

THE LOVE MOTIF IN SELECTED PLAYS
OF EUGENE GLADSTONE O'NEILL

THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| PREFACE | iv |
| CHAPTER | |
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| II. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF EUGENE GLADSTONE O'NEILL | 6 |
| III. LOVE IN COURTSHIP | 30 |
| IV. LOVE IN MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY | 97 |
| V. CONCLUSION | 155 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 163 |

PREFACE

In doing my research for this thesis, I read all of Eugene Gladstone O'Neill's forty-nine published dramas as well as a number of books and articles about O'Neill himself. I shall attempt to point out for the reader the aspects of love that O'Neill deals with in the plays that I have selected. It may be discouraging to realize that much of the love one finds expressed in O'Neill's plays ends, as do most of his dramas, in tragedy. Love very often cannot provide the fulfillment that O'Neill's characters desire.

I must confess that one of the reasons why I chose Eugene O'Neill and his plays as the topic of my thesis was that I felt that I was reading "soap operas" with endings. Like so many other women today, I enjoy watching the popular domestic daytime melodrama commonly called the soap opera. However, it is a frustrating experience to go on watching a program month after month without ever reaching the climax and/or ending. O'Neill's plays contain many of the same melodramatic aspects and intrigues found in a soap opera, but O'Neill's plays have an ending, a fact which is a necessary part of the experiences of each of us as individuals.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Vernon Lynch, Dr. Thomas Brasher, and Dr. Frank Josserand, the members of my thesis committee, for the help and guidance that they have given me throughout the many months that I have been working on this thesis. And I would especially like to thank my family: my husband, Sam; my daughter, Suzane; and my parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Ausenbaugh, for their patience and encouragement, for without them, I am sure that I would have given up on this thesis and my degree long ago.

S. A. B.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

"Oh, love, love, what is love? How can I know?"¹
Mrs. Ethel Frazer hysterically asked of the playwright and novelist, David Royston, in Eugene Gladstone O'Neill's play entitled Servitude. Surely, each person has asked himself that same question many times before. To understand the meaning of love in one's own life is a difficult problem indeed.

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill deals primarily with internal, psychological motivation in his plays. One recurring aspect in his works is his treatment of love. Eugene O'Neill has many of the characters in his plays comment on love. Some of the characters mock love and scorn its existence, as does Juan Ponce de Leon in The Fountain. Juan answers Maria de Cordova's confession of her love for him with

That word--we have never uttered it before. You
have always been--my friend. Why must you ruin

¹Eugene O'Neill, "Servitude," in Ten "Lost" Plays, with a Foreword by Bennett Cerf (New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), p. 242.

our friendship for a word that every minstrel mouths? Love, love, love we chatter everlastingly. We pretend love alone is why we live! Bah! Life is nobler than the weak lies of poets--or it's nothing!²

Although Maria is deeply hurt by his words, Juan continues with mocking laughter, "Love, love, and always love! Can no other motive exist for you?"³ Juan is like many other of O'Neill's characters--ambition and success have made him unable to understand the love within himself. Juan, however, recognizes his own inability to feel love as he explains to Maria with passionate earnestness,

What you call loves--they were merely moods--dreams of a night or two--lustful adventures--gestures of vanity, perhaps--but I have never loved. Spain is the mistress to whom I give my heart, Spain and my own ambitions, which are Spain's. Now do you understand?⁴

Unfortunately, most of O'Neill's characters do not understand so quickly their feelings toward love. Many of O'Neill's characters, on the other hand, are

²Eugene O'Neill, "The Fountain," in The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, 3 vols. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1955), 1: 379.

³Ibid., p. 380.

⁴Ibid., p. 381.

capable of expressing their love. O'Neill himself gives several excellent definitions of love in his plays.

In Servitude, David Roylston answers Mrs. Frazer's query: "Love is the world upside down."⁵ Mrs. Alice Roylston, the playwright's wife who has spent her entire married life serving her husband and making him happy, clearly defines her love, "Love means servitude, and my love is my happiness."⁶ What a beautiful description!

Mrs. Nora Melody echoes Mrs. Roylston's sentiments concerning her love for her husband in A Touch of the Poet. Nora explains her love to her daughter, Sara, as

. . . given' all of yourself, and that's what love is . . .

. . . It's when you don't give a thought of all the if's and want-to's in the world! It's when, if all the fires of hell was between you, you'd walk in them gladly to be with him, and sing with joy at your own burnin', if only his kiss was on your mouth! That's love, and I'm proud I've known the great sorrow and joy of it!⁷

⁵O'Neill, "Servitude," in Ten "Lost" Plays, p. 285.

⁶Ibid., p. 270.

⁷Eugene O'Neill, "A Touch of the Poet," in The Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill, ed. by Travis Bogard, Modern Library College Editions (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), p. 149.

Love is a universal emotion but individuals are at a loss of words when it comes to defining their emotions. Webster's Dictionary provides a rational definition of an irrational emotion.

¹love n 1a: affection based on admiration or benevolence b: an assurance of love 2a: warm attachment, enthusiasm, or devotion <~of the sea> b: the object of such attachment or devotion 3a: unselfish concern that freely accepts another in loyalty and seeks his good: (1): the fatherly concern of God for man (2): brotherly concern for others b: man's adoration of God 4a: the attraction based on sexual desire: the affection and tenderness felt by lovers. . . c: an amorous episode: LOVE AFFAIR ²love vt 1: to hold dear: CHERISH 2a: to feel a lover's passion, devotion, or tenderness for . . . 3: to like or desire actively: to take pleasure in . . . 4: to thrive in^s

Eugene O'Neill deals directly and indirectly in his plays with most of these definitions of love. The many aspects of love that are found in Eugene O'Neill's plays are some of the most important motivating forces within those plays. The love in the plays can be characterized as it relates to three different categories during courtship and in marriage and the family, courtship being defined as that love which takes place outside of marriage

^sWebster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, (1969), s.v. "love."

and/or the family situation. The three categories of love are "unrequited love," "unfulfilled love," and "redeeming love."

Unrequited love is perhaps the saddest love in that it is neither recognized nor returned. Unfulfilled love is the most tragic in that one has tasted of its fruits but has had love slip away before it can bring the fulfillment of a redeeming love. The number of plays in which love is the redeeming quality is relatively few in the O'Neill canon.

The reader should note that in courtship, unrequited love means that the love object does not recognize another's love for him. In marriage and the family, however, an unrequited love actually comes in the rejection of the parent or child, or husband or wife. Love has been replaced by another interest of the individual or by another of his basic needs and/or desires.

C H A P T E R I I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF EUGENE GLADSTONE O'NEILL

Any study of the plays of Eugene Gladstone O'Neill must of necessity include a look at Eugene O'Neill himself as both man and playwright. Many of O'Neill's themes of love-hate, reality versus illusion, and the search for the answer to the "riddle of existence" and its meaning in the lives of mankind can be traced directly to O'Neill's experiences with his own family, and to his experiences and relationships during those important, formative years when he was traveling around the United States with his parents, around the open seas and foreign countries with his shipmates, and around New York City with Jamie and the other originals for the unprepossessing characters that we meet in many of the plays.

One finds that it is a very difficult task to categorize the themes of the plays because there are few clearly defined relationships; perhaps this difficulty relates to the dissipation within the O'Neill family, as the harmony one normally finds within one's own family

was missing during O'Neill's boyhood and youth. The family's problems of being almost constantly on the road, Jamie's alcoholism, and Ella's morphine addiction contributed to the wanderlust one finds within O'Neill himself and within his plays.

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill "was born here [New York] on October 16, 1888, in a third-floor room of the Barrett House, a quiet family hotel that used to stand at Forty-third Street and Broadway,"¹ near the heart of the New York City theater district. His father, James O'Neill, was famous throughout the United States as a matinee idol in the title role of a stage adaptation of the Alexandre Dumas romantic melodrama, The Count of Monte Cristo.² His mother, Mary Ellen "Ella" Quinlan O'Neill,³ was brought up as a devout Catholic, and had received a part of her education at "the convent of St. Mary, at Notre Dame in Indiana."⁴ During the restless years of his youth, Eugene revolted against the strict Catholicism of his parents; he never returned to the church.

¹Hamilton Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," The New Yorker 24 (February 28, 1948): 34.

²Arthur and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill, with an Introduction by Brooks Atkinson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 48. This is the most comprehensive work on O'Neill.

³Ibid., pp. 11 and 963.

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

Eugene O'Neill led a fragmented boyhood as he traveled all over the United States on road tour with his parents. The family's "only permanent home"⁵ during most of the years of Eugene's boyhood and youth was the "Monte Cristo Cottage, New London,"⁶ Connecticut, where the O'Neills spent summer vacations and holidays.

From 1896 to 1906, Eugene attended intermittently the parochial boarding schools of "Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson at Riverdale, New York" and "De La Salle Institute on Fifty-ninth Street in New York City"; he attended military school at "Betts Academy in Stamford, Connecticut."⁷ Eugene entered Princeton in 1906, but his stay there was short-lived, "a little less than nine months,"⁸ as he resigned from college after a period of suspension from the institution.

Most of 1907 and 1908 Eugene spent in New York City, where he worked "as secretary to a small New York

⁵Ibid., p. 11.

⁶Ibid., illustrations following p. 266.

⁷Crosswell Bowen, with the assistance of Shane O'Neill, The Curse of the Misbegotten (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 18-19.

⁸Gelb, O'Neill, p. 112.

mail-order firm dealing in cheap costume jewelry,"⁹
 and where he was under the influence of his elder brother,
 James O'Neill, Jr., "Jamie," alcohol, and chorus girls.¹⁰
 It was there in New York that Eugene was introduced to
 Kathleen Jenkins, whom he married in "Hoboken, New Jersey,
 on October 2, 1909, about a week before he was scheduled
 to sail for Honduras."¹¹ Agnes Boulton gives the follow-
 ing account of the marriage in her Part of a Long Story:

He'd met this girl through his friend Frank [Best]--
 a damn nice girl, very proper and well brought up.
 She was a friend of the girl that Frank was going
 around with at the time, and she'd brought Kathleen
 along with her one night. . . . " . . . she began
 telling me about her background, which was pretty
 conventional and which she didn't seem to like
 particularly. And I began by feeling sorry for her
 and ended up by falling for her."

Gene paused . . . "She must have fallen for
 me too, for after a month or so of going around
 together--always the four of us--Frank and I suggested
 we all go over to Jersey City and she and I get
 married. She agreed, so we got married! It was
 going to be kept a secret from everybody for a
 while--which suited me. . . ."

. . . "I was scared to death when I realized
 what I had done. Her parents were away at the time,
 and after the wedding we all went over to her apart-
 ment and celebrated. . . . I stayed a couple of days--
 her folks wouldn't be home for a week. It was
 fun-- . . ."

⁹Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁰Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 35.

¹¹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 133.

"It was a crazy thing to do--we didn't have any money or any plans . . ."

" . . . The truth was that after I'd been married a week or so I practically forgot I was married to her. It seemed a joke, a lark. Frank looked at it that way too--it even seemed to me that was her attitude. She was trying to be a good sport, I suppose. Anyway, when the four of us would all go out together it was just about the same as before."¹²

Both Kathleen's non-Catholic parents and Eugene's Catholic parents strongly opposed the marriage, which lasted only a few days.

Apparently O'Neill wanted very much to marry her [Kathleen], but when he told his parents they objected vigorously. He was not making enough money to support a wife, the girl was not a Catholic, and her parents were divorced. Jamie, too, was against the marriage on the grounds of Eugene's youth.

. . . When they returned to New York and told their parents of the marriage, James and Ella and Mrs. Jenkins were all furious. If the children lived together in marriage they did not do so for many weeks, for not long afterward Eugene left on a gold-mining expedition to Honduras . . . this flight signaled the end of his first attempt at marriage.¹³

James, Sr., had arranged for Eugene to go to Honduras with Mr. and Mrs. Earl C. Stevens¹⁴ on a gold prospecting

¹²Agnes Boulton, Part of a Long Story (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 196-97.

¹³Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 23.

¹⁴Ibid.

expedition. No gold was found on the expedition, but O'Neill contracted malaria¹⁵ during the tour. The trip was valuable, however, in that the steaming jungles of Honduras were later to provide the setting for The Emperor Jones,¹⁶ a play dealing with a fugitive Caribbean dictator, in which fantasy and reality are intermixed with the hypnotic beating of drums as the dictator flees his rebellious subjects.

On May 5, 1910, Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, Jr.,¹⁷ the first of O'Neill's three children, was born to Mrs. Kathleen Jenkins O'Neill. Eugene's marriage to Kathleen ended in divorce on October 11, 1912,¹⁸ on the grounds of adultery; "since adultery was the only ground for divorce in New York State, O'Neill agreed to be caught in flagrante delicto."¹⁹

¹⁵Gelb, O'Neill, p. 135.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 134-35.

¹⁷Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 25.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 26-27.

The summer of 1910 Eugene O'Neill spent on the road "as assistant stage manager with the White Sister company,"²⁰ in which his father played "the minor role of a bishop."²¹ The theatre life of his father did not suit the younger O'Neill, and, therefore, in the fall of 1910, "he shipped as an ordinary seaman on a Norwegian square-rigger bound [from Boston] for Buenos Aires."²² O'Neill worked at various jobs during the next months in South America in the Westinghouse Electric Company, in a Swift and Company packing plant, and in the office of the Singer Sewing Machine Company.²³ O'Neill quickly grew tired of his life on land, so he sailed to Durban, South Africa,²⁴ "tending mules on a cattle steamer. Returning to Buenos Aires he spent a period of complete destitution, terminated by a return to New York as an ordinary seaman on a [British] tramp steamer,"²⁵

²⁰Boulton, Part of a Long Story, p. 130.

²¹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 141.

²²Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 36.

²³Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 153-54. ²⁴Ibid., p. 154.

²⁵Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, with an Introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch, The Modern Library Edition (New York: Random House, Inc., 1959), p. xiii.

the S.S. Ikalis,²⁶ in the summer of 1911. O'Neill's experiences aboard these ships and in various foreign ports served as the basis for his S.S. Glencairn cycle and other sea plays.

That winter, 1911 to 1912, in New York City, O'Neill's residence was a three-dollar-a-month room over a notorious nickel-a-drink waterfront saloon known as Jimmy-the-Priest's.²⁷ The experiences of that time gave O'Neill his materials for the first act of Anna Christie, and for part of the background of The Iceman Cometh.

After a few months, O'Neill shipped to Southampton, England as an able-bodied seaman aboard an American Line passenger liner, the S.S. New York,²⁸ After a wild party with his shipmates to celebrate their return home, Eugene "awoke in the upper berth of a train pulling into New Orleans."²⁹ In New Orleans, O'Neill by coincidence encountered his father on a touring circuit. Eugene accepted a small part as "a jailer and a gendarme"³⁰

²⁶Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 158-59. ²⁷Ibid., pp. 161-62.

²⁸Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 34.

²⁹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 174.

³⁰Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 37.

in the production featuring his father and stayed with the company for "a fifteen-week tour in the Far West."³¹

That summer, 1912, the O'Neills returned to Monte Cristo Cottage, New London, Connecticut; Eugene would later call it the summer of Long Day's Journey Into Night.³² The atmosphere crackled with tension. James, Sr., was temporarily between jobs; Ella's morphine addiction was again reaching the crisis point; Jamie was drunk most of the time. Eugene went to work as a reporter for the New London Telegraph.³³ O'Neill's first attempts at the writing of either prose or verse "were not composed with a writing career in mind"³⁴ as the man, now twenty-four years old, "still had no idea what he wanted to do with himself."³⁵

It was during this time that an attack of tuberculosis sent O'Neill for five months to the Gaylord Farm Tuberculosis Sanatorium, at Wallingford, Connecticut.³⁶ It was during that period of "enforced idleness"³⁷

³¹Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 35.

³²Ibid., p. 36. ³³Gelb, O'Neill, p. 195.

³⁴Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 38.

³⁵Ibid. ³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Robert Spiller et al., Literary History of the United States, 3 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), 2: 1238. Hereinafter cited as Literary History.

that O'Neill finally came "face to face with the self from which he had been trying to run away."³⁸ Although O'Neill's confinement at the sanatorium was short, it was highly significant, for it was there at Gaylord Farm that O'Neill first read "Dostoevski's The Idiot and Strindberg's recently translated play, The Dance of Death."³⁹ In addition, "He read Marx and Kropotkin as well as Wedekind, . . . and Ibsen."⁴⁰ But most important, it was there that he first resolved "to be a dramatist."⁴¹

During the period of about a year, 1913 to 1914, of convalescence which followed his release from the sanatorium, O'Neill wrote

. . . eleven one-act and two full-length plays. In between, he was reading Nietzsche and the plays of Wedekind. "I read everything I could lay my hands on," he has said, "the Greeks, the Elizabethans--practically all the classics--and, of course, all the moderns, like Ibsen and Strindberg, especially Strindberg."⁴²

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 233.

⁴⁰Spiller, Literary History, 2:1238.

⁴¹Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 38.

⁴²Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 58.

Eugene destroyed all but six of the one-acters--five of which his father paid to have published⁴³ in Thirst and Other One Act Plays⁴⁴ in 1914. The plays were not distinguished, but James O'Neill was willing to back Eugene in almost anything that would save him from the fate of his alcoholic brother, Jamie.

James O'Neill encouraged Eugene to attend "a postgraduate course at Harvard called English 47."⁴⁵ The course was a dramatic workshop in playwriting directed by Professor George Pierce Baker. Eugene found the commercialism of Professor Baker's view of the stage to be as contemptible as that of his own father.

When Eugene left Professor Baker's class the following year, he was determined to write theater that would have nothing to do with convention or artificiality; but he was determined to write theatre--theatre that would bring reality to the stage.

⁴³Gelb, O'Neill, p. 257.

⁴⁴Eugene G. O'Neill, Thirst and Other One Act Plays (Boston, Massachusetts: The Gorham Press, 1914).

⁴⁵Gelb, O'Neill, p. 264.

Instead of settling down to work, Eugene returned to New York City,⁴⁶ and lived in a rooming house in Greenwich Village, where he proceeded to acquire more settings and experiences for his future characters. John Wallace's "Golden Swan, but known to its patrons, more accurately, as the Hell Hole,"⁴⁷ gave O'Neill further ideas for the locale and setting of The Iceman Cometh, just as Jimmy-the-Priest's had given him a part of his materials a few years earlier. "O'Neill, who was living in the Village because it was cheap and not because of the literary life, was acquainted with only a few of them [the aspiring artists of that generation of Greenwich Villagers]."⁴⁸ Eugene, himself, was much more closely associated with "a notorious gang of Manhattan gangsters"⁴⁹ called the Hudson Dusters.

The following spring, 1916, O'Neill went with a group of Greenwich Village artists, journalists, and writers to Provincetown, on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 281 and 282.

⁴⁷Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 38.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 71.

year before, the newly formed group, the Provincetown Players, had converted a deserted fish warehouse built on pilings over the water into the Wharf Theatre.⁵⁰

The group included Susan Glaspell, the novelist, and her husband, George Cram Cook, a poet and playwright; Hutchins Hapgood, novelist and essayist, and his wife, Neith Boyce; Wilbur Daniel Steele, author, and his wife; William Zorach, the sculptor, and his wife; Robert Edmond Jones, a stage designer, and John Reed, the journalist and radical and future author of Ten Days that Shook the World, the story of the Russian Revolution. Jig Cook, as George Cram Cook was called, was leader of the group

The next summer--1916--new members joined the group: Harry Kemp, the poet, and his beautiful wife, Mary Pyne; Louise Bryant[mistress of Eugene O'Neill] afterward the wife of John Reed; Frederick Burt, a writer, and the B. J. O. Nordfeldts. Still another newcomer was Edna St. Vincent Millay.⁵¹

It was in the Wharf Theatre "that the one-act romantic melodrama Bound East for Cardiff became the first of his works to be publicly performed."⁵² Presenting the work was the Provincetown Players, the company for which O'Neill drafted all his earliest plays. The Provincetown

⁵⁰Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 306-7.

⁵¹Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, pp. 78-79.

⁵²Spiller, Literary History, 2:1238.

group, of which Eugene O'Neill became the leading playwright and also a director, soon became the revolutionary force of American drama. The Provincetown Players and O'Neill were the first to depart from the romantic theatricality and commercialism of the stage by offering plays of stabbing realism. With the Provincetown Players group, O'Neill in a series of one-acters gathered in a cycle called the S. S. Glencairn, came to terms with his years of aimless wandering, his dissipation, his journeys to foreign lands, and the characters he had known at Jimmy-the-Priest's and the Hell Hole.

In the fall of 1916 the Provincetown

. . . group decided to go into business in New York. Calling themselves the Provincetown Players, they rented a brownstone house at 139 Macdougall Street [Greenwich Village] and turned its ground floor into the Playwrights' Theatre.⁵³

Eugene O'Neill himself is credited with having thought up the name of the Playwrights' Theatre.⁵⁴ "Bound East for Cardiff, which, as no one was more aware than he himself, would be the first production of an O'Neill play in

⁵³Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 40.

⁵⁴Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 315-16.

