EUGENE O'NEILL:

A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO DEATH

by

John Dunnell

Pledged in full:

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Die at the right time: so teacheth Zarathustra.

--Friedrich Nietzsche,
Thus Spake Zarathustra

Why was I born without a skin, O God, that I must wear armor in order to touch or to be touched? . . . Or, rather, Old Graybeard, why the devil was I ever born at all?

--Eugene O'Neill,
The Great God Brown

It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish. As it is, I 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!

--Eugene O'Neill,
Long Day's Journey Into Night

In 1942, at the age of fifty-four, Eugene O'Neill wrote his next to last play, Hughie. It was a one-act play, part of the cycle of one-act plays, which O'Neill intended to write under the title of By Way of Obit, to probe further into his thesis that man must live by illusions if he wishes to live at all. Hughie was the only completed play of this cycle, and was not published until 1959, six years after his death. It is more of a short-story than a play: it is basically a monologue, and the story relies heavily on the descriptions and comments which O'Neill makes with practically every line. There is one such comment which must always be quoted when starting in on any thesis of O'Neill's life and work, because it depicts the skeleton structure of the kind of life which he lived. A night clerk is trying to occupy the lonely night hours by listening to and living with the sounds of the street.

> The clerk's mind remains in the street to greet the noise of a far-off El train. Its approach is pleasantly like a memory of hope; then it roars and rocks and rattles past the nearby corner, and the noise pleasantly deafens memory; then it recedes and dies, and there is something melancholy about that. But there is hope. Only so many El trains pass in one night, and each one passing leaves one less to pass, so the night recedes, too, until at last it must die and join all the other long nights in Nirvana, the Big Night of Nights. And that's life.[1]

It is the kind of life which Eugene O'Neill lived and which inspired his many great plays. For him, the goal of life was

no more tangible than the rumbling of the El. train, out of sight, far off in the distance. There were many such El. trains, but none for him to ride. They represented hope, but a "hopeless hope", a hope which he knew could never be achieved. It is hard to pin-point what O'Neill's exact hope in life was. We get the feeling in studying his life that he could never be satisfied with anything. But O'Neill's one hope and wish in life was to "belong" to something meaningful, something that would replace his family and his religion which were insufficient for his guidance. If man's need to live by illusions is one persistent theme in O'Neill's work (as I have already stated), man's need to belong is certainly another.

> O'Neill's most persistent theme is what has sometimes been called the theme of "belonging". From the earliest one-act plays of the sea down at least to Mourning Becomes Electra, his most nearly heroic figures have been those who, like Yank in The Hairy Ape or Ephraim Cabot in Desire Under the Elms, belong to something larger than themselves which confers dignity and importance upon them. . . . They are men of heroic stature, determined to find in the universe something besides themselves to which they can belong and be loyal. They are, in other words, tragic heroes.[2]

Whether or not your want to call O'Neill and his characters "tragic heroes", it is necessary to see them all vainly searching to "belong".

Why was it so difficult for O'Neill to "belong?" There are three reasons. The first is related to the problems which existed in his own family. The second is his lack

of love and his inability to find it. And the third is his lack of religion and his vain search for its replacement. These three reasons will be discussed fully later. Here it is only important to understand that these reasons are found throughout all of his plays and that O'Neill's problems are comparable to the problems of many of his characters. Indeed, all his plays can loosely be called autobiographical. Chronologically they are a record of his painful growth as a man and as an artist.[3] We shall be able to see O'Neill in the characters of Robert Mayo in Beyond the Horizon, Michael Cape in Welded, Eben Cabot in Desire Under the Elms, Dion Anthony in The Great God Brown, Reuben Light in Dynamo, John Loving in Days Without End, Larry Slade in The Iceman Cometh, and most clearly, Edmund Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night.

And now a second question must be asked: how did O'Neill, and the characters in his plays, overcome the frustrations of not being able to "belong?" What were their means of escape? Basically, there were five means of escape. The first is to be found in the worship of the Earth-Mother, and in the search for mother-love. Only in Woman, can man find the peace of true belonging.

> Because of her biological function, O'Neill conceives of woman as being at the very heart of the cosmic process. God the Father is to him a meaningless concept, a contradiction of the role of woman in furthering life and making it possible.[4]

We shall see later how this concept is used in his plays of

the "middle period",[5] such as _Desire Under the Elms_, _The Great God Brown_, _Dynamo_, _Strange Interlude_, and _Mourning Becomes Electra_.

The second means of escape rests in O'Neill's occasional belief in the eternal recurrence of life. This belief represents the one great optimistic view point of O'Neill in his plays. He felt that the fear of death could be combated only by believing that life goes on, even after death. Belief in eternal recurrence and the denial of death can be found in _The Fountain_, _Marco Millions_, _The Great God Brown_, and _Lazarus Laughed_.

The third route of escape lies in illusions fostered by dreams, or, more specifically, by pipe dreams. The pipe dream is a lie which allows man to escape reality and to live in a world of illusions. As Larry Slade says about the derelicts of Hope's Saloon in _The Iceman Cometh_, "The lie of a pipe dream is what gives life to the whole misbegotten mad lot of us, drunk or sober."[6] Pipe dreams play an important part in the late period of O'Neill's plays. In the early plays they appear in the form of obsessions, such as Captain Keeney's obsession for oil and adventure in _Ile_, and Captain Bartlett's overwhelming desire for treasure, in the play _Gold_.

A fourth escape for the haunted characters of Eugene O'Neill is illusion through drunkenness. Drunkenness was an important means of communication, of belonging, for O'Neill. During his stay at Jimmy-the-Priest's in the year 1911,

O'Neill was almost constantly on an alcoholic binge. It was at times like these when O'Neill was probably truly happy. He could forget his family and the rigors of sea life. He enjoyed communicating with low life--with the seamen, the drunks, and the prostitutes. "They helped him achieve a sense of identification with humanity. They wore no masks, and among them he needed no masks either."[7] As is so with all things important to O'Neill himself, drunkenness holds a prominent position in his plays.

Only the final escape held the ultimate solution to the problem of belonging, and that escape was death. The O'Neillian character's desire for death sets up a third important theme in O'Neill: "the maintenance of an equilibrum between life-sickness and death-fear."[8] The purpose and aim of this thesis is to explain this equilibrium and to show the conflict it presented in O'Neill's plays. The thesis will show how death was accepted in the early play, Bound East of Cardiff, but how the death-fear grew after this time. It will show O'Neill's attempts to combat the death-fear by using the other escapes just mentioned as an alternative to complete self-annihilation. It will prove that not until his last four plays--The Iceman Cometh, Long Day's Journey Into Night, Hughie, and A Moon for the Misbegotten--did O'Neill again embrace the death-wish realistically, feverently, and finally. And it should be remembered throughout that the problems and fate of the O'Neillian characters are strongly tied up in the life of the playwright himself, and that when the answer to the

problem of belonging finally comes--when the death-wish is finally and totally accepted--Eugene O'Neill will have found peace amidst his life of suffering.

Before examining O'Neill's search for peace in his plays, it is first important to understand the events in the playwright's life that influenced his outlook. To do this, we should examine two facets of O'Neill's life: his family problems and the events which took place between the years 1909 and 1912. The situations which occurred opened up the horrors of life to him and started him on a search for personal peace.

Eugene O'Neill was born on October 16, 1888, at Broadway and Forty-third Street in New York City. His birthplace was given the name of Times Square sixteen years later. Although O'Neill constantly cursed the day he was born, he always remained affectionate toward his birthplace--Times Square-- the heart of the theatre to which he was to dedicate his life.

In Long Day's Journey Into Night, Mary Tyrone tells her son Edmund:

> You were born afraid. Because I was so afraid to bring you into the world . . . afraid all the time I carried you. I knew something terrible would happen . . . . I should never have borne [you]. It would have been better for [your] sake.[9]

Whether or not Eugene's mother actually spoke these words to him, we can see that O'Neill must have felt his mother's

despair over his birth. She was afraid because she had recently lost her second son, Edmund. She was afraid because of the pain she experienced at the time of Eugene's birth. And she was afraid because she had no permanent home to raise her new-born child in, since her husband, an actor, was moving around the country with his family on one-night stands. Being a sensitive child, O'Neill inherited some of his mother's fears, which took the form of a fear of life in general.

Eugene's father, James O'Neill, was a famous actor. His career, however, was stifled by his continuous appearance in The Count of Monte Cristo, in which he appeared more than six thousand times over a period of twenty-five years. He married Ella Quinlan, an attractive young girl who was studying to be a nun. She was attracted by the handsome actor and by the glamorous life he led, but soon found that it was no life for a woman who wanted a home and a family. Eugene was born in a hotel room during one of his father's short stands in New York. For a cradle, his mother pulled the top drawer of the bureau out half way and lined it with a quilt. His birthday was "damp and gray, with an intermittent light rains,"[10] and undoubtedly fog--a symbol which appears again and again in his plays to depict man's empty, lost feeling, his inability to belong.

In his early years, Eugene's family life was far from normal. His father was demanding: he wanted to put Eugene on the stage as he did his eldest son, Jamie. But Eugene

had no ambition in this direction. Also, his father's miserliness and his sporadic drunkenness disturbed the sensitive Eugene, and there grew a sub-conscious hatred for his father. Eugene's mother, because of her pain at the time of his birth, had taken morphine and had become addicted to it. Eugene was haunted all through his life by the thought that he was responsible for his mother's condition. He therefore tended to sympathize with his mother and take her side against his father. The mother-image plays an important part in many of O'Neill's plays. We see near-incestuous relationships between mother and son in plays such as Desire Under the Elms and Mourning Becomes Electra, which are attempts on the part of the playwright to express his love for his mother. In Strange Interlude and Dynamo, the mother is worshipped as a God.

O'Neill's elder brother, Jamie, had a great influence upon him. In Long Day's Journey Into Night, Jamie Tyrone, in his typically drunken manner, tells his young brother:

> Why shouldn't I be proud? Hell, its purely selfish. Your reflect credit on me. I've had more to do with bringing you up than anyone. I wised you up about women, so you'd never be a fall guy, or make any mistakes you didn't want to make! And who steered you on to reading poetry first? Swinburne, for example? I did! And because I once wanted to write, I planted it in your mind that someday you'd write! Hell, you're more than my brother. I made you! You're my Frankenstein![11]

It was through Jamie that Eugene caught the seed of rebellion and came into contact with low life. It was Jamie's open hatred for his father that magnified Eugene's feeling toward him. It was Jamie's over-indulgence in liquor and

women that brought Eugene to his low ebb in the years between 1909 and 1912.

If Jamie was one great influence on Eugene, what caused his loss of faith in Catholicism was another. This event came about when he was only twelve and was spurred on by his reading of Victor Hugo and by the pressure on him by his parents to attend Mount Saint Vincent, a Catholic school.

> He could not read the works of Victor Hugo without learning that some people regarded the Catholic Church, not as a simple projection of Christ's teachings as Papa and Mama did, but rather as a tool of oppression that kept the masses servile by means of a mixture of superstitious fear and idolatry. He couldn't forget either that it was to a Catholic school, to the care of nuns and priests, that his parents had exiled him.[12]

Most of O'Neill's plays, whether directly or indirectly, deal with the problem of man's search for some kind of spiritual faith. O'Neill stated his interest in this way:

> "I am not interested in plays which are merely about the relation of man to man. I am interested in nothing except the relation of man to God." [13]

It would probably be correct to say that, by God, O'Neill means anything in the universe which is greater than man himself--hence his occasional worship of the Earth-Mother.

The years from 1909 to 1912, when O'Neill was in his early twenties, were important ones in shaping the man as a playwright. In these four years, four important events took place in O'Neill's life: his short-lived marriage to Kathleen Jenkins, his various sea voyages and adventures,

his tenure at Jimmy-the-Priests, and his contracting tuberculosis and commitment to Gaylord Farm.

By 1909, following his brother's example, Eugene was already leading the life of a Broadway rake, waiting at stage doors to pick up the newest chorus girl. Prostitutes held a great attraction for O'Neill. He readily accepted their function in society and was interested in studying their souls. Prostitutes were to play important roles in many of his plays, and in The Great God Brown, one is elevated to the majestic position of O'Neill's Earth-Mother. Eugene enjoyed the company of the racy Broadway tarts and would have been continually absorbed in their embrace had it not been for his encounter with Kathleen Jenkins. She was young, attractive, and respectable, being the daughter of a prominent New York financier. They met, and she promptly fell in love with this dark, moody, but shy young man--shy because he felt awkward in the presence of a respectable girl. He soon fell in love with her, but, as Arthur and Barbara Gelb put it, "he was less in love with her than with the romantic image of her love for him." [14] This, I think, is the correct way of expressing O'Neill's relationship toward Kathleen Jenkins in 1909. All through life he felt desperately in need of love, although he did not know how to give it himself.

On October 2, 1909, O'Neill married Kathleen. One week later Eugene set sail for Honduras on his father's suggestion that he become a miner. There seems to be no regret on Eugene's part for leaving his wife. He was not thoroughly

convinced he should have married her in the first place, but she had been very persuasive in the matter. This sea voyage was the first of many for Eugene, and it became for him an escape from the authority of the land. On the ocean waves, far out of sight of land , Eugene could really live for the first time in his young life. Edumund Tyrone explains the ecstatic feeling that O'Neill felt on the ocean in this passage from Long Day's Journey Into Night:

> I lay on the bowsprit, facing astern with the water foaming into spume under me, the masts with every sail white of the moonlight, towering high above me. I became drunk with the beauty and the singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself,--actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself![15]

And then in Anna Christie, O'Neill puts into the mouth of Burke the meaning the sea had for him:

> The sea is the only life for a man with guts in him isn't afraid of his own shadow! 'Tis only on the sea he's free, and him roving the face of the world, seeing all things, and not giving a damn for saving up money, or stealing from his friends, or any of the black tricks that a landlubber'd waste his life on.[16]

On the sea, Eugene felt this sense of freedom, which gave him something to belong to outside of his own dark soul. But physically, he was unable to withstand the hard labor and poor food aboard ship, and often was forced

to recuperate for months on land until he had recovered. These so-called "rest stops" always took place at Jimmy-the-Priests, a low dive on the waterfront in New York City. Jimmy-the-Priest's was a three-dollar-a-month rooming house and bar, which was infested with the vermin of the world. Prostitutes, dope addicts, drunkards, and all those who wished nothing more out of life, collected here. It is depicted accurately in The Iceman Cometh and described in this way:

> It's the No Chance Saloon. It's Bedrock Bar, The End of the Line Cafe, The Bottom of the Sea Rathskeller! Don't you notice the beautiful calm in the atmosphere? That's because it's the last harbor. No one here has to worry about where they're going next, because there is no farther they can go. 17

It was here, in the year 1911, that Eugene O'Neill reached the low ebb of his life, but at the same time felt a true sense of belonging. The bums and prostitutes, as I have mentioned before, were his real friends and were later people he defended in his plays.

O'Neill's death-wish stems from the rubbish of Jimmy-the-Priests. His life-sickness was heightened by the suicide of two of his friends, a seaman stoker named Driscoll, and James Finlater Byth, his roommate at Jimmy's. Eugene met Driscoll at Jimmy-the-Priest's in the middle of 1911, and both signed aboard a ship together. Driscoll, a huge Irishman with a red beard, was by profession a ship's fireman and a good one. The sea and the dirty, sweaty stoke-hole of the

ship were his life, the thing to which he belonged. O'Neill admired him tremendously for his strength and for his dedication to the sea. It was Driscoll who made it possible for him to feel at home on the water. To him, Driscoll was the epitome of a man who "belonged." But his faith in the sea, and in the ability truly to "belong," was shattered one day when he learned that Driscoll had killed himself by plunging off his ship in a thick fog. This event had a profound effect, not only on plays in which Driscoll himself appears (The Hairy Ape as Yank and S.S. Glencairn, under his own name), but in many other plays as well. O'Neill's love for the sea was partially shattered (in Anna Christie the sea is referred to as "that ole davil, sea"), and fog became for him the symbol for the sub-conscious barrier that kept people from belonging.

