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### The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter vol. 9, nos. 1, 1985

Eugene O'Neill Society

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# The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter

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NINA FACES LIFE! Glenda Jackson as Nina Leeds in the London production of *Strange Interlude*, whose Broadway transplatation is reviewed, in this issue, on page 46. Photo by Zoe Dominic.

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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Alcoholism, drug addiction, and a son's struggle to free himself from the stifling coils of his mother's domination: hardly the ideal ingredients for celebrating the start of the Newsletter's ninth year and volume! But, glum as it is, this issue's special "focus" section--a result of the fortuitous confluence of scholarly contributions--is an important and revealing one. Dependency, in various forms, was a major part of O'Neill's life and of the art that he forged from his experiences as son, brother and sometime inebriate. The contributors make abundantly clear that he knew whereof he wrote, delineating patterns of individual and group behavior whose on-target accuracy has subsequently been borne out by such clinical and psychological studies as those cited by Bloom, Pond and Black. Einkenkel makes only tangential reference to drug or alcohol addiction; but his analysis of the four-act battle between Edmund and Mary Tyrone introduces another, subtler kind of dependency that threatens, until it is overcome, the former's achievement of autonomy. Here, too, O'Neill knew whereof he wrote, as Einkenkel makes clear in his telling use of biographical detail to show how Edmund both is and is not Eugene O'Neill. Purists and "new critics" who decry such biographical and clinical emphases as heretically paraliterary are advised to note how much light the assembled critics throw on the plays they treat, and how much value O'Neill's depiction of various dependencies can have for readers and playgoers threatened by the same or comparable maladies. If, after 26 pages, readers are still inclined to tip a congratulatory tankard Newsletterward, the gesture will meet with a grateful editorial clink!

Louis Sheaffer's welcome and rightfully indignant rebuttal of anecdotal inaccuracies about O'Neill committed by Donald Hall and Bennett Cerf is more transitional than a full-fledged part of the "dependency" section. I included it there only because the first refuted anecdote involves inordinate inebriation. Mr. Sheaffer, like O'Neill, knows whereof he writes, and his article deserves to stand by itself.

The rest of the current issue is far happier: George C. White's narrative of his adventures while directing *Anna Christie* in Beijing--a fuller version of his *New York Times* report that was abstracted in the last issue; reports on five excellent new books, and reviews of three theatrical productions, plus the regular assortment of news notes that some readers prefer to the longer, more scholarly parts of each issue. They are right, of course, to expect news to predominate in a newsletter; the publication has long outgrown the title to which its founding editor parentally clings. But the news is still there, albeit at the end, and those who eschew longer exegeses can turn to it immediately. I trust that the Newsletter has grown sufficiently to accommodate a variety of constituencies, and I welcome suggestions for a new title if readers feel that a change is in order.

Several fascinating articles are being readied for the Summer-Fall issue, whose major item will be an essay by Donald Gallup on the O'Neill collection at Yale. Also featured will be advance word about the conference on "Eugene O'Neill--the Later Years," which will be held at Suffolk University in Boston early in the summer of 1986. I am eager to hear from O'Neillians who are interested in participating as panelists, paper presenters, session chairs, recorders and performers. My dream--for that's all it is at present--is for a four-day format much like the last one: an all-day research conference on Thursday, at which invited O'Neill scholars from around the world can compare notes, share insights, and prepare for the 1988 centennial; a banquet and keynote address on Thursday evening; daytime panels, paper sessions and films, open to all, on Friday and Saturday; an evening of scenes from the later plays, performed by renowned O'Neill actors, on Friday (repeated on Saturday); more sessions, as needed, on Sunday morning, followed by a noontime bye-bye brunch like the one that brought the 1984 conference to such a convivial close. Dates and more details will appear, as I said, in the next issue; but I urge all whose appetites are already whetted to let me know as soon as possible what part they would like to have in the proceedings.

I close with sincere thanks to all who have helped the Newsletter grow in stature and scope during its first eight years of existence. I had no idea, when starting the venture, of the warm friendships and pleasurable associations it would engender. My very best wishes--tardy, as ever, but sincere--for a happy and profitable 1985! --FCW

DRINKING AND DRUNKENNESS IN *THE ICEMAN COMETH*: A RESPONSE TO MARY MCCARTHY

In her decidedly unfavorable review of the original 1947 production of *The Iceman Cometh*, Mary McCarthy is highly critical of the depiction of drunkenness she apparently observed on the stage of the Martin Beck Theatre. She contends, in fact, that there was virtually no evidence in the performance of the effects that such an amount of drinking as occurs in the play would actually have on human beings:

In the day and a half that elapses on the stage of the Martin Beck, none of the characters is visibly drunk, nobody has a hangover, and, with a single brief exception, nobody has the shakes; there are none of those rancorous, semi-schizoid silences, no obscurity of thought, no dark innuendoes, no flashes of hatred, there is, in short, none of the terror of drink, which, after all, in the stage that Harry Hope's customers have presumably reached, is a form of insanity. What is missing is precisely the thing that is most immediately striking and most horrifying in any human drunkard, the sense of the destruction of personality. (McCarthy 51)

And for this, McCarthy condemns the dramatist--she condemns *O'Neill* himself--as an "incompetent reporter" regarding "drinking *moeurs*," and she dismisses the play as the work of a playwright who cannot write.

More recently, McCarthy has re-evaluated *O'Neill* much more positively. In fact, in September 1983, at a reading at Boston College, she responded to a question about her review of *The Iceman Cometh* by admitting that she was "wrong" about *O'Neill*, in general. She did not, however, retract her specific comments about *O'Neill's* depiction of drunkenness, and her previous condemnation of this play has gained considerable legitimacy over the years since it has been included in several anthologies of *O'Neill* criticism. In none of these anthologies is there any attempt to oppose her misguided critique. In fact, in the Introduction to *Twentieth Century Interpretations of "The Iceman Cometh,"* John Henry Raleigh, the editor of the collection, definitively concludes from McCarthy's review that "the point to be made is that *O'Neill* does not describe the effects of alcohol realistically" (Raleigh 8). Nothing could be further from the truth. The point to be made is that *O'Neill* depicts the effects of alcohol and the symptoms of alcoholism with remarkable accuracy, and he uses these effects and symptoms to develop and enhance the rich characterizations that comprise the greatest accomplishment of the play.

It is apparent that most of the play's virtues were lost on much of the audience of that original production in 1947 because of poor acting. Louis Sheaffer reports of a "near-disaster in the final act" due to an "inadequate portrayal" of Hickey by James Barton. Sheaffer generally characterizes the reviews as "sharply critical," and at best, "only lukewarm":

Almost without exception the critics, including those favorably impressed, found the play repetitious and decidedly too long. While Eddie Dowling's direction was widely praised, Stark Young, an astute judge of acting, was so dissatisfied that he said in the *New Republic*: "I am not even sure as to the extent to which I can judge *The Iceman Cometh* after seeing such a production of it." (Sheaffer II 582)

It seems safe to conclude, then, that the production itself was seriously flawed. Perhaps the strongest evidence is the exuberant, positive response the play received when it was revived ten years later. As Sheaffer concludes from this critical reversal, "most of the reviewers" of the original production obviously "could not see the play for the performance" (Sheaffer II 584-585). Mary McCarthy wrote one of these misconceived reviews; in her denunciation of *O'Neill's* depiction of "drinking *moeurs*," surely she confuses the play with the performance.

McCarthy's first and perhaps most curious argument is that none of the characters is "visibly drunk." That *O'Neill* intended many of these characters to be drunkards is obvious from his introductory descriptions of them. About McGloin's face, for example, he

stipulates that "time and whiskey have melted it down into a good-humored, parasite's characterlessness," and Ed Mosher has a "round kewpie's face--a kewpie who is an unshaven habitual drunkard" (*Iceman* 7).

These physical descriptions may be difficult to convey to an audience as being alcohol-related, but certainly O'Neill's directions are meant to inform the actors' characterizations; and there are still more specific, "playable" indications of drunkenness that should be quite visible, such as the behavior of Hugo and Willie in Act One.

During the opening moments of the play, Hugo has been sleeping, "bent forward in his chair, his arms folded on the table, his head resting sideways on his arms" (4). Larry awakens him, much to Rocky's dismay: "Aw, fer Chris' sake, don't get dat bughouse bum started!" Following this introduction, Hugo awakes and speaks:

HUGO (*Raises his head and peers at Rocky blearily through his thick spectacles in a guttural declamatory tone*). Capitalist swine! Bourgeois stool pigeons! Have the slaves no right to sleep even? (*Then he grins at Rocky and his manner changes to a giggling, wheedling playfulness, as though he were talking to a child.*) Hello, leedle Rocky! Leedle monkey-face! Vere is your leedle slave girls? (*With an abrupt change to a bullying tone.*) Don't be a fool! Loan me a dollar! Damned bourgeois Wop! The great Malatesta is my good friend! Buy me a trink! (*He seems to run down, and is overcome by drowsiness. His head sinks to the table again and he is at once fast asleep.*) (11)

It does not seem difficult to perceive Hugo's drunkenness here. At first, he appears to be crazy, or "bughouse," as Rocky calls him, but Hugo's seemingly empty slogans and crazy behavior have more serious implications on a deeper psychological level.

One of the most apparent psychological aspects of Hugo's behavior is his childishness, which is a significant symptom of his condition. In a 1946 study of alcoholism, Edward Strecker and Francis Chambers discuss heavy drinking as a manifestation of an "unconscious desire to regress" (*Strecker and Chambers* 14). One of their conclusions is that the heavy drinker often "enacts an alcoholic drama of escaping the burdens of maturity and retreats to childish levels of mentality." This regression will intensify as the drinker moves to further stages of intoxication. At a certain level, they claim, the drinker will simulate the reactions of an infant. Hugo's "giggling" and "wheedling" seem to indicate this kind of regression.

At a final stage of intoxication, the drinker experiences what Strecker and Chambers call an "anesthetic effect," which involves an increased release of inhibitions, silly laughter, maudlin tears, lisping baby talk, smearing the face with food, excreting publicly, indecent exposure, clumsy and grotesque imitations of various sex acts (14). Obviously, Hugo does not engage in all of these specific behaviors, but several are applicable, and others are not inconceivable for him. Furthermore, Larry points out that "no one takes [Hugo] seriously," suggesting that the others treat him rather like a child.

There are also instances of childish regression in the behavior of several other characters. It is most apparent in Willie's behavior, for instance, when he sings the "New England folk ballad" (*Iceman* 39-40) with a rather adolescent sense of naughtiness, and Harry then threatens to punish him, much as one would a child. Willie reacts with "pitiable terror" when Rocky threatens to "lock him in his room," and the discussion between Rocky and Harry on this subject is couched in terms parents might use when reprimanding a child.

Given the patently autobiographical quality of O'Neill's writing, and especially of the late plays, it is certainly relevant, in order to appreciate the realistic texture of the drunken behavior he portrays on stage, to refer to a brief discussion of O'Neill's own drunken behavior in Sheaffer's biography. First, Sheaffer claims that "O'Neill never became boisterous and loud when he drank; neither did he stagger or show the other usual signs of inebriation." Sheaffer then proceeds to quote Agnes Boulton on this subject:

"He never," Agnes has written, "seemed to be what is called drunk," but during their years together there would be "some sudden and rather dreadful outbursts

of violence, and others of bitter nastiness and malevolence ... [when] he appeared more like a madman than anything else." (*Sheaffer I* 424)

While it has been well-documented and convincingly argued that Hugo is, in large part, based on Hippolyte Havel, whom O'Neill had known in his early days in Provincetown (*Alexander* 63-71), still there seems to be something of the intoxicated O'Neill in Hugo's resemblance to a "madman."

In further comments on O'Neill's drunk behavior, Sheaffer reports that "after the first few drinks, though [O'Neill] moved slower, he seemed to gain in vitality, talking and smiling more freely. After downing too many, however, his humor became increasingly sardonic, sharp-edged, until he sank into a despairing mood" (*Sheaffer I* 424). Hugo, who is well beyond the "first few drinks," hardly moves at all, but when he is aroused, he talks and smiles quite freely. O'Neill's sardonic humor is saved for other characters, like Larry, but Hugo constantly sinks into a "despairing mood" (and in fact, this will become the pervasive mood of almost all the characters in Act Four).

The rhythm suggested by Sheaffer's description of O'Neill's behavior accurately defines Hugo's behavior in the play: he arises to smile and giggle and declaim childishly, to behave "like a madman," and then he sinks into a somber mood, and quickly passes out again. Strecker and Chambers' findings again seem to be borne out: alcohol is used as an "escape from the responsibility and burden of mature emotional life and its decisions" (12). Obviously, passing out "destroys all thought," and with it, any possibility that mature responsibilities will gain attention.

Willie is the second most obviously alcoholic character, but his visible symptoms are often those of withdrawal rather than of intoxication. Early in Act One, when he begins to gain consciousness, he "*jerks and twitches in his sleep and begins to mumble.*" O'Neill has described Willie's face as "*haggard,*" and he has indicated that Willie's "*eyelids flutter continually as if any light were too strong for his eyes.*" Willie's appearance, as described by O'Neill, should show his destitution. His clothes look as if they "*belong to a scarecrow*"; Rocky classifies Willie's attire as one step *below* a "bum outfit," emphasizing that even the pawnbroker will not take back these garments:

Jees, I've seen him bad before but never dis bad. Look at dat get-up....  
Willie sure is on de bottom. I ain't never seen no one so bad, except  
Hickey on de end of a coupla his bats. (14)

As Willie sits, "*shaking in his sleep like an old dog,*" Rocky comments further that Willie is so far gone that his family has abandoned him ("de lawyer tells Harry nix, de old lady's off of Willie for keeps dis time and he can go to hell"). He also mentions that Willie used to get "the rush to a cure," indicating some acknowledgement of his alcoholic condition by Willie and/or his family. As Larry provides further confirmation of Willie's sorry state, by pointing out that Willie "hasn't far to go" to get to hell--"Be god, he's knocking on the door right now!"--Willie "*comes to a crisis of jerks and moans*" (14). Thus, O'Neill provides a vivid stage image to accompany the descriptive and informative dialogue.

A crucial key to perceiving the nature of Willie's condition is Rocky's early reference to "de Brooklyn boys." When Willie's sobbing and yelling awaken Hope and the others, Rocky explains to Hope that "de Brooklyn boys is after" Willie (15), meaning that Willie is suffering from delirium tremens or "the dt's," as it is commonly called. Sheaffer reports that "the boys from Brooklyn are coming over the bridge!" was "a favorite expression of the two [O'Neill] brothers for delirium tremens" (*Sheaffer I* 425). This condition is defined by *Blakiston's Medical Dictionary* as "a delirious state marked by distressing delusions, illusions, hallucinations, constant tremor, fumbling movements of the hands, insomnia, and great exhaustion. Usually associated with alcoholic poisoning" (*Blackiston's* 193). Many of these features of the condition characterize Willie's behavior throughout the first act, but more recent research suggests that what Rocky and the others perceive as "the dt's" are more likely the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal, a somewhat less severe condition.

The third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)*, published by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, defines the two disorders as follows:

#### Alcohol Withdrawal

The essential features are certain characteristic symptoms such as a coarse tremor of the hands, tongue, and eyelids, nausea and vomiting, malaise or weakness, autonomic hyperactivity (such as tachycardia, sweating, and elevated blood pressure), anxiety, depressed mood or irritability, and orthostatic hypotension, that follow within several hours cessation of or reduction in alcohol ingestion by an individual who has been drinking alcohol for several days or longer.... Sleep is often fitful and disturbed by "bad dreams." These merge with a variety of misperceptions and illusions. Brief, poorly formed hallucinations, occurring in any modality of sensation, may be experienced.

#### Alcohol Withdrawal Delirium

The essential feature is Delirium that is due to recent cessation of or reduction in alcoholic consumption. Autonomic hyperactivity, such as tachycardia and sweating, and elevated blood pressure, is present. Delusions, vivid hallucinations, and agitated behavior usually occur. Hallucinations, when present, are usually visual, but may occur in other sensory modalities.... A coarse, irregular tremor is almost always present. (*DSM-III* 133-134)

The *DSM-III* also stipulates that whereas withdrawal symptoms begin "shortly after cessation of or reduction in drinking," delirium tremens generally begins "on the second or third day" after cessation or reduction. Since Willie's hallucinations seem "poorly formed" rather than "vivid," and since he apparently has not abstained from drinking for more than a few hours, it is, in fact, more likely that he would be suffering from withdrawal than from the dt's. Obviously, however, O'Neill was familiar with the symptoms regardless of the precise diagnosis.

Willie, then, exhibits many of the symptoms of withdrawal cited above. The shaking is the most apparent sign, but his shouts to his father ("Oh Papa! Jesus!") seem to be part of some "poorly formed hallucinations," or at least suggest "bad dreams." He is clearly the most restless of all the sleepers, and he shows evidence of exhaustion as well as of hyperactivity. When he finally obtains his drink, the stage directions indicate that he "takes the bottle with both twitching hands and tilts it to his lips and gulps down the whiskey in big swallows" (17). When Rocky grabs the bottle away from him, he shows it to Larry, and announces that Willie has "killed half a pint or more." This is certainly a substantial quantity, but one that matches the nature of Willie's condition: as is well known, heavy drinkers gain an increasingly higher tolerance for alcohol (*DSM-III* 130, 170). Immediately after drinking, Willie "has closed his eyes and is sitting quietly shuddering, waiting for the effect." When he reawakens, moments later, O'Neill describes him as "drunk now from the effect of the huge drink he took" (37), and his subsequent self-description is a burst of loquacity and accentuated conviviality symptomatic of intoxication. Once he gets his drink, then, Willie begins to exhibit clear signs of drunkenness.

After he introduces himself to Parritt, at great length and with great relish, he sings his "folk ballad," which is followed by the aforementioned scene in which he is scolded by Hope and Rocky. After he shrinks in terror at the prospect of being sent to his room, he "closes his eyes and sinks back in his chair exhaustedly, twitching and quivering again." All of these changes reveal the "emotional lability" symptomatic of intoxication (*DSM-III* 130), and this symptom is also apparent in Hugo's behavior. Indeed, extreme mood changes characterize much of the behavior of several characters in the play.

All of these effects of heavy drinking may not be the "visible" signs of drunkenness that McCarthy had in mind, but they are realistic details that prove O'Neill to be quite knowledgeable about the real effects of heavy drinking, and quite accurate in his use of them in the play. Especially in the characters of Hugo and Willie (and with additional instances readily apparent in the behavior of other characters), O'Neill has incorporated many realistic details of drunken behavior that actors and directors must make manifest to the audience.

As for McCarthy's claim that nobody in the play has a hangover, we must again attribute it to a poor production because in at least two instances in Act One, and again later in the play, O'Neill indicates that the characters are hung over. When Hope addresses McGloin and Mosher, "*who are sleepily awake,*" the stage directions explain that they "*grin hangover grins of tolerant affection at him and wink at each other.*" And the very next stage direction states: "*Meanwhile at the middle table, Captain Lewis and General Wetjoen are as wide awake as heavy hangovers permit*" (42). Here, as in other stage directions, O'Neill does not specify how one depicts a hangover, and perhaps the actors McCarthy saw in these roles failed to convey it. Another possible explanation is that she may have been looking for the wrong signs. These characters are, after all, heavy, habitual drinkers, and the symptoms of a hangover for them would certainly go beyond mere headaches and nausea; their symptoms would look much more like the symptoms of withdrawal and the dt's described above.

As we have seen, Willie suffers the most obvious withdrawal symptoms, but Hugo's fitful and disturbed sleep is another visible sign of withdrawal, and the other characters certainly show indications of anxiety, depressed mood or irritability, misperceptions, and especially illusions. It is also important to note that the first concern each man shows as he awakens is to obtain a drink. This is a sure sign of an alcoholic condition, the drink being needed to ward off the effects of withdrawal as well as to enable one to face the world. Finally, Willie's "shakes" do not represent a "single brief exception," as McCarthy suggests, but rather an extended realistic characterization based on the poisonous effects of alcohol. In Act Three, several other characters will develop the "shakes," while Willie will suffer throughout the play.

Next, McCarthy claims that in *The Iceman Cometh*, there are "none of those rancorous, semi-schizoid silences" typical of drunken behavior. While it is not clear exactly what she means by that--what kind of silence she is expecting--it is quite clear that during the course of the play each character is silent for considerable stretches. When the characters do speak, they certainly convey rancor towards the others and especially towards themselves.

It would seem, therefore, that a rancorous and schizoid state would prevail (although it is not at all apparent how one defines "semi-schizoid"). Rosamund Gilder has pointed out, in a review of the original production, that the characters "spend most of their time in blissful or tormented alcoholic slumber," and that the sleep induced by alcohol allows O'Neill to move characters in and out of the action without many awkward entrances and exits (*Gilder* 31). It is also true that the characters often "drowse" rather than sleep, and that some, most notably Larry, often simply sit staring, wide awake. Perhaps, in fact, this device suggests an important response to the frequent complaint that there are too many characters in the play, and thus, too much unnecessary repetition. The fact is that drinking *can* induce long periods of silence, and it would be quite tedious to watch two or three drunks, at the stage these characters have reached, interacting realistically for long periods of time. By peopling his stage with *many* drunks, however, O'Neill is able to alternate their periods of silence, thus allowing for almost constant dialogue while some characters remain realistically silent. Even if repetitious at times, the dialogue and actions of *many* drunk characters are theatrically more interesting than the drunken silence of a few characters would be. In other plays--*Long Day's Journey Into Night*, for instance--with fewer drunks on stage, the silences are more noticeable. In *Iceman*, the silence is far less prominent, but it is certainly there.

As for the lack of "obscurity of thought," McCarthy is presumably influenced by the moments of relative lucidity experienced by Larry, Rocky, and a few others. One explanation of these demonstrations of comparatively clear perception and thoughtfulness is that at the stage of alcoholism these characters have reached, they have developed rather high levels of tolerance, which means that it requires progressively more alcohol for them to reach each stage of intoxication (*DSM-III* 130, 170). We know that in the early phases of intoxication, a person may "appear exceptionally bright, expansive, and hyperactive, with a subjective sense of well-being and increased mental sharpness" (*DSM-III* 130). Thus, it is possible that someone like Larry, for instance, needs more alcohol than he consumes in the play to cause him to lose clarity of thought. It is also important to note here that



Larry controls his intake of alcohol, and probably drinks somewhat less than many of the others do. The same is true of Rocky, who does not drink much at all. So, it is not sufficient for McCarthy simply to claim that there is not enough "obscurity of thought" in the play to make all the drinking believable; she must also consider who is speaking, how much he has had to drink, and how high his tolerance might be.

On the other hand, there are surely several instances in the play of some "slowing down" of characters' mental faculties, if this is what McCarthy means. A number of the characters clearly do go beyond the initial stage of "mental sharpness." With some exceptions, many of the words spoken by Hugo and Willie, for example, express thoughts that are certainly far from lucid. It is useful to consider Shakespeare's Porter in *Macbeth* for contrast here (II, iii). That character demonstrates far more clarity of thought while intoxicated than does O'Neill's Hugo or Willie. O'Neill's drunks are certainly less eloquent than Shakespeare's, but they are more purposefully realistic. The amount of alcohol consumed by the Porter is irrelevant to Shakespeare's purpose, but the amount consumed by O'Neill's men is quite important to his. If by "obscurity of thought," then, McCarthy is referring to this slowing down of the mental processes typical of the extreme stages of inebriation, then either she or the actors missed the suggestions of the symptom that appear in the text. More important, McCarthy seems to have missed a central insight that is so crucial to O'Neill's depiction of drunk characters: O'Neill knows that alcohol has a variety of effects on different people at different stages of intoxication, and his characterizations are shaped by this awareness.

The "dark innuendoes" and "flashes of hatred" that McCarthy looks for are as poorly defined as most of her other criteria. We can certainly see "flashes of hatred" in much of Hope's cantankerousness, and "flashes" of *self*-hatred abound in the play. Larry, for one, expresses his hatred constantly; often, it is hatred of the Movement, or of the world, and by implication, hatred of himself:

The material the ideal free society must be constructed from is men themselves and you can't build a marble temple out of a mixture of mud and manure. When a man's soul isn't a sow's ear, it will be time enough to dream of silk purses.... I have no answer to give anyone, not even myself. Unless you can call what Heine wrote in his poem to morphine an answer:

"Lo, sleep is good; better is death; in sooth,  
The best of all were never to be born." (31-32)

The couplet encapsulates one of O'Neill's central concerns in the play; it suggests a hatred for life that is bitter and profound. It surely carries a "dark innuendo" with it that again denies the validity of McCarthy's argument. If she is looking for the "dark innuendoes" of the threatening, drunken villain of melodrama, she will not find that here. The innuendoes and the hatred of *Ice-man* tend to turn inward rather than outward, but they are certainly present. O'Neill uses intoxication here as a "device," as several critics have pointed out, to convey inner feelings realistically. As Robert Whitman has observed, "liquor breaks down inhibitions, pulls aside the façade which men build up in self-defense and self-delusion and shows us the tormented, divided spirit within" (*Whitman* 160).

McCarthy sums up all of her criteria as the "terror of drink, which after all, in the stage that Harry Hope's customers have presumably reached, is a form of insanity." While O'Neill was experienced enough with drink to know that its effects are distinct from insanity, he also was apparently aware that those effects often *seem* to signify insanity. Thus, Rocky refers to Hugo as "dat bughouse bum," and the term "bughouse" recurs throughout the play in reference to drunkenness. On a deeper level, however, there *is* a sense of terror in O'Neill's drunkards.

Terror is a factor in Larry's lonely, bitter confrontations with his own sense of emptiness, and in Jimmy's exit line in Act Three, when he calls Hickey a "dirty swine" in a "*burst of futile fury*"; as he exits, he is clearly terrified of the outside world. The "terror" comically and pathetically accompanies Harry Hope out of the bar, and it is present when he comes face to face with reality in the form of the "automobile" that almost

runs him down, and that sends him, terrified, back into the saloon, where he is safe from the "terror" outside. McCarthy is again unclear, but if this is the "terror of drink" she means, then it exists in the play, palpably.