New York,"⁵⁵ was part of the first bill, in November, 1916. O'Neill was represented by three other one-acters during the Provincetown Players' first New York season--Before Breakfast, Fog, and The Sniper.⁵⁶

By the opening of their second season with O'Neill's The Long Voyage Home, on November 2, 1917,⁵⁷ the Provincetown group had moved the Playwrights' Theatre to a converted "stable at 133 Macdougall Street."⁵⁸

The results [of these productions] were so pleasing to all concerned that between then and 1924 most of O'Neill's plays--including, besides a number of one-acters, The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, and All God's Chillun Got Wings--had their premieres on Macdougall Street.⁵⁹

"By 1920, O'Neill was looked upon in advanced circles as the hope of the American Theatre,"⁶⁰ according to well-known literary critics such as H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan.⁶¹ However, the Village saw little of

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 318.

⁵⁶Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 83.

⁵⁷Gelb, O'Neill, p. 342.

⁵⁸Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 90.

⁵⁹Spiller, Literary History, 2:1238-39.

⁶⁰Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 42

⁶¹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 340.

Eugene, as he had gone to Cape Cod to live with Agnes Boulton, his second wife, whom he married in Provincetown on April 12, 1918.⁶² Mrs. Boulton was an author of short stories and pulp fiction.⁶³ Many years later, in 1958, Agnes Boulton published her account of their courtship and marriage in her Part of a Long Story.

On Cape Cod the O'Neill's lived in a remodeled, "former Coast Guard station on the dunes of a lonely, isolated spot known as Peaked Hill Bar, three miles from Provincetown."⁶⁴ It was in that remote isolation that O'Neill started working on his longer plays.

On October 30, 1919, a son, Shane Rudraighe O'Neill,⁶⁵ was born in Provincetown to Eugene and Agnes O'Neill. Five and one-half years later, May 13, 1925,⁶⁶ Agnes gave birth to their second child, a daughter, Oona,

⁶²Ibid., p. 372.

⁶³Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 95.

⁶⁴Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 44.

⁶⁵Gelb, O'Neill, p. 400.

⁶⁶Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 154, says, "Late in the evening of May 13, 1925, Oona was born." However, Gelb, O'Neill, p. 583, says, "It was not until May 14 that Agnes produced her child."

at Campsea in Bermuda. Oona eighteen years later became the fourth wife of the famed film-comedian Charlie Chaplin, then fifty-four years old.⁶⁷ Although her mother was pleased with the marriage,⁶⁸ O'Neill himself never forgave Oona; he eventually disinherited both Oona and Shane and all of their issue: "'I purposely exclude for any interest in my estate under this will my son, Shane O'Neill, and my daughter, Oona O'Neill Chaplin, and I exclude their issue now or hereafter born.'"⁶⁹ In 1959, Croswell Bowen published The Curse of the Misbegotten; it is subtitled "A Tale of the House of O'Neill." The Curse of the Misbegotten was written by Bowen in collaboration with the derelict son, Shane O'Neill, who by that time had himself drifted into drug addiction.

In O'Neill's early plays, the sea is the prevailing background. The plays, although somewhat melodramatic, are still realistic in characterization. There is, however, at the same time in most of them a yearning for something more--a yearning for "a land beyond my

⁶⁷Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 287.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 288.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 360.

horizon."⁷⁰ Beyond the Horizon is the title of O'Neill's first successful full-length play, which was produced in New York in 1920, and it was "the first of any of his plays to be seen on Broadway."⁷¹ Beyond the Horizon was the only one of his son's plays that James O'Neill ever attended, as he died only a few months later. Eugene Gladstone O'Neill won the first of his four Pulitzer Prizes for Beyond the Horizon.⁷² At this point, O'Neill's career was launched as the leading American playwright of his generation. Two years later, O'Neill won a second Pulitzer Prize for Anna Christie.⁷³

In the three years following the production of Beyond the Horizon, O'Neill suffered the loss of not only his father in August, 1920, but also the loss of both his mother in February, 1922, and his brother in November, 1923.⁷⁴ Ella O'Neill's death and Jamie's subsequent drunken return trip from California to New York with the body of his mother gave Eugene the materials for his A Moon for

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 101.

⁷¹Basso, "The Tragic Sense--I," p. 44.

⁷²Gelb, O'Neill, p. 426. ⁷³Ibid., p. 508.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 431, 496, and 532.

the Misbegotten. Despite his personal grief during those years, O'Neill continued to produce one successful play after another.

Always a restless and unsettled person in his private life, O'Neill in 1922 had purchased a large estate, "Brook Farm at Ridgefield, Connecticut,"⁷⁵ as a winter home. The O'Neills lived at Brook Farm a couple of years and then decided to move to Spithead,⁷⁶ a spacious manor house in Bermuda. It was in Bermuda that Eugene fell in love with Carlotta Monterey, with whom he had been acquainted during a production of The Hairy Ape in which Miss Monterey had starred. Eugene "eloped" with Miss Monterey to Europe in 1928,⁷⁷ leaving his second wife, two children, an unfinished home, and several unfinished plays behind. O'Neill's marriage to Agnes Boulton O'Neill ended in divorce on July 2, 1929,⁷⁸ on grounds of desertion.

After a period of residence in France with Carlotta, whom he married July 22, 1929,⁷⁹ O'Neill

⁷⁵Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 144.

⁷⁶Gelb, O'Neill, p. 624.

⁷⁷Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 180.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 189.

⁷⁹Ibid.

returned to the United States in 1931.⁸⁰ They built a home, Casa Genotta⁸¹ (the Castle of Gene and Carlotta), on Sea Island, Georgia; later they abandoned it and built another, Tao House,⁸² in Contra Costa County, California.

Eugene O'Neill received a number of honors for his literary achievements. In 1926, he was awarded an honorary degree from Yale.⁸³ In 1932 O'Neill was "made associate member of [the] Irish Academy of Letters."⁸⁴ O'Neill became a member of the "National Institute of Arts and Letters" in 1923; in 1933 "he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters."⁸⁵ Finally, in November, 1936, Eugene Gladstone O'Neill became the first American dramatist to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.⁸⁶ It would be another ten years, however, before O'Neill's next play, The Iceman Cometh, would appear

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 214.

⁸¹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 760.

⁸²Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 254.

⁸³Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 603-4.

⁸⁴Jordan Y. Miller, Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1962), p. 102.

⁸⁵Gelb, O'Neill, p. 559. ⁸⁶Ibid., p. 807.

on Broadway. The Iceman Cometh was the last of his plays to open in New York during O'Neill's lifetime.⁸⁷ A Moon for the Misbegotten, which opened in Ohio in February, 1947, was the last O'Neill play to open anywhere during the remainder of the playwright's lifetime.⁸⁸

By this time O'Neill had begun to suffer "from a disease, only superficially resembling Parkinson's, in which the cells of the cerebellum were subject to a slow, degenerative process."⁸⁹ Eugene and Carlotta were able together to weather the stormy, later years of their marriage. O'Neill lived the last years of his life as a recluse; Carlotta "devoted herself full-time to the job of protecting her husband's privacy."⁹⁰

It was three years after O'Neill's death in Boston on November 27, 1953,⁹¹ at the age of sixty-five, that Eugene Gladstone O'Neill's "second career" began to appear. In 1955 and 1956, Carlotta Monterey O'Neill

⁸⁷Miller, Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic, p. 104.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 941. ⁹⁰Ibid., p. 822.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 940.

copyrighted and allowed the release of Long Day's Journey Into Night.⁹² O'Neill had given the original script of the play to Carlotta as a gift for their twelfth wedding anniversary in 1941.⁹³ Because of the intense, personal nature of the play, O'Neill had requested that the play not be released until twenty-five years after his death. Long Day's Journey Into Night won for Eugene O'Neill his fourth Pulitzer Prize.⁹⁴

A Touch of the Poet appeared in 1958 in print;⁹⁵

A Touch of the Poet . . . was first produced in Stockholm in 1957 and its first New York production was in 1958. Its title was once given to the [projected historical] cycle [A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed] as a whole, and it was originally conceived as the first play of the work. In the final plan, it was put third, to be preceded by Greed of the Meek and And Give Me Death. It was to be followed by More Stately Mansions, which carries on the story of the marriage of Sara and Simon, and by The Calms of Capricorn, The Earth Is the Limit!, Nothing Lost Save Honor, Man on Iron Horseback, and Hair of the Dog. All the unfinished plays except More Stately Mansions were destroyed by O'Neill shortly before his death.⁹⁶

⁹²Eugene O'Neill, Long Day's Journey Into Night (New Haven Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1956).

⁹³Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁴Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten, p. 366.

⁹⁵Miller, Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic, p. 4.

⁹⁶Eugene O'Neill, The Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. xxviii.

In 1957 New York finally saw A Moon for the Misbegotten,⁹⁷ ten years after its unsuccessful road try-out in Ohio in 1947. Hughie⁹⁸ appeared in 1958 as O'Neill's last testament to his beloved brother, Jamie.

Hughie was the only completed work of a projected six-play cycle of one-act dramas, to be called By Way of Obit. It was written in 1940 and first produced in Stockholm in 1958. Its New York premiere took place in 1964.⁹⁹

The list of forty-five published dramas was supposedly completed in 1957, with the release for production of More Stately Mansions¹⁰⁰ in its unedited, draft form. It was not until the 1970's that the number of plays in the O'Neill canon was to increase to forty-nine, with the publication in 1972 of "Children of the Sea"

⁹⁷Miller, Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic, pp. 163-64.

⁹⁸Eugene O'Neill, Hughie (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1959).

⁹⁹O'Neill, Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. xxvii.

¹⁰⁰Eugene O'Neill, More Stately Mansions, shortened from the author's partly revised script by Karl Ragnar Gierow and edited by Donald Gallup (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1964), p. x.

and Three Other Unpublished Plays by Eugene O'Neill.¹⁰¹

These four plays were only recently discovered in type-script form in the Library of Congress, the copyrights having expired long years ago.

These details of the life of Eugene Gladstone O'Neill will become more important to us as we examine O'Neill's plays in search of the themes of love that we find contained within them. Let us, therefore, now begin our "Journey into Light--into love."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹Eugene O'Neill, "Children of the Sea" and Three Other Unpublished Plays by Eugene O'Neill, ed. Jennifer McCabe Atkinson, with a Foreword by Frank Durham, Microcard Editions (Washington, D.C.: National Cash Register Company, 1972).

¹⁰²O'Neill, Long Day's Journey Into Night, p. 7.

C H A P T E R I I I

LOVE IN COURTSHIP

Love in courtship refers to that love which takes place outside of marriage and the family. O'Neill devoted much of his time to writing about the love in courtship. The characters in those plays dealing with courtship seem to be willing and able to give of themselves in order to find fulfillment in their love, and thereby, to find fulfillment in their lives. Unfortunately, many of the characters in O'Neill's plays are not able to attain love. This fact, however, can be easily understood as the reader must realize that all individuals do not find the kind of love that brings redemption in their everyday lives. Some individuals and characters, as a matter of fact, never realize love at all, as the reader shall see in the play "Marco Millions".

In the Prologue to "Marco Millions", three merchants simultaneously arrive at a sacred tree on the plains in Persia. As each of the three is voicing his own belief as to the origin of the tree, depending on his background and/or religion--a white Christian merchant; a

Magian, a Persian; and a Buddhist, a Kashmiri traveling merchant¹--they are interrupted by the arrival of a wagon pulled by human "beasts," and bearing the coffin of Queen Kukachin of Persia. Beneath the sacred tree, the body momentarily regains life as "a voice which is Kukachin's and yet more musical than a human voice"² proclaims her unrequited love:

KUKACHIN. Say this, I loved and died. Now I am love, and live. And living, have forgotten. And loving, can forgive. Say this for me in Venice!³

The Christian immediately responds with, "Venice! It must have been a message she wished me to take back to Marco Polo!"⁴ Surely, this was Kukachin's final declaration of her love for Marco Polo and, through that love, her final forgiveness of him, because as the reader will learn in the play, Queen Kukachin has lost the will to live because of an unrequited love. Marco Polo never returns Kukachin's love because he is so blinded by his desire for success, and to earn "millions," that he is unable to realize any

¹Eugene O'Neill, "Marco Millions", in Nine Plays, P. 211.

²Ibid., p. 216.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 217.

love other than that love that he has pledged as a youth to his childhood sweetheart Donata.

The play itself opens some "twenty-three years earlier"⁵ than the action in the "Prologue." Marco Polo is discovered outside of Donata's window. Marco is "a boy of fifteen"; Donata "is a girl of twelve."⁶ Marco and Donata sincerely declare their childlike love for and their devotion to each other.

DONATA. You silly boy! Why do you do that?

MARCO. You know, Donata.

DONATA. Know what? Go on and tell me, Mark.

MARCO. I love you, that's what. I've loved you ever since I can remember. And you've known it right along, too, so there's no good pretending.

DONATA. I wasn't sure.

MARCO. And how about you? Do you love me? You've got to answer me that!

DONATA. You know--without my saying it.

MARCO. Please say it!

DONATA. I love you. There, silly⁷

O'Neill carries this childlike devotion of Marco and Donata throughout the play "Marco Millions". The innocent, sincere, honest lover, Marco, of this scene is almost a foil to the Marco one finds later in the play.

In this same innocent declaration of their love, the reader also finds the germ of Marco's inevitable

⁵Ibid., p. 219.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., pp. 219-20.

downfall as he explains to Donata that her parents and his will approve of their eventual marriage because "It'll bring the two firms into closer contact."⁸ Already Marco views love and marriage in terms of a business deal rather than in terms of an inner feeling of the heart. O'Neill here is commenting upon the Western culture's definition of love. To be more exact, O'Neill is satirizing the Western standard in which economics enters even into young people's romance.

As Marco prepares to leave for "the court of the Great Kaan,"⁹ he pledges to Donata, ". . . I've got to make my own way--so we can marry--"¹⁰ and he asks her,

But you'll wait, won't you, no matter how long? . . .

And I swear by God I'll come back and marry you, and I'll always be true and never forget or do anything--¹¹

Unfortunately for the poor Kukachin, Marco keeps his troth to Donata.

Donata gives Marco her locket and asks, "Will you keep looking at this all the time you're away and never

⁸Ibid., p. 220.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 221.

¹¹Ibid.

forget me?"¹² She also asks of Marco, "Will you write me--a poem?"¹³ The love poem that Marco writes to Donata while he is still an innocent youth foreshadows the action of the play as he does eventually bring back to her the things that he mentions in his poem:

"You are lovely as the gold in the sun
 Your skin is like silver in the moon
 Your eyes are black pearls I have won.
 I kiss your ruby lips and you swoon,
 Smiling your thanks as I promise you
 A large fortune if you will be true,
 While I am away earning gold
 And silver so when we are old
 I will have a million to my credit
 And in the meantime can easily afford
 A big wedding that will do us credit
 And start having children, bless the Lord!"¹⁴

Tedaldo aptly describes Marco's "heaven of love [as] a trifle monetary."¹⁵ Even in his innocence, Marco is so engulfed in his own ambitions that he cannot distinguish his equating of love with a successful business venture.

Prostitutes play an important part in a number of Eugene O'Neill's plays. Admittedly, a relationship with a prostitute is not a true love, but it is still an important relationship as it provides an outlet for one's

¹²Ibid. ¹³Ibid. ¹⁴Ibid., pp. 224-25.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 225.

emotions and for the sex drive, both of which do play an important role in true love. In most of the plays, O'Neill portrays the prostitute in a favorable light, as he was in sympathy with the plight of the working classes. In the play "Marco Millions", however, Marco's experiences with the Prostitute are symbolic of Marco's compromise with conventional morals and his loss of innocence. This loss of innocence is an important theme in the literature of all nations.

In three consecutive scenes of Act One on their way to Cathay, the Polos encounter the Prostitute. Marco's first encounter with the Prostitute shows him as an innocent, almost comic character.

MARCO. Look! Who's that? . . .

PROSTITUTE. Money isn't everything, not always. Now I wouldn't ask money from him. (She points to Marco). . . .

PROSTITUTE. Hello, Handsome.

MARCO. You've learned our language?

PROSTITUTE. I sell to all nations.

MARCO. What do you sell?

PROSTITUTE. A precious jewel. Myself. But for you I'm a gift. Why don't you kiss me?

MARCO. I--I don't know--I mean, I'm sorry but--you see I promised someone I'd never--Leave go! I don't want your kisses.

NICOLÒ. What a dolt!

MAFFEO. Better luck next time. He'll learn!

PROSTITUTE. Oh, yes, but I won't be a gift then. I'll make him pay, just to show him!¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 231-32.

In his second meeting with the Prostitute, Marco is "pleased to see her--embarrassedly."¹⁷ This time, Marco intervenes in a bet between his uncle Maffeo and the Prostitute as he "suddenly kisses her."¹⁸

PROSTITUTE. You're learning, aren't you? You're becoming shrewd even about kisses. You need only me now to make you into a real man--for ten pieces of gold.

MARCO. No, please.--I--I didn't mean it. It was only in fun.

PROSTITUTE. Later, then--when we meet again.

MARCO. She's pretty. It's to [sic] bad she's--what she is.

MAFFEO. Don't waste pity. Her kind are necessary evils. All of us are human.¹⁹

As Marco is developing shrewdness in the business world, he is losing his innocence; by the time of his third meeting with the Prostitute, the reader realizes that the shell around Marco has hardened and he is now a worldly man.

PROSTITUTE. Shall I expect you again tonight?

MARCO. No. You've got all my money. And I'm through with you, anyway.

PROSTITUTE. And I with you--now that you're a man.²⁰

In Marco's relationship with the Prostitute, O'Neill is again satirizing Marco, and the double standard

¹⁷Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 235-36.

²⁰Ibid., p. 239.

that exists in Western society. In our culture, a male professes to be faithful to his troth, and actually believes he is faithful to her, while in actuality, he is not practicing faithfulness when having an affair with a prostitute. Marco voices his conception of this double standard:

And I've been true to her, too. I haven't ever thought of loving anyone else. Of course, I don't mean I've been any he-virgin. I've played with concubines at odd moments when my mind needed relaxation--but that's only human nature.²¹

Act Two opens with the revelation to the audience that the Princess Kukachin, the granddaughter of Kublai, The Great Kaan, is to "soon become Queen of Persia."²² Kublai recognizes that "her air is grief-stricken"²³ and tries to reassure her of his love for her and of the important role that she has played in his life.

KUBLAI. . . . ever since you were old enough to talk, the Ruler of Earth, as they innocently call your grandfather, has been little better than your slave. . . .

You have been a golden bird singing beside a black river. You took your mother's place in my heart when she died. . . . But now you in turn must

²¹Ibid., p. 269.

²²Ibid., p. 249.

²³Ibid., p. 248.

leave me, the river seems black indeed! If it will make you unhappy, you need not marry Arghun Khan.²⁴

Kublai's reassurances of his love are of little comfort to Kukachin, however; Kublai finally asks, "Tell me, can you have fallen in love?"²⁵ Kukachin's forlorn answer sets the mood for the rest of the play, "You must not ask that--if you respect my pride! You see--he does not even know--."²⁶ And he will never know! Marco Polo is so busy flaunting his successes and is so preoccupied with money and wealth that he has lost his capacity to love a person. Marco's basic need, love, has lost out in the inner conflict with another of the individual's basic needs--the need for economic success.

For an Oriental, the test of a soul consists of that soul's ability to love. Kukachin's reaction to the arrival of Marco Polo at the court of Kublai enables Kublai to guess immediately with whom Kukachin has fallen in love--Marco Polo. It is Kublai that recognizes Marco for what he really is:

He has not even a mortal soul, he has only an acquisitive instinct. We have given him every opportunity

²⁴Ibid., pp. 249-50.

²⁵Ibid., p. 250.

²⁶Ibid.

to learn. He has memorized everything and learned nothing. He has looked at everything and seen nothing. He has lusted for everything and loved nothing. He is only a shrewd and crafty greed.²⁷

Kukachin immediately responds with a defense of Marco. The reader realizes from her response that the love of Kukachin for Marco is rather unrealistic. She does not know the man Marco himself. She has fallen in love with him from afar, and, therefore, her view of him is romantic. She seems actually to be in love with him as the successful tycoon.

Why are you both [Kublai and Chu-Yin] so unjust? Has he not done well everything he was ever appointed to do? Has he not always succeeded where others failed? Has he not by his will-power and determination risen to the highest rank in your service? He is strange, perhaps, to people who do not understand him, but that is because he is so different from other men, so much stronger! And he has a soul! I know he has!²⁸

Chu-Yin, "the Cathayan sage and adviser to the Kaan,"²⁹ wisely explains to Kublai why it is possible for Kukachin to have fallen in love with such an insensitive personage as Marco, and why he did not warn Kublai that he suspected Kukachin's love for Marco.

²⁷Ibid., p. 251. ²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 241-42.

Love is to wisdom what wisdom seems to love--a folly. . . .

