UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Belonging, Possession and the Ironic Life Force:

Philosophical Synthesis in the Early Period Plays of Eugene O'Neill

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Theater Studies

by

Ryder W. Thornton

Committee in charge:

Professor William Davies King, Chair

Professor Simon Williams

Professor Robert M. Dowling

December 2018

The dissertation of Ryder W. Thornton is approved.

_____
Simon Williams

_____
Robert M. Dowling

_____
William Davies King, Committee Chair

December 2018

Belonging, Possession and the Ironic Life Force:

Philosophical Synthesis in the Early Period Plays of Eugene O'Neill.

Curriculum Vitae (abbreviated)

Ryder W. Thornton

Cell: (267) 496 9910
rthornto@tulane.edu

Education

PhD, Theater, **University of California, Santa Barbara**, 2018 (expected)
Dissertation: "Belonging, Possession and the Ironic Life Force: Philosophical Synthesis in the Early Period Plays of Eugene O'Neill." Advisor: William Davies King
MFA, Theatre Directing, Temple University, 2004
Thesis Production: *The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière (translation and direction). Written thesis: "A Directorial Approach to Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid*." Advisor: Dan Kern
BA, English, **University of Wisconsin, Madison**, 1995
Honors Thesis: "Weaving Timeless into Time: A Study of Memory and Memorable Figures in T.S. Eliot's 'The Four Quartets.'" Advisor: Cyrena N. Pondrom.

Selected Awards and Recognition

Carol Lavin Bernick Faculty Grant–international conference travel, Tulane 2018
Professor Of Practice Travel Grant–international conference travel, Tulane 2018
Doctoral Travel Grant–award for international conference travel, UCSB 2017
Research Support Grants –funding awards for research, UCSB, 2014-18
UCSB Departmental Fellowship–first year fellowship, Dept. of Theater and Dance, 2013
Travel Award Grant–Temple University Award for travel-related research, 2002
Graduate Fellowship–Three-year fellowship Temple University, 2001
Fulbright Scholarship–Host: Eötvös Loránd Tudomány Egyetem, Budapest,1995
University Bookstore Award for Outstanding Research –Senior Thesis, 1995

Publications

"Stately Women in Retrospect: Actresses Jenny Bacon and Joan Macintosh Recall Their Roles as Sara and Deborah Harford in Ivo van Hove's *More Stately Mansions* at NYTW." *Eugene O'Neill Review*, 38:1-2 (2017), pp 122-136.

"Anna and *The Antichrist*: Nietzsche, Christian Symbolism, and Vedantic Philosophy in *'Anna Christie'*." *Eugene O'Neill Review*, 37:2 (2016), pp. 145–163.

Review: "*The Iceman Cometh* by George C. Wolfe." *Eugene O'Neill Review,* vol 39, no. 2 (2018), pp. 331-335.

Review: "*The Hairy Ape* by Richard Jones." *Eugene O'Neill Review,* vol 38, no. 1-2 (2017), pp. 170-174.

Review: "*Hughie* by Michael Grandage." *Eugene O'Neill Review,* vol. 37, no. 2 (2016), pp. 310–314.

Book Review: "April Fool—Stories by Dezsô Kosztolányi." *budapestlive.hu.* Pocsok Media. Web February 2000.

"Influences and Innovations: The Paintings of Moricz Gabor." *Seven Magazine,* vol. 1, no. 1, March 1999, p. 41.

Conference Presentations

"'Accept yourself as you are:' American Dreams and the Tragedy of Pragmatism in *More Stately Mansions*." Migrations in American Drama and Theatre: 5th International Conference on American Drama and Theater, Nancy, France (June 2018)

"Killing Catholic Guilt: Self-loathing and the Psychology of Fascism in *Iceman Cometh.*" Tenth International Conference on Eugene O'Neill, Galway, Ireland (July 2017)
"Dissonant Protagonists: O'Neill's Nietzschean Approach to Tragedy in the Early Plays." 41st Annual Comparative Drama Conference, Orlando FL (April 2017).
"A Theatrical Vocabulary for the Unfinished Play: Ivo van Hove's *More Stately Mansions* at New York Theatre Workshop 1997." ALA 27th Annual Conference (March 2016).
"Kafka's Comedies: An evening of adaptations on stage." Metamorphosis: Human, Animal, Armor: International Conference. Santa Barbara, CA (December 2015).
"Changeover Politics in Contemporary Hungarian Literature." Fulbright Scholars in Hungary Conference, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem. Budapest (December 1996).

Teaching Experience and Academic Appointments

Tulane University, Department of Theatre and Dance, New Orleans LA
Professor of Practice, full time (fall 2017 to present)
Plays and Playwrights - Survey of drama from the ancient Greeks to the present
Fundamentals of Acting - Foundational acting class focusing on methods
Honors Colloquium: "Creativity" - An honors seminar on the creative process

UC Santa Barbara, Department of Theater and Dance
Teaching Associate (spring 2017)
Modern and Contemporary European Drama
Teaching Assistant (2013-16): *Performance in Global Contexts: Europe, Introduction to Acting*, *Play Analysis, Directorial Production*

American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA), New York NY
Acting Instructor (2011-13) *Foundations*, *Graduation Showcase*, *Advanced Scene Study*

Temple University, Department of Theater, Philadelphia PA
Adjunct Lecturer (2005-2010) *Art of Acting, Creative Spirit, Collaborative Art, Acting II, Intro to Directing*

Northampton Community College (NCC), Dept. of Theater, Northampton PA
Adjunct Instructor (2009) *Acting I*

Languages

Latin: Advanced reading knowledge of classical and medieval forms, medieval paleography.
French: Intermediate oral and written.
Hungarian: Intermediate oral and written.

Professional Affiliations

Board Member: Eugene O'Neill Society
Member: SDC - Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.
Member: DG - Dramatists Guild of America.
Member: TCG - Theatre Communications Group

Practical Experience

Director of over 40 professional theater productions nationally and internationally. Selected credits include: New City Stage Company, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, The Wilma Theater, Waling Fish Theater, EgoPo Productions, Kaibutsu, Pennsylvania Academy of Vocal Arts, Temple Theatres, New York University, UC Santa Barbara, The Pearl Theatre Company, Classic Stage Company, Inad Theatre Company, The Merlin International Theatre, White Heron Theatre Company and Tulane University.

ABSTRACT

Belonging, Possession and the Ironic Life Force:

Philosophical Synthesis in the Early Period Plays of Eugene O'Neill.

by

Ryder W. Thornton

The plays of Eugene O'Neill's early period express the playwright's philosophic mind, which constructed drama from the metaphysics of philosophers he had begun reading in his late teens. Three seminal thinkers stand out as having the greatest influence on the dramatist: Arthur Schopenhauer, Max Stirner, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Their philosophies enabled O'Neill to construct a worldview in which tragedy could be staged for modern audiences. This dissertation presents analyses of one-act and full length plays from 1913 to 1921 revealing the influence of these philosophers and establishes that O'Neill was a fundamentally a philosophic playwright even from his earliest dramatic sketches. Specific concepts from Schopenhauer, Stirner, and Nietzsche went into O'Neill's shaping of character arcs and dramatic circumstances. Among them are Schopenhauer's concept of will, Stirner's notion of possession and Nietzsche's principle of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality. Schopenhauer's will was foundational to O'Neill's construction of tragic irony, which is apparent in his first one-act plays written in 1913 and 1914. Stirner's ideas play a distinct role as O'Neill begins writing full length plays and constructs tragic characters that are brought down by their own actions such as John Brown in the unproduced *Bread and*

Butter (completed in 1914) and the Robert Mayo in *Beyond the Horizon* (completed in 1918). Nietzsche's influence is apparent in early successes like the *Glencairn* plays and becomes more pronounced as O'Neill moves into full-length drama. O'Neill did not isolate these philosophers' theories. Their ideas, as well as ideas from other traditions, operate in concert in the plays demonstrating the playwright's unique capacity for philosophical synthesis. In *"Anna Christie*" (completed in 1920), for example, O'Neill combines Nietzsche's idea of Christian decadence, outlined in *The Antichrist*, with his own Catholic sensibilities, his reading of Eastern philosophy and Stirner's concepts of ego and possession. In *The Hairy Ape* (completed in 1921) O'Neill invokes various Nietzschean theories and complements them with concepts from Stirner and Schopenhauer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Eugene O'Neill's philosophic education is difficult to chronicle given that he was largely self-taught and would often revisit texts to further peruse the ideas that inspired his dramas. Such is the case with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Stirner, all three of whom O'Neill discovered outside his formal educational settings and reexamined over the course of his career. His appreciation of their insights, therefore, should be considered cyclical rather than sequential as he returned to their works again and again as part of his creative process. There is a custom in O'Neill scholarship of dividing Eugene O'Neill's works into three periods: early (1913-1920), middle (1920-1931) and late (1932-1943). This study argues that the playwright's use of philosophy began in the early period and provides analyses of selected works from that era including one from what is considered the middle period (*The Hairy Ape*, completed in 1921) as an example of full maturation of his talent for dramatizing of philosophy. The early period plays represent the playwright's first efforts at synthesizing the ideas of the philosophers he admired and establish the themes he would return to in the work of his middle and late periods.

An avid reader as a child, O'Neill had cultivated an interest in philosophy by his late teens. In the summer of 1906, O'Neill could be found in New London reading the works of Schopenhauer or the literature of Emil Zola and Oscar Wilde from a collection of first editions that friend and local doctor Joseph "Doc" Ganey had amassed during his world travels.[1] In the spring of 1907, O'Neill began frequenting Benjamin Tucker's Unique Bookshop on Sixth Avenue in Manhattan. There, he discovered the work of Max Stirner and obtained his first copy of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which he reread every year or so, never losing his fascination with its content.[2] Tucker was a philosophical anarchist and publisher of radical treatises who had gathered a following of intellectuals and patrons with an interest

in radical politics. One of them was O'Neill, who befriended Tucker[3] and looked to his establishment to find what was lacking in his classes at Princeton, where, according to Doris Alexander, he was becoming increasingly bored with what he called "professorial dry rot."[4]

When O'Neill entered Princeton, philosophers like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Stirner held an unconventional, if not iconoclastic, appeal as atheistic thinkers. They were the scourge of romantic ideals that defined the previous generation. Their philosophies sparked arguments like the one that appears in act 4 of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* between James and Edmond Tyrone. "Where you get your taste in authors," shouts Tyrone. "That damned library of yours! (*He indicates the small bookcase at rear*) Voltaire, Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ibsen! Atheists, fools and madmen!"[5] To the extent that Tyrone's attitude mirrored that of O'Neill's own father towards his son's intellectual interests around 1912, we can assume that James O'Neill's son took to authors who challenged the romanticism, sentimentality and ethical framework he associated with his father's era. As a playwright, he revolted against the melodramatic theatre in form, content, and worldview. As Sophus Winther observes, O'Neill "consistently" attacked the "exaggerated romanticism" that had characterized American theatre a generation earlier.[6] His attacks have a conceptual foundation in the works of modern philosophers whose ideas supplanted the Christian beliefs O'Neill resisted in his father's home and the schools he attended.[7] Schopenhauer refuted cosmological arguments proving the existence of God; Nietzsche undermined the foundations of conventional morality; and Stirner declared that life should be centered on the self and not any sense of duty to God, country or cause.

Biographers have gathered various testimonies of the playwright holding forth on these philosophers and recommending them to others between the years 1906 and 1912.[8] O'Neill's preoccupation with philosophy as a young man is evident in his correspondence.

In a letter to Jessica Rippin written in the spring of 1914, for example, O'Neill mentions time spent in the "lofty ether of Nietzsche-Schopenhauer philosophic discussion"; from a distinctly Nietzschean point of view, he argues against the false binaries of moral posturing: "Sin and its punishment, virtue and its reward; piffle upon piffle until everything in the world is turned upside down and all that is delightful is dubbed 'Bad' and all that is disagreeable and ugly 'Good.' The immortal Gods, deliver me from Good and Evil."[9] A year later he writes to Beatrice Ashe describing his love for her in language that reflects his exposure to Schopenhauer: "It's just a feeling of being at harmony with Life itself, of having found the Thing-In-Itself, of having reached the ultimate goal of all my striving."[10] Considering the context of these letters, one might dismiss O'Neill's references as sophomoric and no measure of advanced comprehension. However, it cannot be denied that by his late teens, O'Neill was drawn to philosophy, that his interest would be sustained throughout his life and that his philosophic background would manifest itself in his attitude and personal expression even before he decided to be a playwright.

After O'Neill began writing drama, he was fortunate enough to befriend the amateur philosopher and philosophical anarchist Terry Carlin, whom he met in 1915 when both were helping Hippolyte Havel with his anarchist periodical *Revolt.*[11] Carlin was well read and commanded a deep knowledge of western and eastern philosophical literature. He is credited with introducing O'Neill to mysticism and Indian philosophy.[12] One can only speculate on the nature of their intellectual discussions, but in Carlin O'Neill would have found a mentor unlike any in the halls of Princeton or the home of his Irish Catholic family.