Jimmy Byth was James O'Neill's press agent, when Eugene first met him, and reached the low point of his life at the same time and in the same place as did O'Neill. In fact, in 1911, Jimmy's life exactly paralleled O'Neill's. He had turned to drink because, as he told it, he had found his wife in bed with a staff officer. Eugene always suspected that this was just an excuse which Jimmy used to justify himself--that it was Jimmy's drinking that had broken up the marriage.[18] (This idea has a prominent place in The Iceman Cometh, as we shall see later). Together, Jimmy and Eugene would drink Jimmy-the-Priest's dry and then stumble upstairs to their room to sleep it off, so that they could start

in again the next night. Jimmy achieved the nickname of "Jimmy Tomorrow" because every night he was drunk he would swear that tomorrow he would reform. But he never did reform, and eventually he did not even have the strength to talk of "tomorrow". He realized that his case of life-sickness could be cured only by death, and one day he leaped from a fire-escape outside his bedroom window to the pavement below.

Jimmy's suicide made Eugene's life-sickness even more unbearable, but the final blow and the one which helped to fashion his morbidness and his discolored outlook on life, was very shortly to come. His wife, Kathleen Jenkins, now with a son by him, began to give up all hope of his return and filed for a divorce. Her lawyers were able to persuade O'Neill to set up legitimate grounds for divorce, which in New York State had to be eye-witness proof of adultery. On December 29, 1911, O'Neill entered a house of prostitution with three witnesses. The following passage, quoted from Doris Alexander's biography of Eugene O'Neill, is enough to explain why this degrading display made him a victim of the death-wish and gives us an understanding as to the pessimism toward life that breeds throughout his plays.

> Eugene had been with prostitutes many times, but now he was filled with horror. Degradation before witneesses appalled him. Always the prostitute had symbolized for him the destruction of love, and now the symbol became unendurably real. He might have been the husband of a fine girl, living like Papa and Mama in affectionate

> companionship, but he had destroyed that possibility, and now the spectacle of Eugene O'Neill in bed with a parlor house pig--to be witnessed and sworn to by Warren, Mullen and Archibald-- seemed to epitomize his whole life.
> When he left the place, he was sick with self-loathing, and in the days that followed his sickness grew. He brooded on the senseless waste his life had been. He kept thinking of the scene with the prostitute and of Jimmy Byth's plunge from the fire escape. The image of death--peace--annihilation became increasingly alluring.
> Finally he acted. He went out and bought veronal tablets, and in the same grimy room from which the last cough of the lunger next door had been heard before he was carried off to the morgue, in the same grimy room from which Jimmy Byth had hurled himself to the sidewalk, Eugene swallowed all of the tablets in the bottle, lay down, and sank into oblivion.[19]

O'Neill, of course, did not die, then, in the real sense of the work. But for the rest of his life death dwelt within his soul and pounded at him for release. Death would always fascinate him because he had been so close to it. It would always be the final answer, the final stop, in his search for peace. Although he would search for peace and a sense of belonging in the other ways I have mentioned (specifically the belief in eternal life, mother-love, and illusion by dream and drunkenness), he would always keep his preoccupation with death as a final escape from the life-sickness which continued in him.

Only one more thing about his life need now be said. While at Jimmy-the-Priests, he picked up tuberculosis, and on Christmas Eve, 1912, he entered Gaylord Farm Sanitarium for a six-month period. His tuberculosis was important to his development as a playwright, according to Dr. Philip Weissman of the sanitarium.

> According to Dr. Weissman, O'Neill's enforced inactivity as a result of tuberculosis prevented him--and protected him--from acting out in life his unconscious reactions to these drives [the drives that brought O'Neill to his low moral ebb], and impelled him to express them in his plays.[20]

And so it is to the plays themselves which we now must turn to see how O'Neill handled the problems that were gnawing away at his life--problems that were persistent throughout his career as a playwright.

In the two years after he was released from Gaylord Farm, Eugene O'Neill wrote a great deal which gives us an inkling to his death-wish, but which deserves little mention because of its lack of merit. The first thing of interest which he wrote was not a play, but rather a poem entitled "The Lay of the Singer's Fall", which appeared in the New London Telegraph on November 27, 1912. It was actually written just before he went to the sanitorium. It dealt with the story of a singer "born in a land of gold" whose singing gave joy to the people around him. But then he is attacked by the Devil of Doubt who "breathed his poison in every pore" of the young singer. The Devil sets about to destroy the singer's faith in three ways. First, he tells him that "the truth of truths is there is no truth" and destroys the singer's faith in what is true. Second, he ruins love by saying that "the greatest of loves is merely lust." And finally he destroys the singer's faith in the divine kingdom of God by saying

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"there is nothing sure after death, but death." And O'Neill ends the poem with these lines from the lips of the singer:

> When Truth and Love and God are dead
> It is time, full time, to die!"
> And the Devil in triumph, chuckled low,
> "There is always suicide,
> It's the only logical thing I know."
> --And the life of the singer died.[21]

It is certainly true that at this time in his life, O'Neill had lost his faith in all three: truth, love, and religion, and the presence of death to replace them appears even in his earliest work.

O'Neill's first play of any consequence (and I am using that term loosely) was _Fog_, which was written late in 1913. It is important, I think, for three reasons: (1) It contains for the first time the dark, brooding, poetic character that appears in most of his later plays, a counterpart of the playwright himself. (2) The symbol of fog as a veil of man's despair is first introduced. And (3) important for our own purpose, it contains a statement concerning the blessing of death. The story revolves around four people--two men, a mother and her child--trapped in a life-boat in the fog. The Poet represents the brooding figure of O'Neill, the dreamer, the man of thought; he is described in the stage directions as having a face "oval with big dark eyes and a black moustache and black hair pushed back from his high forehead"[22]-- a perfect description of O'Neill himself. The Poet is the father of such characters as Robert Mayo, Juan Ponce de Leon, Dion Anthony, Reuben Light, Orin

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Mannon, Eben Cabot, and Edmund Tyrone. Opposed to him is the Businessman, who founded a race of materialists which include Andrew Mayo, Captain Bartlett, Brutus Jones, Billy Brown, Marco Polo, and the Harford family. It is the dreamers--the characters who represent O'Neill himself--that are searching to belong and who have the sub-conscious death-wish.

The symbol of fog is, as I have mentioned before, a very important one in O'Neill's plays, and is, in fact, the only persistent piece of symbolism that O'Neill used. It represents the unknown, the mysterious, the hand of fate in life and serves to hide man from his life source--the need to belong. As we analyze O'Neill's plays, we should be conscious of how the playwright uses the fog image, and remember that the presence of fog gives rise to incurable life-sickness and that its absence, in scenes where it well belongs, is a sign of hope.

Finally, Fog is important because of its outlook on death. As the play opens only two men's voices can be heard; they cannot be distinguished because of the thickness of the fog. The first voice turns out to be that of the Business Man; the second, that of the Poet. From their conversation, we learn that the child is dead.

> 2nd Voice-- (After a long pause) So you think the child's death was a terrible thing?
> 1st Voice-- (In astonishment) Of course. Why? Don't you?
> 2nd Voice-- No.
> 1st Voice-- But you said just a minute ago that--

> 2nd Voice-- I was thinking of the grief and despair of the mother. But death was kind to the child. It saved him many a long year of sordid drudgery.[23]

This is certainly not an affirmative outlook on life, and we shall seldom see anything but a negative attitude toward life on the part of O'Neill. I believe that he truly felt the child was better off dead, so that it would not have to experience the gruesome apparitions of life as O'Neill had done. The dead child stands for a spiritual triumph over fate;[24] its crying, which is unheard by the Poet and the Businessman, summons help and thereby saves their lives. The fog lifts because death has triumphed over fate.

However, the "germ" of the death-wish, and all that is best about O'Neill's writing, appear in his first play ever to be produced, Bound East for Cardiff. O'Neill himself said that "in it can be seen, or felt, the germ of the spirit, life-attitude, etc., of all my more important future work."[25] The story is a simple one: the seaman, Yank, has had a bad fall and is dying from internal injuries aboard the British tramp steamer Glencairn. If the ship could reach Cardiff in time, Yank could receive the medical treatment he needs and his life could undoubtedly be saved. But there is too much sea, too much fog between the Glencairn and port. Yank, a strong man of action, must therefore be sacrificed before the hand of fate. The important thing to notice is Yank's attitude toward his impending death. He is quite naturally scared; he does not understand

death. And yet at the same time he is resigned to it and feels that perhaps it is the best solution to the problems of his life. In his youth he enjoyed the life of the sea, the hard work for little pay, poor food, drunken brawls, and cheap women. Moreover, the sea was undoubtedly an escape for him--an escape from the realities of life which he did not want to face. But in time, these realities caught up with him on the very decks of the Glencairn. His pipe dream--the illusion which makes life worthwhile for him--has now changed. He tells his friend Driscoll:

> It must be great to stay on dry land all your life and have a farm with a house of your own with cows and pigs and chickens, 'way in the middle of the land where yuh'd never smell the sea or see a ship. It must be great to have a wife, and kids to play with at night after supper when your work was done. It must be great to have a home of your own. Drisc . . . . I dunno, this last year has seemed rotten, and I've had a hunch I'd quit--with you, of course--and we'd save our coin, and go to Canada or Argentina or some place and git a farm, just a small one, just enough to live on. I never told yuh this, 'cause I thought you'd laugh at me.[26]

This change of heart toward the sea parallels O'Neill's own. In Playwrights of the New American Theatre, Thomas Dickinson gives an answer to a sailors ambivalence toward the sea:

> The sailor is by nature a man who "yearns beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down." The sea is his means of escape; but before he ever reaches the sea escape is in his blood. Escape is the key to his character and to his sins. And so he dreams no less while on the sea than while on the land.

> On the sea he dreams of far harbors, and the strange chances that will bring fortune into his lap; he dreams of booze and of women. Nothing is more clear than that in these characters that dream "beyond the horizon" we have the key to the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of human nature, its most sublime victories, its most degraded defeats. 27

We can see here the inference that man's dreams are never wholly satisfying to him. When one has achieved his dream, he must dream further in order to keep an illusion to strive for. Yank's dreams have reached the realm of the impossible. Since he is a sailor through and through, he will never be able to have the farm he desires. It is "not in the cards," so to speak. The problem is that he realizes the futility of his dream, but clings to it because he sees no other alternative; he is left clutching at a straw, at what O'Neill called "hopeless hope.". He had this to say about the importance of clinging to dreams:

> . . . Any victory we win is never the one we dream of winning. The point is that life itself is nothing. It is the dream that keeps us fighting, willing--loving! Achievement, in the narrow sense of possession, is a stale finale. The dreams that can be completely realized are not worth dreaming. The higher the dream, the more impossible it is to realize it fully. 28

As Yank lies dying, he sees the alternative to his futile dream--his own extinction from life. Like O'Neill himself, Yank has no religion and therefore no anticipation of a life to come in heaven or hell. He simply says: "I ain't never had religion; but I know whatever it is what

comes after it can't be no worser'n this." [29] Yank begins to realize that death cannot be any worse than the life he has led, and so he resigns himself to it. He begins to feel that the fog which shrouds the ship is seeping into his cabin, infesting his very soul--the fog which bars him from achieving his dreams.

As he dies, Yank seems to have a vision of what death is; he mutters to Driscoll that he sees "a pretty lady dressed in black." [30] This is the first of many attempts on the part of O'Neill to depict in his plays what perhaps death is like. These depictions are always optimistic, always a more cheery picture than he paints of life. I feel that O'Neill was trying to reconcile some fear of death he undoubtedly had. At the time of his suicide, his drunken condition was undoubtedly such that he was not always in complete control of himself. A sub-conscious desire for death would, still, of course, have to be present, since even drunken people will not act violently against their inner nature. But when writing plays, O'Neill was always sober; he would never touch a drop of liquor until a play was completed. At such times, I would imagine that the fear of death was omni-present in O'Neill's mind. That he was a man whose soul breathed death and whose mind bred fear-- that there was a conflict in him between death and the fear of it--is, to me, certainly evident in his plays, and we shall see more examples as we move along.

When Yank dies, the fog lifts. The barrier which stood between Yank and his happiness is lifted. His death seems to have given a meaning to life. As Doris Falk puts it, "death provides an enlightenment of life." [31] Death provides a solution for the problems of life. We are led to feel at the end of the play that Yank has achieved peace. Has O'Neill? Not yet, for he has a long journey of searching in front of him until all his fear is lost, until he can achieve ultimate peace. Bound East for Cardiff is a blunt statement of O'Neill's problem with a sound solution at the end. We shall see only a few occasions in O'Neill's plays where he tackles this problem so postively and at the same time realistically, until his last four plays, written at a time when death was moving fast upon him. Then the answer was vital, the solution had to be reached.

With only two exceptions, O'Neill was never to deal again with the problems of life-sickness, disillusionment, and an acceptance of death as realistically as he had done in Bound East for Cardiff, until his later plays. The two exceptions, are Beyond the Horizon and Desire Under the Elms, and even these, I feel, are not true expressions of O'Neill's death-wish, because they are at least one step removed from the events which the playwright himself lived through. I shall be able to explain this more clearly as we turn to Beyond the Horizon, which is the next play in the O'Neill

canon which we must examine. For here, as in Bound East For Cardiff, death once again proves to be an enlightenment of life, an escape, a solution to the problem of life-sickness and disillusionment.

Beyond the Horizon is essentially the story of Robert Mayo, a young farm lad of twenty-three, who would rather read than work, and who has a passionate desire to learn what is "beyond the horizon". The setting of the play, as O'Neill originally planned it, was to alternate between the interior of the farm house and the open fields of the farm, to give an effect first of isolation, then of freedom, and so on. Because of the difficulty in changing sets, this idea was modified somewhat. The play, as we read it today, opens on a road at sunset. Robert (who, incidentally, is described as looking like O'Neill himself, with "a touch of the poet about him expressed in his high forehead and wide, dark eyes" 32) is telling his brother Andrew of his impending sea voyage that will satisfy his romantic notions of what lies beyond the confines of the Mayo farm. Andrew looks at the practical side of this voyage and sees the chances of his brother becoming a millionaire. But these are not Robert's reasons for going. He says:

> Supposing I was to tell you that it's just Beauty that's calling me, the beauty of the far off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East which lures me in the books I've read, the need of freedom of great wide spaces, the joy of wandering on and on--in quest of the secret which is hidden over there, beyond the horizon? 33

Robert's desire for freedom sounds similar (although diametrically opposed in objective) to Yank's longing to settle down. With Robert there seems to be no reason why his desire cannot be fulfilled; death is not hanging over his head as it was hanging over Yank's. But, as happens in many of O'Neill's earlier plays, the hand of fate steps in. Ruth, who is betrothed to Andrew, tells Robert that it is him she loves. She persuades him to stay, marry her, and run the farm. Since he has always secretly loved her, he falls victim to her demands. Andrew, out of spite and shame, takes Robert's place and goes to sea. When we next see the two brothers three years later, Robert has aged greatly. It has always interested and amused me to notice how quickly O'Neill's protagonists age in such a short period of time. O'Neill himself did not age physically at any such fantastic rate. Perhaps, inwardly he felt himself getting old and slowly decaying. I feel this is probably true: a lot went on inside of that man's body which is revealed only through his plays. Anyway, Robert is leading a life of disillusionment; he is not cut out for farm-work, and Ruth is constantly criticizing him for being such a weakling. They have a two-year-old daughter, who is the one light of Robert's life. Andrew, on the other hand, has prospered by his trip--not aesthetically but financially. He has great plans for running a large farm in Argentina. In the third act, after five years have passed, Robert is dying of tuberculosis. His daughter has already died; he

has nothing more to live for--no love, no dreams. At the end, the dying Robert staggers out of the farmhouse to greet the rising sun. His last words to his brother are:

> You musn't feel sorry for me. Don't you see I'm happy at last--free--free! freed from the farm--free to wander on and on--eternally. . . . It isn't the end. It's a free beginning--the start of my voyage! I've won to my trip-- the right of release--beyond the horizon![34]

And he dies as the sun rises over the horizon. This is one of the few endings of an O'Neill play in which the sun rises or the fog lifts. This would tend to make us feel that O'Neill is espousing some hope. But hope for what? Life has been cruel to Robert Mayo; it has shattered all his dreams. For him, death is an escape, a blessing. When he dies the sun rises. Could O'Neill be saying that whatever comes after death will be any better than what came before? Certainly, it cannot be any worse. But death here seems to be a feeble escape, a poor reward for the wasted life Robert has led. He accepts death because it is upon him, because he has no choice in the matter. Death is not the horizon he wishes to go beyond, but he is forced to accept it and make the best of it. This play, therefore, does not seem to me to deal positively with death as a solution of life-sickness and disillusionment. Bound East for Cardiff is more positive than this. Yank at first expresses his fear of death, but then accepts it as a solution to the problems of life. When he dies, he knows it is the answer because he sees the "pretty lady in black." On the other

hand, when Robert learns that he is about to die, he is so life-weary that he simply doesn't care: death is neither a solution nor a deterrent. His enthusiasm for achieving his goal in death at the end of the play seems hollow to me. We have seen this same enthusiasm at the beginning of the play, and we have seen it snuffed out by the hand of fate. Why, therefore, should we believe his hopes at the end of the play will be fulfilled? The sun may rise, but it soon must set again.