That ["since she was a little girl, she has only talked to him once or twice every two years or so!"] was unwise, for thus he has remained a strange, mysterious dream-knight from the exotic West, an enigma with something about him of a likable boy who brought her home each time a humble, foolish, touching little gift! And also remember that on each occasion he returned in triumph, having accomplished a task--a victor, more or less, acting the hero.³⁰

Kublai has little choice but to grant Kukachin's final request of him, ". . . that they [Marco, his father and uncle] be appointed, for my greater safety, to attend me and command the fleet on my voyage to Persia?"³¹ Why? "I wish to be converted to wisdom, too--one or another--."³²

It is Chu-Yin who tries to convert Marco to wisdom in order to save Kukachin's happiness. As Marco and Kukachin prepare to leave on their voyage to Persia, Chu-Yin tells Marco that "You are, at some time every day of the voyage, to look carefully and deeply into the Princess's eyes and note what you see there."³³ And "Be sure and converse on love and marriage often with the Princess. I am certain you will cure her."³⁴

³⁰Ibid., p. 252.

³¹Ibid., p. 262.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 268.

³⁴Ibid., p. 269.

The royal junk arrives in Persia "some two years later."³⁵ While the ship is "at anchor in the harbor of Hormuz, Persia,"³⁶ the reader realizes from Kukachin's response to the chant of the Chorus that Marco has not been converted by her love for him. Kukachin cries:

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. . . .

 A hero is merciful to women.
 Why could not this man see or feel or know?³⁷

Kukachin finally attempts to reveal her love to Marco when she pleads with him:

I myself feel there is something, something I cannot understand, something you must interpret for me! And remember this is your last chance! There is nothing in life I would not give--nothing I would not do--even now it is not too late! See my eyes as those of a woman and not a Princess! Look deeply! I will die if you do not see what is there!³⁸

Marco is about to realize his passion for Kukachin, when the sound of Maffeo's voice exclaiming, "One million!"³⁹ suddenly brings Marco back to himself. Marco has lost his ability to love anything other than material wealth.

³⁵Ibid., p. 271. ³⁶Ibid. ³⁷Ibid., p. 274.

³⁸Ibid., p. 279. ³⁹Ibid., p. 280.

Marco tries to explain to Kukachin his momentary loss of control over his emotions by showing to her the painting of Donata, "The future Mrs. Marco Polo,"⁴⁰ on the locket that Donata had given to him years ago before he left Venice; Kukachin can only respond with painful rage, "There is no soul even in your love, which is no better than a mating of swine!"⁴¹

Ghazan, Khan of Persia, is presented as a foil for Marco's materialism. Ghazan meets Kukachin, and his speech has the immediate effect of showing the reader another aspect of love--the placing of the object of one's love on a pedestal for adoration and worship.

You are more beautiful than I had dared to dream!
It shall not be I who rules, but you! I shall be
your slave! Persia shall be your conquest and every-
where where songs are sung they shall be in praise of
your beauty! You shall be Queen of Love--!⁴²

After her marriage to Ghazan in Persia, Kukachin sends her grandfather a final message in which she tells him that

I have lost my love of life. My heart beats more and
more wearily. Death woos me. . . . My soul he has

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 281.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 283.

already possessed. I wish to commend the unrelenting attention to his duty of Admiral Polo. . . . You were right about his soul. What I had mistaken for one I discovered to be a fat woman with a patient virtue. By the time you receive this they will be married in Venice. I do not blame him. But I cannot forgive myself--nor forget--nor believe again in any beauty in the world.⁴³

The play ends as it opens, with the reunion of the "lovers," Donata and Marco. Unlike the childlike devotion which is illustrated in Act One, the love felt by Marco and Donata is now simply a childish memory, as Donata must even ask her father, "Is that him, father? I can't tell."⁴⁴

In the final scene, Chu-Yin wisely sums up one theme of the play as he answers Kublai's exclamation, "She died for love of a fool!" with "No. She loved love. She died for beauty."⁴⁵

In the "Epilogue," Marco Polo, the businessman-type, rises from the audience and leaves the theatre. He does not see himself in the play, nor can he understand the meaning of the themes of the play--his own loss of innocence and the loss of Kukachin's will to live because of a broken heart caused by her unrequited love for Marco.

⁴³Ibid., p. 289. ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 294.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 302.

The childlike devotion and unrequited love found in "Marco Millions" is carried over to an extent in "The Great God Brown." In The Great God Brown the love of Margaret and Dion as introduced in the "Prologue" is given a romantic effect by the disclosure that Dion is an artist-type and by the use of the masks. Billy Brown, who is described as "humbly worshiping,"⁴⁶ repeatedly tells Margaret of his love for her, but she can only reply that she loves him "like a brother!"⁴⁷ Billy resigns himself to the fact that Margaret loves Dion. Billy tells her, however, to "remember I'll always be your best friend!"⁴⁸

Throughout the play Billy remains Margaret's friend and she remains the object of his love, although she never recognizes his love for her because she is so deeply in love with Dion. Margaret loves Dion, but she cannot recognize him without his mask, which he desires to discard. It is Dion himself who prepares the reader for the theme of the play when he announces, "Love is a word--a shameless ragged ghost of a word--begging at all doors for life at any price!"⁴⁹

⁴⁶Eugene O'Neill, "The Great God Brown," in Nine Plays, p. 312.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 313.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 314.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 316.

Billy begs for Margaret's love throughout the play, but she is never able to realize nor return his love. Other characters in the play, however, do realize that Billy is in love with Margaret. Dion tells Margaret some years after their marriage that "Billy was in love with Margaret at one time."⁵⁰ And Dion is even able to make Billy himself admit the fact that he is still in love with Margaret:

DION. How many million times Brown has thought how much better for her it would have been if she'd chosen him instead!

BROWN. You lie! All right. If you force me to say it, I do love Margaret! I always have loved her and you've always known I did!⁵¹

In The Great God Brown, Cybel is depicted as the understanding prostitute. In fact, Cybel without her mask is the only realistic character in the play who is capable of truly understanding human emotions. Just as Dion knows that Billy still loves Margaret, so does Cybel also recognize Billy's love for Margaret, and she tells Billy, "You love his [Dion's] wife."⁵²

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 323.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 349.

⁵²Ibid., p. 340.

The reader realizes that there must be a great void in the marriage of Dion and Margaret as Margaret and their children only know Dion when he is wearing his mask. This is one of the factors that enables Billy Brown to wear Dion's mask and thereby take the place of Dion as Margaret's husband after Dion's death, since Billy is still in love with Margaret. The pressure of living a double life as both himself, Billy Brown, and Dion Anthony eventually becomes too great for Billy when Margaret describes Dion as having "been like a new man lately, so full of ambition and energy! It's made me so happy!"⁵³

Billy attempts in desperation to reveal his feelings for Margaret as Billy Brown himself and not as Dion Anthony, whom she believes him to be:

Margaret, I've got to tell you! I can't go on like this any longer! I've got to confess . . . ! There's somethin . . . ! . . .
 . . . Think of me! I love you, Margaret! Leave him! I've always loved you! Come away with me! I'll sell out here! We'll go abroad and be happy!⁵⁴

Margaret is so amazed by Billy's confession that she answers him with pained disbelief:

⁵³Ibid., p. 356.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 357.

Billy Brown, do you realize what you're saying?
 Are you crazy? . . .
 . . . Why, Billy--I simply won't believe--after all
 these years. . . !⁵⁵

Margaret later even describes Billy to the Dion-masked
 Billy, as having

. . . raved on some nonsense about he'd always loved
 me. He went on like a perfect fool! . . .
 . . . I've never thought of Billy Brown except
 as a friend, and lately not even that! He's just a
 stupid old fool!⁵⁶

Like Marco Polo in "Marco Millions", Margaret is simply not
 able to realize any other love than that love that she has
 felt for Dion since she was a young woman. Margaret idol-
 izes her Dion up to the end of the play as the reader knows
 when she is speaking to the mask of Dion in the "Epilogue,"

My lover! My husband! My boy! You can never die
 till my heart dies! You will live forever. You are
 sleeping under my heart! I feel you stirring in your
 sleep, forever under my heart.⁵⁷

In the play Lazarus Laughed, it is the love of
 Pompeia, the mistress of Tiberius Caesar, that remains un-
 requited. Pompeia throughout the play alternates between

⁵⁵Ibid. ⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 363-64.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 377.

her love for Lazarus and his laughter and a fierce, raging hatred for him. Pompeia's love for Lazarus is at first simply lust; the lust is quickly replaced by a desire "to see him suffer."⁵⁸ However, after Pompeia has poisoned Miriam, the wife of Lazarus, she begins to realize that her feelings are more than desire, and that she does love Lazarus.

POMPEIA. I am glad he laughed [at the death of Miriam], Caligula! Did I say I loved him before? Then it was only my body that wanted a slave. Now it is my heart that desires a master! Now I know love for the first time in my life! . . .
 . . . Now I know love, I may not give myself to any man save him!⁵⁹

When Pompeia tells him, "I love you, Lazarus!" he answers, "And I love you, woman."⁶⁰ She becomes enraged, however, that his is not the kind of love she desires.

No! No! It is my love, not Love! I want you to know my love, to give me back love--for me--only for me--Pompeia--my body, my heart--me, a woman--not Woman, women! Do I love Man, men? I hate men! I love you, Lazarus--a man--a lover--a father to children! I want love--as you loved that woman there. [sic] that I

⁵⁸Eugene O'Neill, "Lazarus Laughed," in Nine Plays, p. 450.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 460. ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 470.

poisoned for love of you! But did you love her--or just Woman, wife and mother of men? Liar! Cheat! Hypocrite! Thief!⁶¹

Lazarus cannot love as Pompeia loves because Lazarus is "a man in love with God!"⁶² Too, Lazarus is very deeply in love with Miriam.

In his very brief characterization of Miriam in Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill is trying to present his ideal woman. Miriam is described as "never-laughing,"⁶³ so the reader is made to understand that she follows her husband Lazarus not so much because she believes in his laughter and what it symbolizes, but simply because she loves him so deeply. Lazarus grows younger as Miriam progresses towards old age. She welcomes her death as she tells Lazarus:

You should have newborn laughing hearts to love you.
My old one labors with memories and its blood is
sluggish with the past.⁶⁴

Miriam seems to exemplify O'Neill's picture of a loving mother who is at the same time capable of understanding the needs of her husband and lover.

⁶¹Ibid. ⁶²Ibid., p. 385.

⁶³Ibid., p. 427. ⁶⁴Ibid., p. 454.

Pompeia is ignored by Lazarus as he and Caesar carry on their discussions of the soul. Pompeia's torment causes Caesar to have Lazarus "burnt alive."⁶⁵ Pompeia herself is drawn into the fire: "his eyes, . . . call to me! . . . I hear his laughter calling. I must go to him. . . . The fire calls me. My burning heart calls for the fire!"⁶⁶ Although Lazarus has not returned her love, Pompeia is able to gain through Lazarus a new love and laughter.

Eugene O'Neill seems again to be trying to present his ideal woman in the play A Moon for the Misbegotten. We have already been introduced to her through O'Neill's characterization of Miriam in Lazarus Laughed. In A Moon for the Misbegotten, O'Neill's ideal woman is defined in the personality of Josie Hogan, the oversized woman who everyone supposes is a slut but who is actually a virgin. Josie's father, Phil Hogan, is a tenant farmer who is capable of expressing love, but he does not do so until the end of the play. James Tyrone, Jr., is the man with whom Josie is in love. Jim, a character who also appears in O'Neill's autobiographical play Long Day's Journey Into

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 473.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 474 and 476-77.

Night, has had his "life" taken away from him by the bottle.

A Moon for the Misbegotten opens with Josie helping her youngest brother, Mike, to run away from the family farm, just as she has helped their brothers, Thomas and John, before Mike. It is through Josie's conversation with Mike that the reader is told that Josie is "the scandal of the neighborhood."⁶⁷ One realizes, however, that Josie is kind and understanding as she tearfully tells Mike:

I'm sorry to see you go, but it's the best thing for you. That's why I'm helping you, the same as I helped Thomas and John. You can't stand up to the Old Man any more than Thomas or John could, and the old devil would always keep you a slave. I wish you all the luck in the world, Mike. I know you'll get on--and God bless you.⁶⁸

Eugene O'Neill injects a "father image" into the characters in several of his plays. It is, therefore, interesting to note here that Josie refers to their father, Phil Hogan, as "the Old Man," just as Eugene O'Neill himself and his brother, Jamie, refer to their own father,

⁶⁷Eugene O'Neill, A Moon for the Misbegotten, in The Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 303.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 304.

James O'Neill, Sr., (James Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night) as the Old Man.

O'Neill also uses the conversation of Mike and Josie to introduce Jim Tyrone, whom Mike describes as "a drunken bum who never done a tap of work in his life, except acting on the stage while his father was alive to get him the jobs."⁶⁹

The reader learns early in the play that Phil Hogan is a schemer and that he will cheat any neighbor out of a "buck" if given the opportunity. Phil Hogan is presently planning to buy the farm on which he and Josie live from Jim Tyrone as soon as Jim's father's estate is out of probate. Hogan is not above even considering the possibilities of a scheme to trick Jim into marrying Josie as he tells her:

I wouldn't call it a dirty trick on him to get you for a wife. . . .

Well, you've put marriage in my head and I can't help considering the merits of the case, as they say. Sure, you're two of a kind, both great disgraces. That would help make a happy marriage because neither of you could look down on the other.⁷⁰

In the midst of Hogan and Josie's conversation, Jim Tyrone arrives at the farm with the news that T. Stedman

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 306.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 314.

Harder of Standard Oil "intends to stop here on his way back to lunch from a horseback ride."⁷¹ As Stedman nears the house, Jim hurries into Josie's bedroom where he will be out of sight and can listen unbeknown to Harder as Hogan and Josie make a complete fool of him with their double talk and jokes.⁷² Jim and Hogan are pleased with the stratagem that they have used on Harder. As Jim and Hogan prepare to leave for the Inn for a celebration, Jim reminds Josie of the "moonlight date tonight"⁷³ that they were discussing when Harder arrived.

The next act takes place hours later, "around eleven o'clock"⁷⁴ that night. Josie has been waiting for hours on the steps for Jim to return from the Inn and keep their date. Hogan appears; he is very drunk and angry with Jim because, "He's agreed to sell the farm [to Harder]."⁷⁵ Hogan takes advantage of Josie's vexation with

⁷¹Ibid., p. 329.

⁷²This incident, the joke concerning Harder and Hogan's pigs, is mentioned by Edmund in Long Day's Journey Into Night, pp. 22-23. In Long Day's Journey Into Night, however, Edmund meets Shaughnessy (Hogan) at the Inn, and he tells Edmund about his encounter with Harker (Harder) of Standard Oil.

⁷³Ibid., p. 341.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 343.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 351.

Jim for "standing-her-up" to enlist her in a plot to insure that he is able to purchase the farm from Jim before it can be sold to T. Stedman Harder for the ten thousand dollars cash that Harder has now offered Jim for the farm.

Jim finally arrives for his date with Josie, "two hours and a half late."⁷⁶ Hogan and Josie stage an argument in order to get Hogan out of the house so that Josie can be alone with Jim. Josie tells Hogan:

He's turned in the gate where he can hear us. Pretend we're fighting and I'm driving you off till you're sober. Say you won't be back tonight. It'll make him sure he'll have the night alone with me.⁷⁷

Jim is drunk, but he is still in control of his senses.

He explains to Josie:

Had to get out of the damned Inn. I was going batty alone there. The old heebie-jeebies. So I came to you. I've really begun to love you a lot, Josie.⁷⁸

Jim also tells Josie, "I'd like tonight to be different,"⁷⁹ but he does not explain, different from what? The reader is led to believe, however, that Jim wants the night to be

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 363.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 362.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 364.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 365.

different from the many previous nights he has spent with tarts along Broadway in New York.

Josie leads Jim to the steps outside of her bedroom to sit "where the moon will be in our eyes and we'll see romance."⁸⁰ It is there in the moonlight that Jim realizes his feelings toward Josie:

You're beautiful to me. . . .
 You're real and healthy and clean and fine and
 warm and strong and kind-- . . .
 Well, I don't know much about ladies' souls--but
 I do know you're beautiful. And I love you a lot--in
 my fashion. . . .
 You have a beautiful strong body, too, Josie--
 and beautiful eyes and hair, and a beautiful smile
 and beautiful warm breasts.⁸¹

Jim mentions Josie's "beautiful breasts" several times in the play. Her breasts apparently symbolize for Jim a mother-image and a return to the womb as he tells her, "Mother me, Josie, I love it."⁸²

Josie is somewhat overwhelmed by the revelation of Jim's love for her. It is Jim who realizes that Phil Hogan is not the "tightwad" that he pretends to be, but that instead, "He's a grand old scout, Josie. The only

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 371.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 372-73.

⁸²Ibid., p. 342.

real friend I've got left--except you. I love his guts."⁸³ Just as Josie is a mother-figure in Jim's mind, so is Hogan a father-figure. Jim also explains to Josie that he has no intentions of selling the farm to Harder but that instead he has simply been continuing the ruse on Harder. This is the revelation that finally allows Josie the "relief and joy"⁸⁴ that she has been desiring, "Oh, Jim, Darling! I knew you'd never [doublecross her and Hogan and sell the farm to Harder]--I told him--Oh, Jim, I love you."⁸⁵

Jim explains to Josie that he and Hogan both know the truth about her and the fact that she is not the "brazen trollop"⁸⁶ that she has been pretending to be. He reassures her that Phil cares for her and, "I care, Josie. I love you."⁸⁷ The repeating of Jim's declaration of his love for her is the final reassurance that Josie needs in order to confess her own emotions.

Then I'll confess the truth to you. I've been a crazy fool. I am a virgin. And now you'll never--and I want you to--now more than ever--because I love you more than ever, after what's happened--But you will! I'll make you! To hell with your honorable scruples! I know you want me! I couldn't believe that until

⁸³Ibid., p. 375.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 381.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 383.

⁸⁷Ibid.

tonight--but now I know. . . It's in your kisses! Oh, you great fool! As if I gave a damn what happened after! I'll have had tonight and your love to remember for the rest of my days! Oh, Jim darling, haven't you said yourself there's only tonight?⁸⁸

Jim is suddenly struck by another case of "the old heebie-jeebies"⁸⁹ as he momentarily "draws a blank"⁹⁰ and forgets that he is with Josie and treats her like a whore. Jim apologizes and turns to leave, but Josie cannot fight the love and maternal instincts that overcome her. She brings Jim back to her:

Come here to me, you great fool, and stop your silly blather. There's nothing to hate you for. There's nothing to forgive. Sure, I was only trying to give you happiness, because I love you. I'm sorry I was so stupid and didn't see--But I see now, and you'll find I have all the love you need. . . .

. . . . Forget all about my being a fool and forgive--Forgive my selfishness, thinking only of myself. Sure, if there's one thing I owe you tonight, after all my lying and scheming, it's to give you the love you need, and it'll be my pride and my joy--It's easy enough, too, for I have all kinds of love for you--and maybe this is the greatest of all--because it costs so much.⁹¹

Jim senses the protection that Josie's love has afforded him, and in her arms he is able to confess his

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 383-84.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 385.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 389.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 386-87.

experiences with "that fat blonde pig on the train"⁹²
 coming back from California with the body of his mother.
 Jim is hesitant at first, but he finally tells Josie:

You won't believe it could have happened. Or if you did believe, you couldn't understand or forgive--But you might. You're the one person who might. Because you really love me. And because you're the only woman I've ever met who understands the lousy rotten things a man can do when he's crazy drunk, and draws a blank--especially when he's nutty with grief to start with.⁹³

From the story that Jim tells her about his mother's death and the trip back to New York, Josie is able to arrive at the realization that there is no chance for a life together for her and Jim because his soul has died with his mother. Their love has been doomed by prior experiences over which neither of them now has any control. Josie, however, is an inspiration for all lovers when she tells Jim:

I understand now, Jim, darling, and I'm proud you came to me as the one in the world you know loves you enough to understand and forgive--and I do forgive.⁹⁴

After all, is not one of the missions of love to understand and forgive?

⁹²Ibid., p. 374.

⁹³Ibid., p. 389.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 394.

Hogan appears at dawn to find Josie still sitting on the steps with Jim asleep in her arms, his head on her breast. Phil does not understand the "strangely tragic picture"⁹⁵ that the two form as they sit there in the dawning light of morning. Josie tells Hogan that she knows about his scheme but that nothing has happened between her and Jim. She explains their evening together to her father:

What woman doesn't sorrow for the man she loved who has died? But there's pride in my heart, too. . . .
. . . He did nothing to bring me sorrow. It was my mistake. I thought there was still hope. I didn't know he'd died already--that it was a damned soul coming to me in the moonlight, to confess and be forgiven and find peace for a night--⁹⁶

Josie sends Hogan into the house that she may awaken Jim. Jim is somewhat dazed for a few moments when he first awakens, but as his memory of the evening slowly returns, he tells Josie:

I may not remember much, but I know how different it was from the way I feel now. None of my usual morning-after stuff--the damned sick remorse that makes you wish you'd died in your sleep so you wouldn't have to face the rotten things you're afraid you said and did the night before, when you were so drunk you didn't

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 396.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 398-99.

know what you were doing. . . .

