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### The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter vol. 12, nos. 2, 1988

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# The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

SUMMER-FALL 1988

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O'Neill sketching near his New London home c. 1895. The photo, provided by Monte Cristo Cottage, served as model for the 1 1/2-lifefize bronze sculpture by Norman Legassie, commissioned by the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, that will be unveiled at New London harbor at 1 p.m. on centennial Sunday, October 16.

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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

I hardly have space, in an issue as packed as this, to get in my traditional introductory greeting, partly because the list of contents is so long that I must relinquish a portion of this page to its continuation, which I offer forthwith.

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Twelve books and seven productions: that must be a Newsletter record--indicative, of course, of the renewed interest in the playwright generated by the arrival of his centennial.

What's particularly interesting is that, of the seven productions, only one took place in the United States. Add the sad, early closing of the centennial double-bill on Broadway, and a question inevitably arises: is Eugene O'Neill more revered and respected in England, Czechoslovakia, France and Sweden (and in China, Belgium, Japan and Germany as well, as later reports and news items may suggest) than he is in his homeland? Why do American audiences stay away from productions of plays that theatregoers flock to in other lands? Granted, Broadway prices are astronomically high; it may have been unwise to open the shows just before summer, even under the rubric of the International Festival of the Arts; and the combining of two plays in one run at the same theatre may have dizzied showgoers unfamiliar with the repertory system. Still, if Robards, Dewhurst, Quintero and Brown can't bring 'em in, who can?! Let us hope that the many centennial productions soon to appear regionally will be more fortunate, and that they will spark a revival of interest in O'Neill's plays where their greatness is most apparent--on the stage.

The publishing scene in America is more hope-inspiring. The publication on October 16 of the complete plays (by the Library of America) and of the selected letters (by Yale University Press) are milestones in the history of O'Neill studies. Never before have we had such clear pictures of the man himself, and of his works in toto; and the results should be galvanizing well beyond the blowing out of the last candle on the last 100th birthday cake.

It is an honor to print the second of three sets of papers from the 1984 and 1986 Boston conferences--the Newsletter's own contribution to the festivities; and, thanks to some tireless notetakers, to bring you detailed reports of the summer conferences in Belgium, Sweden and China. I can attest to the exhilarating effects of the first two; and veterans of the scholarly and theatrical events in Nanjing and Shanghai report that they comprised a once-in-a-lifetime experience that they will never forget. O'Neill may be "dead on Broadway," as I'm told Variety opined after the recent fate of Long Day's Journey and Ah, Wilderness! But he sure is alive elsewhere! I prefer to believe that the Variety obit is "greatly exaggerated," and that there's still a place even in the crassest of "show-shops" for serious American drama, of which Eugene O'Neill was the greatest creator yet. Perhaps what we must do is challenge and overthrow the standard, false picture of him and his works as unrelievedly dour and gloomy. It's interesting that the jacket of O'Neill's selected letters features a photograph of the playwright smiling. It may be forced, or arch, but it's a smile. If we can just get O'Neill back on major American stages, and keep him there, we can all smile with him! --FCW

## IN SEARCH OF O'NEILL

I can hardly believe that it's been more than three decades since the day that an enterprising publisher asked Brooks Atkinson to write a life of Eugene O'Neill, and that Brooks decided--considering the monumental job of original research he knew it would entail--that he didn't have the energy. He suggested the project to my husband and me, and--with what I now look back on as the height of youthful temerity--we agreed.

It's difficult to remember now how little was then known about O'Neill's family and the tribulations of his youth; and yet, today, scholars all over the world are intimately acquainted with the minutiae of O'Neill's life. And since you are all O'Neill scholars and presumably have read every word written by and about him, I feel that the only thing I can tell you that you don't already know is a little bit about what it was like, back in the olden days of the 50's, trying to find and milk primary source material before it vanished forever.

When my husband and I began our research, we were constantly racing to discover and interview people who had known O'Neill's family, and who were--even as we tracked them down--suffering from incapacitating strokes, or terminal alcoholism, or incipient senility--men and women in their 80's, sometimes in their 90's, who were literally at death's door.

We did not believe, with T.S. Eliot, that "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." Not that we doubted for a moment the "perfection" of O'Neill's art. But we were certain, as soon as we read Long Day's Journey Into Night in 1956--and from the little we did know about his life--that O'Neill, the artist, was also, intrinsically, O'Neill, the man who had suffered; that the two could not be separated; and that O'Neill's life held the clues to his art. And we determined to track down as much detail as we could about his relations with his family, going back to his early childhood and beyond--to the forces that had shaped his parents.

In 1962, just as our biography was being published, this country was beginning to feel the tremors of a youth-rebellion that became an upheaval during the next two decades. And the details of O'Neill's youth--lived a half-century earlier--held a particular significance for our time. As Brooks Atkinson wrote in his introduction to our biography, "If the term 'beatnik' had existed in [O'Neill's] youth, he would have been recognized as a perfect example of the rootless, rebellious, dissipated, egotistical, self-pitying renegade." It was only, Brooks added, "his passion for writing [that] saved him, by imposing on him a certain discipline. He chose between dereliction and writing."

Of course, we all now know that most of O'Neill's plays--not just Long Day's Journey Into Night--were haunted by the ghosts of his father, mother, and brother, as well as his youthful self. But even Long Day's Journey, when it was first published, was recognized by only a handful of sophisticated theatre critics (such as Atkinson) and a few of O'Neill's closest friends and surviving relatives, as being autobiographical. And even they did not know to what degree it was based on the facts of his life.

The play was never intended by O'Neill to be taken as literal autobiography. It appeared to strip away all the most deeply buried O'Neill family secrets--revealing O'Neill's father as a pathological miser; his mother as a hopeless morphine addict; and his brother as an embittered, worthless drunk. But Long Day's Journey was a theatre work, and like all great works of art, it was a distortion of reality that illuminated and heightened the "real." O'Neill was under no obligation to help his future biographers decipher his life. In fact, he did his best to foil any future biographer by trying to insure that the play would not be published until 25 years after his death. That would have been 1978. I've tried to imagine what the O'Neill legend would be like if that wish had been acceded to. Dozens of people we interviewed would, of course, have been long dead, and much that was possible still to trace in the 1950's would have been totally

obscured by the 1970's.

To my husband and me, Long Day's Journey became the Rosetta Stone of the O'Neill saga. It offered the clues to O'Neill's formative years, to the influences that shaped his creativity, to the sources for his early plays and to his development into the theatre giant that he ultimately became. It was vital to keep reminding ourselves, though, that the play could not be taken as literal autobiography; to remember that O'Neill, the artist, had every right to distort, suppress or exaggerate his material in any way his creative vision led him. He was making theatre, and his only commitment was to his artist's self. This could be frustrating to someone researching the facts of his life. Once accepted, though, it became an exciting challenge to try to separate the play's myth from the author's real life, and then to trace how the facts of his life--or, rather, his perception of those facts--were transmuted by him, consciously or unconsciously, into art.

To shed light, for instance, on the difficult and lonely childhood O'Neill ascribed to his alter ego, Edmund Tyrone, in Long Day's Journey, we set out to find, among others, a man we knew to have been a friend of O'Neill's during his earliest school days. We had found letters from O'Neill to this man--Joseph McCarthy--in one of several O'Neill collections that existed in the 1950's. It seemed clear, from the letters, that O'Neill and McCarthy had been intimate friends at the Catholic boarding school to which O'Neill's parents sent him at the age of seven. In one letter to McCarthy from O'Neill in 1930 (a year before he completed Mourning Becomes Electra) O'Neill had written, "Do you ever think of Sister M \_\_\_\_\_ who used to knuckle us on the bean?" Well, because we had realized by the time we came across that letter how vital a role O'Neill's early Catholic indoctrination played in his later creativity, we were very eager to find this Joseph McCarthy.

The letter had been sent to McCarthy at a New Jersey address, and we began our search there. It took days of hunting through old telephone books, visiting neighborhoods where he'd lived, until finally we found a former landlady who thought he had fallen ill and gone into a veteran's hospital--"somewhere in New York State," as she recalled. We then began writing and telephoning to all the veterans' hospitals in New York and finally were able to trace him to a hospital in the remote town of Bath, in the northwestern part of the state. Fortunately, my husband had trained as a police reporter at the New York Times, and understood that sort of research technique--which, incidentally, was often what was required, when traditional methods of scholarly inquiry proved inadequate--although, of course, we did plenty of scholarly research too. The work we were doing in those early days of the investigation into O'Neill's life was, after all, the raw research. The realization of how much of that sort of tedious legwork would be required was precisely why Brooks Atkinson had passed the job on to us.

When I called the veteran's hospital in Bath I was told that McCarthy had recently had a stroke and could not speak. I asked if he could use his hand to write, and was told he could. So I went to Bath and spent several days visiting the hospital and--with the cooperation of the hospital authorities--interviewing him. It took hours of questioning to get him to reconstruct his memories of O'Neill as a schoolboy, and what he told me ultimately filled only two pages of our 964-page biography. But the sense he conveyed of O'Neill as a young child was something only a contemporary could have provided.

And I always felt it had been well worth while to sit and ask questions and wait while McCarthy painfully scrawled out the answers on scraps of paper. He had been fond of O'Neill and was truly anxious to tell me what he remembered, such as the fact that "Gene," as McCarthy called him, "had an aura of sophistication," even at the age of eight; that he read books well beyond his years, such as the novels of Anatole France; and that, at the age of nine, he could comment, "Religion is so cold." It was astonishing how vivid the impression was that O'Neill left on McCarthy; how haunted, more than 60 years later, McCarthy still was by the ghost of that young boy.

Another man whom we unearthed, also confined to a hospital--in this case closer to home, in New York City--was James Joseph Martin. "Slim," as he was called, knew a side of O'Neill that no one else did: the ex-sailor. Slim, too, had been a sailor--as well as a construction worker and a member of the militant I.W.W. We found out about him through a woman who'd had a peripheral connection with the Provincetown Players in their pre-World War I days. Slim had a philosophical and poetic bent, and was drawn to the Players, for whom he did occasional odd jobs of building. He developed an admiration for O'Neill as a fellow-Irishman.

Slim Martin had tuberculosis, which was thought to be arrested; and he was an alcoholic, and had for some time been locked into the hospital's psychiatric ward. He had been long estranged from the daughter who was his only living relative. I persuaded Slim's social service case worker to let me visit him in the locked psychiatric ward. He seemed to me to be perfectly tame, now that he was sober, and delighted to have someone take an interest in him, especially someone who admired his old pal, Gene O'Neill. Slim was happy to strike a bargain. If I could get him transferred to a medical ward and make them give back his confiscated eye glasses, he'd spend his days writing out his recollections of his old pal. It was fairly easy to do what he asked. The social worker was only too happy to have someone share the burden of Slim's mental well being, and I promised to visit regularly, which I did, over many months, until he finally became too ill to receive visitors.

Slim went on at length, and fascinatingly, about everything from his and O'Neill's separate experiences at sea, to their shared philosophy of the downtrodden and the repressed, and their drunken arguments in the Greenwich Village bars they both loved to frequent. I have to confess that occasionally, when he would hint to me that he might be about to run out of steam, I would sneak a pint of whiskey in to Slim. It didn't seem to harm him, and it usually got him going again. The material he furnished ended up filling dozens of pages of our biography.

Like Joseph McCarthy, Slim was indelibly marked by O'Neill. He provided a most moving and poetic tribute--in its way as impressive as the admiration of O'Neill's peers, such as Sean O'Casey. Slim said that, for O'Neill, "the downtrodden, especially if they were courageous, were heroes and friends. And when O'Neill had success and adulation he would leave a group of befurred and jewelled and top-hatted socialites and those he dubbed 'the sons of Mary' to walk over and say hello and chat with one of those he called 'the sons of Martha.' And you could be in shirt sleeves with the soil of labor black in the sweat of your face. He was truly a man and a friend."

All three of O'Neill's wives--all of them in their late 60's--were very much alive and in rude health when we began our research. The difficulty in their case was a disinclination to talk to a biographer, without all sorts of concessions and reassurances--and in one instance, blank refusal. As it turned out, Carlotta Monterey, the most difficult and temperamental of the three, became a marvelous source over the six years that we interviewed her.

Carlotta respected Brooks Atkinson greatly, because O'Neill had admired Brooks and occasionally confided in him, and Brooks asked her to see us, so she did. We had our ups and downs with her, and we always maintained the fiction that we were merely chatting with her about O'Neill and her life with him. A biography in progress was never mentioned. Sometimes she was willing to see us both together, sometimes she insisted on seeing my husband alone, and occasionally she asked to see me alone. We never took notes in her presence, because that made her nervous and self-conscious. What we would do was race away from the interview to a typewriter, and put down everything we had talked about. And at a later interview we would subtly check up on anything we thought needed confirmation or clarification.

It wasn't until the end of our research that my husband, at our attorney's suggestion, asked Carlotta if he might tape-record a session with her. To his great surprise, she



said yes, and he taped an interview with her that went on for hours and has become one of our most treasured possessions. In that interview they went over much of the vital material Carlotta had already given us, including a vivid account of O'Neill's birth, as he had recounted it to her. And she added new information about O'Neill's final years, notably about their fights and separations and her confinement to a psychiatric facility near Boston, as well as their last days together in Boston. And she described the scene at his deathbed--which she said she had never told anyone about before.

Carlotta was a staggering figure in her own right, the only other person involved with O'Neill's life--except for John Reed and Louise Bryant--who I felt should herself be the subject of a work of some sort. She was so marvelously volatile and inconsistent and melodramatic, and for a very long time she seemed absolutely indestructible--even O'Neill couldn't do her in. She was amazing.

O'Neill's second wife, Agnes--the mother of Shane and Oona--would not see us because she was writing her own book about her marriage to O'Neill. But there were numerous friends and acquaintances of hers who were willing to talk to us about her life with O'Neill. And we managed to get a look at her memoirs in manuscript, shortly before our biography went to press, but we never did meet her face to face.

It was O'Neill's first wife, Kathleen Jenkins, who described to us one of the most poignant episodes of O'Neill's youth. By the time we saw her, we had already pieced together some of the story of her hasty marriage to O'Neill when they were both 20. She was, of course, already pregnant. And we also knew some of the background about her son, Eugene O'Neill, Jr.'s suicide at the age of 40 (only a couple of years before O'Neill's own death). We did not know, though, the extent of the tragedy that Kathleen's life had become, or how haunted and--evidently--guilty O'Neill felt about his love affair with her. And we became aware of how, for the rest of his life, O'Neill kept slipping bits of that relationship into his plays.

Kathleen was widowed and had also lost a younger son--from her second marriage--before Eugene, Jr., killed himself. She lived very quietly in a small town on Long Island, and seemed to be almost pathologically concerned about her reputation. She hedged about the date of her marriage to O'Neill, fearing, even though she was then close to 70, that she would be thought of as not quite respectable by her neighbors if the true story were told. This sensitivity became understandable when we realized that she had never gotten over the humiliation of those newspaper stories trumpeting the scandal of Eugene, Jr.'s birth and her desertion by Eugene's father. O'Neill, of course, had been bullied by his father, James, into abandoning Kathleen. And soon after, O'Neill allowed Kathleen to divorce him.

The pain of that episode never really left Kathleen, and though she forgave O'Neill, she could barely bring herself to talk about their aborted romance, even though nearly 50 years had passed by the time we went to see her. What became even clearer, though, was that O'Neill never got over it either. The episode with Kathleen--his dilemma and his guilt--lingered with O'Neill to the end of his writing days. It explained his interest in the subjects of abortion and forced marriage in some of his earlier works; and even more importantly, it illuminates the relationship between the young lovers, Sara Melody and Simon Harford, in A Touch of the Poet, one of his last--and finest--plays.

And perhaps most interesting of all, we were able to find evidence of O'Neill's unconscious obsession with the Kathleen episode even in the family saga of Long Day's Journey Into Night. Knowing about Kathleen Jenkins solved the puzzle of why, in Long Day's Journey, with all of the 24-year-old Edmund Tyrone's talk about his recent, turbulent and adventurous past, there is no mention of a marriage or the birth of a son. As we ultimately discovered, it was during the summer of 1912, which is when Long Day's Journey is set, that Kathleen was in court divorcing O'Neill. And, indeed, O'Neill does seem to have had that on his mind while writing the play, since--into a cast of characters made up of family members--he chose to introduce only one outsider, a servant

girl named Cathleen, a symbol for the unacknowledged wife, not to mention the mother of his rejected son.

In order to thoroughly absorb O'Neill's family background, to try to understand the pull of what was his only settled home--and the place, or course, that became the scene of possibly his finest play--my husband and I rented a house in New London during the spring and summer of 1958. There were numerous family members and old family friends to interview in the area, and also all the local landmarks to which references are made in Long Day's Journey, Ah, Wilderness!, A Moon for the Misbegotten and other plays: the hotel where James and his sons drank, the river where O'Neill rowed his boat and swam, the lighthouse in the Sound and, of course, Monte Cristo Cottage itself.

We had two young sons and decided to combine their summer vacation with our O'Neill research. Our boys had grown used to living with O'Neill by this time. They regarded him as a member of the family, referred to him cozily as "Gene," and weren't at all surprised to be spending their vacation in his home town. They had, in fact, picked up our devotion to O'Neill, as children will, and made it their own. I'll never forget the day, a few months before we all embarked for New London, when my husband took our boys for a walk through the Shakespeare Garden in Central Park. They studied the bust of Shakespeare that decorates the garden and my husband overheard Michael, who was then seven, tell Peter, who was not quite five, that "Mommy says Shakespeare is the world's greatest playwright." Peter indignantly retorted, "Oh yeah? What about Gene O'Neill?"

The people of New London in 1958 did not, we quickly discovered, share the Gelb family's admiration for Gene O'Neill. One of O'Neill's relatives, who had been sent a gift copy of Long Day's Journey, had thrown it into the fire without reading it. Her anger was shared by other relatives of James and Ella O'Neill, who felt--as O'Neill had feared they would--that he had betrayed his family. But it wasn't only family who found O'Neill a distasteful subject.

The New London elite had always taken a snobbish attitude toward all the O'Neills, whom they regarded as shanty Irish, as drunken ruffraff. Some of the town's elderly residents refused to talk to us. New London in the '50's seemed oblivious to Eugene O'Neill's stature and, indeed, took positive pleasure in its hostility to him. O'Neill had had an adolescent fantasy that we learned about from one of his local friends the summer we spent in New London. In this fantasy, O'Neill would make a lot of money, hire a horse-drawn carriage and then, as he put it, "fill it full of painted whores, load each whore with a bushel of dimes, and let them throw the money to the hoi polloi on a Saturday afternoon."

In a way this childish fantasy of vindication and revenge has been fulfilled. Today, of course, the Monte Cristo Cottage has become a museum that New Londoners are proud of; there is a Eugene O'Neill Avenue in town, and the O'Neill Theater Center flourishes in the neighboring town of Waterford.

One of the most startling discoveries we made during our New London summer concerned another strange omission in Long Day's Journey. In the play, as we all know, Edmund Tyrone becomes almost inarticulate with rage at the thought that his wealthy father is going to allow him to be a charity patient at a state farm for tuberculars. James is then shamed, in the play, into sending his son, instead, to a heavily-endowed, semi-private sanitarium.

Everyone we interviewed in New London took it for granted that this was what had actually happened, because they all knew that O'Neill had, in fact, recovered his health at the Gaylord Farm Sanitarium, a heavily-endowed, semi-private institution in Wallingford, Connecticut. O'Neill set his early play, The Straw, in Gaylord Farm and subsequently gave numerous interviews about the place--whereas he never mentioned the state farm referred to in Long Day's Journey Into Night until he wrote the play.

But we discovered a discrepancy, through other research, between O'Neill's date of departure from New London, and his arrival at Gaylord Farm--a difference of two weeks--and we wondered if, indeed, his father had sent him first to a state farm, as James Tyrone threatens to send Edmund in Long Day's Journey.

We pointed out this discrepancy to people like O'Neill's New London girl friend and the nurse who had cared for him when he developed pleurisy and then T.B.--both women in whom he had confided. And neither of them thought it possible that James O'Neill had actually sent his son to a poor farm. They--and all the other friends and relatives we talked to--had always believed O'Neill went straight to Gaylord, and no one could account for the gap of two weeks between the day he left New London and the day he arrived at Gaylord.

And so, on a hunch, I began a search in the area for sanatoria that had existed in 1912, and found the Fairfield County State Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Shelton. And then I tracked down and interviewed the doctor who had received O'Neill there and who quickly suggested he leave and apply instead to Gaylord. And we concluded--and wrote--that apparently O'Neill's first destination had been "an ugly secret between father and son."

It wasn't until later that we came across a brief item in the local newspaper dating back to 1912 saying that O'Neill was going for a rest cure to Shelton, a few miles southeast of Wallingford. That discovery could have saved us some trouble and time, but it had little bearing on the issue. We referred to the news item in our biography, adding that no one among the dozens of New Londoners we interviewed recalled having noticed it at the time. Here was one more crucial example of the way in which O'Neill played with the facts of his life, distorting them to heighten the tragedy of Long Day's Journey.

And tragedy was what O'Neill insisted upon. Brooks Atkinson once commented to us that he believed O'Neill's life had not been any more tragic, intrinsically, than many other lives. But where others had managed to shake free of childhood despair, to laugh in its face, O'Neill chose to be its prisoner. He was haunted and hounded by the tragedy of his birth, of having been unwanted, of having (so he believed) driven his mother to drugs, of being preordained for disaster. He spent his life in the obsessive telling and retelling of this saga of doom.

O'Neill used the despair of his childhood and youth as a rationale for rebellion. He used it to seek--by unconventional means--for a truth beyond the accepted conventions. And he succeeded--as one or two such rebels do in every generation--in molding the tragedy of his youth into art. His inner vision never wavered. Even on his deathbed O'Neill insisted on the fateful pattern set for him at birth. I'll never forget Carlotta re-enacting for us, in tears, the scene at O'Neill's deathbed, and his dying words: "Born in a hotel room, and Goddammit died in a hotel room!" No dramatist ever wrote himself a better exit line.

-- Barbara Gelb

#### FROM NOBODY TO THE NOBEL: TWO DECADES OF FIRST NIGHT O'NEILL CRITICISM

The reactions of the first night New York critics to the plays of Eugene O'Neill between 1915 and 1936 were anything but uniform except in their one consistency: variation from ecstatic praise to utter condemnation, irrespective of the play under consideration. And, as O'Neill continued to confound his audiences with a bewildering pattern of experimentation, there was expressed a fairly uniform underlying hope that the playwright would someday get his act together and stop distressing his public with wild gyrations between exciting, innovative theatrical adventures on the one hand, and inept, embarrassing blather on the other. This consistent inconsistency in both O'Neill's work

and the critical reaction to it is what makes a study of O'Neill criticism so fascinating. From the time he emerged from literal nothingness to the time he was awarded the Nobel Prize, O'Neill was hailed as the genius who was pulling the American drama kicking and screaming into the modern world; or denounced as a blundering, though admittedly very large, figure who didn't really know what the hell he was doing.

The first critical evaluation of O'Neill appeared in Clayton Hamilton's brief comment in The Bookman of April 1915, upon the publication of Thirst. With echoes of things to come, Hamilton found O'Neill's favorite mood to be horror, dealing with grim and ghastly situations. "He shows a keen sense of the reactions of character under stress of violent emotions; and his dialogue is almost brutal in its power."

Uptown critics paid little professional attention to early productions of the Provincetown Players, but Stephen Rathbun of the Sun did take note and, on November 13, 1916, published the earliest review of an O'Neill play to appear in a New York paper. He found Bound East for Cardiff real, subtly tense, and avoiding pitfalls that would have made it, as he says, "the regular thing." Heywood Broun in the Tribune of January 30, 1917, wrote that "here is a play which owes more to the creation of mood and atmosphere than to any fundamentally interesting idea or sudden twist of plot." Then, with the production by the Washington Square Players of In the Zone on October 13, 1917, a dozen papers printed reviews, many of them, even at this early date, citing one of O'Neill's recurring problems: too much talk. Burns Mantle, obviously unaware of what had been going on, called it "[t]his boy's first play" (the "boy" was 29 years old), but he liked it. Others approved of the tenseness, thrills, realism, and ingenious dramatic effects.

With the Greenwich Village Players' staging of Ile on April 18, 1918, the varied opinions began to mount. Broun in the Tribune disapproved of the lack of inventiveness in having the wife go mad, and the Post found it too obvious a shocker. Favorable comments noted that "this son of James O'Neill" did arouse interest with his gifts of realism and characterization. Said Louis Sherwin of the Globe: "I wonder what this promising young O'Neill can do with a three-act."

That discovery was not long in coming. Beyond the Horizon opened for its trial matinee performances on February 2, 1920, and with its Pulitzer Prize and subsequent total run of 111 performances, O'Neill became an established Broadway playwright. Critical reaction was fairly uniformly positive, greeting it as a masterpiece, a tragedy of great power and so on. Heywood Broun was attracted by the play, but his praise was tempered:

Eugene O'Neill's "Beyond the Horizon" ... is a significant and interesting play by a young author who does not as yet know all the tricks. Fortunately, he therefore avoids many of the conventional shoddy stratagems, but at the same time there is an occasional clumsiness which mars his fine intent and achievement. Nevertheless, the play deserves a place among the noteworthy achievements of native authors. It is frankly and uncompromisingly a tragedy.

Of course, the fundamental tragedy of the play lies in the fate of the incompetent dreamer forced to battle with the land for a living against every inclination and ability. His disease and death are entirely fortuitous and indeed they lessen the poignancy of his fate.... The hero is much too deliberate in dying.

Alexander Woollcott in the Times, while hedging slightly, was more positive, calling the play

an absorbing, significant, and memorable tragedy, so full of meat that it makes most of the remaining [New York theatrical] fare seem like the merest meringue.... Certainly, despite a certain clumsiness and

confusion involved in its too luxurious multiplicity of scenes, the play has greatness in it and marks O'Neill as one of our foremost playwrights....

November 1, 1920, marked the sledge-hammer entry of O'Neill as sensational experimenter with The Emperor Jones. It was literally the talk of the town and ran for 204 performances, but the critics weren't all that sure about it; the arguments continued to mount. Burns Mantle: "A weird tragedy," cheerless, lacking the promising distinction of O'Neill's earlier plays. The Brooklyn Eagle: "Admirable piece of dramatic craftsmanship." Stephen Rathbun: One of the noteworthy events of the season, both in depth and power. Woolcott: O'Neill is "as yet unbridled." J. Ranken Towse: he took the chance of being "a trifle ridiculous" in this one. Maida Castellun in the Call, November 10, 1920, saw it this way:

The Provincetown Players have done it again.... They are giving hundreds the most thrilling evening of their theatrical lives ... while the tragedy of fear of a Negro porter and ex-convict, turned primitive man again, unfolds itself before the fascinated imagination.... By his vivid imagination and relentless power the author casts his spell over the most pedestrian listener. Jones' hallucinations and reversions to the primitive savage are depicted with the simplicity and directness of a master.

The split opinions were clear-cut with Diff'rent (Dec. 27, 1920), varying from "front rank O'Neill" and "gripping tragedy," to Variety's curt dismissal of the play as one that "should never have been written; until O'Neill gets restraint he should not be permitted to write again."

Regardless of what one had thought of O'Neill previously, with the November 3, 1921, opening of Anna Christie it was clear that his power was significant and his talents had to be seriously considered. But the split continued. The Journal of Commerce: Falls short of a great play; dialogue far out of proportion to the action. The Herald: Not worthy of O'Neill's ability; J. Ranken Towse in the Post and Maida Castellun in the Call found the "happy" ending "disastrous" and a crime. Alan Dale in the American was plain enough: nothing comes through the oleaginous, permeating fog, and there's nothing worth coming through anyway. Better to have presented the fog without either O'Neill or Anna Christie.

Then why the Pulitzer Prize, O'Neill's second? Who liked it? The Telegram did, finding it a hit which promised to repeat former O'Neill successes. So did Louis Defoe of the World, who found keen imagination and ability in this as yet immature artist. Burns Mantle in the Mail regarded it as the finest yet of O'Neill's works; and Leo Marsh, in the Telegraph, concluded that O'Neill's fame could rest on this alone. Kelley Allen, Women's Wear Daily, ranked it with the best of several seasons; and the Drama Calendar saw it as a fine play, as fine as the American theatre had yet produced.

But the next sensation, which the outraged defenders of public morality in the New York DA's office so desperately tried to close, once more threw the critics into disarray. The Hairy Ape of March 9, 1922, followed the usual pattern: tremendous new drama form; O'Neill's most powerful thing yet; a juvenile appeal to ignorance and passion; ominous foreboding of O'Neill's future; a worthless play. The extreme variance of opinions between thoughtful professional reviewing and irresponsible nonsense is well demonstrated by the following.

Alexander Woolcott in the Times, March 10, 1922:

"The Hairy Ape" is a bitter, brutal, wildly fantastic play of nightmare hue and nightmare distortion. It is a monstrously uneven piece, now flamingly eloquent, now choked and thwarted and inarticulate. Like most of [O'Neill's] writing for the theatre, it is the worse here and there

for the lack of a fierce unintimidated blue pencil. But it has a little greatness in it, and it seems rather absurd to fret overmuch about the undisciplined imagination of a young playwright towering so conspicuously above the milling, mumbling crowd of playwrights who have no imagination at all.

Walter Prichard Eaton, The Freeman, April 26, 1922:

Mr. O'Neill's language smites as swiftly as the red glare from the boiler-doors. Yet it is somehow tonic in its stark sincerity, and though it may quite truly play no small part in the startling quality of the play, the quality which brings you up in your seat like a slap in the face, it also is curiously devoid of mean suggestion, rousing, instead, a profound pity in all spectators who have imagination enough to grasp the significance of the drama.... In Eugene O'Neill the new art of the theatre in America has found the new playwright at last.

Patterson James, Billboard, April 15, 1922:

The stark "realism" of "The Hairy Ape" justifies the elevation of Eugene O'Neill to the official position of Archpriest of the Unwashed Drama and pet divinity of its Unsoaped Patrons.... The Provincetown Playhouse idea of naturalism in the drama is to make all the characters criminals or mental defectives, the scenes of the play the interior of a loaded garbage scow, and the language that of a waterfront bawdy house.... "The Hairy Ape" smells like the monkey house in the Zoo, where the last act takes place and where the play should have been produced.... A play by Mr. O'Neill with the mise-en-scène in the entrails cleaning department of a stockyard slaughter house would not surprise me in the least.

If space permitted, we would consider All God's Chillun Got Wings, Desire Under the Elms, and The Great God Brown--none of which brought the critics any closer together. For some of the best examples of the continuing critical dichotomy, however, we must turn to the two "big ones," Strange Interlude and Mourning Becomes Electra, and the award of the Nobel Prize.

The 426 performances of the nine-act marathon of Strange Interlude brought O'Neill his greatest lifetime success and, with the published version a best-seller, made him permanently well off. Opening on January 30, 1928, the play provided material for flat-out critical condemnation and near-hysterical praise. Robert Coleman, in the Mirror, saw it as a great day for faddists: "A long-winded bark at the moon in nine fat acts; tiresome, jerky, heavy-footed." Alan Dale, American: "A sordid mess, ... pecksniffian outbursts, ... hysterical analysis of a psychopathic woman, ... a six-hour bore." Burns Mantle, News: Frankly biological, slow-paced, repetitious, forbidding.

And on the other hand: Brooks Atkinson, Times: "The very stuff of drama." Gilbert Gabriel, Sun: A magnificent venture; "cleaves the skyline of tomorrow," a hewer of ways. Leonard Hall, Telegram: "One of the most astonishing adventures a stage ever held" by an "authentic genius." Robert Littell, Post: The greatest contribution to our stage, beside which all future plays in conventional style will seem flat and two dimensional. Dudley Nichols, World: Perhaps the "most important event in the present era of the American theatre." Thomas Van Dyke, Telegraph: The most significant play O'Neill has written, the finest play yet by an American, perhaps the most remarkable play of our generation, a monument in the history of American dramaturgy.

We all know that no permanent skylines were cleaved and that drama in "conventional" style survived. While this giant of a play may now seem so elephantine and crudely overblown, it did inspire some serious comment.

John Anderson, Evening Journal, January 31, 1928:

Admit that it is an ordeal by watered dialogue; admit that its sprawling



size does, at times, convict O'Neill of reckless waste and artistic laziness--call it even vain of its own huge bulk, and yet, ... it does manage to be profoundly engrossing.... Here is, truly, a play of heft and thought enough to set aside the usual boundaries of the stage.... [I]n spite of its serious defects, remains the most provocative and interesting event of the season, and probably the most significant contribution to the American drama.

Joseph Wood Krutch, Herald-Tribune, March 11, 1928:

"Strange Interlude" is great chiefly because of the passion with which it is recounted and the largeness which its personages are made to assume; because its characters, though drawn from modern life and treated in a rigorously critical fashion, attain, nevertheless, to heroic proportions ... and because, in a word, O'Neill has the power, common in many ages but extremely rare in this, of making human emotions seem cosmically important.... Yet the importance of the play considered as an isolated work does, nevertheless, consist essentially in the fact that it approaches, as perhaps no other modern play approaches, true tragedy without imitating Greek or Elizabethan forms and without adopting any archaic point of view ... in short, it treats modern life in a fashion convincingly heroic.

In contrast, Mourning Becomes Electra, which opened on October 26, 1931, received almost uniformly high praise. There were isolated detractors, but in the main the comments ran from "magnificent tragedy of classic proportions" to "enduring greatness, superb strength and cause of great rejoining" and "a grand stupendous thriller." The differences did remain, however, as the following two excerpts reveal.

Eugene Burr, Billboard, November 7, 1931:

O'Neill, digging and searching thru the muck and scum of the human soul, emerges with his muddy monstrosities, proudly exhibiting them to a breathless world as something real and fundamentally profound. They are actually none of those things.... They utterly fail to plumb the depths of emotion and experience; they are merely very special cases of abnormal psychology placed upon a stage and given pretentious platitudes to mouth, platitudes that reach profundity in the popular mind merely because they have been written by O'Neill.

John Mason Brown, Post, October 27, 1931:

...exciting proof that the theatre is still very much alive, that it still has grandeur and ecstasy to offer its patrons.... It is a play which towers above the scrubby output of our present-day theatre as the Empire State Building soars above the skyline of Manhattan. Most of its fourteen acts, and particularly its earlier and middle sections, are possessed of a strength and majesty which are equal to its scale. It boasts, too, the kind of radiant austerity which was part of the glory that was Greece.

With the failure of Days Without End in 1934, O'Neill's "early years" came to an end. Within two years he received the Nobel Prize for literature, and it might be assumed that past sins could reasonably be forgiven and that this kind of international recognition would be widely welcomed. The welcome was, indeed, widespread, but it did not silence all detractors. The split was as wide as ever.

Bernard De Voto in The Saturday Review of November 21, 1936, under the title "Minority Report," expressed his outrage in a long and detailed attack:

the Nobel Prize ... is supposed to recognize only the highest distinction in literature, and Mr. O'Neill falls short of that. He falls short of it

both absolutely and relatively. Whatever his international importance, he can hardly be called an artist of the first rank; he is hardly even one of the first-rate figures of his own generation in America.

A great dramatist, I take it, is one who has somehow managed to transcend the limitations of the theater and ... to add ... some profundity of human experience, human understanding, or human enlightenment that brings the art of the theater into the same area as the highest art of fiction or poetry. Those who have transcended them have done so by reason of great intelligence, great imagination, and great understanding. The whole truth about Mr. O'Neill is that his gigantic effort to transcend them has been of an altogether different kind. He is a fine playwright who is not sufficiently endowed with those qualities to be a great dramatist but who has tried to substitute for them a set of merely mechanical devices.... [H]e has never yet given us an experience of finality, of genius working on the material proper to genius, of something profound and moving said about life. Just why, then, the Nobel Prize?

Lionel Trilling, writing in The New Republic on September 23, 1926, while not referring directly to the Nobel Prize, approached O'Neill's position in sharp contrast to De Voto's questioning conclusion. His is an appropriate note on which to conclude:

Whatever is unclear about Eugene O'Neill, one thing is certainly clear--his genius... When we stress the actionable conclusions of an artist's work, we are too likely to forget the power of genius itself, quite apart from its conclusions.... We do not read Sophocles or Aeschylus for the right answer; we read them for the force with which they represent life and attack its moral complexity. In O'Neill, despite the many failures of his art and thought, this force is inescapable.

Not only has O'Neill tried to encompass more of life than most American writers of his time, but almost alone among them, he has persistently tried to solve it. When we understand this we understand that his stage devices are no fortuitous technique; his masks and abstractions, his double personalities, his drum beats and engine rhythms are the integral and necessary expression of his temper of mind and the task it set itself.... He is always moving toward the finality which philosophy sometimes, and religion always, promises. Life and death, good and evil, spirit and flesh, male and female, the all and the one, St. Anthony and Dionysus--O'Neill's is a world of these antithetical absolutes such as religion rather than philosophy conceives, a world of pluses and minuses; and his literary effort is an algebraic attempt to solve the equations.

-- Jordan Y. Miller

#### O'NEILL'S METADRAMA

O'Neill was a realist in the sense that he reported life as he saw it, but he always saw life theatricalized. If I were to relate his plays to European "isms," it would be to the theatricalism of Meyerhold and Vakhtangov, in which, as Oscar Brockett puts it, the means of the theatre are "used self-consciously and to their fullest capabilities" (333). The theatricalist constantly reminded the audience that they were watching not life but theatre. O'Neill knew of the Russians' work, and may have been influenced by it, but O'Neill's theatricalism was more complex and ambivalent than theirs. For him, life was theatre, which enabled him to be both theatricalist and realist. For this reason, instead of speaking of O'Neill's theatricalism, I am using the term metadrama:



the subject of this drama is always, in some way, drama itself.