We cannot know the precise list of philosophic texts O'Neill had read by 1913, the year he wrote his first play, but by literary analysis, this study makes the case that the ideas of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Stirner were driving forces behind his early dramatic

writing. Even in his very first work for the stage, *A Wife for a Life*—a piece the playwright later disparaged as "not a play" and "not a vaudeville skit, either" but "nothing"[13]—there is clear evidence that the author was guided by the philosophers he had read. While much has been written regarding O'Neill's use of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer in his middle and late career works, the philosophic content of his early plays has not been sufficiently evaluated. Stirner's influence on O'Neill has been examined in biographical studies, primarily by Robert M. Dowling, but these studies have yet to be complemented with Stirnerian analyses of the plays. The following chapters aim to fill these lacunae with close readings of the characters, narrative structures, and various literary devices that generate distinctly philosophic themes.

The title of this dissertation, *Belonging, Possession and the Ironic Life Force*, lists three significant philosophic concepts that were foundational to O'Neill's playmaking. These concepts will appear in the following chapters in reverse sequence to the title. *The ironic life force* is a term O'Neill uses in the stage directions of his early play *The Web* and captures the quality of irony and blind striving will as a force behind life, which O'Neill derived from Schopenhauer's philosophy. The notion of a cosmic will as the origin of sublime experience, while operating without didactic purpose and confounding moral postulation, was foundational to O'Neill's conception of fate in modern drama. *Possession* is a term Max Stirner uses in *The Ego and Its Own* to describe how ideologies and external forces can take control of an individual and rob him or her of autonomy or what Stirner labels "*ownness*." Stirner's philosophy appears early and throughout O'Neill's work both conceptually and in the language of his characters. Chapter 3 will examine possession in three of O'Neill's early full-length plays in which the protagonists' tragic fall is defined by a loss of *ownness*. The concept of *belonging* takes shape as O'Neill finds his footing as a

playwright and is the central theme of *The Hairy Ape*—the subject of chapter 5. To belong is to harmonize with one's environment, to discover one's place in the world by balancing individual identity with the realization of being a part of a larger overwhelming force—to find one's place, as O'Neill once put it, as an "infinitesimal incident" of cosmic will.[14]

O'Neill's concept of belonging draws from Nietzsche's arguments related to Greek tragedy outlined in *The Birth of Tragedy,* particularly the idea of "failed individuation" and the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict. The antithesis Nietzsche observed in ancient Greek culture between the individual drive to fashion one's self-image (Apollonian) and the self-forgetfulness of feeling at one with nature (Dionysian) was a continuous source of inspiration for O'Neill's tragedies. By the time he writes *The Hairy Ape,* O'Neill is articulating this antithesis in the modern human being's desire to belong, to harmonize these two forces in a way that affirms both the individual and the infinite.

Edmund describes this sensation to his father in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. "I belonged," he declares, describing an experience at sea, "within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself!" (3:812). Anna has a similar experience when she encounters the sea in act 2 of *"Anna Christie."* Robert Mayo references it in act 3 of *Beyond the Horizon,* when he tells his brother, Andy, what a mistake he made by leaving the farm: "You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership." And in *The Hairy Ape,* stoker Yank Smith validates his existence in an industrial society proclaiming that he "belongs," yet soon discovers the emptiness of this assertion and the reality of his alienation.

To appreciate O'Neill, one must also acknowledge his talent for synthesizing the philosophic variables of the three aforementioned philosophers. There is a myriad of additional literary and metaphysical influences, Catholicism and Vedantism, for example,

which are also touched on here, but to be all-inclusive is beyond the scope of this study. Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Stirner were selected as focal points for how central their paradigms are to O'Neil's work. Close readings reveal that the playwright was able to graft these paradigms and others in a complementary way enabling the reader to access the plays from different philosophical angles. "*Anna Christie"* is such an example, and chapter 4 of this study examines its diverse philosophic context as Nietzschean, Stirnerian, Christian, and Vedantic. Our main contention is that O'Neill was fundamentally a philosophic playwright. Even in works considered examples of realism, like the *Glencairn* plays—the subject of Chapter 2—the author's hand is directed by philosophy.

The early plays demonstrate a sensitivity to realistic detail and an imagination for what is beyond sensory perception. O'Neill's eagerness to rend the veil of romanticism and expose coarse circumstances and amoral impulses always brought audiences closer to an understanding that life itself is a veil, and behind it lie the mysterious dynamics of fate with which human beings eternally struggle. In a 1919 letter to Barrett H. Clark, O'Neill referred to this aspect of his writing as "my feeling for the impelling, inscrutable forces behind life which it is my ambition to at least faintly shadow at their work in my plays."[15] It is the goal of this study to appreciate O'Neill's feeling for these forces and his attempts to render them between 1913 and 1921.

A Note on Translations

For this study, I have consulted both contemporary and first English translations of works by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Stirner. I have also used Max Müller's 1883 translation of *The Upanishads*. As the objective here is to appreciate the influence of philosophic texts on Eugene O'Neill's plays, it is appropriate to read those texts as they would have appeared to the playwright. Therefore, whenever possible, I quote from the English translations that would have been available to O'Neill in the early 1900s. However, for the purposes of comprehension, my explanations of the philosophers' tenets are based on recent translations and secondary texts by contemporary scholars. In the case of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* the only existing English translation in O'Neill's lifetime was R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp's 1883 publication which translated the title as *The World as Will and Idea.* As the book in the English-speaking world is known as *The World as Will and Representation* and is titled as such in E.F.J. Payne's 1958 translation, to avoid confusion I refer to the book by that title, though passages from the Haldane and Kemp translation do appear in this text. Regarding Nietzsche's work, nearly all the quotations are from the first authorized English translations published in the *Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* edited by Oscar Levy. One notable exception is *The Antichrist,* which is cited frequently in chapter 4 in relation to O'Neill's play *"Anna Christie."* Nietzsche's book was first translated in 1896 by Thomas Common, but I quote from H.L. Mencken's 1920 translation, which, I argue, O'Neill read while working on his play. Passages from *The Birth of Tragedy* are from William A. Haussmann's 1909 translation with additional references to Ronald Speirs's 1999 translation published in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series. When quoting from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I refer to 1896 translation by Alexander Tille—the only one available to O'Neill in 1907—

and to Thomas Common's 1909 translation—the first authorized one. (Years later, O'Neill would read the work in its original German with the help of a dictionary.[16]) Tille and Common both originally translated the title as *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and the text appears in the notes and bibliography under that title; however, the book is referred to in the body of this study as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and, in fact, modern reprints of Common's translation have changed "*Spake"* to "*Spoke."* Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* was translated into English by the Individualist Anarchist Steve Byington in 1907. This translation remains popular today and is part of the Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought series edited by David Leopold. All quotes from that source are from this edition.

Notes

---

[1] Arthur Gelb and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill: Life With Monte Cristo* (New York: Applause, 2000), 199.

[2] In a letter to critic, poet, and essayist, Benjamin De Casseres, O'Neill says of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that it "has influenced me more than any other book I've ever read." Yet, he adds, "I reread it and am never disappointed, . . . (That is, never as a work of art, aspects of its teaching I no longer concede.)" The remark illustrates O'Neill's attachment to Nietzsche as well as a continuing reassessment and refinement of his appreciation. See Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 245–46.

[3] Robert M. Dowling, *Eugene O'Neill: A Life In Four Acts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 50.

[4] Doris Alexander, *Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade, 1924-1933* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 15.

[5] Eugene O'Neill, *Complete Plays*, ed. Travis Bogard, 3 vols., (New York: Library of America, 1988), 3:799. Subsequent references to O'Neill's plays in this study are to this edition. Volume and page numbers are given in parentheses.

[6] Sophus Keith Winther, *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), 8.

[7] Stephen A. Black, *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 89.

[8] The Gelbs, for example, give accounts of O'Neill's voracious reading and his habit of referring others to his favorite books around 1906. See Gelb and Gelb, *O'Neill: Life With Monte Cristo*, 199 and 243. Louis Sheaffer chronicles similar activity in 1907 and later in 1914-15 when O'Neill was attending George Baker's playwriting course at Harvard. See

Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright*, 1st Cooper Square Press ed (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 135 and 298.

[9] O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 22–23.

[10] Gelb and Gelb, *O'Neill: Life With Monte Cristo*, 61.

[11] Doris Alexander, *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays: Separating Art From Autobiography* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 39.

[12] Chrandreshwar Prasad Sinha, *Eugene O'Neill's Tragic Vision* (New Delhi: New Statesman Publishing Co., 1983), 27.

[13] When O'Neill sent the script of *The Web* to Mark Van Doren in 1944, he attached a longhand note explaining that technically it was not his first play: "To be scrupulously exact, for the record, 'The Web' is *not* the first thing I wrote *for the stage*. I had some time before dashed off in one night a ten-minute vaudeville skit, afterward destroyed. But this was not a play. In fact, my friends in vaudeville crudely asserted it was not a vaudeville skit, either! It was nothing. And 'The Web' is the first play I ever wrote." Quoted in Virginia Floyd, *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment*, Literature and Life Series (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co, 1985), 21. *A Wife for a Life* was copyrighted on August 15, 1913. *The Web* was written in the fall of 1913 and published in August of 1914. See Floyd, 21 and 26.

[14] O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 195.

[15] Ibid., 87.

[16] Barrett H Clark, *Eugene O'Neill, The Man And His Plays.* (New York: Dover Publications, 1947), 25.

I. Suffering and Solace: Nietzsche and Schopenhauer in the Early Plays

Before devoting his life to playwriting in 1913, Eugene O'Neill grounded himself in important literary and philosophical traditions, which made even his earliest efforts in the genre foundational to the style of tragedy he would later perfect. Close analyses of the early plays reveal the playwright's adoption of philosophic concepts particularly from the works of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Max Stirner. By the age of 20, O'Neill had read all three philosophers. From his own statements, Nietzsche made the strongest impression. He was 18 when he obtained a copy of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* from Tucker's Unique Bookshop.[1] Cyrus day believes that O'Neill had read both *Zarathustra* and *The Birth of Tragedy* before the First World War after dropping out of college and returning to New London.[2] In 1926 Barrett Clark reported that O'Neill carried a well-worn copy of *The Birth of Tragedy* to the rehearsals of *The Great God Brown*. And in a 1928 interview, he identified Nietzsche as his literary idol.[3] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is frequently cited by critics as O'Neill's bible because the playwright himself mentions it so frequently and once labeled the book the most influential he had ever read. However, as Eric Levin has observed, critics draw more frequently from *The Birth of Tragedy* when analyzing his plays because *Birth of Tragedy* takes an iconoclastic approach to the genre that most concerned O'Neill.[4] Nietzsche's discussion of tragedy attacks Socratic reasoning and challenges the primacy of Aristotelian conventions and, as this analysis will show, it guided O'Neill's attempts at making his mark in the genre.

Robert M. Dowling documents O'Neill's first contact with Stirner as resulting from his friendship with Louis Holladay in 1907,[5] and Doris Alexander gives an account of O'Neill sharing his enthusiasm for Schopenhauer with his drinking pal James Byth around

the same year.[6] That O'Neill was still extremely eager to converse on these figures in 1914 when he befriended classmates in Baker's playwriting class at Harvard suggests that his appreciation was neither transient nor superficial.[7] In fact, when O'Neill learned that one of those classmates, William Laurence, had read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the original German, he felt compelled to follow suit.[8] Hence, even as he trained to become a playwright, O'Neill remained attached to philosophy and this attachment may have factored into his gravitation toward tragedy. O'Neill had also witnessed and experienced tragedy throughout his life. One of the most harrowing and ironic incidents was perhaps the discovery at age 15 that his mother's drug addiction was a consequence of his own birth. His original impetus to write plays came as he convalesced from tuberculosis at Gaylord Farm Sanitorium where he was admitted on Christmas Eve of 1912—a little less than a year after his attempted suicide at the rooming house and saloon known as Jimmy The Priest's. At Gaylord, O'Neill immersed himself in the literature that would be influential to his work: Greek and Elizabethan drama, Shaw, Strindberg, Dostoevsky, Synge, and Yeats.[9] His literary influences perhaps confirmed what he had learned from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: reason could not sufficiently explain existence which is, in essence, harsh and unreasonable.