It's hard to describe how I feel. It's a new one on me. Sort of at peace with myself and this lousy life--as if all my sins had been forgiven--⁹⁷

Jim is suddenly filled with "guilt and shame and anguish"⁹⁸ as he remembers all of the events of the time he has spent with Josie and he tries to escape his emotions by turning to leave. Josie is deeply hurt by his reactions and begs him:

No! Don't Jim! Don't go like that! You won't see me later. You'll never see me again now, and I know that's best for us both, but I can't bear to have you ashamed you wanted my love to comfort your sorrow--when I'm so proud I could give it. I hoped, for your sake, you wouldn't remember, but now you do, I want you to remember my love for you gave you peace for a while.⁹⁹

Josie's pain tears at Jim and his passion for her overcomes the conflict within him. He quickly goes back to her and apologizes:

Wait, Josie! I'm a liar! I'm a louse! Forgive me, Josie, I do remember! I'm glad I remember! I'll never forget your love! Never! Never, do you hear. I'll always love you, Josie. Good-bye--and God bless you!¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 405.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 406.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 407.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

The reader realizes, just as Josie has realized earlier, that there can be no life together for Jim and Josie. Their love has brought Jim and Josie together momentarily, but it must remain unfulfilled. An unfulfilled love is the most tragic of all love affairs because it has given one an insight into the joys and happiness that love can bring before it slips away forever.

Josie is alone only for a moment before her father comes out of the house and tries to offer her a word of solace. Hogan reveals that his real purpose in involving Josie in his scheme against Jim has been

. . . to bring the two of you to stop your damned pretending, and face the truth that you loved each other. I wanted you to find happiness--by hook or crook, one way or another, what did I care how? I wanted to save him, and I hoped he'd see that only your love could-- . . . Can't you believe that's the truth, Josie, and not feel so bitter against me?¹⁰¹

In other words, Hogan has subordinated his own self-interest to his desire for his daughter's happiness.

Josie ends the play with a reaffirmation of her love for Jim. She realizes that their love is over and will remain unfulfilled, saying, "Don't worry about me,

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 408.

Father. It's over now. I'm not hurt. I'm only sad for him."¹⁰² Josie does echo one wish to the receding figure on the road, "May you rest forever in forgiveness and peace."¹⁰³ The forgiveness and peace that love brings is one aspect of love which is emphasized in this play, whether that love be fulfilled or remain unfulfilled as the love of Jim and Josie is unfulfilled.

Josie and Jim are not able to find fulfillment in their love because of what one might call prior circumstances or experiences. In other O'Neill plays the characters are not able to find fulfillment because of the idealized criterion that the women have set forth as a standard for their lovers. Two of the plays in which O'Neill presents this concept of an unfulfilled love are Diff'rent and Ah, Wilderness!

Diff'rent is a play in two acts: Act One takes place on a spring day in 1890; Act Two takes place on a spring day thirty years later. Emma Crosby and Captain Caleb Williams are engaged and are to be married in two days. They have lived next door to each other since they were children and have always been considered sweethearts

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 409.

¹⁰³Ibid.

by themselves and those around them. Caleb is a ship's captain. Emma is a romantic young woman who has idealized Caleb. Emma has, in fact, put Caleb on a "pedestal" and he says that she expects him "to live up to one of them high-fangled heroes you been readin' about in them books [cheap novels]." ¹⁰⁴

Emma exclaims that she is "diff'rent" and tells Caleb, "You've just got to be diff'rent from the rest. . . . I mean there's things that's all right for them to do that wouldn't be for you--in my mind, anyway." ¹⁰⁵ Caleb tries to explain to Emma that he is "a sea-farin' man" and that "sailors ain't plaster saints." ¹⁰⁶ He also tries to explain to her that he loves her alone and is interested only in making money on his whaling voyages, not in "monkey-shinin'." ¹⁰⁷ During their conversation Caleb, however, does mention "naked heathen . . . brown colored savages" ¹⁰⁸ of the South Sea Islands where his ship put in for water during the voyage after a storm blew them south.

¹⁰⁴Eugene O'Neill, "Diff'rent," in The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, 2:496.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 495.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 497.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

Emma's brother Jack arrives home and jokingly mentions a story that one of the members of the crew is spreading around about Caleb. Caleb denies having done anything wrong, but as he leaves on an errand for his sister Harriet, he tells Emma, "I got to go up street now more'n ever. I want to give that Jim Benson a talkin' to he won't forgit in a hurry--that is, if he's been tellin' tales."¹⁰⁹

Emma immediately calls Jack to her and he good-humoredly tells her about an incident that took place while Caleb's ship was at the islands; a native girl had swum out to the ship while Caleb was alone onboard. Emma's mood changes completely and she immediately declares she will not marry Caleb. Jack is shocked by Emma's response. She explains that she does not care how the incident came about nor what happened, only that Caleb "ought to have acted diff'rent."¹¹⁰ As Jack goes out to enlist his mother's assistance in talking "some sense"¹¹¹ into Emma, Caleb's sister, Harriet, and her boyfriend, Alfred Rogers, come in looking for Caleb. Harriet senses something is wrong and Emma tells her, "There ain't going to be any

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 501. ¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 505. ¹¹¹Ibid.

wedding."¹¹² Jack comes back into the parlor with Mrs. Crosby, and he takes Alf off to the other room to tell him the story about Caleb.

Mrs. Crosby and Harriet argue with Emma and try to convince her that she is wrong in her feelings toward the whole incident. The two women are much more realistic in their attitudes towards men than is Emma, as each tries to explain that one must accept a person "the way he is"¹¹³ and that there will be some weakness and/or fault in any lover that one chooses.

At one point, Harriet tells Emma, "After all, he wasn't married, Emmer--and he's a man--and what can you expect?"¹¹⁴ By this exclamation O'Neill seems again to be pointing out for the reader the double standard that exists in Western society--the double standard being that a man is free sexually to do what he desires before marriage; those acts are forgotten and the individual is considered pure at the time of his marriage.

Emma remains unmoved by the arguments of her mother and Harriet, and she finally tells her mother, "I

¹¹²Ibid., p. 506.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 509.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 511.

don't love him--what he is now. I loved--what I thought he was."¹¹⁵ The audience realizes that Emma is simply in love with the ideal or hero that she has supposed Caleb to be, and that once her illusion of that ideal is shattered, she is not capable of feeling true love for the individual. In other words, one must love the person for what he really is, and not for the ideal that one would like for him to be. Mrs. Crosby realistically points out to her daughter the importance of forgiveness to love: "You'd ought to remember all he's been to you and forget this one little wrong he's done."¹¹⁶

Mr. Crosby enters and agrees with the others that Emma is wrong in her decision not to marry Caleb. Her father, having himself been a sailor, tries to explain to Emma that he has himself been to those South Sea Islands, "And I tells you, after a year or more aboard ship, a man'd have to be a goll-durned geldin' if he don't--."¹¹⁷ Emma still will not accept this as an excuse for Caleb.

Caleb returns and he himself tries to explain to her the story of what had really happened aboard the ship. He tells Emma,

¹¹⁵Ibid. ¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 512. ¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 514.

I was sorry for it, after. I locked myself in the cabin and left her to sleep out on deck. . . .

You got queer, strict notions, Emmer. A man'll never live up to 'em--with never one slip. But you got to act accordin' to your lights, I expect. It sort o' busts everythin' to bits for me--But o' course, if you ain't willin' to take me the way I be, there's nothin' to do. And whatever you think is best, suits me. . . .

I've warned you often, ain't I, you was settin' me up where I'd no business to be. I'm human like the rest and always was. I ain't diff'rent.¹¹⁸

Caleb unhappily says that he will respect her decision.

The reader realizes how very deeply in love with Emma

Caleb must be when he tells her:

CALEB. I ain't givin' up hope, Emmer, and you can't make me. Not by a hell of a sight. I ain't never goin' to marry no woman but you, Emmer. You can trust my word for that. And I'll wait for ye to change your mind. I don't give a durn how long it'll take--till I'm sixty years old--thirty years if it's needful!

EMMA. You might just as well say for life, Caleb. In thirty years we'll both be dead and gone, probably. And I don't want you to think it's needful for you to stay single 'cause I--

CALEB. I ain't goin' to stay single. I'm goin' to wait for you. And some day when you realize men was never cut out for angels you'll--¹¹⁹

Act Two takes place thirty years later. Emma naturally has aged considerably, but she tries to disguise her appearance by acting and dressing in a style befitting

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 516-17.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 518.

a much younger woman--wearing frilly clothing, dyeing her hair black, wearing heavy make-up. Her house even has been cheaply redecorated in the style of the day.

Emma is flattered by the attention of Benny Rogers, the twenty-three year old son of Harriet and Alfred Rogers. Benny hates his uncle Caleb, with whom he and his mother Harriet have been living since the deaths by drowning of Alfred and Jack Crosby years earlier. Emma weakly defends Caleb as Benny constantly criticizes his uncle.

Emma chides Benny for his visits to a local prostitute, but Benny defends his actions by saying it was simply to get Tilly Small to "' . . . drag out the old bottle.'"¹²⁰ The reader realizes how incongruous is Emma's reprimand:

EMMA. I ain't blamin' you. But her--she ought to have better sense--at her age, too, when she's old enough to be your mother.

BENNY. Aw, say, she ain't half as old--(Catching himself). Oh, she's an old fool, you're right there, Emmer.¹²¹

Emma then prods Benny to tell her about the girls he met

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 526.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 525.

while stationed in France, adding, "I've heard French girls was awful wicked."¹²²

Emma and Benny's conversation is interrupted by Harriet's approach and Emma runs upstairs to "fix-up."¹²³ Harriet severely rebukes Benny for the way he has been carrying-on with Emma and for his trying to get money from her. Benny only laughs at Harriet and makes fun of Emma and her actions. Benny is pitifully cruel and hateful. Harriet tells him, "Him [Caleb] and me's agreed not to give you another single penny if you was to get down on your knees for it. So there! You can git along on your army pay from this out."¹²⁴

Harriet unintentionally gives Benny an idea for revenge on Caleb when she reminds Benny:

If shame was in you, you'd remember your Uncle Caleb's been in love with Emma all his life and waited for her year after year hopin' in the end she'd change her mind and marry him. And she will, too, I believe, if she comes out of this fit in her sane mind--which she won't if you keep fussin' with her.¹²⁵

Emma comes back downstairs and Benny compliments her treatment of him as he is condemning that of his mother and

¹²²Ibid., p. 526.

¹²³Ibid., p. 528.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 529.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 530.

uncle. Benny carries out his scheme of revenge by asking Emma, "Say, let's me 'n' you git married, Emmer--tomorrow, eh? Then I kin stay! That'll stop 'em, damn 'em, and make 'em leave me alone."¹²⁶ Emma, unfortunately, does not see through Benny and his scheming and does not realize that he is simply using her affections as bait to set a trap of revenge for his uncle.

Benny leaves the room when Caleb knocks. As soon as he enters, Caleb notices the changes Emma has made in the house and in her own attire. She explains them to him:

I ain't old-timey and old-maidy like I was, I guess that's what you mean. Well, I just got tired of mopin' alone in this house, waiting for death to take me and not enjoyin' anything. I was gettin' old before my time. And all at once, I saw what was happenin' and I made up my mind I was going to get some fun out of what Pa'd left me while I was still in the prime of life, as you might say.¹²⁷

Caleb reminds Emma that it has now been thirty years since he promised he would remain true to her and wait for her to accept him in marriage:

I was thinkin' all this last vige--that maybe--now when thirty years are past--I was thinkin' that maybe--Thirty years--that's a hell of a long time to

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 534.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 536.

wait, Emmer--makin' vige after vige always alone--and feelin' even more alone in between times when I was to home livin' right next door to you and callin' on you every evenin'. I've made money enough, I know--but what the hell good's that to me--long as you're out of it? Seems to me, Emmer, thirty o' the best years of a man's life ought to be proof enough to you to make you forget--that one slip o' mine.¹²⁸

Benny's name is mentioned in the midst of their conversation, but Emma defends him and says she is not fool enough to believe any of the gossip about him. Caleb is bitterly hurt by her confidence in Benny and replies, "Then you've changed, Emmer. You didn't stop about believin' the fool stories they gossiped about me that time."¹²⁹ By Emma's falling for trash like Benny, the reader naturally realizes that over the years she has lost all of her idealism and visions of her idealized lover.

Caleb and Emma have an argument over Benny, with Emma accusing Caleb and Harriet of being jealous of Benny's affections and the attention that he pays to her. Emma finally tells Caleb that Benny is staying with her that night and that she is going to marry him tomorrow. Caleb says firmly that he is going out to find Benny and stop him. Emma begs him not to go. Caleb tells her that he

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 538. ¹²⁹Ibid., p. 539.

should either let Benny marry her or offer him money to leave her alone, but that he will do neither, as they are not worth his efforts.

Benny has been listening to Emma and Caleb argue and is extremely excited by the prospect of the money that Caleb has mentioned. Emma subsequently is crushed by Benny's disclosure that he does not intend to marry her and never did. At this time Harriet comes looking for Caleb to go to investigate a noise that she has heard in the barn.

Benny goes down to the barn but returns moments later with the horrifying news that Caleb has hanged himself. Caleb's suicide shocks Emma into realizing she has wronged Caleb, and she calls out in mad grief, "Wait, Caleb, I'm going down to the barn."¹³⁰

Once again, an O'Neill play ends in tragedy. Two people find their love must remain unfulfilled forever even though that is not their desire. Perhaps O'Neill is trying to make us realize that people are flesh-and-blood and that one must accept imperfections in his lover if he is ever to find true love and happiness on this earth,

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 549.

because as Harriet explained to Emma in Diff'rent, "If you're looking for saints, you got to die first and go to heaven."¹³¹

Ah, Wilderness! is considered the only comedy in the O'Neill canon. Ah, Wilderness! contrasts a new, young love with an unfulfilled, old love. Throughout his plays, O'Neill seems especially to value young love while he plays down old love. Perhaps this aspect in his plays can be traced directly to the fact that O'Neill himself seemed to hold a special, romantic memory for his relationship with Kathleen Jenkins. After all, to quote an old cliché, "One never forgets his first love" as a special remembrance one carries with him through life. Or, to quote O'Neill's own words, "Requited love is the greatest blessing life can bestow on us poor mortals; and first love is the most blessed of all."¹³² This aspect of love is especially noticeable in this play, Ah, Wilderness!, as it is a play of character rather than of plot. In reaching his maturity and manhood, Richard accepts his father's attitude toward love while rejecting the irresponsibility and selfish pleasure of Sid Davis and Wint Selby, respectively.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 509.

¹³²"A Touch of the Poet," in The Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 164.

The play takes place during a July 4th holiday period. All of the members of the Miller household are planning their respective means of celebrating the occasion: Tommy with his firecrackers, Arthur and Mildred with their sweethearts, and Nat Miller and Sid Davis at the annual Sachem Club picnic. The first hint of a problem in the play comes when Lily says that she will go to the fireworks display that evening with Sid, "Only not if you come home--you know."¹³³ The relationship that exists between Sid Davis and Lily Miller has for many years been an endless road. Each is dedicated to and seems to be in love with the other, but there can be no fulfillment of their relationship because of Sid's drinking.

Lily is a kindly, old-maid school teacher. She is a perfectionist who has set forth her own strict standards for the man with whom she is in love. Sadly, even perhaps pathetically, Sid is carefree, happy-go-lucky, irresponsible in his view of life, which is in strong contrast to Lily's rigid attitude.

As the Millers are discussing their son Richard and his "awful books"¹³⁴ as Mrs. Miller calls them--books

¹³³Eugene O'Neill, "Ah, Wilderness!," in The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, 2:191.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 192.

of prose and poetry, drama, and socialism--they are suddenly interrupted by David McComber. McComber is angry because his wife has found notes that Richard has sent to their daughter Muriel in which he has quoted from the works he has been reading. McComber charges Richard "with being dissolute and blasphemous--with deliberately attempting to corrupt the morals of my young daughter, Muriel."¹³⁵

Nat Miller is angered by McComber's accusations and defends the innocence of both Muriel and Richard; he tells McComber, "If you believe this would corrupt Muriel, then you must believe she's easily corrupted!"¹³⁶ McComber gives Mr. Miller a letter for Richard; the reader will soon find out that McComber has forced Muriel to write the letter in which she breaks off her romance with Richard. The two men argue and Miller practically throws McComber out of his house.

Miller himself reads some of the quotations that Richard has sent to Muriel and states his feelings towards them, "That stuff is warm--too damned warm, . . . That's no kind of thing to be sending a decent girl."¹³⁷ Miller

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 201.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 202.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 205.

questions Richard's intentions toward Muriel: "Have you been trying to have something to do with Muriel--something you shouldn't--you know what I mean."¹³⁸ Miller, naturally, is relieved when Richard answers with "shocked indignation:"¹³⁹

No! What do you think I am, Pa? I never would! She's not that kind! Why, I--I love her! I'm going to marry her--after I get out of college! She's said she would! We're engaged!¹⁴⁰

Miller gives Richard the letter from Muriel. He reads it and is deeply wounded and angered by its contents. Richard is humiliated and exclaims, "The little coward! I hate her! She can't treat me like that! I'll show her!"¹⁴¹

The discussion of Lily and Essie concerning Sid very closely parallels the discussion one finds O'Neill has already presented in the play Diff'rent. Essie keeps insisting that Lily should marry Sid because she has been in love with him for years. Lily insists, however, "I can't love a man who drinks," and says she still cannot forgive "his taking up with bad women,"¹⁴² although it has now been sixteen years since she has broken off their

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 206. ¹³⁹Ibid., p. 207. ¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 208. ¹⁴²Ibid., p. 213.

engagement. When Essie protests, "But he's always sworn he got raked into that party and never had anything to do with those harlots,"¹⁴³ Lily simply refuses to listen, just as she has refused to listen to reason ever since the incident occurred. Like Emma with Caleb in Diff'rent, Lily has allowed the past to destroy the whole basis for a love affair. Neither woman, Emma nor Lily, comprehends or is willing to understand the necessity of being able to "forgive and forget" in order to lay the groundwork for a lasting relationship.

Wint Selby comes to the house looking for Arthur. He explains to Richard, "Well, I ran into a couple of swift babies from New Haven this after.[sic] and I dated them up for tonight."¹⁴⁴ Richard accepts Wint's invitation for him to go in Art's place and brags on his own worldliness to impress Wint that he is not "a rube."¹⁴⁵ Of course, his bragging is all a lie, but it is a lie from which Wint assumes Richard knows all about "wine, women, and song."

Sid and Nat return home from the picnic. Both have been drinking; Miller is high and happy, while Sid is soddenly drunk. At dinner, everyone laughs at Miller's

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

stories and Sid's jokes. Lily laughs at them too despite the fact that she is upset that Sid has again broken his promise not to drink. The rebellious young Richard, in his own agony over Muriel, observes that it is Lily who is actually to blame for ruining her and Sid's lives:

Do you know what I think? It's Aunt Lily's fault, Uncle Sid's going to ruin. It's all because he loves her, and she keeps him dangling after her, and eggs him on and ruins his life--like all women love to ruin men's lives! I don't blame him for drinking himself to death! What does he care if he dies, after the way she's treated him! I'd do the same thing myself if I were in his boots!¹⁴⁶

Richard's experience with the prostitute Belle in Act Three is significant in that it presents a new, sordid side of "love" that he has not seen before. Richard's meeting with the prostitute is in sharp contrast to the love that one finds expressed by both Mrs. Miller and Muriel in the following pages of the play. Belle is cold and greedy, and interested in Richard's money, but not in his innocent suggestion, "Only you oughtn't to lead this kind of life. It isn't right--for a nice girl like you. Why don't you reform?"¹⁴⁷ Belle is, in fact, one of the

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 243.

few prostitutes in an O'Neill play that is not an idealized prostitute such as those the reader finds in The Great God Brown or Anna Christie. Belle's sensuousness only serves to remind Richard of the innocence and purity of Muriel, and thereby he is able to resist her advances. Belle calls Richard a "cheap skate"¹⁴⁸ and in all of the glory of his innocence, he gives her five dollars, saying, "If you need the five dollars so bad--for your room rent--you can have it without--I mean, I'll be glad to give--"¹⁴⁹

Richard is quite drunk by this time and tries to pick a fight with a salesman who has come into the bar and to whose table Belle has moved. The bartender escorts Richard from the bar and sends him on his way home. When Richard arrives home, his mother and father are shocked by his drunkenness. Sid, however, is sympathetic with Richard's condition, which by now has turned from drunkenness to illness.

The next day Richard is suffering from the severe aftereffects of the previous evening. Despite her anger, Mrs. Miller cannot help feeling sorry for her son, and is quite relieved when he explains:

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 241.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 242.

I won't do it again-- . . .

But that's not because I think it was wicked or any such old-fogy moral notion, but because it wasn't fun. It didn't make me happy and funny like it does Uncle Sid-- . . .

