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THE INTERRELATIONS OF THE LOVE-HATE THEME
IN THE LIFE AND PLAYS OF
EUGENE O'NEILL

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PREFACE

Eugene O'Neill is considered by many to be one of the greatest of dramatists. By many others he is said to be one of the most overrated playwrights, but even those who do not consider him great do state that his plays are powerful and dynamic. In trying to find a reason for such power and dynamism, this writer became aware of the frequency of two of the most powerful of emotions - love and hate. Tracing this theme through O'Neill's plays led to a search for the source of his material. In reading about O'Neill's life it became evident that his own tragic existence was filled with the search for love - a search that was constantly blocked by hate. The influence that this dominant love-hate theme had on his drama seemed to be an apt choice for a thesis.

I have attempted, in Chapter I, to show how great a part the search for love and the presence of hate played in O'Neill's life. In Chapters II, III, and IV I have tried to reveal how he, consciously and unconsciously, transposed his concept of love and hate to his plays as their theme or as the driving force behind his characters' tragic downfall.

In writing this thesis I received much help and encouragement from Reverend Daniel Fogarty. His time seemed always to be at my disposal and his patience was limitless. For all of this I thank him most sincerely.

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INTRODUCTION

Early in the summer of 1939 Eugene Gladstone O'Neill began a "play of old sorrow, written in tears and in blood."¹ This play was to reveal, brutally, the forces that shaped him. Long Day's Journey Into Night, as it was called, was to provide an assessment of his tragic viewpoint and to explain in part his failure as a human being. In the introduction to this work, (which he did not intend to be published until twenty-five years after his death), O'Neill said he was to face his dead family with "deep pity and understanding and forgiveness."² He succeeded with the pity and with the understanding but the fact that, years after their deaths, he felt compelled to reveal his father as a swaggering skin-flint, his mother as a seemingly hopeless drug addict, and his brother as a cynical, weak-willed alcoholic, seems to indicate that he was not yet ready to forgive. Even though he had reached middle age and the other three O'Neills had been dead for several years, Eugene O'Neill still alternated between love and hate for his family. In writing this play he was, perhaps, trying to find the force which had shaped his destiny because he sincerely believed that the past shaped the present. Or perhaps, since he did not want it to be published until so many years after death; he was trying to release the venom from his system and he used the only emetic he knew - drama. Because there is so much

of both love and hate in this play and also because, in his personal actions and in the actions of his dramatic creations, the motives seem to arise from this love-hate theme, one must search for the hate in his life and reveal how he translated it to his tragic drama.

CHAPTER I
THE O'NEILL FAMILY

Part 1

Both of O'Neill's parents, James and Ella, came from Irish Catholic families but that was all they had in common. Ella was a shy, pretty, pampered, convent-educated, semi-mystic from a fairly well-to-do family. She found it difficult to make friends and her shyness and aloofness were often misconstrued as hauteur which resulted in most people disliking her. James, an actor with no formal schooling, had fought his way up from poverty to an esteemed position in the theatre world. He was materialistic, gregarious, adaptable, and, although self-centered, well liked because of his charm. James and Ella met when his career was at its peak and he was the romantic hero of the stage. Ella's beauty and quiet, refined manner attracted him to her and the romantic aura which clung to him was all that was necessary to lead to marriage.

Ella, however, was in for a rude awakening. Her marriage and theatre life were not nearly as exciting or as glamorous as she had envisioned. Domesticity had never been one of her attributes and living in dingy hotel rooms did nothing to make her want to acquire it. Her shyness and the awareness of her incapa-

bilities made it increasingly difficult for her to be socially pleasant and she began to withdraw into herself.

While Ella was jolted by the discrepancy between the romantic life she had thought she would lead and the drabness of the reality, a worse shock was in store for her. James was taken to court on a bigamy and paternity charge and, although the charges were dismissed, Ella never quite forgave him for dragging her into this scandal. Her withdrawal became more acute and was only alleviated by the birth of her first son, James, in 1878. Now Ella had something with which to fill her time while James rehearsed and performed.

For the next several years, James, Jamie and Ella continued to tour the country with various companies. Easy success for James in foolish, melodramatic roles such as The Count Of Monte Cristo, had made it possible for Ella to raise her head from the shame she had felt and she attained a measure of happiness which was to be short lived.

After five years a second son, Edmund, was born to Ella and James O'Neill. Travelling with two children seemed prohibitive so the O'Neills bought a home in New London, Connecticut and left their two young sons in the care of Ella's mother. James seemed to need and want Ella's presence when he was touring and, because she loved him, she complied with his wishes.

When Edmund was a year and a half old he caught the measles from Jamie, ran a high fever for five days and then died. Ella, who was on tour with James, was ridden with an intolerable guilt which she spent the rest of her life trying to shift from herself to her husband, to Jamie and to Eugene, who was not even born when his brother died. Jamie, because he was the one to pass the measles on, was the first to bear the burden of guilt and, six months after Edmund's death, he was banished to a boarding school where he was to spend the rest of his youth. This guilt was to embitter him for much of his life and was a contributing factor to his alcoholism.

Ella was now free to travel with James without fear of being torn between two duties. Melancholy followed her and was intensified by the death of her mother two years after that of her son but she seemed resigned to it. It was at this time and with Ella in this mental state that the O'Neill's third child was conceived.

Part 2

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 born you . It would have been better for [your] sake.³

These are the words Eugene O'Neill was to put in the mouth of Mary Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night. Whether

or not they were the literal words used by Ella to her third son, Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, is doubtful but certainly they conveyed to Gene O'Neill his mother's dismay over his birth. This dismay and the pain of his birth were to lead to her medicinal use of morphine and result in her narcotics addiction. The guilt rested with O'Neill always that his birth was the cause of this addiction and the seeds of self-hatred were sown. James had had a 'quack' doctor deliver Eugene and the latter became convinced that it was his father's miserliness which allowed him to choose such a doctor. Morphine was prescribed to relieve Ella's pain. The tablets were available without prescription at that time, and Ella, enjoying the sensation they produced and unknown to her family, made use of their availability. The drug offered her a never-never land in which she could hide and she willingly journeyed to this land.

Gene O'Neill was born in a hotel and he spent his first seven years in hotels and in the theatre wings. The demands made on his father by the theatre built up in the young Eugene a deep resentment of James, and of the conventions of theatre. When he received little outward care or affection from his drug-addicted mother and his liquor-drinking, theatre-addicted father, he turned to the world of make-believe that he found in books. The books which he was to read throughout his youth were to enhance his sense of adventure and tragedy, and were to make a definite con-

tribution to his drama.

James O'Neill, although miserly about most things was never so about education. He had placed Jamie in an expensive, first class boarding school and, when Eugene was seven, he sent him to an equally expensive and first class boarding school. The nomadic years of travelling had given Eugene an education unlike any of his schoolmates and they also gave him a permanent feeling of rootlessness which boarding school only intensified. He recalled in later years his acute loneliness every time he returned to his exile and his longing to remain with his beautiful mother and dramatic father.⁴ He found it difficult, because of these differences in background, to join with his fellow students in their work, play or leisure hours and they considered him moody and oversensitive. As a result of the feeling of not belonging, Gene O'Neill continued to spend his time with his books.

While at grammar school, O'Neill became aware that something was wrong with his mother but he could not pinpoint it. He also saw that Jamie, whom he idolized, was an idol with clay feet. To defy and gain attention from his father, Jamie had taken to drink and to women, and, at nineteen, was something of a rake. His sneering letters about life and religion were making inroads on the impressionable Eugene. The younger boy had been steeped in the ritual and catechism of the Catholic Church until he was ready for his First Communion at the age of twelve. Upset and worried about

his mother and his brother, Gene O'Neill turned to his religion for help. When he made his First Communion he firmly believed he had achieved union with God, and, because God was Love, all would be well.

But all was not well. Eugene became a day scholar shortly after his First Communion and, returning early from school one day, he found his mother giving herself a shot of morphine. After several anguished sessions with his father and brother, he came to know and understand what had haunted his family all through the years. For the first time the bitter pattern of his father's and brother's lives unfolded before him. He prayed for help and begged his God to cure his mother, challenging Him to prove Himself by so doing. He wanted God to be the God of Love which he knew and understood and with Whom he had felt kinship. He learned, as James in Days Without End learned, that "his God of Love was beginning to show Himself as a God of Vengeance."⁵

Gene O'Neill stormed heaven with prayers for about a year but, when he found that his mother had returned once more to the hospital, he renounced Catholicism and, although it was to hound him throughout his life and prevent him from committing suicide, he never returned to it. He expresses that attitude he held at the time in Days Without End, when he has the hero say:

God was One of Infinite Love - not a stern, self-righteous

Being who condemned sinners to torment, but a very human lovable God Who became Man for love of men and gave His life that they might be saved from themselves. And the boy had every reason to believe in such a Divinity of Love as the Creator of Life.