Schopenhauer was a popular source of inspiration for novelists and painters of the 19th century, and it is not surprising that literary aspirants of the 1900s like O'Neill would align themselves with his principles. Schopenhauer's distinct appeal was probably his opposition to Romanticism. His philosophy rejects the Romantic's idealization of nature as well as the glorification of self-expression. It also denies Christian cosmology and does not substitute it with science. Life, according to Schopenhauer, has no direction or purpose and consists only of violent collisions between conflicting phenomena. He sees the world as

animal-like, in which one manifestation of what he calls "will" survives by devouring another.[10] O'Neill's work stands as a monument to this philosophy. Sophus Winther, an early scholar of O'Neill, characterizes his dramas as "a direct protest against the romantic ideal with its exaggerated hopes and false values and its tendency to deny that man is first and fundamentally the product of his animal heritage." O'Neill took his first inspirations from human beings destroyed by unintelligible powers, but in their destruction, one could discover the embodiment of tragic struggle and the arousal of tragic pity.[11]

Schopenhauer also opposed the tradition of German Idealism established by his philosophic predecessors: Fichte, Schiller, and Hegel. He predicates his philosophy on the subject/object distinction. His early writings are a response to Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason, which states that there is no phenomenon without sufficient reason why it should be so. According to Schopenhauer, this principle presupposes the presence of a subject able to analyze an object according to the laws of reason. In *The World As Will and Representation (Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung)* Schopenhauer pursues the logic of the subject/object distinction to prove that the world (or the universe) is made up of will (the world as it truly is) and representation (the world as it appears). The "will" of the world is Schopenhauer's characterization of the thing-in-itself whose essence is a blind and aimless striving. This will is constantly objectifying itself, and the objective world exists as gradations of the will's manifestation. All phenomenon, all the forces we perceive—gravity, the tides, the generation of life, magnetism, electricity, etc.—are manifestations of an undifferentiated single drive or representations of will.[12] Another way of perceiving this distinction is to say that in so far as the world is noumenon, it is what Schopenhauer calls "will" and in so far as it is phenomenon, it is what he calls "representation."[13]

In Schopenhauer's philosophic scheme, there is no comprehensible God or meaningful purpose to the universe but only perpetual frustration:

> The world, in all the multiplicity of its parts and forms, is the manifestation, the objectivity, of the one will to live. Existence itself, and the kind of existence, both as a collective whole and in every part, proceeds from the will alone. The will is free, the will is almighty. The will appears in everything, just as it determines itself in itself and outside time. The world is only the mirror of this willing; and all finitude, all suffering, all miseries, which it contains, belong to the expression of that which the will wills, are as they are because the will so wills.[14]

Schopenhauer draws an analogy to the human body to illustrate his perspective. One can simultaneously perceive the body objectively and subjectively. That is, the body can be seen both as an object when one focuses on its parts and a subject in how it animates one's will. And through introspection one might discover the concept of will, yet not in reason or self-consciousness but rather in confronting non-rational impulses at the core of one's instinctual drives. Human beings themselves are a fragmentation of the will, and as such, they exist in constant struggle. We strive against each other, clinging to the *principium individuationis,* and perceiving phenomena as distinct objects in the path of our endless striving. Transcending the violence of worldly existence can only be achieved by steering the mind away from practical considerations towards a less-individuated consciousness. Schopenhauer claims that this can be achieved through aesthetic perception—the contemplation of objects in such a way that raises them to the level of the Platonic Idea, while raising the perceiver into a will-less and timeless "subject of knowledge" who becomes one with the object.[15]

Scholars debate whether or not it is accurate to label Schopenhauer a pessimist, but the philosopher is very direct in his opposition to optimism. "If in conclusion to confirm my view, I wished to record the sayings of great minds of all the ages in this sense, which is opposed to optimism, there would be no end to citations: for almost every one of them has expressed in strong terms his knowledge of the world's misery." The ancient Greeks, he claims, were "deeply affected by the wretchedness of existence," and the "invention of tragedy, which belongs to them, is already evidence of this."[16] The aimless and violent world, which by its nature inflicts cruelty on animals and humans, amounts to the perception of life as a horror that is better not to experience.[17] Schopenhauer's wisdom is not unlike that of the Silenus, the tutor and companion of Dionysus who famously revealed: "not to born is best." O'Neill's characters, as we shall see, frequently come to the same understanding.

A clear echo of Schopenhauer's philosophy resonates in one of O'Neill's most terse statements on tragedy—one we will return throughout his study. In a letter to friend and theatre scholar Arthur Hobson Quinn in 1925, O'Neill, explains what he calls "the transfiguring nobility of tragedy":

> I am always acutely conscious of the Force behind—(Fate, God, our biological past creating our present, whatever one calls it—Mystery, certainly)—and of the one eternal tragedy of Man in his glorious, self-destructive struggle to make the Force express him instead of being, as an animal is, an infinitesimal incident of its expression.[18]

O'Neill's term "Force" parallels the notion of "will." Schopenhauer, in fact, once considered using the word "force" to signify what he eventually labeled "will"—a choice, some scholars wish he had made.[19] O'Neill adopts this idea of a mysterious drive behind the world

and sets it against the hubris of human beings who aggrandize their individual significance and refuse to see themselves as only tiny incidents of the will's self-expression. For O'Neill this is tragic, however, he does not regard tragedy simply as horrific. Tragedy, as he writes to Quinn, is ennobling, and it is here where O'Neill aligns with Nietzsche on tragedy and pessimism.

Nietzsche began as a disciple of Schopenhauer and uses much of his predecessor's terminology to establish his concepts in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Analyzing the origins of Greek drama, he identifies the two artistic drives responsible for the medium as the Apollonian (relating to the god Apollo) and the Dionysian (relating to Dionysus), which loosely correspond to Schopenhauer's concepts of representation and will respectively. These drives also represent dual aspects of human nature with the Apollonian signifying image making, delineation, symmetry, the beauty of semblance and all that stands behind the *principium individuationis* or our sense of individuation. The Dionysian represents boundless and unconstrained energy, the spirit of music and nature, and the loss of self-possession that occurs under intoxication. According to Nietzsche, Dionysian rituals involved the use of collective music and dance to heighten emotions and induce a state of complete self-forgetting that would erase individuality. Boundaries between one human being and another, and between humans and nature itself, were broken so that participants felt as one with each other and with what he labels "Primordial Unity." The intense vanishing of subjectivity was at once ecstatic and terrifying as it revealed each individual's reality to be representation generated and destroyed by the will. Whereas Apollo "brought calm to humans by drawing boundaries between them, and by reminding them constantly with his demands for self-knowledge and measure … the Dionysian would destroy periodically all the small circles in which the one-sidedly Apollonian attempted to confine

… life."[20] The Apollonian-Dionysian conflict is animated in Greek tragedy in the form of the tragic hero who pursues individuation to self-destructive ends.

Nietzsche broke from Schopenhauer on the issue of pessimism and tragedy. Schopenhauer argues that tragedy engenders detachment: "What gives to all tragedy, in whatever form it may appear, the peculiar tendency towards the sublime is the awakening of the knowledge that the world, life, can afford us no true pleasure, and consequently is not worthy of our attachment. In this consists the tragic spirit: it, therefore, leads to resignation."[21] Nietzsche, however, rejects this attitude of resignation and celebrates the gloriousness of Dionysian suffering. For him, Apollonian and Dionysian energies must coexist, and tragedy is the art that expresses this dualism at the core of reality. O'Neill stands with Nietzsche on this point and sees the suffering of his characters as uplifting. In a 1923 letter to Mary Clarke, a nurse at the Gaylord Farm Sanitarium, the playwright draws a clear distinction between pessimism and tragedy:

> I'm far from being a pessimist. I see life as a gorgeously-ironical, beautifully-indifferent, splendidly-suffering bit of chaos the tragedy of which gives Man a tremendous significance, while without his losing fight with fate he would be a tepid silly animal.[22]

Both Nietzsche and O'Neill demand a rethinking of pessimism as it relates to the genre. In later reflections on *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche explains that he changed the subtitle to "*or Hellenism and Pessimism*" partly to allude to how the Greeks "got the better of pessimism through tragedy." To them the genre was life-affirming: "Tragedy simply proves that the Greeks were no pessimists: Schopenhauer was mistaken here as he was mistaken in all other things."[23] Nietzsche's statement is typically brazen. The philosopher derived much insight from his predecessor and to deem him summarily "mistaken" is rather hyperbolic.

The exaggeration is, perhaps, a simple means of highlighting the distinction between the two thinkers. Seeing tragedy as enhancing one's appreciation of existence, Nietzsche believed he was moving beyond Schopenhauer and strict notions of "pessimism."[24] O'Neill's alignment with this viewpoint is strikingly clear in the defenses of his own so-called "pessimism." Another example is the letter addressed to journalist Malcolm Mollan in December of 1921. In it, O'Neill defends his penchant for tragic characters declaring that there is more happiness "in one real tragedy than in all the happy ending plays ever written":

> It is a present-day judgment to think of tragedy as unhappy. The Greeks and the Elizabethans knew better. They felt the tremendous lift to it. It roused them spiritually to a deeper understanding of life. Through it, they found release from the petty considerations of everyday existence. They saw their lives ennobled by it.[25]

For O'Neill and Nietzsche, it is the uplifting quality of tragedy that liberates it from pessimism. Tragedy, as an art, removes viewers/readers from their immediate circumstances, the mundanity of their "petty concerns" that can weigh on them and negate their hopes. In this way, tragedy can "get the better of pessimism." O'Neill's modern take on the genre, therefore, is one that takes a Schopenhauerian worldview and mingles it with Nietzschean solace. Sophus Winther accurately labeled O'Neill "a pessimist that loves life," and one whose pessimism is rooted in humankind's "being and becoming." There is pathos in his writing, but an optimism is his perspective.[26]

O'Neill's early plays, those written between 1913 and 1914, are inspired by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and can even be called exercises in dramatizing modern philosophy. He begins with willful individuals, each striving in his or her own right, colliding violently and leaving no moral axioms in the wake of their collisions. Their tragedies are often episodes of self-destruction brought on by failed individuation. O'Neill

occasionally grounds the willfulness of his characters in their fixations, which possess them to a point of obstinacy, blindness, and self-destruction—a technique that serves tragedy and is also inspired by the philosophy of Max Stirner, which we will investigate in Chapter 3. Travis Bogard has observed that the continual presence of violence in the early plays "manages to convey that there is operative in the lives of all the characters something like a power of fate, leading them to the explosions with which their mortal existence ends."[27] O'Neill made conjuring the "power of fate" one of his primary tasks when he set out as a dramatist and to that end, he would draw heavily from his philosophic idols.

The Web is an early example of O'Neill's violent character collision and his ability to dramatically invoke the active presence of fate to which Bogard refers. The play's stark realism has inspired comparisons to Edward Sheldon and Gerhart Hauptmann, but the action suggests that O'Neill's vision was more philosophical than sociological.[28] The protagonist, Rose, is a sickly prostitute with a newborn and perhaps the earliest iteration of a distinct O'Neill type we encounter in his early work: the consumptive at odds with fate. *The Web* begins as Rose begs her pimp, Steve, for money to see a doctor about her condition. Steve not only refuses the money but demands that Rose remove her newborn from the "squalid bedroom" they share on the top floor of a lower East Side boarding house. Despite her pimp's insistence and the adversity of her circumstances, Rose will not be separated from her child. From the consumptive prostitute's stubbornness, O'Neill crafts one of his earliest efforts at modern tragedy, drawing just as much from the sordid reality he knew first hand as the philosophers he had been reading for the past several years.

Rose's conviction defines her *principium individuationis*. It feeds her desire to individuate that puts her at odds with the fate that mocks her efforts at the climax of the play. That O'Neill is concerned with the individual and her relationship with fate is

announced in Rose's opening lines. Throwing away a cigarette and "*laughing bitterly*," she remarks "Gawd! What a night! . . . What a chance I got." Rose then falls into a fit of coughing which becomes an important motif in the play. The prostitute's cough returns in moments of collision with contentious forces embodied in the pimp and later the police. In the sound of the consumptive woman clearing her throat, the playwright imagines Nietzsche's definition of man as "an incarnation of dissonance." As such, human beings require illusion in order to live:

> If we could conceive an incarnation of dissonance—and what is man but that?—then, to be able to live this dissonance would require a glorious illusion which would spread a veil of beauty over its peculiar nature. This is the true function of Apollo as deity of art: in whose name we comprise all the countless manifestations of the fair realm of illusion, which each moment render life in general worth living and make one impatient for the experience of the next moment.[29]