It only made me sadder--and sick--so I don't see any sense in it.¹⁵⁰

Mrs. Miller's love for her husband and family is sufficient justification for her presence in the play. Like most mothers, her love is simply taken for granted by those around her. It is not necessary, therefore, to the development of the play for her to come to any great understanding with her son, as must her husband. It is enough that she loves and cares for him.

Richard's whole attitude changes when Mildred comes in with a note from Muriel in which she explains to him that she does still love him and that her father has forced her to write the letter ending their romance. Muriel also asks Richard to meet her on the beach that night. Richard is exuberant. He defies his mother's order that he is not to leave the house and goes to the beach that evening to meet Muriel.

Richard and Muriel meet on the beach. Neither of them is quite sure how to approach the other or exactly

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 270.

what to say. Richard himself cannot resist the temptation to tell Muriel about his evening as a result of her letter and his desire for revenge because he felt Muriel had betrayed his love for her. Richard finally convinces Muriel that he hated Belle and that he loves her alone. The two young lovers make-up and discuss their plans for their future together.

Meanwhile, Miller and his wife Essie are alone and discussing their family. One realizes that they have found fulfillment in their lives and especially in their marriage:

MILLER. Then, from all reports, we seem to be completely surrounded by love!

MRS. MILLER. Well, we've had our share, haven't we? We don't have to begrudge it to our children.¹⁵¹

It is true that some parents who have not found fulfillment in their own lives and/or marriage will envy the pleasure and enjoyment of the love that their children may find outside of the home, rather than taking pleasure in that love. Essie and Nat themselves sympathetically realize that Sid and Lily will never be able to overcome their differences and marry.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 292.

In the midst of Miller and Essie's conversations, Richard enters in a daze; his father recognizes his symptoms and explains, "It's love, not liquor, this time."¹⁵² Miller reproves his son for his actions of the previous evening and for leaving the house that night against his mother's orders that he was to stay in. As his father is speaking, Richard for the first time seems to realize that parents too are people who love just as he and Muriel love. Richard kisses each of his parents, a kiss that symbolizes that he has now passed from adolescence to a new maturity, manhood. Miller himself expresses in words his son's new-found manhood:

First time he's done that [kissed his father] in years. . . . that meant something! And I don't think we'll have to worry about his being safe--from himself--again. And I guess no matter what life will do to him, he can take care of it now.¹⁵³

The play ends with a reaffirmation of the joy and beauty that love can bring into the lives of two people who have found the fulfillment and fertility that is so much a part of love. Miller says, "Well, Spring isn't everything, is it, Essie? There's a lot to be said for Autumn. That's got beauty, too. And Winter--if you're

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 293.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 297.

together."¹⁵⁴ The weakness and emptiness of the relationship of Sid and Lily is presented as a foil for the love and marriage of Nat and Essie. And, by Richard's recognition of his parents' love, the reader feels that Richard and Muriel will also find a lasting fulfillment in their relationship.

One might practically consider the play Anna Christie to be A Moon for the Misbegotten moved from the farm to the sea, as the sea plays an important role in Anna Christie. The plot of the two plays is basically the same but with a few revisions in the basic make-up of the characters. Christopher Christopherson, Chris, is the dramatic equivalent of Phil Hogan as the captain of the coal barge Simeon Winthrop. The daughter, Anna Christopherson, calls herself Anna Christie in her profession, a prostitute. In this play, James Tyrone is strengthened and revitalized into the character of the stoker Mat Burke. Recalling O'Neill's love for the sea, it should seem quite natural to the reader that the playwright should portray Mat with all of the powerful characteristics of the men for whom O'Neill himself felt such a strong love and comradeship.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 298.

Anna Christie is one of the few plays in the O'Neill canon in which love brings about redemption rather than tragedy. The play Anna Christie itself grew out of an earlier O'Neill play, Chris Christopherson, which

. . . appeared on the stage in 1920 as Chris. . . .
 . . . Apparently elements of this [The Ole Devil]
 were combined with Chris to become the final Anna
Christie.¹⁵⁵

From the titles, the reader should realize that the original plays were about the father. The final version of the play, Anna Christie, is primarily about the daughter herself.

In the beginning of the play, Anna feels only hate as the cynical, fallen daughter is reunited with her father. By the end of the play, the reader realizes that Anna is a new woman whose whole character is dominated by her love for Mat.

Chris has been at sea all of his life, and he uses that fact to rationalize his having left his wife and daughter Anna many years before the opening of the play. To Chris, the sea is evil, the devil, and should be feared. For Mat, one might say, the sea is the will of

¹⁵⁵Miller, Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic, pp. 112-13.

God because in this play, as in other O'Neill plays, the sea symbolizes life itself and its control over the fate of the individual. In loving Mat, Anna is actually expressing her (and O'Neill's) love for the sea, which Mat represents in the play.

The first act of Anna Christie is set in a New York saloon called "Johnny-the-Priest's," a take-off on the real dive known as Jimmy-the-Priest's where O'Neill himself roomed after his return from his first voyage overseas. The play opens with the mailman delivering a letter addressed to Christopher Christopherson. Johnny-the-Priest tells the postman that "Old Chris" is the "Captain of a coal barge" and that "he comes here whenever he's in port."¹⁵⁶ As Johnny and Larry, the bartender, are talking, Chris and his mistress Marthy Owen arrive at the bar. Larry comments, "He's [Chris] still got that same cow livin' with him, the old fool!"¹⁵⁷ Johnny greets Chris and as he leaves, Johnny reminds Larry, "Oh--don't forget to give him his letter."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶Eugene O'Neill, "Anna Christie," in The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, 3 vols. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1954), 3:4-5.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

Chris reads the letter and says that it is from his daughter Anna. He explains to Marthy:

You know, Marthy, Ay've tole you Ay don't see my Anna since she vas little gel in Sveden five year ole. . . .

She must be--lat me see--she must be twenty year ole, py yo! . . .

. . . Ay'm fool sailor fallar. My voman--Ann's mother--she gat tired vait all time Sveden for me ven Ay don't never come. She come dis country, bring Anna, dey go out Minnesota, live with her cousins on farm. Den ven her mo'der die ven Ay vas on voyage, Ay tank it's better dem cousins keep Anna. Ay tank its better Anna live on farm, den she don't know dat ole davil, sea, she don't know fa'der like me.¹⁵⁹

It is the bartender Larry who actually foreshadows the action in the play when he predicts, "This girl, now, 'll be marryin' a sailor herself, likely. It's in the blood."¹⁶⁰

Chris is excited that he is finally going to be reunited with Anna after all of the years that they have been separated. Marthy senses, however, his sudden apprehension at her presence and tries to relieve his nervousness; she tells Chris:

I'm wise to what's in back of your nut, Dutchy. Yuh want to git rid o' me, huh?--now she's comin'. . . .

. . . A square'head tryin' to kid Marthy Owen at this late day!--after me campin' with barge men the last twenty years. I'm wise to the game, up, down,

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

and side-ways. I ain't been born and dragged up on the water front for nothin'. Think I'd make trouble, huh? Not me! I'll pack up me duds an' beat it. . . . So cheer up, Dutchy! I'll be offen the barge before she comes.¹⁶¹

Marthy knows that Chris is drunk and sends him out to get something to eat before Anna arrives, adding, "Yuh want to be sober when she comes, don't yuh?"¹⁶²

Anna arrives during Chris' absence. Her dress and make-up immediately betray her as "belonging to the world's oldest profession."¹⁶³ Anna and Marthy strike up a friendly conversation, and Marthy immediately knows that Anna is the daughter Chris is expecting.

In the midst of their conversation, Anna tells Marthy, "You're me forty years from now."¹⁶⁴ Marthy here is presented as a foil for Anna. Over the years, Marthy has been able to build a genuine friendship with and a sympathy for her man, and she has been able to maintain "a youthful lust for life which hard usage has failed to stifle."¹⁶⁵ Anna, on the other hand, is cold, hard, cynical. She has already developed a hatred for men, "Give you a kick when you're down, that's what all men do. Men,

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 11. ¹⁶²Ibid., p. 13. ¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 15. ¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 7.

I hate 'em--all of 'em."¹⁶⁶ And even of Chris, Anna says, "But I ain't expecting much from him. . . . I don't expect he'll turn out no better than the rest."¹⁶⁷

Anna describes to Marthy her life on the farm, "away from the old devil sea--,"¹⁶⁸

The old man of the family, his wife, and four sons-- I had to slave for all of 'em. . . . they treated me worse than they dare treat a hired girl. It was one of the sons--the youngest--started me--when I was sixteen. After that, I hated 'em so I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed. So I run away--to St. Paul. I didn't go wrong all at one jump. Being a nurse girl was yust what finished me. Taking care of other people's kids, always listening to their bawling and crying, caged in, when you're only a kid yourself and want to go out and see things. At last I got the chance--to get into that house. And you bet your life I took it! And I ain't sorry neither. It was all men's fault--the whole business. It was men on the farm ordering and beating me--and giving me the wrong start. Then when I was a nurse, it was men again hanging around, bothering me, trying to see what they could get. And now it's men all the time. Gawd, I hate 'em all, every mother's son of 'em!¹⁶⁹

Marthy tries to assure Anna that Chris is not like the rest of the men that Anna has known, "Your Old Man, now--old Chris--he's a good one. . . . as good as old guy as ever walked on two feet."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 16. ¹⁶⁷Ibid. ¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 18. ¹⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 18 and 17.

Chris returns to the saloon and Marthy quickly leads him into the bar and tells him, "That's her in there--your Anna--just come--waitin' for yuh. Treat her right, see? She's been sick."¹⁷¹ Marthy says good-bye to Chris and Anna and rushes off "down to the barge--[to] pack up me duds and blow."¹⁷²

Chris meets Anna and sees her simply as his beautiful daughter; he has no suspicions as to her past profession. Chris tells Anna that he desires the opportunity to make up to her for all of the years he has left her alone. Anna cannot help but respond positively to Chris' affection for her. She seems to be almost embarrassed by her own pleasure and surprise at having someone to really care for her: "Then you're really glad to see me--honest? . . . It sounds good to hear someone--talk to me that way."¹⁷³

Chris takes Anna to the Simeon Winthrop to live. Act Two opens "ten days later"¹⁷⁴ with Anna standing on deck. "She looks healthy, transformed, the natural color has come back to her face."¹⁷⁵ The land being the place

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 19. ¹⁷²Ibid. ¹⁷³Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 25. ¹⁷⁵Ibid.

where she has fallen into prostitution, Anna naturally views the land as the cause of all of her problems, while of the fog on the sea she says, "I love it! I don't give a rap if it never lifts! It makes me feel clean--out here--'s if I'd taken a bath."¹⁷⁶

As Anna and Chris are sitting on the deck of the Simeon Winthrop, their conversation is suddenly interrupted by a voice calling to them from out of the fog. From out of "dat ole daviil, sea," is introduced Mat Burke. Mat at first believes that Anna is Chris' mistress. She is furious at him for believing this and pushes him away when he tries to seduce her. When he finds out that Anna is Chris' daughter, Mat immediately falls in love with her, believing she is the "fine, dacent girl"¹⁷⁷ he has been searching for the world over. Anna is shocked but pleased at Mat's proposal of marriage that same night. Chris, however, is angry and filled with hatred at the prospects of Anna's marrying a sailor; Chris turns to the sea, and says, "Dat's your dirty trick, damn ole daviil, you!"¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 40.

Chris chides Anna for having been out with Mat every night. Chris seems to be jealous of the attention Anna has been paying to Mat. He realizes, however, that Anna holds Mat in very high esteem and finally asks, "Maybe you tank you love him, den? . . . Maybe--you tank you--marry him?"¹⁷⁹ The audience sadly recognizes that Anna too has fallen in love with Mat, but that she feels she cannot marry him because of her past:

If I'd met him four years ago--or even two years ago--I'd have jumped at the chance, I tell you that straight. And I would now--only he's such a simple guy--a big kid--and I ain't got the heart to fool him. But don't never say again he ain't good enough for me. It's me ain't good enough for him.¹⁸⁰

Anna tries to dismiss her own anguish by going down to the docks to watch the ships.

Mat arrives at the cabin while Anna is still down at the docks. He and Chris have an argument over Anna and the fact that Mat wants to marry her. Chris condemns the sea and sailors as making contemptible husbands. Mat tries to explain his feelings for Anna to Chris:

But divil take you, there's a time comes to every man, on sea or land, that isn't a born fool, when he's sick

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

of the lot of them cows, and wearing his heart out to meet up with a fine dacent girl, and have a home to call his own and be rearing children in it. 'Tis small use you're asking me to leave Anna. She's the wan woman of the world for me, and I can't live without her now, I'm thinking.¹⁸¹

Anna returns to the cabin and is angry that Mat and Chris have been fighting. She admits that she loves Mat, but she says that she cannot marry him. Mat is shocked into reality, as is Chris, when Anna discloses the truth about her past. She is forced into her confession by the argument over her between Chris and Mat in which she feels that each of them is trying to possess her like "a piece of furniture!"¹⁸² She tells them both:

First thing is, I want to tell you two guys something. You was going on 's if one of you had got to own me. But nobody owns me, see?--'cepting myself. I'll do what I please and no man, I don't give a hoot who he is, can tell me what to do! I ain't asking either of you for a living. I can make it myself--one way or other. I'm my own boss.¹⁸³

The reader realizes the necessity for Anna's confession of her transgressions when she tells Mat:

I wanted to marry you and fool you, but I couldn't. Don't you see how I've changed? I couldn't marry you

¹⁸¹Ibid., pp. 46-47.

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁸³Ibid., pp. 56-57.

with you believing a lie--and I was ashamed to tell you the truth--til the both of you forced my hand, . . . Will you believe it if I tell you that loving you has made me--clean?¹⁸⁴

Thus, according to O'Neill, love cannot flourish in an atmosphere of deceit.

Mat is furious that Anna is not the pure woman that he has thought her to be. As Mat starts to leave, Chris suddenly comes out of his dazed stupor and suggests to Mat, "Ay tank maybe it's better Anna marry you now."¹⁸⁵ Chris tries to comfort Anna by blaming all that has happened on the sea rather than on Anna herself. Chris too leaves Anna and goes ashore to get drunk.

At the beginning of Act Four, Anna is dressed in her "street" clothes of Act One and has her suitcase packed when Chris returns home from his two-day drunk. He begs her to forgive him, and Anna replies:

There ain't nothing to forgive, anyway. It ain't your fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't his neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we just get mixed in wrong, that's all.¹⁸⁶

Chris agrees that fate is responsible, but for him, fate is

¹⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 59-60.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. 65.

the sea, and therefore it is the sea that is responsible for events of their lives. Chris tells Anna that he has signed on for a real sea voyage aboard a "British steamer called 'Londonderry,'" and, "Dat ain't all. Ay gat dem fallars in steamship office to pay you all money coming to me every month while Ay'm away."¹⁸⁷

Mat finally returns to the Simeon Winthrop. Two days of drinking and brawling have not erased Anna from Mat's mind:

'Tis right you'd be asking why did I come. 'Tis because 'tis a great weak fool of the world I am, and me tormented with the wickedness you'd told of yourself, and drinking oceans of booze that'd make me forget. Forget? Divil a word I'd forget, and your face grinning always in front of my eyes, awake or asleep, 'til I do be thinking a madhouse is the proper place for me.¹⁸⁸

Anna is finally able to convince Mat that through his love she is not the same woman that she used to be, and that she hated all of her previous "lovers." It is this revelation which truly convinces Mat that he is the only man for whom Anna has ever felt love. His love for Anna, the woman herself rather than the ideal, is greater than another of Mat's

¹⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 66 and 67. ¹⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 69-70.

basic needs, honor. It is this love, therefore, that finally overcomes his shattered honor and Mat exclaims:

Oh, I'd a right to stay away from you--but I couldn't! I was loving you in spite of it all and wanting to be with you, God forgive me, no matter what you are. I'd go mad if I'd not have you! . . .
If your oath is no proper oath at all, I'll have to be taking your naked word for it and have you anyway, I'm thinking--I'm needing you that bad!¹⁸⁹

"I was loving you in spite of it all"¹⁹⁰ is the key to the love in this play. Mat realizes that, no matter what Anna's past might be, he still loves her. Accordingly, O'Neill is suggesting that each of us must also realize that it is not one's past that is important in a relationship, but the present and the future that couples must build together. Often a man and a woman must forget what has happened in the past to each of them as individuals and begin life anew in order that love might grow as an estate between two people.

As mentioned earlier, Anna Christie is one of the few O'Neill plays in which love brings about redemption rather than tragedy. The reader is not assured, however, that Mat and Anna will live "happily-ever-after," as

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

the factor of the sea is still present. As Chris says, "Only dat ole davil, sea--she knows!"¹⁹¹ In other words, Chris is finally able to face the sea and accept Mat as the fulfillment of Anna's love, just as Phil Hogan subordinated his own self-interest to his desire for his daughter's happiness in A Moon for the Misbegotten, but Chris is still not sure that the sea will allow them to find lasting happiness.

Courtship, love outside of marriage, plays an important role in the plays of Eugene O'Neill. One would normally assume that marriage would be the natural outgrowth of the relationships examined in this chapter. However, remembering O'Neill's own unhappy experiences with his family and in his marriages, the reader should be able to realize why O'Neill does place such special emphasis on love in courtship. That emphasis is logical because it is possible to know the beauty of love without the bonds that the individual often feels are acquired when one takes the marriage vows.

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 78.

C H A P T E R I V

LOVE IN MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

As the reader has seen in the chapter on "Love in Courtship," most of the courting stage of love found in the plays of Eugene O'Neill does not bring peace and happiness. The same is true of the love one finds in marriage and in the family situation in his plays. Very few characters in O'Neill's plays find fulfillment and/or redemption in their marriage or in their family. This emptiness seems to relate directly to the fact that O'Neill himself as a youth did not experience the love and protection that one normally finds within the home and family. In addition, O'Neill was married three times, a fact which seems to testify that even in marriage he was unable to establish the normal, sound relationships with a spouse that are the desirable bases for a marriage. Obviously, something was lacking within O'Neill himself and/or within his marriages that he was searching for throughout his life.

Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical play, Long Day's Journey Into Night, gives the reader an insight into the dissipation within the O'Neill family. The play is helpful

in enabling the reader to understand why Eugene had to search his entire life for the true meaning of love. The reason is that O'Neill's past, his boyhood and youth, affected his adulthood and his ability during that period to express love. O'Neill unintentionally brought pain and suffering to his children and others around him, just as his own family, his parents and his brother Jamie, had unintentionally caused him years of suffering.

The action of Long Day's Journey Into Night takes place during a day in the lives of the James Tyrone family. Each of the characters in the play represents a member of the O'Neill family: James Tyrone, the father, is James O'Neill, Sr.; the wife, Mary Cavan Tyrone, is Mary "Ella" O'Neill; Jamie is James Tyrone, Jr. (the same James Tyrone, Jr. of A Moon for the Misbegotten); and Edmund Tyrone is Eugene O'Neill himself. Interestingly enough, the reader should note that O'Neill has exchanged the names for the characters representing himself and his dead brother with the real names for those two individuals. Edmund O'Neill was the name of the O'Neill child that died before the birth of Eugene himself.

In using the name Edmund for himself in this play, O'Neill seems to be expressing a desire for death as a

means of relief from the suffering in this life brought on by the events of the past, just as the character Edmund, who represents O'Neill, expresses a desire for death in Act Four,

It was a great mistake, my being born a man, [sic] 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!¹

The reader should also note the use of the name Cathleen for the Tyrones' maid. As one will remember, Kathleen Jenkins was O'Neill's first wife with whom he eloped as a young man, and for whom he always seemed to hold a special romantic memory. In this play, Cathleen's cheerful attitude and her youthfulness are in sharp contrast to Mary's deteriorating physical and mental conditions, as well as to Mary's feelings of loneliness and the emptiness of her life. For example, Cathleen does not seem to mind the fog; she tells Mary, "They say it's good for the complexion."² On the other hand, the fog is a symbol

¹O'Neill, Long Day's Journey Into Night, pp. 153-54.

²Ibid., p. 98.

for Mary's drug addiction, and she welcomes the fog for reasons very different than Cathleen's: "It hides you from the world and the world from you. You feel that everything has changed, and nothing is what it seemed to be. No one can find or touch you any more."³ Mary cannot tolerate the foghorn because it brings back to her the reality from which she desires to escape.

Another important symbol in this play is that of Mary's glasses. Mary is constantly searching for her glasses. Mary's search for her glasses symbolizes her search for something else that she has lost--that something else being her faith in God. Mary regrets having left the convent, and the security of the love of God whose presence she seems to have felt only in the convent. Mary explains her loss,

. . . some day, dear, I will find it [my soul] again --some day when you're [Edmund] all well, and I see you healthy and happy and successful, and I don't have to feel guilty any more--some day when the Blessed Virgin Mary forgives me and gives me back the faith in Her love and pity I used to have in my convent days, and I can pray to Her again--when She sees no one in the world can believe in me even for a moment any more, then She will believe in me, and with Her help it will be so easy. I will hear myself

³Ibid.

scream with agony, and at the same time I will laugh because I will be so sure of myself. . . .