.....
 Later, at school, he learned of the God of Punishment, and he wondered. . . . Afterward ..

.....
 He saw his God as deaf and blind and merciless - a Diety, Who returned hate for love and revenged Himself upon those who trusted Him.⁶

And so Eugene O'Neill came to hate his God. He was fourteen years old at this time and, when he was sixty, he was to tell his doctor that this was the turning point in his life.⁷

O'Neill began to hate his father actively for allowing drug addiction to get such a hold on his mother and, by giving her so little understanding, for so contributing to its cause. He hated his mother for her weakness and her rejection of him; his brother for his failure to intervene and for adding to the tragedy of their family by his behaviour.

Hoping to alleviate Gene's bitterness, James changed his son's school. However, Eugene, filled with hatred as he was, proceeded, under Jamie's tutelage, to follow his brother's cynical example. He traded his concept of pure and queenly womanhood, with which he had identified his mother, for the earthy whore. Jamie taught him the 'ropes' and he spent his weekends acquiring a taste for liquor and for prostitutes. What little time he spent on formal education, he spent devouring the works of Dickens,

London, Tolstoi, Doestoeveski and Nietschze and they heightened his tragic outlook. He finished high school and enrolled at Princeton but the brothels and bars were more appealing than his books so he did not even write his first term examinations.

O'Neill's education now became that which life at its seamiest could provide. In 1906 he watched the hostility grow between Jamie and their father. Each complained to him about the other and he found himself torn between the two, although he eventually came to side with Jamie. Hatred of his father's miserliness and his demands, despair over his mother's illness, disgust with his own shortcomings as an actor and as a person, had led Jamie into a state of chronic alcoholism. The hold James exercised over his elder son, once the latter turned to the stage for support, only increased Eugene's hatred and resentment of his father and his disgust for Jamie, so he, too, began to drink more heavily. He rarely attempted work and spent his time frequenting opium dens, bars and brothels and he rejected his father except in times of great need.

One such time arrived when, after courting a nice young lady, Gene found himself altar bound. He ran to his father for help and James decided to send him on a gold mining expedition to the Honduras. However, before Gene left, and without his father's knowledge, he married Kathleen and left a week later for his adventure in mining. Because he contracted malaria five

months later, he returned to New York but he did not return to Kathleen who was soon to produce an O'Neill heir. He informed his father of his marriage and his impending parenthood and James, the ever dependable, once again, assumed the responsibility of freeing Eugene from his unwelcome ties. Eugene did not even make his presence in New York known to his young wife, and when his father offered him a job as assistant stage manager he went on tour to escape contact with her. He is said to have wept when the full implication of his responsibility for his wife and son, Eugene II, struck him but he did not attempt to see the young Eugene until the latter was twelve years old. No doubt his shoddy behaviour did nothing but increase his self-loathing.

His rootlessness began to gnaw at him again and it was not long before he answered the call of the sea and sailed away to South America. While on this voyage he learned to respect the simple life of his fellow seamen as well as to respect them as people. He, also, learned to hate the conventions of society which barred these men from respectable treatment and remuneration. Perhaps, like his Anna Christie, he felt washed clean by the sea because this was the happiest period of his life and the one about which he was always nostalgic.

Unfortunately he stayed too long in Buenos Aires. He was soon a drifter on the docks. He lived on the beach where every

kind of perversity was enacted. He worked only when actually desperate for money and he drank whatever he could lay his hands on. He was "so deep at the bottom of hell there is no lower you can sink and you rest there in peace."⁸ The peace was short lived. He was headed toward willful self-destruction when some unknown urge took him homeward to New York.

Again in New York, O'Neill continued to live on the waterfront at "Jimmy the Priest's". Although he thrived on his life of depravity, some creative urge made him begin to jot down his observations of people and his surroundings but it was some time before he constructively used these jottings. Financial need, only, made him turn once more to his father.

It was, however, almost the end of James O'Neill's career and fear of the poorhouse and self reproach at his failure to become a great Shakespearian actor were becoming obsessions with the senior O'Neill. The fear of being poor was partially justified when one considers that he was the sole support of a drug-addicted wife, a thirty-five year old alcoholic son and a twenty-three year old rake. He could not bring himself to abandon either of his sons and the more they could depend upon him the less respect and liking they had for him. He was, however, shocked out of his self pity when he was informed that his younger son had attempted suicide by taking an overdose of veronal tablets. He helped Gene recuperate and in 1912 got him a job on the New London Telegraph.

Gene O'Neill made an honest attempt to become a good reporter but he was more interested in the 'why' of people's actions than in the actions themselves and this did not lend itself to reporting. While a member of the Telegraph staff he developed a severe cold which his weakened constitution could not throw off and he contracted tuberculosis. His father deposited him in the state sanatorium, thus markedly increasing his son's hatred for him. The doctor kept him there for two days and then sent him to a private sanatorium called Gaylord Farm and forced James to pay the fee.

Tuberculosis was a mixed blessing. It forced O'Neill to rest, to eat proper food, to get fresh air and to cut down on his drinking habit. It provided him with the time and the need to do something and he utilized both time and need to nurture the creative urge which had kept him alive. It was here, in 1913, that Eugene O'Neill wrote his first play. Although he later destroyed this work he now knew what he wanted to do with his life.

After his release from the hospital he spent the summer and fall in New London recuperating and writing. Although he was to return to New York and to his life as a roué, he was to write steadily and to choose to write, on the advice of a friend, and critic, that which he knew best.

Part 3

When the Provincetown Players produced Bound East For Cardiff in 1917 and brought O'Neill's name to the attention of the public, they did not realize that they were introducing one of the greatest and most controversial of dramatists. They liked his unconventionality and continued to produce anything he wrote. As his fame and recognition grew so did his tolerance, pity and understanding of his family, and he became a source of contentment and pride for his mother and came close to being a friend to his father. His life up to this time had been sheer agony - the kind of agony he was to inflict on his own children - and it was to continue to be one of turmoil. Except for keeping the fire of his agony and his hatred alive, this period of his life was not to become a part of his writing or to influence his drama.

During the first flush of fame O'Neill met and married a would-be writer, Agnes Boulton. They were to remain married for eleven years and, during this period O'Neill fluctuated between moods of impassioned love for her and black periods of antagonism. They had two children, Shane and Oona, and between the birth of the two O'Neill lost his father in 1920, his miraculously cured mother in 1922, and his alcohol ravaged brother in 1923. Their deaths were to start him brooding about the past and retreating more and more into a personal and social exile from which he was never to rouse himself. He gave up drinking,

met and fell in love with the beautiful Carlotta Monterrey, who was to provide him with the serenity needed for his writing.

After a financial haggle with Agnes which he took out on his children by rejecting them, he was divorced and married to Carlotta. His exile cut him off almost completely from his children and from most of his beloved friends and supporters. The death of Shane's son, Eugene III, through neglect, the marriage of Oona to Charlie Chaplin, a man almost three times her age, and Carlotta's dislike of the brilliant Eugene II, led to their banishment from his home and seemingly from his thoughts. Eugene II took his own life, Shane became and still is a drug addict, while the only O'Neill who seems to have found happiness is Oona.

To add to this tragic web which seemed to engulf the O'Neill family, Eugene senior contracted a rare disease which caused a breakdown of the motor cells in the brain. In the last few of the twenty years he suffered this illness, he could no longer hold a pen, walk steadily, or speak clearly. He died in 1953 and was buried in Forest Hill Cemetery with only his lawyer and third wife at his graveside. The curtain rang down on a more tragic life than its owner ever portrayed in his great tragedies.

CHAPTER II
"DAT OLE DAVIL SEA"⁹ - LIFE
Part 1

O'Neill was emotionally starved and spent much of his life seeking love. His search failed and so he writhed with pain, bitterness and hatred. He expected the whole world and, particularly, those close to him to be perfect. When their natural human flaws were revealed he cried out against them, and the things for which they stood. He was deeply hurt by father, mother, brother, his wives and his children and his plays resound with pain and with hate in its various forms.