If McCarthy means, though, that the act of drinking somehow signifies the human terror of facing the truth about one's own existence, then to say that this sense of terror is absent from the play is to miss a central function of all the drinking. For these characters, drinking is a means of maintaining sanity and of avoiding the insane terror of confronting the emptiness of existence; in the end, only Parritt, Larry, and Hickey are denied this means of escape. Robert Whitman quotes an important speech of Larry's in reference to this subject:

LARRY...All I know is I'm sick of life!... I'm drowned and contented on the bottom of a bottle. Honor or dishonor, faith or treachery are nothing to me but the opposites of the same stupidity which is ruler and king of life, and in the end they rot into dust in the same grave. All things are the same meaningless joke to me, for they grin at me from the one skull of death.  
(*Ice-man* 128)

Whitman then comments on the suggestion in this speech of the "relationship between this fear of existence and alcohol": "Afraid of life, and hating it, but equally afraid of death, men try to find at least temporary escape or forgetfulness by hiding at 'the bottom of a bottle'" (*Whitman* 162). O'Neill strongly implies that it is a feeling of terror, precisely, that leads his characters to seek escape by drinking, and that underlies much of their intoxicated behavior.

In her final effort to explain what she believes is missing from the drunkenness in *Ice-man*, McCarthy speaks of the "sense of the destruction of personality," which she believes to be the most "striking" and most "horrifying" feature of the human drunkard. She claims that "each of O'Neill's people is in perfect possession of the little bit of character that the author has given him" (*McCarthy* 51). If alcohol does destroy the personality, then it is unclear why McCarthy would expect these characters, at their advanced stages of alcoholism, to have more than the "little bit of character" O'Neill has given them. That they each have only a "little bit of character" would clearly be a result of their dissipation. This is all O'Neill has given them because this is all they have left. Each character, though, has a past, and this should influence the characterizations, both in terms of the real past and the past as it is seen in retrospect, clouded by alcoholic illusions.

If these characters do not exhibit destroyed personalities, and I do not believe they do, surely they are, at best, fragmented. McCarthy complains that "the Boer is boerish [sic], the Englishman english [sic], the philosopher philosophizes, and the sentimental grouch who runs the establishment grouches and sentimentalizes in orderly alternation" (*McCarthy* 51). What she overlooks here is that each of these characters presents a mask to the world, underneath which is a different reality. The Boer *tries* to act Boerish, and the Englishman *tries* to act English, each appearing to be proud of his heritage, but actually hiding a very real sense of shame in himself for not living up to that idealized heritage. Indeed, in Act Three we learn that each has so disgraced his nationality that he stands little chance of being readmitted into his homeland (174-176). Similarly, it does not take unusual powers of perception to recognize Larry's sham persona. The "foolosopher" who objectively philosophizes from the sidelines is actually torn apart, emotionally, by the confessions of Parritt. In the end, Larry recognizes his self-delusion, but we should be aware much earlier that Larry is not really what he wants to appear to be.

Egil Törnqvist has pointed out that O'Neill uses liquor in these late plays to depict "the dichotomy in man between his 'mask'--his sober façade--and his 'face'" (*Törnqvist* 149). Törnqvist suggests that O'Neill's characters reveal the truth when they are intoxicated ("'in vino veritas' stuff," as Jamie Tyrone calls it), and that this drunken truth destroys the sober façade--or "mask"--that the drunkard normally attempts to present to the world. On the other hand, Strecker and Chambers explain that the drunken extroverted personality is merely a "surface change," or a "psychic masquerade." They point out that

the "underlying personality remains constant." When this personality "lacks its mask," they continue, the alcoholic believes that the underlying personality appears ridiculous and so he or she has an abnormal fear of facing reality as he or she is (*Strecker and Chambers*, Chapter 3). These observations of the behavior of alcoholics suggest that Törnqvist oversimplifies matters in his analysis of the mask-face dichotomy in O'Neill's plays. In fact, there is much evidence that O'Neill's characters do not always reveal the truth when they are drunk; they are often quite deceptive, in fact, and they try to hide what they perceive to be inadequate personalities beneath their drunken masks. Indeed, in *The Iceman Cometh*, the truth emerges most clearly when the characters are *not* drunk--in Act Three and part of Act Four.

The façade, then, is deceptive in *Iceman*, and it is often as much a matter of self-deception as deception of others. There are few indications of self-awareness in most of these characters. Larry's façade of detachment, for instance, is surely aimed at convincing himself as much as anyone else that he has actually taken his place in the "grandstand." The same can be said of the constant proclamations of pride in their countries by Lewis and Wetjoen. The question of "subconscious revelation" in *Iceman* is more a matter of self-revelation than revelation to others. One of the problems with Robert Whitman's analysis of O'Neill's use of drinking in his plays is that Whitman ignores the significance of O'Neill's use of liquor in terms of the revelation of a character's subconscious thoughts and feelings *to himself* (Whitman 160-161). In *The Iceman Cometh*, O'Neill's concern is not primarily with the communication of truth *among* the characters. (Note that Hickey's revelation of truth about himself--*not* brought on by intoxication--is eagerly rejected as insanity by the others.) Rather, his main concern is with the characters' self-awareness. Most of the people in the play remain happily self-deceived, while Larry and Hickey become miserably self-aware. The analyses of both Whitman and Törnqvist do not account for O'Neill's use of intoxication in facilitating self-deception.

In 1932, O'Neill wrote the following about masks in *The American Spectator*:

One's outer life passes in solitude haunted by the masks of others; one's inner life passes in a solitude hounded by the masks of oneself. (O'Neill 117)

When O'Neill had attempted to dramatize this notion of masks by using real ones in such plays as *The Great God Brown* and *Lazarus Laughed*, or by using asides in *Strange Interlude*, these devices seemed awkward and sometimes confusing, but they served O'Neill's expressionistic purposes. In intoxication, however, O'Neill discovered a more realistic device with which to convey the complex internal dynamics of personality in his later plays. If McCarthy could not see the fragmented personalities beneath the façades the characters project in their drunkenness, it is not because O'Neill's characterizations are weak. If the Boer seemed merely Boerish, the Englishman merely English, and so on, then the actors failed to convey the complexities that O'Neill so clearly developed in his characters.

The best example of McCarthy's shortsightedness on this matter is her comment on Harry Hope: to say that he merely alternates between grouchiness and sentimentality misses the point of the inner struggle that this alternation makes manifest. And here, O'Neill incorporates still another aspect of intoxication in his development of character, one which McCarthy completely overlooks--extreme mood changes. In the first act, Hope's moods shift radically. As the other characters attempt to wangle free drinks from him, he responds with anger and obstinacy; but when reminded of his wife Bessie, or the "good old days," he can become nostalgic and congenial.

As he eagerly anticipates Hickey's arrival and the "million funny stories" Hickey always tells to cheer things up, he complains to Mosher: "You and the other bums have begun to give me the graveyard fantods" (61). The word "fantods" here, meaning irritability and tension, has clearly defined Hope's behavior so far in the first act; but Hope is *not* an irascible old man, as we often observe in the play, and his words often indicate that he does not like to behave that way. He often retracts and apologizes for his irritable behavior. It becomes apparent that his changeability is an effect of the alcohol he consumes. This is one of the symptoms that Whitman accurately describes when he points out that liquor "allows the rapid juxtaposition of contradictory moods and impulses....

It is a device which O'Neill uses ... to reveal the conflicts which tear his characters apart and frustrate their potentialities as complete human beings" (*Whitman* 161). McCarthy apparently does not recognize that there is a conflict within Hope, reflected in his behavior when he is intoxicated; in this, she seems to misunderstand one of O'Neill's most important uses of intoxication for the purposes of characterization in his drama.

It is quite clear, then, that Mary McCarthy's critique was misguided. Her observations may have been valid in terms of the production she saw, but they are invalid in terms of the play O'Neill wrote. While McCarthy was perhaps looking for the work of a "naturalistic" reporter, O'Neill was working as a "realistic" dramatist, not dealing merely with surface realities, but with deeper psychological realities as well. To say that his depiction of drunk behavior on stage is "realistic," is not to say that it is absolutely precise and complete, or clinically exact, but rather that those features O'Neill chooses to utilize do, in fact, reflect accurate observations of and insights into the physiology and psychology of alcoholic intoxication and of alcoholism.

Doris Alexander has commented that "perhaps the greatest value of the play lies in all the, to use Hugo's expression, 'nice, leedle, funny monkey faces' in it." In an essay that focuses on the source of the character of Hugo and on how O'Neill recreated this person for the stage, Alexander concludes with a provocative suggestion as to the ultimate impact of *The Iceman Cometh*:

O'Neill told Barrett Clark that *The Iceman Cometh* is one of the two plays that have given him the greatest satisfaction of any he has ever done. Probably his satisfaction lay in the vivid recreation of a group of broken but strangely loveable people he had known. In the characters also lies, perhaps, the satisfaction of any who read or see the play. Whatever enduring value *The Iceman Cometh* holds consists, probably, not in its dramatic or ideological qualities, but in its fine character sketches of a group of fascinating lost souls.  
(*Alexander* 71)

These "fascinating lost souls" are alcoholics, and they are at the center of the drama's theatrical effectiveness. Mary McCarthy and the 1947 production notwithstanding, these characters come to life on stage because O'Neill has endowed them with many rich details of personality and behavior that are truly characteristic of their alcoholic condition.

*The Iceman Cometh* is not made of ice or iron, as Mary McCarthy concluded in 1947; it is made of flesh and blood and hearts and souls--mixed convincingly with a great deal of alcohol.

--Steven F. Bloom

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#### A FAMILY DISEASE

Before the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) were fully articulated, Eugene O'Neill dramatized remarkably two of the central characteristics that make alcoholism a family disease: denial, and enabling or acquiescence in the development of the disease. In *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1940), O'Neill created a family whose members reinforce each others' addictions and who use morphine, whoring, and greed as opiates analogous to alcohol.

Bill Wilson and a few friends were just beginning the famous AA self-help program for alcoholics in 1935-1941; now the program is practiced world-wide, and recovering alcoholics explain that sufferers of this disease dread and despise their loss of control even as they drink compulsively. Most go to elaborate lengths to deny their drinking problems. They hide their bottles, boast of their tolerance for booze, and pretend to social drinking patterns or even abstinence. They divert energy and money from other realms of life to conceal and support their addiction. They shift blame to others when their disease becomes hard to deny or conceal. They encourage others to join in, in an attempt to make their own addiction seem normal. Guilt progressively overwhelms them.

Each of these addictive behaviors is exhibited by Tyrone family members in *Long Day's Journey*. Although all three men drink heavily, Jamie is most frequently acknowledged to be a drunk. Whoring and gambling too, he has been fired from colleges and jobs, berates himself for his vices, waters his father's whiskey bottles to conceal his boozing, and blames Mary's addiction for his own. At 33, he shows physical disintegration in O'Neill's stage directions. His father, James Tyrone, though claiming he has never missed a performance, also drinks heavily throughout the day, and, according to Mary, has always spent much of his free time in saloons with hard-drinking companions. He both denies that drink is a problem to him and blames his disappointment in Mary and his sons for his indulgence. O'Neill shows James Tyrone's second addiction, greed, in his turning out of lights, compulsive land speculations, and compromises on quality in medical care, cars, clothing, servants. His impoverished childhood lends credibility to these patterns in a prosperous man, and we learn that he even compromised his acting career in hope of "easy fortune" by performing too long in a single play.

Edmund, at 23, has consumption and drinks heavily all day, declaring he'll stop after diagnosis of his lung disease; but he does not. The maids' conversations tell us that

surreptitious heavy drinking is usual with both sons. As modern drug abuse therapists suggest, Mary's addiction shows similar patterns. She is guilty and secretive about her morphine use, usually denies it, blames her husband, her choice of marriage instead of a career in the church or music, her sons, the loneliness she actually seeks, the death of the baby Eugene from measles carried by Jamie, her arthritic hands, and the cheap doctor engaged by James Tyrone to heal her after Edmund's birth.

After AA groups were thriving, family members who recognized how the disease disabled them began gathering in support groups, and in 1949 Al-Anon Family Groups formed in New York City, coordinating 87 groups and individuals nationwide. In 1957, a teenager whose parents were in Al-Anon and AA formed the first Alateen Group. These organizations grew and multiplied as persons affected by other people's drinking recognized the effects on families which O'Neill had dramatized ten and twenty years earlier.

Family members also deny to themselves, the drinker, and each other the power of alcoholism in a loved one. They become diseased themselves, warping their behavior to coexist with the disease. Mounting a merry-go-round of contradictions, they acquiesce in the progression of the disease through ambivalent enabling acts. For example, they may try to manipulate an alcoholic or preach will power and quick reform, giving him excuses for escape to liquor. They may pour out or hide liquor in a futile effort to reduce the drinker's intake. They may protect the alcoholic from outsiders' eyes. They may try to solve the drinker's difficulties, like bad checks or attendance problems at work, instead of allowing him to suffer the consequences for his own behavior and reach a depth of despair at which he may resolve to change, acknowledge a higher power, and seek affiliation with recovering alcoholics who can offer companionable, but candid support.

Some family members actually have masochistic or sadistic needs that are served by alcoholics; some need to control someone else and join forces with the alcohol. Men are vulnerable through their socially-expected pride in sexual adequacy. Parents are vulnerable through their impulse to protect and nurture their children. Women, still victims of double standards, are vulnerable when their impulse to honest expression collides with social pressure to accept male views and be satisfied serving others.

In *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (New York, 1973), Al-Anon Family Groups describe how families shrink from public exposure of their alcoholics, try to cope with the disease secretly at home, and then feel guilty, hurt, and fearful when they fail. They obsessively listen for sounds of an addict indulging and suffer anxiety watching relatives slowly kill themselves. Simultaneously, anger seethes in family members who feel deceived and unloved, and they "want to strike back, punish, make the alcoholic pay for the hurt and frustration caused by uncontrolled drinking."

In *Long Day's Journey Into Night* O'Neill dramatizes convincingly these behaviors that stimulate and reinforce each other. All four Tyrones enable each others' addictions. They alternate between denying each others' drinking and drugging, accusing then excusing it, and preaching instant reform by simple will power. Although their family love binds them together and occasionally moves each to try to protect the others, like living alcoholics they are each also seen suggesting drink to one or more of the others. Pouring liquor for his consumptive brother, Jamie even says, the "dead part of me hopes you won't get well . . . , wants company." James Tyrone has even spooned whiskey into his infant sons and says Mary's father was an alcoholic, despite her denial. Whether susceptibility to substance abuse is hereditary or environmentally determined, O'Neill has provided sufficient conditions to make this nest of sufferers plausible.

O'Neill makes New London fog an emblem of the opiates in the play. Mary explicitly welcomes fog's shroud that "hides you from the world and the world from you." She wishes the fog would always be so thick, "All the people in the world could pass by and I would never know." O'Neill's intention seems plain when Jamie wails that, for addiction, "there is no cure and we've been saps to hope," and Edmund warns Mary to remember, always to be on guard, for they are like the foghorns that occasionally cry mournful warnings in the mist. It is the foghorns Mary hates and blames for disturbing her, though in Act I she does urge Jamie to "take advantage of the sunshine before the fog comes back." Today the sunshine of AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen does guide some families out of the fog of

addiction. Part of O'Neill's artistic achievement for me is his early and powerful evocation of a family struggling with this virulent disease.

--Gloria Dibble Pond

#### LONG DAY'S JOURNEY TOWARDS SEPARATION: THE MARY-EDMUND STRUGGLE

There is something terribly seductive about the idea that all an artist needs is emotional honesty and the good fortune to possess a thoroughly miserable personal family history in order to create an enduring masterpiece. Unfortunately, it is an idea that has produced instead many an embarrassingly bathetic and thoroughly tiresome domestic melodrama. That *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not one of these, but a work of truly enduring dramatic resonance, is a tribute to Eugene O'Neill's supreme skill in translating and altering the raw material of his life into thoroughly theatrical terms. The subtle perfection of dramatic artifice rather than the abandonment of it gives *Journey* its transcendent power.

No small part of the play's intensity derives from O'Neill's setting it convincingly within a narrow sixteen-hour time frame despite the unlikelihood that such a precipitous family fall could actually occur within this period. But the movement of *Journey* is not determined by everyday reality, but, rather, by the demands of a single relentless dramatic action--Edmund's struggle to separate from his mother. This is the very spine of the play. Lending urgency to this struggle is the fact of Edmund's consumption. Creating the essential dramatic conflict of the play is Mary's equally determined effort to keep Edmund tied to her. The resulting relationship between these two produces a psychological battleground on which the entire family is attacked and ultimately destroyed.

Aside from the telescoping of time through re-shaping a complex mother-son relationship into a more basic theatrical conflict, O'Neill's artistic hand is evident in the fictional reshaping of his characters and the family history.

The playwright himself has given us an unusual warning against equating Edmund with himself. He has reversed names so that Eugene becomes the dead child whose memory haunts the Tyrones and Edmund the living playwright-to-be. Considering that the play was always intended for posthumous production, is it not likely that author is telling an audience far separated in time from the events of his family life not to see the dead writer as a living character on stage, but to view Edmund as an independent fictional creation? I think he is.

While the similarities between the young O'Neill and Edmund are obvious, the differences may be more telling. Young Eugene found himself back in the family fold not simply because he was suffering from consumption, but because he had already made a brief and messy foray into marriage, producing a namesake offspring. He enlisted his father's help in securing a quiet annulment and left the child with his ex-wife. The omission of this information can be regarded as the author's attempt to make himself look better. But O'Neill's portrait of the alcoholic Edmund is hardly flattering or idealized even with this history excised. A more likely reason for presenting us with an unmarried and childless Edmund is to intensify further the impression of his failure to separate from the Tyrone family. In *Journey* what efforts he has made to leave have actually bound him to them more closely. Unable to earn an independent living, his adventures having produced in him a deadly physical disease and a greater loneliness, he is in a developmental limbo with no vision of his future or even the certainty that he has one.

Edmund is far more than a dependent son, however. He is supposedly a portrait of the artist Eugene O'Neill. And this he most assuredly is--but not the artist as he was in 1912, when the events of this play transpire. Young Eugene did determine upon a career as a playwright at that time. However, in 1912 almost all his writing was in verse, the greater part of which was in the form of political parody, highly socialist in sympathy. Young Edmund is virtually without politics. He appears to have given up on his own poetry and recites from memory only the poetry of others. By the end of the play he has

set an artistic course towards achieving "faithful realism." His artistic vision resembles nothing so much as the fully mature artist who is writing this play in 1940. Put another way, Edmund evolves towards an insight into his artistic self which took the actual Eugene some 28 years to discover.

Unlike his father and brother, Edmund has been relatively sheltered from the experience of the "fiend" in Mary. Kept physically away from home during her worst periods, his knowledge, with one striking exception (more of which later), is second-hand. His primary source of opinion on family matters has been Mary herself, whose accusations against Tyrone he mimics. His is a romantic vision of his mother which he clings to long after the audience is on to Mary's deception.

The dramatic movement of the play is not built upon whether or not Mary will descend into total addiction, but on when Edmund will accept the inevitability of that descent. It is a terrible thing for a child to discover that the parent whom he most resembles both physically and temperamentally, even to "the quality of extreme nervous sensibility," is not a goddess. It is no less terrible for a young artist to become aware that the muse to his work is not the center of a positively beautiful and harmonious universe, but the harbinger of a faithless, tortured life to come. Mary is not simply Ella O'Neill. She is the muse to Edmund the artist.

If the situation in *Journey* were more normal, Edmund's artistic strivings should follow the path of his father, by profession an artist. To some degree the elder son has done just that, with disastrous personal results. Edmund, on the other hand, though he "looks like both his parents," has moved physically and professionally away from the family business, the theatrical tour of "that God-damned play." By siding with his mother, he has already separated himself fairly successfully from his father. The long fourth-act scene between them suggests a relationship in which some real respect and compassion is now possible. But O'Neill's portrait of the elder Tyrone remains a deliberately one-sided sketch of the real James O'Neill's failure as father and artist.

Significantly, O'Neill attributes his father's obsessive frugality and his bartering away of his charismatic talent to a psychological guilt. Tyrone's very survival through childhood he attributes to "a fine, brave, sweet woman," his own mother, from whom "he learned a lesson, it's hard to unlearn." He has patterned the behavior of his prosperous adulthood after the desperate scrounging needed to survive an impoverished childhood. Had he separated himself from his mother's "lesson," he might have released the artist and the loving father within. This point of view is essential to the artistic design of the play, but, as with other facts, it is a highly edited version of the raw reality.

A young O'Neill might well have given more weight to the external economic facts of life facing James. No professional actor of his time, a time pre-dating both Hollywood and large-scale Broadway production, could hope to earn an even moderately successful living without touring the country. Transportation was, of course, much more problematical, leaving little choice for theatrical families but to travel together or endure long separations. That James O'Neill looked for alternatives is borne out by a fact omitted from the play--that the elder O'Neill spent the greater part of the summer of 1912 working on an ultimately unsuccessful film of his Monte Cristo play. His obsession with frugality is rendered unmercifully in the comic screwing and unscrewing of light bulbs during Act IV. Actually, the cost of electricity was proportionately more expensive than it is today. Tyrone's attempt to save on the light bulbs is depicted almost entirely as a product of his fearful and stingy character. But the very fact that the real-life O'Neill had electric lighting at all indicates that he was willing to make some substantial use of his money to secure a then modern and by no means typical creature comfort for his home and family. All along the way--from sending Eugene to good schools to bailing him out of his marital difficulties--the senior O'Neill seems to have gone a long way towards being a supportive father.

James Tyrone is a man totally tied to the parochial values of his impoverished Irish immigrant background, incapable, no matter how hard he tries, of giving the free nurture of a warm and loving father. His very attempts become comical, as when he tells Edmund



to choose a sanatorium of his liking at any cost, and then adds, unable to stop himself, "Any place you like--within reason." When, at the end of their long talk together, he declares,

I'd be willing to have no home but the poorhouse in my old age if I could look back now on having been the fine artist I might have been[,]

Edmund breaks into "a burst of strained, ironical laughter."

TYRONE. What the devil are you laughing at?

EDMUND. Not at you, Papa. At life. It's so damned crazy.

We know that, whatever the scope of the real James O'Neill's talent, James Tyrone lacks both the temerity and vision of a truly great artist. In the end, he has probably made the best of a good but small talent and a large capacity for charm. Edmund is laughing with loving forgiveness at his father's pipe dream.

But Tyrone also embodies Edmund's dilemma. Edmund is an artist with a small talent, the makings of a poet without the ability to put the words together with the skill of a poet, a writer who cannot write. If he is his father's son in this respect, how can he possibly break away from his father's failure as an artist? Ironically, it is Tyrone who leads the way to an answer by drawing the distinction between them in his response to Edmund's monologue about the fog:

You have a poet in you but it's a damned morbid one.... Why can't you remember your Shakespeare and forget the third-raters. You'll find what you're trying to say in him--as you'll find everything else worth saying.

And in the next moment, using his "fine [actor's] voice," he is quoting the bard with total inappropriateness:

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

EDMUND. (*Ironically*) Fine! That's beautiful. But I wasn't trying to say that. We are such stuff as manure is made on, so let's drink up and forget it. That's more my idea.

Faced with his son's loving homage to death as an escape from the horrors of reality, Tyrone is relentlessly optimistic. Given the unrelenting pattern of self-destruction all about him, there is something amazing about Tyrone's view of life; he remains essentially healthy-minded, in the sense that William James used that expression. In Tyrone's peculiar cosmology, Shakespeare was a Catholic whose plays reinforce the simple faith he has retained despite the utter failure of his prayers to help Mary or his children. He is a man who dreams that he might have surpassed the tragedian Edwin Booth but has shut out any tragic vision of the universe.

Here is the point of separation between Edmund and his father. Edmund has a sick-souled view of the world that may result in personal tragedy or lead him to a truly artistic creativity. Tyrone's exhortations to return to the Catholic faith are at best bromides for the severely ill son and at worst dangerous calls to complacency for the searching artist.

There is evidence that the real-life model for James Tyrone was not nearly so contented a soul. In early biographical notes drafted by the playwright in 1926, we read that:

In later days of his life husband periodically talks when depressed of doing as his father did, deserting family, going back to Ireland to die.

Such depressive behavior with its suggestion of a suicidal longing is completely absent from the fictional James Tyrone. We cannot envision him expressing anything quite like James O'Neill's last words to his playwright son:

Eugene--I'm going to a better sort of life--this sort of life--here--all froth--no good--rottenness!

Here is a character very likely to inspire a creative artist. As a matter of fact, the

playwright was to claim that these very words were "seared on my brain--a warning from the Beyond to remain true to the best that is in me though the heavens fall." This profound kinship between father and son is virtually eliminated from the play.

Edmund must turn away from his father towards his mother for the kind of nurturing he needs. She, too, has failed him in the past, but, as the play begins, there is renewed hope in the warm summer air. Mary has been born again to her better self and is ready, he assumes, to become the nurturing mother he seeks.

Mary Tyrone is different from her real-life counterpart as well. She lives completely isolated from all but her family, having rejected her husband's theatre associates while apparently abandoning any friendships pre-dating her marriage. Ella O'Neill, according to the playwright's biographical notes, had "a few loyal friends scattered over country." No mention of them is made in the play. Mary speaks of being cruelly vilified by her late mother just before her wedding. In real life, according to the same notes, "M's mother still alive--M has still her affection for comfort when husband fails."

These alterations make Mary more vulnerable and desperate, more tied to her familial roles of wife and mother. Living under the shadow of her own critical, competitive mother reinforces the psychological fears Mary has concerning her adequacy to perform these roles.