Metadrama, in broad definition, is drama about drama, drama that itself depicts some form of performance. The most obvious kind is the play within the play, so popular with Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Subtler forms include ceremony or ritual within the play, and role playing within the role, when the playwright depicts characters who are themselves in some way performing.

O'Neill never once used the play within the play as such, the most overt form of metadrama. This absence is itself highly significant, however, especially in the context of his other metadramatic devices. The closest he came to using the play within the play is when his characters recite passages from plays, or, more often, from lyric poetry; even Long Day's Journey, a play about O'Neill's theatrical family, gives us no more than this.

Indeed, despite O'Neill's having grown up in the theatre, actors themselves are conspicuous by their absence from most of his plays, even where we might expect to find them. The Lumpenproletariat in Harry Hope's saloon include no professional actors, though they do include a circus performer. Two of O'Neill's plays, Before Breakfast and Hughie, are directly influenced by Strindberg's The Stronger, which has two actresses for its characters; O'Neill changes them into a writer and his wife in the former instance, and a gambler and a night clerk in the latter, despite the fact that Hughie is set in a hotel in New York's theatrical district. (The theatre itself is never mentioned.)

Furthermore, in the few plays where actors do appear as characters, their profession is depicted negatively or, at best, ambivalently. In Welded, the wife's career as an actress interferes with her husband's nobler calling as a writer. In A Moon for the Misbegotten, there is only one direct reference to Jim Tyrone's having been an actor (306), when Josie's brother remarks scornfully that Jim has never done any real work; at another point, Jim accuses himself of having behaved like a ham at his mother's funeral (391). In Long Day's Journey, Tyrone seems to love and respect his profession, but the rest of the family do not; besides, the theatre ultimately seduced and destroyed him with the lure of easy money for repeating a simplistic role in a trashy play. Even theatrical references are rare in O'Neill's plays; An O'Neill Concordance lists only 12 references to the theatre (3:1636), and only 32 to actors--20 of which are negative (1:16).

But if O'Neill was wary of the theatre and actors per se in his plays, he put associated elements there in abundance. In the early play, there are numerous ceremonies and interludes that are not full-fledged plays within the plays, but which are still heightened performances set apart from the surrounding action. At the climax of Where the Cross Is Made, for example, there is an inset dumb show in which ghosts of three sailors glide in bearing a treasure chest; the lighting turns green and their bodies sway rhythmically as if pulled by underwater currents (159-60). In The Emperor Jones, Jones's visions are highly theatrical insets within what had begun as a more or less realistic play. In Lazarus Laughed, there are the choral passages; in The Hairy Ape, the stylized crowd passes from the church like "a procession of gaudy marionettes" (207). All God's Chillun starts as a stridently realistic play about race relations, but its final act shifts in style to a highly theatricalized expressionism. Even in the plays that remain realistic throughout, there are often inset performances, like the dance in Desire Under the Elms, or quasi-rituals, like the swearing on the cross at the end of Anna Christie. Indeed, it would be difficult to find any O'Neill play into which the theatre does not find its way, in some displaced form.

Similarly, although professional actors are extremely rare as characters in O'Neill's drama, role playing is ubiquitous. Rereading The Emperor Jones, I was struck by how prescient O'Neill was, in creating a figure who has since been replicated in any number of third world dictators like Papa Doc Duvalier or Idi Amin. The notable difference about Brutus Jones, however, is that unlike Duvalier or Amin (or Henri Christophe or Haiti's President Sam, who apparently served as models for O'Neill's character), Jones is

not a native, but a thoroughly American black from Chicago. Why did O'Neill make this change? Clearly, to enhance the role-playing aspects of the character. In making Jones originally someone as different as possible from what he was to become, O'Neill was expressing a deep set belief in the multiplicity of human nature; for him, as for Shakespeare's Jacques, all men and women are merely players.

Critics have written extensively about questions of identity in O'Neill's drama. This is particularly true with regard to the mask plays, but is not limited to them; Egil Törnqvist, for example, points out that "figuratively speaking, nearly all O'Neill's protagonists wear a mask" (118). These figurative masks may be freely chosen, as with Brutus Jones, or they may be forced upon the characters by circumstance. In Beyond the Horizon, each brother comes to wear the "mask"--that is, take on the role--of the other, which is the very source of the tragedy. Anna Christie has had the role of prostitute forced upon her as a result of her bitter poverty and neglect. Even lesser characters are often described in dualistic, role-playing terms; thus, O'Neill's stage directions tell us of Johnny-the-Priest, owner of the saloon in Anna Christie, that "beneath all his mildness one senses the man behind the mask--cynical, callous, hard as nails" (60).

Törnqvist also notes, however, that there is more to O'Neill's masks, both literal and figurative, than just the traditional notion of hiding one's true self from the world. In many plays, the division is not just psychological but ideological. In The Great God Brown, the masks are exaggerations of the characters' true selves, standing ultimately for differing aspects of the human soul, in particular for Dionysian and Apollonian principles that Nietzsche maintained underlie our lives.

It is interesting to compare O'Neill's use of masks with that of other times and cultures. O'Neill had studied about masks not only in the ancient Greek and Roman theatre, but also in Japanese, Chinese, and African theatre as well (Chothia 35). Yet there is a striking difference in the way he used masks from the way all those other theatres did. In the other cases the masks implied no duality to the human personality; the mask was, simply, the character. As Peter Arnott points out in a perceptive essay, in both the Japanese and the ancient Greek theatres, "the external manifestations are the character and the actor is merely the temporary means that gives these manifestations speech and movement" (5); thus, different actors might even play the same character in the same play. In a passage that many critics have cited, O'Neill once wrote, "What, at bottom, is the new psychological insight into human cause and effect but a study in masks, an exercise in unmasking?" (Chothia 35). But in Greek tragedy there was never any unmasking; it would literally have been unthinkable. Similarly, in the Japanese theatre, it was assumed that the spirit of the mask possessed the actor wearing it; thus, while the actor wore it, the mask did not hide his real self, nor present an aspect or exaggeration of his real self. It was his real self!

O'Neill, then, was fascinated with masks, and with acting and theatre generally, because for him, unlike the Greeks and orientals, they carried strong implications about human identity, not just in the simple sense of hiding one's true identity behind a literal or figurative mask, but in the broader sense of expressing the complexity of human personality, with its multiple facets and wide potential. No doubt his interest was rooted in his problems with his own identity; certainly the first thirty years of his life were one long identity crisis. This would account for the strong love/hate he felt toward the theatre, rarely incorporating it directly into his plays, yet almost always putting it there in disguised form. The theatre is a place where identities are fluid, and would have thus appeared to him both as a threat and as a possible fulfillment. O'Neill repeatedly made derogatory remarks about the theatre, and fled from it more than once, yet always came back to it. Direct references to theatre in his plays, as with Shakespeare, are almost always disparaging. Perhaps the early, "lost" play, The Movie Man, expressed his ambivalent feelings most strongly; in it, two movie makers go to Mexico and bribe a general to stage real battles for their cameras. Here, as usual, the theatre is displaced, in this case to the movies, which are shown as powerfully seductive, yet a vulgar sham--and destructive of lives.

O'Neill would certainly have received this ambivalent attitude toward theatre from his family, where it was rampant. As Jonas Barish has shown in his admirable book, however, the "anti-theatrical prejudice" is widespread in our culture, and in other cultures as well. There are strong psychological reasons for this, which Barish does not explore, but which are illuminating in the case of O'Neill. Psychoanalytic identity theory derives from Freud's 1930 essay, Civilization and Its Discontents, in which he maintained that the infant originally has no sense of identity, no separation of self from other. Identity is something we learn, and it is an inherently painful process. Freud wrote that "the tendency arises to dissociate from the ego everything which can give rise to pain, to cast it out and create a pure pleasure-ego, in contrast to a threatening 'outside,' not self" (5). The mechanism is thus very much the same as that of sexual repression generally, as we learn to limit our desires through contact with what Freud called the reality principle, the harsh fact that reality is a source of pain as well as pleasure, and that pleasure itself must be severely limited in contrast to our drives, which are originally limitless. In developing an identity, we are similarly forced by reality to limit our sense of self, which was also originally without limit: "Originally the ego includes everything, later it detaches itself from the external world. The ego-feeling we are aware of now is thus only a shrunken vestige of a far more extensive feeling--a feeling which embraced the universe" (6).

Thus, human identity has a clear psychosexual component. The ambivalence we feel about identity is the same as that which we feel about sexual matters generally. The "anti-theatrical prejudice" is an expression of this ambivalence. This is the reason that moral philosophers have always been made uneasy by theatre, and also the reason that actors, in addition to being castigated for playing with their identities, are popularly characterized as being libidinous. We unconsciously fear that letting down the boundaries of identity will lead to letting down all constraints for our animal impulses.

O'Neill's strong ambivalence toward theatre, then, was the result of more than just the attitudes in his family toward it. Such conscious attitudes would in fact have merely reinforced unconscious psychosexual feelings about identity generally. O'Neill's haphazard, ineptly handled early upbringing would have left him with a weak sense of self, a narcissistic disorder in which one's identity feels forever precarious. A father is the most important role model for a developing male infant, just as a mother is for a female. In O'Neill's case, his mother's openly hostile feelings toward her husband would have weakened him in Eugene's eyes in any event; but the fact that O'Neill, Sr., was an actor, playing heroic roles in contrast to his mundane, parsimonious everyday self, would have damaged even further young Eugene's attempts to model himself on a solid authority figure. Finally, as Louis Sheaffer has written, "It was a bewildering world the child was born into, one forever changing, dissolving, melting into something else--hotel, railroad station, train, hotel, railroad station, train, backstage of theatre, hotel, railroad station, train, Syracuse and Louisville, Cincinnati and Boston, hotel, railroad station, train, Portland, Pittsburgh and Rochester, Seattle, Atlanta and San Francisco, hotel, backstage, train, hotel, railroad station, train" (24). O'Neill's resultant feelings about the precariousness of his own and others' identities are the driving force behind his playwriting, and are the ultimate subject matter of his plays.

If we see O'Neill's plays as not just employing theatre as a medium, but as being about theatre, an exploration of its meaning and significance to the individual, then a number of things become clear. Many elements that critics have attacked as weaknesses are instead essential aspects. Thus, the melodramatic plot devices are not a lapse from realism; they are instead an exploration of a certain type of theatricality, like his incessant exploration of differing theatrical styles. Similarly, his use of stagy dialects is an examination of role, rather than an inept reporting of how people in real life actually talk. These devices are not simply dramatic, but are metadramatic; like Shakespeare's plays within the plays, they occur within a frame. They are not just presented, but are estranged.

Finally, I would suggest that theatre provides the underlying meaning for O'Neill's favorite dramatic metaphor, the sea; that ultimately "dat ole davil sea" of Chris Christopherson and "that God-damned play" of James Tyrone are one and the same. If that seems far fetched, consider this: Both the theatre and the sea are places that one ran away to, to change one's identity. (Other youths could resolve their identity crises by running away to join the theatre, an option that was closed to O'Neill!) Both were considered low, disreputable employments, yet could be the source of great wealth for a few. Both had the quality of being simultaneously seductive and destructive; we are told this repeatedly about the sea in Anna Christie and elsewhere, and implicitly about the theatre in Long Day's Journey. Both are places in which identities are variable; just as one can be a different person in every play, one can take on a new identity with every voyage. The sea (and water generally) is an archetype in all cultures for death and rebirth, the shedding of an old identity for a new one, as in the baptismal ceremony. Thus, both theatre and the sea are metaphorically places for dissolving one's identity, for returning to that infantile feeling of oneness with the universe that Freud, interestingly enough, called "the oceanic feeling" (2).

O'Neill not only wrote about the sea; he had been to sea as a sailor, and throughout his life he was a compulsive swimmer. In his autobiographical play, Long Day's Journey, he has Edmund say, "It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish" (153). Consciously as well as unconsciously, then, the sea was associated in O'Neill's mind with changing identities. The closest O'Neill ever came to becoming a professional actor was when, on a bet, he memorized the entire role of Macbeth for his father. O'Neill, Sr., told him he had a good memory, but warned him never to go on the stage (Sheaffer 96). Eugene had no intention of doing so; instead, he ran away to sea, and spent the rest of his life fascinated by it. He never acted again, but instead wrote autobiographical plays in which he cast himself in the principal roles. Acting itself was too threatening for him, too direct a return to the fluid ego state of his chaotic infancy. The sea, however, was an acceptable substitute, just as the theatre itself would become psychologically acceptable, as long as he was a playwright rather than an actor, shaping and controlling the oceanic tides of the theatre rather than being swallowed by them.

-- Richard Hornby

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#### O'NEILL'S FUNNY VALENTINE

When the Circle in the Square Theatre in New York produced Ah, Wilderness! one February, its advertising called the play "O'Neill's valentine to America," thereby wedding a positive image to a seasonal come-on. We don't as a rule associate O'Neill's theatre with tributes to this country, much less to the imminence of spring, and though I hate to come down--slightly--on the side of darkness and bleakness, what we end up with in this comedy is a bouquet of roses that sports at least as many thorns as blossoms. Or, to liquefy the trope, a toxic nectar.

To start with, the name of the play: O'Neill adapted it from Fitzgerald's famous stanza,

A Book of Verses, underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread--and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness--  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

in which all the nouns, as in German, lead off with capitals. There is not much difference between Oh, Wilderness! and Ah, Wilderness! other than the one vowel and a pursed versus an elongated mouth, except that the Oh could connote passion, the Ah a mood of reminiscence that might be cheerful or might not. A wilderness doesn't strike us as an upbeat topic for a play. We could assume the word carries irony, but irony usually goes the other way: an upbeat word implies or includes something else, as in Beckett's title Happy Days.

The play, set in New London, Connecticut, opens on the holiday of holidays, July 4th, in the year 1906. Despite the screens, hot-weather flies buzz into the house the second anyone opens a door. Outside, eleven-year-old Tommy keeps setting off firecrackers that make everybody inside jump. Apart from these trivial irritants, the atmosphere in the home of the Miller family breathes serenity, time out from work, but not altogether from domestic routine. In the supposedly traditional spirit of Independence Day, the dramatic temperature will remain mostly low, from the first scene on.

O'Neill puts climaxes into the first three acts and the first two scenes of Act Four, such as a squabble between Nat Miller, the good-natured editor and paterfamilias, and a neighbor, Dave McComber, who sells "dry goods" and whose daughter Muriel has received

wildly affectionate billets doux from Nat's 16-year-old son Richard; or we have Uncle Sid's drunken and funny outburst about lobsters, love, and liquor; or Muriel's threat, uttered on the beach, to walk out on Richard. These and other moments of conflict or excitement are soft-pedaled for the most part. So is the last scene of the play, which turns into an anti-climax: Richard and his father launch a man-to-man talk of the kind that is almost unimaginable today; but Nat grows suddenly abashed and the scene subsides into a reconciliation as Richard kisses his dad good-night. Then he steps outside, meditating and looking, according to his father, "like a statue of Love's Young Dream." His parents kiss and move out of the moonlight "into the darkness of the front parlor."

A tranquil ending. Or is it? The critical consensus tells us that we caught O'Neill here in a mellow, nostalgic mood that enabled him to compose a comedy, for a change, about a typical New England family of yore. The tone evoked in this 1932 work resembles that of Wilder's Our Town, produced three years later, although I would submit that in that play too we are being exposed not to the idyll of small-town America but to its constrictions.

Perhaps we should look back and see what has happened to the characters in the course of the action. The final embrace of Nat and his wife Essie may bring them together, but they were never far apart. Nat, whom another character calls "a good scout," has in his personality a touch of the poet that responds to his son's adolescent, poetasting fervor. More enlightened than the average father of the time (insofar as we know anything about that fictitious entity), he appears eager to please--that is, not displease--his wife, although he sometimes fails. He used to swim well; now he has become "rusty." If we regard swimming as what it was for the playwright, an act of liberation, we might say that he now stays within conventional limits. His daughter Mildred does more or less the same: she remarks that she likes the water "wonderful and warm" when she goes in and that she doesn't swim "so awful far."

Mother Essie, who has raised or is still raising six offspring, plays Nat as the heavy--"Wait till your father comes home"--but she ascribes the children's misdoings, as she sees them, to his influence. A woman held down by domestic chores and cares, she has to give vent to her anxieties by nagging everybody else in the family. One of her favorite adjectives is "nice." Nice has negative meanings, such as not causing discomfort or worry. She lives conscientiously up to the decreed standard of a wife and mother: fussy domestication. If she feels any larger discontents, she wouldn't think of expressing them; to do that wouldn't be "nice." And so we can't accept the clinch between her and Nat in Act Four as signifying much more than resignation to more years of the same.

But what about the play's durably on-and-off love affair, which does go astray--that between Lily and Sid? And what about the junior romance between Richard and Muriel?

Lily and Sid are already in-laws, the younger siblings respectively of Nat and Essie, and already fond of each other when the play starts. They are possibly drawn together by socially received opinions of the time to the effect that an unmarried man of 45 must be a drifter while an unmarried woman of 42 must be, well, unmarriageable. Nat and Essie call Sid "a card" and "a case" and "a caution." Sid makes people laugh to ward off their contempt or ridicule, but his formidable sense of humor needs alcoholic lubrication before it gets into gear. Describing how lobsters make love, or saying he invented them, or marching around the living room to his own rendition of "In the Sweet By and By," he breaks everyone up. When he recovers from a drinking jag, though, he turns remorseful and reverts to the naughty boy who "was always getting punished--and see what a lot of good it did me!" Sid, a free spirit when under the influence, has no place in that society except as a drunken buffoon and a warning, a role he feels ashamed of when sober. He can't hold down jobs, has no prospects. He and Lily may perhaps "meet on that beautiful shore" or "in the sky by and by," but not in this particular lifetime.

Lily looks at first glance like a prototype of the prim schoolmarm who advises her



niece against indulging in excessive loops and flourishes in her handwriting and advises her brother and sister-in-law against encouraging Sid's clownishness; but she proves herself to be, in her own way, a nonconformist. She will not marry for the sake of becoming a married woman in order to acquire that much respectability and escape from people's pity for an old maid. Richard thinks she has driven his uncle to drink, but he misunderstands her. Lily is a proud woman; she will wed only a man she can idealize. Sid has let her down too many times. As some consolation she may act as substitute mother to her students and to her nephews and niece; but she feels more like the Millers' boarder than a family insider. She and Sid will not make a match, but they may well strike us as being partners in unfulfillment, if not undeserved sterility.

In the teenaged pair, Muriel and Richard, we find a marriage ordained by local assumptions. An assured income and an assured level in the social hierarchy--these represent the summit of his parents' ambitions for a young fellow in 1906, as they do for most middle-class parents eighty years later.

Muriel's mother, Alice, doesn't appear in the play. Still, we are told she was a good-looking girl, like Essie. And like Essie again, she hunts through her child's underwear to unearth paper she considers forbidden--in the case of Essie, Richard's books; in the case of Alice, the lush love letters Richard has written Muriel. Essie, in other words, stands in for both mothers. And it happens that Muriel resembles Essie in being short, plumpish, attractive, and a scold. For Dick, being with his sweetheart is much like being with his mother. She's similarly shockable; she doesn't like even mild oaths or smoking or people who drink or get out of control. Her first lines when she sneaks out of doors to see him on the beach consist of reproaches ("I'll bet you'd forgotten I was even coming ... You might think of me for a change"), and more reproaches punctuate her dialogue through the scene. She doesn't want to sit in the boat or gaze at the new moon ("That's not much to look at") or stay long, for fear of being punished. When she hears about Richard's encounter with Belle, a good-time girl in a local tavern, she wishes him dead. When he remonstrates with her she bites his hand and tries to run away. Actually Muriel doesn't come across as quite the sourpuss I've made her seem by selective quotation. Rather, she is young woman any man could have married in 1906. She acquiesces without question in other people's plans for her and Richard. She doesn't want to muddy any waters. She's suppressed and oppressed and repressed. Richard himself observes that she is "afraid of life."

He isn't. Yet. Richard has just about reached the age of--significant word--independence. As he tries with youthful enthusiasm and courage and a certain panache to break out of the mold that destiny has in store for him, he sloshes around in the era's new literature of "pure" feeling and "sheer" intellectualism as ungovernably as his uncle Sid does in liquor. They form a notable contrast, these two. If Sid reformed, he'd very likely turn into another desperately repentant proselytizer like Hickey in The Iceman Cometh; as it is, he will probably decline slowly into a Jamie Tyrone. If Richard were never to reform according to the lights of his family and community, he'd turn into the Con Melody of A Touch of the Poet, a fulltime poseur; as it is, he will probably wind up as a Billy Brown, the commercially successful hero of The Great God Brown, but a Billy Brown who manages at an early age to repulse a soul-invasion by the aesthetic and ascetic Dion Anthony.

Richard has two chances to assert his independence and model himself on Hedda Gabler's admirer, Ellert Løborg. First, he might make a night of it with Belle in or near the tavern, a young woman who will accept even under-age "johns," but he can't bring himself to do so; the inhibitions imposed by his upbringing win out. Later, on the beach, before Muriel's arrival for a tryst, he stares at the moon, communes with nature, and feels half in love with easeful death; but instead of rowing away in the boat and the moonlight to the great elsewhere, he and Muriel sit in the shadows and settle his future. Vine leaves in his unruly hair? Not a hope. She'll buy him expensive pomade to tame it, flatten fur into glossy leather. She'd like him to follow his father and three older brothers through Yale. In after years, if he doesn't watch out, instead of taking over his

father's newspaper he may slide, under Muriel's pressure, into running his grumpy father-in-law's business. Dry goods indeed! He's already come by some of them in the form of Muriel. The married couple will purchase a house and cram it with kids and furniture, as his parents have done. We learn from the first stage direction that the "fairly large" sitting-room in which much of the action takes place has two book cases in it, two double doorways, a screen door, a sofa, a writing desk and its chair, four more chairs, a big, round table, three rockers and three armchairs. With that many obstacles, even a room say 700 square feet in area (20' by 35') would cause acute traffic holdups, maybe an occasional gridlock. It's no wonder Nora the maid has trouble serving dinner.

And now, with your permission, it's time for a station break while we introduce the play's one Norwegian and two Irish godfathers, none other than Henrik Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw. Various other literary names crop up in the text, from Kipling and Swinburne to Carlyle and, of course, the Fitzgeralded Omar Khayyam; but Ibsen, Wilde, and Shaw seem to recur pointedly. Richard calls The Ballad of Reading Gaol "one of the greatest poems ever written." Richard is not given to understatement and dotes on the word "greatest," but he uses it accurately. For him Ibsen is "the greatest playwright since Shakespeare," a judgment any critics who know the drama since Shakespeare would have to concur in today, although today's critics would cravenly and mechanically hedge their bets and say "perhaps the greatest." Richard finds Shaw "the greatest living playwright," which in 1906 he unquestionably was. Richard owns two books by--as Essie has it--"that awful Oscar Wilde they put in jail for heaven knows what wickedness." Arthur, the brother still at Yale, explains, "He committed bigamy," at which, Sid "smothers a burst of ribald laughter."

Arthur would be too young to recall Wilde's trial and death; but the memory would still be fresh in the family of the recent New York productions of Ghosts and Mrs. Warren's Profession. Ghosts had a reception slightly less frozen than the one it had met with in London. (William Winter, a leading critic here, described it as "a gem of decadence," but Richard owns a copy of Shaw's Quintessence of Ibsenism, which cites the London reviews in some detail. As a devout reader he must know that Winter's coldness didn't measure up to theirs, which went right off the temperature charts and plunged into indecency.) However, the American reviewers made up for their timidity when they greeted Mrs. Warren's Profession. That play, says Essie, the amateur critic, was a piece of theatre "so vile they wouldn't even let it play in New York." She is thinking back to the previous October when the single performance of Mrs. Warren by Arnold Daly's company, preceded by a single performance nearer home, in New Haven, which has slipped Essie's mind, had both been shut down by the police.

As a nineteenth-century homosexual and a seditious author, Wilde had personified a challenge to the type of family life conducted by the Millers and their neighbors. In Ghosts and several plays that followed it, Ibsen had written of the frustrations, even neuroses, the scandal mongering and petty enmities, and the subjugation of the women in similar, if smaller, communities in Norway. As for Shaw, he permeates this play, not only in that Richard views himself as a Eugene Marchbanks ("Out, then, into the night with me," he yells as he "stalks out, slamming the door behind him," after a tiff with his mother), but also because, whether by chance or design, he and his mother have the same names as two of the characters in The Devil's Disciple. This last play, Shaw's only one set in new England, takes place during--and deals with--the War of Independence. Its eponymous hero, Richard Dudgeon, provokes the people of Websterville, New Hampshire, into resisting the English as he contends with his puritanical mother and other relatives. An orphan girl named Essie, continually irked during the action by being asked whether she is "a good girl," represents the youthful impetus of the revolution, American's young independence. Treated as something of a colonial possession by the Dudgeon family, Essie finally becomes recognized as a person in her own right and is given the last spoken line of the play.

End of the break. Back to the text, if we ever left it. Is Richard Miller really the young man Eugene O'Neill once said he wished he'd been (a remark cited in practically



every published commentary on the play)--O'Neill, who spent his active career striving to retain his spiritual and social independence? If we reconsider Richard's progression through the four acts, we see that his aspirations are quashed, but in the most gentle, disarming fashion. He didn't want to go to Yale, but thanks to his father's affable insistence, he will. He didn't want to toe the line or have to hide his books. He couldn't make up his mind about Muriel, unless she behaved like an acolyte, a willing receptacle for his impassioned messages. O'Neill could never have dwindled into the accommodating Richard whom his mother, in one of her echoes of Shaw, calls "a good boy." But in the Richard of Act One, even with his extravagant manners, we may well glimpse the young O'Neill, in the Richard who explains, "I don't believe in all this silly celebrating the Fourth of July--all this lying talk about liberty when there is no liberty! The Fourth of July is a stupid farce!" From that point on Ah, Wilderness!, instead of being a frolicsome exception to the O'Neill canon, belongs to it securely, harmonizing with the tones and themes found in The Hairy Ape, The Great God Brown, Strange Interlude, and Mourning Becomes Electra through to his adumbrations for the unfinished play cycle "A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed."

If Richard is decorously stifled, what happens to the other characters, especially the women? At the beginning of the holiday Essie and Lily have no fixed plans. They are at the disposal of the men. Nat and Sid go off to a picnic booze-up, Nat as a small release from his working routine, Sid to drown his woes at being unemployed. The women sit home and wait--and wait--and fret about the children and do the usual housework and cooking. When Sid returns he will fall asleep and forget his promise to take Lily to see the fireworks display. The teenaged girls will slip into the same pattern of frustration as their female elders. Mildred must cut out the flourishes and loops that adorn her handwriting. Muriel must be protected from literature, ideas, and intimations of sex. In the tavern scene the scornful treatment of Belle by a bartender and a salesman echoes this attitude toward women as lesser beings. The fortunately married ones like Essie are worker bees whom the men mollify by letting them assume the airs of queens.

Thus, if Ah, Wilderness! is any sort of a valentine, it pays its love and respects to the playwrights O'Neill wanted to feel worthy to follow--in particular, Bernard Shaw--not to small-town America. In New England, he tells us, prudery and coyness have overtaken the yearnings for independence. Puritanism has returned in a cushioned, twentieth-century form. But O'Neill keeps his moralizing at such a soft pitch that it is hardly detectable. He does so partly by mocking Richard's overblown theatricality as he voices his early sentiments of rebellion, partly by suggesting a genuine underlying warmth in the Millers' feelings toward one another, and partly by dispelling the generation gap in the closing scene between Richard and his father. All the same, for those who stay in that enclave of genteel smothering, the wilderness is going to have to remain paradise enough.

-- Albert Bermel

#### O'NEILL'S TRANSCENDENCE OF MELODRAMA IN THE LATE PLAYS

Everyone agrees by this time that O'Neill's last plays represent a marked change from his earlier plays, both in their art and in philosophical outlook. And most agree by now, I think, that those last plays are his greatest. What I want to suggest is that the change results from O'Neill's successful shift away from the predominantly melodramatic emphasis of his earlier plays, a shift which I have identified in published and as yet unpublished papers on each of the three final masterpieces, but which I wish to consider now by looking at the three plays together. I do not intend to argue that O'Neill's earlier plays are melodramatic. While some disagreement lingers on that point, I think most today recognize that the power and the popularity of all but a few of those well-known earlier efforts--up to and including Mourning Becomes Electra--result, in part at least, from their being thoughtful and refined melodramas.

A brief definition of melodrama which suits my purposes is that of Robert Heilman in his Tragedy and Melodrama. Heilman focuses our attention on two salient characteristics: one, that melodrama involves intrigue, a mystery wherein key information is withheld until the final moments of a work as a means of commanding and holding audience attention. This characteristic assumes that events past and present are knowable and comprehensible. The conclusion of the melodrama fills us in on everything we need to know to feel satisfied and have little curiosity about the future. The other important characteristic of melodrama that Heilman cites is the polar opposition of clear conceptions of good and evil: the play's moral perspective is fixed and certain, and the conflicts within it are those between good and evil--rarely about the ambiguity of good and evil. Traditionally, the ending of melodrama involves the triumph of good and the punishment of evil, though Heilman also identifies what he calls a "drama of disaster," in which evil triumphs and good goes unrewarded.

A tragedy, Heilman feels, is a work which transcends melodrama. In learning more and more about the depths and complexities of the central characters, the work's intrigue becomes less central to our interest--it sometimes disappears altogether--and good and evil become increasingly ambiguous conceptions. The better acquainted we become with the major characters in a tragedy, the more inscrutable they become and remain for us. And out of this moral ambiguity and psychological inscrutability comes the phenomenon that a tragedy is ever subject to fuller interpretation.

O'Neill's late plays, in going beyond melodrama, become truer tragedies than any of his earlier plays. O'Neill's means are twofold. One involves the way he structures those later plays, chiefly the way he treats intrigue in them; and the other involves the way in which he treats the past in them. The first is the easier to define, the second the more important in respect to O'Neill's culminating tragic vision. I shall begin with O'Neill's treatment of intrigue in his last plays.

#### I.

In each of those plays, we are presented with intrigues which seem important and for a time are the chief focus of our attention. But in each case these intrigues disappoint our expectations. Not ultimately central to the plays, they yield gradually or suddenly to what is central. It almost seems as though O'Neill is tricking us, arousing our interest the way he might have in one of his earlier plays, then shifting that interest to something he considers more important.

Since what I am talking about is clearest in A Moon for the Misbegotten, I shall begin with that play, even though it was the last one written. Beginning with a rowdy comic melodrama, O'Neill shifts to the play's chief melodramatic action, the trapping of Jim Tyrone by Phil and Josie Hogan. Employing an old-time Irish version of the American traveling salesman joke, O'Neill builds the suspense crucial to that kind of plot through almost two-thirds of the play. One needs to listen carefully to Jim Tyrone's statements and asides through the first half, to have any clue that this melodrama will become altogether irrelevant to what the play is about. But with Josie's realization that her father has been lying to her about Jim's willingness to sell the farm to Harder, that melodrama suddenly and totally disintegrates; and we are left facing the true issues of the play, the depths of Jim's and Josie's psychological suffering and the means by which each is able to relieve that suffering in the other. The audience is led to expect one kind of play, before being rudely presented with another, far more emotionally demanding kind of play.

While this kind of shift in audience expectations is not so rudely exhibited in Long Day's Journey and The Iceman Cometh, that the same kind of shift does take place makes us recognize that it is perhaps the most important aspect of plot in these plays. In Long Day's Journey, two factors evoke melodramatic curiosity, then suspense, as we move through the early portion of the play: the question of whether Mary has indeed overcome her drug addiction, and the question of whether Edmund has contracted tuberculosis.

These are questions the audience naturally wonders about from their first mention in the play and might suppose the chief purpose of the play, as a melodrama, will be to resolve. In both cases, however, that curiosity as the central audience lure is quickly dissipated. The intrigue concerning Mary is soon resolved. By the time Jamie makes explicit his awareness that Mary's nocturnal wandering, her visits to the spare room, and the dilation of her pupils make the fact of her backslide unquestionable, we have in all likelihood already reached the same conclusion, and there is nothing more to be curious about. And by the same token, by the time Edmund visits Doc Hardy to learn his fate, there is no doubt left in our minds what that fate is.

In each case, our curiosity must shift from one concerning facts, to one concerning the effects of facts; from one based on a mystery, to one based on our empathy with the agonies of these people as they realize what is going on. As in Sophocles' Oedipus, where the hero's stage-by-stage discovery of his past, a past which everyone in the audience knows, gives way to the effects of that discovery on the play's central characters, the shift in Long Day's Journey constitutes a shift from melodrama to tragedy. We are no longer curious about whether these characters are indeed ill. We are, instead, increasingly interested in the complexities of response all the family members have to these illnesses and in what their responses tell us about the human condition.

In Iceman, perhaps because it was written the earliest and was thereby the closest to O'Neill's own melodramatic past, the play's central melodrama persists to near the end and is resolved in the fashion of traditional melodrama, but with a starkly different twist. Suspense regarding what Hickey has done is built up throughout the play: by the strangeness of his behavior--his being on the wagon and his attempting to reform the derelicts--and by what the other characters, especially Larry Slade, responding to these changes, say about him. And so his big confession, having been carefully led up to, arouses every expectation that the suspense will be resolved. And it is, of course, resolved in a way, but without producing the satisfaction in us necessary to a melodramatic resolution. The speech leaves us confused and frustrated--as it leaves him. It is a confession of murder, of course, which is fully in the melodramatic tradition; but Hickey's motives seem wildly contradictory. He says he thought he murdered his wife because he loved her, but that in committing the murder he realized that he hated her. Then, in startled new realization of what he has said, he says once again that he loved her. And there is no reason for us to assume that any of his claims are false. Hickey is anything but a hypocrite in this speech.

Whatever these reversals say about Hickey's psychological state, they take us out of the realm of melodrama. Motives must be clear in melodrama: a character must have a single compelling reason for killing his wife, and that reason must allow us to sort out the pros and cons of the play in a neat fashion. We do not want to be left wondering. We know that Hickey has finally been honest with us, and with himself, but that only leaves us more uncertain about the play's meaning. Hickey's denouement has implications the opposite of what we have expected. His own "reformation" through self-knowledge has led him to committing a horrible crime, and we are left in a dilemma about the supposed universal panacea called self-knowledge. Our state at the conclusion of Hickey's confession is like Larry Slade's at the conclusion of the play. Larry is in the pose of "the thinker," trying to resolve the irresolvable dilemmas of existence. Such a posture is not one associated with the conclusion of a melodrama. Having frustrated our melodramatic expectations, the play insists that we consider its enigmatic view of life.

The melodramatic portions of all three plays, like O'Neill's earlier plays, are full of the trappings of melodrama: deceptions, spyings, entrapments, suspicion, and distrust. Phil Hogan plots against Josie and Jim; Josie distrusts Jim and seeks to manipulate him; the Tyrone men all spy on Mary as she watches them watching her; Larry encourages the derelicts to suspect Hickey of some kind of foul play. In all three plays, however, when the melodrama gives way, the traditional trappings are dispelled. In Moon, when the melodrama disappears, when we realize that Josie's efforts to trick Jim are not the chief

interest of the play, the spying and the distrust all but disappear. Jim and Josie speak to one another with totally self-revelatory directness. Similarly, in Long Day's Journey, when we realize that Mary's addiction and Edmund's illness are undebatable facts, Edmund and, first, his father, then, his brother, open up to one another as never before.

In Iceman, the melodramatic suspicion and distrust fostered early in the play by Parritt and Hickey are consistently countered by the relationships among the derelicts--relationships which are raucous and violent, joyous and savage, but not manipulative. Despite the many ways the derelicts feel toward one another, they never really distrust one another--never, that is, until Hickey seeks to reform them and thus removes their self-protective props, their pipe dreams. And it is to the non-melodramatic relationship among the derelicts we experienced at the beginning of the play that we return at the end of the play.

## II.

The second and ultimately more important means by which O'Neill transcends melodrama in these plays lies in the way he treats the past--the distant past, but also the more recent past. While it might be argued that concern with a past which is not part of the play's action is thereby concern with something outside the realm of the play, I can only respond that these plays are all made up very largely of responses to a past which is not part of the play's action. If we do not set the perspective on that past each character has, against some kind of evidence about what that past may have consisted of, we cannot really be dealing with these plays at all. And what the past actually consisted of in no case squares with the evidence we get. The characters each put one construction upon the past, while we get impressions of many, contradictory constructions.

In melodrama the past must be knowable, and the resolution of the intrigue has to do with the identification of what happened in the past. Our melodramatic interest may be built up in part by devices which obscure or confuse us about the past; but an accurate revelation of those aspects of the past directly related to what is happening in the play is absolutely essential to a satisfactory solution to the play. Most obvious in melodramatic mysteries based on incorrect assumptions built up in our minds about the past--I am thinking of plays like those of the present-day favorite Ira Levin--the necessity for ultimate certainty and clarity about the past is also essential in some unquestionably more "serious" dramas, among them some of O'Neill's own earlier work.

My recent article on The Iceman Cometh focuses on the unknowability of the past and hence O'Neill's triumph over melodrama in that play. It has within it a full-blown "drama of disaster," one reminiscent of O'Neill's earlier drama--the Don Parritt plot. But for everyone else the play has gone beyond melodrama, because the understanding of the way memory works that the play brings us to, takes it beyond melodrama.