Beyond the Horizon is one of O'Neill's more contrived works and for this reason I do not feel it is an important play in terms of the playwright's inner thoughts and feelings. The characters of Robert and Andrew, although counterparts of O'Neill and his brother, do not have that warm familiarity as do the characters that O'Neill knew so well and wrote about in the Glencairn plays and in The Iceman Cometh and Long Day's Journey Into Night. The structure of alternating indoor and outdoor scenes is definitely contrived and so is the situation. It lacks the intimacy of those plays which really deal with O'Neill's own problems and friends.

I could go through each O'Neill play in a similar fashion, pointing out why I do or why I do not think that it is important in terms of the playwright's search for peace and death-wish, but this would be not only boring but unnecessary--boring because some of O'Neill's plays are, and unnecessary because many of his plays say the same things

in even worse ways. Many, I feel do not require lengthy discussion, and I shall only point out as briefly as possible their significance in the overall canon. The rest of the early plays (which I take up through _The Hairy Ape_), with the exception of _The Hairy Ape_ itself, I shall deal with in this way. In the "middle period", we enter O'Neill's period of far-flung experimentation. In this period there are four plays in which death is embraced positively, although not always realistically: _The Fountain_, _Desire Under the Elms_, _Lazarus Laughed_, and _Days Without End_. His last four plays also have this positive quality, but as I shall later prove, they are also realistic. It is this positive quality in O'Neill's plays--the feeling that despite the futility of life, man is able to find some shred of peace--that caused Barrett Clark to call O'Neill an optimistic writer. He says:

> In _Desire Under the Elms_, _The Fountain_, and _The Iceman Cometh_, O'Neill was again to envisage the tragedy of futility, the heartbreaking failure of man under the pressure of inexplicable forces, yet triumphing not in spite of but because of the obstacles that seem to be, but are not really, tragic in a conventional and material sense. It is for this reason that I have always considered O'Neill at bottom an optimist, a yea-sayer. He never leaves us feeling that life is not worth living. If he were as pessimistic as he is often said to be, in the first place he would not have gone to the trouble of trying to prove the futility of existence.[35]

I think Mr. Clark has gone a little too far when he says that O'Neill _never_ leaves us feeling that life is not worth living. In his later plays, life seems pretty worthless.

But yet there is that touch of optimism in O'Neill--an optimism that goes a long way in proving my point--that death, whether feared, loved, or seen as the gateway to another life, is a solution to the problem of life-suffering. It may sound like a pessimistic view to us--to find supreme happiness and fulfillment in self-oblivion--but to O'Neill, who harbored a death-wish in his soul, it was undoubtedly, although probably unconsciously, satisfying.

The Straw, written in 1918 and 1919, follows Beyond the Horizon in order of composition, and is one of those plays which show their characters finding momentary satisfaction by clutching at "straw"--at hope which is in fact hopeless. One of the characters says of this situation:

> Isn't everything we know--just that--when you think of it? But there must be something back of it--some promise of fulfillment--somehow--somewhere--in the spirit of hope itself.[36]

This gives a good example of Mr. Clark's touch of optimism. It takes place in a tuberculosis sanatorium, modeled on the one to which O'Neill was committed. A young newspaperman, named Stephan, leaves the sanatorium cured, ready to start out on a career of writing (like O'Neill himself). Another patient, Eileen Carmody, has been able to live only by her love for Stephan. In order to make her last months of life bearable and happy, Stephan returns and pretends to love her. Whether she really believes him, or whether she is merely living on an illusion

of his love for her, we do not know. If the latter is true (and I believe it is, since it is more in keeping with O'Neill's beliefs), then the situation is similar to that of O'Neill's next play, Gold, in which things are carried one step further. In this play, Captain Bartlett, obsessed by a desire to find gold and half-crazed by thirst on a deserted island, forces himself to believe that the chest of brass junk his crew has discovered is really gold. Two members of the crew try to persuade him that he is mistaken, and in order to keep his dream in tact, he has them killed. Before they are rescued, Captain Bartlett and his crew bury the chest and vow some day to return and claim it. As the years go by, the illusion of gold has become so strong that Captain Bartlett sends out an expedition to find the chest. His madness also turns his son mad with the same desire, until one day when he shows his son a bracelet he has salvaged from the island. The son, not as far gone as his father, realizes that it is worthless. The spell is broken and Captain Bartlett dies on the spot. As he dies an "expression of strange peace" [37] comes over his face. Illusion has possessed the captain's life and turned him mad; only death, O'Neill seems to say, can release him and bring him ultimate peace.

Anna Christie has often been criticized for its contrived happy ending. There is no doubt that O'Neill reconciled the two lovers in order to make a popular and financial success out of his play, but the ending is still

not completely happy. There is an air of foreboding about it. With the lovers rejoicing in the background, old Chris turns toward the sea and says:

> Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time. You can't see where you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea--she knows![38]

This seems to be a warning for what was to come. Fog threatened to blanket the O'Neill protagonists from now on. After this play O'Neill was to concentrate on finding new forms which would also help him illustrate his problems better. O'Neill once wrote in a letter to George Jean Nathan:

> The playwright today must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it--the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfying new one for the surviving primitive religious instinct, to find a meaning for life in, and to comfort its fear of death with. It seems to me that anyone trying to do big work nowadays must have this big subject behind all the little subjects of his plays or novels, or he is simply trying to scribble around the surface of things.[39]

O'Neill's many experimental forms went a long way toward satisfying the requirements for such a theme and toward satisfying his personal questions and problems of life.

O'Neill left behind the realm of realistic writing temporarily in 1920 with The Emperor Jones. The play has generally been termed expressionistic, mainly because of its visual and sound effects. The play deals with a Negro's climb to success and respect in reverse. Brutus Jones,

an ex-Pullman conductor, has been hailed by the natives of an island in the West Indies as their Emperor. Using his position for selfish reasons, Jones exploits the silver mines in the area. The natives finally rebel against Jones' authority, and he is forced to flee. As he flees through the jungle, he tears away his clothes, the marks of the civilized man, and becomes more and more primitive.

Jones is an unimportant character for our purposes, since he stands directly opposed to the typical O'Neillian character: Jones is a materialist, O'Neill a poet. But they are similar (and significantly so) in that both are haunted by the same thing--their past. Jones is pursued and defeated, not by his rebellious subjects, but by his primitive past and by the hundreds of years of persecution that have been dealt to his race.[40] O'Neill, as we have seen, was also pursued by his past--the past of his family, friends, and the events that made up his early life. O'Neill had dragged Jones down by the same collar that was choking him--the inevitability of past history which could not be altered.

The Hairy Ape is another one of O'Neill's first experimental attempts. Barrett Clark calls it " a symbolic fantasy, half-realistic and half grotesque."[41] This play ends the first period of O'Neill's writing which I would call the period of the "futile quest.".[42] In all the plays I have mentioned up to now (plus the rest of the one-act plays and _Diffirent_ and _The First Man_, which I have

not mentioned), the protagonist has been striving to belong and has been searching for some goal. In every instance he has failed to reach this goal, and has many times been forced to accept death as the cure for life-sickness. The approach to death is therefore not completely positive, although Bound East for Cardiff is the most positive attempt O'Neill made to this point to accept death. In the next period of plays to come, O'Neill tried to give his characters some answer to life-sickness other than death--belief in eternal recurrence, romantic love, and mother-love. After The Hairy Ape, O'Neill was to spend ten years trying to find a positive acceptance of life, rather than a denial of it.

In The Hairy Ape, we find a man who is at first satisfied with his life because he feels that he belongs, but gradually learns that he does not belong at all. Yank (a different character from the one in Bound East for Cardiff) is a giant of a man who resembles a "hairy ape." He works in the close hot quarters of the stokehole on a fashionable transatlantic liner. He is both a man of action and a thinker. He is a great bully, but at the same time his uneducated mind is active, and he often assumes the position of the sculpture of Rodin's The Thinker when contemplating. He is a portrait of O'Neill's friend Driscoll, a man who also felt he belonged to the stokehole of a ship, but who unexpectedly killed himself. In The Hairy Ape, O'Neill speculates as to what might have happened to his friend.

Yank loves the hard, dirty work of the stokehole. He feels that he is important because he is a part of what makes the ship move. He is satisfied with his life because he feels that he belongs to something. A great talker and a petty philosopher, Yank explains to the other stokers why they are more important than the passengers they serve:

> Say! What's dem slobs in de foist cabin got to do wit us? We're better men dan dey are, ain't we? Sure! One of us guys could clean up de whole mob wit one mit. Put one of 'em down here for one watch in de stokehole, what'd happen? Dey'd carry him off on a stretcher. Dem boids don't amount to nothin! Dey're just baggage. Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? Well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't. Dat's all.[43]

Yank does not feel that he belongs only because he makes the ship move, but also because he is part of the ship itself. He believes that he is the steel of the ship; he is the strength that makes it move. He says:

> I'm at the bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin" foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves! It--dat's me!--de new dat's moiderin' de old. . . . I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel--steel--steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it![44]

Yank becomes infuriated when Miss Douglas, a wealthy young passenger, visits the stokehole. She is repulsed by Yank's appearance and calls him a beast. He is furious because he has been insulted by a person who does not even "belong". Later he learns that her father is the president of a large steel corporation and that his steel has been used to build

the ship on which Yank works. Yank slowly begins to realize that it is not he that belongs, but rather Miss Douglas and her father. While in jail in New York City for disturbing the peace, Yank has a chance to think over his predicament:

> Sure--her old man--president of de Steel Trust--makes half de steel in de world--steel--where I tought I belonged--drivin' trou--movin'--in dat--to make her--and cage me in for her to spit on! Christ! [45]

But he is determined not to give in to the girl's father without a fight. He tries to join the Industrial Workers of the World, an organization which he thinks is set up to undermine capitalism by violent means. It is no such organization, and Yank is thrown out. He begins to realize that there is no place to which he can truly belong. He says:

> I'm a busted Ingersoll, dat's what: Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel and the woild owns me. Aw, hell! I can't see--it's all dark, get me? It's all wrong! [46]

And then, asked by a policeman what he is doing, Yank answers in a typically hopeless O'Neillian fashion: "Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge. Write it in de blotter. I was born, get me!" [47]

Yank is probably the most pathetic of all O'Neill's protagonists. His dense mind had brought him to the conclusion that he was a part of something. Now that something

has been shattered, and since he lacks the ability to reason effectively, he is at a loss for what to do. He finally visits a zoo and sees a gorilla in a cage. He sees the resemblance between the animal and himself. Perhaps, he thinks, the ape and I belong together. We are both outcasts, locked up because we are a menace to humanity. But than he begins to realize that even the gorilla is better off than he is, that even the gorilla belongs. He says to the animal:

> It's dis way, what I'm drivin' at. Youse can sit and dope dream in the past, green woods, de jungle and de rest of it. Den yuh belong and dey don't. Den yuh can laugh at them, see? Yuh're de champ of de woild. But me--I ain't got no past to tink in, nor nothin' that's comin', on'y what's now--and dat don't belong. Sure, you're de best off! You can't tink, can yuh? Yuh can't talk neider. But I can make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin'--a'most git away wit it--a'most!--and dat's where de joker comes in. (He laughs) I ain't on oith and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call hell, huh? But you, yuh're at de bottom. You belong! Sure! You're de on'y one in de woild dat does, yuh lucky stiff![48]

The gorilla is able to belong, says Yank, because he dreams about his past, and it gives him an illusion to cling to. Yank, as Edwin Engel, Professor of English at the University of Michigan, points out, is destroyed because he tries to think instead of dream.[49] Thinking teaches him more about reality, where it is impossible to belong because of the chaos of life. Dreaming, as the ape does, is the only means of belonging. This idea sets the scene for the

derelicts of Hope's Saloon in The Iceman Cometh.

At the end of the play, Yank lets the ape out of his cage, in hopes that the two of them can find some sort of life together. But the gorilla crushes Yank to death, and O'Neill ends with the thought, "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs." [50] Death, which Yank did not even consider, is the final answer to his search for belonging. In many of the plays to come, we shall see that the characters understand this fact and accept death more positively. Yank's story is O'Neill's life in a nutshell: O'Neill as a child felt secure among his family, but that security was shattered, and he spent the rest of his life searching for a substitute.

In 1921, O'Neill turned his attention back to something he had lost in childhood--religion. This is not to say he regained his belief in God. The religion to which O'Neill turned was more a kind of mysticism, a belief in the powers of the supernatural. His plays for the next several years, showed a keen interest in eternal recurrence. For O'Neill, eternal recurrence meant that some form of life as we know it continued after death. It did not help to make life more pleasant, but it did conquer the fear of death by saying that there was a life to come. A further incentive to death was the fact that this life to come would be more pleasurable than the life man had led on earth. Death, then, would be a kind of eternal life, but not an eternal life of the individual will or the conscious ego. [51]

It would be the eternal life of the unconscious id, which, throughout O'Neill's plays, is striving for expression. The conscious ego, is so greatly tied up in the material values of life that it fears death because death is unknown and incomprehensible. But the unconscious id, which is held in check by the conscious ego, is an aesthetic and spiritual entity rather than a rational one, and can accept death as a life free of all material hindrances. Thus, Juan Ponce de Leon understands the true beauty in the recurring cycle of life. He understands that old age is not the end of life but only the beginning. The conscious will, the rational self, of O'Neill, which caused him to wallow deep in life-sickness and to hold a fear of death, was now to be overshadowed for the time being by the underlying unconscious id, which gave him a temporary mystical religious outlook on life and which allowed him to see death as a thing of beauty and of love. The characters of O'Neill who could come to appreciate the aesthetic side of life would be filled with the spiritual belief in eternal life.