And behind these fears is Mary's peculiar relationship to her men. In the play, the marriage of James and Mary had been brought about through the pandering of Mary's father:

You can imagine how excited I was when my father wrote me he and James Tyrone had become friends, and that I was to meet him when I came home for Easter vacation...My father took me to see him act first...I couldn't take my eyes off him...My father had said we'd go backstage to his dressing room right after the play, and so we did...I fell in love right then...I forgot all about becoming a nun or a concert pianist. All I wanted was to be his wife.

The father who had always spoiled his daughter turned her over to his friend and not long after the marriage was consummated a pattern of heavy drinking helped to hasten the father's death from consumption. This is a heady sequence of events by which to interpret Mary's subsequent behavior towards Edmund, her consumptive and alcoholic son. And the most fascinating part about these events is that, with one exception, the facts are fabricated. James O'Neill and Ella's father did meet and become friends, but the latter had died before his daughter even met his actor friend.

Mary was Ella O'Neill's never-used Christian name. The virgin Mary, mother of God, is Mary Tyrone's intermediary with God the father from whose grace she has fallen. Once the idealized daughter of a loving father, destined to be a nun, the bride of Christ, or a concert pianist, an artist in God's service, she is now the drug-addicted spouse of a successful second-rate actor. In truth she bears closer kinship to Mary Magdalene than St. Mary, but, unlike that fallen woman, there may be no redeemer son of God to restore her to a state of grace.

On the other hand, both in her mind and, to some extent, in his, the role of redeemer son is profoundly connected to Edmund. For the reasons outlined earlier, he alone within the family is able at the outset to believe in Mary's potential for redemption. More importantly, he of all the family has the greatest need to save her. He may be dying, and he seeks not to die alone. If he can only reclaim his mother from the sin of her addiction, she will be the companion he seeks on his journey towards death or his own redemption. But paradoxically, this companionship which he seeks is only possible if he can first make her see him as a mortal being separate from the immortal son whose image she seeks desperately to sustain. What he does not realize at the beginning is that his own image of her is something from which he must separate himself as well.

Before we can understand this struggle to separate, however, we need to examine the unique bond between them. That bond derives from the circumstances of Edmund's birth, a birth enveloped by images of death. Any birth is a joining of spiritual aspirations with biological realities. Both are distorted in the history of Edmund's birth. Out of the guilt she feels for Eugene's death, Mary conceives Edmund, a conception urged upon her by

her husband psychologically and biologically too soon. In a parody of the birth of Christ, she starts to deliver in the hotel room to which her husband's tour has brought her. Driven by her pain, she makes a compromise with death. Accepting morphine addiction, a living suicide, she completes a long fall from grace which began with her marriage to Tyrone. From her womb emerges a child "born nervous and too sensitive"--by implication, incomplete.

In the presence of death, both Mary and Edmund are triggered into a recollection of this bond at birth. A profound guilt on both their parts has been the glue to keep them stuck to one another. He is still a child, a son failing to solace his mother, an artist without creative direction or power--beneath all, a frail mortal. Born to be the virgin mother to her "perfect" father, Mary instead was encouraged by that father to assert her physical and emotional desires with disastrous results. Her marriage to Tyrone was rewarded by the death of her father and the birth of Jamie, Cain to the Abel of his infant brother Eugene. With each assertion of her "sinful" desires against the claims of God, she has been punished by a confrontation with her mortality. She is a mother unable to nurture; a muse stifling creativity; most frightening of all, a harbinger of imminent death.

Living as they do in the shadow of death, these two failed Catholics can only hope to find peace in one way, some kind of return to a state of grace. To achieve grace--the favor of God who alone grants immortality and purpose to man--Edmund must atone for his guilt in driving his mother to addiction, and Mary must save Edmund from death, the fate of her father and Eugene. On the surface, Edmund's seems the more reasonable goal. If he can only make his mother see him as the mortal he is, she will turn from the fantasy of her addiction to the nurturing role of mother. But his goal does not account for the desperate need Mary has to see him as immortal, free from the danger of death. This need compels her to move in the opposite direction from Edmund. As he endeavors to make her see him as a separate mortal adult, she strives to hold him firmly in the position of her immortal child. The situation is set up for failure. The success of one can only mean the sacrifice of the other.

There are four acts in *Journey* and four scenes between Edmund and Mary, each of them coming at the end of an act and charting the development and resolution of the central struggle. Together they are akin to a single musical theme played out with variations.

Even before they meet alone for the first time, the troubles that will pressure them to disharmony are well established. Mary has already revealed a dangerous reversion to behavior associated with her past addiction--oversensitivity to her appearance, particularly her graying hair and her wrinkled hands. The deterioration of her once sexually alluring red hair and her gracefully artistic hands is a constant reminder of her loss of innocence. She is reluctant to be looked at directly, indicating a fear that her true physical and emotional state will not stand scrutiny. Her preoccupation with the painful past is further reinforced by her having slept the previous evening in the spare room, a room intended for the dead Eugene.

Stimulating this behavior is Edmund's physical condition, his "summer cold," which has progressed to the point where the first act is regularly punctuated by his coughing, a sound that causes Mary visible distress. Edmund himself does and does not know he has consumption; he is really only awaiting Doc Hardy's official report before conscious acknowledgement of the worst.

Appropriately this mother and son who seek from each other artificial role-playing prepare for their private meeting much as actors about to enter the stage. Edmund leaves the previous scene to get his prop, a book he carries on stage with no real intention of reading. Mary is even more blatant. After Tyrone and Jamie have left, she sits and lets go, "*her face betraying a frightened, furtive desperation, her hands roving over the table top, aimlessly moving objects around.*" As soon as she hears her "cue," Edmund's footsteps off-stage followed by the inevitable coughing, "*she springs to her feet, as if she wanted to run away from the sound,*" but rather than run away, she takes position for her scene, going "*quickly to the windows at right,*" and adopts her initial acting pose, "*looking out,*

apparently calm, as he enters from the front parlor, [prop] book in one hand. She turns to him, her lips set in a welcoming, motherly smile"--pure acting!

She lies about having been on the way to look for him, a lie obvious to the audience, but evidently not to Edmund, who mistakenly thinks he has caught her in a receptive mood. He launches immediately into "I feel too rotten," which, instead of receiving the sympathetic mothering response expected, is attacked by Mary with "You're such a baby." His bitter disappointment must register fairly visibly, since Mary immediately backtracks-- "I'm only teasing, dear"--as she takes his arm and places him in the rocking chair with a pillow under his head and tender kisses upon his cheek.

She has--momentarily, as it turns out--returned her son to the position of "the baby of the family," quite content to nurture him as long as he willingly acquiesces in that role. But the role is no longer satisfying to Edmund; to accept it, he must deny the reality of his sickness and the adult autonomy he is unconsciously striving for. In the first of only two such moments in the scene, he initiates a physical gesture towards her, taking her hand *"with deep seriousness,"* in an effort to force her to confront her own potential sickness. Edmund sees this as a positive step towards her becoming the mother who can give the adult Edmund the support he needs. Mary, on the other hand, sees this as a hostile intrusion on her necessary defenses.

Once more she retreats to the window to regain her actor's concentration and to attempt a new action. She tries to enlist her son against his father, criticizing the latter's social gaucherie. But Edmund is no longer so easily diverted and actually takes the father's side, forcing a slight tactical retreat on Mary's part which in actuality she converts into a more clever assault. She begins to appeal to Edmund's sense of rootlessness by linking that feeling to Tyrone's failure to provide a stable home.

Edmund becomes noticeably irritable. While the issue is irrelevant to what he is trying to get her to do, face up to her present weaknesses, it forces him to defend his own area of vulnerability, his failure to be a good son. He attempts to assert himself with a phony toughness of language (e.g. "the Old Man") but is scotched by Mary's naked appeal: "But sometimes I feel so lonely."

Unable to accept the desperation of this statement, he presses Mary to own up to the role her addiction had played in isolating her from others. However, before he has fully broached this subject, he wavers, realizing that he is not prepared to deal squarely with this reality. Mary, for her part, recognizes that beneath Edmund's expressed desire to help is an unexpressed fear that she is incapable of a dynamic recovery. She pursues this fear, interrogates him really, until he must admit to sharing with his father and brother the same essential distrust of this imperfect mother.

*(Suddenly a strange undercurrent of revengefulness comes into her voice.)*  
It would serve all of you right if it was true!

With this veiled threat to destroy herself, she pushes her son into full retreat. Once more he accepts her mothering him as if he were still a child, her insistence on his condition as "a bad cold." One last timid attempt on his part to make her entertain the possibility of "something worse" is thwarted by the following exchange:

MARY. I give you my sacred word of honour [that I won't become an addict again]!  
*(Then with a sad bitterness.)* But I suppose you're remembering I've promised before on my word of honour.

EDMUND. No!

MARY. *(Her bitterness receding into a resigned helplessness.)* I'm not blaming you, dear. How can you help it? How can any one of us forget? *(Strangely.)* That's what makes it so hard--for all of us. We can't forget.

EDMUND. *(Grabs her shoulder).* Mama! Stop it!

She has at last invoked her fall from grace, the betrayal of her "sacred word of honour."

Even Edmund does not wish to be reminded of this truth. Once more he makes physical contact with her, this time to return her to a more manageable reality. Realizing that she has temporarily defeated him, his mother announces her intention to take a "nap" with no fear that her son will pursue her real intention. For the first time she can boldly look at him, knowing that it is he who will avoid her eyes. He beats a hast retreat out of the house, leaving Mary with her victory. But as her return to the nervous behavior which preceded the scene indicates, the victory is hollow. She has had to dredge up her ineradicable loss of faith, that permanent damage that cannot be forgotten and which, from this moment on, will dominate her every thought.

All doubts as to Mary's return to addiction as well as the gravity of Edmund's illness have been erased before they next confront each other. Immediately following her first scene with Edmund, she has taken a small dose of morphine from a secret stash. Because she does not have enough of her "medicine" to get really high, she is still reasonably lucid and connected to reality. And this means that, when Doc Hardy's phone call comes, both she and Edmund are able to detect the bad news behind Tyrone's efforts to cover up what he has been told.

The situation has become more desperate and is further intensified by this exchange between father and son:

TYRONE. ...I wish she hadn't led me to hope this time. By God, I never will again!

EDMUND. That's a rotten thing to say, Papa! (*Defiantly.*) Well, I'll hope! She's just started. It can't have got a hold on her yet. She can still stop. I'm going to talk to her.

When both Tyrone and Jamie seek to convince him of the futility of talking to his mother, Edmund runs off rather than accept their harshly accurate assessment. By setting himself against his father's despair, he has placed his manhood even more squarely on the line.

Holding him to his promise, Tyrone creates the impetus into the second Edmund-Mary scene: "Maybe if you asked your mother now what you said you were going to--." With the lamest of excuses ("look at the time"), he leaves the two of them to work it out. His retreat is spurred by the discomfort just aroused by his younger son's bad joke ("Did Doc Hardy tell you I was going to die?") and his wife's violent reaction to it:

I won't have it! (*She stamps her foot.*) Do you hear, Edmund! Such morbid nonsense! Saying you're going to die! It's the books you read!

--Even his props are fair game for Mary.--

Nothing but sadness and death! Your father shouldn't allow you to have them. And some of the poems you've written yourself are even worse! You'd think you didn't want to live! A boy of your age with everything before him! It's just a pose you get out of books! You're not really sick at all!

This bullying assault from his wife prompts Tyrone to bid her hold her tongue. Knowing now that Edmund intends once more to confront her with his illness and that her husband will not stay to smooth things over, she launches even more aggressively than in the first scene into her action of babying Edmund into submission.

However, even as the earlier scene seems to be repeating itself, Edmund is responding with a very different awareness of Mary's behavior. Despite the almost brutal energy with which she presses her mothering upon him, he refuses to be enveloped by it, steadily pushing his own appeal. He succeeds to the extent that Mary momentarily desists from her mothering and "*stammers pleadingly.*" This pleading drains Edmund of all desire to fight. As in the first scene, her apparent retreat turns out to be a ploy to disarm her son and allow her to mount again an assault on his failure as a son. But this time the assault is more profound, as she links his illness to her return from the sanatorium, implying a hostile intent on his part to undermine her stable recovery.

Irrational as it may be, this attack is clearly and cruelly successful on the guilt-ridden Edmund. Mary once more shifts tactics, returning to her mothering stance. Edmund's defeat seems complete, and it allows Mary to move more straightforwardly into her own fantastic vision of salvation. "*Her manner remote and objective again,*" she can now share her terrible secret, "that one day long ago I found I could no longer call my soul my own." "*Lowering her voice to a strange tone of whispered confidence,*" she confides to her son for the first time her vision of a return to grace:

...when the Blessed Virgin Mary forgives me and gives me back the faith in Her love and pity I used to have in my convent days, and I can pray to Her again-- when She sees no one in the world can believe in me even for a moment any more, then She will believe in me, and with Her help it will be so easy. I will hear myself scream with agony, and at the same time I will laugh because I will be so sure of myself.

This is the climactic moment in their relationship as Edmund "*remains hopelessly silent*" before this humanly impossible vision of a perfect communion with God. Both characters sense the unbreachable separation between them, but Mary accepts it more willingly and is the first to act upon it: "Now I think of it, you might as well go uptown." There is no longer a need for his presence. Morphine will be her companion.

While he accepts this dismissal, Edmund does not leave without exhibiting his first openly hostile attack on his mother. As she tries to behave with some affection, urging him to follow Doc Hardy's advice, he "*bitterly*" throws her earlier words of disparagement back at her: "I thought he was an old idiot."

Truly alone now, Mary is finally allowed to express her inner voice and it is a voice in total isolation from her family: "Then Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely?"

In the interval between Acts II and III, Mary has secured a fresh supply of morphine and is well on her way to becoming once more, to use her own phrase, "a dope fiend." Edmund, in the meantime, has been explicitly informed by his father of the results of his examination. Each character has been pushed closer towards an unbearable awareness of mortality. Significantly, each is still in touch with reality: Edmund has not yet gone on a drunken binge; and Mary, not yet sure of the proper dosage to achieve oblivion, has taken an insufficient amount of her drug. She is about to go for more when the entrance of her family stops her. They are at maximum stress without the immediate power to run for relief.

That all pretense is over becomes clear from Edmund's reaction to his mother having sent Cathleen in to pick up her prescription: "For God's sake, Mama! You can't trust her! Do you want everyone on earth to know?" The once hopeful son has joined his father and brother in the task of covering up the family skeleton. Even so, there is still one more variation of the Edmund-Mary scene to be played out. As the second scene to some extent opened with a repeat of the opening process of scene one--Mary's aggressive mothering--so the third scene opens with Tyrone's running out on his son as he had at the beginning of the second scene. His excuse in this instance is less specious; he is running for a special "fresh bottle of whiskey," one that he intends to share with the young Edmund. On the most basic level, he is trying to console his son for the bad news; but, more profoundly, this whiskey will serve in Act IV to provide the liquid warmth to the body, a perverse substitute for the security of true motherly nurturing denied to all her men by Mary.

Mary's treatment of Edmund at the outset of this third confrontation reveals to what point matters have advanced. She no longer feels compelled to play the mothering role. Having chosen morphine, she need not curry favor from Edmund. Presently she will need no family at all for protection. Ironically, this "*detached amusement*" allows her to experience sincerely positive feelings towards her husband:

You must try to understand and forgive him, too, and not feel contempt because he's close-fisted. His father deserted his mother and their six children a year or so after they came to America. He told them he had a premonition he would die soon, and he was homesick for Ireland, and wanted to go back there to die. So he went and he did die. He must have been a peculiar man, too.

Your father had to go to work in a machine shop when he was only ten years old. Her behavior here is a total reversal of her earlier contempt for her husband's peasant roots as well as her attempt to enlist Edmund's enmity against him. Earlier in the play such behavior might have spurred Edmund on to gently press his claims. His response now is also a reversal as he puts down her effort. Having failed to receive any sympathy himself from her, having been denied permission to express his fear of dying, he is frustrated and angry with her. How dare she lend her voice to the pain of Tyrone's desertion by his father when she is guilty of the very same desertion of her son.

Listen, Mama! You're not so far gone yet you've forgotten everything. You haven't asked me what I found out this afternoon. Don't you care a damn?

The tone is dramatically different--aggressive, hostile, uncompromising. Edmund has carried the emotional lesson of the previous scene into this one, clearly seeing his mother as his adversary, her hypocrisy to be broken down once and for all.

Mary is plainly taken aback by this new Edmund; but, as before, her son has underestimated her desperation and the lengths to which she will go to protect herself. Battered by Edmund's insistence, she strikes back by evoking the most devastating moment in Edmund's past: she describes her attempted suicide. It was for Edmund his loss of innocence, the end of his faith: "God, it made everything in life seem rotten."

As it devastated him then, so it threatens to destroy him now. Mary, taking advantage of the pain she has evoked, begs him to end his attack, but, with "*stubborn persistence*," he gets his message out:

EDMUND. Listen, Mama. I'm going to tell you whether you want to hear or not. I've got to go to a sanatorium.

MARY (*Dazedly, as if this was something that had never occurred to her.*) Go away? (*Violently.*) No! I won't have it!

O'Neill's strange stage direction for her and Mary's violent reaction make complete sense if we see her effort from the beginning as one to preserve the image of Edmund as her immortal baby, the one creation of her life that did not die, that justified her existence and could lead her back to a state of grace. While she has abandoned this fantasy, Edmund's effort to summon her back to reality threatens the escape into her new morphine fantasy. Her own counter-effort cruelly alludes to his most vulnerable point:

[Doc Hardy's] been jealous of you most of all. He knew I loved you most because--

EDMUND. (*Miserably.*) Oh, stop talking crazy, can't you, Mama!

He cuts her off before she refers to the fact that his birth was paid for with her addiction, her fall from grace. He tries desperately to prevent her from placing this responsibility upon him, for the first time openly attacking her lack of motherly nurturing: "I've been away a lot, and I've never noticed it broke your heart."

But she is in control now, relentless in her accusations, questioning his sensitivity, burdening him as the cause of her self-conscious guilt ("I had to be glad whenever you were where you couldn't see me"). And Edmund is simply no match for her as "*he reaches out blindly and takes her hand*," once more attempting through physical contact to achieve an emotional bond. "*But he drops it immediately*," realizing the futility of his gesture.

She senses victory as, "*with an abrupt transformation into a detached bullying motherliness*," she makes her boldest move to render her son impotent:

(*With a belittling laugh.*) If I gave you the slightest encouragement, you'd tell me next you were going to die--

EDMUND. People do die of it. Your own father--

She has overplayed her hand, not expecting that her own willingness to use psychologically cruel means will be matched by her son, who sees his own survival at stake:

MARY. ...I forbid you to remind me of my father's death, do you hear me?

This remarkable demand is such a total dismissal of Edmund that he is left with no choice if he is to survive with any autonomy at all. At last the bitter rage building inside him finds expression in his most openly cruel and aggressive action towards her:

*(He gets up from his chair and stands staring condemningly at her--bitterly.)*  
It's pretty hard to take at times, having a dope fiend for a mother!

With this one action he turns the guilt back upon her and separates himself from her forever. But, even as he does so, he tries to retreat from the consequences of his action. Those consequences are nothing less than the psychological murder of his mother as "*she winces--all life seeming to drain from her face, leaving it with an appearance of a plaster cast.*"

He feebly attempts to take back what he has said, but Mary's zombie-like behavior and preoccupation with the fog, associated in this play with death, reveal all too well the thorough success of his action. He has won his separation from Mary, but at a cost he cannot face. "I--I can't stay here," he stammers as he hurries away, seeking his own escape in drink.

If the three scenes discussed above comprise a theme with variations, then the final scene acts as a startling coda to the rest.

Morphine has permitted Mary to retreat into an eternally innocent past, to that moment when a young girl dreamed of a life dedicated to God. Edmund has drunk his way to a sober realization that he

will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death!

For one last time, the two meet in a brief but conclusive confrontation. Echoing the pattern of her movements at the end of their last scene, she enters "*like a sleepwalker*" during the last moments of the play. As she passes behind him, Edmund

*(turns impulsively and grabs her arm. As he pleads he has the quality of a bewilderedly hurt little boy.)* Mama! It isn't a summer cold! I've got consumption!

Still not accepting the inevitable consequences of his previous actions, he again tries through physical contact, and the little boy behavior she had earlier sought, to break through to her. It seems "for a second" that he might succeed, but then Mary renders the separation between them irrevocable with the simple command, "No."

He drops his hand, releasing her forever. It is an awesome theatrical moment--one in which we certainly see nakedly revealed the personal tragic theme of O'Neill's life, but also an artistically brilliant vision unmatched before or since by any other American playwright.

--Robert Einkenkel

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Other sources could be cited, but these three were used directly. Textual quotes, of course, come from the edition of the play listed above. General biographical background was arrived at from both of the other sources. However, the Gelb book is particularly thorough regarding the elder O'Neills. James' last words and O'Neill's reaction come from this source. The author's biographical notes are to be found only in the Sheaffer book which alone makes his study a necessary companion to the other.



## ELLA O'NEILL'S ADDICTION

One of Louis Sheaffer's many original contributions to our knowledge of the O'Neill family has to do with the dependency of Ella Quinlan O'Neill on morphine: in particular, that as early as about 1914 or 1915, she permanently rid herself of the habit (*Sheaffer I* 280-281). Given the topic, it is remarkable that any evidence at all exists. The evidence Sheaffer presents must be considered fragmentary and circumstantial, but the conclusions he draws are plausible and persuasive.

Sheaffer learned from Agnes Boulton that Eugene told her that "a few years" earlier his mother had freed herself from a drug addiction. Sheaffer does not say when Agnes heard of her mother-in-law's problem, but a likely time may have been in early March, 1922, just after Ella's death, when, as both Sheaffer and the Gelbs report, Eugene described the family nightmare to Saxe Commins (*Sheaffer I* 86; *Gelb* 498). With the floodgates open on the old secret, it may have been the same night that Eugene also told the sad story to his wife. Whenever the conversation took place, Agnes formed the impression that the cure had happened in 1914 or 1915. Drawing inferences from a "flurry of items in the New London newspapers," Sheaffer judges that the time was spring, 1914.

Sheaffer adds that Ella went to a convent, perhaps in Brooklyn, rather than to a sanatorium. Without indicating other sources of information, he concludes that a return to her childhood religion helped Ella where medical treatment had so often failed. It is reasonable that Ella, who disliked and distrusted physicians, might have found a better cure by returning to her faith than going to a hospital. Hospitals had repeatedly ended her physiological dependency, but had not shown her how to tolerate the miseries and frustration of daily life in a difficult family. Something would have had to give her the "will power" to confront the stresses of her life without resuming use of the drug for the remaining eight years of her life.<sup>1</sup>

At least some events of the ensuing eight years would test the strongest person's resolve. Most notably, in April, 1919, Ella O'Neill underwent a mastectomy for breast cancer (*Sheaffer I* 440, 441). In addition to tolerating the psychological shock of disfigurement, Ella would almost certainly have been re-exposed, post-operatively, to morphine. That she did not become re-addicted is remarkable. To understand how she withstood re-exposure seems to require a fuller understanding of both her problem and the various factors that may have contributed to its cure.

It may be that physical addiction was not Ella's primary or only problem. While authorities do not agree about an "addictive" or "pre-addictive" personality, they do find certain traits that consistently recur in addicts. Various authors emphasize that addicts tend to meet "conflicts and anxieties about aggression, dependency, and sexuality" passively, "by avoidance rather than by aggressive acts." In the opinion of such experts as Wikler and Razor, and Nyswander, "opioids suppress the source of certain conflicts and anxieties, permitting the addict to make a passive adaptation to his inner tensions. Addicts seem to take advantage of the powerful action of the drug to mute and extinguish their emotions and to solve, at least in the short run, problems associated with interpersonal questions" (*Freedman* 1596).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>We do not know how long Ella's periods of abstinence lasted following her medical cures. The currently standard summary of the topic, "Opiate Dependence" by Albert M. Freedman, M.D., states that although withdrawal symptoms of "the abstinence syndrome" are intense for only 2 or 3 days, and are "generally milder than the dramatic depictions of cold-turkey withdrawal," the symptoms may persist for 6 months or longer (*Freedman* 1604). Recurring symptoms of withdrawal of whatever intensity would be immediately relieved by resumption of the drug, only to return when the immediate dose wore off. It may be that Ella's periods of abstinence were simply not long enough to permit her to become completely free from the influence of the drug. But the matter of her low tolerance for distress would surely play a part in her resumptions.

<sup>2</sup>Freedman's article exemplifies a problem of multidisciplinary studies--that experts tend to find persuasive conclusions that stem from their particular points of view, but which may not fit with the equally persuasive conclusions of other disciplines. When discussing the

The conclusions seem aptly to describe the personality of Mary Tyrone as O'Neill portrays her (in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*); they also fit with most of what we know of Ella O'Neill. It is appropriate to add here that the actress Florence Eldridge, who first played Mary Tyrone, consulted one of the experts just cited, the respected psychoanalyst Marie Nyswander, about the character of Mary. According to Miss Eldridge, Dr. Nyswander believed, on the basis of reading *Long Day's Journey*, that O'Neill had portrayed a person whose psychopathology extended beyond her addiction (Eldridge 286-287).<sup>3</sup> In childhood, Sheaffer tells us, Eugene accounted for his mother's erratic behavior with the belief that she was "mentally unstable" (Sheaffer I 80); and in adult life, the numerous portraits of Ella that fill the plays show that her son did not change his mind.

Sheaffer asks, most poignantly, the question that plagued Eugene and the other O'Neills for the remainder of their lives: "If she could free herself after all these years, after the habit had its claws into her so deeply, why couldn't she have succeeded at the start, before she had bequeathed him a legacy of lifelong guilt feelings?" (Sheaffer I 280). No matter when the cure took place, we require a fuller explanation to account for the ability Ella found in 1914 or after, but not before, to return to her Catholicism and end her addiction.<sup>4</sup>

The following thoughts may add a little to our understanding of the problem. In the spring of 1914, Ella would have been about 56 years old. She ought to have completed her menopause by then, and thus would be free from fear of pregnancy, a condition she dreaded. Her younger son wrote in a private autobiographical document (printed in *Sheaffer II* 510-512) that she had had a "series of brought-on abortions" between the death of the second child, Edmund, and the conception of himself. Sheaffer emphasizes that Ella wanted no more children after the death of Edmund, and carried Eugene to term with great reluctance (e.g., *Sheaffer I* 4, 19, 21).