A model for the whole group may be found in the figure of Jimmy Tomorrow. Jimmy tells us that he turned to drink and hence became a derelict because he discovered that his wife was having an affair with another man. He has thus defined his life as a drama of disaster--a melodrama based on a past event. But Larry Slade abruptly points out that Jimmy had had a drinking problem for years and that his wife left him because of it. There is no evidence that Jimmy is lying, however. He may indeed have discovered his wife in the arms of a rival and may have "turned to drink" as a result. Yet Larry's statement has equal validity. Jimmy's wife deserted him because of his drinking. Two equally precise understandings of (melodramas of) the past are presented us, neither more "provable" than the other. Or, stated the other way, a precise understanding of the past in relation to the present is not knowable. Jimmy's drama of disaster is a fiction of his own creation, not something upon which our understanding of his character can be based.

Jimmy's is the clearest example because he talks more about his past than do the other

derelicts; but something like Jimmy's story may be understood from what we learn about each of the others. It is quite uncertain whether Pat McGloin took the rap for a corrupt police force or fell independently as a result of his own grossly corrupt nature. Was Joe Mott victimized by the white supremacist attitudes of turn-of-the-century New York officialdom, or was he disgracefully co-opted by that officialdom? Piet Wetjoen was either a hero or a coward depending upon very separate but equally valid readings of his past. The version each presents us is the one in which he was the victim of triumphant evil forces, the defeated protagonist in a drama of disaster. Yet each is troubled about, and becomes quite hostile in trying to deny, the opposing melodrama in which he has instead been the antagonist, the one whose "crimes" led justly to his present state. And we, the audience, are thus led to the thought that one cannot tell anything about the past, certainly nothing to base an understanding of that past upon.

It might be argued, of course, that melodrama exists in either case, whether drama of disaster or drama about the defeat of evil. What offsets that conclusion is the all-important present; that is, what we do see in the play. What we see in each derelict, made up of both his protagonistic and antagonistic roles, is a living, functioning human being, one who, while residing at the "End-of-the-Line Café," nevertheless experiences hope and disappointment, joy and sadness, hostility and affection, pretty much as the rest of us do. In other words, the present we see the characters living in, while made up of the often contradictory components of what we have been told about the past, is not clearly related to that past. There is little cause and effect. Instead there is a quite plausible but puzzling human being in front of us, as most human beings are plausible but puzzling. In no way do we draw the final conclusions about these figures which would be the essence of a melodramatic response. Instead, these figures constitute a scenic image of variation and contradiction, of the complexity which is life.

Moving to Long Day's Journey, O'Neill's treatment of the past may be focused in a statement by Mary Tyrone which, from a melodramatic perspective, could be considered the dominant theme of the play, and the play be considered thereby a drama of disaster. In her personal despair about her past--in particular, her drug addiction and its causes--Mary answers James's appeal that she "forget the past" with the cry: "How can I? The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too." Mary feels that her addiction has made her what she is, and there is no escape from the fact of her past. She is the antagonist of her personal melodrama, and she is convinced of the triumph her evil.

As if to parallel the structure of Mary's ritual of despair, her husband and sons go through their own such rituals: the repeated shock and sense of defeat, the drink, and the overriding cynicism. Mary's story of lost hope leads the men to assess their own past lives in the same way. Jamie's "They never come back" describes not just Mary's view of the past, but that of all four haunted Tyrones.

But if, in Long Day's Journey, the past is the present, and the future, too--past, present, and future are all made up of such contradictory elements that the apparent solidity of Mary's simple sense of cause and effect gives way to uncertainty. Was the day she "could no longer call [her] soul [her] own" the day she first used morphine to alleviate the pain of childbirth? Or was it any one of a number of days? She had always been withdrawn, given to seeking escapes from pain well before the morphine, as the Mother Superior in the Convent appears to have recognized when she questioned Mary's motives for wanting to be a nun. So, too, can her decision to marry the older James be seen as a desire to withdraw from the world and its pains.

Then there is the question of her desire to become a concert pianist. Did her addiction possibly result from a conflict between her artistic nature and her familial obligations? Is her guilt only focussed on her being a "dope fiend," or is it guilt at having failed to be true to her abilities? Even so seemingly simple a motive force as the guilt so prevalent in O'Neill's plays is subject to conflicting interpretations in this play. And in stating these contradictory forces as alternatives, I of course do not

mean them as alternatives. In fact, both alternatives are present simultaneously.

What holds for Mary also holds for her husband and sons. What appears to exist in the past may indeed exist, yet something quite the opposite may also exist. James was and was not a "great Shakespearean actor"; Edmund's sense of alienation was caused by his mother's addiction yet would very likely be what it is for many other reasons. Most important of all, Jamie's past tells us that he has long been both a scoundrel and a saint. Jamie is the most aware of the contradictions which shape his being. His confession regarding the "dead part" of himself in the last act finally and effectively refutes the determinacy of Mary's past, present, and future remark. In telling his brother of that dead part and thus sacrificing his protective shell on his brother's behalf, he is brilliantly revealing a live part of himself which has existed far into the past. In no way can Jamie's past have shaped his present except in the sense that its implied contradictoriness assures us that we can draw no fixed conclusions about what he was or is. Jamie, more than the others, takes us light years away from melodrama in this play.

O'Neill's treatment of the past A Moon for the Misbegotten makes the past as much of an enigma as ever. Following the displacement of the play's melodramatic plot by Josie's realization that Jim has not been lying to her, the play builds powerfully toward Jim's great confession. Along the way, O'Neill concentrates on Josie, whose experience clearly suggests how impossible the past is as an indicator of the present. Her fixed view that she has been unattractive to men has led to her playing the role of a whore while remaining a virgin. Jim explodes that fixed view in an instant, leaving her free for the first time to accept herself in human terms. But his fixed view regarding his own past provides more difficulties.

One of the difficulties is that we can tell almost nothing about Jim's past before his trip to California and his mother's death. But one key reminiscence on Jim's part implies much about the workings of his memory. In his great confession, he says he is sure his mother awoke from her coma just before her death and saw him drunk. And it is on the basis of her awakening that Jim builds his devouring guilt. We have no way of knowing whether she did awake, but Jim bases everything about his subsequent experience on that dubious recollection. Jim, in other words, has built a melodrama, a drama of disaster in which he is the antagonist, on something which may or may not have happened. Based on a guilt unquestionably associated with his alcoholism, Jim's memory negates all the good things he has done in his life, good things of the kind we have just seen him do for Josie.

Like Josie, Jim has a melodramatic view of his past which, he is convinced, must determine his future--that is, his downfall. In fact, his past is just as ambiguous as Josie's. Her forgiveness of him and her giving him her long night's nurture, is thus a declaration that he is more than what he is convinced the past has made him. His nightmares, and nightmares traditionally go with melodrama, are gone the next morning--which might be to say his personal melodrama is over. But the physical effects of alcohol cannot be so easily removed. Jim is and has been a dying man throughout the play. What makes the play a tragedy is that Jim, who like Hickey confesses himself right through and beyond a melodramatic perspective on himself, must indeed die, and die as the tragic hero, fully possessed of the new knowledge the experience of the play has brought him to.

Thus has O'Neill, whose melodramatic perspective on his own past so dominated and shaped his earlier drama, given dramatic form to a new perspective on the past. We are not what the past has made us because we do not know what the past is. All we know are the melodramas we have made of the past, and those melodramas are inevitably countered by contradictory melodramas, contradictory interpretations of the past. Any interpretation we place upon past events must therefore be illusory. The present, on the other hand, is the on-going existence lived by all of the characters in these plays. And it is an existence made up of variations and permutations which shatter the melodramatic



perspective and make these plays, in spite of the suffering they abound in, monuments to a belief in life as it is being, and not as it has been, lived.

-- Michael Manheim

#### TAOISM IN O'NEILL'S TAO HOUSE PLAYS

In 1937, a year after he received his Nobel Prize, Eugene O'Neill built a new home in California and named it Tao House. It faced eastward, with black Chinese tile on the roof, bright Chinese red paint on all the windows and interior doors, and a Chinese-style brick walk twisting and winding behind, "to ward off devils." This "pseudo-Chinese" house in the American far west reminds us of the American playwright's earlier fascination with China and its culture.

From around 1922 to 1925, O'Neill had made an extensive study of Chinese history, religion, art and poetry in preparation for his composition of Marco Millions, a play whose main action is set in the court of Kublai Kaan. Then in 1928, a year after the play's publication, O'Neill set out on a long voyage to China. He described the imminent trip as "the dream of [his] life," and as "infinitely valuable" to his future work (Gelb 678). Quite understandably, he did not find the expected "peace and quiet" in Shanghai, and the trip, he felt, left in his mind "a million impressions" that were hard to digest (Gelb 686). O'Neill's enthusiasm for China, however, continued unabated. As his Work Diary indicates, he persisted, though sporadically, in his thoughtful reading on China till as late as 1934, in a futile attempt to develop the original ideas he had first recorded in his notebook back in 1925 for a play about China's first emperor (Floyd 114). Later, in 1936, at their home "Casa Genotta" on Sea Island, O'Neill and Carlotta talked with Somerset Maugham about the possibility of making another trip to China, and immediately ordered a book about Beijing that had been recommended by the British writer (Gelb 798).

The naming of Tao House, like the naming of his earlier houses and the titling of many of his plays, was not an act of impulse, but of deep deliberation. It was, in a sense, the result of his long, comparative study of the intellectual and spiritual ideas of the East. In a letter to Frederic I. Carpenter, dated June 24, 1932, O'Neill acknowledged that he had done considerable reading in Oriental philosophy and religion in order to have some grasp of the subject as part of his philosophical background, and then he added: "the mysticism of Lao-Tse and Chuang-Tsu probably interested me more than any other Oriental writing" (Griffin 42).

O'Neill had, according to Robinson, two different editions of James Legge's translation of Tao Te Ching and Chuang Tzu, one of which was sent to him, together with another book entitled Lao Tzu's Tao and Wu Wei, as a gift by a Chinese writer-artist, Mai-mai Sze, with whom the O'Neill's maintained a friendship. Another Chinese writer, Lin Yutang, also sent them, on the same occasion of their moving into the new residence, two of his own works about China and its philosophical ideas, both of which displayed deep respect for Chuang Tsu. Of the various philosophical and religious traditions of the East, Taoism seemed to be the only one for which O'Neill read not only explications and commentary, but a translation of the original texts as well (Robinson 23-24). While it is difficult to ascertain how much and how deeply O'Neill had read these and other books of and about Taoism, it can be argued that he had read enough to find its mysticism extremely illuminating for his own mystical intuitions about reality.

The importance of O'Neill's Orientalism has long been recognized. Frederic Carpenter observed, in his insightful essay "Eugene O'Neill, the Orient, and American Transcendentalism," that Orientalism is "the most important and distinctive aspect of his art" (Griffin 40). But if we trace the development of his Orientalism from the early to the later plays, we find that he was gradually drawn from a general, indefinable fascination with the East towards a solid center of Taoism.

In O'Neill's early plays, the idea of the East is often vague, a romantic utopia--meaningful and alluring, yet remote and intangible. Robert Mayo in Beyond the Horizon dreams of "the beauty of the far off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East which lures me in the books I've read." And in The Fountain, Ponce de Leon talks of "some far country of the East--Cathay, Cipango, who knows--a spot that Nature has set apart from men and blessed with peace."

In one of O'Neill's mid-career works, Marco Millions, Orientalism has become more definable, as a kind of intellectual and spiritual wisdom which the author uses to comment on the materialism of the West and the viability of Christianity. But there we find a somewhat diffused view of the various systems of philosophy and religion of the East. For instance, in the second scene of Act III, the funeral procession for Princess Kukachin features four priests representing the four major religions of the East: Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Moslemism. Each of the priests tries without avail to console the Great Kaan according to his own religion.

In O'Neill's late plays written at Tao House, Taoism becomes, more than any other philosophical or religious system, an integral part of their ideas, style and structure. But before we examine the Taoist influence in these plays, it is necessary to examine briefly the elusive term "Taoism" itself.

\* \* \*

Taoism is a word with various connotations. In the most relevant sense, however, it refers to a school of philosophy which received its highest literary expression in the writings by, and attributed to, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. The former was its first major patriarch, the latter its radical interpreter and foremost popularizer. Taoism as a system of philosophy revolves around the pivotal concept of Tao, which has two meanings.

First, cosmologically, Tao is a "formless and ineffable" reality, which is behind all and beneath all, the womb from which all life (both human and natural) springs, and to which, after a cycle, it again returns. Tao is immanent as well as transcendent. It is everywhere, in all things and at all times. Though often identified as the "mother" of all things, Tao is impersonal and amoral.

Second, ethically, Tao refers to the way man should keep his life in tune with the universe. What is right is bound up with Nature. The process of Nature is spontaneous, free from artificiality and strife. Therefore, Taoism holds spontaneity and receptiveness as the highest principles of human conduct. It stresses achieving inner peace and purity of mind by quelling perturbing emotions, renouncing desires for political power and excessive wealth, and avoiding social entanglements of any kind.

\* \* \*

To O'Neill, "Tao House" was more than just a name for a home; it meant a way of life and a "mansion" for his soul. The eight years he spent at the isolated Tao House were very much like those of a Taoist hermit striving for full wisdom in secluded meditation. It is obvious that when O'Neill wrote his final plays, the Taoist ideas he embraced were no longer something he just copied, but something he had long pondered and even personally experienced. Consequently, the Taoism embodied in these mature works is remarkably different from the "borrowed" ideas of his previous plays which, as Robert Brustein bluntly puts it, are "all grafted onto plots which are largely unconvincing, irrelevant, or inconsequential" (Brustein 333). Taoism is now softly infused into the ideas, characterization, style and structure of these plays. And it seems even to have influenced O'Neill's choice of subject matter in the final phase of his dramatic career.

It was at Tao House that O'Neill abandoned his five years of hard work on the mammoth 11-play cycle, "A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed," planned as a critical evaluation of about 150 years of American history. He turned, instead, to a group of



autobiographical plays dealing with his own and his family's past. This choice, crucial and significant, is generally seen as due to the author's deteriorating health, which compelled him to write plays that he knew he could finish. But it also seems possible that O'Neill's choice was made in accordance with one of the basic tenets of Taoist mysticism; namely, that the Tao flows through a man as through the rest of the world, and the individual is thus a microcosm corresponding fully to the macrocosmic world. To identify the Tao within--i.e., to understand oneself--is the best and surest way to know the Tao of the world. Chapter 47 of Tao Te Ching reads in part: "Without stirring abroad / One can know the whole world; / Without looking out of the window / One can see the way of heaven. / The further one goes / The less one knows" (Lau 108). And a familiar parable in Taoist literature describes a man searching for his divine teacher in all the holy mountains until he finally discovers him in one of the "mansions" inside his own head.

To identify the Tao within, all outward impressions need to be stilled and the senses withdrawn to an interior point of focus. One must also undertake an initiatory return, a psychological journey back to one's origin. In writing the autobiographical quartet--The Iceman Cometh, Hughie, Long Day's Journey Into Night and A Moon for the Misbegotten--O'Neill relived, in an almost relentless manner, his early years of chaotic formation and went through a cathartic process of emptying his mind of disturbing emotions. Unusually perceptive, these plays stand as the crowning achievement of his long and awesome career. Though intensely personal, they "dig at the roots of the sickness of today" at a level deeper than either his own abandoned cycle plays or most of the socially-oriented plays of his contemporaries.

Like their creator, the tragic protagonists of these late plays shun the society of the outside world and look within. They explore their own past and recapitulate the process of their own making. Hickey, in the last act of Iceman, feeling "balled up" about himself and others, tries to explain himself and his action--"Only I've got to start way back at the beginning" when he was a child. James Tyrone, Sr., in Act IV of Long Day's Journey, makes rapprochement with Edmund, and peace with himself, by going through the ancestral causes of his miserliness and his artistic failure. His wife Mary, too, searches in the memory of her past and experiences the wholeness that existed at the beginning, before she was made to lose her true self forever.

\* \* \*

The element of Taoism implicitly contained in O'Neill's Tao House plays represents, I venture to say, one of the basic qualities that make these works uniquely distinct from the author's earlier work and make them even "existentially" modern today. One salient characteristic of all O'Neill's late plays is the interfusion and identicalness of contraries, which results in rich ambiguity in their style, characterization and themes. These dramas display a curious mixture of past and present, comedy and tragedy. In them, to quote O'Neill, "something funny, even farcical, can suddenly without any apparent reason, break up into something gloomy and tragic," and the element of low comedy persists intermittently thereafter in otherwise highly tragic situations. Most of the characters are also found to be at once funny and tragic. Their motivation refuses to be explained in definite terms.

This quality of interfusion of opposites and the resultant ambiguity in O'Neill's Tao House plays echoes a very unique notion of Taoist teaching, especially that of Chuang Tzu. In our daily life we tend to draw distinctions that make for a dualistic view of the world. There are this and that, comic and tragic, right and wrong, good and evil, and an infinite number of other dualities. The Taoist challenges this view and asks whether any real distinctions exist within these alleged dualities. Chapter II of Chuang Tzu, entitled "The Equality of All Things and Opinions," says:

There is nothing which is not "that"; there is nothing which is not "this".... "That" and "this" can be spoken of as alternately producing

one another. When there is life there is death, and when there is death, there is life.... Not to discriminate "that" and "this" as opposites, is the very essence of Tao (Fung 232, slightly modified).

This notion of the relativity of all values and the identity of contraries ties in with the traditional Chinese symbolism of Yin and Yang, often pictured in an endlessly revolving closed circle. It sums up all of life's basic oppositions: shady-sunny, female-male, negative-positive, evil-good, death-life, and so on. Though in tension, they are not wholly opposed: they complement, counterbalance, and even interpenetrate each other. Constantly moving and turning in the circle, the opposites are just like phases of a revolving wheel. No one perspective, therefore, can be regarded as absolute in this world of relativity.

In all of O'Neill's early plays, there is a persistent emphasis on dichotomy and contrast. It is expressed either through sharply drawn and opposing characters such as Robert and Andrew Mayo in Beyond the Horizon and Dion and Brown in The Great God Brown; or through alternation of contrasting scenes such as the indoor-outdoor rhythm in Beyond the Horizon, and the movement from the hot, sweaty stokers' pit to the cool, sunny deck of the leisure class in The Hairy Ape. The idea of dualism finds its expression also in antithetical themes. The degenerative land is set against the refreshing sea in Anna Christie, for instance; and Western materialism confronts Eastern spiritualism in Marco Millions.

Nothing seems absolute, however, in O'Neill's late dramas. One finds, instead, ambiguity and identity of contraries. Take the theme of marital relations, for example. In the early plays, love exists in contrast to hate, and usually there is only hate in marriage--e.g., in Desire Under the Elms and Mourning Becomes Electra. The heroines of these plays are often compelled to seek new and idealized love extramaritally. In the late plays the clean-cut dichotomy between love and hate is eschewed, and a new notion of Chuang Tzu's paradoxicalness takes its place. Hickey in Iceman, for example, always professes happiness in the love of his wife. Yet he had to kill her, as he explains, "to give her peace and free her from the misery of loving [him]." This explanation, however, becomes partial if not false when, in his long speech of self-justification, his unconscious hatred for her is revealed: he laughed when killing her and even swore at her, "you damned bitch." But the moment he blurts this out, he denies it: "Good God, I couldn't have said that! If I did, I'd gone insane! Why, I loved Evelyn better than anything in life!" Hickey is perplexed about his own emotion which interweaves love and hatred, the conscious and the unconscious. Any attempt to define his emotion categorically as hate or love is to miss the point. This revelation of ambivalence in his motivation at the end of the play demands a re-evaluation of the earlier action, making the play rich in ambiguity.

Death is another persistent theme throughout O'Neill's playwriting career, and this theme too shows development toward the Taoist reconciliation of opposites. Several of the one-acters composed at the start of his career, like Bound East for Cardiff, The Sniper and In the Zone, contain brief yet serious contemplations on death. "The fear of death," O'Neill once said, "is the root of all evils, the cause of man's blundering unhappiness" (Quinn 252). In mid-career plays like Dynamo and Days Without End, O'Neill dramatizes the human need for a satisfying new religion "to comfort [one's] fears of death with." And Lazarus Laughed states most explicitly and categorically the theme of denial of death and affirmation of life.

In Taoist perspective, however, life and death are not in opposition but are merely two aspects of the same reality. They are arrested moments of never-ceasing transformations, like day and night or summer and winter. Death is seen as the natural result, and also a new beginning, of life; and to feel bitterness against it is "to violate the principle of Nature and to increase the emotion of man." Thus, Chapter XXII of Chuang Tzu says, "Since life and death are companions, why worry about them?"

In his late plays, O'Neill adopted a similar attitude of serene acceptance. Death is no longer the Big Chill. It is something natural, to be neither feared nor desired. While drinking and dreaming, the denizens at Harry Hope's saloon are in fact waiting without fear for the Iceman--Death--to come. And so is Jim Tyrone in Moon. In Hughie, even the dividing line between life and death blurs and fades away. Not only is Charlie Hughes, the night clerk, a personification of death-in-life; but he and the recently-deceased night clerk whose position he has taken are so depicted as to represent exact doubles, with the same surname, age and background, and performing an identical social role.

A more significant example of the ambiguity and equivalence in the late plays is the common theme of dream and reality. We know that the theme runs through the whole of O'Neill's dramatic career; but in his pre-Tao House plays, dream is necessarily associated with some meaning or beauty far off "beyond the horizon," and is always in contrast to the plainness correlated with reality. As Carpenter indicates in his book Eugene O'Neill, the playwright's career follows a clear pattern of development: from the romantic dream of beauty in plays such as Beyond the Horizon and The Fountain, to disillusionment when the ugliness of reality is contrasted with that dream in plays like Anna Christie, The Hairy Ape, The Great God Brown and Marco Millions; then to tragic resignation by one "who envisions the perfect, struggles vainly to achieve it and finally accepts inevitable defeat," as in Strange Interlude and Mourning Becomes Electra.

In the final dramas, the characters still hold on to their dreams, but the dreams have dropped their romantic coloration. No longer is there any secret or beauty to be found. No longer is the dream used to countervail or throw into relief a squalid reality. And the plays do not culminate in tragic resignation after failure in struggle. The time has come for a full acceptance of reality. The dreams of the characters in the late plays do not transcend but are immersed in reality. The "pipe-dreams" of the denizens of Harry Hope's saloon are as simple as having a walk outside in the street, or getting back a lost job, or reopening a gambling house. The great dream of the Tyrones is to hope against hope that Mary has been cured of her drug addiction and Edmund's disease is not consumption but a slight cold.

O'Neill's rejection in his late plays of dualism, especially that of dream and reality, recalls what is probably the most famous parable about dream and wakefulness in the Taoist tradition (Chuang Tzu, Ch. III). Chuang Tzu once dreamed that he was a butterfly. Happy and content, he did not know that he had ever been anything but a butterfly. When he suddenly woke up, he was surprised to find that he was unmistakably Chuang Tzu. He became puzzled as to whether he was really Chuang Tzu who had dreamed of being a butterfly, or whether he was a butterfly now dreaming he was Chuang Tzu.

If we say O'Neill's late plays are plays of transcendence, then the transcendence derives from the author's final belief in there being no antithesis between dream and reality, truth and falsehood, good and evil, hope and despair. He condemned nothing in these plays, nor did he idealize or celebrate anything. The protagonists are neither pitied nor criticized. O'Neill seemed to have reached a state of non-differentiation, knowing that at center all things are one. For all the things he described and all the characters he portrayed in these plays, he now had only understanding and compassion to impart.

After writing the curtain line for Moon, O'Neill needed to write no more. All his family could now "rest forever in forgiveness and peace." The opposites and contraries presented in his early plays were now identified and reconciled. His own violent emotions likewise subsided. In 1944, a year after he completed his last play at Tao House, O'Neill left California and returned to New York, where he had begun. Two years later, he supervised the Broadway production of one of his Tao House plays, The Iceman Cometh. After that, there was silence.

-- Liu Haiping

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## O'NEILL AT WORK: A PEN IN TRUST TO ART

Eugene O'Neill died as he had lived, bereft of human understanding and comfort but totally committed to a cherished idea: the inviolability of his art. While he never mentioned the theatre in the months before his death, and the Nobel and Pulitzers, according to his wife Carlotta, meant "nothing to him--now," O'Neill took comfort in the fact that he had retained his integrity during his long career as a playwright. Carlotta states that the month before he died, when she was preparing him for sleep, "he began to recite Austin Dobson's 'In After Days':

In after days when grasses high  
O'er the stone where I shall lie,  
Though ill or well the world adjust  
My slender claim to honor'd dust,  
I shall not question nor reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;  
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;  
I shall be mute, as all men must  
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain would I

That someone then should testify,  
Saying--'He held his pen in trust  
To Art, not serving shame or lust.'  
Will none?--Then let my memory die  
In after days!

Then he looked at me & repeated (so quietly), 'He held his pen in trust to Art, not serving shame or lust'" (Letter to Dale Fern, October 4, 1953). This line could serve as O'Neill's epitaph. His single lifelong passion was his work. All else was sacrificed to it.

Art, first of all, had the healing power to transform him. The young O'Neill, a drifter and alcoholic, seemed ill-equipped to become a playwright. In 1913 fate provided a period of reflection at Gaylord Farm Sanatorium where he learned to discipline himself and began to question his goals. He states: "It was at Gaylord that my mind got the chance to establish itself, to digest and evaluate the impressions of many years.... At Gaylord, I really thought about my life for the first time, about past and future" [Quoted in Barrett Clark, Eugene O'Neill (New York, 1926), p. 12].

When O'Neill began to write, he had only his instincts and a working knowledge of the melodramatic medium of his father to guide him. He learned his craft by a process of trial and error. Throughout his thirty-year career, the author's method of composition was consistent. He could create only by writing his ideas, and this he did in pencil.

It is not true that O'Neill's handwriting became illegible only in his later years. The first recorded idea for "Exorcism" (1919) is as difficult to read as a page from "The Last Conquest" (1942). Much of the last three plays, The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, and A Moon for the Misbegotten, however, is nearly impossible to decipher. The handwriting in the 1941 notes for A Moon for the Misbegotten, or the "Dolan play" as it was called then, is so small that it looks like lines drawn across the page. What compelled O'Neill to write so small? Apparently his hand trembled even in the early years of composition. His fingers are described in Long Day's Journey, set in 1912, as having the same nervousness as his mother's. By writing as he did, he obviously found a way to control the tremor in his hand. But psychological, as well as physical, factors were involved. O'Neill's handwriting was a sign of his own intensely introspective nature. Its illegibility protected its import. Its smallness permitted him to commit more in less time to paper.

Dudley Nichols provides the best explanation for O'Neill's unique creative process. When the dramatist was unable, physically, to complete "The Last Conquest," Nichols offered to write it out as the author told it to him and to rewrite successive drafts. Nichols says: "He could no more do this than he could dictate his work. His handwriting was a part of his mind, almost a part of his imagination, which is what makes his MSS. so fascinating. His hand stopped, his work was stopped, and he knew it."

The dramatist rarely made major revisions in his years of apprenticeship. The manuscript for Thirst (1913), originally titled "Hunger," reveals the arrogance of youth. Only a few words are inserted, omitted, or changed. The author apparently did not record his ideas systematically in a notebook those first years, 1913-1917. Had he done so, he certainly would have retained the notebook as he did the others in the Yale collection. The author's careful preservation of every idea, no matter how trivial, conceived after 1918 and the later scenarios and drafts of plays suggest his ardent belief in the inevitability of his artistic success. O'Neill was a proper grammarian in all ways save two. He had his own unique way of spelling certain words, like "crucifixion"; and punctuation marks, such as semicolons and periods, ceased, in time, to exist for him. The dash seemed the sole way to separate thoughts.

In 1914 O'Neill acquired the work method he used throughout his career from Professor George Pierce Baker in the "47 Workshop" at Harvard: to record the original idea, to

write a scenario, and to set down the dialogue for the first draft. Notes for Chris Christopherson provide the first clear illustration of this method. Both the original idea and the scenario are recorded in the 1918-1920 notebook. In time, O'Neill's scenarios became more detailed. Rich with dialogue, they began to resemble first drafts. It is possible to develop some of the scenarios for late plays that were destroyed or never completed, as Donald Gallup did with The Calms of Capricorn.

Art influenced every major decision of the author's life. It determined where and how he would live. The sea mesmerized and inspired him. While writing all of the early plays, except the works done for Baker, he lived by the sea, in either New London or Provincetown. Over half of O'Neill's dramas, nineteen short and seven long plays, were written before 1919; twelve had either ocean settings or sea-related elements. Later creative years were spent by the sea at Spithead, Bermuda, in the 1920s and at Sea Island, Georgia, in the 1930s. O'Neill left Georgia for the west in 1936, stating in his Work Diary: "climate no good for work half of year--and feel jinxed here."

Art determined not only where O'Neill lived, but, possibly, with whom. Early ideas like "The Little Things" and "Silence" (1918-1920) shed light on the creative difficulties O'Neill experienced while living with his wife Agnes. At the end of "Silence," the central character walks out on the erring wife who fails to maintain a quiet, efficiently run home. His action foreshadows the author's break with Agnes, whose attempt to pursue her own writing career left her little time for worship at her husband's shrine. Even though Agnes assumed most of the responsibilities for the upkeep of their home and children, O'Neill felt beset by family obligations and resented the distractions that interfered with his creativity. The quiet sanctuary offered by the cool, attentive Carlotta Monterey in the late 1920s was a welcomed escape from the boisterous home proffered by the harried, distracted Agnes. The price Carlotta demanded for the temple to art she created was O'Neill's sacrifice of family and friends. O'Neill's awareness that he had been the guilty one, the betrayer of love, had an effect on his work. His guilt is manifested in the ideas of the late 1920s in the frequently used "Modern Faust" hero, a self-portrait. He is a man who has had taken from him "everything that makes him one with human life--wife, children, fame, money." An entry in the Work Diary, made on November 11, 1927, six days before the author left Agnes and his children, states: "Idea Modern Faust play--the selling of one's life (instead of one's soul)."

The dramatist laboriously forged the early primitive melodramas of the first period from his own experiences and familial relationships. The first plays, 1913-1919, trace the evolution of an artist and mark the stages of the author's personal development. They contain portraits of friends, family, and self: the sailors he met at sea (the Glencairn series); the husband and wife, modeled on James and Ella O'Neill, in conflict (Ile, Recklessness, Warnings); the self-centered wife who destroys her artist-husband in a marriage that was, like the author's to Kathleen Jenkins, a mistake (Bread and Butter, Before Breakfast); and three other self-portraits: the tubercular writer (The Straw); the irresponsible youth who impregnates and destroys a girl (Abortion); and the suicidal failure ("Exorcism").

Four domestic dramas dominate the early 1920s: Diff'rent, The First Man, Welded, and All God's Chillun Got Wings. Welded and, to some extent, The First Man mirror the author's own marriage at that time to Agnes. Both dramas failed, but the experimental plays of this period, The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape, brought him international acclaim. Not until O'Neill wrote The Fountain and Marco Millions did he consciously and systematically look beyond his own horizons: his family and friends, his sea and life experiences. The author did a considerable amount of research for these two historical dramas and for Lazarus Laughed, Mourning Becomes Electra, and the Cycle plays. The massive collection of notes for Marco Millions is surpassed only by those for the Cycle. He could, with justification, state in his 1935 letter to Leon Mirlas: "As you can imagine it [the Cycle] involves a tremendous amount of reading and note-taking--for even if I find it beside my point to use such historical fact background, still I wish to live



in the time of each play when writing it." He made copious notes, still extant, from Josephson's The Robber Barons, Clark's Clipper Ship Era, two Van Wyck Brooks books (The Flowering of New England and The Life of Emerson), Byron's Childe Harold, and other works. O'Neill left pages of names for potential characters, apparently amassed in the 1930s as some names suggest: Lavinia, Jonathan, Niles, Sand, Henry, Jimmy, Larry. At the bottom of one of these pages is the notation: "My thoughts on awful subjects dwell/Damnation and the Dead!" He jotted down hundreds of phrases--most of them Irish expressions--apparently for the Cycle plays: "Devil a doubt he does," "'Tis more you might be doin'," "Be the light that shines," "Arrah, Hawld your prate," "For the love of the Virgin!" In the 1930s the author compiled lists of songs popular in 1904, 1905, and 1906, possibly for use in Ah, Wilderness!

O'Neill consistently drew set designs for his work: crude box sets at first for the early ideas, more detailed sketches for later dramas, such as Lazarus Laughed, Dynamo, the Cycle plays and "The Last Conquest." He was often disappointed with the settings scenic designers constructed (for Desire Under the Elms, for example), and he attempted through his drawings to convey to them his conceptions of the settings.

The 1920s was a period of extraordinary growth for O'Neill. Technically, he expanded the horizon of the American theatre by introducing a host of experimental devices--masks, choruses, complex multiple sets--and forms: the nine-act play, the projected trilogy. Thematically, he went beyond the narrow perimeters of personal experiences and reminiscences of his parents, brother, and friends to depict societal concerns: the exploitation of the worker by capitalism (The Hairy Ape); the destructive effects of greed (Desire Under the Elms, Marco Millions, The Great God Brown); political oppression by totalitarian rule in historical plays (The Fountain, Lazarus Laughed); racial injustice (The Emperor Jones, All God's Chillun Got Wings). The author mounted a personal crusade in the plays he contemplated in the 1920s to combat racial bigotry: "Honest Honey Boy," "Bantu Boy," "Uncharted Sea."

At the outset of his career, O'Neill wrote hastily and carelessly. The Hairy Ape, he boasted, was written in three weeks. Discussing the choice of act or scene divisions for The Fountain in a 1921 letter to Macgowan, he states: "I always let the subject matter mould itself into its own particular form and I find it does this without my ever wasting thought upon it. I start out with the idea that there are no rules or precedent in the game except what the play chooses to make for itself." Notations in the Work Diary indicate that he spent only about six weeks on Desire Under the Elms. In the mid-twenties, however, he began to plan his work more carefully, to rewrite and revise it. He devoted two entire years, 1926 and 1927, to Lazarus Laughed and Strange Interlude. He told Macgowan in 1927 that he wrote a scene for Strange Interlude two separate times "and tore them up before I got started on the really right one! The point is my stuff is much deeper and more complicated now and I'm also not as easily satisfied with what I've dashed off as I used to be."

To O'Neill the most disappointing failure in the 1920s was Dynamo. He had wanted this "first fruit" of his relationship with Carlotta to be successful. Maya Koreneva of the Gorky Institute of World Literature observes, correctly, that "Dynamo does not fairly represent the essential qualities of O'Neill's writings of the middle period, though it does concentrate some of his grosser weaknesses." The dramatist believed the major flaw of Dynamo to be the elaborate settings, which obfuscated the meaning of the play. In 1929, after a decade of experimentation, O'Neill utters a cry of emancipation "for good":

No more sets or theatrical devices as anything but unimportant background.... To read "Dynamo" is to stumble continually over the sets.... Greater classical simplicity, austerity combined with the utmost freedom and flexibility, that's the stuff! (Letter to Macgowan, June 14, 1929).

Dynamo, finished in 1928, marks the halfway point in O'Neill's writing career. Of the

fifteen plays written in the 1920s, two, the expressionistic Emperor Jones and Hairy Ape, were artistic triumphs in this country and abroad; three controversial works, Anna Christie, Desire Under the Elms, and Strange Interlude, won popular acclaim. The other ten can be classified as either moderate successes or failures. O'Neill's favorites were The Great God Brown, The Hairy Ape and Lazarus Laughed. He won his first Pulitzer Prize in 1920 for Beyond the Horizon; his third, at the end of the decade, for Strange Interlude.

The three dramas O'Neill created in the early 1930s can be labeled "self" plays, for they contain the same kind of autobiographical connotations found in the work of the mid- and late-1920s: Desire Under the Elms, The Great God Brown, and Dynamo. Mourning Becomes Electra (1930-31) proved to be his finest play, in scope and execution, prior to the work of 1939. It is one of the supreme achievements of twentieth century drama. Even though the basic story of the trilogy parallels, in general, the Oresteia, there are many autobiographical elements. These are more conspicuous in the trilogy's early scenarios as they foreshadow Long Day's Journey: the setting is identified as New London; the name of its leading family, the Chappells, prototypes for the Mannons, appears. The mother figure, Christine, is more clearly an early portrait of Ella O'Neill. There was to have been a second Mannon son, Hugh, Orin's preferred rival for the affections of the mother, prefiguring the Jamie-Edmund Tyrone relationship.

Days Without End (1931-33), in its notes and seven drafts, forms the most autobiographical extant document. Whereas Long Day's Journey focuses primarily on the author's parents, and A Moon for the Misbegotten is a memory play about Jamie, Days Without End is O'Neill's account of his own spiritual odyssey. When the hero of John Loving's autobiographical novel was fifteen, his mother, who had "an absurd obsession with religion," became ill. Despite the youth's vow to devote his life to piety were she spared, the mother died. Like O'Neill, he became a renegade Catholic, went to college at eighteen, and passed through the same radical political and spiritual stages in his attempt to find a meaningful belief to replace his abandoned faith. While writing Days Without End, O'Neill apparently desired to emulate his hero, who returns to his faith.

There is a natural explanation for the "fully formed" concept of Ah, Wilderness!, which O'Neill claims to have had when awakening on September 1, 1932. The "Nostalgic Comedy" derives from the autobiographical material the author had accumulated, both mentally and artistically, for Days Without End. Ah, Wilderness! is set in 1906. Its hero, Richard Miller, who is seventeen and preparing to enter Yale, is an early view of John Loving before he suffered the loss of his mother and became a full-fledged radical. The twenty-three-year-old Edmund Tyrone in Long Day's Journey, set in 1912, is also, like John Loving, a Richard Miller grown disillusioned with life. Ah, Wilderness! is not only the precursor but also the prerequisite for writing Long Day's Journey.