For Rose, this veil is the hope that she can remain attached to her child. It is this hope that "renders [her] life . . . worth living" and drives the main action of the plot with an impatience for the next moment, and ultimately leads to the destruction of the protagonist. O'Neill sets up the ironic trajectory by having Rose declare that the child is all she has to live for. "If yuh take her away, I'll die," she tells Steve; "I'll kill myself."[30] Rose, like so many of O'Neill's characters, is a victim of her own hopeless hope, and her tragedy is compelling because this hope appears selfless and within the bounds of human dignity. Keeping her child is her right, but as she explains to the "yeggman" character, Tim, who temporarily rescues her from her pimp, larger and more powerful forces deny the rights and the dignities of the individual. To the notion of reform, Rose declares "Take it from me it can't be done. They won't let yuh do it, and that's Gawd's truth" (1:22). Rose has tried

going straight, but hard circumstances and unforeseen events have pushed her back into prostitution. In her helplessness she rails at vague personifications of the forces holding her back: “They—all the good people—they got me right where I am and they’re going to keep me there.” Rose lives in a universe that thwarts her individuation. Her attempts to govern her fate are denied again and again, and she has always had to yield. Regarding her child, however, she is intransigent and willing to confront whoever denies her the right to a mother’s love. With Tim’s entrance, her hope swells to a level of idealism as their brief exchange conjures romantic possibilities. But in the end, the ironic forces are too powerful. At the play’s climax, just when her world seems to open with possibility—she will keep her child, has a roll of cash and a new friend to protect her—a sudden twist shatters it completely—tearing her veil to shreds. Steve shoots Tim from the window and tosses the gun at Rose, making her appear as the culprit when the police enter a moment later. The final twist is so painful to Rose that it breaks down her self-possession. O’Neill’s stage directions suggest an attempt to render the final irony as a moment of Dionysian suffering—the sense of being-outside-of-oneself, which Nietzsche relates as a feeling of terror and dread at the loss of self-determination. Rose suddenly cannot contain herself; she tries “*to hold herself in control*” when she grasps the appearance of her guilt but “*losing all control,* [she] *frenziedly breaks from the Policeman’s grasp and throws herself beside* [Tim’s] *body*.” Rose’s loss of self-possession is followed by a release of her agency as she looks upon the “*unbelieving sneers*” of bystanders and policemen realizing “*the futility of all protest*” (1:27). The stage picture at this moment is reminiscent of Attic tragedy as neighbors and police surround the protagonist like a Greek chorus and look on as she is escorted off stage. Having completed the Dionysian rite of failed individuation, Rose is reabsorbed by the chorus, and at this moment she receives a second sight, not the insight of anagnorisis but a

real sense of vision that is a consequence of her transformation. O'Neill describes Rose in the final moments as being in a "*trance*." "*Her eyes are like those of a blind woman*," he writes, and she is now able to perceive "*something in the room which none of the others can see—perhaps the personification of the ironic life force that has crushed her*" (1:28). In the final moment, Rose has transformed from a striving individual contending with nature to what Nietzsche labeled as the suffering being or *sufferer*.[31] The phrase "life force" here further denotes O'Neill's philosophic disposition, which sees the climax of Rose's story as her confrontation with a cosmic power operating behind the phenomenal world.[32]

Rose's insight is born from an arc of suffering that characterizes the tragic hero both in Nietzsche and O'Neill. After a sequence of increasingly agonizing moments that culminates in the separation from her child, the universe suddenly reveals itself to the prostitute. If taken merely as social commentary, the play neither pinpoints the causes of the dehumanized urban landscape nor offers any solutions. It seems ineffectual as a piece of realism beyond the pity it may evoke for Rose's plight. But social commentary seems unlike O'Neill, especially when we consider his enthusiasm for Nietzsche. *The Web* is better characterized as an early effort to evoke the Nietzschean concept of "metaphysical comfort," which the philosopher identifies as an essential component to Attic Tragedy. Metaphysical comfort is Nietzsche's term for the pleasure an audience finds at the climax of a tragedy when it reveals an eternal life at the core of existence, a force beyond human agency that persists despite the constant destruction of the phenomenal world.[33] Metaphysical comfort offers the possibility of intuiting the relationship between the thing itself and the world of appearances. It is the closest we can come to perceiving Schopenhauer's notion of the will behind representation. Rose's insight is appropriately born from an agony inflicted by appearances and the power of deception. Deception shows her to be a murderer in the eyes

of the neighbors and the police, and in perfect irony, this illusion is generated by Rose's own illusion—the hopeless hope with which she veils an unbearable existence. In the final moments, O'Neill compels us to contemplate tragic fate itself, the ironic force, what Rose calls "Gawd," that has been behind the phenomenal world the whole time. He attempts to create for his audience the experience of what Nietzsche calls "the tragic effect"—our "wish to view tragedy and at the same time to have a longing beyond the viewing."[34] In a tragedy we are taken in by the circumstances and actions of the characters, we become attached to their reality, but by the finale, we are imagining an unseen power, the character of fate itself that has orchestrated all the action by breaking down illusions.

"Tragic myth," Nietzsche argues, "is to be understood only as a symbolisation of Dionysian wisdom by means of the expedients of Apollonian art: the mythus conducts the world of phenomenon to its boundaries, where it denies itself, and seeks to flee back into the bosom of the true and only reality;"[35] This "Dionysian wisdom," is "unconscious," "instinctive," the source of our "metaphysical delight in the tragic" and can be understood in its relation to music:

> it is only through the spirit of music that we understand the joy in the annihilation of the individual. For in the particular examples of such annihilation only is the eternal phenomenon of Dionysian art made clear to us, which gives expression to the will in its omnipotence, as it were, behind the *principium individuationis*, the eternal life beyond all phenomena, and in spite of all annihilation. The metaphysical delight in the tragic is a translation of the instinctively unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of the scene: the hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is disavowed for our pleasure, because he is only phenomenon, and because the

> eternal life of the will is not affected by his annihilation. "We believe in eternal life," tragedy exclaims, while music is the proximate idea of this life.[36]

From the outset of his career, O'Neill focused on writing the kind of drama that would provide the delight Nietzsche describes in the above passage. In the works that followed *The Web*, he continued to dramatize the destruction of the individual as an expression of Dionysian wisdom.

Even in his earliest play, *A Wife for a Life* (1913), which was intended as a vaudeville sketch, he identifies Apollonian forces. The protagonist, "The Older Man," is driven by the vengeful pursuit of his wife's lover. His will, his *principium individuationis,* is defined by this obsession and, like Rose's attachment to her child, it becomes the fabric of illusion and the premise of his suffering. The plot bears similarities to *The Count of Monte Cristo* and is perhaps a slight parody of the famous narrative that launched his father to stardom. The Dumas novel centers on the romantic struggle of Edmond Dantès as he avenges the scheming tormentors who imprisoned him and stole his fiancée. In *Wife for a Life,* a similar struggle is ironically mocked, and the story concludes with the lone protagonist isolated in a desert landscape reflecting with "*whimsical sadness*" on self-denial (1:11). As in the Dumas novel, fortune turns for the lead character when he discovers great wealth. Upon the discovery of gold after years of panning for it in the Arizona desert, The Older Man and his partner, Jack, look to brighter futures. The Older Man declares "it sure looks as if our ship has come in at last," and the pair seem to be fulfilling Dantès' resolve at the end of *Monte Cristo*: "Wait and hope." But here the fortuitous moment merely sets the stage for agony and the destruction of illusion. The Older Man learns that Jack, who decides to christen their gold mine "Yvette," is none other than the man whom he has vowed to hunt down and kill for having stolen the affections of his wife—also named Yvette. As Jack

shares the details of his connection to Yvette, The Older Man sits in silent agony, scarcely managing to refrain from a violent outburst. As Jack concludes, The Older Man decides not to reveal his identity, and, realizing it is not in him to exact revenge, he sends Jack on his way to Yvette, who can now legally accept him in marriage. In the end, the promise of "wait and hope" is given to the characters who have names, while The (still nameless) Older Man must content himself with an unknown and obscure fate like a minor character cast aside from the important developments of the main narrative.

O'Neill was reluctant to even acknowledge *A Wife for A Life* as part of his oeuvre.[37] However, Bogard argues that the play sets stylistic precedents, particularly the use of "psychological setting" and a tightening of focus on the inner life of a character as the plot unfolds through the use of soliloquy.[38] Although it is not typically labeled tragic and has been regarded as trivial, the piece testifies to O'Neill's early application of philosophic ideas relating to tragedy. The playwright subjects his protagonist to the agonies of destroyed illusion, which alters both his and the audience's perspective. The Older Man discovers he was wrong about his friend, his wife, his attitude towards women and most importantly himself. In the breakdown of these illusions he experiences the failure of his individuation, and while the agony of his self-destruction may not be so intense as to merit the Nietzschean title of suffering being, in his transformation The Older Man offers us a metaphysical perspective on human insignificance. In the last moments of the play, we see that despite his rage, his suffering, and his insight, the nameless man is nothing but a minor character in the melodrama of Jack and Yvette. Their love is a greater force and now becomes the real story, while his revenge plot is a mere obstacle, an ironic incident in the larger scheme of things. In the final moment he attempts to console himself by paraphrasing John 15:13, making it "Greater love hath no man than this that he giveth his wife for his friend" (1:11). The Older

Man mediates the forces that have ironized his life with Christian sentiment. Thus, in his very first play, O'Neill dramatizes the "transfiguring nobility of tragedy" he would describe years later in the letter to Quinn. His protagonist discovers he is much less significant than he once believed, almost "infinitesimal," as he sits alone in the desert by a dying campfire. Yet, the experience has ennobled him by broadening his perception of life and driving home the realization that he is not the center of it.

The jealous husband caught in a marital love triangle is the premise of another of O'Neill's 1913 one-acts, *Recklessness.* In that play, however, vengeance is allowed to take its course. Upon discovering evidence of an affair between his chauffeur and his wife, Arthur Baldwin, a wealthy race car enthusiast, seizes the first opportunity to inflict retribution. As protagonists, Baldwin and The Older Man are opposite types--the latter is hesitant, self-doubting and restrained by conflicting impulses while the former is confident, uninhibited and capable of cruelty—yet despite the differences of character and action, their plays affirm similar tragic themes of illusion and isolation.

Just as he does in *A Wife for a Life*, O'Neill envisions a setting that captures a psychological dimension of the protagonist. The sitting-room reflects the shallow materialism of its owner whom O'Neill describes as "*a moderately wealthy man who has but little taste and is but little worried by its absence*." The void of tasteful objects is filled by pictures "*of a sporting nature, principally of racing automobiles*" and Baldwin's "*tall and strikingly voluptuous*" wife, Mildred, who sits in one of the Morris-chairs (1:55). When Baldwin later enters we learn that "*his racing car and his wife*" are in fact the two things for which he "*exhibits enthusiasm*." Not surprisingly, we learn from Baldwin's wife that he treats both similarly. The play opens with her complaining to her lover, the chauffeur Fred Burgess, that Baldwin looks upon her as "his plaything . . . a toy to be exhibited" and that

his failure to understand the meaning of the word "husband" is compensated for by his having been "a very considerate owner" (1:58). The connection between wife and race car is further established when Baldwin, after learning of his wife's affair, remarks on Fred's driving: "He is absolutely reckless, . . . especially with other people's property" (1:67). Baldwin's double entendre renders his wife and his race car interchangeable, and his marital relationship one of possession. The logic of this link also implies that the chauffeur is the licensed user of both, and in that sense, Fred and Mildred's affair is a consequence of Baldwin's own materialism—what one might call patriarchal materialism.

Baldwin's happiness is bound up in his car and his wife. When the illusion of fidelity is torn from him, his agony provokes the destruction of both. He first lures Fred into a fatal accident by urging him to drive his car with its faulty steering mechanism as rapidly as possible. Later, he deceives Mildred into confessing her love for Fred then torments her with false hopes of a divorce before finally revealing Fred's corpse and driving her to suicide. Baldwin's bloody revenge is, again, reminiscent of Greek tragedy, particularly the moment he asks his servants to bear Fred's corpse before his wife. Moreover, in his vengeance, Baldwin becomes less human and more a god-like agent of fate—deceiving and tormenting the lovers into self-destruction while becoming increasingly stoic if not sadistic. The "*smile of cynical scorn*" (1:59) on his face when he enters becomes a mask concealing his brutality, to which O'Neill makes repeated references: "*twisted smile*," "*sneering smile*," "*cruel smile*," etc. (1:69-72). Unlike The Older Man, Baldwin does not shrink from murder, yet his actions land him in the same self-imposed state of isolation. That the play exhibits violence and cruelty while establishing no moral frame invites a Schopenhauerian reading. The storm of conflict and agony in *Recklessness* captures the blind and aimless striving of the "one will to live," and Baldwin personifies Schopenhauer's will in becoming a force that ironically

destroys the phenomenon it creates. In Nietzschean terms, suffering the truth releases Baldwin's Dionysian side, which then destroys the Apollonian symbols of his individuation: his wife and his car (the only real images of beauty he knows). Baldwin's cynical smile also suggests a lurking Dionysian spirit that becomes Mephistophelean as he engages in deception and cruelty—a character transformation O'Neill would revisit with more complexity in *The Great God Brown*. A larger philosophic implication resonates when we reach the end of the play and realize that Baldwin is capable of cruelty because he is incapable of loving anyone beyond himself—a significant shortcoming in Nietzsche's philosophy. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche urges love beyond oneself as the way to self-overcoming—"One day ye shall love beyond yourselves! If so, first *learn* how to love."[39] In one of the *Untimely Meditations,* "*Schopenhauer as Educator*," he describes genuine love as being pulled out of the soul and losing the self to freedom.[40] In love, one can channel Dionysian forces to positive ends as the emotion dissolves self-possession and feeds "the desire to look for a higher self which is yet hidden, and strive upward to it with all its strength."[41] Here O'Neill shows us the opposite of this love: a man trapped in narcissism who can only possess and destroy since he is unable to separate love from ownership. His materialism is, therefore, a curse that sets his Apollonian and Dionysian sides against each other. The destructive impulses of the latter are triggered by revelations that he does not, in fact, own manifestations of the former.