Eugene could not help but be a biased witness; nevertheless, keeping alert to his interest in the matter, we must continue to listen to his testimony. He portrays Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey* as a woman whose thoughts, under the influence of morphine, consistently revert to a time before her marriage when her most important relations were with nuns at her convent, and where she dreamed of a celibate life as a nun. Nothing in her recollections of childhood suggests she looked forward to becoming a mother, and little in her relations with her sons or husband suggests anything but aversion to maternity and its obligations.

O'Neill clearly connects his mother's drug use to her aversion to maternity and to a complex response toward her own sexuality. Late in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey* he has Edmund ask in a childlike way for his mother to acknowledge the severity of his illness and give him the comfort he craves. In so doing he "grabs her arm." Her reaction is most striking: she appears to believe that someone has made a sexual overture to her for "her expression becomes terrified," she gives "a command to herself, No!" and then retreats

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pharmacology of addiction, animal studies are adduced to support the conclusion that anyone at all may become addicted if exposed to a narcotic (Freedman 1597). However, "Interpersonal, Familial, Developmental, Psychodynamic" considerations (1595-1596) lead to the somewhat different conclusion cited in my text.

A recent work which disputes the "exposure" theory is Bruce K. Alexander and Patricia F. Hadaway, "Opiate Addiction: The Case for an Adaptive Orientation," *Psychological Bulletin*, 92:2 (1982), 367-381. I am grateful to my former student Jim Janz for referring me to this article.

<sup>3</sup>See also Geraldine Fitzgerald's complementary view of the character, "Another Neurotic Electra," also in Floyd, pp. 290-292.

<sup>4</sup>The passage of the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914 must be considered as possible additional confirmation of Sheaffer's date. The act restricted the sale of such nostrums as Dr. Barton's Brown Mixture, and Dover's Powders, which contained opium, and which are believed to have made addicts of huge numbers of white middle class American women from Civil War times to 1914 (Freedman 1592). However, O'Neill shows Mary Tyrone obtaining prescriptions from physicians to satisfy her needs, so the evidence for the date remains inconclusive.

into her morphine-induced detachment, seeming to regard Edmund not as her son but as a strange adult, and herself a convent girl. "You must not try to touch me," she tells the stranger, her son. "You must not try to hold me. It isn't right. I am hoping to be a nun." Nothing in the context suggests any other possible origin of an improper thought or act than her own mind. In a certain sense, it must be her own thoughts, apparently sexual thoughts, that terrify her, and cause her to retreat even more deeply into narcosis.

It is consistent with the episode in Act IV that O'Neill also shows her, while under the influence of morphine, avoiding her husband's bed by sleeping in the spare room when she is using the drug, a fact to which her sons pay particular attention. In her final speech of Act IV she says she was "shocked" that Holy Mother advised her to go home and live "as other girls lived, going out to parties and dances," rather than remaining forever in the convent as she then wished to do. Another portrait of Ella, as Emma in the underrated *Diff'rent* (1920), shows the emergence of a kind of psychosis at two stages in a woman's life when her sexual fear and fascination erupt. Christine Mannon and Deborah Harford, both partly modeled on Ella, mingle a virginal quality with overtly incestuous behavior. Numerous other portraits in the plays repeat the pattern her son perceived.

The private autobiography and various plays clearly convey O'Neill's belief that his mother dreaded pregnancy and its consequences and suggest that she habitually thought of herself as a virginal convent girl. The aversion to maternity seems to have been related to a highly complex attitude toward her sexuality. One way that Ella apparently controlled terribly troublesome conflicts about her sexuality and especially her fear of pregnancy was apparently to use morphine, and when she no longer had to fear pregnancy, she was able to give up the drug.<sup>5</sup>

--Stephen A. Black

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#### O'NEILL'S FIRST WIFE DEFAMED

Leafing recently through *The Oxford Book of American Literary Anecdotes*, a collection drawn from many published sources, I began, of course, with its several pages on O'Neill. Donald Hall, editor of the book, says in a prefatory note: "Son of a theatrical family, O'Neill worked at a variety of jobs before he began writing for the theater in 1913. Like many another American writer, he suffered from a frailty." The editor then quotes, as follows, from *At Random: The Reminiscences of Bennett Cerf*.

O'Neill's drinking often led to blackouts; in fact, in 1909 his first marriage had resulted from one. He woke up in some flophouse with a girl in bed next to him, and he said, "Who the hell are you?" and she said, "You married me last night."

<sup>5</sup>My wife, Sylvia A. Thorpe, Ph.D., lent me her expertise and experience as a clinical-psychologist during several conversations about Mrs. O'Neill's difficulties; however, she is not responsible for my conclusions or my possible errors.

This, to put it politely, is hogwash, wholly erroneous, without a scintilla of truth. Both Cerf, originally, and Hall should have known better than to peddle such a fable, for they could have learned the facts from any of the O'Neill biographies. Kathleen Jenkins, O'Neill's first wife, was thoroughly respectable, a more or less conventional young woman from a good family: her maternal grandfather had been a member of the New York Stock Exchange; her father, from pre-Revolutionary stock, was an employee of Tiffany's jewelry house. Kathleen, as she once said, was "deeply in love" with Eugene and, from their romance of several months, became pregnant. O'Neill was shamed by mutual friends into marrying her, in a ceremony kept secret from his parents, to legitimize their child, but the two never lived together. Several years later, too proud to ask for alimony or support for their son, she got a divorce.

Airily repudiating what should have been one of his major responsibilities as editor, Mr. Hall says in the preface to his book: "In the matter of accuracy, I have been careful to be unscrupulous; if a story achieves print, it is grist for this mill." No doubt Mr. Hall must have thought that that sounded cute, really cute--he had "been careful to be unscrupulous"--but to most of us, I venture to say, he sounds grossly insensitive about literary ethics.

Clearly, though, the original and chief culprit in this whole matter is Bennett Cerf. It so happens that the Oxford Press editor could hardly have found a less reliable source of information on O'Neill than Cerf's memoir, as the following account should demonstrate.

When O'Neill's publisher, Liveright's, went bankrupt early in the 1930s, a good many houses sought to acquire the playwright; aside from his prestigious name, his published works always made money, even those that had failed in the theater. "Everybody was making offers for Eugene O'Neill," Mr. Cerf says in *At Random* (pp. 81 & 85), "and also for one of the leading American poets on the Liveright list, Robinson Jeffers. Those were the two I wanted most ... but O'Neill was the prize. His agent was Richard Madden, and every publisher in New York made a beeline for him.... I had a much better idea; I flew down to Sea Island, where Gene and his wife, Carlotta, lived....

"So while all the other publishers were besieging Richard Madden ... I signed up Gene O'Neill personally. We shook hands and the whole deal was made.... [Madden] was very surprised when O'Neill told him that he was going to come with Random House, since all the big publishers wanted him and we [Cerf and his partner Donald Klopfer] were still beginners."

Cerf's account is followed, more or less, by several biographies, but the facts of the matter are otherwise. It simply is not true that the young publisher took the initiative of going to Sea Island, Georgia, or that he and the playwright quickly reached agreement.

After a number of publishers, including Cerf and Klopfer, had approached O'Neill by letter or through Madden, the playwright had Thomas R. Coward come to Georgia. O'Neill, as well as Carlotta, liked him personally, but he was disappointed in his book list, which he saw only after he had invited the Coward-McCann man. O'Neill meanwhile had had an attractive offer through Madden from Random House and, though he was starting to fear that he might have to play host to a parade of publishers before reaching a decision, he invited Cerf for an overnight stay. Despite the latter's recollections, the two parties agreed on a deal only after extensive correspondence and negotiation, not during Cerf's brief visit (*O'Neill, Son and Artist*, by Louis Sheaffer, pp. 414-417).

Shortly after Cerf's visit, Eugene wrote to Saxe Commins, his editor at Liveright's and closest friend, that while he felt his association with either Coward or Cerf "could not fail to be pleasant," he considered the Random House partner "more able ... [he has] an appreciation for good literature, an ambition to expand only along lines of distinction." Carlotta, giving her own impression, wrote Saxe that Cerf "is a *very clever businessman*. And can get away with a lot on account of an exterior of boyish enthusiasm & carefree manner ... Don't think I don't like Cerf--because I do--but he is a bit like all those N.Y. friends of his--(Dorothy Parker, Woolcott, Ross of *The New Yorker*)."

As time would prove, Carlotta didn't really like Cerf. She had met him during her previous marriage, to cartoonist Ralph Barton, and had never felt at ease with Barton's

smart, wisecracking friends, among them Parker, Woollcott and Cerf.

From a well-to-do family, Bennett Cerf entered the publishing field in the early 1920s when he purchased a berth as a vice-president with Horace Liveright, whose profligate style of living kept him chronically short of funds. A spendthrift playboy fascinated by the theater, he ran his domain as a combination of publishing house and oasis where literary and theatrical notables could find a party going on, with endless drinks, at almost any hour of the day or night.

*At Random*, calling O'Neill "part of the ensemble," goes on to say (pp. 33 & 34): "Sometimes in a single day [Herbert Bayard] Swope would come up from the newspaper [the *World*, where he was the editor], and O'Neill and Dorothy Parker and then maybe Marc Connelly. Or Ben Hecht, one of the most amusing of all...."

"Eugene O'Neill was too much of a brawler for me in those early days, a real wild man, but I loved him...."

"At Sea Island, I found him much changed from the wild man I had known at Liveright. He had lived down along the waterfront in those days, among all those men in flophouses, a bunch of drunks who were always in trouble. He was so often at Bellevue to dry out that they knew him there by his first name...."

"O'Neill's drinking often led to blackouts; in fact, in 1909 his first marriage had resulted from one. He woke up in some flophouse with a girl in bed next to him, and he said, 'Who the hell are you?' and she said, 'You married me last night.' He actually had. In disgust he signed up on a boat and went on a seven-month trip, and that's where he got the background for his sea plays ...."

First of all, O'Neill was never "part of the ensemble" at his publisher's; Hecht, Parker *et al.*, including Cerf, were virtually strangers to him. He made himself so scarce, in fact, that Liveright used to complain, "Why doesn't Gene ever come to see me?" As for his being a "brawler," yes, he had gotten into scrapes during his seafaring days, his time in the lower depths; but his roistering, except for occasional brief lapses, was behind him once he turned playwright. Cerf, on the basis of what he had heard about O'Neill's footloose years, was romanticizing him, in a left-handed sort of way, when he spoke of him as a "real wild man."

*At Random* is rife with other exaggerations, misleading remarks and outright errors about O'Neill. Although the memoir leaves the impression, without explicitly saying so, that Carlotta Monterey had been the mistress of cartoonist Ralph Barton, they were married. He was her third husband, O'Neill the fourth.

Contrary to Cerf's account, O'Neill did not "fall" for her when she appeared in his 1922 play *The Hairy Ape*. Indeed, the opposite was true. At their first meeting, at a rehearsal of *Ape*, she criticized both her part and the play, without knowing that the author was present and overheard her, while he told his friend Jimmy Light that he didn't think much of her acting ability. Their romance began a few years later when they were vacationing separately in Maine, O'Neill with his wife and children, Carlotta nearby as the house guest of someone Eugene knew.

Recalling a visit to the O'Neills when they lived at Tao House in California, Cerf says (p. 87): "In some New Orleans whorehouse he had bought--I don't know how he found it--a player piano which he named 'Rosie'; it was white, with naked ladies painted all over it. And Carlotta, the great religious girl, thought it was terrible, so Gene had it down in the cellar. He'd sneak down once in a while and drop nickels in the slot, and while it played old ragtime tunes he'd sit there with an ecstatic look on his face."

His account is wrong in several respects. Far from disapproving of the piano, Carlotta, who found it in Wurlitzer's store on Forty-second Street, just off Times Square, had given it to her husband as a birthday present. Instead of being "white, with naked ladies painted all over it," let's have O'Neill's description:

It was a great moment in my life when she first burst on my sight in Wurlitzer's

remotest storeroom in all her gangrenous-green, festooned-with-rosebuds beauty. There sure must have been an artist soul lost to the world in the New Orleans honky-tonk--or bordello--she came from.

Another time he said: "I'm not sure that listening to all those old songs I played on Rosie was a good idea. I try to remember a beautiful verse of Verlaine and come up with a line of 'Everybody's Doing It' or 'Oh, You Great Big Beautiful Doll.'"

--Louis Sheaffer

#### DIRECTING O'NEILL IN CHINA

[O'Neill once visited China, and there is a substantial record of productions of his plays on Chinese stages, as Haiping Liu documented in his paper at the March 1984 O'Neill conference in Boston. So a new Chinese production of an O'Neill work would not ordinarily be headline news. But the October 1984 production of *Anna Christie* (retitled *An Di*), directed by George C. White, President of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, is an exception to the rule--partly because of its success as an experiment in international cooperation, and also because of its transplantation of characters and locales from the United States to China. The Newsletter's Winter 1984 issue included a picture of two of the principals (on its cover), a review of the production by Professor Liu (pp. 29-31), and an abstract of Mr. White's report of his adventure in the *New York Times* (pp. 45-46). Since the *Times* report was an abridgement and O'Neillians may wish a more detailed account of the venture, the editor is pleased to present below a fuller version. He thanks Mr. White for permitting its printing, and hopes it will inspire other theatre practitioners to comparable initiatives in the future.]

It is impossible to adequately express my feelings toward the experience I had directing Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* in Beijing. Aside from the exotic aspect of the venture itself, the excitement of accepting and meeting a challenge of formidable proportions, it was the window through which I was permitted to view a theatrical world strangely similar yet totally different from our own, a world burgeoning with rejuvenated enthusiasm following the fallow years of the so called "Cultural Revolution." It is a world interested, to be sure, in retaining much of its ancient past, yet anxious to push on into the era of modern drama.

The Beijing production of *An Di* had its genesis in a visit to China by theater consultant Robert Brannigan, my wife Betsy and myself in May of 1980. We had been invited by the Chinese Theater Association to become acquainted with the contemporary Chinese theater scene with the long view of fostering theatrical exchange. I remember being struck by the thematic emphasis of such works as *The Rickshaw Boy*, which depicted pre-liberation social conditions with the obvious unspoken comparison to those of the period since 1949.

In succeeding summers, with the exception of 1982, the O'Neill Center hosted Chinese delegations, all of which were led by noted playwright and film writer Huang Zongjiang. Huang, as a student in Beijing and later an actor in pre-war Shanghai, had always admired Eugene O'Neill's works, and his war duties as a sailor further strengthened his artistic and spiritual bonds with O'Neill. (This is not as remarkable as it might first appear, as O'Neill's work was well known in China in the 1930s and 40s and had influenced such young Chinese dramatists of that era as Hou Sheu and Ca Yu. O'Neill himself had visited China in 1929, a fact often pointed out to me by the Chinese with much pride.)

In the fall of 1983 I was officially invited by the Chinese Theater Association to direct an O'Neill play of my choice in Beijing the following October.

Based on my experience in 1980 and discussions with Mr. Huang, *Anna Christie* seemed the logical choice. I felt that the story of an old sailor forced to send his only daughter away, unable to care for her after her mother's death, and her subsequent decline into prostitution would strike a responsive and sympathetic chord in audiences only a generation

away from the feudal era in China when daughters were sold to landlords or houses of prostitution as preferable alternatives to starvation.

Further, it occurred to me that were *Anna Christie* to be done, I would wish to change the venue from New York, Provincetown, and Boston, to Shanghai in the late 1920s or early 1930s. I believed that by setting it thus and making the characters Chinese I would remove any barrier between audiences who might otherwise view this story of Swedish Americans and an Irishman as some sort of exotic depiction of an alien life-style. O'Neill's eloquent ability to portray the relationship of father and child and its accompanying love and guilt, as well as that of a man and a woman, has no national boundaries, and his talent is as universal as the emotions he portrays. In essence, I wanted the drama to do what theater can do best--i.e., show ourselves to ourselves--and I did not feel it served O'Neill's genius to allow Chinese audiences to view *Anna Christie* as a sociological document of America in the 1920s.

In the fall of 1983 I received the official invitation from Mr. Liu Housheng, director of the Chinese Theater Association, asking me to direct *Anna Christie* and offering to support an entire American team in Beijing for the production period. The Theater Association would sponsor the production, which would be produced by the Central Academy of Drama at its new theater, the newest in China.

The selection of the American group was an easy one, availabilities permitting. First and foremost was the scenic designer, Ming Cho Lee, born in Shanghai and one of our foremost scenic artists as well as a master teacher. I felt he was an exciting choice to adapt the setting and add the dimension of instruction to the exchange, an element strongly desired by the Theater Association. Costumes became the next consideration. Patricia Zipprodt's sensitive work over the years, culminating in *Sunday in the Park with George*, made her the obvious selection. She understood the concept of adapting the play to China, could create a truly realistic "O'Neill look," and illustrate the concept that clothing evolves from and accentuates character. Finally, for lighting designer, I chose Ian Calderone, long a colleague at the O'Neill Center, a Hunter College professor, and a Broadway lighting designer since his teens. All three were able to free their schedules, but I was unable to secure a production stage manager, a loss I was to particularly regret later on. In the spring, to my delight and immense relief, I received assurance of funding from the Asian Cultural Council for this group's transportation and honoraria.

In late May I was able to journey to China via Russia with my son Caleb in order to cast the play and have preliminary talks with the production staff at the Central Academy of Drama. At these meetings I told of my plan for an adaptation of the play to China and mentioned that Huang Zongjiang had agreed to do it. Madam Teng Yan, a noted Chinese director and teacher at the Academy, had arranged the auditions for me in advance. (She had been part of the previous year's delegation to the O'Neill Center and we had discussed the production at that time.)

After the two days of auditions, I decided on Ma Shu Yun for Anna. She had worked in a company in Yonjie County and had appeared in films and on television. She had obviously studied the role and brought to the audition a marvelous sensitivity and grasp of the character.

Old Chris was Bao Guo An, a mature actor who had achieved renown in an acclaimed 1981 performance as Macbeth in Beijing. Younger actors were selected for the other two major roles. Xue Shan, a recent Academy graduate, seemed the best choice for Mat; and a young character actress from the Kantong Province Dance Company, Lou Nai Ming, brought startling insights to the character of Chris's barge companion Marthy. Her abilities were particularly impressive as she movingly portrayed someone far older than herself. I returned home elated by the prospect of working with such a fine group of professionals.

Ming Cho Lee and Pat Zipprodt went to China in early July to meet with the theatrical staff. Upon their return I learned that they had met with much negative reaction to the plan of setting the play in China. The producers and actors, it seems, had their hearts set on presenting an American classic portraying American characters, and on presenting it in the American way. This was corroborated by Huang Zongjiang, who once again led the

Chinese delegation to the summer's Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill Center. Helpful in stiffening my resolve was another visitor to the Center, Ying Rousheng, who had played Willy Loman for Arthur Miller in Beijing. He said that, though the adaptation of classics was rare in China, there was a precedent: both Gorky's *Lower Depths* and Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* had been successfully adapted to Chinese settings.

Ultimately, though not without trepidation, we resolved to pursue the adaptation course and scheduled the first rehearsal in Beijing for the first Monday in September.

The first day's work consisted of a general meeting with Theater Association and Academy officials, the chief technical personnel and the cast. I had brought with me a model of the sets and the costume renderings and was able to unveil them before a pleasantly surprised audience. Indeed, the designs received applause. The President of the Academy, Mr Xu Xiaozhong, made a brief speech pledging the full support and cooperation of all. Clearly included was a veiled but timely edict to cease further arguing about the Chinese adaptation and an exhortation to unite behind the effort to bring off a successful production. Huang Zongjiang now explained his adaptation. Virtually the entire play was translated word for word; only names, places, and Chris's song had been changed to fit a Chinese setting. Anna Christie now became An Di, a common south China girl's name. She had been sent to Harbin, rather than St. Paul, Minnesota, when her mother died. Her father was now a Fujian sailor and her Irish suitor a Catholic convert from Canton. The first act was moved from a "saloon near South Street, New York City" to a wine shop on the Shanghai waterfront, and the subsequent three acts took place on and in the cabin of a Huangpu River barge. Huang also explained that, although some of the ways of expressing emotions were distinctly unchinese, the goal would be to engage the audience so completely, to so "trick" them into accepting the situation as it unfolds, that "suspension of disbelief" would carry us through the evening.

We next read through the play while I changed the set model to conform to each act and displayed the costumes for each actor. Each line of the English and Chinese text was numbered so that at any given moment we could find exactly where we were in the script.

The large auditorium space on the fourth floor of the Academy building adjacent to the theater was our rehearsal hall. On the stage of this space sat a large group of observers to whom I was introduced. I was informed that they had come from various parts of China and had paid to watch me work. I did not at all mind having them sit in on rehearsals; but, finding that they had paid money for the experience, I felt an instinctive obligation to give them some extra value beyond simply viewing the often boring rehearsal process. So I asked them to submit a series of questions on O'Neill and American theater, or any craft questions they might wish to have discussed, and I would try to answer them at the breaks.

The rehearsal day began at 8:30 and lasted until 11:30 and resumed again at 2:30 and ended at 5:30. The Theater Association provided a car and driver that shuttled me between the rehearsal room and my room at the venerable and comfortable Beijing Hotel.

The rest of the first week was spent on the tedious but necessary business of blocking each act. I could sense the apprehension of actors accustomed to three months of rehearsal who normally spend the first two or three weeks sitting around a table discussing the meaning and interpretation of each line. The experience of being on their feet with script in hand the second rehearsal day, plus the prospect of an opening night a mere six weeks away, clearly had them worried. I did my best to reassure them but knew that real confidence would only be gained by experience.

I was startled by the absences of the man previously introduced to me as the stage manager. I was informed that, unlike the American system, a stage manager never comes to rehearsals; his job would begin when we got on the stage. (I also sensed that this position on the production staff was much too grand for involvement in the day-to-day preparation of the play.) Additionally, conditioned as I was to the U.S. way of theater and Actor's Equity rules, I was shocked to see the cast join the staff in changing the rehearsal sets and furniture between acts.



The work became very time consuming, since every direction had to be translated by my interpreter, Mr. Sun Zhongshu. But I found that by learning certain phrases in Chinese such as "hold it" and "once again from the top," and utilizing body language and some charade techniques, I was able to bridge many simple communication gaps.

The day-to-day work with the actors was stimulating. Since their training and mine was rooted in the same Stanislavsky tradition, even though they may have different names, the same avenues of approach to performance could be taken. The only time this mutual heritage did not serve came in the second week. Midway in Act Three, Anna, in an impulsive moment of passion toward Matt Burke, takes his head in both her hands and holds his face close to hers, staring into his eyes. Then she kisses him full on the lips. I had long been aware that this moment would be a problem, as kissing is never done on a Chinese stage; but I was not prepared for the amount of embarrassed giggles that greeted my attempts to stage it. Suddenly I felt as if I were directing a 6th grade play instead of mature professionals. The solution to the problem finally lay in the fact that we were doing a Chinese adaptation. Not only is kissing never done on stage; it would never be done to a lover by a daughter in front of her father, no matter what her history might be. To have staged the kiss, even if I had been able to triumph over the awkwardness and achieve a modicum of realism, would so have shocked and embarrassed the audience as to distort the rest of the act. In consultation with Huang and with Madam Teng Yan, who was now my associate director, I concluded that a passionate embrace would serve the same dramatic function and achieve O'Neill's aim without creating a Chinese theatrical cause célèbre and losing the focus on the play itself. (I should add that throughout the entire rehearsal period I never felt censored in any way and was always given a free hand. But in this case I felt that insisting on a kiss would have been a hollow victory at the expense of the scene, the act and possibly the play.)

During the second week I began to feel pressure from some of the production staff to replace Xue Shan, the young actor playing the Cantonese sailor. They felt he was too stiff and melodramatic, an opinion I tended to share, but I had cast him over others because of a quality of raw power he brought to the role which I felt could be molded to serve the play. Like producers everywhere, my sponsors were beginning to worry about the venture's success, and I began to feel a bit as though I were in an out-of-town try-out prior to Broadway. This situation was exacerbated by some of the paying observers who, I learned, had said that "George White obviously isn't a good director because he can't make a bad actor better." Rather than prematurely admit defeat, cause the actor a tremendous loss of face, and undermine the morale of the ensemble, I decided to wait two more days, spend separate time coaching him after hours, and only then, if necessary, fire him if he did not improve. His basic problem was inexperience and nervousness, and after a day's special work and attention we began to notice a marked improvement. By the second Saturday morning when we held a first run-through for invited guests, he had progressed sufficiently to convince us all that there would probably be no need to make a change.

During the third week, the actors became much more confident about working in our limited time frame and seemed daily to be more flexible, relaxed and willing to experiment. One vestige of their tradition which would occasionally creep in was the tendency toward large-scale melodramatic acting. (In all fairness, one must also acknowledge that O'Neill himself grew up in this tradition. Though his talent transcended it, the element which saves a great deal of O'Neill's early works is their overwhelming emotional power, and it takes constant vigilance not to spill over into melodrama at certain moments.)

Throughout the rehearsals we kept trying to enhance the Chinese quality of the adaptation by adding bits of business. One came in the first act. When Anna sees her father for the first time in 15 years, she takes off a bracelet which her mother had given her for identification. This old custom helped to enhance the Chinese aura. The third Saturday morning run-through moved the invited visitors to tears. My worry now was how to sustain the momentum and maintain freshness with three more weeks to go.

At the beginning of the fourth week I was told after a rehearsal that the actors wanted a special meeting with me. Such an unusual request made me nervous, so I pressed for an

explanation of the problem, if any, and was told that they felt that they were having scene problems they did not know how to solve and that they couldn't understand the schedule of run-throughs set for the rest of the week. It distressed and annoyed me that these concerns had not been expressed to me during rehearsal and that I was getting the information third-hand. I therefore determined to have it out with the principals the next morning at the beginning of rehearsal.