Whereas O'Neill extended the limits of the American stage in the 1920s with his experimental devices, he explored its thematic potential in the 1930s. His first trilogy, Mourning Becomes Electra, was a transitional work in time and concept. Days Without End was to have been the second play in another trilogy, the projected "Myth Plays for the God-forsaken." In the early 1930s O'Neill told Barrett Clark that he was "saving up a lot" of material, "the most dramatic episodes of my life," for "a cycle of plays I hope to do some day." While he purported to dramatize the two-hundred-year history of an imaginary American family in the eleven-play Cycle he devised, "A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed," the family was, in many respects, his own. Here, as elsewhere, O'Neill depicts his own tortured, convoluted life. His relationship to mother, father, brother, wives, and friends is dramatized in endless variations in the canon. Because all human lives pivot around the same types of familial ties and friendships, O'Neill's work assumes universal dimensions.

O'Neill died not in 1953 but a decade earlier. His wife states that when he "had to quit his job--he died--& life, since then, has been a hell for him" (Letter to Fern, October 23, 1953). In his last years O'Neill longed to resume his work. Shortly after



his move to Marblehead in 1948, he told Dudley Nichols: "And now at last, with everything to the last book in place (or nearly so) we can sit back and rest a while, and I can hope to start writing plays again" (Letter of December 4, 1948).

The author's health deteriorated in the next years and so did his relationship with Carlotta. She could no longer serve his art. It is callous to say, but true: he had no need for her psychologically in those last years, and he withdrew completely from her and shut out the world. He followed the example of one of his most tragic characters, Lavinia Mannon, who immured herself with the ghosts of her parents and brother within the Mannon home, and spent the last two years of his life isolated in a Boston hotel. Carlotta described his illness as a "degeneration of the nerve tissue" and said that it affects "the muscles and slowly kills all coordination between the brain & the muscles. Hence, he starts to get out of bed in the normal way & falls on his face! He always walks with a stick, even to the bathroom.... His tremor has become so bad again it is most difficult for him even to eat solids alone" (Letter to Fern, October 15, 1953).

The author's helplessness resembles that of Tom Perkins, a partial self-portrait, in "The Personal Equation" (1915). The remark the doctor makes in the last act about his incapacitated, bedridden patient applies also to O'Neill in his last months: "He doesn't seem to have any relatives alive. It's a pity. He might have been different if he had had the influence of a home. As it is, there's no trace of who he is or where he came from. He's one of those strange human strays one sometimes runs across."

Eugene O'Neill was not pretentious or given to self-aggrandizement. He was a simple man, a deeply compassionate man who had reverence for all living things. He was a Black Irishman who fell in love with words. He used those words to articulate the sorrows of his life and those of mankind. Often he stumbled; occasionally, he succeeded; and when he did, he added new luster to the American theatre, which he, through his efforts, managed, single-handedly, to transform. Frequently he was misunderstood; at times, in the last two decades of his life, he was neglected. Herman Melville chastised nineteenth-century Americans for their neglect of another New England son, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and said: "Let America prize and cherish her writers. Let her glorify them. For how great the shame, if other nations should be before her, in crowning her heroes of the pen!" The phrase "hero of the pen" aptly describes O'Neill. Truly he held that pen in trust to art.

-- Virginia Floyd

#### MEN OF IRON, BEASTS OF CLAY: THE CONFLUENCE OF FOLK-TALE AND DRAMA IN "JOE MAGARAC" AND THE HAIRY APE\*

The zeal of the worker in the some twenty years preceding The Hairy Ape (1921) may be demonstrated in two contrasting ways: the rise of the corporate structure, which the productivity of labor made possible; and the rise of the workers rebelling against its excesses and injustices. At the turn of the twentieth century, the contribution of labor was certainly evident in what it had helped to create, the giant corporation which, like a leviathan, overwhelmed the country through an economic and political organization "more centralized and powerful than even the nation itself" (Tipple 19). Of the recently formed United States Steel Corporation, an incredulous commentator wrote: "It receives

\* Without the enthusiastic assistance of Warren R. Hull, Director of Communications Services, Public Affairs Department, United States Steel Corporation, I would not have recognized the powerful connection between Joe Magarac and the steel industry. Mr. Hull provided materials from the corporate files of U.S. Steel and the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, including reprints valuable for suggesting theories on the origin of Joe Magarac as "steel hero." -- M.J.

and expends more money every year than any but the very greatest of the world's national governments; its debt is larger than that of many of the lesser nations of Europe..." (Tipple 18).

Yet labor experienced few benefits from these immense corporate gains, the average worker during a 12 to 14 hour day earning wages barely above subsistence levels. In addition, the workers suffered a loss of pride and personal incentive with the development of the mass assembly line,<sup>1</sup> as well as with other improvements in technology and cost-management efficiency. While labor gained some advantages during World War I, employers having to compete from a decreased pool of workers, at the end of the war the gains of labor were practically annihilated (Tipple 45). "The lost generation" should, in fact, refer to the workers of the 1920s.

The worker's response to the corporate monolith--his tragic insistence on retaining a sense of personal power in a system that would convert him to matter or monster--is powerfully revealed through two very different works, a folk-tale and a drama. Though O'Neill describes The Hairy Ape as "a comedy of ancient and modern life" and though Yank does not experience the total anagnorisis, the play is tragic in intent. It recognizes the inability of Yank, of man himself, to "belong" in a world no longer "natural," but alienated from nature by technology; a world in which technical advancement has led only to human degeneration. In the folktale-myth, "Joe Magarac,"<sup>2</sup> the character named in the title, has been so conditioned to serve the cause of technical advancement and corporate profit, that he willingly dematerializes, albeit into a powerful substance, flesh and blood changed into the magical formula for a super steel. Joe Magarac is "the ultimate technological folk hero ... the raw material, the process [Bessemer] and the product literally rolled into one" (Walker 114).

In The Hairy Ape, Yank, the most powerful of the stokers, prides himself on having become that ultimate technological hero, the composite of substance, energy and end product, thriving in the Hell-holes of industry. Yank boasts, "Hell, sure, dat's my fav'rite climate" (Sc. 1). Hell, he insists, is his natural element, not the sun and wind and "miles of shiny green ocean" that is Paddy's resurrection of and lamentation for a vision of nature since lost. Yet, Hell is also, as Yank proclaims, the extension of his own nature: "It's me makes it hot! It's me makes it roar! It's me makes it move!" (Sc. 1).<sup>3</sup> In Yank's mind, not only does he supply the energy for the action, but he also comprises the elements for fueling the motion; he is both matter and process. Most significant, he is the first cause and the strongest of elements. "I'm steel--steel--steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it!" (Sc. 1). This "Magarac" self-image convinces Yank that he "belongs": not slave or pariah, but the giant Atlas, the best able to support the world and exultant in others depending on his power.

Joe Magarac accomplished Yank's self-image, even to his "steel-blue eyes" (Billard 219). "He was steelmans all right: all over he was steel sam lak is from open hearth, steel hands, steel body, steel everything" (Botkin 252). Some trace Magarac's birth to the inside of an iron mountain. (See the versions by Botkin and Leach.) Like Yank, Joe glories in his strength and his ability to work in the "hell-hole"--working night and day at furnace number seven in the steel mills along the Monongahela River of Pennsylvania. When even the best of the regular mill workers cannot endure the fierce blast from the open hearth, Joe Magarac likes it (Malcolmson 33). Joe stirs steel with his bare hands, scooping up the molten mass and pouring it into ingot molds, squeezing out in one motion eight fine steel railroad rails from between his fingers (Leach, Rainbow Book, 55). Yank's bending steel bars to escape his prison on Blackwell's Island (Sc. 6) is, perhaps, no less spectacular.

Both Joe Magarac and Yank are tragic parodies of the "strong man" hero, their tremendous brawn providing each with the illusion of capability and control neither can effect, their very strength the source and foil for their failures. When Long explains to Yank that Yank's best retaliation against Mildred's insult lies in opposing the capitalist class she represents, that he needs to seek political action, Yank derides

Long's idea and calls him "yellow." For Yank, successful opposition depends on assault--verbal abuse and knock-down fight. He challenges the Fifth Avenue "marionettes" of the upper class to a brawl (Sc. 5) and thumps his chest, anticipating their feeble blows and his victory. But their impassiveness, expressionistically realized, makes them invulnerable--armored as they are by wealth, police protection and distance from the poor. Yank is easily defeated and arrested.

Joe Magarac's triumph, too, is really a form of defeat. After Steve Mestrovich, a steel-mill worker, arranges for a contest to determine the man who will make the best husband for his daughter Mary, Magarac enters the contest and succeeds at the feat that none of the other suitors can even attempt, effortlessly lifting the third and heaviest pair of steel dolly bars to the wonder of all. Yet he refuses the prize, sending Mary into the arms of another suitor, and claims a disinterest in marriage as he has no time for anything in his life but work (cf. Billard, Botkin, Leach, Malcolmson). Sometimes his interest extends to eating (in Billard, Malcolmson), for a strong man needs remarkable sustenance to perform his Herculean tasks.

Ultimately, both Magarac and Yank make no contribution to bettering conditions for their fellow workers, their very physical strength being, in part, the cause of their failure. Because Joe Magarac is so adept at squeezing hot steel into rails, the mill has to shut down--too many rails to sell--and the workers are, at least temporarily, displaced (Malcolmson, Stoutenberg). Yank's potential service to the I.W.W. is immediately curtailed when, in the belief that the I.W.W. is a terrorist gang (a belief fostered by his hearing the fulminations against the I.W.W. of a right wing senator), he suggests to the secretary at I.W.W. headquarters that he has the gumption to "blow tings up . . . Blow it offen de oith--steel--all de cages--all de factories, steamers, buildings, jails--de Steel Trust and all dat makes it go" (Sc. 7). Yank's only interest is in revenge for Mildred's seeing him as, and calling him, a filthy beast, an ape. The alarmed I.W.W. members, who believe in political action rather than terrorism, kick him out of the office, as Yank is only a menace to the working class and a "brainless ape" to boot.

Both Magarac and Yank are identified with animals that express their dominant traits--metaphorically or metaphysically as the contest suggests. While the word magarac is equivalent to "jackass" and the name "Magarac" considered Slovak or Hungarian in all the folk tales named for him,<sup>4</sup> the word and name are actually Croatian for "donkey" (Reutter 35). In all versions, Joe Magarac is a "work donkey," a beast of burden; yet for all his limited focus, he is not considered stupid. His single-minded devotion to his work is admired until his over-zealous effort leads to the mill's closing (Leach, Stoutenberg). Later, however, he is restored to hero status when his determination (and subsequent death) creates a new mill and more jobs, as well as superlative steel. Joe's body melted into the steel is the new element in a steel so smooth and straight that it is without seam or pipe; the workers are proud of this new steel, and work with renewed energy--work just like magaracs, with diligence, dedication, integrity. The powerful beast of burden has poured himself into his work and has improved its quality.

While Yank's real name is Robert Smith (as we discover only in Sc. 7), he is always "Yank" or, as the play progresses, "the hairy ape," for the ape, the lower animal from which man has ascended, the beast of the jungle that lives by instinct rather than reason, becomes the image Yank has of himself after Mildred has "baptized" him a beast. Earlier the ape image is used without reference to Yank. In Scene One, Paddy, in recalling how in the days of clipper ships men belonged to the ships and the sea, refutes Yank's vaunting sense of his own and the stokers' power; the stokers, Paddy scoffs, are "caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the zoo." Later, O'Neill in his notes for Scene Three describes the men shoveling in the stokehole as crouching in the "inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas." When the steel heiress, Mildred, enters the stokehole in Scene Three, Yank, unaware of her presence, has just become infuriated by the engineer's whistle signaling a work speedup. He threatens the invisible engineer by raising his shovel in the air and "pounding on his chest gorilla-like [my italics]," and

shouts scurrilous terms at the engineer when suddenly he sees Mildred who "looks at his gorilla [my italics] face." Later (Sc. 4) Paddy interprets Mildred's expression of horror: "Sure 'twas as if she'd seen a great hairy ape escaped from the zoo!" Here Yank is first identified with the "hairy ape."

The image becomes fastened to him, for Yank mentions "hairy ape" six times in Scene Four, as if desperately trying to extricate himself from the vision. It is also significant that the scene begins with Yank seated in the attitude of Rodin's powerful "The Thinker"; thus, the designation of "ape," while causing Yank's disintegration, also provides for his evolution, his rudimentary efforts to "tink" about his place, or lack of it, in the world. "Beauty" has, unknowingly, transformed the "Beast." Later references to "ape" and appearances of related animals--"monkey" (monkey fur)--ironically echo Yank's plight until his final encounter with the gorilla in the zoo symbolizes his metaphysical struggle to belong, to fit into the world somehow.

O'Neill based Yank on his friend Driscoll, a stoker of massive strength, capable of gruelling labor. Both sailed on the luxury liner Philadelphia in 1911, O'Neill as a member of the deck crew (Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Playwright 197). Driscoll dominated the stokehole, proud he could outwork all the others (Gelb 166). When O'Neill later learned of Driscoll's suicide (on Aug. 12, 1915), he puzzled over the reasons for such a tough, capable man ending his life (Bowen 32). Another person who may have suggested Yank was O'Neill's elder brother Jamie, who was "haunted by feelings of 'not belonging'" (Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Artist 389).

It is also possible that Terence O'Carolan--or Terry Carlin, as he called himself--provided at least an influence on the character of Yank. Terry, a skilled tanner, developed an improved process of tanning which his employer profitably used without giving Terry compensation. Recognizing how others had been similarly exploited, Terry became an anarchist and joined the I.W.W. Later, fearing for the loss of workers' individualism should they gain industrial control, Carlin became a mystic (Alexander 211-14).

Although Joe Magarac is regarded as a folk-tale hero (genuine or manufactured), his character may have a factual basis. According to Jules B. Billard, Joe may be the composite of William Wiehe, a powerful seven-foot-tall president of a steelworkers' union, and Captain Bill Jones, a dynamic worker, then superintendent, in 1874, for Andrew Carnegie at the J. Edgar Thomson works in Pennsylvania. Jones died in his mill during a blast furnace explosion.<sup>6</sup> Another factual basis for the character may be a Croatian named Mestrovic who originally came from the mining region of Petrova Goro, a "Josip" who in America became "Joe" (Reutter 35, examining a theory provided by George J. Prpic). While tales about Joe Magarac supposedly appeared as early as 1909, the character's real entry into public consciousness came in 1931 with the publication of "The Saga of Joe Magarac: Steelman" in Scribner's Magazine by Owen Francis. From the 1930s to 1950, "Joe" was used as a marketing device for U.S. Steel. He made a 1937 appearance in a narrative by Ernest J. Wright, a writer for the Federal Writers Project (Kahn 17-18). In 1950 Carnegie-Illinois Steel put out a comic book titled "Joe, the Genie of Steel."

Steel for Yank is, first, a magical shield which he uses to conceal from himself the gap that exists between himself and the natural world. He can never fully understand that, by having identified with steel, he has become his own prison. "Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me. Aw, hell! I can't see--it's all dark, get me. It's all wrong!" (Sc. 7). (Even those like Mildred, the heiress to Nazareth Steel, have been converted into waste products in the Bessemer process, their natural strength atrophied as their industrial empire expanded.) The bowels of Yank's ship are "imprisoned by white steel" (Sc. 1). On Blackwell's Island Yank is crouched behind heavy steel bars (Sc. 6); and at the monkey house, Yank addresses the gorilla in the steel cage--the scene for Yank's determined regression and the ape's and Yank's mutual "release."

Steel in 1920 had appeared as a metaphor for human progress in Carl Sandburg's Smoke and Steel (and recall that Stalin means steel). The metaphor of steel as progress may have acted as a catalyst for The Hairy Ape (Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Playwright 73). "Progress," for O'Neill, was decidedly ironic. In 1913 as a cub reporter on the New London Telegraph, O'Neill had satirized the perverse effects of "progress" on the workers in poems about the exploitive practices of corporations such as U.S. Steel (Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Playwright 230).

Joe Magarac's transformation from hybrid steel-man into pure steel has an uncanny resemblance to Yank's "final solution" to resolve his "in-between" status. Joe finally becomes the "complete company man," imbedded in metal and in the metallic foundation of the mill, an archetypal sacrificial figure whose blood insures the strength of the edifice under which he is buried (see Leach and Fried 553). Magarac closes the gap between self and nature by plunging into a steel furnace. Relinquishing both self and nature, Joe becomes the complete expression of O'Neill's description of The Hairy Ape: his exploit is "A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life."

In both works, the woman is crucial to exposing the non-human qualities in the characters. Mildred Douglas is a Medusa, fixing Yank to an image from which he cannot escape; and he starts "down the road to self-extinction" (Raleigh 126). While Mary Mestrovich as a folk character "belongs," and while Mildred serves no pronounced thematic function, in at least one version of "Joe Magarac" Mary responds to Joe with the same revulsion Mildred shows to Yank. Learning that Joe is her intended groom, Mary recoils in fear and nearly faints (Malcolmson 32). (In none of the versions does Mary look on Joe as a possible husband.) While Joe prefers working to wives in all the versions I have seen, it is also clear that Mary prefers Pete Pussick over a steel-chested giant. Since Magarac considers marriage an imposition--entering the contest not for her hand, but for his own delight in ousting the competitors--he is not devastated by Mary's response, as Yank is by Mildred's look. Nonetheless, it is significant that once Mary's marriage is settled, Joe's dedication to making steel--and doing nothing else--is clarified; at this point he, like Yank, relinquishes the life force. (See Goldberg in Cargill, Fagin and Fischer 242 for a discussion of the "ironic life force" in The Hairy Ape.)

At least two versions (Malcolmson and Stoutenberg) suggest that Joe Magarac's reason for melting himself down was his inability to confront the emptiness of "no work." After the mill closed, he did not "belong." Unlike Yank, he could not even attempt "to think"; he could only act--if he was no-body, he could enter "the body" of his work, steel. The tale, then, in spite of U.S. Steel's use of it to exalt the loyal and productive worker, suggests the entrapment of modern man. Whether he be confined in steelmill or stokehole, his psychic nature becomes irretrievably lost in the materials he uses (the loss of Man in his work lamented by Emerson in the opening paragraphs of The American Scholar, 1837). His subconscious is consumed by the furnaces of technology, and he lives in a perpetual present, without memory and without a means of projection. (See Raleigh 170; in The Iceman Cometh, Hickey considers that living exclusively in the present is a panacea.)

Without a past or a future, how can man belong? Magarac exults in his decision, and his "bubbling laughter" comes from the furnace as he sinks beneath the surface of the hot steel mass. As Yank is releasing the gorilla from his cage at the zoo, Yank speaks in a "mocking tone"; later his derision of the ape changes to self-derision when he realizes he's been mortally crushed. The passionate despair he expresses in asking the question "Where do I fit in?" is soon replaced by habitual toughness. Assuming the role of a circus barker advertising a freak, he burlesques his own death. He urges the imaginary audience to look at the "one and original Hairy Ape...." Both Joe Magarac and Yank are "macho" to the end; both tragically succeed in splitting off the self neither can find.

In two genres so dissimilar, what finally is the confluence of "Joe Magarac" and The Hairy Ape? More evidently "Joe Magarac" is an attempt by industry to create the do-and-die hero. The reader, considering the tale from this socio-economic perspective,

sees the tale as exploitive and dangerous,<sup>8</sup> even tragic in the realization that the message was once widely believed (as a reverse-perverse Horatio Alger myth). Today, while we can reflect on how workers of the past were duped by the "Joe Magarac" mentality, we ourselves have bought into "workaholic" schemes designed by others and by ourselves to keep us too busy to recognize our own spiritual demise. From that vantage point, "J.M." is a myth for the "melt down" of the twentieth century self. The Hairy Ape is, in large part, evidence for the same type of protest, O'Neill recognizing how materialistic America destroys man's spirit, "divorcing him from the qualities of humanity which gave him dignity and the sense of manhood" (Bogard 249). Whether man has not evolved sufficiently to change his own and others' conditions or whether his environment has not allowed him "to think" in order to create means for more life-giving conditions, falsely posits too wide a separation between the nature of man and his environment. If the environment is destructive, man is deformed; if that deformity prevents the emergence of a healthful environment, man is doomed. The man of steel becomes the beast of clay till, "burnt out," he becomes mere ash. Nothing left. No fire of thought or imagination to kindle understanding, to illuminate future lives. In becoming the comic equivalents of Yank and Joe Magarac, we inherit their tragedies.

-- Marilyn Jurich

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Initiated by Henry Ford in 1913-14, the moving assembly line was widely adopted by industry in the 1920s (Link and Catton 252).

<sup>2</sup>Folklorists disagree on the authenticity of Joe Magarac as a genuine folk hero. In a 1953 article entitled "Joe Magarac...Hoax and Humbug!" (in The Pittsburgh Press), George Swetnam discusses the study by Hyman Richman, a Pittsburgh folklorist, which reveals that as an oral tale, the story was completely unknown by the mill workers in the very towns where the Magarac narrative was supposed to be widely circulated. While a few inhabitants in these southwestern Pennsylvania towns had read the tale in some version, no spoken variants of the tale existed (in 1953).

More revealing, when Richman spoke the Croatian term magarac to Slavs who recognized its meaning, not one regarded its equivalent "jackass" favorably--as "a hard-working dependable, stalwart laborer," the sense intended in the tale. Rather, the Slavs regarded the term to be downright abusive. Richman concluded that "Joe Magarac" was never a folk-tale, that the character was, instead, a manufactured hero, both character and tale derived from a story by Owen Francis published in Scribner's Magazine in 1931, though Francis may himself have heard it from others. (Sometimes the tale is regarded as "legend" or "myth.")

<sup>3</sup>In this respect it is interesting to refer to Jean Piaget's The Child's Conception of Physical Causality to explain Yank's concept of nature: "...the more primitive the ideas of the child, the further removed are they from the physical environment as we know it.... The starting point of causality is a nondifferentiation between inner and outer experience: the world is explained in terms of the self" (in Gruber and Vonèche 146).

<sup>4</sup>Two sources suggest that an Irish name for the hero may exist: Leach names a "Joe McGarrick" and Gibbons refers to "Joseph Patrick McGarrick."

<sup>5</sup>Mildred's feeble attempt to belong is also expressed symbolically through her identification with a leopard (Scene Two). In a jungle, she admits, she can remain camouflaged; but in a cage, she becomes conspicuous. Her willingness to become vulnerable so as to use power for others' benefit, ends in inertia.

<sup>6</sup>Roy Kahn in Real Pittsburgh (Nov., 1985) regards this factual explanation as a U.S. Steel promotional gambit.



<sup>7</sup>See H331 "Suitor Contest: bride offered as prize" in Stith Thompson, Vol. 3.

<sup>8</sup>The tale is currently available in many versions for children.

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JOE MAGARAC, the Hairy Ape's confluent counterpart in comics and folklore, in a painting by William Gropper that was hanging in the lobby of the University of Pittsburgh's Student Union in 1965, when it was caught in this photograph.

## THE O'NEILL SUMMER: REPORTS ON THREE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

[EDITOR'S FOREWORD.] Eugene O'Neill could never have experienced a summer as grand as this, which would have been his 99th. Inspired by the imminence of his centennial, four international symposia were devoted, in whole or in part, to his life, his work, and his indelible influence on American and world drama. Thanks to the diligence of a crack team of dedicated correspondents, we are able to offer, in this issue, reports on the first three of those conferences; and we hope, in the Winter issue, to provide a comparable summary of the fourth--the June 11-12 symposium directed by Yoshiteru Kurokawa in Tokyo. In the interests of brevity and uniformity, the professional affiliations of participants have been omitted; but I will be happy to seek the address of any mentioned individual to whom a reader wishes to write for fuller information or for a copy of a specific paper. Our deepest thanks to Marc Maufort, Michael and Martha Manheim, and Gary Vena for the detailed and evocative reports that follow. --F.C.W.]

I. "EUGENE O'NEILL AND THE EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN DRAMA," organized by the Belgian Luxembourg American Studies Association (BLASA), sponsored by USIS, the National Fund for Scientific Research-Belgium, the Belgian Ministry of Education, General Motors and Sabena, and held at the Educational Center "Domain Les Masurel," in Han-sur-Lesse, in the heart of the Belgian Ardennes, on May 20-22, 1988. Report by Marc Maufort, director of the conference.

The conference opened on the afternoon of Friday, May 20, with remarks of welcome by Armand Michaux, BLASA Vice-President, to the participants, who came from the United States, Japan, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary and Belgium. I then introduced John Henry Raleigh, whose keynote address was entitled "Strindberg and O'Neill as Historical Dramatists." Both playwrights, Raleigh noted, had a strong sense of the contradictions and ironies of human life, and the historical background of their works reinforced this dark vision. In their respective histories of Sweden and America, they were interested in man's struggle for power and in the development of the nation. Whereas Strindberg was a historical optimist concentrating on the Reformation era in Sweden, O'Neill was essentially a historical pessimist focusing on the American nineteenth century. However, both also exhibited a world historical impulse. Strindberg believed that propulsion in history was concurrently materialistic, ideological and spiritual. To him, historical rhythms relied on repetitions, the dialectic of integration and disintegration, the rapidity of historical events, and the idea of relativity. O'Neill, on the contrary, had no such complex theory about history. The origins of his notion of history could be traced in Fechter's The Count of Monte Cristo, in which historical events took the shape of a romantic pageant. Further, O'Neill thought of history as an ongoing continuum, as his use of Greek myths indicates. In particular, he saw American history as propelled by greed. From The Fountain to More Stately Mansions, O'Neill's concept of history developed towards the depiction of actual historical circumstances and an increasing sense of determinism. Raleigh concluded that both Strindberg and O'Neill underscored a parallel between history and the individual, an idea reminiscent of the works of Wilhelm Dilthey and of Goethe's Dictung und Wahrheit. To describe the historical works of Strindberg and O'Neill, an apt metaphor would be that of Joyce in Finnegans Wake, where existence is compared to a gigantic human body. In short, history is but the "lengthened shadow of a man."

The first paper session, "O'Neill: Patterns of Influence and Confluence," moderated by Gilbert Debusscher, began with Michael Manheim's talk on "Eugene O'Neill and the Founders of Modern Drama." Manheim stressed that modern drama, essentially a reaction against nineteenth century melodrama, should be called "post-modern" inasmuch as it presents life from various contradictory perspectives. He then cited scenes from plays by Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov and O'Neill in which such modern vision is best expressed. To all four, the plot, so prominent in melodrama, is secondary. Indeed, in The Wild Duck, Miss

Julie, and The Three Sisters, opposing and shifting emotions constitute the most important ingredient of the drama, disrupting our settled impressions of characters. These "rhythms of kinship" culminate in O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night, in which Jamie reveals a chaotic mixture of self-recrimination and true fellow feeling, and polar emotions condition the nature of the dialogue. Manheim concluded that in all four authors' dramas, these conflicting feelings do not find, as in conventional melodrama, a neat resolution; and that such "open" form determines the measure of the writers' modernity.

In the same session, I talked on "Typee Revisited: O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra and Melville," arguing that a full appreciation of the craftsmanship of O'Neill's Civil War trilogy lies in the identification of its affinities with Melville's first romance. Indeed, in The Hunted, Orin Mannon refers specifically to Typee in declaring his incestuous passion to Christine, opposing the idyllic peace of Melville's islands to the rigors of New England Puritanism. O'Neill contrasts these "Blessed" isles to the bleakness of the North Seas, traceable in the brooding song "Shenandoah" and in the depiction of Boston Harbor, where a murder is performed. While Melville adopts a monolithic viewpoint in Typee, O'Neill describes the novelists's islands from a multiple perspective, enabling him to stress their illusory nature. Such cubist-like composition technique, combined with his existentialist viewpoint, testifies to O'Neill's innovative stance. On the other hand, that Mourning becomes Electra should bear resemblances to Melville's work places the dramatist in the mainstream of the American literary tradition.

Saturday, May 21, began with a panel on "The Early O'Neill," chaired by Joris Duytschaever. Frederick Wilkins talked about O'Neill's literary growth in a paper entitled "'Arriving with a Bang': O'Neill's Literary Debut." These beginnings, Wilkins showed, were marked by the 1914 publication of Thirst and Other One-Act Plays. Two factors suggest the importance of this volume: O'Neill's obsessive love for books, and his disdain for the commercial theatre of his father. Wilkins subsequently described the various qualities and blemishes of these short dramas. Thirst offers evidence of O'Neill's powerful scenic vision in the depiction of a setting dominated by the "angry eye of God." Fog, while a lesser sea play, nonetheless presents a similarly fascinating decor, as O'Neill's "dawn iceberg" indicates. Thematically, Wilkins submitted, these two one-act plays reveal other nascent qualities: Thirst suggests O'Neill's incipient metaphysical preoccupations, while Fog includes a complex portrait of a poet. Warnings and Recklessness, which are land plays, do not possess a comparable degree of thematic substance: in the former, the hero's fate remains rather tawdry; and in the latter, the plot is a mere "grisly anecdote." The Web, however, shows real pathos as Rose, granted a moment of tragic vision, understands the futility of human life before going to prison. Wilkins concluded that in these one-act plays the motifs that would recur in O'Neill's later career were already announced. They can be summarized in the composite words of two characters in The Web: "It's a bum game all around.... Us guys has got to stand together." The analysis of his first book reveals that, by 1914, O'Neill had indeed "arrived with a bang."

Paul Voelker followed with a paper entitled "Success and Frustration at Harvard: Eugene O'Neill's Relationship with George Pierce Baker (1914-1915)," in which he argued that Baker's influence on O'Neill was not as negative as has been generally assumed. Voelker reviewed the various plays that O'Neill wrote while enrolled in Baker's course at Harvard. "The Dear Doctor," a short story adaptation, apparently exhibited O'Neill's talents as a writer of comedy, since it appealed to Baker, who also liked O'Neill's Belgian play, "The Sniper," in which details of gesture and pantomime can be attributed to the teacher's positive influence. A third play written at Harvard, "The Personal Equation," was first conceived of as a story of abortion; but O'Neill rejected that theme since Baker thought that such a play could never be produced. O'Neill responded to this advice because his greatest fear at that time was of remaining an unproduced playwright. The fourth work, Belshazzar, written in collaboration with Colin Ford, had a religious theme and was probably influenced by the motion picture Cabiria, about Hannibal's

crossing of the Alps. Belshazzar was not entirely successful, a sign that O'Neill had not yet acquired mastery of the full-length play genre. But after having attended Baker's course, O'Neill was definitely able to write for the theatre. The best proof of the positive influence of Baker on O'Neill, Voelker concluded, lies in the fact that the playwright revised Bound East For Cardiff out of respect for the teacher's evaluation of it.

In the session's third paper, "Theatre Language: Word and Image in The Hairy Ape," Jean Chothia commented on the success of Peter Stein's recent production of The Hairy Ape for the Schaubühne Theatre Company of Berlin. In The Hairy Ape, the stage directions and images lead us to anticipate Yank's fall into consciousness, and Stein's staging gave correct attention to these scenic images. In the first half of the play, taking place at sea, one could see the massive side of a steamship, marked in three horizontal strips across the full width of the stage, which were removable to expose playing areas at different levels. Stein added a personal touch to the stokehole scene when Mildred, before recoiling from Yank in horror, reached toward him. And, by following O'Neill's indications scrupulously, Stein successfully staged the last scene of the play. This last moment sounded convincing as Yank uttered a final cry of self-mockery. Chothia concluded her speech by alluding to the translation problems of O'Neill's dramas. She submitted that the polyphony of O'Neill's speeches survived in translation and that the energy of despair embedded in each line could be conveyed by skilled actors. In other words, the general orchestration continues to reach audiences even in another language.

I chaired the next session, "Studies of the O'Neill Archives," which began with Judith E. Barlow's "Mother, Wife, Mistress, Friend, and Collaborator: Carlotta Monterey and Long Day's Journey Into Night." Barlow examined Carlotta Monterey's contributions--direct or indirect--to O'Neill's great autobiographical work, which Carlotta typed herself, also providing the details for the description of Mary's wedding gown. Her allowing the play to be produced just three years after her husband's death was not solely an attempt to revive interest in O'Neill's work. From the study of her diaries, preserved in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale, it appears that Carlotta firmly believed that she was the first person who had provided O'Neill with a real home. To her, Long Day's Journey was welcome proof that O'Neill's first family had failed to do so. Clearly, she did not see, or did not wish to see, that O'Neill sought to forgive his parents in this late play. The irony, as Carlotta's diaries suggest, is that Mary resembled Carlotta to some degree. Both had a passion for expensive clothes, a tendency to romanticize their past, an uncomfortable attitude towards motherhood, a hatred for the stage, and a penchant for accusing their husbands of insensitivity. Ostensibly, although she collaborated in the creation of Long Day's Journey Into Night, Carlotta did not want to see herself in Mary Tyrone. But, as Barlow concluded, the character of Mary is not solely Carlotta or Ella Quinlan O'Neill; the playwright has subtly transformed real life into dramatic art.

Jackson R. Bryer delivered the second paper of this session: "O'Neill's Letters to Donald Pace: A Newly Discovered Correspondence." Bryer first commented on the nature and scope of his forthcoming edition, with Travis Bogard, of selected letters of Eugene O'Neill to be released in January 1989 by Yale University Press. The volume, containing 600 of the 3000 extant O'Neill letters, will present in full many letters that have previously appeared in abridged form in the standard biographies. New discoveries in the process of putting together the volume were a previously unknown letter to Marion Welch; a letter to Sister Mary Leo, showing the complexities of O'Neill's attitude towards the Catholic faith; and letters to the editor of an American-Norwegian newspaper, bespeaking O'Neill's admiration for Ibsen. In the second part of his talk, Bryer focused on O'Neill's letters to Donald Pace, who worked for various marine firms and built detailed ship models for the playwright. The letters, dating from 1934 to 1935, show O'Neill's impressive knowledge of nautical nomenclature. He was inflexible on questions of scale and authenticity, on which grounds he once rejected one of Pace's models. The letters to Pace reveal that, some twenty years after his sea travels, O'Neill was still fascinated by the clipper ships evoked so poetically in Paddy's reveries in The Hairy Ape.

On the afternoon of May 21, Kristiaan Versluys conducted a session entitled "Studies in O'Neill's Literary and Theatrical Craftsmanship I." The first paper, by Egil Törnqvist, entitled "From A Wife for a Life to A Moon for the Misbegotten: On O'Neill's Play Titles," showed how O'Neill often struggled to obtain the most precise, evocative titles for his dramas. To this end, Törnqvist reviewed the meanings of O'Neill's titles throughout his entire canon. In his conclusion, Törnqvist considered his findings in the light of the French "titrologie." According to this method of literary study, there are two types of titles: "thématique" and "rhématique." In the first category are titles that are theme-oriented; in the second, titles that are form-oriented. In O'Neill's works, one comes across umbrella titles, such as Mourning Becomes Electra; mono-titles; subtitles with rhematic aspects ("A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life in Eight Scenes"); titles referring to the hero (Anna Christie); and titles evoking the main situation of the drama (The Long Voyage Home). The titles in the last category are often ironical in intent. Törnqvist's paper clearly demonstrated that, through a skillful choice of titles, O'Neill achieved the artistic qualities described by Edmund Tyrone as the "makings of a poet."

The second talk of this session--"With Clenched Fist...: Observations on a Recurrent Motif in Dramas by Eugene O'Neill"--was read by Professor Ulrich Halfmann, who first indicated certain similarities between O'Neill's plays and Fechter's The Count of Monte Cristo. He then argued that little attention had been paid to the fact that, in several of his plays, O'Neill "pursues a critical-creative reworking of the means of representation characteristic of melodrama," restyling them to harmonize with his own tragic world view, one markedly different from the affirmative vision of melodrama. As an illustration of this technique, Halfmann focused on the motif of the clenched fist, derived from the end of Act II of The Count of Monte Cristo. Examining the evolution of this motif in several of O'Neill's works, Halfmann argued that there exists a specifically O'Neillian semiotics of the fist: the fist often strikes out at things, and turns back against the one who waves it. In other words, it expresses both rage and impotence. Further, the clenched fist is most often connected with the main character of the play and is used as a leitmotif at crucial moments of the action. O'Neill's fist is a symbol of man's reaction against fate in a world, unlike that of melodrama, deprived of a governing deity. Halfmann concluded his presentation by indicating that in The Iceman Cometh O'Neill found a way, through a sheer delicate balance of dreams, to preserve hope in the hopelessness of such a godless universe.

The last paper of this session, delivered by Gary Vena, was entitled "O'Neill's Pentimento: The Iceman's Journey from Sketchbook to Stage." Vena's slide-illustrated presentation examined the process by which O'Neill's sketches for The Iceman Cometh were first translated into stage language. This analysis emphasized the various transformations of O'Neill's work, a feature which Lillian Hellman defined as "pentimento," alluding to a painter's modification of his intentions. Vena showed how, in each act of the play, Robert Edmond Jones and Karl Nielsen succeeded in translating the playwright's intentions in mounting the 1946 Guild production, capturing O'Neill's sense of symmetry and creating designs evocative of his claustrophobic early drawings. A measure of O'Neill's craftsmanship, Vena concluded, lies in the richness of detail those sketches provide.

A final session, "Studies in O'Neill's Literary and Theatrical Craftsmanship II," moderated by Armand Michaux, took place on May 22. Susan Harris Smith presented a paper entitled "Actors Constructing an Audience: Hughie's Post-Modern Aura." She submitted that the play's last moments are much less positive than has often been understood. Hughie belongs, Smith explained, to what Charles Newman calls the "heroic phase" of modernism, consisting of "a retrospective revolt against a retrograde mechanical industrialism." Hughie encompasses the shift between modernism and post-modernism. Of the former, it retains a certitude of despair, self-absorption, and self-confidence mixed with self-loathing. Of the latter, it offers the following symptoms: self-assertion of the private mind, a self-reflexive theatricality, an artificial construction of an identity, silence as a source of alienation, and a tendency for consciousness to turn on



itself. The characters of Hughie achieve authenticity in role-playing only, as each of the two plays the part of an audience to the other. Thus, they share a mutually constructive truth that makes life bearable but hardly idyllic. Smith concluded by recommending that the post-modern nature of Hughie might best be stressed in performance through a taped presentation of the clerk's unspoken thoughts.