In his early adult life he spent much of his time at sea. Here he was at peace for what was probably the only time in his life. He voiced his feeling for the sea in Long Day's Journey Into Night.

When I was on the Squarehead square rigger, bound for Buenos Aires. Full moon in the Trades. The old hooker driving fourteen knots. I lay on the bowsprit, facing astern, with the water foaming into spume under me, the masts with every sail white in the moonlight, towering high above me. I became drunk with the beauty and 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! To God, if you want to put it that way. Then another time, on the American Line, when I was lookout on the crow's nest in the dawn watch. A calm sea, that

time. Only a lazy ground swell and a slow drowsy roll of the ship. The passengers asleep and none of the crew in sight. No sound of man. Black smoke pouring from the funnels behind and beneath me. Dreaming, not keeping lookout, feeling alone, and above, and apart, watching the dawn creep like a painted dream over the sky and sea which slept together. Then the moment of ecstatic freedom came. The peace, the end of the quest, the last harbour, the joy of belonging to a fulfillment beyond men's lousy, pitiful, greedy fears and dreams! And several other times in my life, when I was swimming far out, or lying alone on a beach, I have had the same experience. Became the sun, the hot sand, green seaweed anchored to a veil of things as they seem drawn back by an unseen hand. For the second you see - and seeing the secret, are the secret. For a second there is meaning! Then the hand lets the veil fall and you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason!¹⁰

As the fog could remove the cleansing peace of the sea so the symbolic fog could cloud life, its purpose and the people who strive to give it meaning. It was this kind of fog that we find in many O'Neill plays. It was this kind of fog that masked love and made it seem like hate or that hid love behind the curtain of bitterness. It was this kind of fog that O'Neill came to hate and about which he wrote in some of his works.

O'Neill had learned about and come to know the sea and the men who sail her. His first plays reiterate its call and, at the same time, show its hardships as a way of life. The sailor's life was not an easy one. The ships were poorly equipped and the food, hours of labour and wages were always poor. As the men on the ship bound for Cardiff, in his first produced play, explained it, "It's a starvation ship" with "plenty o'

work and no food - and the owners ridin' around in carriages!"¹¹
 "This sailor's life ain't much to cry about leavin'," exclaims the dying Yank, "just one ship after another, hard work, small pay and bum grub and never meetin' no nice people."¹² Yank dreams the dream which has occupied his life - of being on 'dry land'. He grew up in a village where all men went to sea and he had no choice but to join them. He had wanted to die on land but even this was denied him.

Like him, the sailors on the whaling ship out of Norway, in Ile, came to hate both the sea and their captain. Their ship became ice-bound in the frozen Arctic Sea before they could fill its holds with whales. Because of this and the fact that they had been away from home for two years, it is little wonder they "damn him and damn the ice . . . and damn the Arctic Seas."¹³ It is also little wonder that Mrs. Keeney, who had joined her captain-husband on this seemingly romantic adventure to escape the loneliness of and enforced vigil at home, should lament that "Although I used to love the sea . . . I don't ever want to see the sea again."¹⁴ When her husband refuses to take her home because of his mania for whale oil she becomes mentally ill and the sea claims another victim.

Both of these plays reveal the sea as a hard master, one which well deserves the hate its victims supply. In Anna Christie,

the sea is once more the enemy. Here it is never impatient, never anxious. It is to man and all his threats and entreaties just cynically, mockingly indifferent. It is luringly beautiful and terrifyingly sinister. To Anna, who loves it, it is beautiful and calming. But her father, Old Chris, hates and fears it. He has spent the greater part of his life on it because he has had little choice. "All men in our village on coast of Sveden go to sea. Ain't nutting else for dem to do."¹⁵ The sea has never done him anything but harm. It has claimed as its victims at some time or other, most of the members of his family and he has a feeling that, in the end, it will get him, too. But it will not get him without a fight. He takes a position as the captain of a barge that never goes out into the open sea and he keeps his greatly loved little girl away inland so that she will be safe from it. Then he shakes his fist at it and dares it to do its worst. One can almost hear the sea laughing. Old Chris's love for his daughter and his cunning plan to save her from the sea are the direct causes of her coming back to it.

She comes to the old man and he takes her with him on the barge. He is horrified to see, almost at once, appearing in her the indications of that serpent-like fascination the sea has always held over him and that he has always had to

fight against. He shrinks away in fear and horror from her declaration of love when she cries out "I love this fog . . . It makes me feel clean out here like I took a bath."¹⁶

With Anna on the barge out in the bay at night events begin to move quickly. The "old devil sea's" victims come more and more under its hypnotic spell. A dense fog comes up and out of it comes a hail and a shipwrecked crew. One of the crew is the almost superhumanly strong Matt Burke. Almost at once he loves Anna and she, attracted by this tremendous, romantic, sea-going man, soon comes to love him. The only women he has hitherto known were those of the unsavory profession that was Anna's a short time before. He has always had contempt for these women. There has always been something foul and unclean about them. The only men Anna has known until now were the men who sought such women. She hated those men. She was inclined to band together all men with those she hated, just as he linked all women with those he despised. Now they come to each other as clean things from the clean sea. He has never met anyone like Anna and she has never met a man like him. He is so clean she cannot bring herself to besmirch such purity. Her father, who no longer knows the cleansing quality of the sea, and Matt, who is above being suspicious of her, goad her. The pressure they exert along with that of her conscience, makes her feel that she must reveal her past. When she does so the love all

three have for each other is almost destroyed but it is greater than her past weaknesses and it overcomes this evil that threatens it.

Old Chris ventures once more on the open sea because he believes that if "that ole davil git me back she leave you alone den"¹⁷ Matt decides that marriage to this girl he cannot forget will erase the pain as well as the knowledge of her sin so he and Anna are married. As Chris and Matt go off to sea an overhanging unknown is threatening but it is hidden by the fog "all bloody time. You can't see where you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil sea, she knows!"¹⁸

The play begins and ends with Chris's hatred of the sea. It begins with Anna and Matt loving the sea and ends with their fearing what it might do to their future. Only the sea can tell them and it refuses.

The symbolism here seems obvious. The sea is life. Anna's coming to the sea is the change she has made in her life - a kind of 'coming to life'. She has wakened and tried to cast aside the evil which was stealing her life from her and she almost succeeds. According to O'Neill, trying to circumvent the inevitable is only trying to circumvent oneself. That is man's tragedy. Seeking to accomplish one end, (as Anna did in trying to free herself), man invariably accomplishes another, (as she did in hurting two people she had come to love and, thus, in adding new scars to her

already bruised heart). It matters not whether man's motives are according to contemporary standards of morality, good or bad. Anna proves this too when she tells of her past so that nothing hidden will be able to destroy her love for Matt. Her motive is good but Matt cannot understand it because he is fogged in by her crimes. As a result, where love had an opportunity to heal it only reopened an old wound and time alone can tell whether or not the love is strong enough to reheat it. Once again the sea of life with its inevitable 'fog' has altered the course of the ship which is 'man'.

Part 2

But the powerful unpredictability of life and of the sea is not O'Neill's only dramatic theme. In the Hairy Ape he uses a different approach but one which is none the less effective. The thesis of this play rests with the idea that no man, as long as he can satisfy his desires by action, ever uses thought. Thought is only man's last resource. The man who thinks is a man waking into consciousness of his life position. He brings himself into perspective and his eyes coming into the light, blink and suffer.

The hero, Yank, is tremendous. He is a stoker on an Atlantic liner, a physical giant whose raw force has given him

a position of eminence. All other stokers both respect and fear him. He is assured, confident, strong and has vast physical power. He is steel, strength and speed all rolled into one being. Like the giant ape that is free and untamed and magnificent in its wild jungle, so Yank, in his world, is free and untamed and magnificent. He does not know other worlds than his exist and he sings with the pure animal joy of being alive.

Suddenly all this changes. A white-dressed, white-faced woman enters his domain - a hold in his ship. She is everything that Yank is not - neither vitality nor integrity are hers. She is shocked at his appearance and screams to be taken away from the "hairy ape". Sight of her, however, administers an even greater shock to Yank. When he realizes that her fear of him is born, not of any recognition of superiority in him, but of fear and disgust; when he learns that he is to her only a dangerous animal, a "hairy ape", then his life philosophy bursts like a huge bubble. The world in which he was secure slips rapidly away from him. He begins to realize that he is caged in and not free as he had thought. He has known liberty by being freely above his fellow stokers and he is, therefore, even more aware of the prison in which he now finds himself.