. . . If I could only find the faith I lost, so I could pray again!⁴

There is very little action in the play Long Day's Journey Into Night. Most of the play simply involves the revelation of the emotions, both past and present, of the characters.

James and Mary are still in love with each other, but neither one is able any longer to relate to the other, mainly because Mary is unable to admit her own drug addiction. Mary blames James' miserliness in part for her drug addiction. In her drugged condition, Mary speaks first to James and then to herself, saying, "Oh, we all realize why you like him [Dr. Hardy], James! Because he's cheap! . . . And yet it was exactly the same type of cheap quack who first gave you the medicine--and you never knew what it was until too late!"⁵

Another source of strife in the marriage of James and Mary is her devotion to the memory of her home and her father. Mary tells her husband, "In a real home one is never lonely. You forget I know from experience what a

⁴Ibid., pp. 93-94 and 107.

⁵Ibid., p. 74.

home is like. I gave up one to marry you--my father's home."⁶ The strong relationship with and affection for her father has wedged itself into Mary's relationship with her husband. The extreme dedication and/or hatred involved in the parent-child relationship is an important theme in several O'Neill plays.

Mary herself has never forgiven Jamie for the death of the baby Eugene; she believes that Jamie intentionally went into the room with the baby against her warning in order to give him the deadly measles. Mary explains to her husband,

I swore after Eugene died I would never have another baby. I was to blame for his death. If I hadn't left him with my mother to join you on the road, because you wrote telling me you missed me and were so lonely, Jamie would never have been allowed, when he still had measles, to go in the baby's room. I've always believed Jamie did it on purpose. He was jealous of the baby. He hated him. Oh, I know Jamie was only seven, but he was never stupid. He'd been warned it might kill the baby. He knew. I've never been able to forgive him for that. . . .

It was my fault. I should have insisted on staying with Eugene and not have let you persuade me to join you, just because I loved you.⁷

Mary feels also that she did not deserve to have Edmund because of her neglect of Eugene. Again she tells Tyrone,

⁶Ibid., p. 72.

⁷Ibid., pp. 87-88.

. . . I shouldn't have let you insist I have another baby to take Eugene's place, because you thought that would make me forget his death. I knew from experience by then that children should have homes to be born in, if they are to be good children, and women need homes, if they are to be good mothers. I was afraid all the time I carried Edmund. I knew something terrible would happen. I knew I'd proved by the way I'd left Eugene that I wasn't worthy to have another baby, and that God would punish me if I did. I never should have borne Edmund.⁸

Presently both James and Mary are concerned about Edmund's health, but she refuses to admit that Edmund's illness could be more than a summer cold. Edmund himself tries to tell his mother he has tuberculosis, but she has returned too far into her own world of drugs to accept any communication with reality.

James constantly criticizes Jamie for the sort of life he is leading--playing the horses, drinking whiskey and associating with whores.⁹ James accuses Jamie of trying to lead Edmund into the same sort of life; he tells Jamie,

You've been the worst influence for him. He grew up admiring you as a hero! A fine example you set him! If you ever gave him advice except in ways of rottenness, I've never heard of it! You made him old before his time, pumping him full of what you consider

⁸Ibid., p. 88.

⁹Ibid., pp. 21, 31, and 129.

worldly wisdom, when he was too young to see that your mind was so poisoned by your own failure in life, you wanted to believe every man was a knave with his soul for sale, and every woman who wasn't a whore was a fool!¹⁰

His wife echoes James' sentiments; in addition, Mary accuses Jamie of being jealous of Edmund, saying,

But we musn't allow him to drag Edmund down with him, as he's like to do. He's jealous because Edmund has always been the baby--just as he used to be of Eugene. He'll never be content until he makes Edmund as hopeless a failure as he is.¹¹

Jamie is jealous of Edmund, but simply because he is so dedicated to his mother. Jamie knows that Mary first became addicted to the drug morphine as a result of her suffering at the time of Edmund's birth. Jamie, being older and having seen his mother return to her drug habit many times before, realizes much earlier in the day the cause of Mary's "illness." Jamie tells Edmund,

Listen, Kid, I know you think I'm a cynical bastard, but remember I've seen a lot more of this game than you have. You never knew what was really wrong until you were in prep school. Papa and I kept it from you. But I was wise ten years or more before we had to tell you. I know the game backwards and I've been thinking all morning of the way she acted last night when she thought we were asleep. I haven't been able to think

¹⁰Ibid., p. 34.

¹¹Ibid., p. 109.

of anything else. And now you tell me she got you to leave her alone upstairs all morning.¹²

Jamie's character goes through a continuous erosion as the play progresses. Jamie himself finally admits to Edmund that he has intentionally tried to drag him down because he feels their parents have favored Edmund. Jamie tells his brother,

Want to warn you--against me. Mama and Papa are right. I've been rotten bad influence. And worst of it is, I did it on purpose. . . .

Nix, Kid! You listen! Did it on purpose to make a bum of you. Or part of me did. A big part. That part that's been dead so long. That hates life. My putting you wise so you'd learn from my mistakes. Believed that myself at times, but it's a fake. Made my mistakes look good. Made getting drunk romantic. Made whores fascinating vampires instead of poor, stupid, diseased slobs they really are. Made fun of work as sucker's game. Never wanted you succeed and make me look even worse by comparison. Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama's baby, Papa's pet.¹³

James tries to soothe Edmund's apprehension after Jamie's confession by telling him,

I heard the last part of his talk. It's what I've warned you. I hope you'll heed the warnings, now it comes from his own mouth. But don't take it too much

¹²Ibid., p. 57.

¹³Ibid., p. 165.

to heart, lad. He loves to exaggerate the worst of himself when he's drunk. He's devoted to you. It's the one good thing left in him.¹⁴

Their common devotion to Edmund and especially to Mary is the one bond left between his father and Jamie.

Mary's constant fussing with her hair is a sign of the nervousness caused by her drug abuse, but it is also a sign of Mary's eagerness to look pretty for both her husband and sons. It should be noted that in the play, both Jamie and Tyrone repeatedly compliment Mary on her appearance in the futile hope that it will lead her back to the world of reality.

Just as Mary is concerned with James' niggardliness, so are their sons also concerned. Jamie and Edmund both in turn accuse their father of being at least partially responsible for Mary's problems: Jamie first tells his father,

The bastard of a doctor [who took care of Mary after Edmund's birth] was [responsible for Mary's becoming addicted to drugs]! From what Mama's said, he was another cheap quack like Hardy! You wouldn't pay for a first-rate--¹⁵

Edmund later says to Tyrone,

¹⁴Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 39.

It [the morphine] never should have gotten a 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! Instead you put her in the hands of a hotel quack who wouldn't admit his ignorance and took the easiest way out, not giving a damn what happened to her afterwards! All because his fee was cheap! Another one of your bargains!¹⁶

Jamie and Edmund also feel that James is too cheap to send Edmund to any sanatorium other than the state farm. James eventually does consent, however, to send Edmund to a sanatorium other than Hilltown; James tells Edmund,

Stop coughing, lad. You've got yourself worked up over nothing. Who said you had to go to this Hilltown place? You can go anywhere you like. I don't give a damn what it costs. All I care about is to have you get well. Don't call me a stinking miser, just because I don't want doctors to think I'm a millionaire they can swindle.¹⁷

It is important in dealing with Long Day's Journey Into Night for the reader to realize that the parents have actually not rejected their children, nor have the children rejected their parents. Nor is O'Neill trying to rationalize his own abandonment of his families. O'Neill

¹⁶Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 145-46.

simply seems to be saying that there is a force in our lives that is greater than the individual's own desire and ability to love, and it is that same force which has made each character in the play and each individual in O'Neill's own family a slave to the past. The force in the lives of the Tyrones (and O'Neills) is determinism.

The doctrine of determinism, arguing that the fate of the individual has been ordained by antecedent causes, is acknowledged repeatedly in the play by the different characters; for example, in speaking of Jamie, Mary says,

But I suppose life has made him like that, and he can't help it. None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your true self forever.¹⁸

Mary does, however, later defend Jamie, saying to Edmund, "It's wrong to blame your brother. He can't help being what the past has made him. Any more than your father can. Or you. Or I."¹⁹

Edmund acknowledges the doctrine of determinism when he says, "Everything is in the bag! It's all a

¹⁸Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 64.

frame-up! We're all fall guys and suckers and we can't beat the game!"²⁰ Jamie echoes the same sentiments, but he seems to be even more pessimistic than his mother and brother when he says,

I suppose it's because I feel so damned sunk. Because this time Mama had me fooled. I really believed she had it licked. She thinks I always believe the worst, but this time I believed the best. I suppose I can't forgive her--yet. It meant so much. I'd begun to hope, if she'd beaten the game, I could, too.²¹

O'Neill himself through his characters seems to be telling the reader that there is no chance to win, whether the game be happiness or love or whatever else there may be. Or is he? In view of the fact that O'Neill's technique is tragedy for the purpose of art, perhaps he is trying to tell us that we should not give-in to the discouraging problems that daily confront us, but that we should continue to struggle, as do the characters in his plays, to find happiness and peace, and through them, to find love.

The continuing theme, lack of understanding between parent and child, is emphasized in the "Prologue" to The Great God Brown. In The Great God Brown, the artist Dion Anthony represents the artist in O'Neill himself. In

²⁰Ibid., p. 76.

²¹Ibid., p. 162.

the opening of this play, the individual's need for self-expression is in conflict with the parents' need to inflict their own desires for success upon their son. The conflict between parent and son here reflects the inability of Eugene O'Neill himself to communicate with his father, James O'Neill.

In the "Prologue," Billy Brown and his parents enter the scene before the Anthonys. The Browns are discussing Billy's future and they decide that Billy should be an architect. Billy simply agrees, "All right, Mother,"²² as he is given no choice in the matter.

When the Anthonys enter, the reader senses a completely different attitude toward children. The Anthonys are also discussing the future of their son, Dion. Mr. Anthony, unlike his business partner Mr. Brown, refuses his wife's plea, "You simply must send him to college!" by saying,

I won't. I don't believe in it. Colleges turn out lazy loafers to sponge on their poor old fathers! Let him slave like I had to! That'll teach him the value of a dollar! College'll only make him a bigger fool than he is already! I never got above grammar

²²O'Neill, "The Great God Brown," in Nine Plays, p. 309.

school but I've made money and established a sound business. Let him make a man out of himself like I made of myself!²³

The speech of Mr. Anthony is reminiscent of what O'Neill has led the reader to believe that his own father would answer in just such a situation.

Mrs. Anthony protests her husband's decision and tells him that the Browns intend for Billy to study architecture "so's he can help expand your firm!"²⁴ Mr. Anthony's whole attitude changes immediately as he "suddenly turns on Dion furiously" and says, "Then you can make up your mind to go, too! And you'll learn to be a better architect than Brown's boy or I'll turn you out in the gutter without a penny! You hear?"²⁵ Parents' concern for their children's success often causes them to forget their children's feelings.

The Iceman Cometh is the most pessimistic drama of the O'Neill canon. The characters in the play, like the characters in Long Day's Journey Into Night, see the present nature of man and his future in terms of the reality of the past and of man's own weaknesses.

Most of the characters in The Iceman Cometh, the roomers at Harry Hope's hotel, do not have the same desires

²³Ibid., p. 310. ²⁴Ibid., p. 311. ²⁵Ibid.

that are found in other O'Neill characters--success, honor, happiness, or even love; they seek only peace. However, a young man comes to Harry Hope's seeking love. That young man is Don Parritt. Parritt is looking for Larry Slade, and "Larry Slade, sitting in the midst of them [the down-and-outers at Harry Hope's], drinking, observing, philosophizing, is once more O'Neill."²⁶

Don Parritt is the son of the free-thinking, free-loving,²⁷ Anarchist Movement leader, Rosa Parritt. Larry Slade himself was at one time a member of the same Anarchist Movement, but he left the Movement as a young man because he could not bear to see his mistress, Don Parritt's mother, Rosa, betray his love with her other lovers.

Parritt has never known the love that a child rightfully expects from his mother. Rosa has always been too dedicated to the Movement to develop a normal mother-son relationship with Don.

It must kill her when she thinks of me--I know she doesn't want to, but she can't help it. After all,

²⁶Miller, Eugene O'Neill and the American Critic, p. 13.

²⁷The concept of "free love" is the subject of the humorous but satirical play, "Now I Ask You," in "Children of the Sea" and Three Other Unpublished Plays by Eugene O'Neill. In Now I Ask You as in The Iceman Cometh, free love is not quite so free as some may desire it to be.

I'm her only kid. She used to spoil me and made a pet of me. Once in a great while, I mean. When she remembered me. As if she wanted to make up for something. As if she felt guilty. So she must have loved me a little, even if she never let it interfere with her freedom.²⁸

Rosa presently has pushed her son even further away from her because she feels he does not have the proper dedication to the Movement:

We had a fight just before that business happened [his mother was arrested]. She bawled me out because I was going around with tarts. That got my goat, coming from her. I told her, "You've always acted the free woman, you've never let anything stop you from--" That made her sore. She said she wouldn't give a damn what I did except she'd begun to suspect I was too interested in outside things and losing interest in the Movement. . . .

. . . [And] I was! I'm no damned fool! I couldn't go on believing forever that gang was going to change the world. . . ! I got wise it was all a crazy pipe dream!²⁹

Parritt, therefore, has come to Harry Hope's; Parritt is seeking Larry Slade in the vain hope that through Larry he may find some semblance of love.

Larry represents a father-image for Parritt. He tells Larry, "I remember that last fight you had with her.

²⁸O'Neill, "The Iceman Cometh," in The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, 3:667.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 591-92.

I was listening. I was on your side, even if she was my mother, because I liked you so much; you'd been so good to me--like a father." Parritt even goes so far as to tell Larry, "Do you know, Larry, I once had a sneaking suspicion that maybe, if the truth was known, you were my father."³⁰ Parritt has projected his need for the love of a father onto Larry because Larry is the only one of his mother's lovers who ever cared for him or his mother. Parritt feels he can still relate to Larry, saying,

Do you know, Larry, you're the one of them all she cared most about? Anyone else who left the Movement would have been dead to her, but she couldn't forget you. She'd always make excuses for you. . . . I suppose what she really meant was, come back to her. She was always getting the Movement mixed up with herself. But I'm sure she really must have loved you, Larry. As much as she could love anyone besides herself. But she wasn't faithful to you, even at that, was she? That's why you finally walked out on her, isn't it?³¹

Despite the fact, or perhaps because of the fact, that Don Parritt has been denied love all of his life, he is very keenly aware of the feelings of others.

Larry was fond of Parritt as a child, but he now refuses to give Parritt the affection that he so badly needs

³⁰Ibid., pp. 647 and 667. ³¹Ibid., pp. 646-47.

and desires. Parritt tells Larry that he has sold out the Movement to the police in order to get money, so that he can afford his prostitute-girlfriend; Parritt says,

My getting through with the Movement. She'll never forgive that. The Movement is her life. And it must be the final knockout for her if she knows I was the one who sold-- . . .

It'll kill her. And I'm sure she knows it must have been me. But I never thought the cops would get her! You've got to believe that! You've got to see what my only reason was! . . . here's the true reason, Larry--the only reason! It was just for money! I got stuck on a whore and wanted dough to blow in on her and have a good time! That's all I did it for! Just money! Honest!³²

Guilt seeks out its father confessor! The reader realizes, however, how much Parritt must hate his mother and her lovers for depriving him of the love and home that every individual deserves. Parritt finally attains relief when he tells Larry, "I may as well confess, Larry. There's no use lying any more. You know, anyway. I didn't give a damn about the money. It was because I hated her."³³

Throughout the play, Larry Slade continually speaks of death; like the other characters in the play, Larry too has his pipe dream--death. But also like the other characters, Larry's pipe dream is merely an illusion

³²Ibid., p. 667.

³³Ibid., p. 716.

which he personally cannot embrace. Death becomes a reality in the play, however, when Don Parritt commits suicide by jumping from the fire escape outside the hotel. Parritt has lost all desire to live; his last hope for love, and through that love, the desire to continue living, has proved to be futile--Larry too has refused him the love that he has been deprived of during all of his life.

The boarders at Harry Hope's have all been anticipating the arrival of Theodore Hickman, Hickey, in order that they may hold their annual celebration of Harry's birthday. When Hickey finally arrives, however, everyone realizes that something is different about him and his attitude. Hickey refuses to even have a drink and he explains to them that it is because he no longer believes in his pipe dreams, and therefore, he no longer needs to drink:

The only reason I've quit is--Well, I finally had the guts to face myself and throw overboard the damned lying pipe dream that'd been making me miserable, and do what I had to do for the happiness of all concerned--and then all at once I found I was at peace with myself and I didn't need booze any more.³⁴

Hickey later tells them that he has found a substitute for his pipe dream: the realization that "there is no tomorrow"³⁵ in life.

³⁴Ibid., p. 621.

³⁵Ibid., p. 705.

Eventually Hickey explains that his wife is dead, and Larry is himself suspicious that Hickey has caused the death of his wife, saying, "I'm damned sure he's brought death here with him. I feel the cold touch of it on him."³⁶ Subsequently Hickey does confess to the murder of his wife.

The confession of Hickey adds to the tragedy in this play. All of his life Hickey has been unfaithful to his wife--staying out, drinking, running around with other women, associating with prostitutes. And each time his wife has loved Hickey enough to forgive him and welcome him home. Her continued forgiveness and his continued unfaithfulness have caused Hickey to develop ever greater feelings of guilt. Guilt eventually replaces Hickey's love for his wife with feelings of his own humiliation, and finally with hatred for her. Hickey's feelings of guilt can no longer accept his wife's "sweetness and love and pity and forgiveness,"³⁷ and so he says that he murdered her in order to keep from disappointing her any further.

Love-hate is a strong motivating force in O'Neill's plays, and it is shown in three different circumstances in The Iceman Cometh. Larry's love for Rosa has

³⁶Ibid., p. 668.

³⁷Ibid., p. 714.

turned to hate because she has constantly betrayed his love for her, and although he left her many years before the opening of the play, Larry has never since been completely free of her influence. Don Parritt's love for his mother has turned to hatred because of her rejection of him in favor of the Anarchist Movement and in favor of her many lovers. And finally, Hickey's love for his wife has turned to hatred because his guilt can no longer tolerate the frustration of her continued forgiveness, even though that forgiveness is an important aspect of love.

A very close parallel may be drawn between the plays "Marco Millions" and Ile. Just as Marco is unable to recognize the love of Kukachin for him because he is so pre-occupied with material wealth and success, so is Captain David Keeney no longer able to realize his own love for his wife Annie. Captain Keeney's pride and need for economic success have overruled his desire for love and, therefore, caused him to reject his wife in favor of the "ile."

As the play Ile opens, the reader learns from the conversation between Ben, the cabin boy, and the Steward that the Atlantic Queen has been at sea for two years that very day and that "All he [Captain Keeney] thinks on is

gittin' the ile--'s if it was our fault he ain't had good luck with the whales."³⁸ The reader also finds out that there is a woman aboard ship. Annie, the wife of Captain Keeney of the steam whaling ship Atlantic Queen, has persuaded her husband to take her along on his whaling voyage. She explains that she loved her husband and that

I wanted to be with you, David, don't you see? I didn't want to wait back there in the house all alone as I've been doing these last six years since we were married--waiting, and watching, and fearing --with nothing to keep my mind occupied--not able to go back teaching school on account of being Dave Keeney's wife. I used to dream of sailing on the great, wide, glorious ocean. I wanted to be by your side in the danger and vigorous life of it all. I wanted to see you the hero they make you out to be in Homeport.³⁹

The strain of the long voyage which has been unsuccessful because of extremely cold weather and ice has brought about a great change in Annie, and she now feels she must return home very soon or she shall go mad. Captain Keeney, however, is a very proud man who has refused the crew's pleas to return home, saying, "Turn back! Mr. Slocum, did you ever hear 'o me pointin' s'uth for home

³⁸Eugene G. O'Neill, "Ile," in The Moon of the Caribbees and Six Other Plays of the Sea (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1923), p. 121.

³⁹Ibid., p. 133.

with only a measly four hundred barrel of ile in the hold?"⁴⁰ Captain Keeney had rather face the possible mutiny of his crew than ruin his reputation as a skipper by returning home with an empty ship; he reminds Slocum, the second mate, "I ain't never come back home in all my days without a full ship. Ain't that truth?"⁴¹

Captain Keeney is about to submit to Annie's wild pleas of

Then do this this once for my sake, for God's sake--take me home! It's killing me, this life--the brutality and cold and horror of it. I'm going mad. I can feel the threat in the air. I can hear the silence threatening me--day after gray day and every day the same. I can't bear it. I'll go mad, I know I will. Take me home, David, if you love me as you say. I'm afraid. For the love of God, take me home!⁴²

when Slocum enters and excitedly announces, "The ice is breakin' up to no'the'ard, sir."⁴³ Like Marco in "Marco Millions", Captain Keeney is brought back to reality by the materialistic world. His tender devotion to his wife is subordinated to his avarice for the "ile." He sternly rebukes his wife, saying to her,

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 127.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 128.