In The Fountain, Juan Ponce de Leon, a character whom O'Neill borrowed from history, is desperate to find the legendary Fountain of Youth. He wants to be young again so that he can marry his beautiful young ward, Beatriz, who looks on him as a second father, and so that he can conquer more lands for the glory of Spain. In his youth, he scoffed at stories of such a Fountain; his conscious ego

was inspired only by material gain. But in his old age, inspired by the beauty of Beatriz and by his love for her, he sets out in search of the Fountain. He is tricked into believing that a certain fountain is the one he seeks; he is there ambushed by some natives and left to die. As he lies wounded, he prays to heaven for some vision to show that his life has been worthwhile. Then he sees the figure of Beatriz dancing in the forest and singing:

> Life is a field
> Forever growing
> Beauty a fountain
> Forever flowing
> Upward beyond the source of sunshine
> Upward beyond the azure heaven,
> Born of God but
> Ever returning
> To merge with earth that the field may live.[52]

Then he sees the image of the Fountain veiled by rainbows. He tries to reach it but is unable to. The figure of Beatriz disappears. Then an old hag approaches and drinks from the Fountain. Instantly she is transformed into a beautiful young girl, and Juan recognizes her as Beatriz. He sees for himself the magical powers of the Fountain and accepts the belief in eternal life. He exclaims, "Death is no more!"[53] Only twice more was O'Neill to shout this cry, in Lazarus Laughed and Days Without End.

Some months later, just before he dies, Juan has "the calm of a deep spiritual serenity about him."[54] He feels young again, and is not afraid to die because he understands the true beauty and endlessness of life. He says:

> Juan Ponce de Leon is past! He is resolved into the thousand moods of beauty that make up happiness--color of the sunset, of tomorrow's dawn, breath of the great Trade Wind--sunlight on grass, an insect's song, the rustle of leaves, an ant's ambitions. (In an ecstasy) Oh, Luis, I begin to know eternal youth! I have found my Fountain! O Fountain of Eternity, take back this drop, my soul![55]

And then he dies. The priest asks if Juan is dead, and his friend, Luis, tells him: "No! He lives in God!"[56]

We can gather that Juan has gone to live eternally in a world of peace and beauty. But in reality, Juan never did find the Fountain of Youth. Are we to suppose from this that he was the victim of a fake illusion? The Fountain he saw was, of course, an illusion, but what is important is that it gave him comfort. It made him feel that all the suffering of life had been worthwhile, and it wiped out his fear of death. Even though he never really found the Fountain, he was satisfied by the dream he had of it.

How did O'Neill suddenly come to the belief in the eternal recurrence of life as a solution to death-fear? I think the most logical answer to this question can be found in the death of his parents. His mother died in 1922, the year he completed The Fountain; his father had passed away two years before. Although his parents had been the cause of much of his misery, it is obvious that he cared for them and wished them a better life in the world to come. In his dedication to Long Day's Journey Into Night, he explained that he was writing the play out of forgiveness

and pity for the family he had so long scorned. And I am sure his father's last words stayed with O'Neill all his life. The words were: "Eugene--I'm going to a better sort of life--this sort of life--here--all froth--no good--rotteness." [57] O'Neill was undoubtedly interested in exploring his father's statement that the life he was going to was better than the life he had lived. He tested it in The Fountain and saw that it was possible.

The Fountain was a great step forward in O'Neill's philosophy of life and death. It gave hope to something beyond life and therefore made life less static. Edwin Engel states that it switches the emphasis from Being to Becoming.

> The faith which Juan's mystical experience reveals to him is that of dramatic pantheism; a vitalistic Becoming rather than a static Being; an eternal, glorius continuum of birth and re-birth. For life, like Shelley's Cloud, changes but it cannot die. Divine Immanence is apparent everywhere. God is the vital force, its impulsion and its receptor, its source and its goal. [58]

The theme of Becoming, introduced in The Fountain, brings us to another cure for death-fear in O'Neill's plays--the love and comfort of the Earth-Mother. The concept of the Earth-Mother and of Mother-love comes from Carl Jung. The mother, he explained, is an archetypal experience. A person's subconscious mind knows the mother even before he is born because he has been a part of his mother from the moment of conception. The mother is particularly important

to the male child since she if the first woman with whom he comes into contact, and his future opinion of women is based to a large extent on the qualities he finds in his mother. Edwin Engel gives us a clear insight of the importance of the mother image:

> The most immediate primordial image is the mother, for she is in every way the nearest and most powerful experience; and the one moreover that occurs in the most impressionable period of a man's life. Since the conscious is as yet only weakly developed in childhood, one cannot speak of an individual experience at all. The mother, however, is an archetypal experience; she is known by the more or less unconscious child not as a definite, individual, feminine personality, but as the mother, an archetype loaded with significant possibilities. As life proceeds the primordial image fades, and is replaced by a conscious, relatively individual image, which is assumed to be the only mother-image we have. In the unconscious, on the contrary, the mother always remains a powerful primordial image, determining and coloring in the individual conscious life our relation to women, to society, and to the world of feeling and fact, yet in so subtle a way that, as a rule, there is no conscious perception of the process.[59]

It is to the mother, or to someone who fits the unconscious primordial image of the mother, that a man turns when he is afraid or in doubt, and needs comfort. The reason for this is described in Jung's own words concerning the mother archetype:

> The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impluse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility.[60]

Since the mother-image is a primordial image (*i.e.*, a universal image), it brings to mind a similar picture to all human beings of a woman who replenishes and nourishes. Always the mother is the eternal female, who gives birth to a life of sorrow. She must be more than a mother; she must also be a lover to her offspring in order to give them complete comfort and satisfaction in their hours of misery. The mother is the perpetuating force of eternal recurrence, the symbol of Becoming.[61] She offers comfort for the fear of death, but has no remedy for life-sickness, because, as an aspect of Becoming, she has no chance of Being--the answer to life-sickness.[62]

The mother is therefore a universal being. The Romans used to worship the goddess Cybele, the great mother of all things. Today, we refer to the earth as Mother-Earth, because it has given birth to all living things. This is the term that O'Neill often gives the woman to whom his characters turn for comfort. We shall see them in various aspects in *Welded*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Great God Brown*, *Lazarus Laughed*, *Strange Interlude*, *Dynamo*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and even in his last play, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*.

The Earth-Mother first appeared in O'Neill's next play, *Welded*. It is interesting to note that it was the first play O'Neill started writing after the death of his mother. *Welded* is one of the worst of O'Neill's plays and one of his most autobiographical. Like the characters in the play,

O'Neill and his second wife, Agnes Boulton, were having terrible quarrels. And so, in borrowing from Strindberg's favorite theme of love-hate, O'Neill wrote this play of a young married couple who constantly quarrel. They quarrel because they are intensely jealous of each other, but they do not divorce because of the thin bond of love which "welds" them together. But in the course of the play, each decides to go his own way: Eleanor, an actress, to live with an actor friend, and her husband, Michael Cape, to live with a prostitute. The fact that they are finally reconciled in this sickly little story is certainly not important for our purposes; but what is important is what takes place between Michael and the prostitute. We have already seen that O'Neill held a high opinion of prostitutes, so it is not surprising that a prostitute should be O'Neill's first Earth-Mother. And yet, when Michael first approaches the prostitute, he scorns her. He tells her:

> You're a symbol. You're all the tortures man inflicts on woman--and you're the revenge of woman! You're love revenging itself upon itself! You're the suicide of love--of my love--of all love since the world began! [63]

Here O'Neill was undoubtedly thinking about the prostitute he was forced to visit in order to start divorce proceedings against his first wife.

However, Michael soon learns that this woman has more to offer than just her body. She understands the problems he has with his wife, because she has heard the same sad story from hundreds of other men. In her typically crude fashion, she tells Michael to go home and make up with his

wife. And then Michael begins to see the light: here is a woman who is willing to accept life for what it is. She has played whore to hundreds of men for little money, and still she is willing to give advice to someone who needs help. From her, Michael learns to accept life for what it is. "To learn to love life--to accept it and be exalted--that's the one faith left to us!",[64] he says. Michael and his wife undoubtedly will continue to quarrel, just as Eugene and Agnes did, but there is now some real hope that they will be able to understand their problems and try to live with them. The prostitute qualifies to be an Earth-Mother because of her great wisdom of life and because she unknowingly helps many of those that come to her door. She gives comfort to the life-sick and world-weary.

Like Welded, O'Neill's next play, All God's Chillun Got Wings, deals with man's need for love and understanding. The man, a Negro, has married the white girl friend of his youth. He is a failure in everything he tries, because, like Brutus Jones, he cannot escape from what his ancestry has made him. Only his wife's love keeps him living in a world of prejudice. Other than showing man's need for love, this play has little importance in a study of O'Neill's philosophy on life and death. It is interesting to notice, however, that the names of the married couple, Jim and Ella, are the same as those of O'Neill's own parents.

We now come to Desire Under the Elms, one of O'Neill's most solid plays, and the one which stands in the middle of

his entire canon. It is a raw, realistic piece, which acts as a counter-balance for the experimental works that O'Neill wrote just before and after it. It is a continuation of the theme of the Earth-Mother; but more important, it contains the most positive and realistic acceptance of death since Bound East for Cardiff--an acceptance without any fear whatsoever.

The play has the very texture of the earth. Eben Cabot's two older brothers are so earth-stained from working on the farm that "they smell of earth."[65] Ephraim Cabot is an earthy old man: he is married to his third wife at seventy-six years and has plans of producing another son. Abbie Putnam, his young third wife, is described as "buxom, full of vitality."[66] We can see her as the typical Earth-Mother; she fills her dual role as mother and lover by being both comforting and sexually attractive. And the large elm trees in the background signify products of the earth which brood over the sins of the Cabot farm.

In the play, Eben believes that the farm will become his when his father dies, because it was so stated in his mother's will. Abbie wants to bear Ephraim a son so that the farm will eventually fall into her hands. Knowing that Ephraim is too old to give her what she wants, she attempts to seduce Eben. She lures him into the parlor one evening--the very parlor in which his mother died. Eben is tempted, but calls out to his mother to tell him what he should do.

Finally, because of the underlying hatred for his father and the temptation of the seductive Abbie, Eben gives in to her demands. This is the first of several near-incestuous relationships that occur in O'Neill's plays. It seems to be an attempt on the part of O'Neill to work out his own family relationship--to explain his hatred for his father and love for his mother. This relationship is, of course, known in Freudian terms as the "Oedipus Complex". Edwin Engel gives a clear and precise definition of what this means:

> Reconstructing the conditions of the primal herde, he [Freud] described a rebellion of the sons against the violent primal father who stood in the way of their sexual demands and of their desire for power. It was evident to Freud that after the idea of God appeared he was "in every case modelled after the father and that our personal relation to god is dependent upon our relation to our physical father, fluctuating and changing with him, and that god at bottom is nothing but an exalted father." The revolt was not Satan's but the son's, that is, Christ's. For he was related to earlier conceptions of gods who had "enjoyed the favours of material deities and committed incest with the mother in defiance of the father, finally murdering the latter. But the slaying of the father left is mark, and here is where religion and morality began." Hating the father, the sons also loved and admired him.[67]

It is because Eben hates his father that he first cries out for help from the ghost of his mother and then seeks comfort and final revenge in the arms of Abbie. We shall see this happening in several of O'Neill's plays to come. Although O'Neill's hatred for his father was never intense

enough to drive him to incest with his mother, his own position was a microcasmic case of that greater problem. By expressing it in his plays, as he had done with other personal problems, he was able to release it from his tortured soul and study it in a critical light.

By the time the baby is born, Abbie has fallen passionately in love with Eben. When Ephraim learns that it is not his child, he tells Eben of Abbie's scheme to have a son in order to inherit the farm. In order to prove to Eben her love for him is unselfish and to show that the farm means nothing to her, she kills her baby. Eben accepts his share of the guilt with Abbie, and at the end they walk off with the sheriff to their execution, as the sun rises. This is certainly a willing acceptance of death, for in either heaven or hell, Eben and Abbie will be able to have a pure love, rather than an adulterous and incestuous one. Death is the answer for them, and the sun rises at the end to prove it--the first time it has risen since _Beyond the Horizon_. Barrett Clark says that in _Desire Under the Elms_,

> . . . for the first time the victims of fate in an O'Neill play had faced death not as failure, but as ultimate justification--the crowning moment that fulfilled for them the experience through which they have lived: the beauty of the passion of Abbie and Eben transcended the "tragedy" of their crime and punishment.[68]

I would qualify this statement of Mr. Clark's and say that

this play was the second time in which O'Neill faced death not as a failure, but as a justification. Certainly in Bound East for Cardiff and Beyond the Horizon, two other plays which deal with some sort of acceptance of death, death is certainly seen as the end result of a hope, or of a life, that has failed. But in the Fountain, I feel that death is accepted as ultimate justification. Juan was satisfied to die because he came to believe in eternal life. Eben and Abbie are willing to die because they believe in their love for each other. This is certainly the most optimistic period of O'Neill's playwrighting, because love is at least the temporary, if not the permanent, solution for man's discomfort in life.

Marco Millions, the next play that O'Neill wrote between the years of 1923 and 1925, is in many ways a change of pace. It is a satire on the Wall Street business-man, portrayed fictitiously by the Far Eastern merchant of long ago, Marco Polo. But this aspect of the play is not what makes it important for this thesis. O'Neill conceived the idea for this play at the time he was writing The Fountain, and so it contains many of the same mystical strains. On one level of the play, there are the themes of eternal recurrence and the importance of love in life. The central character, as far as these themes are concerned, is Princess Kukachin, the daughter of Kublai Khan. When we first see her she is dead, lying in her coffin; the stage directions say: "her calm expression seems to glow with

the intense peace of a life beyond death, the eyes are shut as if she were asleep."[69] And then her voice is heard rising from the coffin: "Say this, I loved and died. Now I am love and live. And living, have forgotten. And loving, can forgive."[70] She intended for these words to be carried to Marco Polo in Venice. This scene becomes understandable later on in the play, when earlier events are related. Marco Polo, who, ironically, Kublai Khan believes possesses a soul, has been asked by Kublai Khan to sail with his daughter to meet her promised husband. Kukachin, however, is in love with Marco. She tries to make this clear to him, but his mind is so filled with dollars and cents that he cannot see this. Aboard ship, she sings the following song:

> When love is not loved it loves Death.
> When I sank drowning, I loved Death.
> When the pirate's knife gleamed, I loved Death.
> When fever burned me I loved Death.
> But the man I loved saved me.[71]

Kukachin seems to be more of a goddess than a real human being. Her sustenance comes from living and from being loved in return. Love makes life beautiful for her. She loves Marco, even though the world of Marco Polo contains everything she shuns. Perhaps she hopes to find the soul he boastfully claims he has. In the song which she sings, she states that if her love is not loved, then she prefers to die. Here again we have death as the favorable alternative

to living in the harsh world of reality--a world without love. Marco Polo is the man she hopes will save her from death by loving her. But Marco, of course, does not understand love and sees himself as simply a good samaritan in helping Kukachin reach her chosen husband. Rejected by Marco, Kukachin slowly dies. But for her, of course, death is more satisfying than life without love. She has that calm expression on her face of having found a peaceful life in death. Now, instead of the transitory state of "becoming" loved, what she has is now "being" loved, and therefore lives. Whereas in The Fountain, death was a state of "becoming", death here is a state of "being"--a state which, as I have already mentioned, cures the ills of life-sickness. We can see that in death Kukachin has achieved what she was unable to in life. But it must be remembered that Kukachin is a goddess-like character, not quite real, and that O'Neill was playing around with ideas in the realm of mysticism--ideas which would not be compatible in the minds of real people.

In his next two plays, The Great God Brown and Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill reached the peak in ridding himself of his fears of death. The plays, I think, are companion pieces, since the ending of The Great God Brown explains the laughter that will pervade the souls of Lazarus and his followers. The former employs the forces of both the Earth-Mother and the theme of eternal recurrence in order to bring about the denial of death which we find in the latter.

