell Swortzell, 733 Shinkin Hall, New York University, NY 10003.

16. BOOK IN THE WORKS. Thomas D. Pawley of Lincoln University, President of the National Conference on Afro-American Theatre, is currently at work on a book to be titled "The Black World of Eugene O'Neill."

17. DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON O'NEILL (as listed in Dissertation Abstracts International, 8/86-3/87):


18. INDIAN DISSERTATION INCLUDES O'NEILL. Jancy George earned a doctorate from Calicut University in Kerala, India, last year, with a dissertation, directed by Prof. R. Viswanathan, on "Memory as Theme and Technique in Modern American Drama." The Emperor Jones was prominent in the study, which examined the adjustments in Aristotelian theory necessary for "drama of the mind."
PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

THOMAS P. ADLER is Professor of Dramatic Literature and Film and Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Purdue University. His Mirror on the Stage: The Pulitzer Plays as an Approach to American Drama was published in 1987 by the Purdue University Press.

LINDA BEN-ZVI, Professor of English at Colorado State University, has published a book on Samuel Beckett and is completing a biography of playwright Susan Glaspell.

TRAVIS BOGARD, Emeritus Professor of Dramatic Art at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill (rev. ed., 1988) and editor of the imminent Library of America volumes of O'Neill’s plays and (with Jackson R. Bryer) of the selected letters of O'Neill, promised for late summer by Yale University Press.

MICHAEL HINDEN is Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society. He has published numerous articles on O'Neill and classical and modern drama, and is currently at work on a book-length critical study of Long Day’s Journey Into Night.

PHILIP C. KOLIN, Professor of English at the University of Southern Mississippi and co-editor of Studies in American Drama, 1945-Present, has written or edited twelve books, the most recent being Conversations with Edward Albee (UP Mississippi) and American Playwrights Since 1945: A Guide to Scholarship, Criticism and Performance (forthcoming from Greenwood Press).

MARC MAUFORT, of the University of Brussels, has spoken and written frequently about O'Neill, especially about his affinities with Herman Melville. He was the director of the international conference on “Eugene O’Neill and the Emergence of American Drama” in Han-sur-Lesse, Belgium, in May 1988.

LAURIN R. PORTER, Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas at Arlington, spent the past year in London, where she feasted on the theatrical riches of the West End and completed a book-length manuscript entitled “Possessors Dispossessed: The Late Plays of Eugene O'Neill.”

SUSAN TUCK, co-editor with Horst Frenz of Eugene O’Neill’s Critics: Voices from Abroad (Southern Illinois UP, 1984), has made extensive study of the connections between the dramas of Eugene O'Neill and the fiction of William Faulkner.

PAUL D. VOELKER, Professor of English and Drama at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland, and President of the American Drama Society, has published essays on O’Neill in Studies in Bibliography, American Literature and the Eugene O'Neill Newsletter.

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. His centennial tribute to O'Neill will appear in the July-August 1988 issue of Americana Magazine.

GARY JAY WILLIAMS is Associate Professor of Drama at the Catholic University of America. His extensive research on O’Neill’s early years was utilized by Margaret Loftus Ronald, for whose Eugene O’Neill Companion he wrote the articles on the Provincetown Players and the Experimental Theatre, Inc.