O'Neill returns to the internal conflict of Apollonian and Dionysian forces in another early play, *Abortion* (1914), in which an Ivy League baseball star deals with the consequences of impregnating a stenographer from the local town. Again, O'Neill uses the set to visualize a psychological dimension of the lead character. All of the action takes place in the dormitory of an "*eastern university*," which solidly represents the privileged milieu of

protagonist Jack Townsend. The room includes a "*large bow-window looking out over campus*," from which the audience can perceive exterior images and hear off-stage events that complement the action (1:203). Jack's victory in the championship game is a cause for celebration, and various campus festivities are getting underway. Beside his family and fiancée, who have come to participate in the events, Jack is very much the college hero and poised to inherit the pleasantries of American upper-class family life.

As O'Neill presents it, the occasion is almost a rite of passage, especially with the mingling of celebratory and ceremonial elements—a parade and canoe carnival along with bonfires and dancing. The parade and college cheers honoring Jack initially represent the Apollonian side of the character whose individuation has come to fruition. Later, however, when Jack reckons with consequences of his loss of "restraint," as his father calls it (1:213), the same cheers ring out with painful irony over his suicide. In the end, the celebration of the play becomes a tragic ceremony in which Dionysian forces reclaim Jack from his promising individuation.

O'Neill highlights his thematic concern with Apollonian-Dionysian forces, using motifs of visual contrast and various attempts by the characters to bring light to darkness. When the play opens, Jack's roommate, known as "Bull," is stumbling around in the dark room with Jack's mother and his sister Lucy. When Bull finds the light switch, he declares: "Let there be light!" to which Lucy responds "Don't stand there posing, Bull. You look much more like a God of darkness than one of light" (1:203-4). The moment establishes the world of the play as one in which characters are trying to dispel darkness with light. Lucy's jocular remark here and further on in the text that Bull resembles the god Pluto suggests that darkness is an inherent quality that light cannot simply eradicate. Pluto is the god of the underworld and the Roman name for Hades, who, according to Heraclitus and Euripides,

was synonymous with Dionysus in ancient Greece.[42] Moreover, the name Bull, given to "*a huge, swarthy six-footer*" (1:204), also signifies the animal closely associated with Dionysus as it was the form the god took when slaughtered and eaten by the Titans.[43] Therefore, by way of stage business and references to the classical world, O'Neill sets the scene for dark and powerful forces to overcome the quest for light.

The very premise of *Abortion*—a wealthy college student attempting to put a sexual relationship with a lower-class girl behind him for the sake of inheriting a bright future—implies an effort at denying darkness. The notion of eradicating a dark force is directly addressed when Jack and his father discuss why men have sexual encounters outside the boundaries of love and marriage. The senior Townsend's answer to this question is simply that "We've retained a large portion of the original mud of our make-up. That's the only answer I can think of" (1:212). The analogy equates sexual transgressions with soil on the image of mankind, which he must strive to wipe away to attain perfection. Thus, Townsend counsels the Apollonian virtue of "restraint." Jack, however, points to the inherent hypocrisy of this view, "Restraint? Ah, yes, everybody preaches but who practices it?" and argues that "ideals of conduct, of Right and Wrong" are ultimately "unnatural and monstrously distorted." Morality leads to a denial of reality and forces one "into evasions" (1:213) like his own. Jack has a Nietzschean inkling into the false dichotomy of good and evil and seems to understand that evil is an illusion just as the notion of driving out darkness is false. His insight presumably comes from the lived experience of having taken a working-class lover, Nellie, whom he later must deny for the sake of preserving his image. When he discovers that his forcing Nellie to have a backroom abortion has resulted in her death, the protagonist must suddenly grapple with the consequences of denying dark forces—consequences that were fatal for his lover and will soon be fatal for him.

Jack learns of Nellie's death from her brother Joe Murray who enters determined to kill Jack because of his seeming indifference to the event. However, after their altercation, he decides to shame him with scandal—a choice more threatening to Jack's Apollonian side as it would destroy his public image. O'Neill describes Jack and Joe as near physical opposites. Jack is "*well built*," "*handsome*," with "*blond hair*" and "*intelligent blue eyes*." Joe is "*slight, stoop-shouldered, and narrow chested*" with "*large, feverish black eyes*" and "*the sunken cheeks of a tuberculosis victim*" (1:205-06). Further antithesis is apparent in the naming of the characters. Being a local in a university town, Joe is known as a "townie," which echoes the first syllable of Jack's last name "Townsend." The wordplay implies that Jack is an "end" of "town." In one sense he brings an end to a townie by causing Nellie's death.[44] In another sense, Jack represents the boundaries the townie may not cross—the line dividing class and privilege in America and the physical boundaries of the university that admits elites, not working-class locals. Part of Joe's rage, in fact, stems from the sense of superiority students display: "Yuh come here to school and yuh think yuh c'n do as yuh please with us town people. Yuh treat us like servants" (1:217). As the guiding idea of inherent opposition moves into a political context, we gain insight into the futility of attempting to eradicate an undesirable force. Acts of transgression, mud on the image of mankind, Dionysian forces etc., will return with greater intensity when they are repressed just as the townie will return with anger to Townsend when he feels denied. Notably, Jack's roommate dismisses Joe when he enters at the beginning of the play, which only adds to his vexation at their eventual confrontation. In the play's final ironic twist, the cheers celebrating Jack's success become the catalyst for this destruction. Hearing the parade approach his window, Jack "*groans and hides his face*." He then evades cheerleaders searching the dormitory for him and finally staggers toward his window and cries "No! No!

For God's sake!" before shooting himself (1:219). The tragic end of *Abortion* seems to also critique American over-enthusiasm for the individual which makes reconciling the Apollonian and Dionysian impossible.

In the fall of 1913, O'Neill wrote his first play set at sea, *Thirst*, which was published in 1914 and produced by the Provincetown Players in 1916.[45] The action transpires on the life raft of a sunken ocean liner among a West Indian sailor of mixed race, a wealthy first-class passenger and a woman who worked on the ship entertaining passengers as a dancer. Two historical moments may have inspired this piece: the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912 and Clayton Hamilton's visit to the O'Neill family home in the summer of 1913 when he advised the aspiring playwright to become the first American dramatist to write about the sea.[46]

Given the young O'Neill's interest in philosophy a third inspiration appears to have come from one of Schopenhauer's metaphors for *principium individuationis*:

> Just as a sailor sits in a boat trusting to his frail barque in a stormy sea, unbounded in every direction, rising and falling with the howling mountainous waves so in the midst of a world of sorrows the individual man sits quietly, supported by and trusting to the *principium individuationis*--or the way in which the individual knows things as phenomena.[47]

This metaphor is Schopenhauer's way of connecting the principle of individuation to a concept he borrows from Indian philosophy known as the "the veil of Maya." The individual, he argues, sees an obscured reality—not the oneness that is the "inner nature of things," but a world of detached, separate and opposed phenomena. "For to him, pleasure appears as one thing and pain quite another thing: one man as a tormentor and a murderer, another as a martyr and a victim; wickedness as one thing and evil as another." Under this

veil, man can make no sense of life. It is full of contradictions and ironies—he "seizes upon pleasures and enjoyments . . . and knows not that by this very act of his will he seizes and hugs all the pains and sorrows at the sight of which he shudders." Like the sailor who drifts on a "frail barque" surrounded by misery, the individual navigates life "trusting the *principium individuationis*, or way in which the individual knows things as phenomenon." Under such limited knowledge the individual is driven by momentary gratification, but "in the inmost depths of his consciousness" lives a "very obscure presentiment," from which arises "ineradicable *awe*," that the *principium individuationis* cannot protect him from the "boundless world, everywhere full of suffering." [48]

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche refers to Schopenhauer's metaphor and quotes the above passage when describing the nature of Apollo: "thus we might say of Apollo what Schopenhauer said of man caught up in the veil of Maya: 'Just as in a stormy sea . . .'" etc.[49] For Nietzsche, Apollo is a sublime expression of faith in individuation and "the quiet sitting of the man wrapt therein." Apollo as the god of "all shaping energies" is also "the glorious divine image of the *principium individuationis."* And from the "ineradicable *awe*" that the *principium individuationis* will collapse, Nietzsche argues "we gain insight into the being of the Dionysian."[50]

That *Thirst* concerns itself with the collapse of *principium individuationis* is suggested in the opening stage directions, in which O'Neill meticulously describes the deteriorated external form of The Gentleman and The Dancer. The former is a "*mere caricature*" of his former self, a "*pitiful figure*" covered in blistered skin and tattered clothes. The detailed image of The Gentleman is exceeded by that of The Dancer, whose ragged appearance from head to toe renders her an even "*more bizarre figure than the man*" and "*a mocking spectre of a dancer*" (1:31-32). The Gentleman and The Dancer are

Apollonian symbols suffering Dionysian destruction, here represented in the forces of nature—the intense sun, the sea, and its sharks. In his description of The Sailor, O'Neill does less to convey the unraveling of self-image and focuses instead on his voice, noting the seeming impediment to his speech and the monotonous song he croons. In this, The Sailor represents man's attempt to mediate the forces of nature, the Dionysian forces, with music. The Sailor sings hoping to protect the crew, while the white characters, The Gentleman and The Dancer, become obsessed with knowing, and their obsessions facilitate the deaths of all three characters.

The plot unfolds as a sequence of events that divide the three-member crew, culminating in violent and absurd moments illustrating the failure of the individuated state and its perception of phenomena as "detached, separate and opposed." Initially, the white characters view The Sailor as "*strange*" and tolerable, but in the course of the play, he becomes an object of suspicion and hate. In a moment that echoes ironically at the end of the play, The Gentleman describes a dream in which he saw The Sailor with a knife in his hand but dismisses it as "madness": "He is only a poor negro sailor—our companion in misfortune. God knows we are all in the same pitiful plight. We should not grow suspicious of one another" (1:35). The irony here is twofold: The Gentleman and The Dancer very quickly become suspicious of The Sailor, which eventually leads to The Sailor attacking The Gentleman with a knife. The same "poor negro sailor" who is at first a "companion in misfortune" is soon the object of scorn and contemptuous racial epithets. Layers of gentility are being peeled away as illusions are dispelled. The first of the epithets occurs just after The Gentleman reveals the truth to The Dancer about sharks eating humans—a revelation that reminds both that death is near in one form or other. The Sailor's song now becomes "the accursed humming of that nigger [which] only makes one feel the silence more keenly"

(1:40). Unlike The Sailor, The Gentleman and The Dancer have no means of mediating their individual existence to the oneness of nature. The Sailor's song reminds them of this, and so they become more detached, and death becomes more threatening. In the absence of their own music, they must know things—how they got to where they are, what happened to the captain, whether the sailor is hiding water etc.—and the deeply rooted mental habit weighs on their sanity. Their obsessions, fixations, and vulgar materialism do not possess the sailor who focuses only on his song.

At a pivotal moment, The Gentleman and The Dancer begin reflecting on the cruel irony of their circumstances. The Dancer laments: "Oh God! Must this be the end of all? . . . must I die out here on a raft like a mad dog" (1:41); and The Gentleman: "Is this the meaning of all my years of labor? Is this the end, oh God?" These tormenting thoughts are the product of the white characters' own detached phenomenology, in which they see their lives as separate from and somehow more significant than the whole of nature. They look to their own personal narratives as if these could protect them from reality, but inevitably they confront Schopenhauerian *awe*. In response, they can only turn away again toward some illusion or other that might give them hope of protecting their individuality. In the next moment, The Dancer sees a mirage of an island in which she can hear water "running over stones" (1:42). The Gentleman tears the illusion from her and replaces it with his belief that The Sailor has water. As both characters become more obsessed with this idea, their divisiveness becomes sharper and more truculent. The Gentleman yells furiously at The Sailor, and The Dancer suggests they kill the man. The Gentleman then urges The Dancer to offer The Sailor her diamond necklace to which The Sailor can only respond, "I have no water" (1:46). The repetition of this response only frustrates the two white passengers who cling to their illusion and push their demand. Eventually, The Dancer shifts alliances,

turning against The Gentleman and attempting to seduce The Sailor. When this fails the characters reach their most isolated and violent states. The Dancer calls The Sailor a "black animal" and a "dirty slave," then tries to strangle him (1:48). After he pushes her away, she goes mad. Suddenly possessed by the illusion of performing before a Duke she begins dancing wildly "*like some ghastly marionette jerked by invisible wires*" (1:50), and at the height of her frenzy, she drops dead—as if she embodied the very collapsing of *principium individuationis* itself. In the final conflict between The Sailor and The Gentleman, O'Neill further illustrates this collapse. The Sailor, less burdened by detached phenomenology, has no moral or psychological inhibitions about cannibalism and immediately moves to take nourishment from The Dancer's corpse. The Gentleman, however, remains attached to a world of opposed phenomena and can only respond to such an action with "loathing" and "anguished horror." His throwing The Dancer overboard to be devoured by sharks and not by men is his last ironic refusal to accept that he is part of nature. After the scuffle that ensues in which both men fall overboard, O'Neill draws our focus to the calming ocean: "*the fins circle no longer . . . the sun glares down like a great angry eye of God. The eerie heat waves float upward in the still air like the souls of the drowned. On the raft, a diamond necklace lies glittering in the blazing sunshine*" (1:51). With this final image, O'Neill returns to Nietzsche's "Dionysian wisdom," the supremacy of the will and its eternal life that is not affected by the hero's annihilation.[51] As it does in Dionysian festivals, according to Nietzsche, nature at the end of *Thirst* reclaims mankind from his individuation, and the glittering necklace is perhaps a symbol of the Apollonian beauty left behind.[52] Hence, O'Neill, in his first play about the sea, is already giving it a metaphysical quality, which he will explore further in the *Glencairn* plays and *"Anna Christie."*

In *Fog*, O'Neill creates another maritime symbol to express the oneness and ironic force behind Schopenhauer's will and Nietzsche's Primordial Unity. The play was written shortly after *Thirst*, in the winter of 1914,[53] and both are historically significant as the first iterations of the two most potent symbols in the playwright's oeuvre—the sea and the fog. Both plays are set on a lifeboat, but in *Fog* O'Neill theatricalizes his philosophy to a less grim conclusion. As with *Thirst*, the play's scenic imagery is philosophically evocative. Though on the page the plays appear to be very challenging for amateur theatre companies, both were successfully produced by the Provincetown Players. The play opens with the set and characters shrouded in a fog so thick "*None of their faces can be distinguished*" (1:97). The dialogue begins between a "First Voice" and a "Second Voice," implying that the audience should not be able to identify the speakers. Their exchanges quickly establish that First Voice and Second Voice hold opposing world-views, and eventually we discover them to be a businessman and a poet respectively. The voices represent distinctly opposed phenomenon but unified by the undifferentiated fog they create a theatricalization of Primordial Unity. The emergence of separation and delineated reality is played out in the gradual revealing of the characters and their conflict.