The Great God Brown is the most esoteric of O'Neill's plays and the play in which he comes closest to satisfying his desire to be a poet of the theatre. In it O'Neill used masks to denote the two-sided lives of his characters. Dion Anthony, the artist of the piece, portrays the duality that was within O'Neill himself: the pseudo-cheerfulness which he kept for his few friends and which was a thin crust which he showed to the world, and the inner struggle of a man possessed by a death-wish. Dion Anthony's name depicts this dualism: Dion stands for Dionysus, the god of drink and revelry, the deity of art, the devil of senuousness and illicit love; Anthony stands for St. Anthony, the Christian martyr, who found peace in spiritual values. In the play Anthony is the real man; Dion is the mask he wears as the cynical, but creative artist. Without his mask he is a sensative human who asks, "Why was I born without a skin, O God, that I must wear armor in order to touch or to be touched?" But then he puts on his mask and defies God by saying, "Or, rather, Old Graybeard, why the devil was I ever born at all?"[72] As a young man, his mask is shaped "into the expression of a mocking, reckless, defiant, gayly scoffing and sensual young Pan",[73] but as he grows older the mask becomes that of sneering, bitter, dissipated Mephistopheles. His real face remains, like O'Neill's, "dark, spiritual, poetic, passionately super-sensitive, helplessly unprotected in its childlike, religious

faith in life." [74]

When Dion Anthony is in need of comfort, he turns to Cybel, who has the mask of a hardened prostitute. But underneath that mask, she is the most perfect example of O'Neill's Earth-Mother. (Here again we see that O'Neill felt there was a natural goodness behind the hardened exterior of prostitutes), When we first meet her,

> she is a strong, calm, sensual blond girl of twenty or so, her complexion fresh and healthy, her figure full-breasted and wide-hipped, her movements slow and solidly languorous like an animal's, her large eyes dreamy with the reflected stirring of profound instincts. [75]

Seven years later, after Dion Anthony's face has taken on the pain and self-torture of a martyr,

> Cybel has grown stouter and more voluptuous, but her face is still unmarked and fresh, her calm more profound. She is like an unmoved idol of Mother Earth. [76]

She has a feeling for the whole human race, because symbolically she has given birth to it. She says of her desire to help mankind:

> . Oh, God, sometimes the truth hits me such a sock between the eyes I can see the stars!--and then I'm so damn sorry for the lot of you, every damn mother's son-of-a-gun of you, that I'd like to run out naked into the street and love the whole mob to death like I was bringing you all a new brand of dope that'd make you forget everything that ever was for good! [77]

Dion tells her that she has given him the strength to die.

He soon does, and his last words are the first lines of the Lord's Prayer. We have seen that O'Neill began to return to spiritual thought in the plays of this period. Now he seems to be returning to Christianity, although there is nothing in his life to document this fact.

The third important character in the play is Billy Brown, the exact opposite of Dion. If Dion is the symbol of the tormented artist (like O'Neill), then Brown is the successful businessman.

> According to O'Neill, Brown is "the visionless demi-god of our new materialistic myth--a success--building his life of exterior things, inwardly empty and resourceless, an uncreative creature of superficial preordained grooves, a by-product forced aside into slack waters by the main current of life desire." 78

But Brown, whom O'Neill facetiously calls "the Great God Brown," falls victim to Dion's aesthetic magnetism. Upon Dion's death, Brown steals his Mephistophelean mask in hopes of achieving Dion's great artistic power, but it merely torments Brown's real self as it had Dion's. In a short while, Brown is also crawling to Cybel for comfort. As he is dying, he turns to her for comfort and talks to her like a hurt child. He calls her "Mother" and asks for love. She tells him "there is only love," and he dies comforted. And then she speaks over his body of the eternal recurring cycle of life.

> (. . . <u>with profound pain</u>) Always spring comes again bearing life! Always again! Always,

always, forever again!-- Spring again!-- life again! summer and fall and death and peace again!--(With agonized sorrow)-- but always, always, love and conception and birth and pain again--spring bearing the intolerable chalice of life again!--(Then with agonized exultance)--bearing the glorious, blazing crown of life again! (She stands like an idol of Earth, her eyes staring out over the world.)[79]

O'Neill's great Earth-Mother speaks the realities of life. She does not find any affirmation in the cycle of life as Juan or Kukachin had. Their view of life was ideal; Cybel's is realistic. When she speaks of the cycle of life, she speaks in an agonized tone. There is no poetry here as there was in The Fountain or Marco Millions. Cybel stands for life as it really is. She is therefore pessimistic, but at the same time stoic. Her feeling that life is futile is expressed at one point in the play when she exclaims: "What's the good of bearing children? What's the use of giving birth to death?" [80]

Only the dreamer, like Dion and Brown converted by the mask of Dion, could find something rewarding in the cycle of life and death. Brown, too, starts to say the Lord's Prayer, but now we see that he is not praying to a Christian God, but rather to a pagan Dionysius. He exclaims with ecstasy just before he dies:

I Know! I have found Him! I hear Him speak! "Blessed are they that weep, for they shall laugh!" Only he that has wept can laugh! The laughter of Heaven sows earth with a rain of tears, and out of earth's transfigured birth-pain the laughter of Man returns to bless and play again in

> innumerable dancing gales of flame upon the knees of God! [81]

The belief in a spiritual affirmation through laughter is certainly not a Christian biblical concept; it is, rather, found throughout Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra, which O'Neill used as his Bible. Zarathustra, Nietzsche's prophet of the Superman, a Dionysian-like super-human to replace an intangible God, speaks of the affirmation through laughter in this way:

> How many things are still possible! So learn to laugh beyond yourselves! Life up your hearts, ye good dancers, high! higher! And do not forget the good laughter!
>
> This crown of the laughter, this rosegarland crown--to you, my brethren, do I cast this crown. Laughing have I consecrated; ye higher men, learn, I pray you--to laugh! [82]

Billy Brown hinted at the doctrine of laughter at the end of The Great God Brown, but it took Lazarus three days among the dead to learn the full exaltation that comes through laughing in O'Neill's next play, Lazarus Laughed. Edwin Engel calls this play a high point in O'Neill's canon, and The Iceman Cometh a low point: the former is a denial of death; the latter is an acceptance of it. [83] This makes Lazarus Laughed an important and an interesting play for our purpose because it is directly in opposition with O'Neill's death-wish. However, little need be said about the play itself, for the legend of Lazarus is self-explanatory. We can see immediately the theme of eternal

recurrence and the denial of death, because Lazarus has existed through death and has come back. We can see that Lazarus is the greatest of the "dreamers"--Robert Mayo, Juan, Dion Anthony, and O'Neill himself--who are able to satisfy their lives temporarily by believing in something greater beyond life. Lazarus is Nietzsche's Superman, a laughing Yea-Sayer. The words that he preaches are strong pills for the fear of death.

> There is only life! I heard the heart of Jesus laughing in my heart: "There is Eternal life in No," it said, "and there is the same Eternal Life in Yes! Death is the fear between!" And my heart reborn to love of life cried "Yes!" and I laughed in the laughter of God.[84]

> Men call life death and fear it. They hide from it in horror. Their lives are spent in hiding. Their fear becomes their living. They worship life as death.[85]

> Love is Man's hope--love for his life on earth, a noble love above suspicion and distrust! Hitherto Man has always suspected his life, and in revenge and self-torture his love has been faithless! [86]

And finally, the chant that Lazarus leads throughout the play: "Laugh! Laugh with me! Death is dead! Fear is no more! There is only life! There is only laughter!"[87]

Lazarus has defeated death because he has removed the fear of it; he has been dead for three days and knows that death is not any worse or any better than life; therefore, there is nothing to fear. Everyone believes him because everyone wants to believe that death is nothing to fear.

Only Miriam, the Earth-Mother of the play, does not want to believe.

> To deny the existence of pain and birth, sorrow and death in the perfect conception of Being of Lazarus would be a denial of her very function, for without death there could be no renewal and no motherhood.[88]

But upon her death, even she is able to laugh. This play, then, is certainly a high point in O'Neill's search for peace, even though an illusory one. Even his Earth-Mother, a person who sees and understands the world for what it is, has taken the idealistic outlook toward death.

What is most interesting about this play is O'Neill's frame of mind at the time he wrote it in 1925. He himself was greatly disturbed by the fear of death, and had taken up drinking again as a means of alleviating this fear. Finally he decided to undergo psychoanalysis to cure him permanently of his drinking. O'Neill learned a lot about himself from his treatments. A friend, Kenneth Macgowan, says:

> When it was over, Gene told me he had no trouble understanding that he hated and loved his father, and that he was suffering from an Oedipus complex. Later, . . . Hamilton [O'Neill's doctor] told me, "There's a death-wish in O'Neill."[89]

Lazarus Laughed was undoubtedly an attempt on the part of O'Neill to stem the fear of death he knew was in him. But it was only a temporary cure. As the play clearly shows, the fear of death always returns. Once out of the direct

influence of Lazarus, men forget what he has taught them. O'Neill forgot and left the oasis of Lazarus Laughed to crawl in the desert of life-despair in his next three plays: Strange Interlude, Dynamo and Mourning Becomes Electra.

When we read Strange Interlude, we tend to see Nina Leeds as a high point among O'Neill's Earth-Mothers. She has lost her pagan qualities and feels she should be exalted to the rank of a Christian God. She says:

> The mistake began when God was created in a male image. Of course, women would see him that way, but men should have been gentlemen enough, remembering their mothers, to make God a woman! But the God of Gods--the Boss--has always been a man. That makes life perverted and death so unnatural. We should have imagined life as created in the birth-pain of God the Mother. Then we would understand why we, Her children, have inherited pain, for we would know that our life's rhythm beats from Her great heart, torn with the agony of love and birth. And we would feel that death meant reunion with Her, a passing back into Her substance, blood of Her blood again, peace of Her peace.[90]

By making God a Mother, with whom he could more easily identify, O'Neill found another means to appease his fear of death, since death would be merely a return to the womb. Nina feels that she is the perfect mortal image of God the Mother. She has four men, who satisfy all her feminine needs, wrapped around her little finger: Charlie Marsden, a kindly man who is like a father to her; Sam Evans, her husband; Ned Darrell, the strongest of the men, who is her lover; and finally her son by Ned, Gordon. Reveling in having all four of these men sitting at her feet, she says to herself:

> My three men! . . . I feel their desires converge in me! . . . to form one complete beautiful male desire which I absorb . . . and am whole . . . they dissolve in me, their life is my life . . . I am pregnant with the three! . . . husband! . . . lover! . . . father! . . . and the fourth man! . . . little man! . . . little Gordon! . . . he is mine too! . . . that makes it perfect! . . .[91]

Almost everything about this play relates to the idea of the Mother. Even its structure indicates this. The nine acts of the play represent the nine months of a woman's pregnancy; the name "Nina" stands for "nine."[92] On the surface, it would certainly seem that O'Neill was continuing the optimism in the face of death which he had in Lazarus Laughed.

But such is not the case. On the contrary, Strange Interlude presents the first step in the decline of the Earth-Mother and subsequently a decline in one of the important comforts for the fear of death. At the beginning of the play, Nina says to Marsden:

> Say lie-- L-i-i-e ! Now say life. L-i-f-e! You see! Life is just a long drawn out lie with a sniffling sigh at the end![93]

This cynical attitude toward life is certainly not typical of O'Neill's previous Earth-Mothers. By definition of her own function, the Earth-Mother is supposed to be a part of life, whether she finds it good or bad. She need not like the life she is a part of, but she must accept it and help others find peace in it. Nina denies her function

when she calls life a lie. Since she is basically disatisfied with life, she does everything in her power to find happiness for herself, never worrying if she is bringing happiness to others. She uses the men in her life to her own advantage. She embarrasses and hurts sensitive old Charlie by pretending to be sexually attracted to him. She marries Sam Evans, not because she loves him, but because she can dominate him. She uses Ned Darrell in order to have a son. And she makes her son become the symbol of the virile young boy friend of her youth. She is selfish and has none of the comforting qualities of the other Earth-Mothers.

Edwin Engel and Doris Falk, who both have written excellent critical studies on O'Neill's plays, agree that Nina shows a decline in O'Neill's image of the Mother. Dr. Engel says:

> Nina's postion is that of a backsliding member of the cult of Cybele, for she has abandoned the principle of rebirth and retained only that portion of the divine cycle that is concerned with death and peace . . . . Since "life is just a long drawn out lie," ecstatic affirmation is impossible.[94]

Miss Falk points out that the mother has become, as the father has always been in O'Neill's plays, a dominating creature who is capable of destroying all she touches. She says:

> Nina becomes herself an embodiment of God the Mother, but she is not the Cybel . . . , angel

> of beneficence and peace. She thunders her own brand of egotism, inherited from her father. In her the eternal feminine no longer redeems man but devours him, and his attempts to free himself only damn him further to endless guilt and self-hatred. This is the position of Woman from now on in O'Neill's work.[95]

The Mother is at the height of her destructive power in Dynamo. Again she is pictured as a kind of God. The protagonist, Reuben Light, is another one of O'Neill's romantic young men in search of the answers of life. Reuben has been raised on the Christian religion: his father is a minister. His mother is against Reuben's falling in love with Ada Fife next door, because she and her family have a questionable reputation. Fed up with living in a pious household, Reuben defies his family and God, and runs away from home. To replace the Christian God of his father, Reuben takes up a belief in the God of Electricity, whom he sees in the form of a dynamo. When he returns home a year later, he learns that his mother has died. Unable to stay with his father, he goes to live with the Fife family. He learns that Mrs. Fife shares his love for dynamos and can even imitate their humming sounds. Mrs. Fife is a large woman weighing well over two hundred pounds and her body displays a kind of "inert strength." She is maternal and perfectly fits O'Neill's conception of the Earth-Mother. But she is not a realist, not a part of life as Cybel was; she is not even a sensible, intelligent person like Nina. Rather, she is a silly romantic, who sits around the house

dreaming at the moon and wondering about trivial things. She is the most degraded form of the Earth-Mother so far. But to Reuben, she is the perfect Mother-image, and he sees in her the same qualities he admires in the dynamo. He begins to see the dynamo as a Mother also and hopes that it will comfort him for the loss of his own mother, whom he really loved. He visits a dynamo to seek comfort, and standing in frony of it, says to himself:

> It's so mysterious . . . and grand . . . it makes you feel things . . . you don't need to think . . . you almost get the secret . . . what electricity is . . . what life is . . . what God is . . . it's all the same thing. . . . It's like a great dark idol . . . like the old stone statues of gods people prayed to . . . only it's living and they were dead . . . that part on top is like a head . . . with eyes that see you without seeing you . . . and below it is like a body . . . not a man's . . . round like a woman's . . . as if it had breasts . . . but not like a girl . . . not like Ada . . . no, like a woman . . . like her mother . . . or mine . . . a great dark mother! . . . that's what the dynamo is! . . . that's what life is! . . . Listen to her singing . . . that beats all organs in church . . . it's the hymn of electricity . . . "always singing about everything in the world" . . . if you could only get back into that . . . know what it means . . . then you'd know the real God! . . .96

He prays to the dynamo for comfort and hear the voice of his mother speaking to him. He feels that the dynamo is the one true God and that he has been chosen to represent her power on earth. He tells Mrs. Fife:

> . . . There must be a center around which all this moves, musn't there? There is in everything else! And that center must be the Great Mother of Eternal Life, Electricity, and Dynamo is her Divine Image

> on earth! Her power houses are the new churches! She wants us to realize the secret dwells in her! She wants one man to love her purely and when she finds him worthy she will love him a give him the secret of truth and he will become the new saviour who will bring happiness and peace to men! And I'm going to be that saviour. . . .[97]

As Reuben's fervor heightens, he begins to feel that his love affair with Ada stands in the way of his complete worship of the dynamo, just as it had stood between him and his own mother.[98] So he kills Ada as a sacrifice to the dynamo in order to show his great faith in it. But when Reuben runs to the dynamo to be thanked for what he has done, his hands reach for the hand-like carbon brushes, and the dynamo electrocutes him. This act has been seen by some critics of O'Neill as the Mother-dynamo's ultimate acceptance of Reuben and as his return to the womb.[99] But I believe there is another and perhaps more accurate way of looking at it. Reuben thinks that he is achieving peace through a return to his mother, but in reality he is being rejected by a machine. To me, the play has an ironical ending: the dynamo, the great Mother to whom Reuben turns for comfort, has rejected him in his hour of need. It has turned out to be a destructive force rather than a comforting one. The dynamo is merely a cold, impersonal machine, that kills all who touch it. Reuben dies but is not united with the Earth-Mother in death. The Mother, shown in this play as the dynamo and Mrs. Fife, has proved ineffectual for man's needs in both instances. The irony of the ending is carried even further when Mrs. Fife tells the dynamo that it ought

to be ashamed of itself for killing Reuben. She beats it with her fists and calls it a "hateful old thing."[100] It is almost comic to see this degeneration of the Earth-Mother--one taken to beating the other!