In the following talk, "Buried Children: Fathers and Sons in O'Neill and Shepard," James A. Robinson examined the imprinting of a father's destructive behavior in the sons of Desire Under the Elms and Buried Child. Both plays show a son's attempted succession to a father's authority, and use pagan myths in order to lend universal significance to such conflict. While O'Neill adopts a reverent attitude towards myth and authority (a typically modernist stance), Shepard subverts those myths through irony (a markedly post-modern perspective). Such a viewpoint reflects what Ihab Hassan terms the "vast will to unmaking" of our era. In Desire Under the Elms, the authority of the father triumphs, as the last moments of the drama indicate; whereas, in Buried Child, the very idea of a son's revolt against a powerless father is seen as impossible. At the end of Buried Child, Vince inherits the masculinity of his forefathers. Shepard, however, subtly reveals that this occurs in an empty vision. Robinson summarized his observations by suggesting that O'Neill's influence on Shepard, and on Buried Child in particular, resides in a creative use of myth.

In the session's last presentation, "O'Neill's Endgame," Christopher W. E. Bigsby also viewed O'Neill from a post-modernist perspective. In the last plays of O'Neill as in those of Beckett, he argued, a hopeless hope energizes the lives of the characters. Hughie, in this respect, resembles some of Susan Glaspell's plays or some of Edward Hopper's paintings, as it is named after a character who never appears. It is in some sense an obituary in which the titular portrait is a construction that reveals the sensitivity that creates it. Hughie stresses the importance of narrative, a feature evocative of Beckett and Pinter. O'Neill's characters are storytellers victimized by their own stories. (Erie, for instance, aspires to what Foucault termed the "labyrinth of repetition": he remains trapped in his own story, in his own performance.) Bigsby noted that Hughie, concerned as it is with the radical incompleteness of language, still owes something to Emerson, one of whose poems O'Neill was reading at the time of the play's composition. Like Emerson's poem, Hughie demonstrates a fundamental anxiety with the problem of personal identity, thus exploring the tragic nature of the discovery of our existence.

The scholarly conclusion of the conference was a roundtable discussion on "The Future of O'Neill Studies," led by Gilbert Debusscher and myself. Special guests were John Henry Raleigh, Judith Barlow, Frederick Wilkins, Jean Chothia, Betty Jean Jones, Alain Piette, Johan Callens, and actor-playwright Mel Cobb. Among the topics considered were O'Neill's early plays, his unpublished private papers at Yale University, and especially his potential for the stage. All participants vowed that, after O'Neill's centennial year, major efforts would continue to be made to seek better coordination between literary and theatrical spheres, to ensure that stylistically adequate productions of his works are offered in the years ahead.

Three different forms of theatrical activity were featured during the conference. On Friday evening, Mel Cobb gave a reading of his play, O'Neill; or, Sunny Days and Starry Nights. Cobb read the part of O'Neill while actor Larry Corwin delivered the stage directions. The action is situated in O'Neill's study as he is composing Long Day's Journey Into Night and confronts, successively, the ghosts of his father, mother and elder brother. In his reading, Cobb succeeded in giving theatrical life to these different voices. On Saturday, two parts of Long Day's Journey Into Night were offered. The first, in Dutch, featured Flemish actor Julien Schoenaerts as James Tyrone in the Act IV confrontation with Edmund, played by Carl Ridders. The second, in French, starred veteran Belgian actress Yvonne Garden, who appeared as Mary Tyrone, with Emile Souvoy and Pierre Pivin as James and Edmund, in the last scenes of Acts III and IV. The variety of languages employed--English, Dutch, and French--made abundantly clear that the works of

1.



Jean Chothia, Paul Voelker, Frederick Wilkins and Joris Duytschaever evaluate "The Early O'Neill."

(Identifications proceed from left to right.)

2.



Jackson R. Bryer and Judith Barlow proffer insights gleaned from their studies of the O'Neill archives.

3.



Gary Vena, Egil Törnqvist and Ulrich Halfmann assess "O'Neill's Literary and Theatrical Craftsmanship I."

4.



James A. Robinson and Susan Harris Smith share studies of "O'Neill's Literary and Theatrical Craftsmanship II."



Gilbert Debusscher and Marc Maufort con shots of Touch of the Poet, directed by Betty Jean Jones at UNC-Greensboro.

6.



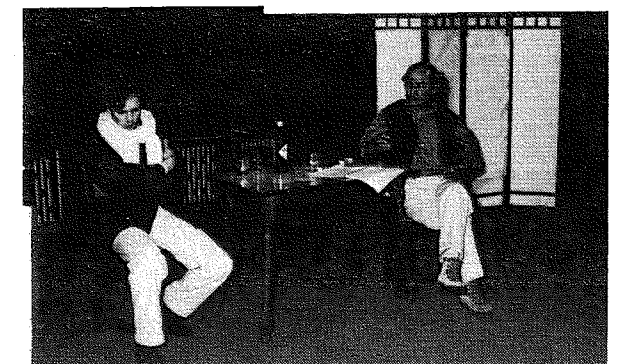
Last-day stalwarts: Vena, Bigsby, Bryer, Maufort, Raleigh, Barlow, Chothia, Robinson, Törnqvist, Smith and Manheim.

7.



Yvonne Garden as Mary Tyrone in a French translation of the last scene of Long Day's Journey Into Night.

8.



Carl Ridders (Edmund) and Julien Schoenaerts (James) in a scene (in Dutch) from Act Four of Long Day's Journey.

O'Neill survive in translation and can even move audiences unfamiliar with the language of the performance.

As conference director, I would wish to thank all those who helped me in the organization of this conference: Mrs. Francine Lercangée and the staff of the Brussels Center for American Studies, who carefully oversaw the administrative details; Mr. Jan van Kerkhove, of the Brussels American Cultural Center; and the members of the organizing committee: Professors Gilbert Debusscher, Joris Duytschaever, Kristiaan Versluys, and Herman van de Wee. I hope that this conference will have contributed to the reputation of O'Neill and to the development of American studies in Belgium.

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II. "STRINDBERG/O'NEILL: THE MODERN THEATRE," the 1988 Nobel Symposium, sponsored by the Nobel Foundation, organized by Dr. Tom J. A. Olsson, and held at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, Sweden, on May 24-27, 1988. Report by symposium participants Michael and Martha Manheim.

The 1988 Nobel Symposium, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, consisted of scholarly papers on the theatre of Strindberg and O'Neill; interviews and discussions with and by leading playwrights, directors, and actors of Europe and America on the state of the theatre today and its prospects for the future; and productions by the Royal Dramatic of well-known plays by the authors under discussion (Strindberg's Master Olof and Miss Julie, and O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night, the last two under the direction of Ingmar Bergman). Conference participants were welcomed on the first day in the foyer of the Theatre's main stage by Lars Gyllensten, Chairman of the Nobel Foundation, who discussed the tremendous impact the rebellious Strindberg has had on 20th century Sweden, and the appropriateness of including the American playwright O'Neill, who owed so much to Strindberg, and the performance of whose plays, early and late, was pioneered by Karl Ragnar Gierow and the Royal Dramatic Theatre. The emphasis of Gyllensten's remarks, however, focused on Strindberg, who struck such a nerve in the Swedish character.

The first day's papers were, then, on Strindberg. In the morning, Professor Göran Stockenström dealt with the strong streak of mysticism underlying Strindberg's plays. He illustrated his views through discussion of such seemingly dissimilar works as A Dream Play, the historical Vasa trilogy, and To Damascus. He distinguished this tendency in Strindberg from the "naturalism" which characterizes much of the drama of the period by use of the term "supernaturalism" to characterize Strindberg's work.

Dr. Gunnar Ollén, speaking in Swedish, dealt with the international reputation of Strindberg, whose plays--along with those of Ibsen, Chekhov, and Brecht--are today's "new classics" of theatrical production. Ollén reviewed 20th century Strindberg productions which have taken place throughout Europe and America, though not in Nazi Germany and, even to this day, rarely in the Iron Curtain countries. Strindberg's success has been especially notable, however, in postwar Germany, which has become a sort of "second homeland" for his work, Ollén observed. The playwright's reputation in France was enhanced with productions of his work by Antonin Artaud (in his Theatre of Cruelty) and in England with the "coming of John Osborne and the generation of angry young men." In the United States, Ollén continued, Strindberg became a "role model" for such playwrights as Eugene O'Neill and Edward Albee.

On a different note, Dr. Richard Bark concluded the morning session with a lament, supported by statistics, that Strindberg is so little performed in Sweden today. This is regrettable, Bark said, because the characteristics of Strindberg's plays which have accounted for their compelling fascination are most compatible with key aspects of the post-naturalist movement in literature--for example, the element of chance which provokes characters to throw one mask upon another, achieving contradictions which make playing

Strindberg such a challenge to actors. Everything in Strindberg, Bark suggested, ultimately comes to be a kind of "dream play," in which we can move from reality to unreality without warning and in which the unresolvably contradictory aspects of human existence abound. Such characteristics of Strindberg's plays suggest for Bark a "sort of meta-theatricality" which would "satisfy the post-structuralists."

Bark's conclusions about the infrequency of performance of Strindberg's plays were strongly challenged in the ensuing discussion by Dr. Freddie Rokem, a director at the Royal Dramatic Theatre, whose own statistics suggested there are many productions of Strindberg in Sweden today, especially if one includes those on radio and television.

Professor Maurice Gravier, speaking in French, led off the afternoon session with a discussion of Strindberg and the "theatre of the absurd," which he defined as theatre in which "we see characters moving around feeling like strangers in a world they perceive to be out of order and not following the laws of logic." The Strindberg plays that Gravier found fit this definition best were A Dream Play, To Damascus, and the chamber plays, especially The Ghost Sonata, which he considers the "culmination of Strindberg's achievement." The playwrights Gravier then focused on as taking the lead from Strindberg as writers of the absurd were Adamov, Artaud, Genet, Ionesco, Vauthier and Witkiewicz. The absurdism of Beckett and Pinter, Gravier suggested, seemingly owed little to Strindberg. "But Strindberg," he concluded, "is like the most red-hot nucleus in the center of a glowing nebula, 'the anti-theatre of yesterday and today.'"

Dr. Freddie Rokem talked about "the modernity of Strindberg's language consisting of a combination of the strong inner tensions of the dialogue on the one hand and its relations to the scenic image as it is presented on the stage on the other." In recent performances, he continued, "there is a clear tendency towards an emphasis on the tensions between word and image" as well as on "the growing importance of images of light and darkness...." Such emphases, Rokem concluded, tend to focus more attention on existential and metaphysical questions. Rokem explored his ideas through discussion of A Dream Play, To Damascus, Easter, and others. He suggested in the course of his remarks that The Ghost Sonata may be seen as a sort of parody of A Dream Play.

Professor Harry G. Carlson followed with a discussion of the rather sorry history of Strindberg productions in America. While his influence on leading American playwrights is unquestionable, Carlson said, that influence has carried over little into the area of production, most Americans still being uneasy about other cultures, and most American actors ignorant of Strindberg. Carlson then reviewed some notable productions since the 1940's, including those of Miss Julie, The Father (with Laurence Olivier), and The Dance of Death (with Olivier and Alan Bates), which offered strong performances by notable actors. But most productions today, he concluded, are off-off Broadway or on college and university campuses. While many of them lose the dark humor of the playwright and the proper balance of the real and the supernatural, that "the amateurs" keep Strindberg alive in America is something Carlson feels we should be grateful for.

Professor John Henry Raleigh next focused on both Strindberg and O'Neill. Comparing their mutual interest in historical drama, Raleigh emphasized their similar "fascination with the paradoxes and ambiguities of history," the perception that family love-hate relationships were important in history as well as in private life, and their "sense of sin in history and the need for its expiation." Raleigh also noted their common desire to "construct great cycles of interrelated historical dramas." On the other hand, Raleigh observed, Strindberg plays are far more "ideological" (and implicitly hopeful). O'Neill's, especially in plays like The Fountain and Marco Millions, while more involved in pageant or spectacle, are at the same time more pessimistic regarding man's innate greed and materialism. Finally, Raleigh observed that what mainly links the historical dramas of both playwrights is that in them "character was history and history was character and ... thus history was the lengthened shadow of a man."

The first day concluded with a discussion by Professor Egil Törnqvist of the impact of



both Strindberg and O'Neill on later dramatists. This impact, as Törnqvist described it, is less evident in the post-Hiroshima world. Rather, we now see the plays of Strindberg and O'Neill through the lens of contemporary perception and theories of dramatic structure. Strindberg clearly influenced O'Neill, he feels, as a psychological dramatist; but while Strindberg obviously also influenced a number of later dramatists, it is difficult to identify O'Neill's influence on them as distinct from Strindberg's. The most notable influence of O'Neill on a dramatist of the 1970's, he added, has been that of Long Day's Journey on the Swedish dramatist Lars Norén, but that influence is for Törnqvist more the exception than the rule.

On the second day--O'Neill day--Professor Virginia Floyd led off with a new look at the influence of O'Neill's Catholic background on his drama. She began by reminding us that O'Neill was led by Strindberg in being primarily an autobiographical dramatist, whose spiritual as well as emotional history constituted the chief subject matter of his drama. O'Neill's ambivalence toward his Roman Catholic heritage and his mother, she suggested, is never far below the surface in his plays, whether seen through the disguises of New England Puritanism (as in Desire Under the Elms or Mourning Becomes Electra), or through the good-evil conflicts of a play like The Great God Brown. While that ambivalence seems to have reached tentative resolution in the religious affirmation at the end of Days Without End, it continued to be a problem in the struggles with confession in Iceman and Moon for the Misbegotten, in the latter of which forgiveness comes after confession. Only the uncompleted plays he was working on at the close of his career, especially The Last Conquest with its planned juxtapositions of Christ and the Devil, appear to approach a genuine understanding of that ambivalence. The one thing all O'Neill's plays reveal, she concluded, is that he was never afraid to "look into his own dark."

Dr. Donald Gallup next described the development of the O'Neill collection at Yale University. The following is his own summary of his remarks:

Much of the Yale O'Neill collection was the gift of Carlotta Monterey O'Neill and resulted from her determination to preserve for future generations her husband's manuscripts and to document his creative genius. She gave not only manuscripts, but also photographs, memorabilia, and the most important books from their combined libraries. From her, during her lifetime, Yale received publication rights to Long Day's Journey Into Night and other late plays, and, by her bequest, her interest in all of O'Neill's work. The income from memorial funds thus established enables Yale to continue to acquire O'Neill manuscript material as it becomes available, to strengthen its collections in the field of American drama, and to offer O'Neill memorial scholarships in the Drama School.

Dr. Tom J. A. Olsson next summarized in considerable detail the unique history of O'Neill productions at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. Fourteen O'Neill plays have been produced there, he noted, from Anna Christie, the SS Glencairn plays, and Strange Interlude in the 1920s to More Stately Mansions in the 1960s. This unusual popularity of a foreign dramatist in Sweden was fostered, he observed, first by a visit by Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones to the Theatre in 1922, then by the good reception of some (though not all) of the plays by audiences and critics, and finally by Carlotta O'Neill's assenting to the production of Long Day's Journey Into Night by the theatre in 1956--its first performance anywhere. Olsson suggested that the Swedish productions helped to create the boom in O'Neill productions in the rest of the world.

The morning session next heard from Professor Edward L. Shaughnessy, who discussed O'Neill's reception by Irish theatres and audiences. Irish actors apparently like to do O'Neill, Shaughnessy observed, while Irish audiences have been ambivalent. In general, with the notable exception of Yeats and O'Casey, Irish intellectuals have been critical of his plays, while students and audiences have reacted more favorably--responses which

parallel, Shaughnessy pointed out, the playwright's reception in America.

Professor Paul Voelker concluded the morning session with a discussion of O'Neill's early debt to Strindberg. He said that O'Neill probably read Strindberg before 1913, but pinpointed a six-month period before publication of the early plays (1914) when the influence of Strindberg took deeper hold of O'Neill, a shift registered in the autobiographical interest of the one-act Fog.

Professor Frederick Wilkins, the afternoon's second speaker, took a close look at these early O'Neill plays, with particular attention to that first published collection, "Thirst" and Other One-Act Plays, a volume little noted in its time. Its five plays, Wilkins observed, reflect many of the themes associated with the playwright's youth--social injustice, his obsession with books, his disdain for the commercial theatre, his fascination with the sea, and the destructive potential of human greed. He concluded with the thought that what links O'Neill's earliest plays, and anticipates his later ones, is the idea expressed in Fog that while life is a "bum game all around," "us guys has got to stand together"--not so much in social action, Wilkins added, as in compassion.

The remaining papers, talks, and one dramatic reading on Wednesday dealt in specific terms with the performance of O'Neill's plays. Professor Gary Vena, who opened the Wednesday afternoon meeting, reviewed in detail the 1946 New York premiere of The Iceman Cometh, a production for which O'Neill chose the director (Eddie Dowling) and helped choose the actors. Vena pointed out that Eugene and often Carlotta O'Neill were present at rehearsals for this production (only O'Neill himself had attended rehearsals of earlier plays), O'Neill insisting on approving what he saw and demanding that nothing be cut. There was some complaint by O'Neill that Dowling was "inflexible," and concern from the actors about the uncertainty of Dowling's direction, which may have resulted from the playwright's presence. Nevertheless, said Vena, the production achieved "alcoholic realism," and reinforced Larry's relation to Hickey, Parritt's isolation, and the rhythm of return in Hickey's position in the last act.

Actress Geraldine Fitzgerald and director Arvin Brown closed the afternoon session with a discussion of problems related to staging O'Neill. Virginia Floyd as chair interviewed them about their experiences in O'Neill production, and Fitzgerald performed Mary Tyrone's monologue at the end of Long Day's Journey, giving participants a rare opportunity to see (for many anew) the role she had performed under Brown's direction in 1971. Brown described his emphases in this summer's New York production of Ah, Wilderness!, a play which, he said, sees love as healing, while it is often destructive in Long Day's Journey. Fitzgerald focused her remarks on the character of Mary, a complex woman who "speaks to all women of all backgrounds." In preparing for the role, she said, she consulted a doctor about physical reactions to drugs, since she felt that the stage directions for Mary "didn't line up with what she said." Fitzgerald also said that as she played the role, Mary had not taken the drug the night before but only after she saw that James wasn't going to help her with her sons." Brown added later that he was not sure O'Neill fully resolved the conflicts between the members of the Tyrone family or fully understood all his feelings about Mary. Both Fitzgerald and Brown commented on the humor always inherent in even the darkest of the plays. Lines in family dialogue should not always be taken at face value, Brown observed.

Thursday morning was devoted to the stage direction of Ingmar Bergman. Professor Lise-Lone Marker led off with a discussion of his productions of Strindberg plays, beginning with his early work in Malmö, and coming down to his current productions at the Royal Dramatic Theatre. He has always been primarily interested, she said, in "the intensification of the internal drama" of the characters, determined to get rid of "theatrical tinsel," and dedicated to "theatre that interests itself in human beings and hardly at all in things around." Her remarks were followed by Frederick Marker's interview of actors Bibi Andersson, Max Von Sydow, and Erland Josephson--all of whose international reputations grew out of their early work in both the stage productions and



films of Ingmar Bergman.

Thursday afternoon and Friday were devoted to explorations by international directors, playwrights, and theatre professionals of the current state of the theatre and what the future may hold. The following are a few of the many highlights in the wide-ranging discussion.

Soviet director Victor Slavkin described the difficulty of theatre artists in a society where decisions they alone could make have instead been made by political representatives. With greater freedom under glasnost, theatre must turn away from political problems for subject matter, he said, perhaps toward aestheticism. Slavkin then read a letter from Anatoly Vasilyev, another Soviet director, who did not obtain permission to attend. Vasilyev's letter attested to the fact that a new age has emerged in Russia, but he said it is too early to determine whether that would be for the good. "Not the word and not the fight," he wrote, "but the whole world around you is the ideology, that is, the dominant factor of artistic expression." Theatre is "looking around, because the world is doing the same."

Social anthropologist Lorentz Lyukens offered the idea that, as contemporary life is not definable because it is always in the action of "becoming," so theatre must mirror the process of becoming. Lyukens suggested several characteristics of modern society to which the theatre needs to respond: the rising lack of patience, competition for attentiveness, increasing expectations, the multiplication of observable phenomena, and the growth of the rhetorical mode.

Polish playwright Slawomir Mrozek investigated the question of why people still need theatre, since as entertainment it is so clearly being surpassed by other forms. Theatre, he suggested, like play, lets us act without consequences, safely. "The stage," he went on, "gives us metaphysical reassurance." We "dream of some consistent order in human history," and so we compose plays. Each "play on the stage is a proof," he continued, "that order is possible." Finally, he said, in order to keep "peace of mind when watching the theatre, the only way is to do it without asking too many questions about the relations of theatre to reality," since reality is, presumably, endlessly and inevitably without order.

Robert Wilson, American author of the recently performed Einstein on the Beach, was joined by East German playwright Heiner Müller in a discussion of the nature of Wilson's work. Wilson described how he creates a performance, beginning with title and length of the work, and then, varying the order of presentation of three or four visual "themes," establishing what he called the "visual book" of his play. Music for the themes comes next; "then we decide on action." What we see, Wilson noted, is as important as what we hear in the theatre. Müller suggested that Wilson is a member of the new culture of the future--the culture of images. "I'm from the stone age," he said. "I'm working from the inside, the dark side of the light," whereas Wilson begins with the surface, the light, and then always finds the "dark spot." Of a play, Wilson agreed, "It's a lie if you can understand it." In the course of the discussion, theatre historian and biographer Michael Meyer made an appeal from the audience for more traditional ways of approaching theatre.

American director Peter Sellars defended O'Neill against his American denigrators, saying that O'Neill "defies packaging," that he always struggles to say what he wants to say, and always seems to try to achieve something he can't. Such a struggle is human, Sellars said; any important playwright gives actors challenges which can't be met. O'Neill stands up, and "standing up is the most courageous thing a human being can do." In his remarks, Sellars vigorously attacked America's obsession with labels and with selling, saying that we must restore a spiritual life which we inevitably cannot understand.

Chinese playwright Gao Zingjian observed that the last century was the century of the

actor, this century at first that of the playwright (Ibsen, O'Neill, Strindberg, Shaw--down to the playwrights of the absurd), then that of the director (beginning in the 1970s). The drama to come, he said, should be theatrical--not the reproduction of everyday life, but a theatre which gives rise to "pleasure in the visual"--and that fresh ways of writing, corresponding to this theatricality, must be found. "Reality," he said, exists outside both the rational and the irrational: the absurd is existence--not a theatrical idea. Wherever rationality shines, art disappears. An audience wants wisdom but not necessarily ideas, and theatricality is a way to reach intuition and so to reach wisdom. Finally, he concluded, theatre needs language conveyed through sound and feeling, the kind of language one finds in folk songs and stories.

Israeli playwright Joshua Sobol, two of whose plays have been performed in Sweden, compared himself as dramatist to the Old Testament prophets, who performed in the street trying to make themselves understood. His message, like theirs, he said, is that the "human being is dangerous, motivated by the urge for destruction of self, state, the world." Is it the aim of theatre, he asked, "to end in silence--to hide? No, it is to speak and to expose!" No one should "keep silent after Auschwitz.... When humanity can be destroyed with a button--this is not the moment to keep silent."

Niklas Brunius concluded the symposium with a brief summary statement. There are no syntheses, much as we may want them, he said. He observed that we had learned many things: among them, that reality is only on stage, but we need not be realistic in the ways we've been trapped in; and we do not want Strindberg and O'Neill to become "classics" in the old sense. We want them to continue to affect us with their immediacy.

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III. "EUGENE O'NEILL: WORLD PLAYWRIGHT," organized and directed by Liu Haiping of the University of Nanjing, and held in Nanjing, People's Republic of China, on June 5-9, 1988; followed by a Eugene O'Neill Theatre Festival in Shanghai on June 10-15, 1988. Report by conference participant Gary Vena.

I can happily report that the ambitious array of scholarly papers and theatrical performances in Nanjing and Shanghai was presented with clockwork precision and consummate professionalism. Above all, the quality, scope and sheer audacity of this spectacular undertaking, coordinated under the superb hospitality and direction of one man--Professor Liu Haiping of Nanjing University, and incorporating the participation of several hundred personalities--transformed the occasion into a memorable celebration of Eugene O'Neill's 100th birthday. And what grand irony that this historical salute to America's foremost "international" playwright should have surfaced in China.

As I carefully collected the many pieces of correspondence and program announcements prior to my arrival in the People's Republic, I often wondered if the more than forty scheduled panel presentations, combined with the nearly dozen Nanjing/Shanghai folk operas and theatrical performances of O'Neill's plays--some of which I might never expect to see produced in America during my own lifetime, much less for his centenary--could possibly be realized. Despite my own anxieties, I trusted the advance publicity and the good intentions of my Chinese hosts, and was fortunate to be able to adjust my itinerary--at the last minute--to accommodate the additional Shanghai play festival which was announced fairly late in the proceedings as a follow-up to the Nanjing conference. While performances in Chinese of Beyond the Horizon and The Emperor Jones (Jiangsu Art Theatre), Long Day's Journey Into Night (Qian Xian Drama Theatre), and Hughie (an American production offered by the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Festival) were scheduled on the evenings of our heavily scheduled conference days, those of us who also planned to attend the Shanghai festival could look forward to The Great God Brown and yet another Hughie (both presented by the Shanghai Youth Modern Drama Troupe); Mourning Becomes Electra (Shanghai Drama Institute), including a Shaoxing opera version of Mourning entitled White Tomb; and Ile (Beatrice Laufer's American opera version presented by the Shanghai Opera

Theatre). In addition there would be a visit to Fudan University for scenes from Beyond the Horizon and Ah, Wilderness!, and two performances of traditional Chinese folk operas.

With wide, bright welcoming banners adorning the marquees of selected hotels, and sharply etched red and black posters of O'Neill's austere grimace plastered against billboards and lampposts, I knew I'd landed in the right place. Furthermore, set in the spacious and attractive surroundings of the Jinling hotel, this international conference devoted to "Eugene O'Neill--World Playwright" was determined to live up to its name. The program of literary events scheduled nine consecutive panels during the first two days alone, and boasted a strong opening that was supported by international panelists who would center their remarks on the philosophic and religious motifs, dramatic patterns, comparative studies, and performance values of O'Neill's plays. I would come to discover, by the end of the fourth and final day in Nanjing, that the conference had left no stone, or play, unturned; that the life, work, and influence of this century-old playwright had left indelible impressions on world drama; and that sixty years after his 1928 visit to Shanghai, O'Neill was still the talk of the town.

Monday, June 6th--at nine o'clock in the morning. As one hundred spectators gathered for the first session, the conference seemed more like a movie set than a literary colloquy: glaring spotlights cut through the air-conditioned atmosphere, movie cameras zoomed toward the stunned panelists, and flashbulbs popped from every direction. But once Oscar Brockett had introduced the first round of panelists (Virginia Floyd, Marcus Konick and James Robinson) to offer their assessment of O'Neill's religious and philosophical explorations, the din magically subsided and the event was clearly underway. Highlights of this first day included (1) studies of specific plays: Dynamo as a "transformation of [expressionist] elements into a unique American form" (William Elwood); the theme of "fulfillment vs. obliteration of real and ideal selves" in Horizon, Iceman and Journey (Qian Jiaoru); the coincidence of dramatic intention in A Moon for the Misbegotten and Ibsen's Peer Gynt (Rolf Fjelde); and the political ramifications of both American and German premières of The Hairy Ape (Ward Lewis); (2) analyses of O'Neill's literary style: his lifetime search for "the cause of human tragedy" (Yuan Henian); his preoccupation with themes and characters of the black (Caribbean) world (Thomas Pawley); Strindberg's influence on his circular dramatic structures (Albert Kalson); and O'Neill's uses of pessimism with "musical themes" and "mathematical parallels" (Ren Zhiji); and (3) a report of his infamous "beginnings" as world playwright (Paul Voelker). An indisposed Liao Kedui invited his doctoral student, Li Hong Mei, to read the paper he had prepared on Realism in O'Neill's plays.

As if this panoply of scholarly research were not enough to fill our heads on the first day, the afternoon ended with a visit to the Nanjing University campus, just minutes away, where an international exhibit of theatre books, including some excellent and rare photos--many of which focused on O'Neill productions--could be viewed. The visit was followed by an opulent banquet back at the Jinling, and a short stroll up the avenue to the Yanan Theatre where a production of Beyond the Horizon awaited us.

While I am eager to share more of the conference details, I cannot resist relating some of my impressions of this production and others, because they provided me with moments I shall long cherish. Horizon's director, Xiong Guodong, had reset O'Neill's American farm in the southern region of a Yangtze River province to strengthen its appeal to the Chinese audience. In an indoor scene, for example, my attention was captured by the crudely realistic kitchen, a living-room hearth with a real fire burning, a "practical" weaving loom set into motion at one point of the dramatic action, and a portable commode that provoked hearty laughter in the audience--all of these set on a conventional proscenium stage in a movie-like theatre that seated approximately twelve hundred spectators. The director introduced some small actions not in O'Neill's script, feeling that such chances needed to be taken in order to be consistent with its Chinese setting. Before rehearsals started, for example, he and his actors had visited the countryside to observe the strongly physicalized actions of the people, many of which were incorporated into the performance. He admitted, in a discussion several days later,

that aspects of the mise-en-scène were inspired by a famous Chinese painting, which he then showed to us. In discussing the play's appeal, he believed that it contained universal elements common to both Americans and Chinese, and that its message was fit for every age level in the East: "In life, what you can get is quite ordinary; but what you cannot get is what you want." He further admitted that, throughout rehearsals, he kept reminding his actors, "The hopeless hope finally is hope."

Two moments in his production stand out most strongly in my memory. The first was the overtly optimistic ending in which an orangy-red spotlight--representing the sunrise--was projected on the upstage scrim, then elevated slowly to a prominent position as Robert Mayo delivered his final speech before dying. (The pronounced visualization of this sunrise somehow disturbed me. But when I turned to my copy of the play weeks later, I discovered that, according to O'Neill, "the edge of the sun's disc is rising from the rim of the hills," at which point Robert points to "the sun!" It was wonderful to rediscover a detail I'd long forgotten in an O'Neill play I had never seen in production.) Sensing my response, a young Chinese scholar who accompanied me to the performance assured me that the director's overtly optimistic ending was something that held great meaning for the Chinese, which was why they responded so enthusiastically when the final curtain fell. The second moment was an inserted coda to the play's action, a fairly innocuous directorial gesture in which the character of Doctor Fawcett, who attends the ailing Robert, was transformed into a character resembling Eugene O'Neill himself, ambling leisurely through the countryside--a token of the director's admiration for the playwright, I was told!

Tuesday, June 7th. Our long first day--and evening at the theatre--did not prevent an even earlier return to the Jinling, where Nancy Swortzell, our opening moderator, introduced the first panel discussion of the morning: "O'Neill On-Stage." Betty Jean Jones emphasized the uses of "style, substance, and synthesis" in directing O'Neill's plays, and focused on her recent production of A Touch of the Poet; Yoshiteru Kurokawa dealt with the obstacles he faced while directing Mourning Becomes Electra in Japan; Felicia Londré employed slides to reconstruct The Emperor Jones in its American, continental, film and operatic versions; and Daniel Watermeier evaluated, through comparison, the 1946 and 1956 American productions of Iceman. Highlights of the heavily scheduled morning session included O'Neill's affiliation with the Provincetown Players (Robert Sarló); an informative and entertaining view of Carlotta Monterey's theatrical career (Margaret Loftus Ranald); and the "surprises and confirmations" encountered in editing and selecting from the more than three thousand extant O'Neill letters (Jackson Bryer). A final morning panel focused on O'Neill as playwright: his compositional process in the portraits of Hickey and Larry from Iceman--including their origin and development as stage characters (Judith Barlow); an analysis of the smaller linguistic components and tonal registers that allow characters "to surface, function, and merge" in Iceman and Journey (Jean Chothia); the uses of memory, free association, and Hickey's "oscillating consciousness" in relation to the "symphony of monologue structures" of Iceman (Marc Maufort); and O'Neill's skillful handling of language, specifically his "use of presupposition as a major means of exposition" in Journey (Cheng Mei).

The lengthy but rewarding morning session was followed by our return to the Nanjing campus where, after lunch, two afternoon sessions were held. The first of these returned us to the philosophic and religious motifs of the previous morning with a presentation on O'Neill and Tao (Ouyang Ji); and two views of Marco Millions, one offered by James Moy, the other by Li Gang. The afternoon's second session, on O'Neill abroad, included Egil Törnqvist's slide presentation on Ingmar Bergman's current production of Journey; O'Neill's reputation in China (Long Wenpei's study was read by his student); the reception of Anna Christie in China (Wang Yiqun); the staging of Desire Under the Elms and Ah, Wilderness! in Japan (Yasuko Ikeuchi); and the reception of O'Neill's "Greek" tragedies in China (Zhao Yu). Despite the day's somewhat record-breaking sequence of five lengthy sessions, accompanied by some record-breaking temperatures--up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit outside our air-conditioned surroundings--many of us enjoyed leisurely dinners before venturing off to the Renmin Theatre where a production of Long Day's

Journey provided powerful "theatrical" closure to a most rewarding day.

Having seen Bergman's bold interpretation at the Dramaten in Stockholm just twelve days earlier, and anticipating Quintero's production which had recently opened in New York City, I found this Chinese premiere of Journey, directed by Zhang Fucheng and featuring Wang Ping--one of China's leading actresses--oddly timed, but curiously irresistible. In the presence of these expert actors, I was consistently gripped throughout this Journey's two and a half intermissionless hours. This time, the Chinese actors, dressed in western clothes, negotiated in a fairly contemporary American household setting. Its skeletal frame, airy and bright with sunshine coming through a left-stage window, seemed mildly expressionistic with its fragmented, mask-like, anonymous profiles peering down on the play's inhabitants. The familiar shelves of books were boldly evident, as was the prominent portrait of Shakespeare in a central position. Once again, two impressions would remain with me: the subdued emotionality of the characters' interactions--a marked contrast to Bergman's consciously explosive confrontations; and the haunting, almost piping musicality of Mary Tyrone's voice against the chorus of her more naturalistic male partners.

Not understanding a word of Chinese, I discovered only later that practically all of the play's Shakespearean and other literary quotations had been deleted to facilitate the audience's appreciation of the action, much to the chagrin of the script's two translators. Regarding the play's more realistic content, however, I was informed by my dependable Chinese colleagues that, in spite of the drug- and alcohol-related motifs which were difficult social issues for the Chinese to handle, the playwright's concern for the welfare of the Tyrones was the play's strongest appeal. Comparing the event with the previous night's, I was greatly disappointed that there was no curtain call and virtually little applause when the action ended. When I asked if the audience disliked the play--their attention had seemed as riveted as mine--I was simply informed that the theatres in the city must be emptied well before eleven o'clock at night, as buses stopped running by then, and patrons needed to return to their homes. This, I also learned, was why performances began earlier than usual and intermissions were often eliminated for lengthier plays.

Wednesday, June 8th--the third day of our conference--began more exotically than the previous two, with extensive touring of the Ming Tomb and a visit to a Confucian temple. By 2:30, however, we were back at the Jinling where Marcus Konick introduced the three speakers of the first afternoon session: Lowell Swortzell, who discussed Emperor Jones as a source of theatrical experimentation; Ralph Randal, who viewed the aspects of class struggle in All God's Chillun and Hairy Ape, with special emphasis on the Dantean levels of meaning in the latter; Maya Koreneva, who analyzed selected parallels between O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms and Tolstoy's Power of Darkness; and Marcelline Krafchick, who explored the "games" motifs--marbles, masking, and boxing, among others--that underscore the "psychological tactics" of All God's Chillun.

It was my pleasure to moderate the third day's final session, which, despite the exhausting morning tour, attracted enthusiastic listeners as determined as ever to lend their support to the marathon proceedings. Continuing the theme of patterns in O'Neill's dramatic "carpet," Jean Anne Waterstradt focused on three O'Neill women and the emerging pattern they demonstrated in their respective plays; Mariko Hori assessed the fascinating metatheatrical elements in O'Neill's late plays; while Anthony Boyle closed the panel with a film-illustrated discussion of Garbo and Robeson in their legendary roles as Anna Christie and Brutus Jones--an excellent bit of timing here, as members of the conference had been invited to the Xiju Theatre that same evening to view a double-bill of The Emperor Jones and Hughie.

Was it possible that the remnant cinematic images of Robeson's portrayal mirrored the same character on view at the Xiju? Director Feng Changnian, brilliantly assisted by Su Shijin's choreography and Cai Wei's athletically versatile central performance, later admitted that he wanted to find a new way to produce this popular and representative

O'Neill play. Thus his attempt to visualize its "inner worlds" deliberately avoided conventional approaches and sought newer styles of "performance art"--focusing on choreographic action, this time, to limn the tragic fall of Brutus Jones. Catering to the tastes of his Chinese audience, he incorporated a variety of native and folk styles; and while most of the play's dialogue was banished, none of its evocative imagery was sacrificed. On the contrary, this striking dance piece--already invited to Beijing's celebration of O'Neill this coming fall--embellished the monodrama through its heightened lighting and sound effects, as well as its exaggerated costumes and make-up. From start to finish, it served us O'Neill's phantasmagorical world to perfection: a striking spider web/backdrop which palpitated with menacing rhythms; the woman-as-witchdoctor, allowing the director to explore some of the unexpressed sexuality of O'Neill's script; the continual integration of Jones and his hallucinatory figures; and the overt crucifix symbolism surrounding Jones's death. Changnian's admittedly "free interpretation" responded instinctively to O'Neill's demands, driving the audience into wild approval.