His physical being, as powerful as it is, is incapable

of meeting this new challenge. At first he is filled with distrust and then he learns to hate. Neither Paddy's sentimental gift of gab and taunts of love nor Long's political harangues offset his inability to talk. Paddy says it is love that has made Yank inarticulate but Yank says "Love, Hell! Hate, dat's what I've fallen in - hate; get me?"¹⁹ Long says this is class hate because the white lady personifies upper class but it is this and so much more. This Yank realizes because he has learned to hate that which has taken away his life-belief and left him with nothing to cling to. It has isolated him from his own.

Cut out an hour offer de job a day and make me happy!
 Gimme a dollar more a day and make me happy! Tree
 square a day, and cauliflowers in de front yard - ekal
 rights - a woman and kids - a lousy vote - and I'a all
 fixed up for Jesus, huh? Aw hell! What does dat get
 yuh? Dis ting's in you inside, but it ain't your belly.
 Feedin' your face - sinkers and coffee - dat don't touch
 it. It's way down - at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it,
 and yuh don't touch it. It's way down - at de bottom.
 Yuh can't grab it and yuh can't stop it. It moves and
 everything moves. It stops and de whole woild stops.
 Dat's me now see? I'm a busted Ingersoll, dat's what.
 Steel was me and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel,
 and de woild owns me. Aw hell! I can't see - it's all
 dark . . . It's all wrong.²⁰

He has lost his physical strength but he cannot yet think. He tries to touch the crowd surging from church and push them around. He tries by speech, to reach the union men. Both politics and the Church reject him and push him aside. He realizes that he

does not belong anywhere - to any group. He feels caged in.

Having been called an ape he goes to see the apes in a Zoo and he hopes to find acceptance there. He tells the apes that they are better off than he is because they know they are apes. He is neither ape nor man. He "can make a bluff at talkin' and thinkin' and a'most git away with it"²¹ but that is all he can do. He decides to join the apes but they, too, reject him and, when he frees them, they kill him. Death is his release. At last the Hairy Ape belongs.

O'Neill has a pet hate here. He is against modern society wherein the majority accepts what it does not understand. He is trying to show the world that no man is so little understood and so much misunderstood as the man who cannot accept what is passed to him as fact, and strives, because he must, to understand. It is, after all, the man who gets the first glimpse of true freedom of spirit who knows best what imprisonment means - and not the man who is born, lives and dies in prison unaware of any other place. The thinker is the disturber. He does not belong. He is not wanted, loved or understood - so he learns hatred, despair and loneliness. Here O'Neill is painting a picture which is grim and uncompromising but which is stark realism. He gives voice to the people who madden him - the people who never think. He shows that all animals are imprisoned by their animal nature

but man can, with thoughtful aim, glimpse freedom and, once glimpsing it, can strive to attain it. He is optimistic about the human race as long as a few will try to be free but he wants the world to know that the struggle for freedom is costly.

Part 3

Few other plays of O'Neill were so concerned with hatred of a universal idea as were Anna Christie and Hairy Ape. This does not, however, mean that the rest of O'Neill's works were devoid of that devastating emotion. Most of the rest of his major works were concerned with the little hatreds which play a much larger part in the lives of individuals. These hatreds can chart the course of a lifetime, as O'Neill well knew, and he used them in most of his plays. Love and hatred very often are the 'why' of a person's actions and in the next chapters we will trace the love-hate theme through the lives of some of O'Neill's characters and show just how closely they are related to the love-hate theme which ran through his own life and that of his family.

CHAPTER III
HAUNTED HEROES

O'Neill did not spend all his huge hatred upon the abhorrent ideas and situations of life. Some of it he used on individual characters to vent his pent up bitterness, resentment and hatred which had arisen from his own heritage. These characters are his haunted heroes because they reflect unconsciously and, sometimes, consciously the ghosts of his own past. He had suffered a severe, perhaps traumatic, experience when he learned of his mother's addiction to morphine for it "made everything in life seem rotten".²² He felt betrayed by all whom he loved and he spent the next dozen or more years trying to betray those who had contributed to this betrayal.

Gene O'Neill was emotionally starved and spent most of his life looking for love. When his search failed he learned to hate. Liquor and women did not ease his loneliness so he sought another escape--drama. As he began to write he also began to delve more and more deeply into the dark past to seek the 'why' of his existence. At the start of this excavation his portrayal of his attitudes toward his parents, his brother and himself was unconsciously carried out. It was only as he

began to dig deeper and when time gave him a clearer perspective that he learned compassion and understanding and began to consciously portray his family. Long Day's Journey Into Night and The Moon of the Misbegotten were the first two of seven proposed plays in which O'Neill was to bare his soul. Ill health and death kept him from completing the cycle but these two plays remain as testimonials to the fact that love and hate intermingled in the O'Neill lives and that love was triumphant in James and Ella's marriage and it gave understanding to take the edge off the bitterness in Eugene's life. It failed only with James, junior, whom hatred conquered until merciful death came to release its hold.

In only one of O'Neill's plays, (Long Day's Journey Into Night), is a father portrayed with any semblance of kindness. In all other works in which there is a father, he is in opposition to the children. These fathers are possessive, stingy, cold-hearted. They are drunken, domineering or rationalistically Bible-quoting parents. In each of these works the sons of such fathers cry out in defiance, in loneliness, in resentment, in bitterness and hatred against their fathers, and, with the exception of Anna Christie who learns acceptance, their cries are of no avail and go unanswered.

There are examples of miserly coldness in many plays. In Desire Under the Elms, Ephraim Cabot never allowed his sons the

the freedom money could have given them and so bound them to himself and to his land. In order to gain the desired freedom they had to steal from him and run away. They leave with hate in their hearts and it appears that it will always remain there.

In The Great God Brown, Mr. Anthony considers money spent on the art education Dion wants as money wasted. As a result he educates his son in an alien field and adds to that son's insecurity and father-hatred. As another result Dion becomes a semi-alcoholic and spends his life hiding behind a mask. No one knows the real Dion.

In The Straw Carmody is the Irish bar-keep who drinks heavily and who has money to spend on himself and his friends but who, at the same time, resents the expense involved in running a family. His close-fistedness leads to an estrangement between his daughter, Eileen, and himself. Having contracted tuberculosis Eileen must spend some time in a sanatorium and, because she has been housekeeper and mother to her father and young brother and sisters, someone is needed to replace her. When the idea of getting a housekeeper is suggested, Carmody bursts forth with:

D'you think I'm a millionaire itself? . . . Seven dollars! and I'll have to pay a woman to come in and the four of the children eatin' their heads off! Glory be to God, I'll not have a penny saved for me old age - and then it's the poorhouse.²³

This poor, blind man cannot understand why his Eileen, after re-

peated examples of his stinginess, seems ungrateful and holds him in bitter contempt.

This action on the part of Carmody is taken almost directly from Eugene O'Neill's own life. As noted in the first chapter, James O'Neill's stinginess induced him to take his youngest son to the state hospital when that son contracted tuberculosis but the doctor there, well aware of the senior O'Neill's affluence, had Eugene transferred to a private hospital within two days and forced James O'Neill to pay the charges. His father's neglect of the son's physical well-being gnawed at O'Neill and built in him a bitterness he often spoke of and which he revealed in two plays. In Long Day's Journey Into Night his counterpart, Edmund, taunts the father with "so why waste money? That's why you're sending me to a state farm. . . . You stinking old miser!"²⁴ Edmund also blames his father for his mother's addiction because he claims that

It never should have gotten hold on her! I know damned well she's not to blame. And I know who is! You are! Your damned stinginess! If you'd spent money for a decent doctor when she was so sick after I was born, she'd never have known morphine existed.²⁵

He does not take this stand against his father alone. Jamie supports him and charges his father's miserliness with the cause of the protracted illnesses of both Edmund and his mother. First of all he claims that if his father had sent Edmund to a doctor

earlier he might never have gotten tuberculosis at all and then, in referring to his mother's illness, he blames his father because "That bastard of a doctor . . . was another cheap quack like Hardy! You wouldn't pay for a first-rate -"26 So, Jamie Tyrone, too, is bitter towards his father for this fault.

It was not only where health and doctor bills were concerned that James Tyrone was a skinflint. He was one even when it came to providing a home for his family. He liked the hotel rooms to which he had grown accustomed and he lacked the sensitivity that would have made him aware of Mary's dislike of them. He never seemed to know of or understand Mary's longing for a home in which to feel secure, in which to raise her family and in which to entertain her friends. He finally bought a summer home but as Mary says

It was wrong from the start. Everything was done in the cheapest way. . . . I'd be ashamed to have friends step in at the door. . . . He thinks money spent on a home is money wasted.²⁷

James Tyrone is aware of his family's attitude toward his miserly ways and, before the play is over, he seeks and gains some understanding from Edmund as to how this habit came about.