But the play definitely has a very tragic note. The Mother and the God of Science, which O'Neill hoped could satisfy his needs more satisfactorily than the Christian God, had both failed him. The Earth-Mother and the belief in eternal recurrence had been shattered; now all that was left was the ineffectual dreaming and drunkenness, and ultimately death. It is the latter which O'Neill courted in his next play, Mourning Becomes Electra.

The Mannon family of O'Neill's trilogy live in a house of death. The motto of their family is "Life was a dying. Being born was starting to die. Death was being born."[101] According to Doris Falk, the feeling of death is due to the family's pride. One of the main points that Miss Falk makes in her book, Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension, is that pride, or the Greek hubris, is responsible for most of the protagonists' self-destruction in his plays.[102] We could say this is definitely true about Robert Mayo, Captain Bartlett, Brutus Jones, Juan Ponce de Leon, Billy Brown, Nina Leeds, and Reuben Light. The opposite of pride, Miss Falk contends, is love, which is by definition unselfish. Love brings the protagonist peace and, in some cases, blissful,

rather than tormented, death. We have seen love at work most clearly in The Great God Brown, where Cybel gave both sexual and motherly love to the protagonists, and comforted them both in life and in death.

The Mannon family was part of the aristocracy of New England from the time it was first colonized. The Mannons we see in the play are living at the end of the Civil War. They are proud of their heritage, and their pride has made them so rebellious against the slightest sign of scandal that they disinherited a member of their family for marrying a French-Indian girl named Maria Brantome. David Mannon, who married the girl, was not interested in the pride of his family, which to him was stifling. He was in love with Maria and would marry her at any cost. But when the proud Mannons disinherited him for his actions, they shut love out of their lives forever, and the house of Mannon became a morbid house of death.

Throughout the trilogy, all the characters search for love in order to escape the Mannon curse. Ezra Mannon, returning from the Civil War, longs for a little love from his wife, Christine; but instead of giving him love, she kills him. She is in love with Adam Brant, who is the son of David Mannon and Maria Brantome, and who therefore possesses the love which Christine feels will save her. But her proud daughter, Lavinia, who publicly states, "I love Father better than anyone in the world," [103] vows to avenge

her father's murder by having Brant killed. She persuades her weak brother, Orin, who has a strong attachment for his mother, to do the deed. Orin kills Brant, and Christine, to Orin's great sorrow, kills herself out of grief.

By the third part of the trilogy, Lavania has become a personification of her mother, whom she hated, and Orin is a weaker portrait of his father, whom he disliked. Orin tries to find love in the girl Hazel, but the Mannon curse on him is too strong, and he is forced to stay with his sister as he had been forced to stay with his mother. Lavinia has made numerous attempts to escape the Mannon curse since her mother's death. On a trip to the South Sea Islands, which she took with Orin, she sought love by having affairs with island natives. Upon returning home, she persuades Hazel's brother, Peter, to marry her. But she realizes it will not work. She can never find love because she is too much a Mannon. The closest that a Mannon can come to love is through near-incestuous relationships, such as Lavinia and her father, Orin and his mother, and Lavinia and Orin. When Orin finally kills himself, Lavinia becomes the last Mannon. She realizes that, even if she were to marry Peter, she still could not escape the Mannon curse and find true love. So she decides to lock herself up in the house and die without inflicting the curse on anyone else. She proclaims:

> I'm not going the way Mother and Orin went. That's escaping punishment. And there's no one left to punish me. I'm the last Mannon I've got to punish myself! Living alone here with the dead is a worse act of justice than death or prison! I'll never go out or see anyone! I'll have the shutters nailed closed so no sunlight can ever get in. I'll live alone with the dead, and keep their secrets, and let them hound me, until the curse is paid out and the last Mannon is let die! I know they will see to it that I live for a long time! It takes the Mannons to punish themselves for being born! 104

As we can see, death is not peace in the House of Mannon. Only love gives peace, and that is not allowed. In this play, O'Neill reached the conclusion that there is no life, because from its beginning, it is subject to death.

In the House of Mannon, there was no Earth-Mother (Lavinia is described as "thin"and "flat-breasted," the opposite of how an Earth-Mother should look), no belief in eternal recurrence, no relief through drunkenness; only death and Orin's vain dream of an Island of Peace where he would be reconciled with his mother and re-enter her womb through death. There is only "mourning" which"becomes" the family. This is probably the most pessimistic of all O'Neill's plays because it represents death stripped bare of all its comforting aspects.

Between the years 1927 and 1931, while writing the last three plays, O'Neill dwelt in the doldrums of depression. Then in 1932 and 1933, he wrote Ah! Wilderness and Days Without End, and his outlook on life changed. He referred to these plays as an "interlude" amidst his

life-sickness. For once in his life, he was truly happy. Edwin Engel gives three reasons for this change in O'Neill's outlook.[105] First of all, O'Neill divorced Agnes Boulton in 1928 and shortly after married the beautiful actress, Carlotta Monterey. The marriage was obviously a happy one. Secondly, O'Neill now had a strong sense of financial security since Strange Interlude turned out to be such a success. And finally, Dr. Engel points out that Mourning Becomes Electra undoubtedly purged O'Neill's soul temporarily of all thoughts of death. It also exhausted him of possible techniques of presenting the drama of death and life.

Ah! Wilderness was the product of a Freudian dream of wish-fulfillment. In the middle of writing Days Without End, O'Neill awoke one morning with all the ideas and details for Ah! Wilderness. In a month he had a play. He stated that his purpose in writing the play was to draw a picture of a typical middle-class American family and to show the spirit that made it great.[106] But there is more behind it than this. Ah! Wilderness depicts O'Neill's family and his boyhood as he wished they might have been. It contains many of the comic recollections of his past. The play is interesting in that it has all the characteristics of the later Long Day's Journey Into Night, but emphasizes

the humorous aspects of the playwright's youth rather than the tragic ones, which are the most real.

If Ah! Wilderness brought O'Neill an interlude of peace by a return to morality, Days Without End did it by a return to Christian spirituality, which had been lacking since his boyhood. Like The Great God Brown, this play represents both sides of O'Neill's character at war with each other; but instead of using masks to differentiate the two selves as he had done in the former, O'Neill here uses an actor to represent each self. The character as a whole person is John Loving: John is the self who is searching for peace through a return to God; Loving is the Mephistophelean self who tries to persuade John that the only peace is in death. John is seen as a conventional middle-aged American; Loving has a face which is "the death mask of a John who has died with a sneer of scornful mockery on his lips." [107] Loving speaks the philosophy of the typical O'Neillian pessimist:

> There is no God. There is only death. [108]

> Beyond death there is nothing. That, at least, is certain--a certainty we should be thankful for. One life is boring enough. Do not condemn us to another. Let us rest in peace at last. [109]

> But there is always death to wash one's sins away--sleep, untroubled by Love's betraying dream! [110]

> . . . There is no truth for men . . . Human life is unimportant and meaningless. [111]

The character of Loving condemns in one blow all the devices which the O'Neillian protagonist hopes for in his search for peace: religion, love, belief in the after-life, and comfort through dreams. He condemns life as meaningless, but yet gives no comfort for the fear of death. He is definitely a personification of all O'Neill's pessimistic thoughts.

John is really a new character in O'Neill's canon because he is willing to seek help through Christian religion. He is not a Juan Ponce de Leon seeking satisfaction through some mystical experience; he wants to return to the Christian religion. Unlike so many other characters, he possesses no trace of a death-wish. He strongly believes that "it's man's duty to life to go on!" [112] He is not willing to give in to the death-preaching Loving. In the end John's powerful faith wins out. Proclaiming his faithful dedication to God at the foot of a huge Cross, John watches Loving crumple to his death before the overpowering radiance of the figure of Christ. Loving is dead, so now John Loving can live as a single self. He exclaims: "Love lives forever! Death is dead! . . . Life laughs with God's love again! Life laughs with love!" [113]

Over the last ten years, Eugene O'Neill had sought spiritual justification in many ways: through a kind of mystical belief in the life hereafter in The Fountain, Marco Millions, and Lazarus Laughed; through the love of the Earth-

Mother in Desire Under the Elms and The Great God Brown, and finally through the new God of Science in Strange Interlude and Dynamo. Now O'Neill had returned to the Christian God of his youth. Edwin Engel says:

> By resurrecting the "Old God"--the "Old Graybeard" who had been accused of crimes to His children ranging from neglect to downright cruelty-- O'Neill enabled his hero to cure the "sickness of today" and comforted his fear of death, to re-acquire in a spiritual way the harmony that he used to have as a child.[114]

If Days Without End had been O'Neill last play, we could say that his plays completed a cycle--a cycle in which the playwright took a long journey through a spiritual desert and finally arrived at the oasis of the Christian God. But it was not his last play; it was merely an "interlude" in his work. Six years later he was to repudiate the beliefs set down in this play and in all his other plays of the "middle period" in The Iceman Cometh.

Between the years 1933 and 1939, before the writing of The Iceman Cometh, O'Neill worked quietly on a cycle of nine plays which he intended to publish under the title of A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed. The cycle was to trace the history of an American family over a period of 150 years. It was aimed at showing the possessive and materialistic qualities of the family. Although he had written fragments of all nine of the Cycle plays, O'Neill only completed one to his satisfaction, and that was not produced in New York until 1958. That play is A Touch of the Poet,

and in it, we see that O'Neill was returning to the realistic vein of writing. It deals simply with an Irish immigrant family who run a tavern in Boston in 1828. The theme of the play, as Doris Falk puts it, is a forerunner of themes which run through O'Neill's last four plays--namely, "the conflict between prideful illusion and shameful reality in a character who keeps his self-respect only be perpetuating the illusion." [115] The character referred to here is Con Melody. In reality he is an Irish immigrant who runs a tavern and who spends most of his time drinking the products he sells. However, he still like to think himself the officer and gentleman he was in his younger days when he rode against Napolean at Talavera. Every year he commemorates the day of the battle by donning his uniform and parading up and down in front of the mirror. In order to "summon pride to justify his life to himself", he recites the following lines from Byron's Childe Harold:

> "I have not loved the World, nor the World me;
> I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
> To its idolatries a patient knee,
> Nor coined my cheeks to smiles,--nor cried aloud
> In worship of an echo in the crowd
> They could not deem me one of such--I stood
> Among them, but not of them . . ." [116]

(This passage, by the way, is the perfect correlative for O'Neill himself: he always thought of himself being a little detached from the world.)

The illusions which he has built up around himself are

so successful that he has great confidence in himself and has become very proud. But like the Mannons, he is destroyed by his pride. His illusions of grandeur cannot stand up against the real grandeur of the aristocracy, and at the end he must fall. The play is a fine dramatic piece and makes one wish that O'Neill had had chance to complete the cycle.

I mention this play only because it brings O'Neill's writing back to the realistic and sets the stage for The Iceman Cometh through its theme. O'Neill's search for peace was almost over. The realistic approach was vital to get at the problems of life-sickness and find a cure that could be as satisfactory to him as to his characters. To do this, O'Neill turned to his past and used in his plays settings and characters with whom he was familiar. The result was to be the answer that Yank found back in 1913,--illusion or death, with death the ultimate peace. We shall now turn to O'Neill's last four plays and see his return to this solution.

Doris Falk says about O'Neill's last plays:

> "O'Neill returned in these last plays to acceptance of struggle and flight as inseparable from and intrinsic to the life process. Now there is no way out but death. The struggle in these plays is essentially the same as it had always been in his work: the conscious intellect at war with the unconscious drives, the laceration of love and hate in every close human relationship, and the desperate search for self among the masks.[117]

O'Neill was no longer looking for an escape in his plays.

As in Bound East for Cardiff, he merely took a setting and situation which he knew and characters with whom he was acqauinted and let the answer to his search for peace rise out of the natural situation. The ultimate answer was death. It came to him naturally for the first time since Bound East for Cardiff in The Iceman Cometh, a play which he wrote in 1939. The answer which he found in The Iceman Cometh allowed him to write his last three plays-- Hughie, Long Day's Journey Into Night, and A Moon for the Misbegotten-- because he was at last at peace with himself and could therefore write realistically about his past without tormenting himself. The Iceman Cometh is, in effect, the culmination of O'Neill's search for peace; the remaining three plays are merely results of it.

Three things made The Iceman Cometh an immediate experience for O'Neill. The first of these is the setting. Harry Hope's saloon is partially modeled on the Jimmy-the-Priest's which O'Neill knew in his younger years. It will be remembered that it was at Jimmy's that O'Neill lived in a world apart from reality, in a world of dreams and drunkenness. It was a place to which he, and others, went to find temporary peace from the rigors of life. Listen to what Larry Slade says about Hope's Saloon:

> No one here has to worry about where they're going next, because there is no farther they can go. It's a great comfort to them. Although even here

> they keep up the appearances of life with a few harmless pipe dreams about their yesterdays and tomorrows. . . . [118]

It is easy to see the resemblance between the two places. A return to the same setting he once knew allowed the playwright to write a realistic play which could deal with his own problems.

A second technique which made the play realistic for O'Neill was the year in which it took place--1912. This was the year of his attempted suicide at Jimmy-the-Priest's--an attempt he often wished had been successful. He tried to kill himself because the dreams and the drink were becoming weaker and weaker, and reality was forcing its way through at the seams. Larry says again:

> All I know is I'm sick of life! I'm through! I've forgotten myself! I'm drowned and contented on the bottom of a bottle. Horror 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 the 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.[119]

Larry's attitude toward life is similar to O'Neill's prior to his attempted suicide. By placing his play in the year 1912, O'Neill was returning to a period of his life when death seemed clearly to be the solution to the problems of life.

Finally, The Iceman Cometh had real meaning for the playwright himself because it contained many of the misbegotten characters he once knew and loved. For the most

part, they represent people he met at a place called Hell Hole, rather than at Jimmy-the-Priest's. Hell Hole was a run-down Irish barroom in New York City and was a place which O'Neill frequented in 1915, when friends were convinced he was trying to drink himself to death.[120] The people whom O'Neill knew here are seen in The Iceman Cometh as derelicts approaching the end of life. Edwin Engel describes them in this way:

> Adrift between heaven and hell, like the Hairy Ape they are neither angel nor gorilla, and "belong" to nothing: neither to Pan nor Christ, the cell nor the universe, the womb nor the hearth . . . In this painless purgatory, not love and peace, but peace alone is the central human need . . . O'Neill proposed three ways in which men can find peace: through dreams, drunkenness, or death. Life is endured only with the aid of the pipe-dream and the bottle. Deprived of these men begin to die. But once they are reconciled to death, it, too, brings peace.[121]

Most of the derelicts are much older than their counterparts in real life, perhaps to show that man's life is set in a rigid groove from which he cannot swerve. All of them are drunk and each has his own pipe dream. A few of the more important ones should be mentioned. Harry Hope, the proprietor of the saloon, is fashioned after Jimmy the Priest. The "hope" which his establishment offers is merely the "hopeless hope" which runs throughout many of O'Neill's plays. His pipe dream is that he is sorry for his wife's death. In reality, he is glad to be rid of her, but

this thought torments his guilty conscience. Willie Oban, a graduate of Harvard Law School, believes that he will be able to get his job back at the District Attorney's office. But this dream is merely an ego-booster. He knows that his drunkenness will stand in the way. James Cameron, nicknamed "Jimmy Tomorrow", is a copy of Jimmy Byth, O'Neill's friend at Jimmy-the-Priest's. Like Byth, Jimmy likes to think he left his wife because he found her in bed with a military officer. In reality, his wife left him because of his drinking. He is determined to give up drinking and go back to work, but not until "tomorrow", which for him will never come. Then, on the humorous side, there are two prostitutes, who believe they are "tarts" rather than "whores" because they do their job respectably. And there is Rocky, the bartender, who refuses to believe he is a "pimp" because he does not beat the two prostitutes; he merely takes their money!