We met in the director's sitting room. When I asked the four, as calmly as I could, what they wanted to meet about, I was greeted by perplexed faces and confusion. It turned out that they had not requested a meeting at all; it had been an idea of one of the producers, based on the fact that one of the observers had told my Chris that he was very moved by the Saturday run-through but thought that one place in the first act could be a bit better. This had become a "whisper-down-the-line" situation and had been blown out of all proportion.

Only then did I learn that traditionally, immediately after run-throughs at which there are observers, the director asks for their critical comments. As I had not done so, one of them gave *his* comment directly to the *actor*. The prospect of a group of observers all adding their comments en masse in the mid-rehearsal weeks was so appalling that I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I did, however, give the cast a lecture about the dangers of listening to any critical observations which had not been filtered through the director. Though the meeting lasted nearly two hours, it gave us all the opportunity to discuss O'Neill's dramaturgy as well. In essence, what had begun as a confrontation on my part became a valuable event that welded us much closer together and removed any remaining barriers between the "American director" and a "Chinese cast."

The remainder of the week was spent running through the entire play in the mornings and working on specific scenes in the afternoon. By the fourth week's final run-through I was satisfied that the cast had a sense of the play's entirety and had begun to set their performances.

I had always been extremely pleased with Ma Shu Yun's grasp of the title role, but was delighted with the way Bao Guo An, as her father, grew in the last ten days. He had been the most intimidated by the speed of working and seemed stiff and unbending at first; but he finally got his professional footing, and it became a delight to watch him discover with me the various levels of character in the old sailor. Xue Shan, the young Cantonese suitor, made continued progress as he began to relax. I also found that he would respond to such analogies as telling him to treat his first meeting with Anna on the barge's deck as delicately as he would were he reeling in a fish, or giving him external images. In the third act, for instance, telling him to worry about wrinkling his brand new blue suit served to restrain just enough his tendency to fling himself around the set too much.

All week long one could sense the growing excitement in Beijing. Daily, the streets became more and more bedecked with flowers and banners and the main buildings and monuments in Tien an Men Square were outlined in lights. Not for us, of course: this was all in preparation for the 35th anniversary celebration which was to be a three-day observance of the People's Republic's founding. I was glad that the holiday came when it did, as I began to sense a slight staleness creeping into the rehearsal performances due to the need for the adrenaline that only an audience can inspire.

The National Day Celebration was one of the most memorable events I've ever experienced. Not only were there banquets, fireworks and spectacular parades; but the sense of pride, joy and enthusiasm emanating from the people was absolutely genuine and exciting to witness. Hotel rooms were at such a premium, though, that my American colleagues had to delay their arrivals till afterward.

The first to arrive was Ian Calderone. He toured the theater and was introduced to the Chinese system of lighting--controls on the apron of the stage where the electrician can see the action, not unlike a prompter's box at a western opera house. Ian was amused and slightly dismayed to discover that in China, as in the West, theater architects tend to be ignorant of the practical necessities of theatrical production and thus, though the theater was new, certain problems such as lighting positions were age old.

Ming Cho Lee arrived shortly after Ian and we now had our group together for the first time. (Patricia Zipprodt's schedule did not permit her to return for the opening.) Ming was struck by the proficiency of the scene painting and the way in which the Chinese scenic artists and technicians had faithfully rendered his set. The actual construction was behind schedule because of limited shop space and the involvement of many of the technicians in building the elaborate floats for the National Day Parade. An additional reason was a drop in personnel: all workers who had given blood during a recent blood drive were paid extra money and given five days off!

I found that the three-day holiday vacation had been beneficial to the cast; after it, they launched into the difficult technical rehearsal period with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

The costumes were now mostly completed, Ming became Pat Zipprodt's surrogate eyes, and we were all pleased with the integrity to her designs. The one area which needed attention was making the clothing look old and worn. Any frustrations at the theater itself revolved around the fact that the famous Chinese compartmentalized bureaucracy extends to play production; it was often difficult to sort out who or what department was in charge of what.

My wife Betsy arrived at the beginning of the week, completing the American contingent. The Theater Association had waited for this to give a welcoming banquet at the famous Fang Shen Restaurant, set in the old imperial kitchens. This was scheduled for noon, with rehearsal slated for 3:00 p.m.

After the banquet we arrived at the theater to find that the large second-act barge set, which had been constructed in the alley beside the theater, was too large to fit through the loading doors and would have to be cut apart and reassembled on stage. Determined not to lose any more rehearsal time, I decided to rehearse on the set in the alley while the neighborhood looked on.

On our way to the theater, the morning before the last technical rehearsal, Ian and I were startled to recognize one of the stage hands bicycling *away* from the theater. When we arrived at the building we found it virtually deserted. Everyone, we learned, was at a meeting forced by the stage crew, who had refused to work. Ming, Ian and I were terribly concerned that we had in some way overstepped our bounds and had precipitated the action by perhaps pushing too hard or being insensitive to some issues. But we were assured that the situation had been developing over a long period of time. Just before lunch the problem seemed to have been resolved and people began to filter in, but we had lost the morning except for some minimal lighting work. The evening's technical rehearsal was the casualty of the morning's "job action." A group of very tired actors stumbled through an extremely ragged and frustrating series of missed cues, incomplete scenery and inadequate props and set dressing. Inevitably the specter of opening night four days away loomed menacingly over the proceedings.

On the day of dress rehearsal, the crew attempted to make up for lost time, but the "dress" itself was punctuated by backstage hammerings and noise, and follow spot operators talking back and forth among themselves on their newly acquired walkie-talkies. I was astonished at the actors' fantastic concentration in the face of so much general disturbance. I myself was so distracted by the technical problems and shortcomings that I had difficulty assessing the work as a whole.

The first public preview was not much better than the dress rehearsal. The curtain opened on a backdrop so badly hung that it looked like an old bed sheet; and during the Mat-Chris struggle, a bottle fell off a shelf and rolled to the edge of the orchestra pit. The actors' performances were uneven; throughout the night, cues were missed, and even the curtain calls were ragged and badly lit. (Additionally, I finally lost my temper when I was told that the sitting room off the orchestra, which I had occasionally used, should not be used for my pre-show actor briefings because it was "reserved for guests." I was startled by what I considered feudalistic class distinction, vehemently protested that "actors are people too," and prevailed. Clearly the tension was getting to everyone.)

The great question now became whether to give everyone the Sunday off or press ahead. I felt that the actors were exhausted and that I risked over-taxing them. Thus, with a pledge that if they were given the day off, all would be completed by the second preview on Monday evening, I decided to risk a holiday.

The gamble paid off. When I arrived at the theater on Monday, I found it a beehive of activity and could detect substantial progress. When I met with the actors that evening, I found them rested and relaxed. The preview went considerably better, and though there were still quite a few problems, I saw a glimmer of hope of salvaging the show and I was nervously optimistic.

Opening day--Eugene O'Neill's birthday--was bright and sunny, and I hoped that this would be prophetic of the "weather" on stage that evening.

I sat literally with fingers crossed as the curtain opened for the first act. Ming's set received applause, a rare thing in China. The opening seemed a bit slow but had the right sort of energy, and by Anna's entrance I began to relax a little. Throughout, my antennae were tuned to the audience reaction; I listened for any shifting in seats, coughing or spitting. There was silence--a clear sign of our having engaged their interest.

The second act went very well. The follow-spot operators, critical to this act, were a bit behind in places, but the excitement of opening seemed to keep them on their toes.

I had split the play into two large acts with the break coming between Acts II and III in order to get the audience out in time to catch transportation home. (Public transit in Beijing stops at 11:00 p.m.)

At intermission we adjourned to the sitting room to host selected visitors for tea, as is traditional with Chinese theater. Everyone seemed excited and enthusiastic, but I still kept my fingers crossed.

Acts III and IV had the proper intensity and I spent them on the edge of my seat wanting to conduct every line and nuance. I personally felt that Anna's big revelation scene in Act III had gone better in some rehearsals, but when I looked around the silent audience and saw tears, I knew that O'Neill's magic for depicting human emotions was reaching them.

My penultimate plateau, the forgiveness scene between Anna and Chris in Act IV, came off as I had hoped. Now, if Anna's swearing her love for Matt on the cross did not bring giggles of embarrassment, I'd be home. I held my breath as he took out his mother's cross and Anna knelt, Buddhist fashion--no giggles, the audience accepted the moment!

At the end of the play no one ran for the exits or their buses; they stayed for the Chinese translation of O'Neill's marvelous "Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time. You can't see where you was going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea--she knows!" (Somehow I know how he felt.)

The resulting applause, the audience standing for the conventional American-type curtain call, filled me with an enormous sense of relief. Suddenly the long six weeks became worth the investment of time, energy, emotion and three years of planning. Throughout the weeks I had felt that this project must not fail; there was too much at stake. And my anxiety had grown in the last ten days as I felt the enormous pressure of professional and personal artistic honor at stake and, by extension, an important element of international cultural exchange. It had to be a success and, thanks to so many contributions from the artists of both societies, we had brought it off!

There was an enthusiastic and joyous onstage reception. The actors all appeared in O'Neill sweatshirts that Betsy and Ian had brought from Waterford. Distinguished Chinese officials, U.S. Embassy personnel and Theater Association officers all joined in the spirited opening night party. The speeches and general celebration closed with all of us raising our glasses in a 96th birthday toast to Eugene O'Neill.

Two weeks later, Betsy and I returned to Beijing after touring China. We were delighted to learn that, though there had been some initial public resistance to the "Chinese version of an American play," the "word of mouth" was such that audiences grew daily. We saw it

the last night before it went into repertory and found that the actors had made additional adjustments on their own to continue to make it more Chinese. I found this a good thing and was delighted that they had taken up the concept and made it their own.

Our last day in Beijing was highlighted by a Sunday brunch given by the marvelous U.S. Cultural Affairs Officer, Leon Slaweki, and his wife Barbara. Here we said our final farewells to all who had shared this theatrical adventure. It was a touching and emotional leave-taking--a fitting finale to the entire experience. I will always treasure the generosity of spirit of my charming Chinese colleagues who, despite the various difficulties and cultural differences, had worked so hard in a joint effort to build a special bridge between our societies.

--George C. White

**O'NEILL ON THE GERMAN-LANGUAGE STAGE.** A review of Ward E. Lewis's *Eugene O'Neill: The German Reception of America's First Dramatist* (Berne: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1984, 211 pp. ISBN 0-8204-0156-0. \$28.95.)

Professor Lewis's work is a valuable contribution to O'Neill studies that does more than its title promises. This 136-page text focuses on O'Neill's plays in Germany. Professor Lewis has adopted an excellent method of presentation which combines discussions of content of plays and their receptions in America and Germany with running comparisons of responses to O'Neill in the two countries. The book contains a goodly number of well-selected quotations from German-language sources which are precious to specialists while perplexing to non-Germanists. However, the English text leaves little of the gist of quotations to the imagination of non-linguists.

Professor Lewis discusses the best-known plays according to the chronology of their productions in Germany. In order to fill in gaps in O'Neill stage history, the author includes outstanding Austrian productions from time to time. One can easily grasp his reasons for confining his focus, yet one can regret that some of the interesting Swiss productions of O'Neill could not be included.

Among several advantages of Lewis's approach, an especially worthwhile result is its demonstration of the emergence of O'Neill from a definitely alienated critical viewpoint to the status of one of the world's major dramatists. One early critic, after seeing *Anna Christie*, said he preferred American automobiles to American drama. The following plays were produced--all without real success--between 1923 and 1928: *Anna Christie*, 1923; *Emperor Jones*, 1924; *The Hairy Ape*, 1924; *Desire Under the Elms*, 1925; *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, 1926; and *The Great God Brown*, 1928. It was not until thirty-five years later that Austrian director Ernst Lothar placed O'Neill among the great dramatists of all time with his claim that "*Mourning Becomes Electra* ... is not only O'Neill's finest play, it is one of the greatest tragedies in world literature" (*Express am Morgen*, 4 May 1963).

The early period of O'Neill on the German-language stage ended, nevertheless, in a victory. The victory, to be sure, was conceded by critics and audiences rather to the actors and the production than to the author. But henceforth Eugene O'Neill was a must for the German repertoire. The play was *Strange Interlude*, and the confluence of forces which led up to this memorable event in Berlin's theatrical history is so remarkable that one ought not to omit it here.

In her all too brief autobiography entitled *Unordentliche Erinnerungen* (Casual Memories), Elisabeth Bergner relates the circumstances of this production. Owing to a bad press after she had played Juliet in Shakespeare's play, she had gone into exile in England. Here she read *Strange Interlude* in the original, then in a rough German translation. She found the role of Nina Leeds irresistible, fell in love with the whole play, and returned to Berlin, script in hand. Under Reinhardt's management of the Deutsches Theater she had signed a contract to play a part in a drama of her own choosing. By her return to Berlin Reinhardt had turned the management of this theater over to Dr. Robert Klein. Bergner wanted to break the contract, but Klein held her to it. She then chose *Strange Interlude* as her option.

But Dr. Klein indignantly refused this choice. Having looked at the script he called the play a mere imitation of Strindberg, an opera by Wagner without the music. "No German audience would sit through it," he said with finality. Bergner's reply in substance was: No play, no contract.

Reluctantly yielding, the theater manager took his revenge. He invited two theater celebrities who shared his view of the O'Neill play to occupy the manager's loge at the premiere for the purpose of disrupting the performance. Bergner writes that in the tensions of the first night she began to hear voices, and laughter where no humor belonged. The theater barely escaped a madhouse scene when Rudolf Forster, who was playing Darrell, suddenly walked downstage and faced the audience in silence until quiet was restored. Thereafter applause stifled the efforts of the two mischief-makers. Next morning the critics tore the play to bits while conceding that Bergner was good and the production by Heinz Hilpert well done. Dr. Klein walked up to Bergner with the remark: "Now are you satisfied?" She assumed the play would be dropped at once. But, just as the manager was reaching this decision, word came from the box office that long lines stretched out into the street. Tickets were selling for a run, and Bergner played the role for seventy-five nights before she left town again. (See *Unordentliche Erinnerungen*. Munich: C. Bertelmann, 1978, pp. 65-68.)

The role of Nina, writes the actress, was "an unforgettable high point in my career." Bergner says the interior monologues, so often panned by critics, contributed immensely to the maturing of her talent. Professor Lewis calls the monologues a "mixed blessing" and praises the judgment of Rudolf Steinboeck, who cut most of them out of the script for his Burg production in Vienna. One regrets that the author could not have seen Keith Hack's recent production with Glenda Jackson and Edward Petherbridge.

Whether or not one agrees with the specific conclusions of Professor Lewis, his book conveys truths about O'Neill's *oeuvre* which his fellow countrymen too often overlook. One of these is the astonishing popularity and prestige of *Mourning Becomes Electra* on the German-language stage. Since O'Neill was banned from National Socialist Germany (1933-1945), Austria was first to produce *Mourning Becomes Electra*, on February 11, 1938--one month before the country was swallowed up by the Hitler regime. This play was chosen to represent American drama within a cycle of plays from different nations. Critical response varied from revulsion to praise. Audience reactions--in part, owing to a brilliant cast--were evidently enthusiastic. One critic notes that ovations lasted almost throughout the intermission, and extended applause marked the final curtain. As Lewis observes, this production is little known, though it represents a milestone in the upward trend of O'Neill's dramatic stature. Josef Gielen, who directed, cut and rewrote Rita Mathias's translation in order to adapt it to his players and to a four-hour performance. The late Ewald Balser took the General Mannon role, while Maria Eis played Lavinia. (Frau Eis had played the title role in *Anna Christie* in 1924.)

After the war, *Mourning Becomes Electra* was freshly translated by Marianne Wentzel, who went on to translate all but the last four plays of O'Neill. The translation and production rights to these were awarded by Carlotta to Oscar Fritz Schuh.

The stage history of O'Neill's plays in translation has to begin in Sweden, the land of August Strindberg. There alone a company of actors over decades has specialized in plays by O'Neill and Strindberg. Karl Ragnar Gierow, formerly manager of the Royal Dramaten in Stockholm, has recorded that this theater produced *Anna Christie*, *Days Without End*, *Strange Interlude*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *Iceman Cometh*, *All God's Chillun*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Long Day's Journey*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *Emperor Jones*, *Hughie*, and *More Stately Mansions* in this sequence. The relevance of Gierow's enthusiasm lies in its carry-over to his German friend, Oscar Fritz Schuh. As Schuh once told the reviewer, he followed closely in Gierow's footsteps in translating and producing the last four O'Neill plays which created the O'Neill "Renaissance" in Germany. A brief listing will illustrate: *A Moon for the Misbegotten* opened at Stockholm in 1953; in Berlin, 1954; *Long Day's Journey* in Stockholm, 1957; in Salzburg, 1957; *Hughie* in Stockholm, 1958; in Salzburg, 1960; *More Stately Mansions* in Stockholm, 1962; in Salzburg, 1965. And regularly, Schuh pointed out, after his first German-language production, the plays went

the rounds of German, Austrian, and sometimes Swiss theaters.

As the American dramatist's stature grew with his late plays, interest in the earlier works increased, says Lewis. And early plays were given better productions. *All God's Chillun* now became a favorite of audiences, stimulating lively discussions of the racial and political problems raised by O'Neill. *Ah, Wilderness!* came into its own with many productions in the sixties; this play was felt to be a genuine representation of a stratum of life in America.

Of O'Neill's major works, only *Ice-man Cometh* has never yet had a truly successful German-language production. A comparison of O'Neill's text with the cut version which was offered by Kurt Hirschfeld in collaboration with Eric Bentley in the fall of 1950 reveals the secret of the play's failure. As Bentley explains in his famous essay, "Trying to Like O'Neill," the two men cut an hour out of *Ice-man*. Bentley assumed that O'Neill's sense of theatrical form clashed with his "repetitious garrulousness." It was therefore the job of the dramaturge to excise the fat and keep the solid flesh--or at least the bone. When this skeleton of the play put audiences to sleep, Bentley made up his mind that it was the dramatist's fault! Hence, though he tried, he found O'Neill wanting. Bentley thinks the untranslatable dialects, the absence of American tough talk, was a great loss. Yet when *Ice-man Cometh* was given a four-and-a-half-hour performance at the Stockholm Dramaten, Tom Olsson tells us ("O'Neill and the Royal Dramatic," in Virginia Floyd's volume, *Eugene O'Neill: A World View*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1979): "The critics were profusely enthusiastic...."

*A Touch of the Poet* was the center of attention at the Salzburg Festival of 1957. Schuh had again found just the right cast: Attila Hörbiger as Cornelius Melody; Adrienne Gessner as Nora; Aglaja Schmidt as Sara; and Marianne Hoppe as Deborah Harford. Schuh once told the writer that *Touch of the Poet* is, of all O'Neill plays, the audience favorite. In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland between 1956 and 1974 it had sixty-nine productions.

If Professor Lewis undertakes a second edition of his book, one hopes he will include the Swiss contribution to the German-language stage through its interesting selection of O'Neill plays. During World War II the Zurich Schauspielhaus was the only theater to produce O'Neill in German. In 1943 *Mourning Becomes Electra* appeared on this stage. The first German-language production of *Marco Millions* was staged at the Basel Stadttheater in May 1945, eleven years before it appeared at the Frankfurt Städtische Bühnen. And of course the excellent, if misguided, 1950 production of *Ice-man Cometh* was also at the Zurich Schauspielhaus.

The one flaw in Professor Lewis's book is in Chapter I where he discusses *Anna Christie* in Berlin from the perspectives of Alfred Kerr and Rudolf Kommer. Discussion of *Anna Christie* has been saved for the latter part of this review in order not to cast a negative light from the start upon this highly readable, highly informative, and serious piece of scholarship. Kerr was disappointed with the production on 9 October 1923, as were most (but not all) of the critics. One reviewer said the play gave Käthe Dorsch (Anna) an opportunity to exhibit all her acting talent. Prof. Horst Frenz is the source of Lewis's statement that Anna shot herself in a sudden *unmotivated* moment. True, this was an inspiration of the young but able director, Fritz Wendhausen, a protégé of Reinhardt; Lengyel had however, developed sufficient motivation for suicide, but had prevented it by a quick reaction of Mat who grabs the pistol. Yet even then Anna's last words in the play are, "Ich will sterben, Mat." (I want to die, Mat.)

Another unfounded statement of Lewis is on p. 20: "The entire second act of the original work [*Anna Christie*] was deleted in the Berlin production." The opening and early part of Act II in O'Neill is almost identical with Lengyel's text. But Lengyel combines O'Neill's Act II with Act III; he also deletes about half of Mat's stage-Irish boastings, and the rescue scene is treated in retrospect rather than as an immediate event.

Rudolf Kommer, a hanger-on and employee of Reinhardt, was a gifted linguist and a brilliant conversationalist. Alexander Woolcott wrote him up as a human curiosity in the *New Yorker*, IX (March 18, 1933), pp. 20-23. Kommer was a disappointed author and translator.

In his delightful but utterly misleading article "Eugene O'Neill in Europe," Kommer was spitting venom at the established Hungarian dramatist Melchior (*Menyhért* was his original name in Hungarian) Lengyel when he accused the latter of a Berlitz acquaintance with German and English.\* In a letter of February 20, 1972, Liddy-Ann Lengyel, wife of the author, wrote the reviewer that she had translated a text provided by her husband, who had "an excellent dramatic sense and was so well known in German and Central European theatrical circles that he could secure the first productions of an O'Neill play." She states further that the Lengyel version of *Anna Christie* was obtained in New York during a visit while *Emperor Jones* was on Broadway, though she could not recall the name of O'Neill's agent. This cancels Lewis's suggestion that Lengyel smuggled a script of *Anna* out of the country. True, there were numerous condemnations of the translation. Translators of plays are rarely popular among critics. Oscar Fritz Schuh, himself a translator, has remarked that the sure sign of a good translation is when the critics do not mention it; if it becomes the subject of discussion, it is flawed. There are no data available for many productions of *Anna* in the early years; however, the Mykenae Verlag has data for the period 1954 to 1976. Lengyel's version was used through 1960. The play ran intermittently for three seasons, 1954 to 1957. In 1956/57, *Anna* was performed 40 times at the Zimmertheater in Hamburg. In that season (when *Long Day's Journey* had brought with it an O'Neill vogue), the play was performed seventy-four times in four theaters. Regarding the quality of the translation, Walter Tappe, who directed *Anna* at the Jürgen-Fehling theater in Berlin, 1945, told the reviewer that he found the version quite adequate; he may have changed three or four words, as is normal, while rehearsing the play. Dr. Tappe was unaware that O'Neill's published text is very different from, and some five thousand words longer than, Lengyel's.

Both text and footnotes show careful proofreading. Yet, as usual, a few solecisms have crept in. It is a pleasure to note the accuracy of names and language in the German quotations. One can imagine that the Swiss printers assisted in this. Yet on p. 186, Note 4, one reads "*das Vehemenz*." On p. 162, Note 1, *Edward Balsler* should read *Ewald Balsler*; on p. 85, *Alice Bradley* should read *Alice Brady*; and on the same page Earle Lattimore should read Earle Larimore.

--James P. Pettegrove

#### BOOK REVIEWS, LONG AND SHORT

1. C.W.E. BIGSBY, *A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN DRAMA. VOLUME ONE: 1900-1940*. Cambridge University Press, 1982. ix + 342 pp. \$39.50 (\$14.95 paperback). ISBN 0 521 24227 4 (0 521 27116 9, paperback).

The illustration on the cover of Volume One's dust jacket--a photo of the 1931 Theatre Guild production of *Mourning Becomes Electra*--attests to O'Neill's dominant position in the first four decades of modern American drama, which truly began, as does Bigsby's study, with the pioneering ventures of the Provincetown Players both on Cape Cod and in New York, heralding the tardy arrival of the experimental theatre movement on American shores. Wisely eschewing an examination of every strand in the forty-year tapestry--something that could hardly be done in depth in 342 pages--he concentrates on "the major figures and theatre groups of the period." But the wisdom of his selective approach is somewhat undermined by the overriding thesis that determined what would be selected. It is Bigsby's thesis, emphatically announced in a two-page preface, that since a nation's drama reflects the milieu around it, and since the twentieth-century American environment is "largely urban and industrial," its drama's "central theme ... became alienation," its "dominant image ... the loss of space: physical, emotional and moral." Such a thesis, while unimpeachable in its general accuracy, leads to omissions

\* The Kommer article, like the one by Eric Bentley earlier cited, is most readily available in Oscar Cargill et al., *O'Neill and His Plays* (New York: New York University Press, 1966). Kommer's article appears on pp. 266-269, Bentley's on pp. 331-345.



that belie the encyclopedic aura of the book's title. The American musical, for instance, which had reached some sophistication and respectability by the 1930s and is generally cited as one of the nation's few original contributions to world theatre, is, because it doesn't fit the thematic pattern, virtually ignored. In short, those who seek a comprehensive survey of *all* facets of American drama 1900-1940 had better look elsewhere. But they will miss a lot, because what Bigsby *does* cover, he covers extremely well.

Two chapters will be of particular interest to O'Neillians. The first, "Provincetown: the birth of twentieth-century American drama" (pp. 1-35), traces the rise and subsequent fall of the Provincetown Players, whose communal endeavors "established the theatre for the first time in America as a serious focus of artistic activity" (p. 20). Bigsby describes O'Neill's importance to the group but reserves his major attention (and praise) for the plays of Susan Glaspell (pp. 25-35), whose work he clearly prefers. One soon comes to expect the regular contrasts between Glaspell's greater "control," her "natural reticence which charges language and gesture with a significance the more powerful because of their subtlety" (p. 27), and O'Neill's "crude metaphysics" and melodramatic excesses, "a weakness which dogged [his] career" (p. 18). And the basis for the partiality eventually becomes apparent: "Susan Glaspell is less concerned with elemental battles between the self and its environment than with differing versions of the social ideal" (p. 29). Since Bigsby, too, prefers the social to the "elemental," Glaspell wins hands down. But it must be admitted that when O'Neill writes as Bigsby wishes--when he treats the theme of alienation and constriction--his power is acknowledged (e.g., p. 16); and the study of several of Glaspell's major plays supports the author's contention that "the success of the Provincetown Players owed almost as much to her as it did to O'Neill" (p. 35). He has done more than engage in a kind of trendy reverse discrimination, and it is to be hoped that his pages on Glaspell will aid in her rescue from the benign neglect she has suffered for so long.