⁴²Ibid., p. 139.

⁴³Ibid., p. 140.

Woman, you ain't adoin' right when you meddle in men's business and weaken 'em. You can't know my feelin's. I got to prove a man to be a good husband for ye to take pride in. I got to git the ile, I tell ye.⁴⁴

As the captain leaves the ship in pursuit of whales, it is obvious that Annie has been pushed to the breaking point as "she is playing wildly and discordantly"⁴⁵ on the organ when the play closes.

As the reader has seen, pride and concern for economic success have thus far been responsible for destroying the love of a number of individuals in O'Neill's plays. A study of several other O'Neill plays will show to the reader that poverty is also a source of tragedy in O'Neill's plays, because poverty also has an adverse effect on love. The negative effects of poverty on a relationship are most clearly seen in the play Warnings.

Mary Knapp has lost her ability to express love because of the circumstances of being poor. Mary is so busy feeling sorry for herself that she is unsympathetic with her children:

" . . . I declare a body can't have a moment's peace with you children all the time wranglin' and fightin'." . . .

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 143.

" . . . I never saw such children. You haven't any feelin' for your mother at all."⁴⁶

Mary is even more unsympathetic with her husband James'⁴⁷ loss of his hearing. She tells the children,

"Your father has a bad cold and his head is all stopped up. He says he hasn't got a cold but I know better. . . . But he won't believe me. So he's gone to pay five dollars to an ear specialist when all he needs is a dose of quinine--says a wireless operator can't afford to take chances. I told him a wireless operator couldn't afford to pay five dollars for nothin'--specially when he's got a wife and five children."⁴⁸

James Knapp returns home and gives his wife the report from the doctor, "'He says I'm losing my hearing--that I'm liable to go stone deaf at any moment.'"⁴⁹ Instead of trying to console her husband and ease his worries

⁴⁶Eugene G. O'Neill, "Warnings," in Thirst and Other One Act Plays, pp. 75 and 78. In his early plays, O'Neill uses quotation marks at the opening and closing of each character's speech. Although the use of these quotation marks is inconsistent with their use in other parts of this paper, I have maintained the quotation marks in such plays as Warnings, Fog, and "Bread and Butter" as they are used in the available text of those plays.

⁴⁷Note that O'Neill uses his parents' names, James and Mary, for the parents in this play, just as he used those same names for the parents in Long Day's Journey Into Night.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 82.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 90.

over the fact that he will lose his job if the steamship company finds out about his loss of hearing, Mary scornfully tells him,

"You have worries? And what are they, I'd like to know? You sail away and have a fine time with nothin' to do but eat the best of food and talk to the pretty women in the First Class. Worries? I wish you'd stay home and change places with me--cookin', scrubbin', takin' care of the children, puttin' off the grocer and the butcher, doin' washin' and saving' every penny. You'd soon find out what worry meant then." . . .

" . . . And this is all the thanks I get for slavin' and workin' my fingers off! What a father for my poor children! Oh, why did I ever marry such a man? It's been nothin' but worryin' and sufferin' ever since."⁵⁰

James, on the other hand, shows understanding and compassion for the plight of his wife and family. In speaking of their children, he tries to explain to Mary,

"'Where's the hurt? They're only kids and they've got to have some fun.'"⁵¹ James also tries to placate Mary's scornful attitude towards himself by telling her, "'I know you have to put up with a lot, Mary, and I wish I could do something to make it easier for you.'"⁵²

James consents to make one last trip as wireless operator, and he explains, "' . . . But this is going to be

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 89 and 92. ⁵¹Ibid., p. 89. ⁵²Ibid.

my last trip. I got to do the right thing.'"⁵³ James realizes the danger to himself and others because of his hearing loss; Mary realizes only that they will have to live on one less income.

Scene Two of Warnings takes place at sea aboard the S.S. Empress. The ship has hit a derelict and is sinking. James Knapp is frantically sending calls for help, but he has received no answers. The ship's captain, Captain Hardwick, and a crewmember, Mason, are talking to James when they realize he cannot hear them. James too suddenly realizes he is deaf, saying, "'Oh my God! it's come!'"⁵⁴ He tries to explain the circumstances of his deafness to Captain Hardwick.

In the meantime, Dick Whitney, wireless operator of the Duchess who happens to be aboard the Empress at the time, takes over the wireless and contacts the Verdari, a ship in the area that has been radioing the Empress, but whose messages James has been unable to hear. As everyone else leaves to enter the lifeboats, James realizes the loss of the ship and the lives of those aboard has been his fault. The pressure is too great a burden for James to

⁵³Ibid., p. 93.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 98.

bear; he goes into the radioroom, takes a revolver from a drawer, and shoots himself.

Fog is sequel to Warnings. The play Fog takes place in a lifeboat at sea in a heavy fog, a while after the ship has gone down after hitting a derelict. In the lifeboat are four figures--a Poet, a Man of Business, a Polish Peasant Woman, and her Dead Child.⁵⁵

The Poet again represents the artist, O'Neill. The Poet possesses the same superior qualities with which O'Neill has endowed other artist-type characters in his plays. The Poet is full of an awareness of life around him; he is interested in people; he thinks of others before himself, and he is able to recognize the strong love of the peasant mother for her child. The Poet himself was responsible for saving the mother and child from going down with the sinking ship:

"I was going to die [commit suicide], yes. So I hid in the steerage fearing that some of the ship's officers would insist on saving my life in spite of me. Finally when everyone had gone I came out and walked around the main deck. I heard the sound of voices come from a dark corner and discovered that

⁵⁵Eugene G. O'Neill, "Fog," in Thirst and Other One Act Plays, p. 105.

this woman and her child had been left behind. How that happened I don't know. Probably she hid because she was afraid the child would be crushed by the terror-stricken immigrants. At any rate there she was and I decided she was so happy in her love for her child that it would be wrong to let her die."⁵⁶

The Business Man is a foil for the poet; the Business Man is cold, and has no feelings for other people--he is interested only in his business. He tells the Poet,

" . . . I'm a business man pure and simple and the farther I get away from that business the more dissatisfied I am. I've built that business up from nothing and it's sort of like a child of mine."⁵⁷

The child has died while the four have been in the lifeboat. It is the Poet's speech concerning the child's death and poverty that shows him as the humanist who is capable of understanding the suffering of others:

" . . . death was kind to the child. It saved him many a long year of sordid drudgery." . . .
 " . . . The child was diseased at birth, stricken with a hereditary ill that only the most vital men are able to shake off." . . .
 "I mean poverty--the most deadly and prevalent of all diseases."⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 119.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 115.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 110-12.

The Poet, however, is less sensitive to the kindness of death when he realizes the position in which death has left the woman:

" . . . The thought of that poor woman takes all my hunger away. I used to watch her every day down in the steerage playing with her little son who is now dead. I think he must have been the only child she ever had, the look on her face was so wonderfully tender as she bent over him. What will her life be now that death has robbed her of the only recompense for her slavery?"⁵⁹

A rescue boat soon draws near to the lifeboat, and the Poet and Business Man are saved. Neither the Business Man nor the rescuers are able to understand the Poet's comment when he discovers the mother too has died. The Poet says she is a "'poor happy woman'"⁶⁰ as she is now with her child forever.

The Poet's understanding of poverty and the position it has relegated its victims to is again emphasized in The Web. The "web" in this play is life and the inability of the individual to free himself from life's hold. Rose Thomas is a prostitute who has tried before to break out of prostitution, but she is poor, and cannot quit prostitution for love of her child because prostitution is her only

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 117.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 133.

means of support. Like the peasant woman in Fog, Rose's baby is also "the only recompense for her slavery."⁶¹ Poverty has actually heightened Rose's love for her child. Rose loves her little daughter very much, and in order to be able to help her and take care of her, Rose must go on being a prostitute so that she can earn a living.

Rose has consumption, but she cannot go away to regain her health because her pimp Steve takes most of the money she earns to buy booze and drugs for himself. It is Steve who realizes the rewards from Rose's selling her "love."

The love of Rose for her child is in strong contrast to the heartlessness of Steve; he tells Rose,

And now we're talkin' about it I wanta tell yuh that kid has got to go. I've stood fur it as long as I kin with its bawlin' and whinin'. Yuh gotta git rid of it, that's all. Give it to some orphan asylum What'd you want with a kid? A fine mother you are and dis is a swell dump to bring up a family in.⁶²

Rose begs Steve to let her keep her child, but he is unmoved by her pleas. He finally tells Rose,

⁶¹Ibid., p. 117.

⁶²Eugene O'Neill, "The Web," in Ten "Lost" Plays, p. 40.

I give yuh a week. If yuh don't git dat brat outa here in a week, den I will. . . .

I'll have yuh pinched and sent to the Island. The kid'll be took away from yuh then.⁶³

In the midst of the argument between Steve and Rose, Tim Moran breaks into the room and orders Steve to get out and leave Rose alone. Tim is presently being sought by the police for robbery. Tim and Rose discuss how they have both tried to break out of their respective life styles and reform, but society will not let them:

Tim Then why don't yuh cut this life and be on the level? Why don't yuh git a job some place? He [Steve] couldn't touch yuh then.

Rose Oh, couldn't he? D'yuh suppose they'd keep me any place if they knew what I was? And d'yuh suppose he wouldn't tell them or have someone else tell them? Yuh don't know the game I'm up against. I've tried that job thing. I've looked fur decent work and I've starved at it. A year after I first hit this town I quit and tried to be on the level. I got a job at housework--workin' twelve hours a day for twenty-five dollars a month. And I worked like a dog, too, and never left the house I was so scared of seein' someone who knew me. But what was the use? One night they have a guy to dinner who's seen me some place when I was on the town. He tells the lady--his duty he said it was--and she fires me right off the reel. I tried the same thing a lot of times. But there was always someone who'd drag me back. And then I quit tryin'. There didn't seem to be no use. They--all the good

⁶³Ibid., p. 41.

people--they got me where I am and they're goin' to keep me there. Reform? Take it from me it can't be done. They won't let yuh do it, and that's Gawd's truth.⁶⁴

Tim gives some money to Rose so that she can get away from her work and regain her health. Rose tries, however, to refuse the money, saying, "I can't take it. Yuh been too good to me already. Yuh don't know how rotten I am."⁶⁵ Tim answers her with a kiss, and Rose's expression is suddenly "transfigured by a new emotion"⁶⁶ that she obviously has never known in her life. It is at this time, however, that from the window Steve shoots and mortally wounds Tim. The police break into the room and naturally believe that Rose has killed Tim for the money which he has given her. Rose tries to convince the police that she loves Tim and did not shoot him:

Honest to Gawd, I didn't do it. He gave me this money. Someone shot him from the window. Why, I loved him. . . .

. . . Speak to 'em! Tell 'em I loved yuh, Tim--that I wanted to help yuh git away. Tell 'em yuh kissed me. They think I shot yuh. They don't know I loved yuh. For the love of Gawd speak to 'em.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 44-45. ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 49. ⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 51-52.

Despite all her protest, the police lead Rose away and take her child. The reader realizes the real tragedy in the play when Rose's little girl calls for her mother and a policeman answers, "Mama's gone. I'm your mama now."⁶⁸

In each of the three plays Warnings, Fog, and The Web, poverty has denied the characters the fulfillment that love is expected to bring in marriage and/or the family. The presence of several other forces in O'Neill's plays is also found to have an adverse effect on the fulfillment of love. One of these forces that is found in a number of plays is the individual's need for self-expression. It has already been mentioned in connection with the artist Dion in The Great God Brown. The artistic spirit, the need for self-expression, in conflict with the need for love and in conflict with the materialistic world is an important theme in "Bread and Butter", one of the four plays recently discovered by Jennifer McCabe Atkinson in the Library of Congress. "Bread and Butter" is also significant in that it is the only play in which O'Neill discusses the possibilities of divorce as a means of ending a marriage in which love has again turned to hate.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 54.

John Brown is the young artist in "Bread and Butter". John's brother Edward is somewhat jealous of him because their father has denied Edward and the other brother and sisters a college education while Mr. Brown has sent John to college for four years to study to become a lawyer. John, on the other hand, is interested not in law, but in painting.

Another source of Edward's jealousy of his brother John is Maud Steele. The honorable Edward has approached Mr. Steele and informed him of his intentions concerning his daughter, but Maud herself has turned him down because she is in love with another--John. It is at this time that John enters and personally announces that Maud has accepted him.

John tries to explain to his father that he has been given no say in his father's choice of law as a career for himself. He tells his family he wants to go to art school. When Mary, the school teacher sister, protests John's wanting to study art, John replies,

"Yes, Maud knows of this craze [to study art] of mine, as you are pleased to call it, and approves of it in every way. She realizes I would not be worthy of her love if I were not true to myself."⁶⁹

⁶⁹Eugene G. O'Neill, "'Bread and Butter,'" in "Children of the Sea" and Three Other Unpublished Plays by

Act Two takes place a year and a half later in John's apartment in New York. John has not given in to commercialism and, therefore, has not become a successful artist. When Mr. Brown arrives, he is very angry that his daughter Bessie has been secretly meeting with Babe Carter, John's roommate, and they are planning to marry. John tells his father that he has not been "doing all . . . in his power to further their [his children's] happiness."⁷⁰ John again reflects O'Neill's attitude toward his own father when he tells Mr. Brown,

" . . . You consider your children to be your possessions, your property, to belong to you. You don't think of them as individuals with ideas and desires of their own. It's for you to find out the highest hope of each of them and give it your help and sympathy. Are you doing this in Bessie's case? No, you're trying to substitute a desire of your own which you think would benefit her in a worldly way."⁷¹

Mr. Brown tries to induce John to give up art and come home with him. Mr. Steele has said that he wants John

Eugene O'Neill, p. 20. (The plays in this volume are published from typescripts, and O'Neill's misspellings, incorrect and/or faulty punctuation, possessive forms, typing errors, have all been retained in the text. I, therefore, shall not note such errors by the repeated use of sic.)

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 37.

⁷¹Ibid.

to take over his store and that he will buy John and Maud a home as a wedding gift from him. Much to the chagrin of his father, John refuses Mr. Steele's offer, and he also refuses to give up his art. As Mr. Brown leaves in a rage, he tells his son,

" . . . I tell you here and now, young man, . . . I've had enough of it. You either come home with me in the morning or you needn't look to me for help in the future. I'll bring you to your senses. Starve awhile, and see how much bread and butter this high art will bring you! No more coming to me for money, do you understand?"⁷²

Act Three takes place several months later. John is deeply depressed because his art is not progressing and there is a certain emptiness⁷³ in everything he tries to paint. The cause of John's depression is that he is overburdened with worrying about his relationship with Maud. He explains to his roommates,

"It's not my family's antagonism; it's Maud, - her letters to me; every one of them showing she can't understand, although she's trying so hard to; that she thinks I'm throwing my life away, and her's too, on a whim; that she has no faith in my ultimate success; but that her love is so great she will stick to me till the end - to a lost cause, a forlorn hope. Oh, it's hell to love and be loved by a girl who can't understand; who, you know, tries to and cannot; who

⁷²Ibid., p. 44.

⁷³Ibid., p. 46.

loves you, and whose life you are making miserable and unhappy by trying to be true to yourself."⁷⁴

Maud and Mrs. Brown arrive at John's apartment. Maud wants him to accept her father's offer and come home with them. John repeatedly refuses. Edward enters and is still obviously the honorable gentleman who is concerned with Maud's happiness. Edward accuses John of being "mixed up with some woman down here,"⁷⁵ and John hits his brother in anger. Maud arrogantly leaves with Edward and his mother, but she rushes back into the room moments later, begging,

"You do care! You've been crying! Oh, please Johnnie dear, come back with us. Please if you love me. I do love you so much. Won't you please do this for my sake-just this once for my sake-I love you-I don't want you down here-I don't believe what Edward said-but still it might happen if you never saw me. If you love me, won't you please for my sake?"⁷⁶

The reader realizes that John's will is broken as he gives in to Maud's pleas.

A complete change has come over John and Maud by the opening of Act Four two years later. John is a failure and has turned to the bottle; he is going out with other

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 48. ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 61. ⁷⁶Ibid., p. 62.

women for solace which he does not find at home. The love that at one time was such a strong bond between John and Maud has now changed into an equally strong, mutual hatred. Edward is again present and, as before, has Maud's happiness at heart when he tells her,

"I know it's quite against my principles. I have always held divorce to be the greatest evil of modern times and a grave danger to the social life of the nation; but there are cases-and yours is one of them-where there seems to be no other solution. Therefore I repeat, I advise you to free yourself from one who has proved himself so unworthy; . . . "

"Think of yourself, Maud. You are making yourself sick both in mind and body by remaining in such distressing environment." Listen to me, Maud. I love you, as you know. I have always loved you ever since I can remember Let me take care of your future. Do as I have advised and I will protect you from everything that could possibly hurt you. I ask nothing for myself. My love for you has always been an unselfish one. I only want to see you happy, and to do all in my power to make you so. If, in after years, you come to love me ever so little-you would be free-with such a hope my life would be-"⁷⁷

The reader should note that in O'Neill's plays, the men are the characters who remain dedicated over the years despite the barriers raised by the women they love. O'Neill is commenting on his conviction of the shallowness of women and their love.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 69-70.

John comes into the room as Edward finishes his speech to Maud. Edward exits hastily, leaving John and Maud alone. The two argue, and it is John who makes a realistic assessment of the state of their marriage, saying,

" . . . I gave up a career for you; and you gave up the righteous citizen Edward for me. We were both very foolish." . . .

" . . . You've stated the truth. Our life together is impossible and the sooner we recognize that fact and do what we can to rectify it, the better for both of us. We're young and life may still hold something pleasant if we've only the courage to break our chains. When nothing is left of the old love but wrangling and distrust, it's high time for us to give up this farce of life together."⁷⁸

Bessie arrives; her whole character is dominated by the happiness and fulfillment which she has found in her own marriage to Babe Carter. John explains to Bessie his own failure and the failure of his marriage. When Bessie leaves, Maud enters the room again and raves at her husband. John tries to stop her, but suddenly runs from the room. Moments later, the report of a revolver is heard; he has killed himself.

Love-hate and the artistic temperament's need for self-expression are an important part of "Bread and

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 74-75.

Butter," just as they were an important part of the life of Eugene O'Neill himself. O'Neill's constant conflicts with his family are further exemplified in plays such as Desire Under the Elms and Strange Interlude. In Desire Under the Elms, the description of the father, Ephraim Cabot, bears a close resemblance to O'Neill's own father. In addition, the conflict between the father and his sentient son, and that son's devotion to his mother, is very much like that conflict which took place continuously in O'Neill's family. Equally, the love-hate separating parent, child, husband, wife, son, and lover in Strange Interlude is the same love-hate that separated Eugene O'Neill from his parents, as well as from his own wives and children.

To deal with all of the aspects of love as embodied in the three plays--Desire Under the Elms, Strange Interlude, and Mourning Becomes Electra--is an almost impossible task without writing a complete volume on each. Therefore, those three plays shall be considered as each relates to several themes that are central to each of the plays: the desire to possess the love object, the extreme dedication and/or hatred involved in the parent-child relationship, and the destructive effects of an adulterous relationship on the parties involved.

In Desire Under the Elms, the reader learns from the conversations of Eben and his stepbrothers Simeon and Peter that their father, Ephraim Cabot, is a hard, driving man whom his three sons have come to hate. Although Eben's mother has already been dead for ten years when the play begins, Eben still feels her presence with him, and blames his father for "slavin' her to her grave--." ⁷⁹ Eben swears,

An' sooner'r later, I'll meddle. I'll say the thin's I didn't say then t' him! I'll yell 'em at the top o' my lungs. I'll see t' it my Maw gits some rest an' sleep in her grave! ⁸⁰

Shortly afterwards Ephraim returns home after a two months' absence with his new bride, Abbie Putman. The seventy-five year old Ephraim explains his marriage to the young Abbie: "It was lonesome too long. I was growin' old in the spring. A hum's got t' hev a woman." ⁸¹ Ephraim apparently feels that a woman's love is needed in a home to bring happiness and warmth and to wipe out the loneliness the passing of the years can bring. The reader

⁷⁹Eugene O'Neill, "Desire Under the Elms," in Nine Plays, p. 142.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 143.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 156.

immediately realizes, however, that Abbie has prostituted herself in her marriage when, looking at the house, she says, "I can't b'lieve it's r'ally mine."⁸² And she even confesses to Eben, "What else'd I marry an old man like him fur?"⁸³

Abbie sets herself up for her downfall when in her greed to keep the farm for herself she promises Ephraim, "Ye'll have a son out o' me, I promise ye."⁸⁴ In her lust, Abbie naturally turns to Eben, who finally accepts Abbie as his lover because he believes, "It's her [his mother's] vengeance on him [Ephraim]--so's she kin rest quiet in her grave!"⁸⁵

Abbie and Eben are happy in their love for a time, but as all adulterous relationships do in O'Neill's plays, theirs too must end in tragedy. Abbie eventually must prove to Eben that "I love ye better'n. . . . Better'n everythin' else in the world!"⁸⁶ and the only way she can do that is to kill their son. After the baby's death she explains to Eben,

I didn't want t' do it. I hated myself fur doin' it. I loved him. He was so purty--dead spit

⁸²Ibid., p. 155.