The Businessman and The Poet collide in their optimistic and pessimistic attitudes as well as their contrasting ideologies of self-determination with respect to social determinism. At issue is whether the child who died the day before on the raft and whose mother still clings to him is better off dead. The Businessman argues for life and self-determination: "Everyone has a chance in this world; but we've all got to work hard," while the pessimistic poet, who contemplated suicide as the ship was sinking only to change his mind when he saw the mother and the child, argues a variation on the wisdom of Silenus—not to be born is best when one is born into poverty. The Poet claims that he is not a "reformer," only

"sicken[ed]" by the frightful injustices of "life in general" (1:100*).* At this point, we understand that O'Neill, too, is not taking up a political debate so much as pitting the Apollonian and Dionysian viewpoints against each other. The Businessman sees the necessity of individuation—the need to affirm life by delineating and protecting oneself from a world of misery and suffering. The Poet, on the other hand, looks beyond the boundaries of self and is overwhelmed by the world's sorrows. The Poet is the "Dionysian man," whom Nietzsche compares to Hamlet: "both have for once seen into the true nature of things—they have *perceived*, but they are loath to act."[54]

The tension between the two reaches a high point when The Poet stops The Businessman from hailing a passing steamer, reasoning that if the ship approached them it would surely hit the iceberg next to their lifeboat. The Businessman refuses to miss the rescue opportunity and is about to throw himself overboard when The Poet restrains him and explains how quickly he would die in the icy water. In thwarting The Businessman's desire to protect his individuality, The Poet shifts his perspective away from the reasoning of *principium individuationis* towards a broader appreciation of life. On the heels of this heroic act, their luck suddenly turns when a rowboat from the steamer heads toward them. At the junction of these two moments, O'Neill brings another striking image to the stage. As the men look on at the approaching rowboat, behind them the fog lifts to expose the surface of the iceberg, which resembles "*the façade of some huge Viking Temple*" (1:109). By revealing the spectacle of the iceberg only to the audience, O'Neill is again attempting to direct our imaginations toward a greater force behind the lives of the characters. The presence of such a force is also suggested moments later when The Officer on the rowboat explains that he sent the rescue team after hearing a child crying while the steamer was slowed down by the fog: "It kept getting plainer and plainer until there was no chance for

mistake—weird too it sounded with everything so quiet and the fog so heavy . . . 'It's a kid sure enough, but how the devil did it get out here'" (1:111). The Poet and The Businessman can make no sense of the story, and we know there must be some supernatural element at work as the child died the day before. Returning to the connection between fog and Primordial Unity established at the beginning of the play, one reading would be that after the child died on the lifeboat his spirit was assumed by the fog and carried to the steamer where his cries were heard by the crew. The fog, therefore, like the sea in *Thirst*, is a natural element O'Neill is endowing with supernatural qualities via the philosophic ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Again, O'Neill is establishing the metaphysical and stylistic dimensions of an element he will use in later plays with greater potency.

A close look at the early plays reveals how integral the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were to O'Neill's creative process. From his first attempts at playwriting, before he ever developed a style we know as O'Neillian, he focused on theatricalizing the concepts of metaphysical comfort, Apollonian-Dionysian duality, *principium individuationis,* the veil of Maya, Primordial Unity, and others. The German philosophers enabled him to ground his plays in metaphysics that directed his audiences' imagination toward the supernatural. Other playwrights and novelists, like Ibsen, Strindberg, and Conrad, had set stylistic examples O'Neill followed, and like them, he established a core philosophical orientation that could express itself in either naturalism or expressionism. In the next chapter, we will examine how in continuing to follow Clayton Hamilton's advice O'Neill developed a unique style of writing that drew from his experience at sea and combined his philosophic perspective with naturalist stylization.

Notes

[1] Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 119.
[2] John Gassner, *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays.* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 75.
[3] Eugene O'Neill and Mark W. Estrin, *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Estrin, Mark W., Literary Conversations Series (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 81.
[4] Eric Levin, "A Touch of the Postmodern: Marco Millions and Nietzschean Perspectivism," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 33, no. 1 (2012): 14–15.
[5] Robert M. Dowling, *Eugene O'Neill: A Life In Four Acts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 48–50.
[6] Doris Alexander, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 128-9.
[7] Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright*, 1st Cooper Square Press ed (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 295.
[8] Egil Törnqvist, *Eugene O'Neill: A Playwright's Theatre* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2004), 39.
[9] Dowling, *Eugene O'Neill*, 97–98.
[10] Bryan Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 154–55.
[11] Sophus Keith Winther, *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), 12.
[12] Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 139.
[13] Ibid., 152.
[14] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea.*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1883), 453.
[15] Ibid.,178-9.
[16] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation, Vol. 2*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 585.
[17] Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 154.
[18] In the letter to Arthur Hobson Quinn dated April 3, 1925, O'Neill articulates his perspective on the "transfiguring nobility of tragedy" and the "eternal tragedy of man.":

> But where I feel myself most neglected is where I set most store by myself—as a bit of poet who has labored with the spoken word to evolve rhythms of beauty where beauty apparently isn't—*Jones, Ape, God's Chillun, Desire* etc.—and to see the transfiguring nobility of tragedy, in as near the Greek sense as one can grasp it, in seemingly the most ignoble debased lives. And here is where I am a most confirmed mystic, too, for I'm always, always trying to interpret Life in terms of lives, never just lives in terms of character. I'm always acutely conscious of the Force behind—(Fate, God, our biological past creating our present, whatever one calls it—Mystery, certainly)—and of the one eternal tragedy of Man in his glorious, self-destructive struggle to make the Force express him instead of being, as an animal is, an infinitesimal incident in its expression.

See Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 195.
[19] Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 144.

[20] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. William A. Haussmann, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 1 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 51.

[21] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea.*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, vol. 3 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1883), 213.

[22] O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 181.

[23] The original title appeared in 1872 as *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. In 1886 the text was re-issued as *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*. In 1888 Nietzsche wrote retrospective notes on his early work, which Haussmann included in an appendix to his 1909 translation. See Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 189–90.

[24] Raymond Geuss elaborates on this point in the introduction to Ronald Speirs translation of *The Birth of Tragedy*. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Raymond Geuss, and Ronald Speirs, *The Birth of Tragedy And Other Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xxvi.

[25] Malcolm Mollan was formerly O'Neill's boss as city desk editor of the *New London Telegraph* where O'Neill worked as a night reporter in 1912. Mollan's published interview with O'Neill appeared as "Making Plays with a Tragic End: An Intimate Interview with Eugene O'Neill Who Tells Why He Does It" in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, January 22, 1922, magazine section, page 3. See O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 159.

[26] Sophus Keith Winther, *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), 216–17.

[27] Travis Bogard, *Contour In Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 17.

[28] Brenda Murphy, for example, characterizes *The Web* as "a study of social and economic forces that promote prostitution," in her study of the influence of realism on O'Neill's early plays. See Brenda Murphy, *American Realism and American Drama, 1880-1940*, Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 113.

[29] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 186.

[30] Eugene O'Neill, *Complete Plays, 1913-1920,* ed. Travis Bogard (New York: Library of America, 1988),19. Subsequent references to the plays are to this edition, and page numbers are given in parentheses.

[31] Haussmann translates the German word "*Leidender*" as "sufferer." Contemporary translators such as Ronald Speirs translate it as "suffering being." Oedipus at Colonus is the archetype of the *sufferer* who, having been stricken with excesses of suffering, assumes an air of sovereign "supermundane cheerfulness, which descends from a divine sphere and intimates to us that in his purely passive attitude the hero achieves the highest form of activity, the influence of which extends far beyond his life, while his earlier conscious musing and striving led him only to passivity." (Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 74).

[32] According to the OED, the phrase "life-force" first appeared in 1848. In 1896 William Caldwell used it to articulate manifestations of Schopenhauer's concept of will in *Schopenhauer's System in Its Philosophical Significance:* "The will is the life-force that pulsates through man's nature." See William Caldwell, *Schopenhauer's System in Its Philosophical Significance* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), 500. George Bernard Shaw uses the phrase "Life Force" repeatedly in *Man and Superman* (1903) to

signify the metaphysical idea of a cosmic élan vital. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" to *Man and Superman*, Shaw lists Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as "among the writers whose particular sense of the world I recognize as more or less akin to my own." See Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy.* (New York: Brentano's, 1922), xxviii. While it is not a direct reference to the philosopher, from the dramatic context we may suspect O'Neill was alluding to conceptualizations of fate similar to Schopenhauer's.

[33] See Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 60–61.

[34] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 112.

[35] Ibid., 168.

[36] Ibid., 127-8.

[37] See note 13 in the Introduction

[38] Bogard, *Contour In Time*, 10–11.

[39] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Alexander Tille, The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. 8 (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 96.

[40] See Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xx.

[41] Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*) was originally translated as *Thoughts Out of Season* by Adrian Collins in 1909. This quote is from that edition. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thoughts Out of Season Part II: The Use and Abuse of History, Schopenhauer as Educator*, trans. Adrian Collins, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 5 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 157.

[42] In *Fragments*, Heraclitus equates the two gods: "For were it not Dionysus to whom they institute a procession and sing songs in honor of the pudenda, it would be the most shameful action. But Dionysus, in whose honor they rave in bacchic frenzy, and Hades are the same" (CXXVII). A note on the text in the 1889 translation cites scholar Gustav Teichmüller's interpretation of the fragment: "the shameful and the becoming are the same. . . . For what is improper for men is proper for Dionysus, because he is the same as Hades, and Hades is the same as shame, which latter he attempts to prove from Plutarch, de Is. 29 b. Again, Dionysus and Hades are the same, because the former stands for the sun and the latter for the lower world, and as the sun is absorbed into the earth at night and generated therefrom in the morning, they must be essentially the same." See Heraclitus (of Ephesus.), *The Fragments of the Work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on Nature*, trans. Ingram Bywater (Baltimore: N. Murray, 1889), 113, 123.

[43] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 64.

[44] Robert M. Dowling, *Critical Companion to Eugene O'Neill: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 24.

[45] Ibid., 456.

[46] Sheaffer, *Son and Playwright,* 271.

[47] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea.*, 1:455.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 25.

[50] Ibid., 26.

[51] Ibid.,127.

[52] The glittering necklace has inspired numerous symbolic interpretations. Robert M. Dowling, for example, argues that the final image is a symbol for the play's irony in that all three characters die "when one or two could have survived by ignoring the moral laws of mankind and adopting the laws of nature" (Dowling, *Critical Companion,* 460).

[53] Egil Törnqvist, *A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-Naturalistic Technique* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 258.

[54] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 61.

II. Rites of Passage: Realism, Religion, and Philosophy in the *Glencairn* Plays

In the *Glencairn* plays, O'Neill renewed the efforts he began in *Thirst* and *Fog* to capture the spirit of the sea as an embodiment of the ironic life force. The plays also represent a major step towards developing a style he could label "distinctively (his) own" as they draw from his familiarity with the lives of merchant sailors.[1] The first play of the series, *Bound East for Cardiff,* was written in 1914 and the other three (*The Long Voyage Home, In the Zone*, and *The Moon of the Caribbees*) were all written in 1917. The plays did not appear as a four-part series until 1924 in a narrative sequence that differed from that of the composition chronology with *Moon* first, *Bound East* second, *Long Voyage* third and *In the Zone* last.[2] Though there is no official sequence and O'Neill felt that each play was complete unto itself and in no way dependent upon others.[3] For the purposes of thematic discussion, this study analyzes the plays starting with *Bound East* and ending with *Long Voyage*.