Equally effective, but for very different reasons, was the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Festival's production of Hughie--O'Neill's later portrait of an equally misbegotten soul--skillfully directed by Tom McDermott. The audience's reverentially hushed involvement in the proceedings assured Stan Weston's unforgettable Erie Smith that they were cautiously captured by every action and word. This perfectly integrated double-bill was an eloquent expression of East meeting West, offering us two memorable characters--one an exotic, the other an eccentric--who shared the same stage but never met.

Thursday, June 9th--our last morning of the conference. A sense of renewal seemed to fill the air, as dozens of us poured into the Jinling for a final panel discussion that gathered together many of the artistic directors and actors whose work we had witnessed during the week. The topic was the Nanjing/Shanghai O'Neill Theatre Festival itself, and once again spotlights flooded the room as cameras moved into place. Chol-lei Stephen Chen of the Hong Kong Federation of Drama moderated the discussion, with panelists Tom McDermott and Judith Johnston-Weston of the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Festival; Feng Changnian and Xong Goudong of the Jiangsu Art Theatre; Zhanbg Fucheng of the Central Academy of Drama; and Huang Zhongjiang of the PLA Film Studio.

It turned out to be a compelling three-hour session in which each of the panelists shared his ideas and feelings with the group, after which Stephen Chen opened the discussion to all participants. What became most evident was that this tremendous undertaking by the People's Republic to honor Eugene O'Neill as world playwright had generated powerful moments of communication, intellectual understanding, professional exchange and personal good will--as if the green tea we had been sipping continually during the long days' events had transported us to some very special emotional and professional place. We felt glad to be where we were, and our heartfelt expressions of gratitude to Liu Haiping, in particular, were vociferously voiced.

As mentioned earlier, my China adventure did not end in Nanjing, since I was fortunate to attend the O'Neill Play festival in Shanghai, accompanied by many fellow Chinese and American O'Neillians. It was there that a round of equally memorable events whetted our appetites as tourists and theatre-goers: the quiet tour through the hospital in downtown Shanghai where O'Neill had spent many days recuperating from a sudden illness; the warm reception and sumptuous buffet served to us at the famous Peace Hotel where O'Neill found accommodations; Hu Weiming's razor-sharp direction of The Great God Brown, with its fluid maneuvering of masks, which easily rivaled my earlier, still vivid recollection of a production at New York City's Phoenix Theatre in the late 1950s; a marathon Mourning Becomes Electra, performed in sweepingly histrionic style with western designs, costumes and make-up, and culminating in a final mise-en-scène in which the skeletal porticoes of the Mannon estate were magically replaced by seven towering white crucifixes from behind which Lavinia's masked dead lurked and peered at her; the vivid staging and powerful singing of Ile, based on O'Neill's one-act play, and sharing a triple bill with a Chinese version of Hughie, in tandem with the American version first presented in Nanjing; the



warm hospitality shown us by the faculty at Fudan University, and, most especially, the drama students there who performed O'Neill scenes for us in both Chinese and English; our visit to the Shanghai Red Chamber Opera and the company's exciting performance of *The Carp Goddess*, after which we gathered onstage to meet the actors and pose for press pictures in the presence of a large cheering audience. As I stood on the stage and stared out at this receptive crowd, I couldn't help but feel that O'Neill was out there "somewhere," perhaps grinning proudly on this unique occasion and taking full credit for having instigated this centennial celebration some sixty years earlier when his instincts first led him to Shanghai. Was this moment, like so many others we had experienced, all part of *his* design? My reverie was interrupted when we were escorted backstage to chat with the actors and be playfully adorned in their spectacular stage costumes. This very special evening would be my last in Shanghai.

For me, it was the conclusion of a sojourn that had started on May 18th, when I flew from Kennedy Airport to Brussels to begin this summer of centennial homage to Eugene O'Neill. And except for one very rainy interlude in Shanghai, the sun managed to shine every day. While I was flying out of Shanghai on the morning of June 13, however, I suddenly realized that I had forgotten to exchange my People's Republic currency--some forty dollars worth--that it would be impossible to convert elsewhere. Instead of conjuring up new anxieties, I simply settled back in my seat, smiled knowingly, and took it as an omen that I'd return there one day to spend it.

## DAVID RABE

### A Stage History and Primary and Secondary Bibliography

This bibliography is the first study of Tony Award-winning playwright David Rabe, who is best known as the most important playwright of the Vietnam War. A chronological stage history of Rabe's plays performed in the United States and abroad, an examination of Rabe's newspaper work for the *New Haven Register* and a reprint of one of his early poems are among the "firsts" this book offers. The primary bibliography lists chronologically Rabe's early poetry, fiction, and his

articles and movie and theater reviews for the *New Haven Register*. The publication of all his plays and interviews is listed. The secondary bibliography is also chronological, and includes critical studies on Rabe, and theater and film reviews. An index is provided.

Philip C. Kolin is Professor of English at the University of Southern Mississippi and the Founding Co-Editor of *Studies in American Drama, 1945-Present*.

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#### REVIEWS AND REPORTS OF BOOKS AND PRODUCTIONS

1. GARY VENA, *O'NEILL'S "THE ICEMAN COMETH": RECONSTRUCTING THE PREMIERE*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1988. xi + 251 pp. \$49.95, cloth. ISBN 0-8357-1841-7. (No. 47 in UMIRP's "Theater and Dramatic Studies" series, edited by Oscar G. Brockett.)

How refreshing, in an era of rampant deconstruction, to have this exhaustively researched, meticulously detailed and handsomely packaged reconstruction of the original, 1946 Theatre Guild production of *The Iceman Cometh*. It's an exciting story, as full of human interest as of literary and theatrical insight, and Professor Vena's skills as scholar and raconteur are perfectly blended in its telling. Add the striking black cover with a half-length O'Neill portrait stamped on its front; the two sizable appendices (textual modifications made during the rehearsal period, and extracts from the more than 45 opening night reviews); and the wealth of illustrations--including full-page photos (albeit posed) of the 19 cast members in their costumes, O'Neill's set drawings for each of the four acts, and Robert Edmond Jones's renditions of the bar and back room at Hope's saloon--and the hefty fee is unquestionably warranted. O'Neillians of limited means should at least see that their local or institutional libraries acquire copies.

Of course the story is ultimately a sad one. The last Broadway production of an O'Neill play during the playwright's lifetime was not a popular success. It ran for only 136 performances, and would have to wait a decade to prove its now-acknowledged theatrical viability. And Professor Vena makes clear that much of the difficulty arose from temperamental clashes between the author, who was present throughout the casting and rehearsal periods, and director Eddie Dowling, whose wishes and decisions were often overruled. (An evocative one that was retained was his decision to have Larry Slade exit near the end of the last act, as if following Don Parritt's route to the fire escape.) But there are as many happy notes as negative ones--especially the tremendous contribution to mood and atmosphere of the sets, lighting and costumes designed by Jones.

A particularly intriguing emphasis in the 1946 production was the suggestion of a "relationship" (p. 127) or "connection between Hickey and Cora" (p. 156), hinted at in the second act and underscored in the fourth, when Hickey (James Barton) made six "advances ... towards Cora [Marcella Markham] during his lengthy confession." Vena calls the relationship "unexplored" and "unexamined," but he does offer two possible sources for its inclusion in 1946. Perhaps Dowling was utilizing the "comradery" that had developed between Barton and Markham during the rehearsal period; or he may have wished to show Hickey "motivated to arouse [the] sympathy" of the only female in his on-stage audience. Whatever its source, the subtextual sidelight is both intriguing in its own right and a fascinating evidence of the way that the "chemistry" of a particular group of interpreters can broaden a scene beyond the author's original intentions.

The reconstruction-proper--an act-by-act illustrated study of scenic designs, lighting effects, and stage action--is preceded by four chapters that treat O'Neill's earlier affiliations with the Guild, the evolution of the script and technical preparations for production, the casting and rehearsal periods, and the "cast of characters"--the last a particularly valuable survey of the real-life models, their fictional counterparts, and the biographies and distinctive contributions of their first portrayals. Through extensive use of promptbooks, ground plans, rehearsal texts and (best of all) interviews with surviving members of the original cast and production team, Vena has assembled an intimate and engrossing narrative that will be as useful to devotees of professional theatre in general as to lovers of the specific play and playwright. For their collaboration on an obvious labor of love, author and publisher deserve hearty congratulations.

-- Frederick C. Wilkins

2. HAROLD BLOOM, ed., EUGENE O'NEILL. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. 183 pp. \$27.50, cloth. ISBN 0-87754-633-9. A volume in the Modern Critical Views Series.
- HAROLD BLOOM, ed., EUGENE O'NEILL'S "THE ICEMAN COMETH." New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. 120 pp. \$19.95, cloth. ISBN 1-55546-048-8. A volume in the Modern Critical Interpretations series.
- HAROLD BLOOM, ed., EUGENE O'NEILL'S "LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT." New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. 150 pp. \$19.95, cloth. ISBN 1-55546-049-6. A volume in the Modern Critical Interpretations series.

Professor Bloom and his cadre of amanuenses have attempted, in the 476 volumes that comprise the "Views" and "Interpretations" series, to gather the "best current criticism" of the "most widely read" authors and literary works "of the Western world." As the criterion of popularity indicates, there has been little attempt to broaden the canon beyond its traditional confines; but the goal is unquestionably a worthy one, and the series will be a boon to small public libraries hazardously distant from any citadel of learning. Even a major library could strengthen its collection by acquiring the volumes devoted to writers sparsely represented in its holdings.

I doubt, however, that any serious individual or institutional collector of O'Neill material will find much in these particular volumes that he or she doesn't already have, since the bulk of each comprises chapters, or parts of chapters, from standard and ubiquitous book-length studies of the playwright. (Bogard and Chothia appear in all three, Falk and Tiusanen in two, and Berlin, Manheim and Törnqvist in one each.) Surely even modest O'Neill shelves will include their studies--so well known that I need not even list their titles--along with those of many another writer equally worthy of representation. Of articles from scholarly journals, only four are offered, all from Modern Drama. And the sections from books broader in scope--by Bigsby, Brustein, Orr, Sewall and others--should already be present, in their original locales, in any respectable collection of modern drama studies. Lionel Trilling's perceptive 1936 essay, that leads off the general O'Neill volume, will delight those who hadn't seen it in The New Republic or in Morris Freedman's collection, Essays in the Modern Drama (1964). Indeed, almost all of the chosen items are a pleasure to read again; and the prices, by current standards, are admirably modest, especially for such sturdy and attractive packaging. Still, for the "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," the pickin's, or snappables, are sadly few.

These reservations may be unfair: such a massive series of small volumes must, I suppose, stick pretty much to the mainstream; and any O'Neill collection is welcome, even if its contents are well known. But there are other problems that exacerbate this reviewer's discontent. First of all, the contents have been shorn of most of their original documentation, probably to smooth the way for the general reader for whom the two series were designed. But even a general reader might wish to know the authors of quotations and the sources of here-unattributed facts and opinions. Secondly, a number of the selections have been severely (and silently) truncated--a practice that runs the risk of distorting the meaning or intentions of the author. And a third problem, affecting only the general O'Neill volume, was the overall decision to present the selections in the order of their original publication. While it is fascinating to trace the evolution of criticism of Iceman and Journey (in the latter case, from Falk's study two years after the play was released to Bigsby's twenty-four years later), it is at best disconcerting, and hardly helpful for a student new to the playwright, to come upon Falk's assessment of O'Neill's last plays 100 pages before Bigsby's analysis of "Four Early Plays"! Had creative rather than critical chronology been observed, the general reader might have been spared a good deal of confusion, as he is in James J. Martine's Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1984), whose introduction and contents, both comprehensive and comprehensible, epitomize the anthologist's art at its very best.

Professor Martine, of course, is an O'Neillian; he has affection for the man and

an admirable knowledge of his work and what has been written about it. And this leads to my fourth and strongest reservation about the three books under consideration. No surveyor of almost all of major Western literature can possibly revere every artist and artifact; even the most catholic of tastes has its limits. And Professor Bloom clearly carries no torch for Eugene O'Neill, as is evident in his three introductions. (I should say his one introduction, since he cagily constructed a three-part introduction to the general volume, whose sections could be stored and reheated for the other two. The first part, largely an expression of bewilderment at O'Neill's popularity, appears in all three; while the second and third parts, perfunctory glances at Iceman and Journey, reappear once each, in the volume on that particular play.) He parades all the old shibboleths of the anti-O'Neill brigade as if they were shiny new. O'Neill was a bad writer whose "strength was never conceptual," whose "convictions were ... in no way remarkable, except for their incessant sullenness," and who had "no American precursors." [Had Bloom read more of Bigsby than he includes, or any of the recent studies by Marc Maufort, he would have learned that (in Bigsby's words) "O'Neill's real ancestor was Melville." But then, one wonders if he read with care even the selections that his assistants gathered for him. The cryptic, one-page "editor's note" to each volume suggests that he may not have.] How could O'Neill possibly be well or fairly served by an editor who finds in him "a paucity of eloquence, too much commonplace religiosity, and a thorough lack of understanding of the perverse complexities of human nature"? Even words of praise, when unavoidable, are acerbically qualified: Long Day's Journey is "by common consent" a masterpiece; Mary Tyrone's last speech is "banal if moving," etc. Only O'Neill's gifts as mimeticist and creator of "extraordinarily effective stage directions" are praised without reservation. And the praise, in such a context, is faint indeed.

Fortunately, all of Bloom's charges are refuted or strongly challenged in the chapters and essays that follow his remarks. But the damage may have been done at the start--and in triplicate. How many neophytes will be moved to investigate a writer for whom the editor has such obvious distaste? If, as we hope, O'Neill continues to flourish in the years ahead, he will do so not because of but in spite of the recent work of Professor Bloom. One would do best to acquire the books quoted in the three volumes, rather than the three volumes themselves, whose flaws, in two cases, extend even to the art on the jackets. The detail of Edward Hopper's "Sunlight in a Cafeteria," a study in individual human isolation, hardly evokes the physical or human atmosphere at Harry Hope's. And the glorious photograph of Monte Cristo Cottage on the Journey cover has been incongruously reversed. Incongruous, but perhaps appropriate: it mirrors the "backwardness" of the editor's introduction!

-- Frederick C. Wilkins

3. THOMAS P. ADLER, MIRROR ON THE STAGE: THE PULITZER PLAYS AS AN APPROACH TO AMERICAN DRAMA. Purdue University Press, 1987. xv + 171 pp. \$17.50, cloth. ISBN 0-911198-884-9.
- KATHERINE H. BURKMAN, THE ARRIVAL OF GODOT: RITUAL PATTERNS IN MODERN DRAMA. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986. 176 pp. \$24.50, cloth. ISBN 0-8386-3264-84-5.
- BRENDA MURPHY, AMERICAN REALISM AND AMERICAN DRAMA, 1880-1940. Cambridge University Press, 1987. xiv + 232 pp. \$27.95, cloth. ISBN 0-521-32711-3.

Professor Adler's book manages to overcome its unorthodox format. In fact, its organization--thematic rather than chronological--is its salvation. Like Brenda Murphy in American Realism and American Drama (reviewed later in this section), Adler begins by addressing the problems that American drama has had in being taken seriously as literature. Accordingly, like Murphy's, his discussion is developed along an aesthetic, analytical line. He is chiefly concerned with the issues that the Pulitzer prize-winning plays raise--issues reflecting sociological or cultural

concerns that, he notes, have been covered inadequately in previous treatments of the Pulitzer plays. Hence his success in achieving his wish to provide something "new and fresh." By eschewing chronology in favor of an "intertextual" approach, he succeeds in delineating "relationships that might not otherwise be apparent in plays widely separated by time."

The book is divided into ten categories which become chapter headings for the discussions of the plays that Adler finds to be "intertextually linked." One such linkage of interest to O'Neillians is that of Ephraim Cabot (in Desire Under the Elms) and Big Daddy (in Williams's Cat on a Hot Tin Roof). Both plays are shown to be about the strength of a patriarch and the lust for land. Adler does not strictly limit himself to plays that have won the Pulitzer, but he remains consistently true to his subject--what the American stage reflects about American culture.

O'Neill plays are discussed in four of the ten chapters: Beyond the Horizon and The Iceman Cometh in "Supportive Illusions/Romantic Delusions"; Strange Interlude in "The Ethic of Happiness"; Anna Christie in "The Varieties of Religious Experience"; and Long Day's Journey Into Night in the final chapter, "From Modernism to Metatheatre--Art and Artists in Modern American Drama." It is this last discussion that best illustrates what Adler is attempting to do, and it will be of greatest interest to O'Neill specialists. He reads the play as being about the failure of its characters to come to grips with life--surely not a shattering revelation--but he defines in a most revealing way what coming to grips with life means in terms of "art." He shows that Long Day's Journey transcends reality, alluding as it does to a "supra-reality" that can only be "momentarily plumbed and revealed" by the vision of an "artist." And, within this context, he defines an artist as one who follows the "highest calling"--one which allows the individual to be at ease with both the world at large and the world within. Thus, Long Day's Journey becomes an exploration of consciousness itself, not only in terms of family relationships or personal ambitions, but in terms of what it means to exist and to reconcile experience with that existence. For that analysis alone, Mirror on the Stage more than justifies its modest asking price.

Despite Professor Burkman's title, I fear that we are still waiting, and that her book will not be of special interest to the O'Neill scholar except in its discussion of The Iceman Cometh and Ibsen's Wild Duck (pp. 25-32). Iceman recurs throughout the text as a keystone in the failure of the "birthday party ritual" to be consummated as a fully celebratory structure.

Waiting for Godot is the dramatic acid test for Burkman, who hails its ongoing presence and influence as indicative that waiting itself has become the essential ritual of modern drama. Her discussion is frequently arresting; but, since her conclusion offers no overwhelming argument for Godot's arrival, I suspect that her title is grounded in a Beckettian irony.

As for the analysis of Iceman, Professor Burkman describes the play in terms of its triumph over hope, which is the essence of the rejection of ritual. When Larry Slade refuses to join in the cacophonous chorus at the play's conclusion, he is denying Hickey (Iceman's Godot figure) and allowing himself the opportunity to "finally make friends with death." She shows that Hickey and Ibsen's Gregers Werle have the same function in their respective plays: to bring to other characters the realization that life is fed by illusion. This is not, however, their ultimate importance--at least not in terms of "godotisme," if that is what this dramatic phenomenon may be called. What is most significant is that their message is ultimately rejected. And it is through this rejection that the two dramas become denials of ritual. With ritual denied, the notion of rebirth can be considered. For Larry Slade, of course, such a rebirth may not be possible within the realm of the physical. But Burkman is concerned here with "the quest for renewal" as a "spiritual journey," and Larry Slade's physical presence is not needed. Indeed, it

is only excess baggage. Less concern with ritual and more with characters' natures might have marred the thesis, but it might also have resulted in a more rewarding study.

Professor Murphy's book sets itself four tasks: "to describe the dramatic theory the Realists developed, to show its immediate impact on the theater in the realists' own American drama and that of their theatrical disciples, to trace this native realism's slow evolution within American drama between the early 1890s and World War I, and to describe the resulting innovations in realistic drama that flourished in the American theater between World War I and World War II." She attempts as essay in "historical poetics"--a term she borrows from Benjamin Hrushovsky, who defines the term as the "poetics of literary movements placed in historical periods." She is careful in describing her method because her analysis redresses the "traditional but arbitrary division between literary specialists who study drama and those who study American literature."

O'Neillians will be satisfied with the volume, whose specific chapter on O'Neill is entitled "The Cutting Edge." That that is the right placement for the playwright would, of course, be questioned by few; but Murphy's argument for it is particularly incisive because of the context that she limns for O'Neill's emergence. By focusing as she does on the intrinsic development of American realism as a dramatic theory, she makes evident O'Neill's debts to an American dramatic tradition. O'Neill's acknowledgment of Edward Sheldon's contribution to that tradition has been quoted before, and the influence of works like The Count of Monte Cristo has been traced in his work. But Murphy, no jingoistic scholar, gives full attention to continental influences as well. Indeed, she spends considerable time in the book's second half discussing the impact of Freud. If this latter half is more diffuse than the first, it is because of the nature of her subject. By the 1930s (and by the final chapters of the text), "realism" was no longer the dominant force in literature and drama that it had been. Still, it is her conclusion that, by the end of the 1930s, realism had become more than a device or theory: it had become an intrinsic part of American drama. And the book concludes, for exemplification of this notion, with studies of The Iceman Cometh and Long Day's Journey Into Night.

Murphy discusses O'Neill in the context of American drama as a whole, not in terms of his own specific development as a dramatist. Her discussion includes two-page analyses of plays ranging from the early sea one-acts to Mourning Becomes Electra, as well as the two masterworks that are assessed at book's end. But the emphasis is less on analysis of individual plays than on O'Neill's position vis-à-vis his dramatic antecedents. Because she takes such care in establishing the premises of her essay in "historical poetics," her book accomplishes admirably the tasks it sets for itself. For instance, by citing the "denial of closure" as one of the essential features of a fully developed American drama, she clearly indicates that O'Neill's plays, since the late ones resound with such a denial, represent the integration of American drama with its European counterparts in the realistic-theoretical realm.

-- Thomas F. Connolly

4. SUSAN LETZLER COLE, THE ABSENT ONE: MOURNING, RITUAL, TRAGEDY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF AMBIVALENCE. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985. 183 pp. \$22.50, cloth. ISBN 0-271-00391-X.

At the end of her book, Professor Cole makes some very interesting observations about The Iceman Cometh. Getting to the end is the problem. The author finds neither a rhetoric nor an intellectual framework within which to develop adequately the central idea of her book. That the idea has real merit makes its shaky development all the more regrettable. Promise unfulfilled breeds asperity. Ideas that approach the core of tragedy deserve better nurture.



Ranging from Aeschylus to Ionesco, Cole offers to explain tragedy on the model of ancient and "primitive" funerary rites. The thesis, in the author's words, holds that tragedy "is a performance of ambivalence on behalf of an absent presence." By ambivalence she means three different things: simultaneous and opposed feelings or wishes "(a) as expressed by intrapsychic conflict within a single character; (b) as reflected in the relationship between two central characters: deceased and mourner, father (-surrogate) and inheriting son (-surrogate); (c) as displaced onto the governing structure and imagery of the play" (pp. 1-2). Cole lists the other elements she believes link tragedy to funerary rituals: "the presence of the uncanny ... (ghosts, symbolic dreams, hallucinations)"; "the beloved deceased, usually a father or father-figure"; "a mourner-inheritor"; and "the antithetical style and antiphonal exchange characteristic of ritual lament." The introduction and first chapter are jargonish and unclear, suggestive rather than convincing. In the remaining chapters, Cole sometimes shows she recognizes the dynamic potential inherent in her idea; but far too much of the book settles for itemizing the elements common to both tragedy and funerals, for "proving" rather than developing the thesis.

As for theory, Cole does not understand very well the psychiatric writings on mourning that she cites. She needs to consider more fully the celebratory aspects of mourning, which she acknowledges but never clearly explains. It is wonderfully interesting to consider how a play that ends like *Lear* or *Antigone* can leave one filled with a sense of beauty and serenity. Hegel on transcendence might help, or Nietzsche on the dynamic between individuation and Dionysian loss of self.

Cole does best in her last chapter, in which she makes valuable brief comments on several tragic plays (Sophocles' Theban trilogy, *Lear*, *Endgame*, *Philoctetes*, *Othello*, and *The Iceman Cometh*.) Readers of the *Newsletter* should find her remarks about *Iceman* (pp. 160-165) enlightening.

I believe that no previously published account tries to understand as deeply as Cole the play's constant references to death. The metaphor of alcoholism, she shows, embodies funereal lamentation and celebration. To the bums, drinking simultaneously means joy and sleep--anesthesia. And sleep means death, as Larry and others reiterate. Cole correctly perceives that Hickey is not the one who understands death: he is limited by his all-or-nothing thinking. "The unacknowledged situation of the play," Cole asserts, is "the collective death of most of the characters." That the characters themselves are "walking stiff" complicates perceiving the significance of the dead and death. To Cole it lies in the proposition that the characters' "refusal to admit, and mourn, what is dead in the lives of each ... is the refusal to recover what is still living." To understand we must know Larry, the only character in the play capable of accepting death and mourning. In Larry's mourning for Parritt Cole finds the "Aristotelian tragic catharsis in a whisper!"

The concern for mourning Cole finds in the *Iceman* she would find equally prominent in most of the plays O'Neill wrote after the early 1920s (when his father, mother and brother all died). The theme is especially central in the late plays. With O'Neill the biographical connection from the life to the tragic sensibility is especially clear. How many other of the great tragic writers found their way to tragedy through the struggle to mourn overwhelming losses?

--Stephen A. Black

5. FOSTER HIRSCH, *EUGENE O'NEILL: LIFE, WORK, AND CRITICISM*. Fredericton, N.B., Canada: York Press, 1986. 48 pp. \$6.95, paper. ISBN 0-919966-55-1.
- MADLINE SMITH and RICHARD EATON, *EUGENE O'NEILL: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1988. 320 pp. \$44.00, cloth. ISBN 0-8240-0691-7.

ULRICH HALFMANN, ed., *EUGENE O'NEILL: COMMENTS ON THE DRAMA AND THE THEATER. A SOURCE BOOK*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1987. xxxv + 255 pp. \$24.50, paper (ISBN 3-87808-669-5), \$41.00, cloth (ISBN 3-87808-447-1). No. 7 in GNV's "Studies and Texts in English" series.

As a sucker for annotated bibliographies who has long sought a comprehensive O'Neill "Poetics" and a short, inexpensive survey of the playwright's life, work and reputation to assign to students, I was naturally delighted at the appearance of these three volumes. Two of them--the Smith-Eaton and Halfmann collections--are musts for any serious scholar of O'Neill. After reading Hirsch's diminutive study, however, I fear that one of my searches must continue--if, in fact, the goal is attainable at all.

The more one knows about O'Neill and his oeuvre, the less one will be satisfied with a 48-page overview, since so much is necessarily omitted, and what is treated is hardly exhaustively treated. Hirsch's book, like all the series of which it is a part, is divided into five sections: a biography of just over six pages, that emphasizes how O'Neill "shatter[ed] the theatrical conventions of his father's era" and "transformed personal experience into timeless art"; a "chronological list of O'Neill's works" that omits references to poetry and fiction, arouses confusion by jamming together three kinds of chronology--creation, performance and publication--and contains a few errors [e.g., *Chris Christophersen* was published in 1982 (not 1980) by Random House (not Yale)]; a chapter entitled "Life into Art: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill"; a two-page assessment of "O'Neill's Achievement"; and a fairly up-to-date "annotated bibliography" (books only), some of whose capsule judgments ("brilliant," "ponderous," "inessential") will arouse anger or amusement depending on the reader's point of view.

The central chapter on the plays contains a number of conventional but accurate insights and fairly comprehensible synopses of the plays it discusses (which do not include *Hughie*, *More Stately Mansions* or *A Moon for the Misbegotten*). But it is marred by run-on sentences, some glaring errors (that Brutus Jones was "emperor of a remote African tribe" comes as an unnerving jolt!), and a number of questionable and unsupported judgments. Some may agree that *The Hairy Ape* is "now a museum piece" (so much for "timeless art"! ). But is *Marco Millions* "a tissue of pious platitudes"? Are *Strange Interlude* and *Mourning Becomes Electra* no more than "superior soap operas"? And isn't there an odd inconsistency, after saying in the first section that "[w]riting *Long Day's Journey* at fifty-one, O'Neill attained his maturity," in claiming two sections later that the 1916-1918 one acts "contain some of O'Neill's most mature ... writing"? Hirsch must be drawing a tacit distinction between personal and artistic maturity; but the truncation required by the publisher's prescribed maximum of 50 pages precludes clarity.

Problems multiply in the section on "O'Neill's Achievement," which lists five persistent themes and three ubiquitous character types (nothing wrong there), but offers, at best, halfhearted refutations of O'Neill's detractors while actually allying itself with the supposed enemy. O'Neill, says Hirsch, had "difficulty in telling a story" and was betrayed by a lack of "modesty" and "technical discipline" into a "frenzied quest for thematic grandeur" that entailed "laboring against his truest gifts" as a "poet of private passions." With such defenders, O'Neill's reputation rests on shaky ground indeed!

I'd sought a short overview so students would have the basics, leaving time for deeper discussions of individual works and of relations between O'Neill's life and his art. But I fear, were I to assign this volume, that the time saved would pale in comparison with the time needed to challenge, qualify and correct what the students would be reading. Far better, I think, to assign one of the paperback studies by Berlin, Bogard, Carpenter, Floyd, Manheim or Raleigh. (Apologies to others whom I've momentarily overlooked.) The price is higher, but the value to students would be

infinitely greater.

The Garland volume is another matter entirely. Smith and Eaton's goal was to update Jordan Miller's Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic, which ends in 1972, to 1985, with an international component reflecting the increase in writing about O'Neill around the world since the early 1970s. The result is, like its splendid predecessor, a clear and comprehensive work that no O'Neill scholar will want to be without. The bibliography is divided into nine parts: books and parts of books in English; dissertations; periodical publications in English; foreign language publications; English language productions and reviews; foreign language productions and reviews; miscellaneous (adaptations, television and film versions, etc.); editions of primary works; and translations. The first four sections are arranged by year, each year's items alphabetized by author. The English language production list is alphabetized by play title, the productions of each being presented chronologically; and the foreign language productions are alphabetized by country, each's productions appearing chronologically. And so on. Clarity reigns throughout; and even if it didn't, the two concluding indexes--of plays and authors--would make it fairly easy for any researcher to find what he or she is seeking. (A third, thematic index would have made it even easier; but given the eclectic breadth of subjects covered, it might have doubled the book's length!)

No seeker, whatever the specific goal, is likely to be disappointed. What a wealth of material was produced between 1973 and 1985! (That the 322 "periodical publications in English" include 112 from the Newsletter, which didn't begin until 1977, is gratifying to note, even though to do so will possibly undermine my critical credibility!) And what a massive and valuable service Smith and Eaton have performed in locating, organizing and digesting all of it! (If there are lacunae, I haven't spotted them.) The synopses vary greatly in length and detail. For instance, Judith Barlow's dissertation (B21) is more clearly treated than the book it later became (A209), while the reverse is true for the two versions of the film study by John Orlandello (A142 and B31). And there are occasional lapses in orthography, and even in accuracy. (I had to scurry back to see if I'd made the remarks about O'Neill's Irish Catholicism that were attributed to me in A108. I hadn't.) But such cavils are small potatoes indeed, when one considers the monumentality of the whole, and remembers that the annotations are intended, not as substitutes for the items summarized, but as hints at the content one will find in the originals. (The items that include quotations are the best in this regard.) If the book is treated as it should be--not as an end in itself, but as a guide to resources--it will be a boon to scholarship for years to come. Smith and Eaton have earned a place of honor, right next to Jordan Miller on any self-respecting O'Neill bookshelf.

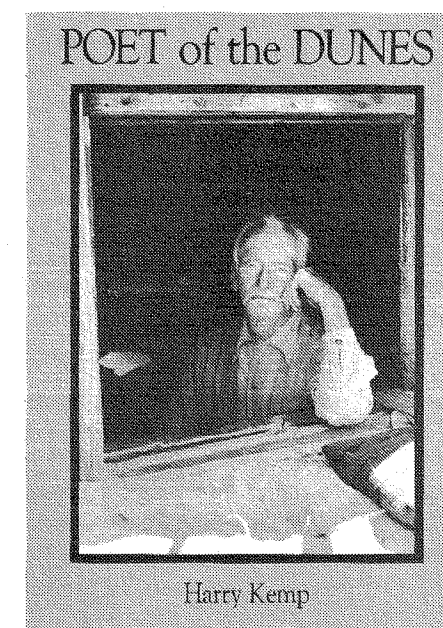
And so has Ulrich Halfmann, whose book includes the one thing that Smith and Eaton omit--an Analytic Subject-Index of "approximately one hundred concepts and keywords occurring in the texts" that the editor has so scrupulously gathered. We've had brief summations of O'Neill's "poetics" in the past, one of the best being Paul Voelker's "Eugene O'Neill's Aesthetic of the Drama" in Modern Drama (1978--item C111 in Smith and Eaton). But never before have all the bits and pieces comprising that aesthetic been gathered in one place, and the result is a revelation. Halfmann has compiled "153 items from 110 different sources"--letters, interviews, introductions, essays, tributes, etc.--the criterion for selection being each's contribution "to our understanding of O'Neill's work, Weltanschauung, or theory of art." Even if O'Neill himself had penned a book on his dramatic theory, it would not have been as good as this collection, which permits us to trace the evolution of that theory as it was worked out throughout his career. If Smith and Eaton should stand beside Miller, this book should accompany Clark, Sheaffer and the Gelbs, since it is the closest we will ever come to the playwright's artistic autobiography.

The selections themselves would make the volume essential, but the scholarly apparatus that links and surrounds them increases its value even more. In addition

to his informative introductions and notes, Halfmann has provided a 12-page chronology of O'Neill's life and work, and a series of appendices and indexes that aid immeasurably in one's study of the contents. So the decision to divide the selections into two parts--material published during O'Neill's lifetime (1919-1951) and material published posthumously (dating from 1914 to 1979)--poses no problem, except for the necessary skipping between the two parts if one wishes to read everything in strictly chronological order. But with a guide as conscientiously thorough as Professor Halfmann, the skipping entails no tripping! Like Smith and Eaton, he has made a major contribution to O'Neill studies that will long outlast the brouhaha of the centennial.

-- Frederick C. Wilkins

6. HARRY KEMP, POET OF THE DUNES. Provincetown: Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association [Box 1125, Provincetown, MA 02657], 1988. Reprint of a 1952 edition. 104 pp. \$6.00, paper. ISBN 0-945135-00-9.



It has always seemed improper to me that in recent years nothing of Harry Kemp's work has been regularly available in Cape Cod bookstores--not even in Provincetown, which was Kemp's home for so many years. With the reissue of Poet of the Dunes, this embarrassing oversight has been eliminated. What's more, it has been eliminated in style: the book is handsome, and it is enjoyable to read.

Other Kemp poetry collections always disappointed terribly, a kind of Byronic distortion factor always overwhelming the work to the degree that the poems, cumulatively, had all the charm, value and presence of concrete greenhouse urns or cherubs. Poet of the Dunes is more satisfying because the poems are somewhat more detail oriented, and, thematically, the collection is more cohesive than previous ones. Almost all the more than 100 poems have to do with the Cape, or the dunes, or the sea; and in the instance of a poem such as "The Old Shoemaker," you get a sense of Kemp being his own

man, a poet who could simply come out and say, to good effect, "The old shoemaker is gone."

This is a great souvenir kind of book from the land of dune shacks and shipwrecks, where sand and sea coexist in a weird constant shifting meeting with each other, frequently trading identities, and sometimes disgorging an artist of O'Neill's stature while retaining one of Kemp's in amongst the eel grass, the sea shells, the dried beached skates and the driftwood.

For O'Neillians who are fascinated by O'Neill's Provincetown days and the formation of the original Provincetown Players--of which Kemp was a part--Poet of the Dunes is highly recommended. It is the first volume in a series of reprints of Provincetown classics by the Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association. The rest of the series is eagerly awaited.

-- Marshall Brooks

7. A TOUCH OF THE POET, directed by David Thacker. The Young Vic and Comedy Theatres, London, January-May 1988. [This production was reviewed by Laurin R. Porter in the Spring 1988 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 62-64). However, since there is word that

it may grace a Broadway stage early in 1989, under the auspices of the Jujamcyn organization, we felt that readers might enjoy the following "inside report" by the productions's dramaturg, William F. Condee. Indeed, Professor Condee's report is so revealing about a fascinating exercise in theatrical (and more than theatrical) transplantation that it merits publication anyhow. The quoted statements of David Thacker are taken from his interviews with the author on 31 December 1987 and 25 March 1988. -Ed.]

The origin of the Young Vic production of A Touch of the Poet lay both in its stars and its producer. Duncan Weldon, the producer, had the London rights to the play, but was about to give them up for lack of suitable leading actors. Meanwhile, he had asked Vanessa Redgrave and Timothy Dalton, who had acted together shortly before in a season of Shakespeare at the Haymarket, what play they would like to perform in the West End. After reading many scripts, Redgrave recalled Poet, for which she had auditioned in America; she was unaware that Weldon held the rights or that 1988 marked the O'Neill centennial. As soon as Dalton read the script he "knew that we had to do it" (Morley 7).

For the director, Redgrave wanted David Thacker, director of the Young Vic, with whom she had previously worked on a production of Ghosts. Redgrave and Dalton also wanted the production to originate at the Young Vic because "seat prices there are still so low that you really do get a young student audience" (Morley 7). Even though it was to be a commercial West-End venture, Redgrave carried enough clout to have the production presented initially at a playhouse more likely to draw the kind of audiences she wanted: younger and impecunious.

Though there had been two prior English productions of the play, they were little noted and Thacker's was likely to become, as one critic pointed out, "a definitive production" in Britain (Truss 13). Thacker expressed appreciation that audiences and critics would not come to the play with preconceived ideas, and would therefore have "open sensibilities." His attitude was therefore to approach the play as if this were its first production.

I became involved as dramaturg through the Young Vic's ongoing relationship with Ohio University, where I teach. Before travelling to London, I researched Poet and its productions at the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University and the Lincoln Center Performing Arts Library. Of greatest interest and value to the director and actors were photocopies of O'Neill's notes on the characters, the play and the cycle of which Poet is a part. The designer, for instance, had completed his set rendering, only to discover that it strongly resembled the sketch by O'Neill that I provided. I worked with the director and cast before and during the initial rehearsal period, wrote the program notes, and then returned to London to see the production after it had moved from the Young Vic to the West End's Comedy Theatre.