The second chapter, "Eugene O'Neill" (pp. 36-119), is dense but rewarding--especially at second and third read. Bigsby relaxes his announced selectivity enough to make extended comments about four one acts and sixteen full-length plays. (Of the major long works, only *Anna Christie*, *Marco Millions* and *Ah, Wilderness!* are excluded from coverage.) And a number of the comments are telling, as in his denial of grandeur to Eben and Abbie at the end of *Desire Under the Elms* (p. 45):

There is no real sense in which they have won a victory over themselves. Their selflessness is simply a mirror image of their earlier selfishness. It is a total reversal unaccompanied by any sense of moral or spiritual value. One obsession is exchanged for another.

And I would have accepted his deflation of the principals in *Beyond the Horizon*--

The failure of the characters derives not from the greatness of their dreams, or even a courage with which they tackle a task imposed by fate. It is a consequence of their capitulation to biological impulse, of their capacity for self-destruction, of their wilful abandonment of dreams for immediate satisfactions of one kind or another.... The game is so thoroughly rigged and so precipitately enacted that the concept of moral authority, of a resistant self, of a courageous challenging of the determined, makes no sense" (pp. 52-53)--

had I not recently read the essay by Shelly Regenbaum that appeared in the last issue of the Newsletter (Winter 1984, pp. 2-8), especially its paragraph (the second on page 6) in support of Robert Mayo.

Bigsby is fair enough to relinquish his predilection for social drama in assessing O'Neill's achievement, which earns about equal amounts of censure and praise. Among the weaknesses he cites are melodramatic excess, imaginative crudity, sentimentality, "an undisciplined intelligence" (p. 40), and the tendency, especially when under the influence of Freud, to spell out motives too fully. Among the saving virtues are the attention O'Neill paid to settings--especially in *The Emperor Jones*, whose *mise en*

*scène* gave it "a dynamic force which no other American play had attempted" (p. 19); and in *All God's Chillun*, where "the *mise en scène* becomes an actor in the drama" (p. 58)-- and his worthy goal of "discovering a way in which the human spirit could survive the rigours of a painful and disillusioning life" (p. 41). Sometimes an O'Neill trait becomes a virtue or a vice depending on the impetus behind it:

When he strained for poetic effect the result could often be bathetic. But when he engaged the experiences of his own family life, or when he recalled lyrical moments from his own life at sea, he created sustained moments of poetry in the theatre which have not been equalled since. (p. 41)

In the long-standing debate between champions of the early plays and those who prefer the later, Bigsby, as that last quotation might suggest, clearly sides with the second group. And he cites two points in the arc of O'Neill's career where improvement is most noticeable: *Mourning Becomes Electra*, which reveals an advance in method ("he has learned to subordinate theatrical devices [such as the mask, the aside, and the stylized soliloquy] to psychological needs"--p. 84); and *The Iceman Cometh*, where Bigsby finds a concomitant thematic advance--an answer to the problem of alienation that had previously eluded him:

The truth, which he had searched for first in religion, then in anarchism and socialism and subsequently in a Nietzschean sense of eternal recurrence, he found, finally, in the simple fact of human relationship. (p. 90)

Such generalizations abound, as they must when a major writer is to be assessed in 80-or-so pages. Sometimes the necessities of compression result in a density that defies comprehension (at least mine, even at *fourth* read), as in the following:

The touch of the poet, which is the mark of so many of his characters, betrays a desire to reshape the world which is equally the origin of that evasion of the real which is at times the essence of their self-betrayal. (p. 96)

There, I fear, too many whiches spoiled the broth. But more often the generalizing remarks are as lucid as they are cogent.

Bigsby may overemphasize O'Neill's "absurdist vision" (e.g., pp. 42, 43, 45, 64, 88 and 115), but his discussion of Melville as "O'Neill's real ancestor" is very persuasive, as is his delineation of the effects of his "double inheritance" (p. 36)-- the melodrama of his father's theatre, and "the naturalistic tradition of Crane, Zola and London."

Bigsby, given his preferences, cannot award consistently high marks to a self-conscious experimenter who lacked "lightness of touch" (p. 85) and "had no very clear social view" (p. 117). But he is fair enough to conclude by noting that *Iceman* and *Long Day's Journey* are "not merely two of O'Neill's best plays but two of the best plays to have emerged from America" (p. 119).

--Frederick C. Wilkins

2. JAMES J. MARTINE, ed., *CRITICAL ESSAYS ON EUGENE O'NEILL*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984. 214 pp. \$28.50, cloth. ISBN 0 8161 8683 9. (A volume in Hall's "Critical Essays on American Literature" series, James Nagel, General Editor.)

Professor Martine's handsome volume is a worthy addition to the group of anthologies of O'Neill criticism listed on page 29 of the Summer-Fall 1984 issue of the Newsletter. It shares with Virginia Floyd's collection, *Eugene O'Neill: A World View*, a feature that makes it unique in the series of which it is a part: all of its contents are new. So purchasers need not fear any duplication of material they already have, and Professor Martine is to be congratulated for choosing essays of such consistently high quality. Very few deliver less than they promise; indeed, several offer considerably more than their titles suggest. (Since the entire table of contents was listed on page 47 of the Spring 1984 issue, I will not repeat all titles in the survey that follows.)

The book is essentially tripartite: an extensive bibliographical introduction by the editor (pp. 1-31); the first complete printing of O'Neill's letters and telegrams to Dudley Nichols (only two ephemeral cards are omitted), informatively introduced and scrupulously annotated by Jackson Bryer (pp. 33-55); and a baker's dozen of essays, fairly evenly divided between general subjects and studies of individual plays (pp. 55-206). The concluding index--a wise addition--permits one to locate widely scattered references to individual plays and persons. It does not include characters' names or general topics (like naturalism, romanticism, or language); but there is a limit to what one can demand, and the editor has performed his duties with thoroughness and care.

Professor Martine's introduction, a mini-survey of O'Neill publication and criticism, covers the high points (and low) in the critical record, and does so in such a jaunty way that the tour is a consistent delight. Omissions are inevitable, given the mass of material that has been published on O'Neill, but a tremendous amount is included and judiciously evaluated. He highlights major achievements, such as "Eugene O'Neill's Aesthetic of the Drama," in which "Paul Voelker has worked a wonder in piecing together from O'Neill's letters and interviews a coherent aesthetic of dramaturgy" (p. 19); and he is not averse to castigating the playwright's more cavalier detractors:

The first sentence of Max Wylie, "Aspects of E.G.O. (Eugene Gladstone O'Neill)," ... is "Not much that is dependable has been written about Eugene O'Neill." If that were true, it would have remained so twelve pages later. Appreciative of the talent, Wylie is vicious in his portrayal of the man; not even Lytton Strachey could have done this: there is no "and all," only warts. Conversational and sensational, this is "scholarship" as it might appear in *The National Enquirer*. The last two sentences of the essay are meant to sum up O'Neill's life: "But isn't it interesting? And wasn't it awful?" The sentences actually sum up Wylie's lecture. (pp. 15-16)

He wisely eschews any favoritism between the two major O'Neill biographies, rightly noting that "a giant of the proportions of O'Neill deserved two such comprehensive biographies" (p. 6). If one wishes for more, it is only to savor longer Professor Martine's company: he wears his erudition with panache.

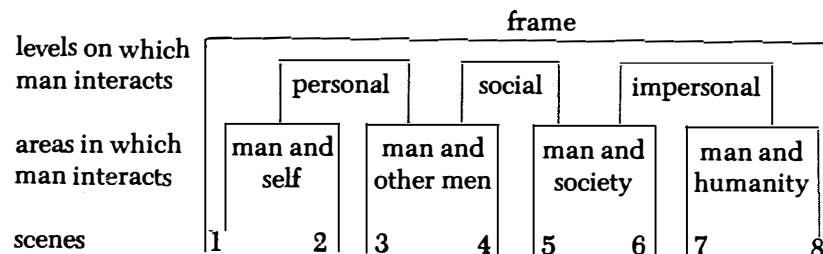
O'Neill's nineteen epistles to Dudley Nichols, which appear here for the first time, were given by the latter to Yale University along with a three-page memoir, "Concerning Enclosed Eugene O'Neill Letters," which Nichols wrote two months before his death in January, 1960. O'Neill had been grateful for Nichols' favorable review of the 1928 Broadway production of *Strange Interlude* and his introduction to the Modern Library edition of *The Emperor Jones* and *The Straw* (also in 1928), though the two did not meet or correspond until much later--except for a brief introduction in 1927 that Nichols recalled but O'Neill had apparently forgotten. The letters, spanning the years 1932-1949, trace the growing warmth and intimacy in what Nichols called "the most important friendship of my life," highlighted by his work as screenwriter on two films of O'Neill's work, *The Long Voyage Home* and *Mourning Becomes Electra* (in 1940 and 1947 respectively). The letters are, as Bryer notes, "a valuable supplement to the biographies," as they "allow us to hear O'Neill in his own words on a variety of subjects" (p. 36).

Among those subjects, in addition to the film projects, are several that contributed to the somber mood of the playwright's last years. Not at first. The second letter (May 29, 1932), though it expresses bewilderment at "the broken rhythms of this time" (echoes of a more famous pronouncement), is optimistic about a more positive philosophic stance in future plays (O'Neill was then at work on *Days Without End*):

I am changing inside me, ... and even the most positive affirmative Nay! of my past work no longer satisfies me. So I am groping after a real, true Yea! in the play I'm now starting--a very old Yea, it is true, in essence, but so completely forgotten in all its inner truth that it might pass for brand new. Whether I will be able to carry the writing of it up to Yea! remains to be seen. (p. 38)

But by 1940, financial difficulties and America's steady drift toward involvement in the world war halted any hopes of optimism, either personal or philosophical. The money worries were comparatively minor, and the "Gaelic curse" he creates for the British withholders of royalties is an incendiary delight (p. 40). But the "enraged despondency" he felt at the war news, which moved him to defer production of *The Iceman Cometh*, was dead serious and deep: "ever since the May [1940] debacle started in Europe I have been in a thoroughly demoralized state of the bitterest pessimism" (p. 44). And after the war, the steady increase of his physical disability precluded any return to hopefulness. Witness the end of the last letter (March 20, 1949), which may be the last ever written in his own hand: "Well--I am no better--I am worse. No play is being written--and no play will be produced." A sad finale to a set of revealing letters that are, by themselves, worth the publisher's asking price. Like the volume of letters to Kenneth Macgowan, they whet one's appetite for the fuller collection of O'Neill's correspondence now being readied by Professor Bryer and Travis Bogard.

Five of the thirteen essays treat general subjects, although the dividing line is sometimes hard to draw. This is especially true of Lisa M. Schwert's "Blueprint for the Future: *The Emperor Jones*" (pp. 72-77), which begins with a diagram of that play's episodic structure (reproduced below) and then suggests how O'Neill later focused more thoroughly on



the three levels of "interaction" (personal, social and impersonal) that are sketchily traversed in its eight scenes. Unfortunately, four pages are hardly enough to treat the one play in any depth, let alone say much in detail about six subsequent works, so the essay itself, by saying too little about too much, remains itself little more than a blueprint. The other four general essays are more thorough in their coverage. Frank R. Cunningham delineates the elements of "Romantic affirmation" in six early plays (1918-1924), refuting the traditional naturalistic interpretation of *Beyond the Horizon*, and offering the first extended analysis of O'Neill's adaptation of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner." Carl E. Rollyson, Jr. traces the dramatic results of "O'Neill's preoccupation with self-transcendence, with the way to be himself and more than himself" (p. 124), a concern that culminated in *Lazarus Laughed*, which receives extended and illuminating comment. B. S. Field, Jr., following the pioneering lead of Jean Chothia in the study of O'Neill's language, confronts and explains the O'Neillian penchant for vagueness, differentiates among the various kinds of vagueness (ambivalence vs. the expression of limitlessness, etc.), and shows how, in O'Neill's "struggle to achieve a style, vagueness was both an enemy against him and a weapon for him" (p. 189). (If some of his points remain elusive, I am sure the fault is mine: Field cannot be accused of vagueness!) And Susan Tuck makes a detailed and persuasive case for O'Neill's "considerable influence" on the fiction of William Faulkner. There may be "no real 'proof' that *Light in August* was inspired by *All God's Chillun*, that *The Sound and the Fury* owed its technique to *Strange Interlude*, or that *As I Lay Dying* was written with *The Emperor Jones* in mind" (p. 205); but the relative dates of composition are extremely suggestive, and Professor Tuck draws the lines of influence with irrefutable precision.

The eight essays on individual plays comprise a marvelous demonstration of the myriad ways in which O'Neill's works can be approached and studied. Steven E. Colburn shows how, for all their surface differences, the four *Glencairn* one-acts are united by a common theme--human illusion----and a common pattern, "the unsuccessful struggle of Man against the tragic mechanism of his fate" (p. 56)--that fate being, not the supernatural one of

traditional tragedy, but the combination of material, psychological, social and natural forces. Peter Egri, in what is perhaps the finest essay in the volume, shows how the episodic structure of *The Hairy Ape* is held together by "a unifying principle ... the dramatic presentation of alienation" (p. 104). (Anyone who still believes that O'Neill was a failure at language need only read Professor Egri's analysis of some of that play's evocative stage directions--pp. 79 and 84-85, especially--to discover what a word master he really was.) June Schlueter and Arthur Lewis, tracing Ephraim Cabot's relationship to cows and stones, show how one of the major battles in *Desire Under the Elms* is within Cabot himself. Joseph S. Tedesco offers a Jungian interpretation of *The Great God Brown*, to counter the traditional Nietzschean one (the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy) to which O'Neill's own explanations of the play gave rise; and Ellen Kimbel, doing the reverse with equal persuasiveness, defends O'Neill's own claims about *Ah, Wilderness!* against those who find it trivial and those others who find it reflective of the playwright's more tragic works.

Michael Manheim, in a study of *The Iceman Cometh*, continues his fruitful examination of O'Neill's ultimate transcendence of the melodrama that dominated his early plays despite his filial and dramaturgic antipathy to the genre. In *Iceman*, melodrama abounds in the characters' stories of their past lives--tales rife with melodrama's two staples, intrigue and "the simple polar opposition of good and evil" (p. 145)--but is transcended or "displaced" by ambiguity--the stories leave it unclear whether each was the protagonist or the antagonist of his own saga--and by contrast with the "unmelodramatized present" that they all share. The audience, like the characters, is left with "an image of existence in flux" (p. 157)--something far beyond the cozy simplicities of melodrama. Steven F. Bloom shows the clinical accuracy in O'Neill's picture of drug and alcohol dependence in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, especially the contrast between the "romantic myth of intoxication" and "the realistic symptoms and effects of alcoholism" (p. 159), and "the hopeless cycle of guilt and blame that defines [the Tyrone's] collective and individual plights" (p. 169). The only flaw in an otherwise splendid study concerns the assertion that the play provides "sufficient evidence ... that the Tyrone men are alcoholics" (p. 167). This is shown to be true of James and Jamie, but is it also true of Edmund? The evidence may be there, but I couldn't find it. Laurin Roland Porter suggests that *Hughie*, a "condensed version" of *The Iceman Cometh*, is not as optimistic in its denouement as some have claimed; but to call the characters' symbiotic pipe dream "devastating" seems to me to be veering too far in the opposite direction. Still, her analysis is otherwise thorough and sound.

One could hardly ask for more in a book of 214 pages. *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill* offers many fresh insights and merits the attention of all O'Neillians.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

BEONGCHEON YU, *THE GREAT CIRCLE: AMERICAN WRITERS AND THE ORIENT*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983. 266 pp. \$22.95, cloth. ISBN 0-8143-1737-5.

Professor Yu's book is a welcome addition to the burgeoning study of American literary Orientalism--specifically, in this case, the influence on selected American writers from Emerson to the present of the great religio-philosophical traditions of India, China and Japan. The title is taken from Crèvecoeur's 1782 pronouncement that "Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle." And the book makes abundantly clear both the breadth and the depth of America's literary response to the Orient. The writers studied, in biographic and thematic detail, are Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Fenollosa, Hearn, Babbitt, O'Neill, Eliot, Pound, Salinger, Kerouac and Snyder. The biographical approach is particularly appropriate, as a number of the writers changed in attitude or direction during the course of their careers.

Of the three traditions, India's seems to have been the most pervasive, justifying Thoreau's memorable comment (quoted on p. 45),

As our domestic fowls are said to have their original in the wild pheasant of India, so our domestic thoughts have their prototypes in the thoughts of her philosophers.

But all three play their part in the exciting saga that Professor Yu limns--the compulsive, persistent drive of the Western mind to regain the completeness it has not had since the era of Plato, after which the "two halves of human experience" (p. 137) were divided between East and West. Writer after writer speaks of the two halves, though they label them differently (reason vs. emotion, action vs. contemplation, utility vs. beauty, etc.), and of the need for their symbiotic reunification. Babbitt, for instance, who suggests that "the half truth of the East may serve as a corrective to the half truth of the West, and may bring to pass that activity in repose which someone has defined as the classical ideal" (p. 133). And Fenolossa, who, a year earlier (1898), spoke of the fusion of the Western knowledge of means and the Eastern knowledge of ends as "a sacred issue for which Time has waited." This drive may have been particularly dominant in America because when Columbus discovered it he was searching for a route to the Orient. And the works that Professor Yu surveys are some of the literary contributions to (in his phrase) "America's collective endeavors to complete Columbus's passage to India" (p. 227), and thereby to "finish the great circle." Two circles, in fact: both geographic and psychic.

Sometimes, as with Whitman, it is difficult to draw the line between fortuitous parallels and direct influences; "Whitman's mysticism complicates his Orientalism" (p. 58) because of the "difficulty of detaching the Oriental from the shadowy depths of his psyche" (p. 62). And sometimes Professor Yu must prove, against authors' disclaimers, that they knew more about Eastern religion and philosophy than they would publicly admit: this is true of both Whitman and O'Neill. But the result is irrefutable proof of the pervasiveness of Orientalism in American thought and art.

As with many such books, the reader may learn more about figures outside his particular field of study than about those he knew already. I doubt that the student of O'Neill will gain much from Professor Yu's study of the Orientalism in seven plays--*Beyond the Horizon*, *The Fountain*, *Marco Millions*, *Lazarus Laughed*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Iceman* and *Long Day's Journey*--that he had not already learned in previous studies by Alexander, Carpenter and Robinson, forerunners whose importance he rightly acknowledges. But the O'Neill chapter (pp. 141-158) has the dual values of showing O'Neill's place in the larger picture of American literary Orientalism and of reinforcing a number of earlier insights. Particularly valuable is the emphasis that Oriental influences continued to the end of O'Neill's career, even though "the Orient seems to disappear altogether" after *Electra* in 1931, when historical and autobiographical subjects supplant the philosophical and religious emphases of the earlier plays. The later O'Neill's "readiness to strip away any veil, any illusion" (p. 153) constitutes "a process of unmasking [that] can best be called ... Buddhistic" (p. 154), and that can suggest at least a mutedly affirmative note even at the end of *Iceman*:

more than any other Oriental religion, Buddhism insists on its doctrine of maya, viewing life primarily as a living hell--where man clings to his illusions and delusions to the last, even when death comes--unless he attains his nirvana. From this Buddhist point of view, there is nothing especially pessimistic about *The Iceman Cometh*. To recognize life as it is means a first step toward enlightenment or release. (p. 154)

Even more positive are the results of communal unmasking among the male Tyrones in *Long Day's Journey*--especially Edmund's remembered vision, which Professor Yu tellingly relates to similar visions, remembered or illusory, in *The Hairy Ape*, *The Fountain* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*.

Demonstrating a familiarity with all that has previously been written on his general subject, and writing with a lively and evocative style that makes the survey as entertaining as it is enlightening, Professor Yu has succeeded admirably in his chosen task of assimilation and amalgamation. His book proves the aptness of the ancient maxim *Ex oriente lux* to describe a major leitmotif in American letters.

4. WINIFRED L. FRAZER, *MABEL DODGE LUHAN*. (Vol. 477 in the Twayne's United States Authors Series.) Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1984. x + 126 pp. \$17.95, cloth. ISBN 0-8057-7418-1.

The past year has been a good one for Mabel Dodge Luhan (1879-1962). Her tempestuous affair with John Reed, semi-fictionalized in the one-acter "Constancy" by Neith Boyce, which had been part of the Provincetown Players' first bill in 1915, was brought back to the stage by the Provincetown Playhouse. Lois Palken Rudnick provided a full-scale biography, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds* (University of New Mexico Press, 384 pp., \$19.95). And Professor Frazer has enriched the Twayne series with a more compact study in which Mrs. Luhan's adventurous experiences and important associations emerge from a chronological survey of her six volumes of memoirs. Devotees will doubtless want the Rudnick work as well, but the casually curious will find more than enough in Professor Frazer's pages. For newcomers to the legendary hostess and enthusiast, this is an excellent place to begin. Between its helpful opening chronology and the informatively annotated eight-page bibliography with which it concludes, the path from Buffalo, New York, to Taos, New Mexico, is skillfully traced and studded with evocative passages from the four-volume *Intimate Memories*, *Lorenzo in Taos* and *Winter in Taos*.

To those who, knowing only the legend, wonder why Mabel Dodge merits inclusion in the Twayne series, Professor Frazer provides multiple answers. As a "collector of celebrities" (p. 26), she knew, encouraged and inspired many of this century's cultural leaders, who flocked to her salons in Florence, on Fifth Avenue and in the New Mexico desert. As Professor Frazer explains, "her ability to provide an atmosphere in which others could converse seems to have attracted the prominent and the interesting to her homes, wherever she lived" (p. 32). As a "collectible" in her own right, she figured prominently in the plays, stories, novels and memoirs of others--among them, Witter Bynner, Neith Boyce, Max Eastman, Arthur Rubinstein, Gertrude Stein, Carl Van Vechten and D. H. Lawrence. (She appears as a character in two novels and three stories by Lawrence.)

But it is of course achievement as an author, rather than as catalyst or model, that really earns one a place in the Twayne series; and Professor Frazer offers abundant evidence of her subject's literary skill. In *Background* (1933), the first volume of her *Intimate Memories*, Mrs. Luhan achieves a "skillful evocation of the past" (p. 1)--her own well-to-do past as a girl in Victorian Buffalo--with a blend of involvement and detachment that brings a departed era "vividly to life" (p. 2): "irreverence, combined with her clear eye for details, makes Mabel an admirable commentator on the ways of the class in which she grew up" (p. 8). Later volumes bring the same gifts to bear on Europe, Manhattan, and finally the American southwest, when Mrs. Luhan describes the daily activities of herself and her fourth husband, Tony Luhan, and captures the changing seasons of her Taos environs. Of particular interest to contemporary readers is the ongoing story of "her remarkable struggle for selfhood as a woman" (p. 60).

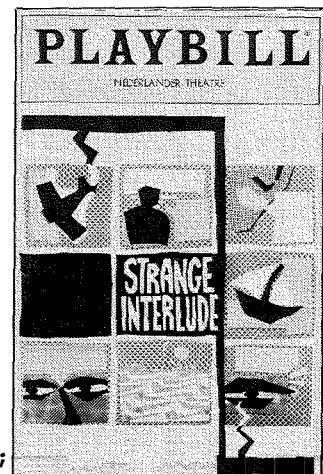
Professor Frazer, who has written so valuably of Eugene O'Neill in the past, has here done the same for another important figure in the cultural life of earlier-twentieth-century America. She successfully emulates Mabel Luhan's role as catalyst--whetting one's appetite for the books she so effectively surveys.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

#### REVIEWS OF O'NEILL PLAYS IN PERFORMANCE

1. *STRANGE INTERLUDE*, directed by Keith Hack, Nederlander Theatre, New York City, Feb. 21 - May 5, 1985 (extended for 24 performances beyond its original closing date of April 7).

Beyond the good news of its box office success, this transplanation of the 1984 London revival proved that *Strange Interlude* remains a theatrically viable entity and offered a production that is unlikely to be bettered in our time. Detractors of O'Neill's Freudian "woman play" may not have been converted; and a number of critics were disturbed at the amount of laughter it aroused (laughter as much at as with the characters and speeches);



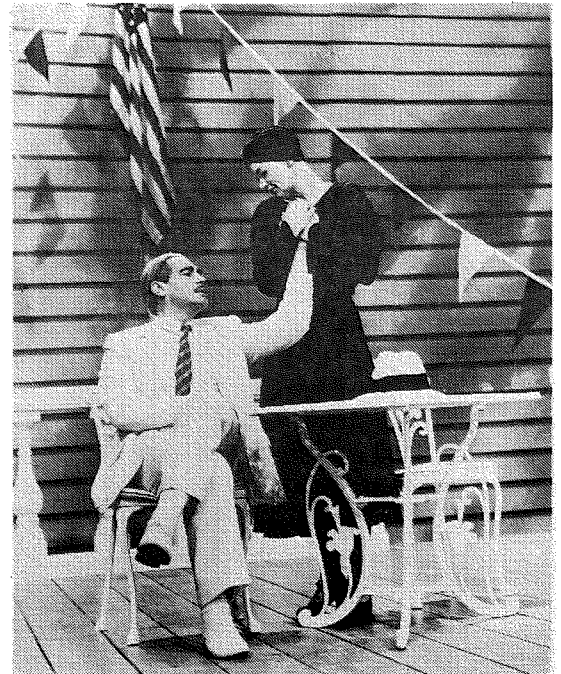
but the slightly trimmed performance with two intervals provided the fleetest 4½ hours on Broadway this season. An agreement with Actors Equity permitted the four London principals to repeat their celebrated performances--Glenda Jackson (Nina), Edward Petherbridge (Charles Marsden), Brian Cox (Ned Darrell), and James Hazeldine (Sam Evans)--with American actors in the supporting roles.