Two of the most important characters in the play, Larry Slade and Don Parritt, can be seen as O'Neill himself. Larry is most clearly a copy of Terry Carlin, O'Neill's closest friend at Hell Hole, a man who is often thought to have had the greatest effect on O'Neill's philosophy.[122] Like Larry, Terry was a heavy drinker and a philosophical anarchist. He had worked only one day in his life--as bartender from noon to midnight--and that only to rob the cash register before the end of the day. But the proprietor robbed it first, and Terry, greatly disillusioned, swore never to work another day in his life.[123] He later fell in love with a girl names Marie, who was also an anarchist, but her promiscuity caused their romance to fade. When he broke with

her, he also left the anarchist movement. Marie can be found in The Iceman Cometh as Rosa Parritt. Terry lived the rest of his life a confirmed pessimist and cynic. He explained his outlook on humanity in these words:

> "Let humanity alone. Humanity is the sewer through which we all are passing. We do not see why we should improve the sewer unless it clogs our passage too much." 124

His pessimistic outlook on humanity, plus his belief in eternal recurrence, had a pronounced effect on O'Neill. So when Larry speaks in The Iceman Cometh, he speaks not only as Terry Carlin, but also as Eugene O'Neill.

Don Parritt, another important character in the play, is modeled almost completely on the playwright himself. Five years younger than O'Neill was at the time, Parritt represents a young man searching for an escape from his family. Parritt feels guilty because he has turned his mother, an anarchist, over to the authorities. This seems to be an exaggeration of the guilt O'Neill felt for not being a good son to his mother, whose dope addiction was due to his birth. Also, when O'Neill wrote home to his father, asking for more money to continue his binge, it probably often came from his mother; and he undoubtedly felt guilty for taking it under such a pretense. His feeling of guilt became exaggerated as time went on. At the end of the play, Parritt seeks the ultimate escape which O'Neill did, only, like Jimmy Byth, he jumps from Hope's second-story

window and succeeds in killing himself. It is important to keep in mind that O'Neill is embodied in both Parritt (a young man of 18) and Larry (an older man of 60), because what happens to them at the end of the play is the answer to O'Neill's search for peace.

I have not yet mentioned the most important figure, and the catalytic agent of the play, Hickey. He is based on no one person O'Neill ever knew, and no character of his type has ever appeared before in an O'Neill play. He is a character whom O'Neill employed to test men in their conflict between illusion and reality. Hickey visits Hope's saloon every year in order to help the derelicts celebrate Harry's birthday and to buy them all drinks. He is a teller of tall tales: his favorite story revolves around the old iceman joke about the man who calls upstairs, "Has the iceman come yet?" and his wife answers, "No, but he's breathing hard!" [125] Hickey delights in making up stories about finding his wife in bed with the iceman. So when the derelicts talk about Hickey's appearance, they refer to him as the "iceman." Hickey gives renewed energy to their pipe dreams. Willie Oban, in a fit of despair, remarks, "Would that Hickey or Death would come"; [126] that is to say, he prefers either illusion or death to facing reality.

But when Hickey does arrive, he is changed. He no longer drinks, and all he can talk about is converting the derelicts from their harmful pipe dreams. He tells them that, if they could once step outside the saloon and make

an attempt to achieve the goals they are always talking about, they would no longer need to live by lies and dreams and would be happier. Each of the derelicts leaves the saloon in order to achieve his objective, but soon comes running back to drown his fears of reality in liquor.

Why has Hickey changed? The answer is because he has gotten rid of his own pipe dream by killing his wife, Evelyn. During the early years of their marriage, Hickey often had the urge to go off on drunken binges and play around with other women, even though he loved his wife very much. She would find out about his escapades, but always would forgive him. Even when he gave her venereal disease which he had picked up from a prostitute, she forgave him, pretending to believe that he had gotten it from a drinking cup on a train. It was hard for Hickey to bear her forgiveness; he knew he was doing wrong and expected to be punished for it. What made it worse was that she was so perfect and pure. He made up the story about finding her in bed with the iceman so that he could justify his own transgressions. But over the years the pipe dream of the iceman began to fade, and Hickey saw that he could achieve peace only by being punished. Ultimate punishment would not come from killing himself because it would hurt his wife too greatly. Ultimate punishment could only be achieved by killing her, the one thing in life he truly loved. So he killed her. Death, rather than illusion, proved to the answer for Hickey.

The reason Hickey seems changed when he returns to Hope's Saloon, therefore, is that he is no longer the Iceman of illusion, bringing them joy and laughter; he is now the Iceman of Death. He is shattering the derelicts' world; they complain that the liquor has no more punch for them. When Hickey sees that they do not accept his reason for killing his wife--as an ultimate punishment to himself--another of his pipe dreams is shattered. He decides to take the only other way out; he calls the police and has himself arrested, knowing that he will be executed for his crime. Only when the derelicts say that he must have been insane at the time of the murder does he pick up another pipe dream--that he was, in fact, insane. But this is a feeble lie; we can tell that he will not believe it long. Hickey will soon find his peace in the arms of death.

As Hickey exits with the police, echoing his last pipe dream, the spell of death, which has pervaded Hope's Saloon ever since his entrance, breaks. They believe in Hickey's pipe dream of insanity and believe that he was kidding with his words about facing reality. However, there are two people who have been converted by the Iceman of Death. They are Don Parritt and Larry Slade. Parritt's pipe dream about his mother is stripped away when he hears Hickey talking about his wife. He realizes the truth--that he had his mother arrested because he hated her, just as

Hickey killed Evelyn because at that moment he hated his wife. Parritt, not able to live with the thought of hating his mother any more than O'Neill was, sought relief in illusion. But when the illusion was broken, he sought peace in the only other way--in death.

Larry Slade was called the "grandstand foolosopher" by his friends at Hope's Saloon. He studied questions from all angles. He boasted that he was free from the pipe dreams which were hounding the rest. This, however, was his pipe dream; he did have one. He pretended to have no fear of death; he pretended that he was waiting for it to come. "Death is a fine long sleep,"[127] he would say. But Hickey knows the truth about Larry. When Larry learns that Hickey has become the Iceman of Death, he becomes frightened, because he is now face to face with reality. But when he hears Hickey's story, he, too, begins to realize that death is the ultimate peace.

As Hickey leaves, the rest of the derelicts return to their drinking and their pipe dreams. Meanwhile, Parritt throws himself from a second-story window, and Larry pushes his drink away and exclaims, "Be God, I'm the only real convert to death Hickey made here. From the bottom of my coward's heart I mean that now!"[128] It is significant that both Parritt and Larry are converted by Hickey, since both represent the playwright himself. It is even more significant when we see Parritt as O'Neill in 1912, and

Larry as O'Neill in 1939. Parritt commits suicide, as O'Neill had attempted to do. But Parritt does not leave any room for failure: he throws himself from a window, a way which caused the death of O'Neill's roommate, Jimmy Byth. Twenty-seven years later, O'Neill saw this means of suicide as a surer way than veronal tablets, and had Parritt use it when convinced once and for all that death was definitely the answer. Larry, as O'Neill, in 1939, shows the realization of death as the answer to peace. Larry, converted by Hickey, loses his fear of death, and so does O'Neill. O'Neill has come to realize that death will bring him the ultimate peace, the true belonging, for which he has so long sought, and during the last years of his life he will be able to face his past without torment and accept death without fear when it finally comes. Parritt, the man of action, the young O'Neill, commits the act which O'Neill often wished he had succeeded in. Larry, the man of thought, the mature O'Neill, understands what death means, understands that

> all men are waiting for the iceman, but only those who have shed their ultimate illusions are aware that the "final and realized meaning" of their lives is death.[129]

For Parritt and Larry, then, "the Iceman cometh"; that is, Death cometh, as it does to all the living. Death is no longer a return to the womb of the Mother, a step in

the cycle of eternal recurrence, or a great Christian affirmation; these now would be considered pipe dreams by O'Neill. Death is merely a consequence of living; and when one has become at peace with himself and understands this fact, as Larry does, then death can be accepted without fear and without pipe dreams.

Besides achieving the end of his search for peace in The Iceman Cometh, O'Neill also found a sense of belonging. Not since The Hairy Ape had he dealt with this theme directly. In The Iceman Cometh, he returns to that theme and learns that only when one finds peace within himself and is able to accept death, can one truly have a feeling of belonging. He was, therefore, correct back in 1921 when he surmised after Yank's death: "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs."

To tie the O'Neill canon even more tightly together, it is easy to show the connections between The Iceman Cometh and his first important play, Bound East for Cardiff. Edwin Engel says about their connection:

> There is a resemblance between the seaman's forecastle of the S. S. Glencairn and the interior of homeless sailors of the early sea plays and the human derelicts of The Iceman Cometh, an identity between the implied philosophy of the first and the expressed philosophy of the last play. Ship and saloon alike are squalid refuges, cages without bars for creatures who have no place better to go.[130]

The "implied philosophy" of Bound East for Cardiff, it will

be remembered, dealt with the conflict between illusion and reality; and showed that when the dream fades, death is the only means of ultimate peace and must be accepted without fear. The "expressed philosophy" of The Iceman Cometh, as we have just seen, demonstrates positively the implied philosophy of the first play.

> The Iceman Cometh is O'Neill's valediction. It brings to a conclusion the death-peace theme of Mourning Becomes Electra, its actual predecessor . . . . Afflicted with incurable life-sickness--the ills of body and soul--O'Neill, like a dying man, reviewed his past in The Iceman Cometh and renounced every aspect of it. In so doing, he repudiated not only love, faith, and truth, but also, by implication, that to which he had dedicated his life: the theatre itself, dependent as it is upon the willing acceptance of illusion.[131]

O'Neill, of course, was not attacking the theatre, but cleansing his own soul by stripping it bare of illusion. From this point on, O'Neill was able to write openly about the conflict between illusion and reality without tormenting himself, as he did in Hughie, and about the problems of his own family which he tackled in Long Day's Journey Into Night and A Moon for the Misbegotten.

If the last three plays are anticlimactic in philosophy, they are certainly high points in O'Neill's career as a great playwright. Undoubtedly his new-found peace within allowed him to write more freely and clearly. Hughie is an example of O'Neill's playwriting at its best. I have mentioned it before, and little more need be said about it.

I only include it here because it is one of O'Neill's last plays and has been mentioned only briefly in one critical work on O'Neill.[132] It deals again with the conflict between illusion and reality. There are only three characters. Erie Smith is an unsuccessful Broadway gambler, who talks big and achieves little. He is like a younger Hickey,--still an Iceman of Illusion, but approaching the doctrine of death. In the play, he tries to strike up a conversation with the Night Clerk of a run-down New York hotel. Erie wants to tell him stories about what a great gambler and ladies' man he is in order to pad his own ego, but for a long time the Night Clerk is unwilling to listen. But Erie is determined to make him listen. If he doesn't, he will have to go to bed and dream of the realities of his life, which torment him greatly. The Night Clerk finally does listen, and Erie is once again able to find temporary happiness in the illusions be builds up around himself.

The third character in the play is Hughie; he is dead. He was the old night clerk to whom Erie used to tell his stories. Hughie was married and had a family, and though he was poor, he seemed quite happy with his lot. He was at peace with himself and therefore could live without illusions. He enjoyed the stories about Erie's racy life, but would never think of participating in them. When they gambled, they always used Erie's money. Once, however, Hughie broke down and gave Erie two dollars, which he had

stolen from his wife, to bet on a horse race. Erie, although he needed illusions in order to live, knew their corruptive value, and was against Hughie's becoming involved. He told Hughie to take the money back before his wife noticed it was missing. We can see from this that Erie was the same type of far-seeing man that Hickey was. Both understood the evil of living by illusions, but both had trouble shaking their own. Erie is just a few steps away from Hickey in the race to find peace and get rid of illusions. But he is a man who understands about reality even though he does not like to live in it. He says of the dead Hughie: "He's out of the racket. I mean, the whole goddamned racket. I mean life." [133]

Hughie is a great achievement in Eugene O'Neill's writing career, because it is one of the very few times he was able to explain his philosophy in a compact form and without being repetitious. Critic Henry Hewes says of the play:

> O'Neill in "Hughie" has written the whole cycle of life into a forty minute piece. The wise guy and the sucker stand for all forms of human interdependence. The swing from naked truth to illusion, from isolation to communication, from bitterness to love, are all basic to living. We alternate from one to the other, and this cyclic motion rather than the achievement of a goal is the stuff and richness of life. [134]

Hughie has not yet been produced professionally in this country, but when it is, I am sure it will be hailed as

O'Neill's finest attempt in the one-act form.

If Hughie is to be considered O'Neill's greatest one-act play, Long Day's Journey Into Night must certainly rank as his best full-length play. Written in 1940, it presents a terrifying picture of O'Neill and his family in the days of his youth. Only because he was freed from illusions and was able to face reality could O'Neill write such a play. His dedication to his wife, Carlotta, reads:

> Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift, it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play--write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones. [135]

I have already touched on the "old sorrows" of O'Neill's family when talking of his early years. The play takes place at the O'Neill summer house at New London, Connecticut, in 1912 --six months after his attempted suicide and four months before he went to the tuberculosis sanitarium. As the dedication indicates, O'Neill attempted in this play to forgive his family for the misery they had caused each other and to understand them instead of being quick to blame them for their faults. The play demonstrates clearly, I think, that the blame does not rest on any one individual but rather on the interaction of a misbegotten family and on fate. Neither his father's stinginess, nor his mother's

dope addiction, nor his brother's shiftlessness and drunkenness, nor his own morbidity, was the single cause of the family's downfall. The dedication also mentions that O'Neill wrote the play for "all the four haunted Tyrones," with the emphasis on "all". This is probably because in this play, O'Neill extended his pity, his understanding and his forgiveness to his father, whom in life he had treated as the cause of all his family's suffering. In the fourth act, James Tyrone (O'Neill's father) tells his youngest son, Edmund (O'Neill himself), of his miserable childhood in Ireland, where his family never had enough money to buy presents for Christmas. He explains how he came to America and worked hard to become a great actor and finally made some money for once in his life. Edmund is moved by his father's story and says: "I'm glad you told me this, Papa. I know you a lot better now."[136] After writing this play, O'Neill could be at peace with his whole family, as well as with himself.

In this play, fog plays an important part in veiling the characters from reality. The members of the family are as much illusion-worshippers as were the derelicts in Hope's Saloon. Mary Tyrone, O'Neill's mother, says of the fog:

> . . . I really love the fog . . . it hides you from the world and the world from you . . . . It's the foghorn I hate. It won't let you alone. It keeps reminding you and warning you, calling back.[137]

We see here again a hint of the danger of illusions: the

foghorn warns of that danger, but Mary is afraid to turn back. And Edmund talks about the fog in this way:

> The fog was where I wanted to be. Halfway down the path you can't see this house. You'd never know it was here . . . . Everything looked and sounded unreal. Nothing was what it is. That's what I wanted--to be alone with myself in another world where truth is untrue and life can hide from itself. Out beyond the harbor, where the road runs along the beach, I even lost the feeling of being on land. The fog and the sea seemed part of each other. It was like walking on the bottom of the sea. As if I had drowned long ago. AS if I was a ghost of the sea. I felt damned peaceful to be nothing more than a ghost within a ghost . . . . Who wants to see life as it is, if they can help it? 138

O'Neill at last could look at his pipe dreams objectively and not be tormented any longer by merely being "a ghost within a ghost."