When I was ten my father deserted my mother and went back to Ireland to die . . . My mother was left a stranger in a strange land, with four small children, me and a sister a little older and two younger than me. . . . There was no damned romance in our poverty.

Twice we were evicted from the miserable hovel we called home. . . . I cried, too, though I tried not to, because I was the man of the family. At ten years old! There was no more school for me. I worked twelve hours a day in a machine shop, learning to make files. . . . You talk of work! and what do you think I got for it? Fifty cents a week! It's the truth.

My mother's one fear was she'd get old and sick and have to die in the poorhouse. It was in those days I learned to be a miser. A dollar was worth so much then. And once you've learned a lesson, it's hard to unlearn it.²⁸

When James has finished this talk and the one in which he recounts his sense of failure on the stage, Edmund says "I'm glad you've told me this, Papa, I know you a lot better now,"²⁹ but Jamie never gets the insight necessary to forgive his father and he always was to think him a "lousy tight-wad bastard".³⁰ Mary Tyrone and Edmund were the only ones who could forgive him this weakness, perhaps because they realized that despite his faults "he worked hard all his life. He made his way up from ignorance and poverty to the top of his profession"³¹ and he needs their love and approval. This discussion with his father dissipated much of the bitterness Edmund felt about finances just as understanding must have worked the same miracle in the real Eugene.

Although his father's miserliness had seeped into several of his son's plays and, by so doing, had revealed just how much it played upon the mind of that son, much of the bitterness it caused was lost. This is not true of some of James O'Neill's other faults. These Eugene O'Neill never forgave or forgot and

he revealed them mercilessly for all the world to see.

There are two plays which are very much alike - The Rope and Desire Under the Elms. In these plays, O'Neill gives vent to the emotions which are most typical of him in relationship with his family. In them we find people who sow the seeds of their own destruction; we find the love-hate theme between father and son, between husband and wife, between brother and brother. In them, too, we have two hardbitten, virile, domineering, stingy men - Ephraim Cabot and Abraham Bentley. Both men are given to enhancing their bitter denunciations of their offspring with quotations from the Bible and neither man, himself, lives up to the teachings of the Bible. Both men try to subjugate their sons. Both men are held responsible by one of their children for having driven their wives to death with overwork.

Bentley's daughter, Annie, reveals her hatred for her father when she shouts

A fine one you be to be shoutin' Scripture in a body's ears all the live-long day - you that druv Maw to her death with your naggin', and pinchin', and miser stinginess. If you've a mind to pray, it's down in the madder ye ought to go, and kneel down by her grave and ask God to forgive you for the meanness you done to her all her life.³²

In Desire Under the Elms, Eben Cabot does a similar job of denouncing his father when he asks his half-brothers why didn't ye never stand between him'n my Maw when he

was slavin' her to her grave - t'pay back fur the kindness she done t' yew?

She'd got too tired. She'd got too used t'bein' too tired.
That was what he done.³³

This kind of blame was also placed on the shoulders of James Tyrone, the stage counterpart of James O'Neill, in Long Day's Journey Into Night. Here Edmund blames his father for his mother's kind of death - drug addiction. He assesses part of the blame as being due to his father's miserliness but he also realizes that something else was more important as a cause. He claims that his mother never was cured

Because you've never given her anything that would help her want to stay off it! No home except this summer dump in a place she hates and you've refused even to spend money to make this look decent. . . . You've dragged her around on the road, season after season, on one-night stands, with no one she could talk to, waiting night after night in dirty hotel rooms for you to come back with a bun on after the bars closed! Christ, is it any wonder she didn't want to be cured. Jesus, when I think of it I hate your guts!³⁴

This hatred of son for parent did not limit itself to the crimes committed against the mother. The son often resented the possessive pressure brought to bear by his mother or father. In Desire Under the Elms, Eben Cabot resented his father's tying him to the farm, although if he had been assured of owning the land at some time, the edge would have been taken off that resentment. In Beyond the Horizon, Andrew was hated by his father because he refused "to live and die right here on this farm as I

expect to,"³⁵ and he is told he "can go to hell if you want to. You're no son of mine."³⁶ In The Great God Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony disagree about Dion's future and Mr. Anthony makes it known that he wants Dion "to make a man out of himself as I made one of myself."³⁷ He expects his son to go into his contracting business and carry on a family tradition. He cares nothing for Dion's dream of becoming an artist and never doubts his son's desire to do as his father wishes. As his future is decided for him, Dion bursts out, with bitterness, "This Mr. Anthony is my father, but he only imagines he is God the Father."³⁸ Dion resents his father's intervention and becomes a semi-alcoholic. It is only when his father dies that he pauses to reflect on their relationship and the lack of feeling and communication which lay between them.

What aliens we are to each other! When my father lay dead his face looked so familiar that I wondered where I had met that man before. Only at the second of my conception. After that we grew hostile with concealed shame.³⁹

He mourns the loss of the closeness he never had and, at the same time, he remembers the bitterness of a life gone astray because of a father's possessiveness and lack of sensitivity.

In Mourning Becomes Electra, Orin is forced, by his father, to join the army and follow his father's illustrious career. Orin lacks both the mental and physical stamina for this type of life, and what little love for his father re-

mained, was soon lost. It was only in death that Orin could look at Ezra Mannon and say "You never cared to know me in life - but I really think we might be friends, now you are dead!"⁴⁰

All of these plays express an intense aversion for fathers but it is in a short play entitled Where The Cross Is Made that O'Neill is most bitter about a father's possessiveness and insensitivity. In this work, Captain Bartlett binds his son to him with the promise of great wealth from a long, lost treasure. Nat, believing his father, postpones his writing career, to follow his father's dream. Realization that his father is mentally ill is brought home to him and his wasted years seem to stab him. Now he is bound to his father because the captain needs someone to care for him. After a time Nat can no longer face the future with this sick man and he decides to have his father committed to a mental hospital. He tries to justify this decision both to himself and to his sister by revealing what his remaining at home has cost him.

You don't know what it means. It stands between me and my book. It's stood between me and life - driving me mad! He taught me to wait and hope with him - wait and hope - day after day. He made me doubt my brain and give the lie to my eyes when hope was dead - when I knew it was all a dream. . . . I do hate him! He's stolen my brain! I've got to free myself, can't you see, from him and his madness.⁴¹

Unfortunately a hallucination binds Nat to his father irrevocably and he, too, becomes insane. He lost the strength and

the desire to free himself and his escape; became insanity.

This seems to be the way Eugene O'Neill felt about the relationship between his father and his brother, Jamie. Certainly, in life, Jamie O'Neill was dependent upon his father. He was enticed into an acting career because of his physical likeness to his father. However, he was weak and lacked his father's drive and theatrical talent and so he was swallowed up with many would-be actors and he drowned his failure in women and in drink. In Long Day's Journey Into Night Jamie Tyrone informs his father that he "never wanted to be an actor. You forced me on the stage."⁴² We may never be altogether sure that this is the only picture of Jamie O'Neill's acting career but, certainly, both Jamie and Eugene had the same idea about it. Certainly, too, Jamie never had the courage to free himself. He allowed himself to be dependent and, perhaps, because of this weakness he was "always sneering at someone else, always looking for the worst weakness in everyone."⁴³ To his dying day he always blames his failure, justifiably, or not, on his father.

Eugene O'Neill felt hatred for his father for what he had done to his mother, his brother and himself but he was not a stupid man. He knew that all the blame could not rest outside himself and he began to search within for a cause and to

wonder, like Dion Anthony, "why [he] was born at all"⁴⁴ In his quest he came to realize that his brother was jealous of him, that his mother blamed him for her drug addiction and that he was to remember her as " a sweet strange girl, with affectionate bewildered eyes as if God had locked her in a dark closet without explanation."⁴⁵ He remembered, too, that when he tried to bring her out of that dark closet by praying to the God he loved, he challenged that God and God seemed to fail him. As a result he turned from God and learned to hate Him as he hated so much else in his life. In all but one of his plays, where there is any reference to God, the references are bitter. He ridicules God with his Bible-quoting fathers and he dares Him to exist and to rescue many of his haunted, artistic heroes.