⁸³Ibid., p. 160.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 173.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 179.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 195.

'n' image o' yew. But I loved yew more--an' yew was goin'/away--far off whar I'd never see ye agen, never kiss ye, never feel ye pressed agin me agen--an' ye said ye hated me fur havin' him--ye said ye hated him an' wished he was dead--ye said if it hadn't been fur him comin' it'd be the same's afore between us.⁸⁷

As the sheriff leads them away at the end of the play, one realizes that Eben and Abbie are actually sincere in their love for each other as they declare, "I love ye, Eben," and "I love ye, Abbie. Sun's a-rizin'. Purty, hain't it?"⁸⁸

A frequent pairing in literature is the romantic versus the realistic views of characters. Strange Interlude is dominated by the romantic illusion of all of its characters. Nina is unable to face reality because of her love and memory of Gordon Shaw. Sam Evans is blinded by his overwhelming love of and explicit trust in his wife Nina. Marsden is completely dominated by the influence of his love for his mother. And Ned Darrell foolishly believes he can enter into a physical, scientific relationship with Nina without becoming emotionally involved.

The "interlude" of the title Strange Interlude is that period in the life of Nina Leeds when she is a

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 197.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 205.

desirable woman, capable of passion and desiring love. The reader feels, however, that Nina will never find the true love she desires because she defines love in terms of possession. Nina has almost found herself and her love for Sam in the baby she is carrying, but she has not told Sam about the baby because she feels, "I want to keep it just my baby . . . only mine . . . as long as I can . . ." ⁸⁹ All of Nina's chances for real happiness are destroyed when Mrs. Evans, Sam's mother, is forced to reveal to Nina the "curse of the Evanses" ⁹⁰ in order to save her son's happiness and sanity.

Nina is still looking for happiness by fulfilling her life with a child when she turns to Ned Darrell to father what must pass as Sam's child. But adultery can only lead to destruction. Nina and Ned fall in love, but they can never be happy in each other's arms because, as Ned explains, "We're absolutely unsuited to each other! I don't admire your character! I don't respect you! I know too much about your past!" ⁹¹ Ned rebukes Nina's exclamation of, "I love you! And you love me!" ⁹² with

⁸⁹Eugene O'Neill, "Strange Interlude," in Nine Plays, p. 531.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 541. ⁹¹Ibid., p. 585.

⁹²Ibid., p. 583.

But I don't! And you don't! You're simply letting your romantic imagination run away with you-- . . . Romantic imagination! It has ruined more lives than all the diseases! Other diseases, I would say! It's a form of insanity!⁹³

Throughout the play Nina holds to the view of "God the Mother" as the God of "love and birth."⁹⁴ Nina is at her peak at the end of Act Six when she realizes she possesses all of the men in her life and she says, concerning Sam, Ned, and Marsden, as they surround her in her home,

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! . . .⁹⁵

From this point on in the play, there is a continual erosion of Nina's grasp of reality. In the end, Nina must finally come to terms with the world in order to find peace with Marsden, as all of her attempts at love have been unsuccessful. She resigns herself from the "rat race" with

⁹³Ibid., pp. 583-84. ⁹⁴Ibid., p. 524.

⁹⁵Ibid , p. 616.

Strange interlude! Yes, our lives are merely strange dark interludes in the electrical display of God the Father! You're so restful, Charlie.⁹⁶

Accepting the role of the father-image in Nina's life, Marsden closes the play with, "God bless dear old Charlie . . . who, passed beyond desire, has all the luck at last! . . ."⁹⁷

Adultery and possessive love must of necessity lead to tragedy in Mourning Becomes Electra, a trilogy set in the aftermath of the American Civil War. The three plays of the trilogy are Homecoming, The Hunted, and The Haunted.

While Christine's husband, Ezra Mannon, is away fighting in the Civil War, Christine falls desperately in love with Adam Brant. Her daughter Lavinia discovers the truth about the relationship between her mother and Brant, and threatens to reveal their adultery to her father when he returns home. Brant goes along with Christine's plan to murder her husband, as Brant feels this would be a just revenge for his mother Marie Brantôme, who was banished from the Mannon household many years earlier.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 681.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 682.

Christine is able to goad Ezra to his death by bringing about his heart attack. First she rejects all of his sincere expressions of love and devotion, and then she further arouses his anger by revealing to Ezra,

I've lied about everything! I lied about Captain Brant! He is Marie Brantôme's son! And it was I he came to see, not Vinnie! I made him come! . . .
 Yes, I dared! And all my trips to New York weren't to visit Father but to be with Adam! He's gentle and tender, he's everything you've never been. He's what I've longed for all these years with you-- a lover! I love him! So now you know the truth!⁹⁸

Orin's return to the Mannon estate reveals an almost incestuous devotion for his mother. When left alone with Christine, Orin tells his mother,

. . . I'll never leave you again now. I don't want Hazel or anyone. You're my only girl! . . .
 . . . Oh, Mother, it's going to be wonderful from now on! We'll get Vinnie to marry Peter and there will be just you and I!⁹⁹

Lavinia is able to prove to her brother the facts about their father's death. Orin has too much Mannon pride to let the death of his father go unavenged. After the murder

⁹⁸Eugene O'Neill, "Mourning Becomes Electra," in Nine Plays, p. 746.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 776-77.

of Adam Brant, Orin is for a time able to revel in the morbid details of Brant's slaying, but Christine's suicide reminds him of his deep love for his mother.

I drove her to it! I wanted to torture her! She couldn't forgive me! Why did I have to boast about killing him? Why--? . . .

Why didn't I let her believe burglars killed him? She wouldn't have hated me then! She would have forgotten him! She would have turned to me!¹⁰⁰

Lavinia immediately assumes the mother role in the play and tries to comfort her brother, "Sssh! Sssh! You have me, haven't you? I love you. I'll help you to forget."¹⁰¹

Sometimes it is necessary for a character to assume a new role in order to bring happiness to the one he loves, and that is exactly what happens in the end of the play All God's Chillun Got Wings. This play deals with an aspect in our society that is becoming more and more common today--miscegenation, or interracial love and marriage.

The reader finds a number of examples in O'Neill's plays of a love we might term a childlike devotion, or an open, selfless concern for others. The most obvious example of this childlike devotion is the attraction felt by Jim Harris and Ella Downey in Act One--Scene One of All

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 810-11.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 811.

God's Chillun Got Wings. Jim and Ella hesitate as the other children involved in a marble game begin to leave for home. Noticing the hesitation of Jim and Ella, the children begin to tease them, and Jim immediately comes to Ella's defense. After the other children leave, the two shyly declare,

ELLA. I like you
 JIM. I like you.
 ELLA. Do you want to be my feller?
 JIM. Yes.
 ELLA. Then I'm your girl.¹⁰²

Would not life be wonderful if love could remain so simple and uncomplicated? Unfortunately, the reader immediately realizes that their racial heritage has predetermined the tragedy of Jim and Ella's future together.

In Act One--Scene Two, Ella rejects Jim's friendship when she declares, "I've got lots of friends among my own--kind,"¹⁰³ and thereby she sets the stage for the tragedy in the play. Ella turns to Jim after her affair with Mickey and the death of their child. She is still only able to say, "I like you, Jim--"¹⁰⁴ and is searching

¹⁰²Eugene O'Neill, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," in Nine Plays, p. 94.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 108.

for protection in his unselfish love for her, which he avidly proclaims.

All love is white. I've always loved you. . . .
 . . . I don't ask you to love me--I don't dare to hope nothing like that! I don't want nothing--only to wait--to know you like me--to be near you--to keep harm away--to make up for the past--to never let you suffer any more--to serve you--to lie at your feet like a dog that loves you--to kneel by your bed like a nurse that watches over you sleeping --to preserve and protect and shield you from evil and sorrow--to give my life and my blood and all the strength that's in me to give you peace and joy--to become your slave!--yes, be your slave--your black slave that adores you as sacred!¹⁰⁵

Jim's speech also has the effect of showing the reader another aspect of love--the placing of the object of one's love on a pedestal for adoration and worship.

Immediately following their wedding Jim and Ella go to Europe to live in order to escape the racial prejudices around them in America. There they discover that love cannot live in a suppressed environment and that their exile is driving them apart. Upon their return home, Jim explains to his sister Hattie,

We decided the reason we felt sort of ashamed was we'd acted like cowards. We'd run away from the

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

thing--and taken it with us. We decided to come back and face it and live it down in ourselves, and prove to ourselves we were strong in our love--and then, and that way only, by being brave we'd free ourselves, and gain confidence, and be really free inside and able then to go anywhere and live in peace and equality with ourselves and the world without any guilty uncomfortable feeling coming up to rile us.¹⁰⁶

Ella's insanity is the final, tragic result of their life together. Her love for Jim has been totally destroyed by her suppressed racial prejudices. As Ella regresses farther into her childhood, we find Jim still so in love with his wife that he is willing to play the part of "old kind Uncle Jim" as he asks God to "let this fire of burning suffering purify me of selfishness and make me worthy of the child You send me for the woman You take away!"¹⁰⁷

To weigh one's emotions and decide who is deserving of one's love is perhaps as difficult a task as defining love itself. This is, however, the task that O'Neill set forth in what is believed to be the first play he wrote.¹⁰⁸ The play is entitled A Wife for a Life.

The play opens with the character who is simply called Older Man sitting alone at a campfire before his

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 116-17. ¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 132-33.

¹⁰⁸Gelb, O'Neill, p. 134.

tent. Old Pete arrives from Lawson and delivers a telegram for Older Man's partner, Jack. Pete exits and Older Man opens the telegram, and reads the contents: "'I am waiting. Come.'"¹⁰⁹ Older Man is puzzled over the meaning of the telegram, but he puts it in his pocket and forgets about it for the present.

Jack enters. The two men discuss their good fortune at finally discovering gold. Older Man then explains how their partnership has developed since Jack saved Older Man's life five years earlier,

We've taken our hard knocks with the imitation of a laugh at any rate and we've been good pals ever since that day in the Transvaal five years ago when you hauled me out of the river, saved my life, and our friendship began. No, you needn't try to stop me expressing my gratitude. I haven't forgotten that day and I never will.¹¹⁰

The reader realizes that a strong comradeship has developed between the two miners through the years.

Returning to the discussion of their recent success, Jack mentions going East to organize a company to handle their affairs. Older Man questions Jack's real motive for wanting to go back East,

¹⁰⁹Eugene O'Neill, "A Wife for a Life," in Ten "Lost" Plays, p. 213.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 214.

OLDER MAN . . . What is the attraction the effete East has to offer? It's a woman I suppose?

JACK An angel, rather.

OLDER MAN They're all angels--at first. The only trouble is their angelic attributes lack staying qualities. At any rate, you'd find them hard to prove by my experiences.¹¹¹

Older Man's response can be understood easily in light of O'Neill's own experiences with and attitudes towards women. The same attitude is repeated later when Older Man again says, "It's my sore spot--the virtue of women. I've seen but little of it in my mining-camp experience and your heroine seems to me too impossible."¹¹²

The mention of the East leads Jack into a story of his love for a young woman, Yvette, that he met about six years earlier in Peru. He loved her very deeply and, therefore, finally told her of his love. She replied, however, "'I know you love me and I--I love you; but you must go away and we must never see each other again. I am his wife and I must keep my pledge.'¹¹³

The Older Man is visibly shaken by Jack's story of his love for Yvette, but he manages to control his feelings. Jack shows Older Man a picture of Yvette, which confirms Older Man's suspicions that it is his wife with whom

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 215.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 218.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 217.

Jack is in love. Jack continues by telling of Yvette's parents arranging her marriage, but concedes, "He [Yvette's husband] certainly loved her--in his fashion."¹¹⁴ Jack then shows Older Man a letter he has previously received from Yvette:

"I must keep my oath. He needs me and I must stay. To be true to myself I must be true to him. Sometime I may send for you. Good-bye." Signed Yvette.¹¹⁵

Jack again declares Yvette's innocence in the whole affair. Older Man recognizes the hopelessness in Jack's voice. Having now realized the significance of the telegram, Older Man is torn between throwing it into the fire or revealing its existence to Jack. Finally making his decision, he gives Jack the telegram. Older Man has had to choose between his own happiness and the love and fulfillment of his friend.

As Jack prepares to leave for the East and a reunion with Yvette, Older Man recalls his first meeting with Jack and the coincidence that Jack's name, John Sloan, was the same as that of the man he was seeking as the lover of his wife. Older Man realizes and admits that he himself

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 219.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

is to blame for the situation. The hatred that had so suddenly flared within him dies as he recalls the day Jack saved his life in the Transvaal. Older Man concludes his reflection with a fulfilling thought:

Oh, what a fool I have been. She was true to me in spite of what I was. God bless him for telling me so. God grant they may both be happy--the only two beings I have ever loved. And I--must keep wandering on. I cannot be the ghost at their feast.¹¹⁶

Older Man has sacrificed his own chance for happiness and allowed his love for Yvette and Jack to bring happiness to the two of them.

The play concludes with Older Man's farewell to Jack and his blessings for their happiness. The final line of the play is a variation of John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." O'Neill's Catholic education and his knowledge of the Bible are revealed here as he changes the words of Christ to "'Greater love hath no man than this, that he giveth his wife for his friend.'" ¹¹⁷ As Jesus gave His final commandment to his disciples in the Upper Room, shortly before His death, so has Older Man demonstrated that love for his friend and his wife.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 222. ¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 223.

Thus O'Neill began his career by the writing of a play about the redemption that love can bring to the individual if he is willing to make certain sacrifices. Love is a goal that is attainable if the individual is willing to give of himself and follow another of God's commandments, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸Leviticus 19:18.

C H A P T E R V

CONCLUSION

Eugene O'Neill's plays reflect the forces in life, and love is one of the most important motivating forces in his plays. Many of O'Neill's characters seek love--some find the redemption of a fulfilled love; others find emptiness; a few find only tragedy. But no matter what may be the final result of a love affair in O'Neill's plays, the important thing is that one seeks to share his love with another.

O'Neill has shown the reader that certain elements have an adverse effect on love. Some of those elements are a puritanical attitude, extreme dedication, guilt, hatred, jealousy, possessiveness, racial prejudice, pride, prostitution of oneself, poverty, financial success, prior experiences, and determinism. However, O'Neill has also shown the desirable, redeeming effects of love. They are admiration, affection, compassion, devotion, faith, friendship, forgiveness, happiness, inner peace, pity, pleasure, protection, sympathy, tenderness, thoughtfulness, trust, and understanding.

The idealized or puritanical attitudes of Emma Crosby in Diff'rent and of Lily Miller in Ah, Wilderness! are presented by O'Neill in order to show that every individual is a human being and, therefore, that one can never find happiness if one expects to base it on perfection in others. One must love the individual for what he really is, and not for the ideal that one would like for him to be. According to O'Neill then, the romantic, story-book hero about whom every girl dreams must of necessity lose some romantic qualities and be accepted as an individual with faults and weaknesses. Romantic illusion is acceptable only under certain limited circumstances, because the individual needs to maintain a constant grasp of reality.

In Diff'rent and Ah, Wilderness!, O'Neill is also pointing out the effects of prior experiences on a relationship. When considered in conjunction with A Moon for the Misbegotten, and in contrast to Anna Christie, O'Neill is showing that the present, not the past, must form the basis for a lasting relationship. The ability to forgive and forget cannot be overemphasized as a basis for love in O'Neill's plays.

In A Wife for a Life, O'Neill presents the problem of deciding between one's own happiness and the happiness of the lover or lovers to whom one is devoted. Dedication to another is presented negatively, however, in several other plays, such as Long Day's Journey Into Night, Strange Interlude, Mourning Becomes Electra, and Desire Under the Elms. In each of the last mentioned four plays, the extreme dedication of one individual to another, and especially to one parent, forms a wedge of hatred in the individual's relationships with others. O'Neill is showing to the reader the necessity of trying to control one's emotions, and, thereby, to show compassion and understanding for all.

In the four plays listed above, as well as in More Stately Mansions, possessiveness is shown adversely. According to O'Neill, one simply cannot possess the love object, because in doing so, one is destroying the freedom and security of a love affair. Possessiveness can only stir jealousy and hatred which will eventually damage a relationship by destroying the love involved.

Racial prejudice is the subject of only one of Eugene O'Neill's plays, All God's Chillun Got Wings. However, the reader can draw other conclusions concerning

O'Neill's attitudes towards love from that play. Prejudice is an acquired trait--a trait which the individual does not know as a small child, but one that he must learn from society. In addition, when the individual tries to deny or suppress his emotions, whether the denial be conscious or subconscious, those emotions will eventually resurface, and probably through such undesirable outlets as hatred and/or insanity.

Josie Hogan in A Moon for the Misbegotten is able to take pride in her love for Jim Tyrone, and in the forgiveness and inner peace that her love has afforded him. Pride is also an important force in A Touch of the Poet and in Ile. Mrs. Nora Melody has pride in her love for her husband. Cornelius Melody at first has pride only in himself and his heritage, and his pride is destroying his love for his wife. Fortunately, Con is able to realize his own shortcomings in time to save his marriage. The opposite is true of Captain Keeney in Ile. He simply will not submit to his wife's pleas to take her home because he cannot overcome his inflated pride for love of anyone or anything other than his own need for economic success.

Economic success and poverty are both important factors in competition with love in O'Neill's plays. A character like Marco Polo in "Marco Millions" is unable to realize love because he is so preoccupied with money and wealth. Mary Knapp in Warnings is no longer able to express love because she and her family are poverty-stricken. Conversely, Rose Thomas' love for her daughter in The Web is heightened by her poverty. Rose must continue in her profession as a prostitute because she is her small child's only means of support.

Most prostitutes in O'Neill's plays are favored characters, as are Rose in The Web, Cybele in The Great God Brown, and Marthy and Anna in "Anna Christie". O'Neill portrays his prostitutes favorably because they are a part of the working class, and O'Neill was himself in sympathy with the plight of the working class. Although they are not idealized prostitutes like the others, Belle in Ah, Wilderness! and the character simply called Woman in Welded are important to the development of those plays because they enable Richard and Cape to recognize their real love for Muriel and Eleanor respectively.

In a number of plays, Eugene O'Neill presents the relationship of love-hate, especially in describing

the artistic temperament's need for self-expression. Such plays include particularly "Bread and Butter" and The Great God Brown. In addition to those plays, O'Neill also shows in Beyond the Horizon and in Welded that each individual must feel free to grow within the framework of his love affair. The individual must feel that he is true to himself by fulfilling his own goals and aspirations in life before he is able to truly experience a fulfilled, lasting relationship with another individual.

O'Neill satirizes love in several plays, including "Marco Millions" and Now I Ask You. In Now I Ask You and in The Iceman Cometh, O'Neill presents the concept of free love, which is actually not so free as many desire because it exacts a high toll from its participants as well as from those around them. Don Parritt, in The Iceman Cometh, as a matter of fact, pays with his own life for his mother's free love and her free life style.

Eugene O'Neill never returned to the Catholic church in which his parents reared him, and which he left as a young man. However, he reflects his Catholic training in several plays. Lazarus in Lazarus Laughed and John in Days Without End both affirm the love of God for man. However, a denial of God's love is also expressed

in Days Without End as well as in "Marco Millions". Nina Leeds Evans clings to the image of God the Mother in Strange Interlude before she concedes allegiance to God the Father at the end of the play. O'Neill also uses Biblical references and quotations from the Scriptures in other plays; for example, in A Wife for a Life.

Eugene O'Neill's plays contain many autobiographical elements reflecting his experience with women. Two of his marriages were unsuccessful and ended in divorce. O'Neill even goes so far as to propose divorce in "Bread and Butter" as a means of ending an unhappy marriage. He does, however, show the elements he considers essential to a successful marriage in such plays as Ah, Wilderness! and Servitude. Some of those essential elements include devotion, friendship, trust, and understanding.

It should be noted again by the reader that O'Neill emphasizes the freshness and beauty of new, young love, while he plays down old love as somewhat tainted and defiled. O'Neill is, therefore, realistic in most of his assessments of love. His plays do not present life or love through "rose-colored glasses." They present love as O'Neill saw and experienced it in his own life.

To understand the true importance and scope of Eugene Gladstone O'Neill's treatment of love in his plays, the reader should realize that love is one of the most important motivating forces in at least three-fourths of O'Neill's forty-nine published dramas. Most of the remaining plays deal primarily with men at sea, as O'Neill never forgot the peace and companionship he found there. A strong comradeship existed between O'Neill and his fellow sailors. And who is to say that that comradeship which O'Neill felt for his fellow sailors did not contain a bond equally as strong as that love which he experienced within his family and marriages?

In almost every one of Eugene O'Neill's plays, his characters struggle against the many problems associated with finding love. So, according to O'Neill, each individual must also continue to struggle that he too may find the "requited love [which] is the greatest blessing life can bestow on us poor mortals."¹

¹"A Touch of the Poet," in The Later Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 164.

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S.v. "love."