At the end of the play, Edmund makes a short speech which accurately describes the tragedy of O'Neill's whole life. It reminds me of the passage from Byron which Con Melody quoted in A Touch of the Poet.

> It was a great mistake, my being born a man; I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish. As it is, I 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! 139

Here we can clearly see the man with the death-wish. And his death-wish shows up even more clearly in the names which he gave to himself and to his dead brother in the play. O'Neill

called himself Edmund in the play, which was the name of his dead brother in real life. And, in turn, Edmund, in the course of the play, refers to his dead brother as Eugene. Thus, the reversal of names here would naturally lead us to think that O'Neill had secretly wished that he had been the brother who died, instead of Edmund.

In Long Day's Journey Into Night, O'Neill painfully recorded the torments of his family as he knew them up to the age of twenty-four--specifically of his father, his mother, and himself. In A Moon for the Misbegotten, written in 1943, O'Neill attempted to tell more clearly about his brother Jamie. This is the last play which O'Neill completed before he died. His hands shook so badly when he wrote it that his writing was hardly legible. He had only ten years left to live, most of those years in sickness.

A Moon for the Misbegotten is set in September, 1923, just two months before the real Jamie died at the age of forty-five. The play revolves around two events which tormented the last two years of Jamie's life and caused him to live them in a drunken stupor. Both events revolved around the death of his mother. The first was concerned with a promise he had made his mother shortly before her death--a promise that he would give up drinking. To make her happy he stopped drinking. But he could not stay dry for long. As he says in the play:

> The old booze yen got me. I got drunk and stayed

> drunk. And I began hoping she'd never come out of the coma, and see I was drinking again. That was my excuse, too--that she'd never know. And she never did. (He pauses--then sneeringly) Nix! Kidding myself again. I know damned well just before she died she recognized me. She saw I was drunk. Then she closed her eyes so she couldn't see, and was glad to die! [140]

The second event which tormented the last years of Jamie's life took place on the train which carried his mother's body from California to New York. Jamie was to meet Eugene in New York and together they were to take their mother's body to New London to be buried. But the thought of riding in the same train with his dead mother was too much for Jamie, and he sought relief in debauchery. He describes it in the play:

> I had to bring her body East to be buried beside the Old Man. I took to a drawing room and hid in it with a case of booze. She was in her coffin in the baggage car. No matter how drunk I got, I couldn't forget that for a minute. I found I couldn't stay alone in the drawing room. It became haunted. I was going crazy. I had to go out and wander up and down the train looking for company . . . . I'd spotted one passenger who was used to drunks and could pretend to like them, if there was enough dough in it. She had parlor house written all over her--a blond pig who looked more like a whore than twenty-five whores, with a face like an overgrown doll's and a come-on smile as cold as a polar-bear's feet. I bribed the porter to take a message to her and that night she sneaked into my drawing room. She was bound for New York, too. So every night--for fifty bucks a night--[141]

There is little wonder why the last years of Jamie's life

were so tormented by guilt for his mother.

Jamie tells his troubles to Josie Hogan, the daughter of a man who rents a piece of his father's property. Josie is a giant of a woman.

> She is another Cybel, with enough earthy animal love of life to go on living in spite of her difficulties to meet the problems of everyday life through the hazes of sadness and frustration which hang over her. She has the "hopeless hope" that springs from Cybel's assumption of the inevitability of life opposites--between which her fate is still suspended, and in which she can still find some value and emotion. [142]

But Josie is much more human than Cybel was. She is not a real Earth-Mother because, like mortal men, she is subject to pipe dreams. Her pipe dream is just the opposite from those of the prostitutes in The Iceman Cometh; Josie likes to think she is a whore! In reality, she is still a virgin at twenty-eight because no man would ever have anything to do with her. Only Jamie notices her. He sees her as a special female--a woman to whom he can turn for comfort. To him, she is an Earth-Mother. He loves here, but can not marry her because of his weakness for drink and prostitutes. He sees through her pipe dream and would not touch her, even though she tempts him, in fear of ruining her purity. Both have one important thing in common--they are misbegotten. Josie is misbegotten because of her size; Jamie is misbegotten because of his personality traits. Both, therefore, are in need of each other. Their pipe

dreams still fool the world, but they are becoming too weak to fool themselves. Jamie says:

> We can kid the world but we can't fool ourselves, like most people, no matter what we do--nor escape ourselves no matter where we run away. Whether it's the bottom of the bottle, or a South Sea Island, we'd find our own ghosts there waiting to greet us . . . . [143]

If the pipe dream is fading, then we know death must be faced. It is significant that the last lines of O'Neill's last play should whisper the words of death-peace. Josie delivers the lines to Jamie as he walks away down the road toward (again significantly) the rising sun. Whether you see Josie as a genuine Earth-Mother or not, she is speaking comforting words to the last member of the O'Neill family in need of peace: "May you have your wish and die in your sleep soon, Jim, darling. May you rest forever in forgiveness and peace." [144]

O'Neill' search for peace was over. If I had to name the one factor which finally allowed him to find the answer to his search, I would say it was his marriage to Carlotta Monterey in 1929. This is not to say that he lived a completely happy life for the next twenty-six years; any biography of O'Neill would disprove that. But in those years O'Neill was more peaceful than at any other time in his life,

and above all, he was loved more dearly than at any other time. We cannot help but think that he must have been happier. In their biography, the Gelbs hint at this when they say:

> Between them Carlotta and O'Neill had begun creating a legend about the handsome romantic, chateau-dwelling O'Neill, secluded in work and in love. For the next twenty-six years of O'Neill's life Carlotta devoted herself to protecting her husband's seclusion and perpetuating the legend. [145]

O'Neill had always wanted to be able to stand apart from life so that he could look at it objectively and see where he belonged in it. Although the first play written after his third marriage, Mourning Becomes Electra, does not show any signs of a happier life, his "interlude" plays, A Touch of the Poet with its optimistic ending, and the last four plays in which his search for peace was finally completed, all show that the playwright was leading a better sort of life.

This thesis has followed O'Neill's search for peace through his plays, paying particular attention to the playwright's death-wish and how it evolved in his plays. It showed first of all the origin of O'Neill's death-wish and what started him on his search for peace. It then showed in O'Neill's first important play, Bound East for Cardiff, how a man, his illusions grown thin, was forced to accept death as his ultimate peace and found it pleasing. It viewed the

period between 1918-1921 (from _Beyond the Horizon_ to _The Hairy Ape_) and showed man's struggle to belong and the futility of his death. It studied the period between 1922 and 1931 (from _The Fountain_ to _Mourning Becomes Electra_) and pointed out man's attempts to rid his fear of death by seeking comfort from the Earth-Mother and from the mystical belief in eternal recurrence. The period ended with a degeneration of the Earth-Mother and a feeling of morbid pessimism and unbearable life-sickness. And finally, this thesis showed in _The Iceman Cometh_ how O'Neill returned to a realistic approach to death, showed the conflict between illusion and reality as he had done in _Bound East for Cardiff_, and found peace once and for all by learning to accept the fact that death is an inevitable consequence of life and need not be feared. His last three plays, specifically _Long Day's Journey Into Night_ and _A Moon for the Misbegotten_, are living proof that he had come to peace with himself, for he was able to tackle the problems of the past with no fear of torment.

Eugene O'Neill died on November 27, 1953. His wife gave him the simple funeral he had asked for, and he was buried with a single prayer in a Boston cemetary. It was a cloudy day, like the day he was born.

O'Neill's exact thoughts about his impending death are not known, except that he took it well; but in reading the

Gelb biography I came across a will which O'Neill had written for his dog, Silverdeen Emblem, on the dog's death. It is a beautiful little piece, written in 1940 to cheer up Carlotta on the loss of the dog. Entitled "The Last Will and Testament of Silverdeen Emblem O'Neill," it is a perfect epitaph for the master himself. It read in part:

> "I, Silverdeen Emblem O'Neill (familiarly known to my family, friends and acquaintances as Blemie) . . . do hereby bury my last will and testament in the mind of my Master . . . .
> I ask my Master and Mistress to remember me always, but not to grieve for me too long . . . . It is painful for me to think that even in death I should cause them pain. Let them remember that while no dog has ever had a happier life (and this I owe to their love and care for me), now that I have grown blind and deaf, and lame, and even my sense of smell fails me so that a rabbit could be right under my nose and I might not know, my pride has sunk to a sick, bewildered humiliation. I feel life is taunting me with having overlingered my welcome. It is time I said good-by, before I become too sick a burden on myself and on those who love me. It will be a sorrow to leave them, but not a sorrow to die . . . . What may come after death, who knows? I would like to believe with those of my fellow Dalmatians who are devout Mohammedans, that there is a Paradise where one is always young and full-bladdered; where all the day one dillies and dallies with an amorous multitude of houris, beautifully spotted . . . .
> I am afraid this is too much for even such a dog as I am to expect. But peace, at least, is certain. Peace and long rest for weary old heart and head and limbs, and eternal sleep in the earth I have loved so well. Perhaps, after all, this is best." 146

Footnotes

[1]Eugene O'Neill, Hughie (New Haven, 1959), p. 19.

[2]Joseph Wood Krutch, "Modernism" in Modern Drama: A Definition and an Estimate (Ithaca, 1953), p. 118.

[3]Doris V. Falk, Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension (New Jersey, 1958), p. 10.

[4]Eleanor Flexnor, American Playwrights: 1918-1938 (New York, 1938), p. 173.

[5]O'Neill's plays can be divided into four periods: (1) Early period: 1913-1921 (from Bound East for Cardiff to The Hairy Ape). In this period, the characters are searching for peace, but it is doubtful whether they find it in the end. (2) Middle period: 1922-1931 (from The Fountain to Mourning Becomes Electra). Here the characters find some answer and at the end can at least delude themselves into thinking they have found peace. (3) Interlude period: 1932-1933 (Ah! Wilderness and Days Without End). This was a brief period in O'Neill's life when he was able to rid himself of all thoughts of death. (4) Late period: 1939-1943 (The Iceman Cometh to A Moon for the Misbegotten). In this period the characters were finally avle to accept death without fear. The period from 1934 to 1938 produced only one play, A Touch of the Poet, the only completed play of the American Cycle. For a fuller account of these periods in O'Neill's writing, see Doris Falk, Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension.

[6]Eugene O'Neill, Plays of Eugene O'Neill, III (New York, 1955), p. 578.

[7]Arthur and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill (New York, 1962), p. 147.

[8]Edwin A. Engel, The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill (Cambridge, 1953), p. 297.

[9]Gelb, p. 55.

[10]Ibid., p. 56.

[11]Eugene O'Neill, Long Day's Journey Into Night (New Haven, 1956), p. 164.

[12]Doris Alexander, The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill (New York, 1962), p. 73.

[13] Krutch, pp. 118-119.

[14] Gelb, p. 132.

[15] *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, p. 153.

[16] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 48.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 587.

[18] Alexander, p. 116.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

[20] Falk, p. 9.

[21] Alexander, p. 174.

[22] Eugene O'Neill, *Thirst and Other One-Act Plays* (Boston, 1914), p. 114.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[24] Gelb, p. 252.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

[26] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, I, pp. 486-487.

[27] Thomas Dickinson, *Playwrights of the New American Theatre* (New York, 1925), p. 71.

[28] Alexander, p. 261.

[29] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, I, p. 486.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 489.

[31] Falk, p. 39.

[32] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 81.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

[35] Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays*(New York, n.d.), pp. 70-71.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[37] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, II, p. 692.

[38] *Ibid.*, III, p. 78.

[39] Flexnor, p. 195.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

[41] Clark, p. 87.

[42] The period of "futile quests" is a descriptive title which I have given to O'Neill's early period. See Footnote 5.

[43] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 212.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

[49] Engel, p. 66.

[50] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 254.

[51] Falk, p. 110.

[52] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, I, p. 440.

[53] *Ibid.*, 442.

[54] *Ibid.*, 444.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 448.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 448.

57 Gelb, p. 431.

58 Engel, p. 106.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 134.

60 Carl G. Jung, *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung* (New York, 1959), pp. 333-334.

61 A. M. I. Fiskin, *Writers of Our Years* (Denver, 1950), p. 111.

62 Engel, p. 230.

63 Plays of Euegene O'Neill, II, p. 475.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 478.

65 *Ibid.*, I, p. 204.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 221.

67 Engel, p. 133.

68 Clark, p. 118.

69 *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, II, p. 352.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 352.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 409.

72 *Ibid.*, III, pp. 264-265.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 260.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 260.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 278.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 284.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 286.

78 Falk, p. 103.

79 Plays of Eugene O'Neill, III, pp. 322-323.

80 Ibid., p. 288.

81 Ibid., p. 322.

82 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche (New York, 1954), p. 332.

83 Edwin A. Engel, "O'Neill: 1960," Modern Drama, III (1960), 221.

84 Plays of Eugene O'Neill, I, p. 279.

85 Ibid., p. 309.

86 Ibid., pp. 351-352.

87 Ibid., p. 280.

88 Fiskin, p. 110.

89 Gelb, pp. 596-597.

90 Plays of Eugene O'Neill, I, pp. 42-43.

91 Ibid., p. 135.

92 Cyrus Day, "The Iceman and the Bridegroom," Modern Drama, I (1958), 8.

93 Plays of Eugene O'Neill, I, p. 40.

94 Engel, The Haunted Heroes, p. 204.

95 Falk, p. 125.

96 Plays of Eugene O'Neill, III, pp. 473-474.

97 Ibid., p. 477.

98 Engel, The Haunted Heroes, pp. 237-238.

99 See specifically Engel, The Haunted Heroes, p. 239. Other critics hint at this action as a return to the Mother, but do not state it directly.

100 *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 489.

101 *Ibid.*, II, p. 54.

102 Falk, p. 130.

103 *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, II, p. 22.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 178.

105 Engel, *The Haunted Heroes*, p. 264.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 271.

107 *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, pp. 493-494.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 565.

109 *Ibid.*, pp. 508-509.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 531.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 535.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 545.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 567.

114 Engel, *The Haunted Heroes*, p. 265.

115 Falk, p. 165.

116 Eugene O'Neill, *A Touch of the Poet* (New Haven, 1957), p. 43.

117 Falk, p. 157.

118 *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 587.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 649.

120 Gelb, p. 286.

121 Engel, *The Haunted Heroes*, p. 280

122 Gelb, p. 286.

[123] Cargill, Fagin, and others, eds., *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism* (New York, 1961), p. 42.

[124] Alexander, p. 215.

[125] Gelb, p. 831.

[126] *Plays of Eugene O'Neill*, III, p. 596.

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 578.

[128] *Ibid.*, p. 727.

[129] Day, p. 5.

[130] Engel, *The Haunted Heroes*, p. 10.

[131] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[132] Falk mentions *Hughie* in a postscript to *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension*, pp. 201-202.

[133] O'Neill, *Hughie*, p. 33.

[134] Cargill, p. 225.

[135] O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey*, p. 7.

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

[138] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[139] *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

[140] Eugene O'Neill, *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (New York, 1952), p. 147.

[141] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

[142] Falk, p. 175.

[143] O'Neill, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, p. 135.

[144] Ibid., p. 177.

[145] Gelb, p. 697.

[146] *Ibid.*, pp. 837-838.

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