It's amazing what a fresh, even brash approach can do to resuscitate a play generally relegated to the dustbin of "interesting" failures and quaint antiquities. What director Keith Hack did, with the assistance of cast, composer and scenic designer, was scrape off the reverent barnacles that usually accompany the famous "spoken thoughts" and play it straight. No looming pauses; no change of position, tone or even volume; no freezing of the others as each blue-bathed thinker reveals the feelings that contradict his public utterances. Such ponderous devices do more to elicit disbelief than aid its suspension. By eliminating them, Hack not only shortened the playing time; he also showed that O'Neill's theatrical instincts, even at their most untraditional, were right on the mark, thanks (in this case) largely to his canny decision to start the play with a character thinking *alone*. Marsden's opening monologue establishes the convention in a thoroughly traditional way; and when it is extended beyond his solo scene we continue to accept it when, as here, the actors treat it so "naturally." Discovering that we have been endowed with omniscience, we relish every revelation, especially when a character's thought is at war, not only with his spoken words, but with other, conflicting thoughts.

Granted, Hack's revisionist approach didn't reveal a flawless masterpiece; much of the aforementioned laughter would have horrified the playwright, who clearly took his characters' inner conflicts and attempts at analysis more seriously than the audience did. But even if O'Neill the psychologist didn't emerge unscathed, O'Neill the man of the theatre did: he triumphed. Many an uncluttered *Strange Interlude* will, I am sure, follow Hack's pioneering lead. If so, the major achievement will be less its own considerable success than its return to the standard repertory of a major dramatic work.

The set, designed by Voytek (the London designer) with Michael Levine, featured high walls of horizontal gray clapboard at rear and sides, towering over a slightly raised platform of wide planks front-to-back (also gray), around which, at the front and sides of the stage-proper, sere leaves were parsimoniously strewn. Blue and white cloud forms streaked diagonally across the walls at times to add (with the leaves) a touch of credibility to the outdoor scenes, and flats were lowered to suggest the various locales: a wall at the rear with classical doorway flanked by glass-doored bookcases for Professor Leeds' study; a more rustic downstage wall with door, their paint peeling, for the front of the Evans home; a wall with tied-back bead curtains in its central portal for Sam and Nina's Long Island sitting room; and a low railing across the rear, with a deck and flag pole behind it, for the last-act terrace which, in this production, served as the eighth-act setting as well. And each locale featured a spare but adequate assortment of furniture and bric-a-brac that, like the costumes by Deirdre Clancy, made up in authenticity for their lack of contemporary appeal.

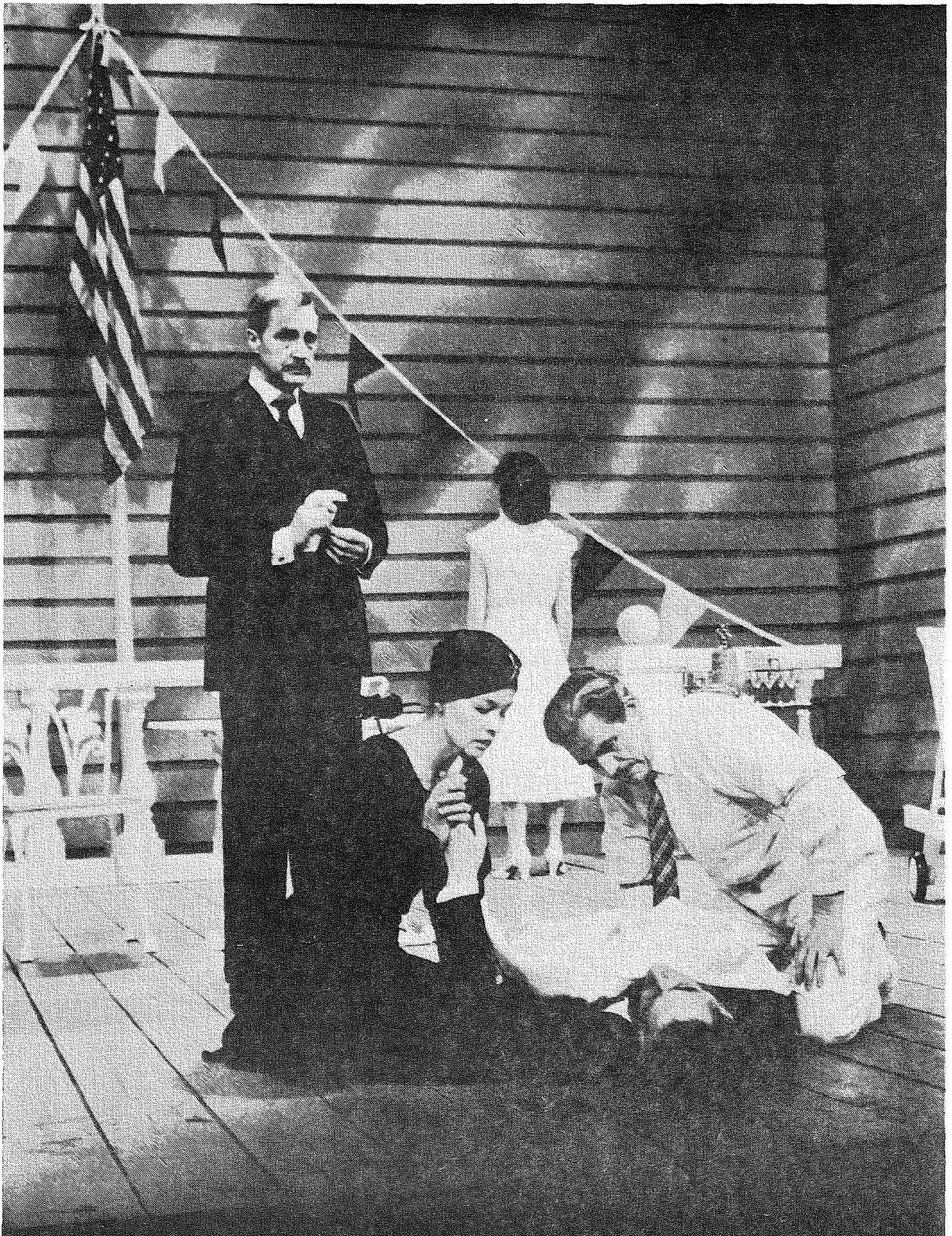
The incidental music by Benedict Mason, that bridged the interact pauses, complemented the settings in its sparseness (piano, violin and a few woodwinds) and also matched the play's own blend of neat surface realism and chaos beneath: its *mélange* of melodic fragments redolent of Americana--march, dance and hymn tunes (probably original, though "Bringing In the Sheaves" seems to surface occasionally)--frequently veered contrapuntally into dissonance in the manner of Charles Ives at his least transcendental.



The reunion of Ned (Brian Cox) and Nina (Glenda Jackson) in Act Eight. (Photo by Zoe Dominic.)



But it was the actors--above all, the central British quartet--who made the long evening memorable, even glorious. Glenda Jackson adopted a persistent tic--a three- or four-step upward jerking of her head--that seemed real enough for one to hope it *was* adopted, but that failed to gauge any change in Nina's nature, since it was present from



Nina (Glenda Jackson) and Ned (Brian Cox) kneel by the stroke-felled Sam (James Hazeldine) in Act Eight, as Madeline (Caitlin Clarke), at rear, savors young Gordon's boating victory. (Photo by Zoe Dominic.)  
 DARRELL. Is her husband dead ... at last?...  
 MARSDEN. I will not have long to wait now!...

beginning to end. (One would expect it to diminish, at least, once she had achieved her goal to "pass beyond desire" and "rot away in peace" with her "nice Charlie doggy"--but it didn't. The rotting was not *all* peace, and the gratuitous tic offered less nuance than nuisance.) But it was her voice that made her ideal for the part: her ability, even at mid-sentence, to switch from mellifluous purr to venomous rasp, so appropriate for Nina, who runs the gamut of feline emotions. (Something in its timbre made one wish that Katharine Hepburn had essayed the rôle in earlier days.) Every nuance of Nina's lines was lovingly revealed, subtext vied with text in the delivery, and the periodic apostrophes to "Mother God" had the warm ring of long-standing conviction. I still resist the view of Nina as archetypal Everywoman, but Jackson managed to create a believable human being out of O'Neill's anthology of female stereotypes.

Nina's "three men"--semi-satirical portraits of the artist, the businessman and the scientist--are harder to humanize, but Jackson's co-stars did very well indeed. Edward Petherbridge almost stole the show as Charles Marsden, conveying all the repressions of the prissy penman (legs crossed, arms crossed, hands held together when one wasn't picking at the immaculate fingernails of the other) and mining every vitriolic vein in the lines with which he needles others and responds with bitchy wit to every real or supposed affront. Even the more florid, overwritten passages seemed fully believable: this was how such a writer *would* speak. His drunk scene in the eighth act, when he reelingly cast off all his usual inhibitions, was the evening's comic highlight. But this Marsden was no clown. He showed real pain when forced to consider that his mother may have cancer; and the tender triumph of his closing line--"God bless dear old Charlie ... who, passed beyond desire, has all the luck at last!"--brought a final glow to the evening's twenty-five years of turmoil.

James Hazeldine (Sam Evans) aged convincingly from brash, likable clod to vested, paunchy, red-faced business success, and his eighth-act stroke was ghastly in its lifelikeness. Brian Cox (Ned Darrell) captured all the forces that turn a promising scientist into a self-rebuking derelict for whom we feel as much pity as scorn, even though he is burdened with the wildest of the evening's assorted "thoughts." (Cox's "Got to go! ... can't go! ... got to go! ..." when trying to flee from Nina in Act Five, earned ubiquitous titters--only partly because of its rapid-fire delivery--that could hardly have surprised the author.) The American players in the smaller rôles were serviceable at best, except for Tom Aldredge, who caught a touching quality in Professor Leeds, torn between loneliness and stoical self-reliance, that I'd never found in the text.

There is little point in niggling about the accents of the British quartet. Hazeldine's Americanese was decidedly the best, while Jackson made, as far as I could tell, no vocal concession to the country of her character's birth. Between them, Cox and Petherbridge succeeded in devising speech patterns that I suspect have never before been heard anywhere on the planet! (The former, at Darrell's moments of greatest stress, betrayed the Scottish burr of his youth. The latter claims to have patterned his delivery on that of Alistair Cooke--an influence that I could not detect at the time.) But so what? They all captured the complex essences of their respective rôles and achieved a level of ensemble performance seldom equalled these days in the commercial theatre.

Many a flashy production dissolves on recollection. This one had abundant surface fireworks *and* continued to deepen and expand in the memory afterwards. It may not have won any of the Tony awards for which it was nominated, but it was a performance to cherish.

--Frederick C. Wilkins

2. *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*, directed by Sam Woodhouse, and *AH, WILDERNESS!*, directed by Douglas Jacobs. San Diego (CA) Repertory Theatre, Fall 1984 (*Journey*, 9/6-11/1; *Wilderness*, 10/4-11/18).

*Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *Ah, Wilderness!*, composed a decade apart, are often recognized as obverse and reverse of a single coin. *Ah, Wilderness!* tells the pleasant tale of what might have been, *Long Day's Journey* the sobering story of what really was

the youth and young adulthood of the author. It would appear that the two plays produced in repertory might provide an interesting view into the life of the young O'Neill, the fantasies and the realities of his backward glance at the younger years.

Such is not necessarily the case. The two plays do not complement one another all that well. Such was the experience of the experiment in late 1984, when the San Diego Repertory Theatre, using many of the same performers in corresponding roles in the two plays, offered a disappointing *Journey* coupled with a delightfully different *Wilderness*.

There appeared to be nothing defective in the production's conception of *Long Day's Journey*. The view of the play was quite ordinary, and the editing (some forty minutes were cut from the text) was quite skillful. What seemed lacking was a grasp of the intensity inherent in the drama. In spite of all the performers' efforts, they appeared less than certain about the depths of personal feeling that are there in the text. While the play was hardly treated casually, and should not be a mere object of awe, the production didn't seem to notice the tremendous pathos that runs throughout the drama.

Although the acting was not amateurish, it failed to live up to the potential that exists in the play. Of the characters, Mary Tyrone (Jo Ann Reeves) was the weakest. Looking too young for her fifties, she failed to provide the sense of command that Mary strangely possesses over the other Tyrones. When excited, she tended to become garbled in her speech. An occasional line was mixed, spoiling the rhythm that "poet" O'Neill had spent a lifetime trying to perfect. And her "Then, Mother of God" line--a speech that may be more of a highlight for the character than her final, haunting line--was almost lost in a reverie that suddenly forgot the audience.

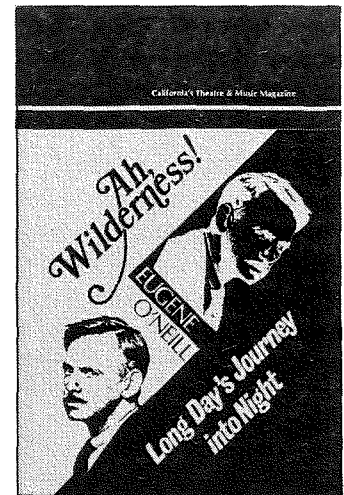
There was a bit too much Tyrone (played by Mitchell Edmonds) to suggest an actor who had managed well his matinee idol's figure all those years. Nor did Edmonds' rather high-pitched voice sound as if it could have done Shakespeare justice in the past. When he did quote the bard, he proved this very point. His bearing, also, lacked the professional touch.

While Jamie (Tavis Ross) had some difficulty with the drunk scene--he seemed much less "stinko" than a night's drinking should have left him--his performance was generally quite good. Thom Murray as Edmund was the best of the four Tyrones. His mustache made him a rather striking look-alike for the playwright, and he gave the role the kind of self-indulgence O'Neill showed himself in the play. Darla Cash's Cathleen was the strongest performance of all. She was truly the naive colleen with little trace of mere imitation of the part.

The set design (by Dan Dryden) played right into Mary's criticisms of Tyrone's miserliness. The tacky rattan furniture should have caused Tyrone to hurry right out to the nearest furniture mart. Scene changes, accomplished by drawing household drapes, worked well. Sound effects, like slamming doors, were very poor.

Surely Mary's weak performance did not destroy the play. She only exemplified, perhaps underlined, the weaknesses overall. Such a delicacy exists in *Long Day's Journey* that no more than a thin line might be drawn between the powerful exchanges of a tragic family and the pathetic whimpering of moderns who lack tragic stature. Reeves' Mary illustrated the point. In drama tuned so fine, it is not just that one weak character can spoil the play, but that one weakness in one character can do the damage. The company's *Journey* had that flaw, and more. That it tried was evident; its success simply didn't follow.

The San Diego Rep's *Ah, Wilderness!* Was as enjoyable as its *Long Day's Journey* was disappointing. Even the set (also by Dan Dryden) was much more clever--and functional, with scene changes integrated into the play's action. The conception of the play was



changed somewhat, with songs introduced throughout (shades of *Take Me Along*). Songs suited to period and mood introduced and concluded the play and accompanied scene changes. While such tampering with a non-musical comedy usually spells disaster, this introduction of music proved a livening element.

For the most part, the players appeared much more at home with comedy than with tragedy. Although at times dangerously close to a Groucho Marx imitation, William Anton was a very good Nat, sly around the wife, shy with Richard at truth-telling time, and the picture of a small-city newspaper editor. He could be libertine, stern, angry, as the occasion demanded. Wife Essie (Jo Ann Reeves) suited the part, age, glasses, and all, quite well. Somewhat garbled in her speech when nerves got the better of her, she gave a good performance as a whole.

Sid (Ric Barr) was a proper riot, "a case if there ever was one." His inebriation was totally convincing. Lily (Barbara Murray) exuded the spirit of propriety that becomes an old maid school teacher. Mildred (Amy Herzberg) acted the young girl who is a bit old before her time, enabling her to be a perfect foil for brother Richard. Tommy (Jonathan Grantham), whether singing in the interludes or playing his role, was a real trouper. Wayne Tibbetts, who doubled as both Arthur and Wint Selby, was much better in the latter role, although his slaughter of Arthur's solo numbers was very good.

The performance of Thom Murray as Richard did much to ensure the success of the play. All the assorted and terrible agonies of discovery and maturation were displayed in face and gesture, whether in protesting his innocence, testing his innocence, or preserving his innocence.

To laugh with O'Neill is an uncommon response. In the company's *Ah, Wilderness!* the humor came through; even the cast seemed to enjoy it. For all the musical additions to the text, the comedy played admirably.

The playing of O'Neill's only comedy and his most devastating tragedy in rotation provides an interesting look at the playwright and his work. The effort was a noble experiment; that it only partly succeeded does not negate the significance of the attempt. The company and its two directors are to be commended for valiant effort as well as for partial success.

--Eugene K. Hanson

#### THE EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY SECTION: MLA '85 AND AFTER

I. O'NEILL SESSION IN CHICAGO. The Society-sponsored special session on O'Neill at the 1985 MLA Convention in Chicago next December will be chaired by Paul D. Voelker of the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland. The session's official title is "Eugene O'Neill's Forebears and Contemporaries: Studies in Relation and Influence." Professor Voelker received, in response to his previous call for papers, many worthy proposals, from which, because of time restrictions, he has limited his selection to three:

"O'Neill, Belasco, and Herne: *Beyond the Horizon* and American Intertextuality,"  
by Brenda Murphy, St. Lawrence University.

"Susan Glaspell and Eugene O'Neill: The Imagery of Gender,"  
by Linda Ben-Zvi, Colorado State University.

"O'Neill and Otto Rank: The Double and Individuation,"  
by Stephen Watt, University of Tennessee.

The time and place of the session, and of the Society's Annual Meeting, will be announced in a future issue of the Newsletter.

II. SUGGESTIONS INVITED FOR CENTENNIAL VOLUME. As was indicated in the minutes of the 1984 Annual Meeting (Winter 1984 issue, pp. 42-43), the Society is considering the publication of a special volume on O'Neill to commemorate his centenary in 1988. Members' suggestions for the volume's contents will be welcome and can be sent either to Society

President Albert Wertheim, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47401, or to Professor Jackson Bryer, Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Professor Bryer agreed at the 1984 meeting to undertake initial work on the project.

## NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

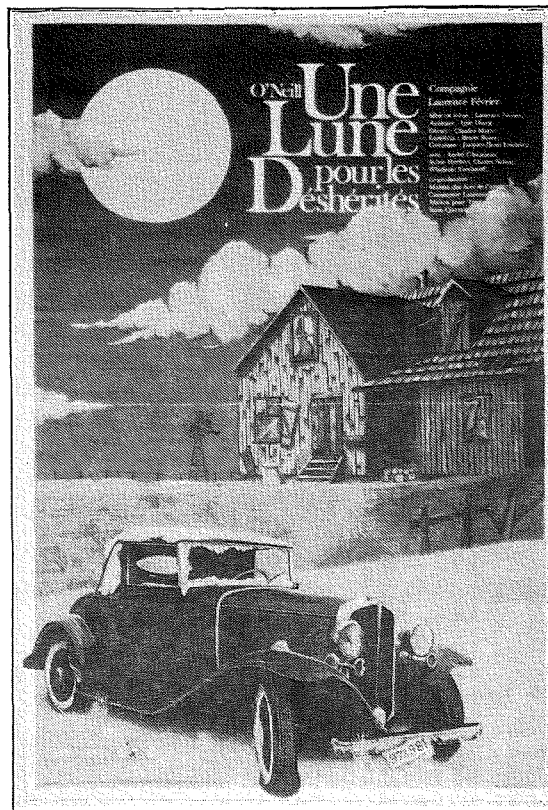
1. O'NEILL ACTIVITIES IN CHINA. In a letter of 20 May, Haiping Liu reported on a recent meeting of O'Neill scholars in China:

Late last month, a number of Chinese O'Neillians from Beijing, Shanghai and Jinan gathered here in Nanjing to discuss preparations for the centennial celebration of O'Neill's birthday in October 1988. Among things proposed at the meeting were (1) publication of a new selection of O'Neill's plays in Chinese, and more articles and books about the playwright and his works; (2) productions in several cities of some of his plays that are particularly appealing to the Chinese audience; and (3) a symposium or celebration gathering to mark the occasion. The participants also discussed the setting up of a Chinese society of Eugene O'Neill. O'Neill's past and current influence on Chinese drama and theater was reviewed. It was believed that such an organization would help the Chinese theater in its change and reform now under way by aiding the exchange of ideas and information among O'Neill scholars at home and abroad. It was agreed that the society should be headquartered in the Central Academy of Theater Arts, which is an ideal link between the theater and the academic sphere. Of course, the plan is still subject to approval from above.

Headly news that will be of exciting interest to O'Neillians everywhere. Since it is a goal of the current Eugene O'Neill Society to continue gaining world-wide membership, its officers and members will surely salute the Chinese venture and hope for close ties with any official organization that may result from the pioneering April meeting. Further developments will be reported as they are received.

Professor Liu has also been invited by a Chinese publishing house to edit a book ("all in Chinese, of course") to be entitled "Eugene O'Neill on Drama." "The main body will be O'Neill's ideas on drama, playwriting and his own works. An appendix will provide plot synopses of his major works." Among the sources he is currently using are the "Credo" section of Cargill's *O'Neill and His Plays* and the Bryer-Bogard collection of O'Neill's letters to Kenneth Macgowan. Anyone with additional source materials to suggest can reach Professor Liu at the Department of Foreign Languages, Nanjing University, Nanjing, People's Republic of China. He will be most grateful for any leads, and will be able to thank contributors personally at the 1986 O'Neill conference in Boston, which he plans to attend. --Ed.

2. MOON AROUSES FRENCH INTEREST IN O'NEILL. The January 1984 production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* at the Maison des Arts André Malraux in Paris, performed by the Compagnie Laurence Février and directed by Ms. Février, was a considerable success. On page 53 are a rehearsal shot of André Chaumeau (Phil Hogan) and Sylvie Herbert (Josie) and the production's poster, designed by Michel Bouvet, which loses much in a black and white reduction. (Attendees of the 1986 conference can see it as it should be seen.) Associate Françoise du Chaxel writes of the production: "Moon was a great success and offered many people the opportunity to discover Eugene O'Neill; they were then eager to know more about him, his life and his works. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was produced in Paris too, in an excellent production that was very well received. Audiences were deeply touched by these two plays. I hope it will be the sign of an O'Neill revival in a country where he has never really been recognized as a chief dramatist." Ms. Février plans to follow her successful *Moon* with a production of *Desire Under the Elms*.



3. AUTHOR'S INQUIRY (reprinted from the *Irish Literary Supplement*, Spring 1985, p. 22). Professor Edward L. Shaughnessy (Butler University, Indianapolis, IN 46208) is writing a history of the reception of Eugene O'Neill's plays in Ireland: a record of productions in both the Republic and the North; the academic assessment of O'Neill's work; and the popular response as registered in press reviews. "I have spent two summers in Ireland," [he writes,] and hope to return this spring. I have put together a fairly thorough record of productions in Dublin (Abbey, Gate, etc.), in Galway (Taibhdhearc Theatre), and in Belfast (Lyric Players Theatre) since 1922. I would be pleased to receive information about other cities where professional productions of O'Neill's plays have been staged. If readers should possess old reviews, programs or other memorabilia, I would consider it a great favor to be permitted to look at them."
4. AMERICAN DRAMA SESSION AT ATA '85. At the 1985 convention of the American Theatre Association in Toronto this August, Paul Voelker will chair a second edition of his highly successful 1984 session on "What Is American about the American Drama?" This year's subtitle is, "The Dialogue Continues: American and Canadian Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century." The session, which will take place from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 6, in the York Room of the Sheraton Centre, will feature three presentations:
- "Hazards of the American Playwright during the Age of Jackson," by Walter Meserve, Indiana Univ., Director, Institute for American Theatre Studies.
- "'Beastly Rough and Inartistic': Canadian Drama in the Late Nineteenth Century," by Richard Plant, Queens Univ., President, Association on Canadian Theatre History.
- "What Makes Theatre American: Notes from the Past, News from the Present," by Vera Mowry Roberts, Graduate School, CUNY, Fellow and Past President of ATA.
5. NEMLA '85. Jackson R. Bryer chaired the session on "O'Neill for the Scholar and for the Public" at the 1985 convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association in Hartford, CT, last March 29th. Donald Gallup, former Curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature, spoke on "The Eugene O'Neill Collection at Yale," followed by a panel discussion on O'Neill activities that featured Sally Pavetti, Curator of the

Monte Cristo Cottage, Frederick C. Wilkins, editor of the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, Jordan Y. Miller, Secretary of the Eugene O'Neill Society, and Megan Callaway, co-producer (with Perry Miller Adato) of the PBS documentary on O'Neill that will air this fall. The general impression gained from the session was that O'Neill activity has never been as rich and varied as it is at present; and the editor is pleased to announce that Dr. Gallup's paper will be printed, in a fuller version, in the next issue of the Newsletter. As all who heard it in Hartford will attest, it is a most moving and informative document.

6. NEMLA '86: CALL FOR PAPERS. "O'Neill's Women: Biography as Theatre" is the topic for the Eugene O'Neill session at the 1986 convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association, which will be held from 10:15 to 11:45 a.m. on Friday, April 4, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. Session chair Ellen Kimbel of Pennsylvania State University, Abington, invites all who are interested in participating to send papers to her as soon as possible. (An abstract or statement of intent will suffice, for the present, if a paper is currently incomplete.) Send either to Professor Kimbel at 244 Meeting House Lane, Merion, PA 19066. (Tel. 215-664-4112.)
7. RECENT PUBLICATIONS--AND EARLIER ONES NOT PREVIOUSLY NOTED.
 