When he began to realize that the great change in his life had begun when he denounced his beloved God, he went in search of a faith to take its place. He thought he had found it in love but he soon knew that the love he had was imperfect so, in 1932, he made a reassessment of his religion and, perhaps with a little assistance, would have returned to the Catholic Church from which he had exiled himself. At this time he wrote a play in which we can see the love and the hate which he had for God. We can also see what it was that made the young Eugene O'Neill turn from God when we look at the struggle that went on with John Loving, the hero in Days Without End. This

man attempts to explain a plot of a story he has written and he is-giving the reason for his hero's rejection of religion. He tells his listeners first that the parents were both devout Catholics

Their faith was the great comforting inspiration of their lives. And their God was One of Infinite Love - not a stern, self-righteous Being Who condemned sinners to torment, but a very human, lovable God, Who became Man for Love of men and gave His life that they might be saved from themselves. And the boy had every reason to believe in such a Divinity of Love as the Creator of Life. His home atmosphere was one of love. Life was love for him, then. And he was happy, happier than he ever was afterward. . . . Later at school he learned of the God of Punishment and he wondered. He couldn't reconcile Him with his parent's faith. . . . But then he was too sure in his faith. He grew up as devout as his parents. He even dreamed of becoming a priest. . . . And then when he was fifteen, all those pious illusions of his were destroyed forever! Both his parents were killed! . . . And he was left alone . . . without love. First his father died. The boy had prayed with perfect faith that his father's life might be spared.

Loving: But the father died! And the poor simpleton's naive faith was a bit shaken, and a sinful doubt concerning the Divine Love assailed him!

John: Then his mother, worn out by nursing his father and by her grief, was taken ill. And the horrible fear came to him that she might die, too.

Loving: It drove the young idiot into a panic of superstitious remorse. He imagined her sickness was a terrible warning to him, a punishment for the doubt inspired in him by his father's death. His God of Love was beginning to show himself as a God of Vengeance, you see!

John: But he still trusted in His Love. Surely He would not take his mother from him, too.

Loving: So the poor fool prayed and prayed and vowed

his life to piety and good works! But he began to make a condition now - if his mother were spared to him! When his mother died

John: He saw his God as deaf and blind and merciless - a diety who returned hate for love and revenged Himself upon those who trusted Him! . . . In his awakened pride he cursed his God and denied Him, and, in revenge, promised his soul to the Devil.⁴⁶

John Loving, at the play's end, came to know that God loves in strange ways and he learned to accept His love. Eugene O'Neill never did return to his church but he most certainly revealed here the struggle between love and hate for God which existed in his tortured soul.

In addition to his hatred of and bitterness toward God, Eugene O'Neill must have felt some self-hatred over his early life. In many plays there are characters defined and described with the same physical makeup and aspirations as he himself had. Orin Mannon, in Mourning Becomes Electra, Nat Bartlett in Where The Cross Is Made, Rob Mayo in Beyond the Horizon, John Loving in Days Without End, Dion Anthony in The Great God Brown and Edmund Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night all look like the author and all aspire to a career in one of the arts. In each case, except in John Loving's, the father has stood between them and their fulfillment. In each play the young man is sorry for himself and, with the exception of John Loving again, each one allows his self-pity to turn to self-hatred while each lacks

the will and courage to break with his past and make something of himself. Each allows the hatred to eat into him until he is too weak to fight and he fails until set free by death. None of them is ever at home or at peace and, like Edmund Tyrone, 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.⁴⁷

CHAPTER IV

THE MIS-MATED MARRIAGE

Almost all of Eugene O'Neill's dramas are imbued with some member of the hate family. Dislike and jealousy ripen from the seeds of rivalry; abhorrence from fear, bitterness and resentment from small annoyances and antagonisms, and deep hatred which often grows from repulsed love. One of the strange and obvious means O'Neill chose to reveal this emotion in one of its forms was the mis-mated marriage. In some of his plays two people both love and hate each other and the drama concludes when they realize they are fated to live with these incongruous emotions until death parts them. In other plays love existed at the beginning of marriage but the marriage, for some reason, became a trap and love changed to hatred. Yet another few marriages were based on less than love and, when no substitute was found for this necessary ingredient, the marriage went awry.

This recurrent love-hate thread which runs through O'Neill's created marriages also runs through the marriages he knew best - those which he had a first hand opportunity to observe and to understand - that of his parents and his own unfortunate second marriage to Agnes Boulton.

The marriage of James and Ella O'Neill was always tur-

bulent yet each of these two people appear to have loved the other deeply. One of the parties was well-educated, shy, withdrawn and quiet. The other was a self-educated extrovert who craved attention from many people. James O'Neill, who always loved his wife, both needed and demanded her company on his road trips with the acting company. Ella must have loved her James because she seemed willing to go with him even when it meant sacrificing the care of her children to someone else. She longed to retire from the theatrical limelight and lead a normal, respectable life. When her love for James made this impossible, she sought peace and forgetfulness in drug addiction. Mismatched though they were their love held them together and, as tragic as their lives were, they provided much of the raw material for America's greatest dramatist.

This marriage, however, was not the only incompatible one that O'Neill knew. There was his own marriage with Agnes Boulton. Although many of their interests had a common ground in literature and in writing, their talents were unequal, their temperaments and personalities were vastly different and they seemed to fluctuate between impassioned love for one another and stormy resentment, jealousy, and hatred. After much heated controversy over financial settlement and after O'Neill had decided to live with Carlotta Monterrey with whom he had fallen in love, the marriage ended in divorce. In this marriage

intense dislike supplanted the love with which it had begun and it ended with as much intensity as it began - only with a different cause of the intensity - hatred.

Not all of the marriages O'Neill painted are direct or partial reproductions of the two he knew but in all but one, (Ah Wilderness), there are evidences of some form of hatred and one wonders if his own unhappy association with this love union had made him portray it only in its uglier forms.

In one of his earliest plays O'Neill killed a marriage with a suicide when the lack of understanding on the part of the wife could no longer be tolerated by the husband. This play, Before Breakfast, is a monologue by a shrewish, unimaginative wife who has become embittered by her marriage to a sensitive but unsuccessful writer. She once loved him and succumbed to his poetic professions of love, but, from what she says, it is evident this was not a love-filled marriage. Her husband has failed to supply her with the necessities of life because he harbours the dream of a literary career and pursues this dream. She has had to be the breadwinner, and, in her bitterness, has turned to drink for solace. The husband, to escape her constant nagging, and lack of understanding, has turned to other women. After nattering at him for some time the wife taunts him with his weakness as a man and with her knowledge of his promiscuity. The husband, driven beyond endurance by this nagging, and unwilling,

or unable, to face the consequences of his extramarital actions commits suicide. As the play ends the audience is made to realize that she, herself, is as much to blame for the failure of this marriage as the man is but she needs him and, in this way, is unlike her husband. He is free but she cries out his name in fear, in loneliness and in despair.

Although several other minor works of O'Neill reflect a similar theme it was not until Beyond the Horizon that the mis-mated marriage played a major role. This is the story of Robert Mayo, a sensitive dreamer who, for years, has longed to leave the farm and see the marvels that lie beyond its horizon. It is the story, too, of his brother, Andrew Mayo, the practical man who loves the earth and wants to stay on the farm and tend it. It is the story of Ruth, the girl both men love; the girl, who by upbringing and personality, is better suited to Andrew but who is attracted to Robert's poetic dreams and marries him.

Robert has the chance to sail away and have his dream fulfilled but, on the eve of his departure, he confesses his love for Ruth. She is young, impressionable and romantic and is "charmed by his low musical voice telling the dreams of his childhood."⁴⁸ She answers his confession of love with one of her own, and convinces him to remain on the farm so they can marry. Andrew, who thinks he cannot bear the loss of Ruth,

takes Rob's place and sails to the far off world.