I spent the first week of rehearsal with the cast as they read slowly through the play, stopping frequently to discuss issues central and tangential to it. While the cast (other than Redgrave) knew little about O'Neill or nineteenth-century American history, they had a voracious appetite for such information. They saw the direct application to their work of information such as: nineteenth-century American life and politics; other O'Neill plays in which comparable ideas and characters arose; O'Neill's ideas about the cycle, and his comments about their characters in his notes and in More Stately Mansions (the play that followed Poet in O'Neill's planned cycle). The actors' discussions were lively, prolonged and at times heated, with everyone taking part. Thacker sat back and said little during these discussions, encouraging the actors to take the lead. His input was usually confined to urging them not to reach conclusions about the issues raised, but rather to leave that until later in rehearsals. He recognized that such open discussions were "dangerous" for a director to allow, in that ideas could run counter to his own. He felt, however, that the exploration of the play and characters was worth the risk.

Leading members of the cast expressed particularly strong interest in the play's social and political context. Some of the most animated discussion concerned their characters' attitudes toward the American and French Revolutions, the "Yankee" and English "ruling classes," and class struggle in Ireland. Redgrave's advocacy of leftist politics and political causes was apparent in discussion, but her views were well-grounded in the text and historical research. While this socio-political context was not in the foreground of the actual performance, it may have been one cause of the Irish tone of the production, as is discussed below.

Thacker's approach to directing is to eschew a preconceived "concept" for the production. Not that he doesn't start out with, or develop, ideas about the play; but he sees the rehearsals as an "organic process" in which you "start with a point of view and an understanding and you end up somewhere else." The director's job, in Thacker's eyes, is to lead a "process of discovery," in which the director is the "adjudicator." Thacker describes his approach as finding the "narrative line of the play from each character's point of view ... what the journey of each character is." The separate, individual journeys of the characters then "lock together to form the central journey that [the spectators] are taken through."

One technique Thacker employed was to create cut-and-paste pages for each character that included any line in which the character, or anyone else, referred to him- or herself. Taking the script apart in this fashion provided each actor with a coherent collection of all script references to his or her character. In fact, the rehearsals were characterized by careful attention to every detail and nuance. The payoff was performance that exhibited a clear understanding of the play. This was not a "conceptual" approach, but a thorough delving into the text itself.

Once the play had opened, Thacker described what he felt was its "central journey":

The play is looking at characters' inability to face the truth about themselves and what they have to do.... Con Melody is unable to understand what is objectively true until the moment that ... the illusions are smashed out of him by the police and by the forces that underlie the emerging capitalist state. At that moment, where does he go? He goes into a similarly dislocated frame of being, which is his means of continuing to live.... What O'Neill does is show us the way one dislocated frame of reality is replaced by another dislocated frame of reality.

The central idea of the play that emerged for Thacker is that "human beings cannot face that much reality."

Thacker's aim was to achieve a production balanced between psychology and politics, or more specifically, a production that "concentrates on the psychology of the human beings" within "the given political circumstances":

One is deeply moved by what [Melody] has to go through, and what the confines of his situation are, and the way in which his class, background, and race are dominant influences in that prison he's in. He wouldn't be in prison if he wasn't Irish and poor and living in America at that time. He wouldn't be constructing these illusions without being in that context. So part of what moves us is understanding how he's trapped.

One of the most interesting aspects of this production is the nature of the politics presented. Some might argue that if the play is political, it concerns American politics. It was, after all, part of O'Neill's planned cycle of plays on American history. This production, however, focused on Irish politics and culture,



based on the idea that all but two of the characters are Irish.

This is where Redgrave's approach entered into the production. According to Thacker, "Vanessa was very keen to open up ... the extent to which the play is dependent upon an understanding of Irish history, as much as an understanding of American history.... Without Vanessa's interventions in that way, one might not have been quite as focused on that." For her part, Redgrave noted that "if we want to understand anything of now, we have to understand the history which produced the now." She had clearly studied the history of the period, and carefully pointed out the political aspects of certain lines and characters. Redgrave described her "strength as an actress" as "the fact that I am very conscious of the necessity of finding out the history that produced the subject of whatever I am working on" (quoted in Fallowell 26).

Thacker's approach, however, was to express the politics of the play through characterization. He described how an understanding of Irish-English politics is central:

The Irish, at the time it was set ... [were] oppressed by the English state. That oppression is fundamental to the Irish experience.... The fact that a nation had been so continually oppressed by another country is crucial to their psychology and their understanding of the place that England has and their own place in the world.

In this production, the Yankees in the play became, in effect, stand-ins for the English, and the Irish-Americans became the Irish. According to Thacker, this substitution is based on Con and Nora's psychological reaction to America. They arrive in a new country only to find themselves "subject to similar oppression in personal terms," and so their "hatred of the Yankees" becomes "total." This approach makes sense, given that this was a production of and for Great Britain. While Americans might tend to focus on the immigrant experience in America, the emphasis here was on the fact that the characters (or their ancestors) had emigrated from the British Isles. The shading is perhaps slight, but the result is a different performance.

With the play's many Irish characters, Thacker felt that his British cast may have had an advantage over an American one: they could handle the accents more easily and understand the English and Irish prejudices more readily. The inherently strong Irish flavor of this particular O'Neill play could perhaps be brought out better by a British cast than by Americans.

In fact, the performance did emphasize the "Irishness" of the play. It featured a live Irish bagpiper offstage during the action and onstage during intermission. Lines referring to Ireland and the Irish got the biggest laughs from the audience during the performances I attended. For the most part, the actors' brogues were excellent (though they initially had some difficulty with some of the rhythms and words of what they considered to be O'Neill's "Americanized" brogue). A section was added to the program notes describing Irish politics and the plight of the Irish in America at the time the play was set (replacing an explanation of American political references in the play). Also included in the program were an extended passage describing O'Neill's Irish heritage, a paean to O'Neill by Sean O'Casey, and the lyrics to an Irish revolutionary folk ballad. The program, music, accents and style all combined to create a production to be "received" by its primarily British audience as a play on Irish themes. In fact, critics noted the Irish heritage of this play, with many comparing it to Synge and O'Casey.

Critics especially praised the acting in this production. Indeed, the casting of the leading roles was central to Thacker's decision to direct the play. While good acting would obviously be helpful for any play, Thacker felt that O'Neill could not

be successfully produced without "exceptional" acting:

The striking thing about [O'Neill] is that the difference between great acting and mediocre acting is colossal in what can be revealed about the play. I have no confidence whatsoever that, if I directed this play with average actors, the meaning of the play could be made clear.

Thacker noted that O'Neill's dialogue is "dead" until the actors "inhabit" the language: "It has to be the language of real speech. When it's just read, it doesn't work." Thacker and the critics took special note of Redgrave's performance. According to Thacker, when Redgrave performs O'Neill "you rapidly realize that it's the language of real speech. What is required is very naturalistic acting and very high caliber acting that makes you believe you're listening to people talking to each other--just having conversations about things." Thacker believes that Redgrave's was "a definitive performance for all time. Who'd want to see anyone else play it?"

Redgrave's initial entrance in the play was staged in a way that did not elicit applause in the performances I witnessed. She entered unobtrusively, shuffling through a side door. Applause may also have been dampened by disorientation and shock at her appearance: the usually dazzling Redgrave had sagging breasts (after much experimentation, lentils worked best), greasy, gray hair, a heavily lined face and padding so as to look over weight. While Redgrave's verve and sparkling eyes were unmistakable, it was a marvel to watch the extent to which she transformed herself. She truly gave the illusion of being spent, overweight and weighed down with years of work and turmoil. Her face and body slack, she trudged about the stage. The always handsome Vanessa Redgrave was as weather-beaten as could be imagined, and thus she was well-suited to the script references to Nora as being a former beauty.

Timothy Dalton, the most recent James Bond, received more mixed reviews as Con Melody. He is arguably too young, handsome and well-preserved for the role, though he does come close to O'Neill's description. He endeavored to undercut these traits with grayed hair, a heavily lined face and red eyes. His after-the-fight makeup, for the last act, was deliberately reminiscent of clown makeup, to emphasize the buffoonery of his character, and to underscore his reference to the "dead" Con as being "a clown in the circus." He delivered a bravura, swaggering performance, posing and strutting throughout. This created a strong and forceful effect, but went too far for some viewers.

Rudi Davies performed the role of Sara Melody after Redgrave's daughter Joely Richardson dropped out because of illness early in rehearsals. Davies also received mixed reviews, with the major criticism aimed at her voice and brogue.

Amanda Boxer played Mrs. Harford in quite a daring fashion. She was costumed in a wild white dress, with a turban-like toque adorned with feathers and jewels, and carrying a parasol. She delivered her long speeches in a chanting, incantatory manner. Overall, the emphasis was on her eccentricity. Though her long speeches were delivered very slowly and in this extremely "unrealistic" fashion, the audiences at the performances I attended were attentive throughout, laughing at and reacting to the slightest nuance of word or delivery. While a more "realistic" reading was experimented with during rehearsals and previews, Ms. Boxer told me that she found audiences needed the time to soak up the complexity of her speeches. The result was a self-consciously eccentric, but engaging performance.

The Irish-English conflict so apparent in this production was reinforced by the background of the other characters. John McEnery, as Jamie Cregan, and the other cronies at the tavern provided an extraordinarily authentic Irish chorus. Their ruddy faces, dense brogues, songs and dances meant that Ireland was present not just

in name, but woven throughout the activity of the production. They contrasted sharply with the Yankee lawyer, Nicholas Gadsby, played by Malcolm Tierney with delightful English hauteur.

This was an especially fascinating production to work on as dramaturg. The result was uniquely British and, I think, a very different approach from what American theatre artists would have produced. The production was very successful with its British audience, and there is some talk that the production may come to New York in a year. If so, it will be interesting to see the reception of this British production by an American audience. Americans would, I suspect, be both intrigued and, at times, disoriented.

-- William F. Condee

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8. MARCO MILLIONS, directed by Václav Hudeček. National Theatre, Prague, Czechoslovakia. Première, February 11, 1988.  
MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA, directed by Zdeněk Kaloč. Mahen [State] Theatre, Brno, Czechoslovakia. Première, April 20, 1988.

O'Neill has long been a popular playwright in Czechoslovakia. Beginning with a production of The Hairy Ape in Prague's National Theatre in 1924, virtually all of the major works have been produced, some within a year or two of their Broadway premières. A hasty survey of professional repertory theatres reveals that the most frequently performed works have been Anna Christie (at least 17 productions) and Desire Under the Elms (at least 16 productions). In considering those figures, bear in mind that Czechoslovakia has a population of only fifteen million, and that virtually no O'Neill was done during the Nazi occupation (1939-1945) or during the Stalinist years of the 1950s.

Two recent revivals that I saw during a Fulbright Research residency in the spring of 1988--Marco Millions (first produced in 1930 in Prague's Municipal Theatre, and at least seven more times prior to the current production), and Mourning Becomes Electra (first produced in 1934 in the National Theatre, Prague, by one of Czechoslovakia's greatest directors, Karel Hugo Hilar, a few months before his death, and subsequently produced at least ten more times prior to the current production)--are almost textbook examples of contrasting directorial approaches. Marco Millions is a highly competent, expertly staged, but essentially conventional production. It is, with few exceptions, faithful to O'Neill's text without giving it any special slant or new insight. On the other hand, Mourning Becomes Electra is an extensively cut, edited, and forcefully adapted version of O'Neill's play, the text of which simply seems to serve as raw material for the director's vision or statement.

In a larger sense, both productions should be considered in the context of directorial practice in Czechoslovakia (especially since World War II), which almost always reflects an obligation to be relevant, not so much to the subjective, idiosyncratic vision of the director (à la Andre Serban, for example), but to contemporary life outside the theatre, even if the relevance must be achieved by alterations to the text and its themes, and even if the immediate relevance is sometimes obscure and cryptic, certainly to an outsider. The prototype here is

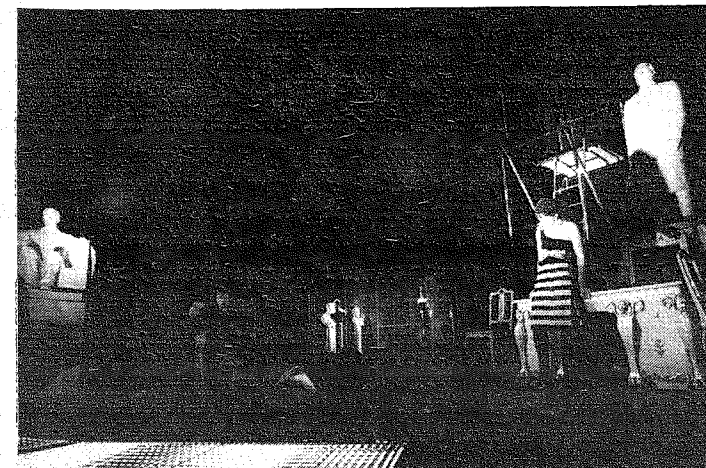
Meyerhold, perhaps, rather than Brook. In recent Czechoslovakian theatre, the models would be Otomar Krejča, Alfred Radok, and, before them, E.F. Burian. Incidental editing of texts is routine, almost standard practice, as are shifts of tone or emphasis. Most audiences accept that plays, especially the classics, are to be reinterpreted. Many would probably be disappointed to witness a "mere" retelling, unless, as may happen, the performance has remarkable freshness and inventiveness while staying within the confines of the text as written. Needless to say, it is a tradition that intensely irritates many living playwrights and would have driven O'Neill wild.

In this context, the Marco Millions production seems tame. It has only incidental cuts and faithfully emphasizes O'Neill's generic theme of losing one's soul in pursuit of the world, as well as the play's central conflict between the insensitive commercial acquisitiveness of the Polos and the serene, enlightened wisdom of the Orient. What is not emphasized, however, is the sheer Americanness of Marco. In commenting on the production, Hudeček, the director, said that he saw the Polos as representing not so much America as the modern western world, in contrast to Oriental traditions. It is also true that the sheer American idiom of Marco's language would be virtually impossible to translate in such a way as to convey that it is American rather than English.

Particularly impressive are the setting and the choreography of the action in relation to the space of the stage. The setting, by Zbyněk Kolář, a veteran, major Czech designer, tends effectively to reduce the stature of the characters without dwarfing them. A huge circle suspended above the stage generally represents the sun or the sky, but also has various patterns or images projected onto it for the many scenes of the play. Sometimes these projections are supplemented by scenic elements (occasionally verging on a certain kitschiness) lowered in front of the circle. Otherwise, scene changes are handled by rolling on key furniture, like thrones. Scenographically, the overall effect is that of exotic spectacle but with simple, economic means. Reinforcing the effect of artistic economy is the minimizing or elimination of crowd scenes. The costuming, on the other hand, is lavish.

The actor portraying Marco was quite on target, though older than he should ideally have been. He played Marco relatively straight, which had the advantage of avoiding caricature but perhaps limited the full flavor of O'Neill's zestfully satiric portrait. Two actors, both National Artists, alternated in the role of Kublai Kaan. I happened to see Miloš Kopecký, who plays comic roles more often than serious ones. Here (as is suggested in the accompanying photograph) he maintained an almost monumental dignity without losing the Kaan's subtlety and sense of irony.

Orin and Lavinia in the Brno Electra.



Miloš Kopecký (Kublai) in Prague's Marco.

Especially good was the actress playing Kukachin, who managed to project the charm, passion, and poignancy the role requires.

All in all, therefore, a good if not exciting revival. The Mourning Becomes Electra is another matter.

First of all, director Kaloč has cut the text to a playing time of some three hours, brought the action up to the 1980s, emphasized the military elements in the costuming and properties, and staged the action in a radically altered, nearly expressionistic setting. More fundamentally, he has deemphasized if not eliminated the Freudian and New England Puritan themes of the work, while heightening its inherent melodrama. The characters behave in a reckless, passionate, self-indulgent manner and then try vainly to avoid the consequences. To this extent, the production is essentially faithful to O'Neill. The difference is that the behavior of the characters, as here presented, is not rooted in the psychological deformations produced by nineteenth century Puritan New England but in their own, primarily self-generated excesses. During one of our conversations, the director said that the emphasis in this production is intended to be on the moral and ethical issue of responsibility. In any event, the production is a dynamic, colorful, imaginatively reshaped shocker that freshly energizes O'Neill's repressed, brooding, angst-filled work. On the other hand, subtlety and complexity are largely sacrificed, and the final effect is reminiscent of some of our contemporary superheated television series. Many of O'Neill's overtones, as well as a great number of lines, are simply eliminated.

In an ingeniously designed set that combines indoors and outdoors, we are confronted with walls and doors sheeted in metal, with a segment of footlights under a metal grill, and with very large electric switches that control two floodlights aimed at two larger-than-life statues, one standing, one seated, on the stage apron, down left and down right (seen in the accompanying photograph). They represent two of the Mannon ancestors. The space between the statues may function as either indoors or outdoors, depending on the furniture. At the rear is an inner stage with numerous additional, smaller busts on pedestals (not paintings) of Mannon ancestors; above it is an upper acting area consisting of a shallow balcony with sliding panels that open onto another inner chamber. It is in fact very much like an Elizabethan stage and, like it, facilitates a sustained flow of action from scene to scene.

Kaloč has introduced a host of other changes and innovations, only a few of which shall be mentioned here. Several Jacques Brel and Donovan songs, chiefly relating to islands, weave throughout the action to underline one of O'Neill's main motifs, the Blessed Isles. The songs are either presented as recorded voice-overs or sung live by Peter and Hazel, who appear in at least one scene garbed in contemporary tennis outfits. The very beginning of the production involves a major alteration. Lavinia, appearing in a nightdress outside the house, cites various short statements from Aeschylus and Euripides on power, justice, and honor. Adam enters and ascends to the upper level by means of a piece of rolling scaffolding that is a permanent component of the setting. We and Lavinia, who remains downstage, then see a highly erotic dance and mimed sexual union between Adam and Christine. Lavinia, appalled, enters the lower part of the house. Only then does O'Neill's play proper begin.

The chorus figures become a motley, coarse group that function as servants, scene shifters, and cleaning crew. Seth serves drinks to Ezra and Christine, and others dress and load the corpses into caskets. One of their number is a woman, whom the men regularly paw.

In a reversal of O'Neill's stage direction, the bedroom scene between Ezra and Christine is played downstage, while Lavinia paces on the upstage balcony. Adam is killed not in his boat, but on the Mannon estate. Orin shoots him with a rifle, and the mortally wounded Adam reels over to the downstage-right statue, smearing it with

his blood as he dies. Orin shows the corpse to Christine, who retreats to her chambers on the upper level. She is revealed, soon after, hanging in her clothes closet.

The characterizations are not so much altered as condensed, intensified, made hyper. This is chiefly evident in Lavinia after her return from the islands. In a loud red and black striped, short-skirted dress, she is aggressive, loud, hysterical, and spastic. Interestingly, and consistently enough, Orin's remarks in the last part of the play concerning the switch of identity that he and Lavinia have experienced, the Mannon dead, and the Mannon legacy of guilt, as well as his incestuous proposal to Lavinia, are cut.

No, this is not the play that O'Neill wrote. But in its own way it is theatrically stimulating and faithful to its romantic, melodramatic core of passionate relationships. It plays vividly and perhaps has special relevance to its audiences as a form of glasnost in its comment on certain aspects of their society. In contrast to the National Theatre's Marco Millions, it is adventurous and provocative. On the other hand, it violates O'Neill's text and many of its intentions. And it adds fuel to the ultimately unresolvable controversy about the respective rights of author and director in the theatre.

-- Jarka M. Burian

9. FOUR PLAYS OF THE SEA ("S.S. GLENCAIRN"), directed by Michael Cawelti with Marc Bruno. Just So Productions, San Francisco, CA, April 27 - June 17, 1988. (Reviewed June 15, 1988.)

O'Neill fans in the San Francisco Bay Area received a special treat during the spring of 1988 when Just So Productions offered the four Glencairn plays under the general title Four Plays of the Sea, staged aboard the three-masted schooner C. A. Thayer.

C. A. Thayer was built in Fairhaven, California in 1895 and until 1912 served as a lumber schooner on the West Coast, traveling as far as the Fiji Islands. She then went codfishing in the Bering Sea, and during the Second World War, the U. S. Army removed her masts and used her as an ammunition barge off of British Columbia. By 1950, she was the last commercial sailing vessel to operate from an American Pacific port; and in 1957, she was brought to San Francisco, where she now rests at the Hyde Street Pier, one of only two survivors of the Pacific Northwest lumber fleet of 900, and part of the National Maritime Museum.

While not an authentic setting for O'Neill's plays, which were written to take place aboard a tramp steamer, C. A. Thayer did provide an atmosphere more vivid than most conventional theatres. While on deck, spectators could smell the salty air, feel the San Francisco fog, and see the Golden Gate, Alcatraz and the city skyline in the twilight. Once below, they leaned to and fro as the ship rode the gentle waves when other craft sent their wake towards the pier.

The unusual setting provided unusual circumstances. Spectators gathered at the base of Hyde Street, outside a white picket fence which forms the entrance to the dock/museum, many wearing warm clothing against the chilly night air, and some carrying blankets and cushions. At eight o'clock, producer Marc Bruno arrived, and because park regulations and insurance requirements prohibit the sale of tickets on the premises, he asked those without tickets to follow him to a nearby restaurant on the wharf, where he made the necessary transactions. When all were ready, Bruno and a park ranger escorted the audience (a full house of just over fifty people) down the dock and up the gangway to the schooner, where everyone chose seats on benches and platforms set up on the main deck. A drummer beat out a haunting rhythm aft, and a



group of sailors gathered on the deck and in the shrouds, one playing a concertina.

Director Michael Cawelti chose to begin the evening with The Moon of the Caribbees, which proved to be the weakest performance of the four. O'Neill's impressionistic collage of apparently random interactions seemed to make the cast uneasy, and the quest for women and liquor took on an adolescent quality rather than evoking the blind, driven but routine desperation that the play requires. The staging was effective within the bounds of the unusual actor/audience relationship, but culminated in a perfunctory fight scene.

The production improved when it moved below decks. In the Zone was set in the forecabin, with spectators sitting on benches and in the wooden cubbyholes that once served as sailors' bunks. Led by Kristopher Logan as a taut Cocky and Richard Lindstrom as Smitty, the cast evoked the thick tension of sailors traveling through hostile waters; and even though no one had a full view of all the action at any given moment, Cawelti succeeded in conveying the action to the entire audience. Suspicion accumulated until Smitty was captured and Driscoll, played by James Reese, sat as his principal judge, gazing anxiously into his face while Paul Finocchiaro as Yank paced the playing area and argued Smitty's innocence.

For intermission, the audience moved to a nearby ferry boat, Eureka, where Bruno gave an informal talk on O'Neill, then returned to the forecabin for Bound East for Cardiff. As Yank, Finocchiaro was laid in a grimy bed near the stove while the other men laughed and talked, and then remembered their shipmate. The helplessness of the Captain, played by Robert Hogan, and the deep concern of Driscoll kneeling by his friend's cot, nicely complemented Yank's fear and agony. He twice suffered a coughing fit and left a spot of bright red blood on the deck, an effect disquietingly vivid to those spectators sitting only a few feet away.

The Long Voyage Home took place below decks, amidships on the starboard side, in a space that had been curtained to suggest a waterfront bar. As the audience filed in to sit on cushions, Jeanne Thomas as Mag, the barmaid, maintained a constant wailing at the lone table. As Fat Joe, Robert Hogan was a man of many faces, now the smiling barkeep and now the shifty opportunist; and Mark Toepfer as Nick was grim and violent. Joe Cole played a giant, well-meaning Olson, arriving with Cocky and Driscoll, all hilarious and ready for Joe's drinks and the company of Celia Shuman and Verona Selter as Kate and Freda, the first thin and the second plump, each as unsavory as she was greedy. By the time Joe's thugs carried Olson out to the waiting windjammer, the sailor's lot seemed as inescapable as the waves that washed the hull. In sum, the daring and faith of this production made it a sterling example of San Francisco theatre and a sincere tribute to O'Neill.

-- Jeffrey D. Mason

10. L'ETRANGE INTERMEDE (STRANGE INTERLUDE), directed by Jacques Osner, with Marie-Christine Barrault as Nina Leeds. Production by Le Sorano, Théâtre National de Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées, at the National Theatre of Belgium in Brussels, May 12-18, 1988.

A bonus of my summer trip to Brussels was the chance to attend the last performance in the Belgian capital of a production that had opened in Toulouse on 17 November, was nominated for a 1987-88 Molière award (for "Meilleur Spectacle de la Décentralisation"), and visited six other French cities before its six performances in Brussels and a concluding five in Strasbourg on 25-28 May. My French is only marginally superior to my Swedish (see the two reviews that follow), and the 4 1/2-hour running time was a challenge to an inexperienced jet setter; but I can concur with a French critic that the production of "ce premier 'soap-Opéra'" was "un vrai plaisir." The French and Belgian reviews (from which I will quote below) were

poster by Rosinski for Le Sorano's Interlude.



Barrault (Nina), Dreyfus (Marsden) and Bosquet (Prof. Leeds) in act One. Photo: Patrick Riou.

uniformly ecstatic; and it is a special pleasure that such a successful and innovative production originated in France, where reverence for O'Neill has never been particularly deep. That that tide may be turning was suggested by Michel Cournot's review in Le Monde ("Toulouse repeche New York," November 27, 1987). Praising director Jacques Rosner's bravery in mounting "une pièce-phénomène, une pièce-monstre," Cournot went on to stress the historic importance of its author: "Notons qu'Eugène O'Neill a été le pionnier non seulement du théâtre, mais aussi de la littérature, américains de notre temps."

The central attraction, of course, was the appearance of Marie-Christine Barrault, daughter of famed actor-director Jean-Louis Barrault, in the role of Nina Leeds, that protean protagonist who (to quote Jean Pigeon in Pourquoi Pas?, Brussels, 14 May) "réunit en elle seule toutes les femmes: la maman et la putain, la vierge et l'amante, la créature et son créateur, etc." That Ms. Barrault felt a kinship with Nina was clear in a comment of hers in the same article: "Je l'aime parce qu'elle n'est enfermée dans rien, parce qu'elle pousse toujours plus loin les limites du possible, brisant les cadres trop stricts...." But it takes more than spiritual affinities to turn "toutes les femmes" into one, credible figure, and even more to make plausible Nina's phenomenal charisma. (Of Norma Shearer and even of Glenda Jackson, despite the latter's vocal brilliance, more than one viewer has expressed doubt that such a woman could hold so many men for so many years!) Well, Ms. Barrault had the requisite "mores" in abundance. Call it charm, or intensity, or just sex appeal; whatever it was, it was radiantly in evidence, from her running entrance in Act One--young, wiry, and all in white--through the vicissitudes of the next quarter-century, to the quiet ending, when she sits on a park bench with Charlie, all passion spent, suffused in the red glow of sunset. Cajoling and babying Charlie, or luring Ned and later reigniting their romance, or screaming with her hands over her ears at the recollection of her first beloved's death, or berating the ever-fatter and self-satisfied Sam, or crying ardently to her "Deus Mère," Ms. Barrault succeeded in portraying a believable, even a lovable Nina.

But this was no one-person vehicle or tour de force: Nina's men were equally well played, though none of them without (perhaps inevitably) a whiff of caricature. Jean Bosquet was appropriately gruff and formal as Professor Leeds, though he seemed a bit old for fifty-five. Didier Sauvegrain developed believably as Ned Darrell--dashing at first, comically embarrassed when being involuntarily lured into Everywoman's web, and sadly shriveled after his tropical sabbatical. Roger Van Hool managed the drastic changes in Sam Evans, from gauche young hick--on his first visit to the Leeds home, in straw hat and knickers, he lowered himself toward the sofa, and missed--to pot-bellied blowhard. And as Charlie Marsden, Jean-Claude Dreyfus almost stole the show. Hopping with bent-wristed hands about waist high like a well-schooled puppy, catty in his acerbic asides, yet touching when he sobs on the heroine's breast and cries, "J'ai peur de la vie, Nina," Dreyfus showed, as Edward Petherbridge had done before in London and New York, that Marsden's role and nature are not just comic. Still, in this fascinatingly Frenchified Strange Interlude, there was no one he resembled more than Albin in La Cage aux Folles. The acting ensemble was consummately skilled, and the production flowed because the famous spoken thoughts were delivered naturally, the characters, usually in profile, turning their heads toward the audience to deliver the inner remarks. So there was no problem for us in distinguishing between what a Brussels critic called their "deux langues: le parler social et la voix intérieure." And there was no vocal tiptoeing in the "intérieure" statements: the appropriately wrought ones were literally screamed!

Except in the eighth act, when a low railing across the rear, some nautical rigging and a trapdoor created the Evans' motor-cruiser, the distinctive feature of Max Schoendorff's sets--aside from the period authenticity shared by his equally accurate, equally ghastly costumes--was a series of tall upstage pillars that kept increasing in number (two in the first act, four in the third, six in the seventh, etc.), whose unstated purpose may have been to suggest the growing entrapment of the *dramatis personae*. (No one on stage seemed to notice that the same site, when revisited, had sprung a new pillar or two!) Between the acts (there was but one intermission, between the fifth and sixth acts), recorded pop and swing music helped to transport the audience to an earlier era; and each act's initial stage directions were provided in voice-over by an unseen announcer.

Since my French is rustier than my jaunty quoting might suggest, I dare not offer any further evaluations about the performance, except to say that the cast seemed perfect, the innovative touches were arresting, and Jacques Rosner proved that Strange Interlude can entertain and absorb even a weary traveler, and even in the heat of midsummer. There were increasing numbers of surreptitious defectors as act succeeded act, but I was rapt to the bittersweet end.

-- Frederick C. Wilkins

11. HUGHIE NATTPORTIERN (HUGHIE), directed and designed by Pi Lind. Komediteatern, Stockholm, Sweden, May 1988.

Among the delights of my one-day summer sojourn in Stockholm was the opportunity, a few hours before the evening performance of Long Day's Journey at the Royal Dramatic, to attend a production of Hughie (complimentary to Nobelsymposium participants) at the Comedy Theatre, a short and exhilarating boatride away from the playhouse where the one-act had had its world première thirty years earlier. And I must say that the theatrical adventure was as revivifying as the nautical one, more than justifying the decision of some of us to choose an additional performance over an invitation to the American Embassy that was scheduled at the same hour. The furnishings were modest--little more than the Wilder-prescribed "platform and a passion or two"; but the interplay of two savvy veterans of comedy and vaudeville, Tor Isedal as "Erie" Smith and Sten Ardenstam as Charlie Hughes, made it an afternoon to treasure, and the applause of the audience of twenty or so lasted till well after

the performers had retired permanently beyond the wings.

A few props on the red-curtained stage suggested the "seedy lobby" of an unprosperous New York City hotel in 1928. The desk, with a carafe and water glass on it and a tall, round-topped stool in front of it, could easily have been a bar--not inappropriate for a play so thematically and atmospherically akin to Iceman. And the Houdini poster to the left of the cubicles behind it was not inappropriate either, suggesting a grand theatrical equivalent of the "magical escape" (from loneliness) achieved by the characters at the end of the ensuing hour. Behind the desk/bar stood Ardenstam, looking only slightly less moribund than the potted palm on a low table nearby. His near-terminal ennui was quickly established before Isedal shambled in, uneasy on this old and world-weary legs, introduced himself, and held the clerk's reluctantly proffered paw in a long handshake that seemed as much an act of desperation as of camaraderie. And then the O'Neill magic took over, as the "odd couple" slowly worked their way to the revitalizing relationship each so desperately needed. Not immediately, of course. At first, Hughes--as pallid and tight-lipped as a corpse--was totally oblivious to the new arrival's vocal overtures; and Erie, frequently roused to passion by his recital of recollections, was repeatedly stopped short by the clerk's opaque resistance. (Opaque to us, too, as there was no use of the clerk's silent thoughts. But the vivid, volatile eyes in Ardenstam's otherwise stony face, as he forced them open, or looked longingly heavenward, or just stared straight ahead in silent pain--those eyes spoke volumes.) By the end, after the mention of Arnold Rothstein had broken through the clerk's opacity, the two men stood arm in arm behind the counter, each having found the lifeline he needed, and the dice rattled vivaciously on its surface.

Purists might point out that neither Isedal nor Ardenstam suggests a character "in his early forties." They might even have resented the comic vocal and physical mannerisms of the former: the lisping "Thmith" with which he introduced himself, the wavering walk, the slow-burns and double-takes. But no one on that particular sunny afternoon would have cared a rap for such reservations. O'Neill, like the characters, had worked his magic once again, and the attenders were enthralled. My thanks to the Comedy Theatre for serving such heartening fare, and to Mimi Lind for sending the photographs that accompany this review, each showing Isedal at the left and Ardenstam at the right.

-- Frederick C. Wilkins



12. LANG DAGS FARD MOT NATT (LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT), directed by Ingmar Bergman. Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm, Sweden. Opened April 16, 1988.



To review the performance of a play, even one as well known as this, when it is done in a language that one does not know, would be an act of the boldest presumption. So I offer less a review than a report--albeit subjective--of the Royal Dramatic Theatre's latest revival of a work that it first revealed to the world in 1956, nine months before the play's Broadway premiere. Two facts indicative of the passing of three decades since that first production are (1) that Jarl Kulle, the first Edmund, is now cast as James, Sr. and (2) that Ingmar Bergman, this year's director, has taken considerable liberties with a script to which Bengt Ekerot had been rigorously faithful in 1956. Neither change, fortunately, is detrimental. I didn't see Mr. Kulle as Edmund, but his James Tyrone is the genuine article, strutting and declaiming like a thespian of the "old school," and wielding his cigar and walking stick like implements of royalty, until the events of the day's long journey undermine and dash forever his lordly façade. And Mr. Bergman's choice of production style, while it is far from what O'Neill had envisioned, still reveals to the full the intricate love-hate relations among the "four haunted Tyrones."

Aside from the chairs and tables that vary from scene to scene, there is no attempt at realism in the sets of Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss. The only constants are two short, round, pillar-like tables at right and left rear, one holding a statue of the Virgin Mary with a votive candle burning before it, the other supporting a telephone and housing the senior Tyrone's precious, locked liquor cabinet. On a huge curtain at the rear of the high and wide thrust stage, a series of projections offers more atmosphere than verisimilitude: at first, a befogged and tilted exterior shot of Monte Cristo Cottage; later, such objects as clouds, a lace-curtained window, a magnified fireplace tile (or it may have been a patch of wallpaper), and a large, illuminated tree, starkly brilliant in the surrounding darkness. A tree? In a cottage without walls? Clearly O'Neill has been elbowed into a stylized, post-Beckettian world, leaving the viewer frequently uncertain whether the Tyrones are in the parlor, the garden, or the "vacant, vast surrounding" of memory.

One thing that such a setting does not provide is the claustrophobic arena in which this family's battles are usually waged. And the resultant directorial choice, after a quiet, untraditional start, was amplification rather than subtlety--at least it seemed that way to a non-Swedish ear. Initially, the four Tyrones enter, with the fog-shrouded cottage-shot behind them, and form a linked family tableau, including the black-clad maid, as though posing for a Christmas card. Then the fog lifts, the boys leave, and the parental dialogue begins, while, incongruously, the maid remains, knitting at the far left with her back to the audience. Thereafter, all is volatile and kinetic--laughter and tears, entrapments and embraces, confrontations and escapes--through the nearly four hours of the production's two acts (the intermission coming before Act Four). Discussions tend to begin calmly, then mount to a climax, usually punctuated at the end by a character's hand slamming on a table or chair, or the flight of one of the combatants. Seldom have the Tyrones been so much in motion--or so much on the floor, one character kneeling imploringly by another's chair, or two (Mary and Edmund) seated there together in a moment of temporary rapport. (Mary even falls to the floor in the last scene, after wrenching the wedding dress from its paper wrapper in Cathleen's hand, and Edmund helps her to his chair.) Bergman accentuates the tendency toward violence among the men, and even in Mary, who is given to hysterical screaming at moments of tension, as when she discovers that James had given Edmund a drink. Still, amid all the flare-ups and face-offs, the director never lets us forget that it is really love that ties the Tyrone family together. Nor did I detect any simplistic attempt to blame any one member for its communal malaise, though Mary was generally stiff, sharp and swift in her rejection of verbal or physical embraces from her husband and sons, from the first scene to the last.

I was told that the play, despite its long running time, had been heavily cut. Perhaps a good deal of the literary quotation was omitted, but the language barrier prevented me from detecting deletions. The only omissions I thought I noticed were

the ice pond story, some references to James's "performance" as hedge cutter, and his remarks about the watered booze. Naturally, given the setting, there are no bulbs to turn off and on above the card players' table; but the only major change, aside from those already noted--the opening tableau and some untraditional bits of business for Cathleen--is at the very end. At the reference to "James Tyrone" near the close of the seated Mary's monologue, all eyes turn toward her. Then, concluding her speech, Mary exits, soon followed by James and Jamie, leaving Edmund alone on the darkening stage with the projected tree behind him. Then he leaves too, taking with him a book that he picks up from the table, and total darkness envelops the stage. An untraditional closing--perhaps less evocative than the diminishing pool of light in the Lumet film--but not an inappropriate one.