Abe, Hirosho. "Eugene O'Neill." In Ogata, Toshihiko, ed., *America Bungaku no Jikotenkai 20-seiki no America Bungaku II* (Kyoto: Yamaguchi, 1982), pp. 205-239.

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

Barlow, Judith E. *Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late O'Neill Plays*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985. [The plays are *Iceman*, *Journey*, and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. A review will appear in a future issue.]

Chatterji, Ruby. "Existential Approach to Modern American Drama." In her *Existentialism in American Literature* (Atlantic Highland, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983), pp. 80-98. [Includes coverage of O'Neill, Miller and Albee.]

Gilmore, Thomas B. "The *Iceman Cometh* and the Anatomy of Alcoholism." *Comparative Drama*, 18:4 (Winter 1984-85), 118-136.

Grimm, Reinhold. "The Hidden Heritage: Repercussions of Nietzsche in Modern Theater and Its Theory." *Nietzsche Studien: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung*, 12 (1983), 355-371. [Includes Nietzsche's influence on Shaw and O'Neill.]

Raleigh, John Henry. "Strindberg in Andrew Jackson's America: O'Neill's *More Stately Mansions*." *CLIO: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History*, 13:1 (Fall 1983), 1-15.

Roberts, Nancy L. "The Cottage with a Glimpse of Eugene O'Neill." *Boston Sunday Globe* (May 5, 1985), pp. B25-26. [Report of a tour of the "remarkably well kept" Monte Cristo Cottage, and of the house's, town's and family's ubiquitousness in O'Neill's works, architecturally (*Mourning Becomes Electra*) and arboreally (*Desire Under the Elms*) as well as biographically.]

Seidel, Margot. "Goethes *Faust* und O'Neill." *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 219:2 (1982), 365-372.

ShIPLEY, Joseph T. *The Crown Guide to the World's Great Plays from Ancient to Modern Times*, revised, updated edition. New York: Crown Publishers, 1984. xiii + 866 pp. \$24.95, cloth. ISBN 0-517-55392-9. This second edition of the 1956 volume, comprising "750 play plots, performances, casts, analyses and critical opinions," includes entries on twelve O'Neill plays, from *Beyond the Horizon* to *More Stately Mansions* (pp. 455-473). An excellent blend of synopses, production history and quotations from the often-divided critics.

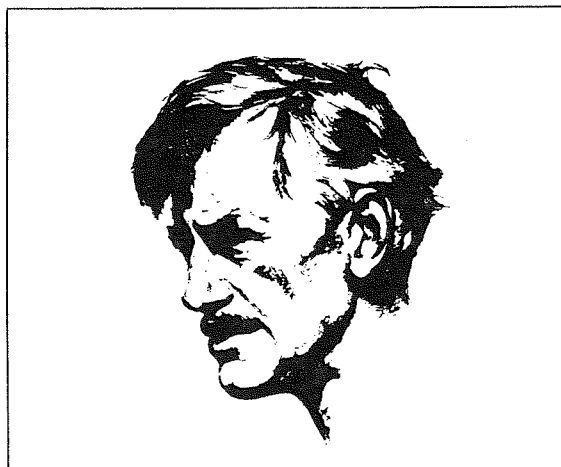
Shurr, William H. "American Drama and the Bible: The Case of Eugene O'Neill's *Lazarus Laughed*." In Gunn, Giles, ed., *The Bible and American Arts and Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983), pp. 83-103.

Smith, Madeline. "The Emperor Jones and Confession." *Bulletin of the West Virginia Association of College English Teachers* (Huntington, WV), 8 (1983), 17-22.

Smith, Susan Harris. *Masks in Modern Drama*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984. xi + 237 pp. \$27, cloth. ISBN 0-520-05095-9. (To be reviewed in the next issue.)

8. CARPENTER BIBLIOGRAPHY PUBLISHED. The eagerly awaited *Modern Drama Scholarship and Criticism 1966-1980: An International Bibliography*, edited by Charles A. Carpenter, has just been published by the University of Toronto Press (\$75, cloth, ISBN 0-8020-2549-8). (See page 33 of the Summer-Fall 1984 issue for some details about its massive contents and the American playwrights most represented.) This "first authoritative bibliography of modern western drama" will be updated annually in *Modern Drama*, which Professor Carpenter serves as Bibliography Editor. For a copy, add \$2 for postage and handling and write to Manager, Direct Mail Marketing, University of Toronto Press, 63A St. George Street, Toronto, Canada M5S 1A6.
9. Robert E. Lauder, "The Renegade Haunted by God: Eugene O'Neill's Dream of Forgiveness," *Commonweal* (December 14, 1984), pp. 690-692.

Responding to the 1984 production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, "one of the most 'Catholic' plays to appear on Broadway in years," Lauder muses on "the 'Catholic' dimension in O'Neill's plays," suggesting that "neither too little nor too much" should be made of it. Citing comments by Crosswell Bowen and Louis Sheaffer and some telling remarks by O'Neill himself, Lauder reviews the 13-year-old O'Neill's break with the Catholic Church, and notes that the separation was never total--as it never *is* for a "Black Irishman." (And O'Neill, according to Bowen, was, of Irish-American writers, "the blackest of all.") Witness the "Catholic symbols" in *Misbegotten* and the "wish fulfillment" of the hero's final return to his Catholic faith in *Days Without End*. O'Neill, says Lauder, never lost his interest in "ultimate questions" and never allowed belief in determinism (despite its emphasis in the views of Mary and Jamie Tyrone, *et al.*) to overrule completely his belief in the human potential for freedom--if not salvation, at least spiritual victory. [The drawing at the right, which accompanied Lauder's article, is attributed to "Lupas, Stage, 1935." --Ed.]



10. EUGENE, GLENDA AND THE CRITICS. I'd hoped to sum up the critical reactions to the Broadway revival of *Strange Interlude*, but the sheer bulk of critical response proved overwhelming. As ever, the reviewers were sharply divided, as titles alone can indicate: everything from "Interminable Interlude" (John Simon in *New York*, March 4, p. 110) to "Thank You, Glenda, Thank You" (Douglas Watt in the *Daily News*). Perhaps the nastiest rebuke, topping even the acerbic Mr. Simon, came from Kevin Kelly in the *Boston Globe* (February 22, p. 21): "It's 'Dynasty' with a mental block." And the fairest, most informative assessment was provided by Frank Rich in the *New York Times* ("A Fresh Look for O'Neill's 'Interlude,'" February 22, p. C3). But the best journalistic reportage preceded the New York opening: a pair of background articles in Section II of the *Times* on Sunday, February 14: Barbara Gelb's "*Strange Interlude* Returns to Broadway" (pp. 1 and 24), and Benedict Nightingale's "Glenda Jackson Grapples with O'Neill's *Everywoman*" (pp. 1 and 6). Deeper than the paeans and put-downs of subsequent reviewers, they deserve the attention of all serious O'Neillians. --Ed.
11. DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS. The following were listed in issues of *Dissertation Abstracts International* (DAI). Copies may be obtained from University Microfilms International,



300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 (tel. 1-800-521-3042).

- Bloom, Steven F. "Empty Bottles, Empty Dreams: O'Neill's Alcoholic Drama." *DAI*, 43:4 (1982), 1145A-1146A.
- Como, Robert M. "The Evolution of O'Neill's Tragic Vision." [Sources in Nietzsche.] *DAI*, 43:9 (1983), 2990A.
- Herzog, Callie J. "Nora's Sisters: Female Characters in the Plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw and O'Neill." *DAI*, 43:9 (1983), 2988A.
- Schroeder, Patricia R. "The Presence of the Past in Modern American Drama." *DAI*, 45:5 (1984), 1400A.
- Shea, Laura. "Child's Play: The Family of Violence in the Dramas of O'Neill, Albee and Shepard." *DAI*, 44:11 (1984), 3384A.
- Sproxton, Birk E. "Subversive Sexuality in Four Eugene O'Neill Plays of His Middle Period." *DAI*, 44:1 (1983), 171A.
- Szabo, K. "O'Neill tragediafelfogasa a kortarsi elmeletek tukreben." [Concerns O'Neill's theory of tragedy.] *DAI*, 43:3 (1982), 2978C.

12. CALL FOR PAPERS ON ROBINSON JEFFERS. *American Poetry* is planning a special issue on Robinson Jeffers for Fall 1987. Critical essays, notes, and documents of 25 pages or less are welcome. Send copies of completed manuscripts to Tim Hunt, 22927 SE 287th, Kent, WA 98042, and Jeffers Issue, *American Poetry*, English Department, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131, no later than November 1, 1986.
13. A NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS. No (to answer a reader's query), the Newsletter does not solicit articles. Only for the special issue on "O'Neill's Women" (Summer-Fall 1982) was a general topic announced in advance. All the other "focus" sections, like the one in this issue, occurred by chance. There is no limit on the size, scope or subject matter of submissions. All that is requested is double-spaced typing--and some biographical information for the "Persons Represented" section, in case the submission is accepted. And I should add that (1) the new MLA documentation style is now in effect, and (2) a lengthy publishing record is not a prerequisite for acceptance. The Newsletter has featured work by new graduate students and directors as well as by the most prominent scholars in American drama. It's quality that counts, not pedigree.

As an indication of the variety of work that is currently being done on O'Neill (and a signal to the authors that their work has been received), here is a list of the essays currently undergoing examination and/or revision:

"The Fusion of the Epic and Dramatic: Hemingway, Strindberg and O'Neill," by Peter Egri.

"O'Neill's *Hughie*: The Necessity of Attempt," by Richard Graziade.

"Eugene O'Neill: America's National Playwright," by Michael Manheim.

"Parallelism and Divergence: The Case of *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*," by Bert Cardullo.

"Eugene O'Neill's Developing Form in *Bound East for Cardiff* (1914) and *Hughie* (1941)," by Marc Maufort.

"The Influence of Reymont's *Peasants* on O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*," by Michael Mikoś and David Mulroy.

"Another View of Ephraim Cabot: A Footnote to *Desire Under the Elms*," by Jean Anne Waterstradt.

"A Cabin in the Woods, a Summerhouse in a Garden: Closure and Enclosure in O'Neill's *More Stately Mansions*," by Thomas P. Adler.

Some of the above will appear in the next issue, some require lengthier revision of text or documentation, and some (I confess) await a first reading. But all will get a fair hearing, and my only advice to other contributors is to choose a topic different from these eight! --Ed.

14. TAO HOUSE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. O'Neill might not have been delighted by strangers tramping through his contemplative California retreat--and he would surely have recoiled at the name of the company that is now taking them there--but a shrine is a shrine, and Tao House is a must on any list of major O'Neill sites. Under a contract with the National Park Service, a firm called Tours Are Us conducts two 90-minute tours of the house daily. Departures are at 11:30 a.m. and 1:45 p.m. Information on prices and starting point is available from Tours Are Us, 145 John Glenn Drive, Concord, CA (tel. 415-674-0474).
15. TAO HOUSE GETS FRENZ COLLECTION. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, has announced that Horst Frenz, the renowned O'Neill scholar and first President of the O'Neill Society, and his wife, Evelyn, have generously donated their O'Neill library of more than 300 books and ten cartons of manuscripts, letters, reviews and other documents to the Foundation. An outstanding collection, and a boon to future scholars, it contains editions of O'Neill's plays translated into 22 foreign languages (including Oriental, Indian, Middle Eastern and Slavic), American and foreign first and unusual editions, and a wide variety of criticism and interpretation of O'Neill's plays.
16. PHOTOS OF VINTAGE O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS ON MICROFICHE. Several attenders of the March 1984 O'Neill conference, and a number of others who read about it, have asked the source of the photographs of 16 original O'Neill productions that were available for viewing on microfiche in the media room. The pictures, part of the Vandamm Collection in the New York Public Library's Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, have been published on 17 microfiche (a word whose plural is evidently unchanged, like that of its aquatic brethren microfish!) by Chadwyck-Healey Inc., 623 Martense Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 (tel. 201-692-1801). [Inquiries from outside the U.S. should be sent to Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., 20 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT, England (tel. 0223 311479).] The O'Neill set's price is \$85, and a catalog is available, listing all 900 stage productions included in the Vandamm Collection's 26,000 photographs of "New York Theatre, 1919-1961." Unfortunately the catalog does not detail the specific shots that are included, but many a March viewer will attest to their importance as a record of theatrical production in the United States.
17. RECENT AND FORTHCOMING O'NEILL PRODUCTIONS.
- Ah, Wilderness!*, dir. Douglas Jacobs. San Diego (CA) Repertory Theatre, Oct. 10 - Nov. 18, 1984. (Reviewed in this issue.)
- Anna Christie*, dir. Anthony Osnato. Seventh Sign Theatre Company, Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church, New York City. Closed on May 18, 1985.
- Desire Under the Elms*, dir. Mary K. Robinson. Hartford (CT) Stage Company, April 19 - May 19, 1985. [A replacement for the previously-announced production of *Ah, Wilderness!*, which was cancelled.]
- The Hairy Ape*, dir. Susan Perry. Strider Theater, Runnals Union, Colby College, Waterville, ME, February 7-9, 1985.
- The Hairy Ape*, dir. Blanka Zizka. Wilma Theater, Philadelphia. Closed on April 21, 1985. [Nels Nelson praised the production, if not the play, in the (Philadelphia) *Daily News*, calling Zizka's "Europeanizing" touches ("dynamic lighting, supple choreography, a creative use of giant cartoon cut-outs and eerily appropriate sound effects") an "instructive demonstration in how to dress an old turkey to the nines," and saluting the Yank of Harry Bennett, who "elicits a certain unity out of the bouillabaisse of slanguage that has fallen his lot."]
- Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. Sam Woodhouse. San Diego (CA) Repertory Theatre, Sept. 6 - Nov. 1, 1984. (Reviewed in this issue.)
- Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. Patrick Laffan, designed by Alfo O'Reilly, with Siobhan McKenna as Mary Tyrone. Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Ireland. Opened on February 14, 1985. (More on this production in a future issue.)

*Long Day's Journey Into Night*, dir. Braham Murray. Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, England. Opened March 14, 1985. [Irene McManus (*Plays and Players*, May 1985, p. 31) found it "a strangely flat and underwhelming affair all round," from the minimal set by Johanna Bryant ("just a circular table, four chairs, and a couple of lamps to stare at for four hours") to inadequacies in the elder Tyrones--a loud but vacant James (James Maxwell) and a Mary (Dilys Hamlett) with whom "the audience loses patience." The other roles fared better: "Jonathan Hackett's earthily coarse Jamie, and Michael Mueller's slow, pallid, brylcreemed Edmund (a bit like an understudy for Vincent Price) are acceptable performances."]

*Long Day's Journey Into Night*. New Day Repertory Company, Vassar Institute Theater, New Paltz, NY, Aug. 22 - Sept. 8, 1985.

*Strange Interlude*, dir. Keith Hack. Nederlander Theatre, New York City, Feb. 21 - April 7, 1985. (Reviewed in this issue.)

18. TAKE ME ALONG DOESN'T "TAKE." A one-night stand was all that the Broadway revival of *Take Me Along* could muster: it closed after opening night at the Martin Beck Theatre (April 15), following a week of preview performances. Evidently a band of talented newcomers couldn't hold the charming adaptation of *Ah, Wilderness!* aloft as the combined forces of Walter Pidgeon, Jackie Gleason, Eileen Herlie, Una Merkel and Robert Morse had (for 448 performances) in 1959. Its long and successful tryout run at the Goodspeed Opera House had augured for a happier outcome, especially at a time when retreads tend to outlast new wares in the commercial theatre. Evidently, when ticket prices range from \$22.50 to \$40, stars are *de rigueur*. If the company's Johnson, Nichols and Grimes had been Van, Mike and Tammy, rather than Betty, Robert and Taryn, the show might still be running. As Albee's Martha would say, "Sad, sad, sad!"
19. NEW HAVEN JOURNEY CANCELLED. The Long Wharf Theatre production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, scheduled for March-April 1985, was removed from the season's repertory. Rumor has it that there was a problem in locating an appropriate actor to play James Tyrone. The cancellation was unfortunate, as the scheduled director (Arvin Brown) and actress (Geraldine Fitzgerlad) struck gold in their previous (1971) collaboration on the play. We hope it will resurface during the Long Wharf's 1985-86 season.
20. JOURNEY MAY BE BROADWAY-BOUND, WITH ODD COUPLE. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* has not been performed on Broadway since the original U.S. production in 1956. Plans are now under way for a new production in the spring of 1986, presented by Emanuel Azenberg, Roger Peters and the Shubert Organization, with direction by Jonathan Miller. The elder O'Neills, it is reported, may be Jack Lemmon and Julie Harris.
21. NEW PLAYS INSPIRED BY O'NEILL.
  - A. THE MOBSTER COMETH. (Thanks to Eugene K. Hanson for the following report. --Ed.)

December saw the world premiere of a new play, *Vespers Eve*, by Louis La Russo II, at a small theatre in Hollywood. The play is about a meeting of the mob in 1929, for the purpose of planning the takeover of underworld activity across the nation. The ten mobsters and half dozen female "entertainers" they've brought with them spend a long evening talking of their plans, their past, their relationships.

Of interest here is not the play itself, but its indebtedness to Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*. *Vespers Eve* is set in the bridal suite of a hotel, with much of the action occurring around a conference table. (One character, upon entering, comments how like the Last Supper the setting seems.) As the mobsters wander in, one and two at a time, they highlight the approach of the last gangster to enter, Lucky. He is the man with a plan, and spends the remainder of the play attempting to sell the others on his scheme. To better promote his ideas, he remains sober while the others indulge heavily in both liquor and women. Much of the play consists of discussions about Lucky's plan, with Lucky himself delivering several lengthy speeches. He is a dead ringer for Hickey.

While the girls are a higher class than the street walkers of *Iceman*, their place in society is essentially no different. And the relationship between the deep-thinking

mobsters and the shallow prostitutes reflects a similar relationship occurring often in O'Neill. As Harry Hope presides over the doings at the bar, so Derek the waiter presides over the comings and goings of the mob members and their molls, seeing to all their needs.

O'Neill's men are today's derelicts; La Russo's are yesterday's, the sweepings of the streets of New York's Lower East Side. While the former cannot conquer their own fears--or the local street corner, for that matter--the latter dispel all their anxieties as they are about to conquer the world.

The opening of the final act finds Lucky and his sidekick Meyer talking, while all the others are out cold. When sufficiently sobered up again, the mobsters vote on Lucky's plan, approving the scheme to take over the gangland activities of a nation. Yet, there is a strange inconclusiveness at the end, with little more to show for the night's deliberations than resolution.

What La Russo has done with a rather obvious use of O'Neill is deserving of commendation. Obviously modeling his play on the structure of *Iceman*, he has nevertheless created a distinct and very successful drama. It is a fine play, well-crafted, fit to be a part of the American tradition of drama that stems from the works of O'Neill.

- B. "HOTEL ELYSEE," by David H. Simpson, 40, directed by Stuart Bishop. Given four staged readings by the Provincetown Theatre Company at the Provincetown Art Association Museum in mid-January 1985, Simpson's "poetic" two-acter, his first play to be staged, was "inspired" by the death of Tennessee Williams in Manhattan's Hotel Elysee on the very day in 1983 when Simpson arrived in Provincetown, and was furthered by his recollection that both O'Neill and Williams had written plays in Provincetown. The play's four characters (aside from a hotel waiter) are O'Neill, Williams, Blanche DuBois and Mary Tyrone, who meet in Provincetown and ponder "such dramatic subjects as death, hell, rebirth, paradise, and immortality in a poetic dialogue that transcends time constraints." (The words are Marilyn Miller's, in her advance report on the venture in the Provincetown *Advocate*, January 10, 1985, p. 4.) Should the play also transcend its initial *medium*, the film might be entitled, "Tom and Blanche and Gene and Mary"!
22. QUINTERO ON *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY*. On a weekend in mid-December 1984, José Quintero held a workshop at a Los Angeles theatre, the Taper Too. A group of actors--Mitchell Ryan, Salome Jens, Brian Kerwin, David Dukes and Rhonda Aldrich--read through *Long Day's Journey Into Night* before a packed house, largely of theatre professionals, with periodic breaks during which Quintero commented on the characters, the family, even gestures, and on his own experiences with the play and with O'Neill's widow, Carlotta. Lawrence Christon reported the event in the *Los Angeles Times* ("Quintero on 'Journey' with O'Neill," December 19, Part VI, pp. 1, 6, 7). Such details as Mary's touching of her hair and Edmund's repeated coughing are important, the director noted, because of their connection to a web of past associations. "Families," he said, "are built up of layer upon layer of complex fabric.... We read and understand great things in the most insignificant signs. Family life involves a private code everyone in the family understands." He also pointed out (in Christon's words) "how, in their bickering and hostility, Jamie and James Tyrone spoke the greatest--if veiled--truths about what everyone was feeling." Besides discussing the interrelations of the four family members, Quintero defended O'Neill's purposeful redundancy:

O'Neill writes like a musician. Critics blame him for his repetition. But no one blames Mozart for repetition. But that's what gives his plays their value. Each time something is said, it changes meaning. There's been a long association between him and me that will never terminate, yet he still catches me by surprise.

The brief article, like his autobiography, *If You Don't Dance They Beat You*, attests to the qualities that have made Quintero the preeminent director of O'Neill's plays. --Ed.

23. MENU OF O'NEILL HOLDS THE MAYO. Enid Nemy reported in the *New York Times* ("O'Neill Performed for Mayo Doctors," April 15, p. C15) on a performance for physicians, residents and personnel of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, of selected scenes from *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. The scenes were those "dealing with the narcotic addiction of Mary Tyrone ... and the reactions of her family," and the performers were Jason Robards, his son, Sam Robards, Teresa Wright and Margaret Hunt. The program was a part of the "Insight" series sponsored by the Mayo's Department of Psychiatry and Psychology--a series that Mr. Robards inaugurated four years ago, "dramatizing the problems of alcoholism by reading the monologue from O'Neill's *Ice Man Cometh*." According to Mary Adams Martin, director of the series, its goal is to "give insight into the common human problems that are a great part of every physician's practice but a small part of his or her education." A worthy goal, and a well chosen vehicle for "insight." The program was repeated in May at a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Dallas.
24. A PASTORAL POSTLUDE. Thanks to Jordan Miller for forwarding the following anecdote he received from Norman Philbrick, Director of the Philbrick Library in Los Altos Hills, CA. It should be of interest to O'Neill aficionados.

A number of years ago the late Hazel Hansen, Professor of Classics at Stanford University, told me of an experience she'd had as a young Greek scholar on a holiday in Greece. She was working to perfect her Greek conversation, and in order to speak directly to the country people she wandered in the hills and came upon a scene which delighted her. She was near a hill where, under a tree, sat a bearded Greek shepherd with his flute, his flock nearby. She engaged the shepherd in conversation and was pleased that she could converse so well in Greek with this ancient.

Suddenly, in the midst of the conversation, the old man said in English, "What's with Skeezi?" Professor Hansen was startled, thinking she was hearing a new Greek word. "What?" said she. The shepherd replied in English, "You know, *Gasoline Alley*--Skeezi--the comic strip." Miss Hansen was exceedingly curious. "How do you know about Skeezi and *Gasoline Alley*?" she asked. "Oh," said the shepherd, "I'm an expatriate. I was, or am, George Cram Cook of the Provincetown Players."

Sic transit gloria mundi!

#### PERSONS REPRESENTED IN THIS ISSUE

- STEPHEN A. BLACK is Professor of English at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C. and an affiliate member of the faculty at the Seattle Psychoanalytic Institute. He has previously published on Thurber, Melville, Hawthorne and Whitman (his book on Whitman's creative processes was published by Princeton U.P. in 1975), and is at work on a book on O'Neill's late plays.
- STEVEN F. BLOOM is Assistant Professor of English at Emmanuel College in Boston. He was a co-director of the 1984 O'Neill conference in Boston and has spoken at O'Neill sessions at annual conventions of MLA and NEMLA. Professor Bloom's essay, "Empty Bottles, Empty Dreams: O'Neill's Use of Drinking and Alcoholism in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*," appears in the new volume, *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*, edited by James J. Martine (G. K. Hall, 1984).
- ROBERT EINENKEL teaches at Queens College, where his courses in O'Neill and the family theme in American drama inspired the essay in this issue. A professional actor and director in community, regional and off-Broadway theatre, he is also active in the retail wine business.
- EUGENE K. HANSON is Professor of English at College of the Desert and a member of the Board of Directors of the Eugene O'Neill Society. He writes a weekly column on drama for *The Desert Sun* (Palm Springs, CA).
- JAMES P. PETTEGROVE, who shares an alma mater with the editor (Bowdoin College), has written extensively about O'Neill and German-language productions of his plays. His "Eugene O'Neill as Thinker" appeared in *Maske und Kothurn*, 10 (1964), 617-624. A more recent article, "'Snuffed out by an Article': *Anna Christie* in Berlin" [*Maske und Kothurn*, 27 (1981), 335-345], was abstracted in the Winter 1982 issue of the Newsletter (pp. 33-34).
- GLORIA DIBBLE POND is Professor of English at Mattatuck Community College in Waterbury, Connecticut--"a nifty old town," according to Sid Davis in *Ah, Wilderness!* She previously taught at New Haven University after studying at Bennington College and Wesleyan University.
- LOUIS SHEAFFER is the author of the two-volume biography, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (1968), which won the George Freedley Award of the Theater Library Association as the best theater book of its year, and *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, winner of the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for biography. He is presently at work on a study of publications about O'Neill.
- GEORGE C. WHITE is President of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut and co-chair (with Barbara Gelb) of the Theater Committee for Eugene O'Neill, which is planning extensive celebrations of the O'Neill centenary in 1988.
- FREDERICK C. WILKINS is Chairman and Professor of English at Suffolk University, Vice President of the Eugene O'Neill Society and editor of the *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*. He organized the 1984 conference on "Eugene O'Neill--the Early Years" and, confident that lightning can strike twice, is planning a follow-up conference on the later years, which will be held at Suffolk University in late May or early June, 1986.