After three years of working at being a farmer everyone in the area is aware that, as such, Rob is a failure. He has no real interest in the land, nor has he the mental or physical stamina to carry out a practical scheme whereby he can make it operate efficiently. There seems to be little love in the Mayo house, which might have urged him to improve. Rob is constantly doing or not doing little things which irritate Ruth and she has become a nagger. Rob, for example, is always late for meals which Ruth has struggled to keep hot for him and, when he does arrive, he buries himself in a book. Ruth, on the other hand, seems to be unable to talk to him calmly about their lack of finances, or, for that matter, about anything else. She nags and taunts Rob about his love of reading until he lashes out at her saying "Why do you persist in nagging at me for getting pleasure out of reading? Is it because . . ." ⁴⁹ He stops himself but Ruth finishes it accurately. "Because I'm too stupid to understand them, I s'pose you were going to say." ⁵⁰ Ruth not only resents this escape which is Rob's but she is also intensely jealous of his relationship with their young daughter, Mary. Mary, although a child, senses her mother's lack of patience with her and lack of love for her father. She is whining, fussy child in her mother's presence. At the same time she is always delighted to see her father and she does anything

he asks of her. Ruth naturally resents this. The differences Rob and Ruth have over the upbringing of their child is reflected in their eyes where "there is something akin to hatred."⁵¹

This jealous hatred only adds to the bitterness and loneliness which envelops Ruth. When a quarrel about Rob's ineptitude and Andy's lack of sensitivity breaks out she can no longer hold back the flood of bitter reprisals. Heedless of Rob's warning that she might someday regret what she is about to say, she lets her hatred flow unimpeded.

I'm only saying what I've been thinkin' for years. . . . What do you think - living with a man like you - having to suffer all the time because you've never been man enough to work and do things like other people. But no! You never own up to that. You think you're much better than other folks, with your college education where you never learned a thing, and always read your stupid books instead of working. I s'pose you think I ought to be proud to be your wife - a poor, ignorant thing like me! But I'm not. I hate it! I hate the sight of you! Oh, if I'd only known! If I hadn't been fool enough to listen to your cheap silly poetry talk that you learned out of your books! If I could have seen how you were in your true self - like you are now - I'd have killed myself before I'd have married you! I was sorry for it before we'd been together a month. I knew what you were really like - when it was too late.⁵²

Rob is shocked. Although he had come to know her impatience and unkindness and to suspect "what a - - a - creature I've been living with", he had "kept telling myself that I must be wrong."⁵³

Ruth is not finished. She declares her love for Andy and her longing for his return. She is sure that Andy still loves her and suggests Rob leave and go over his 'rim of the world' and

leave them in peace. The horror of his marriage is apparent to him at last and he realizes that he has sold his dream for an unhappy reality.

Andy, returning to the farm for a visit, delivers a severe blow when he informs both Ruth and Rob that he had never really loved Ruth but had merely been infatuated with her. Coupled with little Mary's death a year later, this robs Ruth of the ability to feel anything but apathetic. Rob, although he feels compassion for Ruth, turns to the dream world of books even more frequently than he did before Mary's death. Meanwhile, he has contracted tuberculosis which has made enough headway to be incurable and he mulls over the past. When Andy reaches his brother's deathbed, Rob asks that he marry Ruth and care for her because her life has been most difficult. He also asks them both not to grieve and begs them to be happy with his death because "don't you see, I'm happy at last - free - free! Freed from the farm - free to wander on and on - eternally."⁵⁴ The dream-like love which started this marriage was changed by a harsh reality and turned to a hatred mixed, perhaps, with a little remorse in Ruth and with compassion and pity in Rob.

Another major work in which O'Neill reveals the havoc that an unhappy and unsuitable marriage can cause is All God's Chillun' Got Wings. Although, on the surface, this is the problem of a negro hero married to a white heroine, it is really O'Neill's

symbolism for the mis-mated marriage of James and Ella O'Neill. Eugene O'Neill made little attempt to disguise this symbolism for he even uses his father's and mother's names for those of the leads in the play.

This drama begins with a group of young negro and white children playing happily together and unaware of any color barrier. Negro Jim and white Ella are particularly attracted to each other but, later, in their teens, Ella has learned that society places the white above the negro so she has little time for Jim. His devotion for her remains steadfast and, when in her twenties, Ella has been discarded by the white trash for whom she has been a mistress, the ever faithful Jim is there and offers her a welcome escape from pitying eyes through marriage.

Their need for each other is great. Jim has just failed his law examinations and needs reassurance. Ella needs to feel she is wanted and can be useful. Despite the fact that Ella does not love Jim, she marries him and they go to Europe where no color line exists and where Jim swears he can "preserve and protect and shield you from evil and sorrow - give my life and blood and all the strength that's in me to your peace and joy . . . become your slave."⁵⁵ And this is what he does. When Ella, because she is ashamed of the love she realizes she has for him and because of her prejudice, believes herself ostracized because of

Jim's color, he brings her back to New York to face reality. He decides that if they are to be free of this prejudice he must be a success in the white world so he goes back to his law studies. She resents his unrelenting fight to overcome his background and his desire to become the "whitest of the whites". She knows that he cannot really become white and her own inborn prejudice makes it impossible to feel anything but superior. Her love is mixed with revulsion from which she would like to escape but she cannot. She loves him. He loves her and would do anything to make her happy. If leaving her would bring her happiness he would go but

Life isn't simple like that - not in this case, anyway - no it isn't simple a bit. . . . I can't leave her. She can't leave me. And there's a million little reasons combining to make one big reason why we can't. For her sake - if it'd do her good - I'd go. I'd do anything - because I love her. I'd kill myself even - jump out of this window - this second - I've thought it over, too - but that'd only make matters worse for her. I'm all she's got in the world! Yes, that isn't bragging or fooling myself. I know that for a fact.⁵⁶

She has been ostracized and has nowhere to go and so she escapes into the unreal world of the mentally ill where she can give vent to her bitter hatred of the Negro race, where she can pray that Jim fails so that he will not even approach her superior position, where she can retreat to her childhood where color was unnoticed and all were serenely happy. With failure Jim's hopes of overcoming petty cruelties are crushed and he becomes Ella's willing slave as he learns to take care of "the child You send

me for the woman You take away!"⁵⁷

There is a close alliance to Jim and Ella O'Neill's marriage here. In the drama Ella found herself the prisoner of a marriage she first welcomed because the man was charming, kind and different. But this difference is what cut her off from her friends and family and made her subject to their pity. The same was true of the real Ella. The difference lay only in the fact that the created Ella was an outcast because her husband was a Negro and the real Ella's isolation was deepened because of what she considered her husband's socially unacceptable career. The imaginary Ella hid behind an insanity which took her back to a period of childhood where only happiness existed. The real Ella lived in the drug-induced dream world where pain and anguish could not live, and the peace of the past was like balm to a bruised heart. In both cases the Jims loved their wives and learned to be content caring for the broken lives which were entrusted to their care.

While All God's Chillun' Got Wings seems to be closely allied to the marriage of the senior O'Neills, it is in Welded that we find a close alliance with the marriage of the author and his second wife, Agnes Boulton. Michael Cape, a writer, is deeply in love with his actress wife, Eleanor, as the opening lines of the play attest:

Eleanor: Michael!

Michael: You've spoiled it, Nelly: I wanted a kiss to announce me.

Eleanor: This is a surprise!

Michael: Own little wife . . . Happy?

Eleanor: Yes - Yes! Why do you always ask? You know . . . It's positively immoral for an old married couple to act this way.⁵⁸

As the conversation continues Michael is revealed as 'such a relentless idealist' and Eleanor is painted as the practical realist. His love for her is not enough and she enjoys contact with the world around her and the people who inhabit that world. He cannot quite believe she loves him as deeply as she avows or else she could be content to be with him alone. As he tells her "I've grown inward into our life. But you keep trying to escape as if it were a prison. You feel the need to have what is outside."⁵⁹ He does not understand that she feels she is being crushed and denied her individuality.

You insist that I have no life at all outside you. Even my work must exist only as an echo of yours. You hate all my need of easy, casual associations. You think that weakness. You hate my friends. You're jealous of everything and everybody.⁶⁰

The truths each is hurling at the other are hitting too close to home so Michael uses a different attack and accuses Eleanor of being unfaithful - and of being unfaithful with their best friend, John. Infuriated by this unfounded accusation Eleanor falsely admits that John was her lover. Both Michael and Eleanor leave

home with screams of hatred echoing from their throats. Eleanor runs to John begging him to make love to her. He recognizes that her offer springs from a storm of hatred for her husband and not from love of him and he refuses. He proves to her that it is not hate she feels for Michael, but love - a love which is her own to give - a love which Michael can never possess or bestow - and so she returns home, hopefully, to await Michael's return.

Meanwhile Michael has gone off and picked up the first 'woman of the street' he can find. He, like Nelly, finds that he is incapable of being unfaithful. He gains an insight from his woman friend, however. This is the need to accept life as it is. He returns home to Eleanor with the hope that he will be able to accept as much love as she is capable of giving him without demanding more than she is capable of.