The cast was uniformly fine, though, again, the language barrier precludes total evaluation on my part. Peter Stormare as Edmund, loose of limb and wearing his long cardigan like a security blanket, was more physically active than most of his predecessors in the role. Thommy Berggren as Jamie, tawdrily resplendent in his off-white suit with suspenders and red stickpin, played the sport and the drunk effectively, though he remained a bit too neat and clean in the fourth act, and his "warning" to Edmund didn't seem very threatening. (It was interesting that both brothers laughed at Jamie's "Frankenstein" reference--a suggestion that what we traditionally take to be a new and startling revelation may not be that to its on-stage listener.) Bibi Andersson was a stately and beautiful Mary, though hardly a plump one. (Perhaps the comments on Mary's size were also deleted.) What she was, was wildly changeable--floating and soft-voiced at one moment, twirling and gabby at another, or stridently cutting, or icily reserved, and fussily fidgeting and pacing when alone. I didn't discern any clear progression in this mélange of moments, and it is possible that none was intended. But it may be, rather, a heartening reminder that the essence of drama remains language, and that, missing that, I lacked the key ingredient in the characterization.

One biographer and translator of Scandinavian playwrights asked, after attending the production, whether Long Day's Journey might not be vastly overrated, since he had found both play and performance to be embarrassingly "self-indulgent." I could not agree, preferring to ascribe the histrionics to the influence of James's kind of theatre on the members of his family. It is only right that the Royal Dramatic play a major role in the O'Neill centennial celebrations. Thanks to the innovative genius of Ingmar Bergman, the fresh contributions of his production team, and the splendid ensemble of the performers, that role is a striking and memorable one.

-- Frederick C. Wilkins



The Tyrones in Stockholm. Seated: Andersson and Kulle. Standing: Stormare and Berggren.



Edmund (Stormare) is the last to leave at the end of Ingmar Bergman's new staging of Journey.



## NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

1. CENTENNIAL-DAY GALAS, EAST AND WEST. Not even an SST could get one to both, but O'Neill's 100th will be celebrated with festive theatrical programs on both U.S. coasts on Sunday, October 16. At 3:00 p.m., the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco will host a "Centennial Birthday Party," produced by the ACT in conjunction with the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, and directed by ACT Associate Artistic Director Joy Carlin. Featured will be scenes from O'Neill plays presented on the West Coast during the 1987-88 season. Participants include the ACT (Marco Millions), the Oregon Shakespearean Festival (The Iceman Cometh), the Berkeley Repertory Theatre (Ah, Wilderness! and Long Day's Journey), Magic Theatre (Moon for the Misbegotten), and Just So Productions (a Glencairn one act). A reception will follow. At 7:00 p.m. (4:00 p.m., San Francisco time), New York City's Circle in the Square will host a "Gala Centennial Tribute to the Genius of Eugene O'Neill," presented by the Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill, and featuring "scenes (and songs) from O'Neill's plays performed by stars of stage and screen," and followed by a buffet reception and dance. So it can be said that, for an hour or so, the centennial festivities will literally and simultaneously span the continent.
2. PAST AND FUTURE CELEBRATED IN PROVINCETOWN. Two recent events--one a commemorative look back, the other a creative collaboration for the future--deserve the attention and applause of all O'Neillians. The first, on July 28 (the 72nd anniversary of the opening there of Bound East for Cardiff), was the unveiling of a bronze plaque marking the site of the Provincetown Players' original wharf theatre. Replacing a since-lost plaque that had been mounted there in the 1960s, it bears the following inscription: "In 1915, on a wharf belonging to Mary Heaton Vorse which extended from this site, a fish shed was converted into a theater by a group later named the Provincetown Players. On July 28, 1916, the Players staged the first production of 'Bound East for Cardiff,' by the then unknown Eugene O'Neill, which launched his career as a playwright and changed the course of modern American drama." Speakers at the 9 a.m. ceremony included descendants of the original Players; Adele Heller, Producing Director of the Provincetown Playhouse; and novelist Norman Mailer, who talked about literary Provincetown. The second event, on September 7, was the announcement of a "unique collaboration" between the Playhouse and Cape Cod Community College in West Barnstable. The Playhouse will mount professional productions at the College, where students will gain valuable experience as assistants and interns. Our congratulations to Mrs. Heller on this double achievement--a celebration of the Provincetown Playhouse's roots, and a reaffirmation of its commitment to the development of American theatre.
3. ATTENTION, SONGSTERS! Here's a chance to add the final touches to the Eugene O'Neill Songbook, edited by Travis Bogard, that will be published early in 1989 by UMI Research Press. It will contain words and music for the sixty-odd songs that O'Neill calls for in his plays, and will be of great interest to O'Neillians, melodic Americanists, and especially producers of O'Neill's plays. The problem is this: despite years of intrepid sleuthery, Professor Bogard has still not located two of the songs.

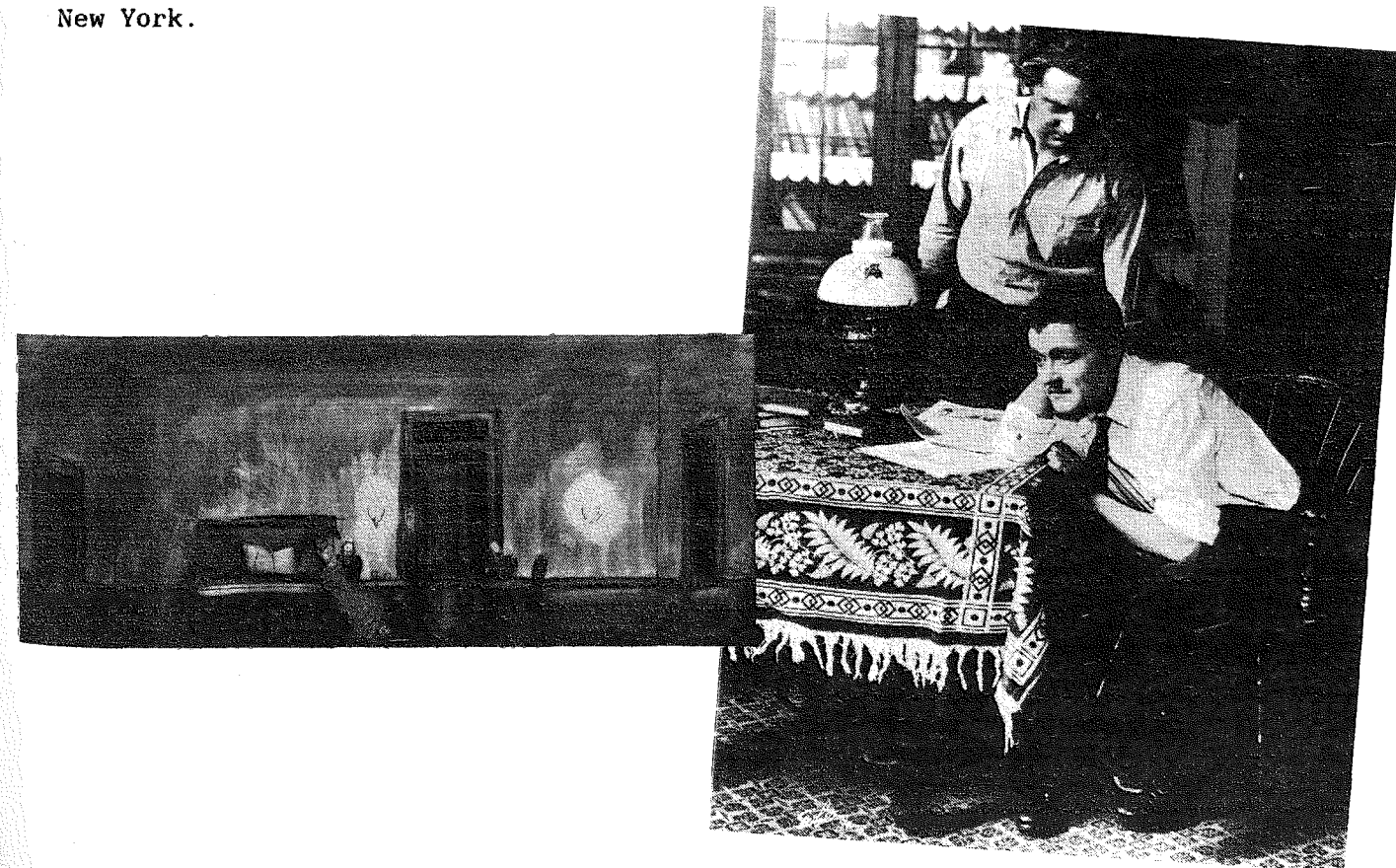
One I don't expect to find, a line sung in The Movie Man: "Mexico, my bright-eyed Mexico." It is probably a bad English translation of a Mexican or Spanish song. The other is important and baffling. It's sung by a boozy sentimental tenor in the first scene of The Hairy Ape and goes:

Far away in Canada  
Far across the sea  
There's a lass who fondly waits  
Making a home for me.

If any of your devoted readers heard it at their mothers' knee, I long to know about it.

Readers who have the words and music for one of both of these songs can send them to the Newsletter for forwarding to Professor Bogard. Do help to make the Songbook complete. Locators will be publicly congratulated in a future issue of the Newsletter.

4. NO WINNER IN PLAY CONTEST. At Sardi's on July 8, the judges in the O'Neill Society-sponsored contest for a play about O'Neill reached the decision that, while several of the entries had considerable potential merit, none had yet been sufficiently developed to be appropriate for the staged reading at the Circle in the Square that was promised for the winner. The President of the Society thanks judges Romulus Linney, Louis Sheaffer and Milan Stitt for their lengthy labors, and shares their regret that there could be no victor. The editor hopes to provide, in a future issue, authors' synopses of several entries, both to show the fascinating variety of dramatic avenues available in treating O'Neill's life, and to alert theatre companies to the plays' availability.
5. SECOND O'NEILL CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT IN NEW YORK CITY. Following its photographic tribute, "The Face of Genius: Images of Eugene O'Neill," the Museum of the City of New York will present a second exhibition, entitled "American Lines: Manuscripts of Eugene O'Neill," from October 17, 1988 to January 8, 1989. Among the assembly of manuscripts, programs, production photos, artwork, promptbooks and scenic designs that will be on display are the manuscripts of Beyond the Horizon, Ah, Wilderness!, Bound East for Cardiff and several other one act plays; the scenic design for Bound East for Cardiff; the stage manager's script and Robert Edmond Jones's scenic designs for Ah, Wilderness!; and Eugene and Carlotta O'Neill's opening night telegrams to the Broadway production's star, George M. Cohan. The exhibition has been organized by Patrick Hoffman, Assistant Curator of the Museum's Theatre Collection. The Museum of the City of New York is located on Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street. For viewing dates and hours and up-to-date program information, call (212) 534-1034. Two exhibit items are pictured below. At left: Jones's scenic design for Act Three, Scene One of Ah, Wilderness! At right: Edward Arnold (Andrew Mayo) stands above Richard Bennett (Robert Mayo) in a scene from the 1920 Broadway production of Beyond the Horizon. The photographs are reproduced with the kind permission of the Museum of the City of New York.



6. CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT AT THE BEINECKE. To celebrate the O'Neill centennial and its own twenty-fifth anniversary, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University will offer, from November 7 to December 21, a display of O'Neill manuscripts, books, letters and diaries. The exhibition, whose organizer is Patricia C. Willis, Curator of American Literature at the Beinecke, explores O'Neill's dramatic art as an imitation of his life, and will feature photographs of the author and original materials relating to the production of his plays. Viewing hours are 8:30 to 5 on Mondays through Fridays, and 10 to 5 on Saturdays. For more information, write to the Beinecke Library, Box 1603A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520, or call (203) 432-2977.
7. "EUGENE O'NEILL: ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER" was the subject of a session at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on November 7. The papers presented were "Eugene O'Neill and the Sea Plays," by Robert Willebrink, Univ. of Central Arkansas; "Eugene O'Neill: The Religious Impulse, 1914-1923," by Gerald Lee Ratliff, Montclair (NJ) State College; "Expressionism and Eugene O'Neill," by Ronald Shields, Bowling Green State Univ.; and "A Deconstructive Analysis of Desire Under the Elms," by Joel Murray, Indiana-Purdue Univ., Fort Wayne.

8. O'NEILL AT NEMLA '88: a report by Steven F. Bloom. On Thursday, March 24, at the Northeast Modern Language Association annual convention in Providence, RI, Martha Bower chaired the O'Neill session entitled "'Theatricality' and Experiment in Eugene O'Neill's Middle Years."

Bette Mandl, Associate Professor of English at Suffolk University in Boston, delivered a paper on "Theatricality and Otherness in All God's Chillun Got Wings," in which she analyzes how the "conceptual forms" that shape the play determine both its "power" and its "limitations." Mandl's provocative thesis is that while the play seems to renounce racial prejudice, its emphasis on differences and "otherness" reinforces universal polarities between black and white, as well as between male and female, that suggest the impossibility of social change: "In seeking to avoid an explicitly political comment through a focus on individual reality, the play unwittingly makes one through its design that is much less progressive than O'Neill would have consciously intended."

Nancy L. Roberts, Assistant Professor in the School of Communications and Journalism at the University of Minnesota, then presented a paper entitled "Eugene O'Neill to George Jean Nathan on the Craftsmanship of All God's Chillun Got Wings and Strange Interlude." Based on her research for the recently published book, "As Ever, Gene": The Letters of Eugene O'Neill to George Jean Nathan, which she co-edited with Arthur W. Roberts, her paper considers various excerpts from the letters that reveal O'Neill's working methods, especially on Chillun and Interlude. She also cites evidence of O'Neill's evaluations of his own plays, as well as his responses to the evaluations of Nathan and other critics. Ultimately, in studying the relationship between playwright and critic, Roberts demonstrates that "the O'Neill letters illuminate the fine line between friendship and professional distance that the critic must walk."

Finally the assembled group was treated to two videotaped excerpts from productions of Strange Interlude, provided by Frederick Wilkins, Chairman of the English Department at Suffolk University in Boston, and President of the Eugene O'Neill Society. Wilkins selected the scene from Act Two in which Ned tries to gain Charlie's assistance in convincing Nina to marry Sam, first from the 1932 film with Clark Gable and Norma Shearer and then from the 1987 public television production with Glenda Jackson. A lively discussion among conference attenders followed on the relative merits (and demerits) of the two productions, based on this scene, and on the production problems of Strange Interlude in general.

9. CHINESE STUDENTS GATHER TO CELEBRATE O'NEILL. As part of the international celebration of the O'Neill centennial, Nankai University and Tianjin TV hosted a National Conference on Eugene O'Neill for Postgraduates from May 5 to 7, 1988, in Tianjin, People's Republic of China. The conference was organized by Liu Siyuan and

Li Gang, graduate students of American literature in the Foreign Languages Department of Nankai University. Approximately sixty doctoral candidates and postgraduates from sixteen universities and colleges across the country participated in the conference. Thirty-two of them delivered papers, which centered mainly on O'Neill's thought, philosophy and artistic achievements; his Oriental inclination; and his influence on modern Chinese drama. The conference was a prelude to this year's celebration of O'Neill's centennial in China and the earliest celebration activity outside the United States. It was also the first of its kind for postgraduates in China. All of the participants and experts on O'Neill who attended the conference agreed that it would certainly give new impetus to O'Neill research in China. In addition to the paper sessions, participants enjoyed an English language production of Ah, Wilderness! that was directed by Liu Siyuan and performed by Nankai University students.

10. MLA '88--AND '89. The dates and hours of O'Neill Society-sponsored events at the 1988 Modern Language Association Convention in New Orleans have been announced. All will take place in the New Orleans Hilton on 28 and 29 December.

\* "Eugene O'Neill at 100: Respects and Retrospects," a paper session (#299 in the MLA Program) moderated by Frederick C. Wilkins. 3:30-4:45 p.m. on December 28 in Marlborough B. Speakers: Normand Berlin, Univ. of Massachusetts ("O'Neill's Shakespeare"), Marc Maufort, Université Libre de Bruxelles ("The Playwright as Lord of Touraine: O'Neill and French Civilization"), Martha Bower, Univ. of New Hampshire ("O'Neill: A Tragedian for All Seasons"), and Michael Hinden, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison ("The Right Kind of Pity": O'Neill's Gift to American Drama").

\* Cash Bar arranged by the Eugene O'Neill Society. 5:15-6:45 p.m., in the same room. (We will either plead with the bartender to open early, or have longer than usual for questions and answers. Whichever, it will be a festive and convivial close for the centennial year.)

\* Annual Business Meeting of the Eugene O'Neill Society. 5:15-6:30 p.m. on December 29 in the Trafalgar Room. (This meeting will be preceded by the annual meeting of Board and Officers, from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in the Newberry Room.)

The title of the O'Neill session at the 1989 MLA Convention in Washington, D.C., will be "Contemporary Critical Perspectives on Eugene O'Neill." Those interested in applying one of the recent critical methodologies--New Historicism, Deconstruction, Narratology, etc.--to a play or plays by O'Neill are encouraged to send abstracts (limit: 500 words) or papers (limit: 10 pages) to Professor James A. Robinson, Dept. of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. The deadline is March 1, 1989. Professor Robinson, who will chair the session, emphasizes the above "etc.": any contemporary critical approaches are eligible, as are all O'Neillians, whether they be established scholars or graduate students.

11. CALL FOR PAPERS. Steven F. Bloom will chair the 1989 NEMLA session on O'Neill, scheduled for Friday, March 31, at the Radisson Hotel in Wilmington, Delaware. The topic will be "Heirs Apparent and Inapparent: O'Neill's Influence and Legacy." The September 15 deadline for submissions has passed. If slots still remain, readers can find out by writing to Prof. Bloom at Emmanuel College, 400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115.

12. CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE IN WEST GERMANY. Professors Ulrich Halfmann and Meinhard Winkgens have organized an O'Neill Symposium that will be held at the University of Mannheim on 5-6 November. Fourteen scholars from thirteen German cities will speak



at three major sessions, on such subjects as O'Neill's Provincetown connection, his experiments with expressionism, his role as cultural critic, his attitudes toward the working class, his affinities with Nietzsche, and the elements of realism, mysticism and tragedy in his plays. Among the specified plays mentioned in paper titles are The Great God Brown, Strange Interlude, Mourning Becomes Electra, Long Day's Journey and A Touch of the Poet. For a copy of the program and information about securing copies of papers, readers can contact Prof. Dr. Ulrich Halfmann, Universität Mannheim, Lehrstuhl Anglistik III - Amerikanistik, Schloss, D-6800 Mannheim 1, Federal Republic of Germany.

13. "EUGENE O'NEILL: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND ART" is the topic of a centennial conference to be held at Washington University in St. Louis on November 10-11, 1988. The conference, organized and directed by Henry I. Schvey, Chairman of WU's Performing Arts Department, will feature talks by such scheduled speakers as Travis Bogard, Jackson R. Bryer, Virginia Floyd and John Henry Raleigh. Among the other highlights will be a first-time exhibition of first editions, letters and photographs from the private collection of Dr. Harley J. Hammerman; screenings of film adaptations of O'Neill's works; and a mainstage production of Desire Under the Elms, directed by Ann Marie Costa, at the University's Edison Theatre. Professor Schvey notes, quite rightly, that the conference "should provide an exciting critical reassessment of the role of the autobiographical impulse in the work of this great dramatist." For information, contact Professor Schvey at Washington University in St. Louis, One Brookings Drive, Campus Box 1108, St. Louis, MO 63130. Tel. (314) 889-5858.
14. CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN PORTLAND, OREGON. The Portland Area Theatre Alliance has put together an exciting group of activities collectively entitled "Eugene O'Neill: A Centenary Celebration." In addition to the productions of A Touch of the Poet and A Moon for the Misbegotten by PATA affiliates that are included in this issue's production list, the Northwest Film and Video Center, a division of the Oregon Art Institute, will screen a series of film adaptations of O'Neill's plays on Thursdays and Sundays through the month of October. [The number for information about titles, dates and showtimes is (503) 221-1156.] And Portland's Storefront Theatre will present "concert readings" of five of O'Neill's less familiar works on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m.: The Hairy Ape on 9/27 and Ile and Where the Cross Is Made on 10/10, both at the Winningstad Theatre in the Portland Performing Arts Center; Hughie on 10/24 in the Ann Hughes Coffeehouse at Powell's Books; and Anna Christie on 11/7 in the Storefront Theatre at Third and Burnside. [For further information, call (503) 224-4001.] Our congratulations to the Portland Area Theatre Alliance (P.O. Box 12068, Portland, OR 97212) for its major contribution to the O'Neill centennial.
15. ASSORTED PAPERS AND SESSIONS ON O'NEILL. Henry I. Schvey spoke on "The Master and His Double: Eugene O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms and Sam Shepard's Buried Child" in March 19 at the Mid-American Theatre Conference in Kansas City, MO. Marc Maufort spoke on "Experiments in Tragic Form: Belgian Productions of Long Day's Journey Into Night" on August 5 at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, in San Diego, CA. Bernard Bergonzi, Normand Berlin, Michael Manheim and John H. Stroupe were featured speakers at a "Centennial Symposium on Eugene O'Neill and T. S. Eliot" in Oshkosh, Wisconsin on September 23-25. (For information on subjects and paper availability, contact Anji Roy, Department of English, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI 54901.) The subjects (and speakers) at the international symposium on "Eugene O'Neill as Contemporary Theatre," held at Hosei University in Tokyo on 11-12 June, included "The Search for a Blissful Land: Utopian Motifs in O'Neill's Plays," "Provincetown Players: The Culture and the Legacy" (Adele Heller), "The O'Neill Tradition at Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre, 1923-1962" (Tom Olsson), "The Psychological Relevance of O'Neill's Plays" (Péter Egri), "Eugene O'Neill in Contemporary Chinese Theatre," "Theatre Language: Word and Image in The Hairy Ape" (Jean Chothia), "The Beckettian O'Neill" (Normand Berlin), and "The Pipe Dreams of O'Neill in the Age of Deconstruction" (Herbert Blau).

# 16. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS.

- Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer, eds., Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988. xi + 602 pp. \$35.00, cloth. ISBN 0-300-04374-0. (To be reviewed in a future issue of the Newsletter.)
- Michael Burlingame, "Eugene O'Neill at the Rippin Cottage," The Day (New London, CT), July 24, 1988, p. A11. [As an antidote to the tragic saga surrounding Monte Cristo Cottage, Burlingame, an Associate Professor of History at Connecticut College, relates the happier story of O'Neill's stay at the Rippin home across the street, where, as the playwright later said, "I first started my pen-pushing in earnest." Local O'Neill devotees are currently trying to save the house from demolition, and Burlingame is definitely among them. "Preserving the Rippin Cottage," he writes, "would remind the world that New London was more than a crucible of suffering for the town's foremost Nobel Prize winner; in fact, it was also a place where he knew joy and health and where he began the most distinguished career in the history of American drama."]
- Michael Burlingame, "O'Neill Recalled Warmly," The Day (New London, CT), July 21, 1988, pp. E1, E3. [An interview with Earle F. Johnson (the interior decorator who had helped the O'Neills furnish their home in Marblehead, MA), on the occasion of Johnson's visit to Monte Cristo Cottage to donate the cane and deck chairs of O'Neill's that Carlotta had given him after the death of the husband she always referred to as "the Master." O'Neill was generally taciturn but genial when Johnson visited, while Carlotta was given to volubility. He sensed no tension between the couple, and irritation flared only at references to Eugene, Jr., whom "Carlotta so disliked ... that she would immediately burn the sheets that he and his lady friend had slept on when visiting the Marblehead home."]
- Gabrielle H. Cody, "Extracts from a Journal: Meditations on Long Day's Journey Into Night," Yale Reports, 12:5 (1988), 3-4, 8. [On a cross-country series of train rides in the last month of 1987, the dramaturg for the Yale Rep's 1988 production of O'Neill's autobiographical masterwork seeks the roots of her previously unexamined reverence for the dramatist and finds them in "a play about the slow eclipse of light, the ultimate need to accept darkness" by a man whose greatest creative impetus was his "disappointed Catholicism" (p. 4).]
- Péter Egri, The Birth of American Tragedy. Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1988. 227 pp. ISBN 963-18-1052-6. (To be reviewed in a future issue of the Newsletter.)
- Pamela Erens, "Portrait of the Playwright as a Young Man," Connecticut (February 1988) pp. 82-87, 169-171. [An anecdotal survey of O'Neill's life, richest on the New London years and his roles as son, brother, journalist, husband and father. The major source (acknowledged) was the two-volume biography by Louis Sheaffer.]
- Anthony Fichera, "Ah, Wilderness!: O'Neill's True Family?" Yale Reports, 12:5 (1988), 2. [Thoughts on the biographical relevance of the play by the dramaturg for its Yale Rep production in 1988. Noting that the protagonist, Richard Miller, resembles his creator as a poetic adolescent rebel, Fichera sees Ah, Wilderness! and Long Day's Journey as complementary "apologias: Long Day's Journey for the way his family failed him, and Ah, Wilderness! for the way he failed them."]
- Richard Hornby, "O'Neill's 'Death of a Salesman,'" Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, 2.2 (Spring 1988), 53-59.
- Marc Maufort, "Eugene O'Neill and the Shadow of Edmond Dantès: The Pursuit of Dramatic Unity in Where the Cross Is Made (1918) and Gold (1920)." In Gilbert Debusscher, ed., American Literature in Belgium. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988, pp. 89-97. [The author offers the following abstract. The early one-act plays of



O'Neill have too often been criticized for their apparent lack of complexity. In some cases, they can prove more coherent than long plays such as Dynamo or The Great God Brown. A comparison between Where the Cross Is Made and Gold, a development of the former into four acts, sheds light on this phenomenon. The setting of the one-act version offers, through O'Neill's skilled use of lighting and sound effects, more poetic qualities than Gold. In the short play, the various threads of the action are unified by Nat's consciousness, in a method comparable to the novelistic "stream of consciousness." In Gold, on the contrary, the plot remains melodramatic. Similarly, the pipe-dream motif of Cross is given a more subtle treatment than in Gold, in which the father eventually recognizes the elusive nature of his hopes. In summation, Where the Cross Is Made presents a number of innovative features that deserve critical praise. Drawing from the Count of Monte Cristo metaphor, on which the two plays are based, one could argue that only in the one-act did O'Neill, following in the footsteps of Edmond Dantès, find the buried treasure of meaningful and coherent craftsmanship.]

Eugene O'Neill, The Complete Plays, ed. Travis Bogard. New York: The Library of America, 1988. Vol. I (1913-1920), 1104 pp. \$35.00, cloth. ISBN 0-940450-48-8. Vol. II (1920-1931), 1092 pp. \$35.00, cloth. ISBN 0-940450-49-6. Vol. III (1932-1943), 1007 pp. \$35.00, cloth. ISBN 0-940450-49-X. The appropriate publication date is October 16, 1988, and the three volumes will also be available in a boxed set for \$100.00 (ISBN 0-940450-62-3). A review will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter, but readers need not wait for it: this first complete edition of O'Neill's plays supersedes all previous collections and is sure to remain the standard edition of O'Neill's dramatic works throughout the playwright's second century.

"O'Neill and the American Theatre," a special issue of Modern Drama (March 1988), whose specifically O'Neill-related contents are these:  
 Ernest G. Griffin, "O'Neill and the Tragedy of Culture" (pp. 1-15);  
 Linda Ben-Zvi, "Freedom and Fixity in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill" (pp. 16-27);  
 Normand Berlin, "The Beckettian O'Neill" (pp. 28-34);  
 Hubert Zapf, "O'Neill's Hairy Ape and the Reversal of Hegelian Dialectics" (pp. 35-40);  
 Ann Massa, "Intention and Effect in The Hairy Ape (pp. 41-51);  
 Laurin R. Porter, "The Iceman Cometh as Crossroad in O'Neill's Long Journey" (pp. 52-62);  
 John Henry Raleigh, "Communal, Familial, and Personal Memories in O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night" (pp. 63-72);  
 John H. Astington, "Shakespearean Rags" (pp. 73-80); and  
 Robert Ready, "The Play of the Misbegotten" (pp. 81-90).

Yvonne Shafer, "Eugene O'Neill and American Expressionism," American Studies (1987).

Edward L. Shaughnessy, Eugene O'Neill in Ireland: The Critical Reception. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988. 221 pp. ISBN 0-313-25627-6.

Evert Sprinchorn, "O'Neill's Myth Plays for the God-Forsaken," Theatre Three (forthcoming).

Ronald H. Wainscott, "Exploring the Religion of the Dead: Philip Moeller Directs O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra," Theatre History Studies, 7 (1987), 28-39. [Director Moeller and set and costume designer Robert Edmond Jones were major contributors to the success of the 1931 Theatre Guild production, as Professor Wainscott shows most persuasively in his study of the preproduction and rehearsal periods as well as the critical reactions. Moeller's third O'Neill production and Jones's eighth was among their best.]

Frederick C. Wilkins, "O'Neill at 100," Americana (July-August, 1988), pp. 47-52. [A

sketch of the playwright's life, with an illustrated report of the restoration of Monte Cristo Cottage and Tao House, and news of centennial activities and productions in both houses' environs.]

17. CENTENNIAL INSPIRES REPRINTS. Our congratulations to two publishers, St. Martin's Press and Paragon House, for choosing to reprint four essential books that other, less perspicacious publishers had foolishly dropped from their catalogs. St. Martin's Press has released paperback editions of José Quintero's If You Don't Dance They Beat You and Normand Berlin's Eugene O'Neill (\$10.95 each). And Paragon House will bring out, next March and September, the two volumes of Louis Sheaffer's prize-winning biography, O'Neill, Son and Playwright and O'Neill, Son and Artist. (New, hardcover editions of both volumes have already been released, primarily for libraries, by AMS Press, at a price of \$75 each. PH's paperback editions will cost around \$15 each.) Veteran O'Neillians doubtless have the four books already; but they can indicate their approval of the new releases by securing copies for potential converts.

18. THEATRE ANNUAL will devote its 1988 edition to O'Neill. The articles, selected by special editor Paul Voelker, are four: "The Dreamy Kid: O'Neill's Darker Brother," by Gary Jay Williams; "The Metatheatre of O'Neill: Actor as Metaphor in A Touch of the Poet," by Jeffrey Mason; "Mariners and Mystics: Echoes of Moby Dick in O'Neill," by Marc Maufort; and "O'Neill's Presence in Long Day's Journey Into Night," by Bruce Mann.

19. A DISSERTATION. Ann C. Hall, "A Kind of Alaska: Women in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill, Harold Pinter, and Sam Shepard." Ohio State U., English, 1988. Dir. K. H. Borkman.

20. A PRINTING ERROR IN LONG DAY'S JOURNEY: a note from Stephen A. Black. Page 109 of all printings of Yale UP's Long Day's Journey Into Night contains a significant printing error. It comes in Act Three, near the end of Mary's long speech to Tyrone and Edmund when they have returned from their visit to the doctor. Mary's thoughts drift to Jamie and, according to the text, she says:

But we mustn't allow him to drag Edmund down with him, as he's like to do.

Both the holograph (Beinecke Library Zx / O'Neill / 92 ax; III, p. 8) and the typescript (93 x; Act Three, p. 9) show that instead of "he's," O'Neill intended "he'd." The difference is considerable. The phrase "he's like to do" is a Midwest ruralism, a contraction of "he's likely to do." It's an unlikely usage for a writer as devoted to adverbs as O'Neill, and an unlikely phrase for someone of Mary's education. As for its meaning, the printed phrase expresses a prediction of a future event, whereas "he'd like to do" expresses a belief in a wish and motive. O'Neill intends Mary to say that she believes Jamie wants to drag Edmund down to his level of failure.

21. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS.

Ah, Wilderness! Portsmouth (NH) Academy of Performing Arts, May 19-22, 1988.

Beyond the Horizon, dir. Frank Bessell. Berkshire Public Theatre, Pittsfield, MA, Oct. 6 to 27, 1988, with a special matinee performance on centennial Sunday, October 16. For information, call (413) 445-4631.

The Emperor Jones, with choreography by Todd Bolender. Missouri Repertory Theatre, Kansas City, MO, Aug. 16-28, 1988.

Long Day's Journey Into Night. Indiana Repertory Theatre, Indianapolis, IN, Fall 1988. Opening production of IRT's 1988-89 season. (Tel. 1-800-234-2500.)

The Long Voyage Home, In the Zone and Ile, dir. Edward Golden. University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Oct. 20-22 and 27-29, 1988.

A Moon for the Misbegotten. Strand Theatre, Schroon Lake, NY, July 8-9 and Aug. 5-7, 1988.

A Moon for the Misbegotten. New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, Drew University, Madison, NJ 07940, Oct. 15 - Nov. 5, 1988. [Tel. (201) 377-4487.]

A Moon for the Misbegotten, dir. Tom Ramirez. Portland (OR) Repertory Theatre, Nov. 12 - Dec. 17, 1988. [Tel. (503) 222-2487.]

A Touch of the Poet, dir. John Stephens. Academy Theatre, Atlanta, GA. Closed on June 4, 1988.

A Touch of the Poet, dir. Malcolm Black. A Theatre Plus production at the Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, Toronto, ONT, Sept. 5 - Oct. 1, 1988.

A Touch of the Poet, dir. Twig Webster. New Rose Theatre, Portland, OR, Sept. 14 - October 16, 1988. (Two actors will play the role of Con Melody--"one as the real Con, the other as Con sees himself.") For information, call (503) 222-2495 or 222-2487.

22. ERRATUM IN ENCOMIUM. When proposing that an artist be declared a national treasure (as I did on p. 68 of the last issue), the proposer should certainly spell the candidate's name correctly. Having failed to do so, I send deep apologies to ISA THOMAS, whose incandescent Christine Mannon remains a highlight of the 1987-88 O'Neill season. -Ed.

23. GOOD NEWS FROM STRATFORD. Stratford, Connecticut, that is, where a quarter century of star-studded theatre came to a halt when the American Shakespeare Theatre went bankrupt in 1982. Well, the institution is to reopen, renamed the American Heritage Theatre, renovated by the state at a cost of \$7.2 million, and affiliated with the University of Connecticut. In the theatre's new manifestation, Shakespeare will share the stage with dance and musical performances--and with the works of Eugene O'Neill! The search is on for an artistic director. We hope the winner will be adventurous, inventive, and enamored of the entire E.G.O. canon.

24. DUNE DOIN'S. As the Newsletter goes to press, the briny issue of whether or not to grant landmark status to the 15 or so dune shacks between Provincetown and Truro on Cape Cod is being scrutinized by state and federal authorities. If made landmarks, the shacks, which for decades have been part of a rich literary and artistic tradition made famous by Eugene O'Neill and others, will be protected from destruction by the National Park Service. The N.P.S., as custodian of the Cape Cod National Seashore, determines the fate of dune shacks when their owners die. And the standard fate is demolition; there were far more than 15 in the past. Needless to say, the dune shacks represent a unique part of American culture and are deserving of support from O'Neillians and all concerned citizens. The Peaked Hill Trust is working to preserve the shacks, some of which can be seen in a striking two-page photograph in the August issue of Yankee Magazine. Preservation-minded readers are urged to contact the Trust (Box 1705, Provincetown, MA 02657) for further information and details on how they can assist the cause. Hearty, adventurous readers may also want to inquire about renting a dune shack at \$100-\$175 per week. O'Neill's Peaked Hill Bar coast guard station vanished into the sea long ago, but the dune ambiance of the area along with its magnificent view of the sea is much the same as it was 50 years ago. There is nothing quite like it elsewhere. --Marshall Brooks.

#### PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

ALBERT BERMEI is Professor of Theatre at Lehman College and Acting Executive Officer of the Ph.D. Program in Theatre at the Graduate Center of C.U.N.Y.

STEPHEN A. BLACK, Professor of English at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, is completing a book on the biographical impetus behind O'Neill's works.

MARSHALL BROOKS is editor of Nostoc, associate editor of the Newsletter, and C.E.O. of Arts End Books, which published Sherry Mangan's Blackness of a White Night (1987).

WILLIAM F. CONDEE is Assistant Professor of Theatre and Head of the Theatre Arts and Drama Program at Ohio University in Athens, OH.

THOMAS F. CONNOLLY is a Lecturer in English at Suffolk University and a doctoral candidate in theatre at Tufts University.

VIRGINIA FLOYD is the author or editor of four volumes on O'Neill, the latest being Eugene O'Neill: The Unfinished Plays (1988), published by Continuum in New York.

BARBARA GELB is co-author with Arthur Gelb of the biography O'Neill, author of So Short a Time: A Biography of John Reed and Louise Bryant, and co-chair of the Theatre Committee for Eugene O'Neill.

LIU HAIPING, Chair of the English Faculty in the Department of Foreign Languages at Nanjing University in China, organized and directed the Nanjing O'Neill conference last June.

RICHARD HORNBY, Professor of Theatre at Florida State University, is the author of Script Into Performance and a book on metatheatrical in modern drama.

MARILYN JURICH, a specialist in fantasy, folklore and children's literature, is Assistant Professor of English at Suffolk University.

MICHAEL MANHEIM, Vice President of the Eugene O'Neill Society and Professor of English at the University of Toledo, is the author of Eugene O'Neill's New Language of Kinship.

JEFFREY D. MASON is Associate Professor of Theatre at California State University in Bakersfield.

MARC MAUFORT, a frequent writer and speaker on O'Neill's "Melville connection" and director of the Belgian conference on O'Neill last May, teaches at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

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

FREDERICK C. WILKINS, editor of the Newsletter and President of the Eugene O'Neill Society, chairs the Department of English at Suffolk University.

## Commemorating the centenary of Eugene O'Neill's birth

### CONTOUR IN TIME



### THE PLAYS OF EUGENE O'NEILL

REVISED EDITION

TRAVIS BOGARD

528 pp.; photos paper \$12.95

This revised edition of Bogard's study of how the progress of Eugene O'Neill's art reflects the contours of his personal life includes new and unpublished material on *A Tale of Possessors*, *Self-dispossessed*, a cycle of eleven plays written by O'Neill during the 1930s and '40s.

***Praise for the first edition:***

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