O'Neill's personal experience as a crewman on a square rigger and various tramp steamers from 1910 to late 1911 provided him with realistic characters and settings that had yet to be been seen in the serious drama of the American stage.[4] The expeditions provided the material that would singularize his artistic voice, as well as a suitable, if not exotic, context for dramatizing the cosmic forces behind the phenomenal world. We have seen that the early one-acts draw significantly upon Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and in the *Glencairn* plays those allusions are balanced with realistically honed characters, circumstances, and themes reminiscent of Joseph Conrad. That O'Neill titled his first version of *Bound East for Cardiff* as *Children of the Sea*—the same title as the American edition of *Nigger of the Narcissus*—suggests an homage to the novelist if not an acknowledgment of stylistic inspiration.[5] O'Neill, in fact, read Conrad's book sometime

before boarding the *Charles Racine* in the spring of 1910 and would discover its religious themes in settings similar those of the novella.[6] The sailors of the SS *Glencairn* are all lost children and the sea their mother who lays claim to them—a concept analogous to nature's reclaiming mankind in Dionysian ritual. Other Nietzschean themes emerge from the Conradian narratives while realism, seemingly the dominant stylistic aspect, grounds the plays' complex ideas.

Bound East for Cardiff concerns a seaman, Yank, who has recently suffered a serious injury and lies groaning and shifting in his bunk. Entering and exiting, crew members comment on his condition while his friend Driscoll stays close by and comforts the dying man with hope and reminiscences of their lives at sea. The play begins with crewmen of the *Glencairn* challenging the veracity of a tale told by one of the shipmates, Cocky. We enter the story *in media res* and know only that Cocky had spurned the affections of a native woman from New Guinea, a cannibal who was "*makin' love to [him]*," he claims, by slapping her on the ear. The event occurred on Christmas ten years prior. In a later installment of the *Glencairn* plays, *Moon of the Caribbees*, we encounter a similar incident somewhat reversed when a West Indian prostitute slaps Smitty for his apparent indifference to her advances. In Cocky's story, the man delivers the blow, but the exchange in both cases involves rejecting the Dionysian spirit. The drunkenness, dancing, and eventual loss of self-control in *Moon* (which I will discuss later in this chapter) evoke that spirit, and here it is symbolized in a flirtatious native woman covered in coconut oil—a substance used in New Guinea fertility rituals.[7] According to Cocky's story, the exotic and sexually primed woman beckons him, and he demonstrates his will, the strength of his self-possession, in his ability to deny the temptation. He recounts this rejection with an emphasis on racial difference, labeling the woman "A bloomin' nigger," as if her race repulsed him (1:187). At this

moment the crew interjects, calling Cocky a liar and responding with laughter and "*ponderous sarcasm*." We do not know specifically what the crew members find untrue: that Cocky denied the offer made by the New Guinea native, that she was even attracted to Cocky to begin with, or whether the entire story itself is complete fantasy. In any case, beginning the play at this moment, O'Neill connects the Conradian theme of false superiority of the colonizer over the colonized with his own dramatization of Apollonian and Dionysian forces.

Driscoll draws attention to Cocky's racial arrogance when he sarcastically remarks that the woman must have been of high status to consider herself worthy of Cocky, "A quane av the naygurs she musta been surely. Who else wud think herself aqual to fallen in love wid a beautiful, divil-may-care rake av a man the loike av Cocky?" Driscoll's remark implies that his shipmate, appropriately named Cocky, thinks too highly of himself, and his story of rejecting love reveals this arrogance. Cocky's self-image, which he displays in his narrative, rings false to the men who sense the disparity between the man Cocky is and the character in his narrative. Cocky is indignant over the crew's derisive reaction, particularly after Driscoll's conclusion that if the woman had been a cannibal, she would have died attempting to consume Cocky's flesh. The scenario is humorous and not without philosophic implications: Cocky, the arrogant and self-possessed old man, cannot be consumed, cannot be broken down by nature, and would be toxic to the cannibal (as unnatural as his fabrication), thus disrupting the cycle of death and rebirth. After "*the laughter is long and loud*," Cocky calls the men "Blarsted fat 'eads!" and O'Neill notes that this remark is articulated "*sullenly*," as the old man is letting go of his attempts to defend his self-image. The story fragment and collective response make an appropriate prologue for a play about a man who is feeling life slip away from him and must eventually let it go. Yank, whose

recent accident and imminent death are related in the next beat of the scene, reviews his life over the course of the play, commenting and correcting the narrative of his existence, in effect breaking down his self-image, before finally giving over to death. Cocky's tale also establishes that the play is concerned with lies—how they are unbearable and yet our fundamental means for bearing the anguish of life and the anxiety of death.

As the focus shifts to Yank writhing in his bunk, his best friend, Driscoll, denies his inevitable demise and insists on hope. In the first awkward silence in which the crew contemplates Yank's condition, Cocky remarks, "Pore devil! It's over the side for 'im" to which Driscoll sternly replies "Stop your croakin'! He's not dead yet praise God, he'll have many a long day yet before him" (1:188). Driscoll emerges as a leader of the crew, forcing kind but false words of encouragement from the men over blunt observations. When Yank says he's not feeling any better, Driscoll tells him he looks "as strong as an ox" and appeals to the rest of the crew to support this illusion, asking them, "Am I tellin' him a lie?" Cocky, Davis and Scotty all chime in, but Yank cannot tolerate the charade and replies, "What're yuh all lyin' fur? D'yuh think I'm scared to—." The stage directions indicate that Yank hesitates on the final word "*as if frightened*" by it (1:191). He is not ready to confront death, while Driscoll, not ready to see him go, remains attached to illusion. The false hope Driscoll feeds Yank comes to a high point when The Captain enters and clumsily adopts the same tactic, then exits awkwardly. Driscoll returns to his false posture, telling Yank he'll be "out on deck cursin' and swearin' loike a trooper before the week is out." In response Yank is finally able to articulate the fatal word:

> YANK: Don't lie, Drisc. I heard what he said, and if I didn't I c'd tell by the way I feel. I know what's goin' to happen. I'm going to (*He hesitates for a second—then resolutely*) I'm going to die, that's what, and the sooner the better!"

The declaration startles Driscoll who replies, "*(wildly)* No, and be damned to you, you're not. I'll not let you "(1:195). Here Driscoll articulates his biggest lie, albeit with passion and determination, that he will somehow be able to keep Yank from death. The lie is Driscoll's hopeless hope—the delusion that drives the actions of O'Neill's desperate characters. Like Rose's hope in *The Web*, Driscoll's delusion is a selfless one, the product of a humane impulse to sustain life and deny its insignificance as the minute expression of a larger power.

Yank, however, journeys in the opposite direction: he must let go of his existence, detach himself from life, and accept death. Initially, this confrontation is overwhelming. He fails to utter the word "die" and pleads with Yank not to leave him alone among the unconscious crewmembers, "asleep and snorin'" (1:193), who indirectly remind him of death.[8] Once he is able to state the reality of his condition, he takes an important step towards his release. The moment is a turning point in which he begins a series of exchanges with Driscoll that together form something like a deathbed confession. Yank shares regrets, secrets, and repressed guilt with Driscoll who, like a father confessor, unburdens the dying man of the thoughts weighing on his soul. This process of confession is a dismantling of Yank's pride, a humbling reassessment of his life. O'Neill's rendering of the moment reflects both his Catholic and Nietzschean sensibilities as one man stumbles through the vulgarization of a Christian ritual and another man slowly comes to acknowledge that a greater force of nature, a Dionysian force, is coming to reclaim him, forcing him to let go of his individuation, reduce his sense of worth and acknowledge his insignificance.

In accepting death, Yank admits to the folly of the sailor's life, which he characterizes as an unrewarding cycle of "hard work, small pay, and bum grub." Suddenly there is no glory or courage in it, nothing to take pride in, and for this reason, it is easier to

let go. Yank then reflects on the life sailors typically scorn, the domestic homestead "way in the middle of the land," where one is bound to agrarian labors but enjoys the pleasures of family life (1:195). Yank speaks wistfully of this life as if he would have traded it for his own because his life now holds an illusion of fulfillment that is vanishing. In this regretful tone, he continues sharing a secret that over the previous year he had wanted to quit sailing, settle down with Driscoll, and buy a farm, but had hesitated to share his wish out of embarrassment. Driscoll, again, responds encouragingly, but Yank lets go of the dream declaring it "too late" and expresses his regret for having made the present trip. His release of this secret dream prepares him for his own passing. Driscoll clings to hope while Yank removes the veil of illusion, the "pipe-dream" that has made his life bearable. In this way, he discharges his Apollonian side, the aspect of his being that stands between him and constant becoming, the cycle of death and rebirth in nature that will soon lay claim to him. Yank's remark at this moment, "How'd all the fog git in here?" suggests the approach of a force defined by the symbolism O'Neill established in earlier one-acts, in which fog represents Primordial Unity.

By way of association, Yank then recalls the moment he fatally stabbed a man in Cape Town. The memory surfaces with "*great inward perturbation*" (1:197). Though Driscoll first urges Yank to put the thought out of his mind, the latter cannot help fearing God's judgment: "They say He sees everything. He must know it was done in fair fight, in self-defense, don't yuh think?" Driscoll responds, in an almost religious manner, assuring Yank that God will forgive him:

> Yank: *(uncertainly)* You don't think He'll hold it up agin me—God, I mean?
>
> Driscoll: If there's justice in hiven, no! (*Yank seems comforted by this assurance*).

Though neither man is outwardly religious, the essence of their exchange is an absolution, which between them transpires so informally one would hardly acknowledge it as a ritual. Whether or not Driscoll is conscious of performing a religious rite, he understands the importance of liberating Yank from guilt when he says, "Let your conscience be aisy." (1:197). Once this absolution is complete, Yank accepts his destined burial at sea, though with some remorse over not being buried on dry land. He then asks Driscoll to divide his pay and take ownership of his watch. Almost forgetting, he instructs Driscoll to buy a box of candy for a prostitute in Cardiff, who had been good to him. The last request seems out-of-place for a dying man settling his affairs, but it attests to a level of sentimentality, which shipmates like Cocky would deny. The moment contrasts Yank with Cocky, and the difference brings thematic significance to the play's conclusion. The last image Yank perceives is "a pretty lady dressed in black"—a mourning figure, a refined and "nice" person perhaps, who personifies death for the sailor. Bogard argues that the image likens the sea to a mother who comes to collect one of her dead children, thus explaining O'Neill's adoption of Conrad's title and the attachment the sea has to its sailors.[9] The dark female figure also recalls the New Guinea native of Cocky's story, hence O'Neill effectively bookends the play with two women beckoning men to journey from self-possession to dispossession. Cocky rudely denies his dark woman and retains his self-possession, while Yank has come to accept this figure, having divested himself of pride by sharing his secrets, regrets, and private guilt. After Yank's death, Driscoll makes the sign of the cross and mutters a "*half-remembered prayer*" (1:197), another informal attempt at a religious gesture that characterizes the main event of the play as a vulgarized form of last rites.

The debasement of Christian symbolism is a topic Nietzsche takes up in his writings, particularly *The Antichrist*. *Bound East for Cardiff* represents O'Neill's earliest success at

dramatizing this theme—one he would later develop to more sophisticated ends in *"Anna Christie,"* which we will examine in Chapter 4. *Bound East* concludes with the collision of self-possessed and dispossessed when Cocky enters from the alleyway asking for help from Driscoll and encounters Yank's corpse. Cocky announces that the fog has lifted, symbolically implying the departure of Yank's soul, which the sea, in the form of fog, has taken—an event that recalls the fog carrying the child's cry to a steamer in *Fog.* At first, Cocky mocks Driscoll for "Sayin' 'is prayers!" then, upon noticing Yank, he is overcome by "*an expression of awed understanding*," takes off his hat, scratches his head and whispers "Gawd blimey!" (1:199). Cocky's realization contributes a final detail to the Apollonian-Dionysian theme as the dead Yank jolts Cocky out of his self-possession. "Gawd blimy," short for "God blind me," ironically expresses Cocky's moment of clarity, as the man who previously shunned nature and would stop the cycle of death and rebirth now confronts that force again with humble recognition.

As he did in previous short plays, O'Neill generates a sense of metaphysical comfort from a protagonist's painful journey. Driscoll fails to create any real consolation from illusion and is only able to ease Yank's suffering by listening to forms of confession. The process prepares Yank to accept death, and his vision of the "pretty lady dressed in black," much like Rose's perception of the "*ironic life force*," sends our imagination beyond phenomenal reality. Though he may not have been able to make sense of his own life, in his death Yank gives us a sense of the forces behind it.