Delight and distrust are intermingled at this homecoming but Michael and Eleanor finally realize that they both wanted revenge for the hurt inflicted by the other. They also realize that their love is stronger than their hatred. They know that they will "torture and tear, and clutch for each other's souls! fight and fail and hate again . . . but! - fail with pride - with joy."⁶¹

This work was written at the time in O'Neill's life when he had met and was attracted to Carlotta and when his own marriage with Agnes was in a state of flux and he was undecided what future

it had. Michael is O'Neill - the supersensitive writer who is self-assured about his ability as a writer but who never had been and was never to be sure of love. He was almost complete unto himself with the exception of needing a loving wife who cared for nothing but his well-being. But Agnes, too, was a writer. She felt choked by his demands and by his greater talent. She liked to travel in a social set and enjoyed meeting people and doing things in their company. These differences led to many and violent quarrels. O'Neill would physically mistreat her, go off on drunken orgies and make fun of her but he almost always returned with an avowal of undying love. The marriage, however, did not continue with an acceptance of weaknesses as did the one in Welded. The real marriage ended in a divorce court because someone came into O'Neill's life who could and was willing to subject herself to him. She was willing to live apart from the world and do nothing but shower the kind of care on this tormented man that he needed.

All God's Chillun' Got Wings and Welded bear a close relationship to two O'Neill marriages but the next two plays which have mis-matched marriages in them bear no relationship whatever to the marriages of real life. They help reveal, only, what O'Neill's attitude towards marriage must have been. In Strange Interlude, Nina is the sum of O'Neill's love-hate idea and is, in reality, a monster which embodies the purest with the blackest in a woman's

soul. She is the innocent lover of Gordon Shaw, and, when he is killed, a mourning fiancée who comes to hate her father because she blames him for preventing the consummation of her love out of his own possessive jealousy. Her guilt makes her want to make an equal sacrifice so she gives herself to wounded war veterans. This only adds to her feeling of guilt. It is suggested that if she would make a man who loves her happy even though she cannot love him she will rid herself of this guilt. It is a suggestion she can follow because Sam Evans is in love with her. She marries him even though he knows she cannot love him because of Gordon. She is kind to him and he is secure in their marriage. The only thing that mars his happiness is the absence of children which he feels would weld their marriage together, and compensate Nina for the love she does not feel for him. Because of insanity in his family Nina cannot or will not bear Sam's child. She decides that to quell his unhappiness over childlessness that she will have a lover, conceive a child and present this child to Sam as if it were his own. Ned Darrel is the man who obliges her but, although she fulfills her desire to have a child, she also falls in love with Ned and he with her. Now she is torn between her love for Gordon Shaw, for Ned Darrell, for her young son and tormented by the bargain she has made. She refuses to break with Sam. She comes to hate the ties that bind her to him. She is jealous of

the relationship between Sam and her son and she is ridden with guilt over her relationship with Ned. Sam dies never realizing how mis-mated he and Nina were or how much heartache their marriage cause her. Nina cries out in despair for the time "when I was a girl . . . when I was happy . . . when I fell in love with Gordon Shaw and all this tangled mess of love and hate and pain and birth began."⁶²

This was indeed a strange interlude when one person was so unaware of the tortured emotions that filled the people who surrounded him but it is not unique. In the Great God Brown we find a similar situation between Dion Anthony and Margaret. Margaret Anthony never knew the man to whom she was married although she loved the man she thought he was. Dion knew and loved her well.

He was a sensitive young man at whom his parents and friends laughed for his poetic, sensitive dreams so he learned to hide them behind a mask and the world came to know only the mask. Dion knew this was wrong but, having been hurt by their taunts, he was afraid - afraid of almost everything.

Why am I afraid to dance, I who love music and rhythm and grace and song and laughter? Why am I afraid to live, I who love life and the beauty of the flesh and the living colors of earth and sky and sea? Why am I afraid to love, I who love love? Why am I afraid, I who am not afraid? Why must I pretend to scorn in order to pity? Why must I hold myself in contempt in order to understand? Why must I be so ashamed of my strength, so proud of my weakness? Why must I live in a cage, defying and hating, I who love peace and friendship? Why was I born without a skin, O God, that I must wear

armor in order to touch and be touched? . . . or rather,
O God, why the devil was I born at all?⁶³

Then he lost some of his fear because he found that the girl he loved loved him. He thought at long last he would be able to take off his mask and be himself and she would know, love and understand his real self. But the mask he showed the world was so different from the real Dion that she could not recognize him and, when he removed his mask, she begged him "Don't! Please! I don't know you! You frighten me!"⁶⁴ He loves her and understands her fear so he never again removes his mask in her presence. However, he must ease the pain of his loneliness so he drinks heavily and, in his search, finds Cybel, an earthy whore, who in her simplicity, recognizes in him the creative power which is his to give. She gives him love and understanding because she knows he "was born with ghosts in his eyes."⁶⁵

Several other O'Neill plays have these mis-matched marriages. A Touch of the Poet is emotionally and psychologically the story of O'Neill's own family. Cornelius, the Irish bar-keep father, has a relationship with his wife and daughter which is very much like that of James O'Neill with his wife and son. The characteristic love-hate theme is present and is revealed in their quarrels about money, liquor and lack of acceptable friends. These quarrels are frequent and bitter but they are quickly regretted and covered with love. The mother, like Ella O'Neill, is protected from the

full thrust of the bitterness and frustration by the 'dope dreams' while the father and daughter have nothing with which to ease the pain.

In Desire Under the Elms there is the strongly incompatible marriage of Cabot and Abbie. When Abbie comes to hate to have Cabot touch her, when her lust for Eben turns to love and that love is great enough to allow her to kill her son to prove it, she well deserves the contempt and hatred which Cabot showers upon her.

So ye'd like t'hev murdered me 'stead o'him, would ye? Waal, I'll live to be a hundred! I'll live t'see ye hung! I'll deliver ye up t'the judgment o'God an' the law! . . . Ye make a slick pair of murderin' turtle doves! Ye'd ought t'be both hung on the same limb an left thar t'swing in the breeze an' rot - a warnin' t' old fools like me t'b'ar their lonesomeness alone - an' fur young fools like ye t'hobble their lust.⁶⁶

The marriage in Mourning Becomes Electra between Christine and Ezra Mannon and its incompatibility set the stage for the tragedy which follows. Christine, who had been attracted to the handsome, strong, and forceful Ezra, was unprepared for his strong demand for subjection to his will. Christine's pre-marital love turned quickly to loathing and hate. When love came to her in the form of Adam Brant, she murdered her husband and from the murder the rest of the tragedy of the trilogy stems. Although she loved him once because he "was silent and mysterious and romantic," she has been "the wife of a man she hated,"⁶⁷ and

she had to free herself from him.

In Mourning Becomes Electra, Ezra Mannon tells his wife, Christine, that "there'd always been some barrier between us - wall hiding us from each other."⁶⁸ This wall which separates married couples seems to have been what tormented O'Neill. In some of the marriages which he portrayed the wall is present but seems to bear no direct reference to the wall that separated his father and his mother or the one which existed between Agnes and himself. In others there is enough to make it seem that it was taken directly from his own marriage or that of his parents. He left us in no doubt as to his concept of his parents' marriage when he wrote Long Day's Journey Into Night. In this play O'Neill revealed the pain and the love and the hate which intermingled in his life and which poured into his writing unbidden but with such dramatic power and intensity that they will long live as a testimonial to his greatness.

CONCLUSION

Don't be afraid. I'm not going the way Mother and Orin went. That's escaping punishment. And there's no one left 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 I live for a long time! It takes the Mannons to punish themselves for being born!⁶⁹

This is the speech Lavinia Mannon makes in the last scene of Mourning Becomes Electra and it is, in reality, Eugene O'Neill's own epitaph. He had, in his youth, contemplated suicide and had once attempted it but he had, apparently, come to a decision similar to the one that he has Lavinia state. He punished himself and, in living, suffered much more than he felt he would have suffered in death. He spent much of his life searching his past for the reason for his existence and he found it in writing about his tangled, pain-filled concept of the love and hate which existed in his family. He seemed unable to disentangle these emotions and in his struggle to do so, through his plays, gave the world some fine drama. As has been shown in this paper, the torture he reveals in his plays is based on the torture he suffered in his own life with his own family. He seems, at the end of his career, to have come to a full realization that "it takes the O'Neills to punish themselves for being born."⁷⁰ And although it may have

been punishment for him it enriched the world with some of the greatest of modern tragedies - indeed, perhaps, some of the greatest tragedies of all time!

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