The destruction of self-possession is played in out in the subsequent plays of the *Glencairn* Cycle, *Moon of The Caribbees* and *In the Zone*, both of which concern the character Smitty, a college-educated able seaman who enlisted in the merchant marines to escape a failed relationship. Like *Bound East, In the Zone* is set among the bunks in the

forecastle of the *Glencairn*, where Smitty draws suspicion from the crew for hiding a black box under his mattress. With their ship traveling through a war zone carrying ammunition, the sailors are fearful of submarines, mines, and enemy spies. Regarded as reclusive, snobbish and a novice crewmember, Smitty is soon suspected of being a German spy and potentially a lethal threat. Once suspicion becomes resolution, the crew restrains Smitty and opens the box, which contains a romantic correspondence with a woman named Edith. After reciting bits of several letters, attempting to find evidence of espionage, the crew discovers nothing but its own shame in having humiliated Smitty by revealing the story of his personal failure.

The play was a commercial and critical success, earning O'Neill royalties for the first time, which may explain why he later criticized its artistic merits. O'Neill often regarded success as antithetical to artistic development. "There are no big themes chosen by our success-chasers," he once wrote to writer and friend Joseph Wood Krutch. "They don't choose subjects for Art, they choose themes for writing."[10] In a 1919 letter to Barrett Clark, O'Neill dismissed *In the Zone* as being "a situational drama, lacking in all spiritual import—there is no big feeling for life inspiring it." The play, he felt, lacked the spirit of the sea, and therefore it "might have happened just as well, if less picturesquely, in a boarding house of munitions workers."[11] O'Neill's self-criticism, however, overlooks the moment in which the sea forces the drama to a turning point. The crew is wavering over Smitty's guilt and what action to take, when they are interrupted by "*the sound of something hitting the port side of the forecastle*" (1:480). After a moment of terrified silence, Davis states that the collision could have been with a mine that did not detonate. The sudden fear drives the men to the conviction that Smitty is a spy and that they must do something with his black box—as if the sea were shoving them toward the climax of the play and their ultimate humiliation. In

comparison with *Bound East,* the sea's role is reduced; however, it functions in a similar manner as an off-stage ironic life force that strips characters of their self-possession—the very quality which, in excess, distinguishes Smitty from his shipmates.

As the crew restrains Smitty while they examine the black box, he protests wildly, calling the men "cowards" and "rotten curs." Driscoll silences him by slapping "*a big wad of waste*" over his mouth "*with no gentle hand*" then gagging him with a handkerchief.[12] The hard slap, a motif in the *Glencairn* plays, puts Smitty in his place and punishes his "misnamin' a man" (1:484). Driscoll and the crew will not tolerate Smitty's insults, but the violent action turns back on them when they eventually confront their own baseness. Driscoll delivers the play's final irony as he reads Edith's last letter to Smitty, in which she laments his relapse into alcoholism and realizes that he has *"*covered up the truth with mean little lies." Edith declares an end to their relationship, leaving Smitty with the realization that he has wrecked her life as he has wrecked his own. At the moment of reading this line, the discovery Edith intended for Smitty extends to the crew: having shared the secret of Smitty's self-destruction they have destroyed their illusions about him and faced the shame over their own mean little lie. After this confrontation the crew is silent, and "*each man is in agony with the hopelessness of finding a word he cannot say*." The silent moment in which the men "*tur[n] their faces to the walls and pul[l] their blankets up over their shoulders*" (1:488) is perhaps the closest O'Neill comes in the play to the "big feeling for life." Through the revelation of Smitty's identity, an individual pain becomes a collective one. The sea inflicts humiliation on the entire crew by exposing their lie and compelling them to hide or find some veil to conceal an unbearable truth.

In the letter to Barrett Clark, O'Neill contrasts *In the Zone* with *The Moon of the Caribbees,* arguing that in the former play Smitty is "magnified into a hero who attracts

sentimental sympathy," while in the latter, the sea is the hero, silhouetted against which Smitty is revealed to be self-pitying and insignificant. While Smitty's circumstance in *In the Zone* certainly arouses some level of sympathy, it is worth noting that the sea, in spite of its lesser presence and O'Neill's comment, is the force that really makes him heroic. Smitty is unjustly humiliated, but humiliation is exactly what he needs, and the sea facilitates this, which is, in essence, the destruction of his self-possession. Using the crew as its agents, the sea tears down Smitty's dignity, turning him into just another man with nothing special or mysterious to set him apart, yet finally belonging as a child of the sea. The experience is painful yet reminiscent of Dionysian suffering and the dissolution of distinction that defines the tragic hero. If there is a weakness in *In the Zone,* it is, ironically, the strength of its plot, which emphasizes the literal circumstances and forces the poetic elements to the background. Mystery and metaphor surface discretely and for that reason, the play may rely more on the imagination of those who produce it to conjure the "spiritual import" and a "big feeling for life."

Further on in the letter to Clark, O'Neill adds that in *Moon,* "We get the perspective to judge (Smitty) . . . and we find his sentimental posing much more out of harmony with truth, much less in tune with beauty, than the honest vulgarity of his mates." These remarks are more useful in appreciating O'Neill's work than those related to *In The Zone.* In *Moon*, Smitty is again the outsider, drinking to forget, and remaining aloof while his shipmates dance and carouse with West Indian prostitutes. The sea's presence is complemented visually by the moonlight and acoustically by the West Indian song emanating from the shore. The song disturbs the men who attempt to drown it out with their own popular chanties, and Smitty remarks that the song makes him think of things he ought to forget. The

Englishman is unable to let go of his memories just as he cannot release himself from the grip of self-possession, which keeps him isolated from the vulgar festiveness of the crew.

Amid the degraded Dionysian activity on board the ship, Smitty connects briefly with the Donkeyman— a slang term for a steam engine operator— in whom O'Neill creates a symbolic parallel with Silenus, the elder satyr, and companion of Dionysus. As it does in Silenus, Dionysian wisdom speaks through the older shipmate with the half-man-half-animal alias when he urges Smitty to relinquish his self-control. The Donkeyman is gifted with peculiar insight—he quickly identifies that Smitty has lost his love because of his drinking and continues to drink because of his loss. He advises Smitty to embrace the coarseness of his companions and to treat women as they do, so he may forget the one that occupies his mind. "I always hit 'em a whack on the ear," he tells Smitty, "That's the on'y way to fix 'em when they gits on their high horse." However, the Englishman shuns the advice, remarking, "*(pompously)* Gentlemen don't hit women" (1:538). In the next moment, Davis staggers out of the forecastle leading one of the prostitutes, whose name he has forgotten, to a location concealed from the rest of the ship. The Donkeyman remarks: "There's love at first sight for you—an' plenty more o' the same in the fo'castle. No mem'ries." Again, Smitty is repelled by The Donkeyman's suggestion and replies, "Shut up, Donk. You're disgusting" (1:539). The engine operator's words are wasted on Smitty, who is too attached to his self-image as a gentleman and the memory of Edith to succumb to vulgarity. Memory and self-possession paralyze Smitty, and he remains un-seduced by nature, unable to harmonize with "truth" or "beauty" and frozen in his own sentimental poses. His isolation culminates when the mob of crew and women suddenly emerge from the forecastle and begin dancing around the aloof Smitty, who "*stares before him and does not seem to know there is anyone on deck but himself*." It is in this state when Pearl, the prostitute he had earlier embraced then pushed

away "*with a shudder of disgust*," returns and "*slaps him across the side of the face with all her might . . . laugh[ing] viciously*" (1:540-1). The blow expresses Pearl's frustration and symbolically the frustration of nature herself whose Dionysian charms Smitty has also rejected in favor of vain self-pity. Smitty might recognize his ridiculousness and take the blow as a sign to step out of himself and into the world. However, he merely stands briefly "*with his fist clinched*" then "*sits down again smiling bitterly*" (1:542). It is at this moment, as he is weighed down by his own vanity, that the mood of play darkens. Smitty's pride has a destructive capacity, which O'Neill illustrates in a parallel action on the deck. As Smitty sits obliviously, Cocky, another Englishman afflicted with self-importance, is tripped by Paddy while dancing. Unable to tolerate the humiliation, he starts a fight that ends in a stabbing and the expulsion of the women from the boat—unpaid for their services or wares. Smitty, like Cocky in *Moon*, denies the Dionysian spirit, and the consequences of this act are analogously illustrated in the painful moments that end the play. Though O'Neill never specified an order of performance for the *Glencairn* plays, Barrett Clark points out that *In the Zone* is a much stronger piece when presented in conjunction with *Moon*.[13] The final image of Smitty, sighing heavily and still attached to his memory of Edith, prepares us for the stripping of his self-possession that occurs at the climax of *In the Zone*.

Attempting to forswear the sea has disastrous consequences in *The Long Voyage Home,* in which Olson, a naïve Swede, is Shanghaied by a ring of shady characters inhabiting a dive on the London waterfront. *The Long Voyage Home* is the only play of the series set on land and extends the theme of the sea claiming its children to a level of literal possessiveness. Olson is set on giving up the seaman's life and settling down on a farm outside Stockholm to live out the rest of his life with his family. However, his fate, as if orchestrated by a jealous god, sends him back to the life he attempted to abandon. Thus his

"long voyage" aboard the *Glencairn* returns him to his true "home," the sea, this time as a crimped sailor aboard the SS *Amindra*—a vessel that crewmembers might call a "starvation ship."

Soon after the rise of the curtain, O'Neill quickly establishes the dive as a den of nefarious individuals who survive by preying upon sailors. The proprietor of the establishment, with his red face and grotesque proportions, has a somewhat demonic appearance, and we encounter him arguing with a prostitute then conspiring with Nick, a "*cruel*" and shifty-eyed "*crimp*" (1:509). His name, Fat Joe, seems a humorous antithesis of St Joseph, the Catholic Saint who, according to his portion of the litany, is a "Guardian of virgins" and a "Terror of demons." St Joseph is also the "Safeguard of families" but Fat Joe conversely oversees the severing of Olsen from his mother and brother who wait for him on the farm.[14]

The mood is ominous as three sailors from the *Glencairn* crew enter. Ivan, though already drunk, is immediately wary of the location and remarks "I don' li-ike dis place" while Driscoll refers to it as a "divil's hole" and recalls being robbed in his sleep there some five or six years ago (1:512-13). The dive seems too dangerous for drunken sailors, particular those falling asleep, as Ivan does, but ironically, those carousing do not become victims of sinister plots. Rather it is the man vowing to stay sober, Olsen, who turns out to be the target. Knowing his mother is old and his brother needs help on the farm, Olsen has made previous efforts to return home at the end of his voyages. Unfortunately, like a man cursed, he cannot break the cycle that keeps him at sea: "I come ashore, I take one drink, I take many drinks, I get drunk, I spend all money, I have to ship away for other voyage" (1:521). This time Olsen promises to abstain, believing that even one drink will ruin his plans. While holding to his resolution, Olsen ends up in the opposite place he intended, and

his story illustrates O'Neill's vision of men driven by larger forces while clinging to illusory notions of will. In his analysis of this play, Bogard remarks "To commit an act of will is, in fact, to act hostilely toward the sea in whose grip [men] move," and Olsen by choosing to leave has incurred the sea's wrath. Moreover, the other crew members are bound by "a crude purity of heart" they know from the sea, and although on land "they meet evil," being men of the sea "they are not touched by it." Olsen, however, is "in a state of apostasy" and therefore becomes a victim.[15] The Dionysian spirit protects Ivan, Cocky, and Driscoll from the evil of the dive, but Olsen, who like Smitty remains self-possessed and fixated on memory, strays from nature. Appropriately, Olsen becomes increasingly vulnerable to the Shanghai scheme as he separates from the group.

Olsen's experience cannot be read merely as punishment. The sea is, after all, a mother who, in her own way, loves her children. Olsen, the lost sheep, must be brought back to the flock, and the denizens of the dive are performing the sea's will "without animosity or responsibility."[16] However, in taking a Schopenhauerian perspective of the sea as will or Primordial Unity, we cannot neglect O'Neill's symbolic distinctions that characterize land and sea as opposing forces. The *Glencairn* plays establish the sea and sea life as clearly Dionysian, while the land, associated with dreams and self-determination, is clearly Apollonian. For Olsen, as for Yank and Driscoll in *Bound East*, the land represents deliverance from the cycles of the sea—with its "storms," "hard work," "bum grub," and "little money" (1:517)—just as the Apollonian world with its illusion of stability and permanence offers "deliverance from becoming," from nature's constant destruction and rebirth associated with Dionysus.[17] In *Long Voyage*, O'Neill adds to this distinction the opposites of loyalty and duplicity. The sea, though trying and turbulent, is loyal to its own while the land, like the thugs and prostitutes in the dive, is duplicitous. Olsen's conversation

with Freda demonstrates these opposites at several points. Freda, who pretends to be Swedish, speaks falsely to the real Swede and strings him along with feigned interest in his life until Nick and Joe manage to drug him. At one point in the dialogue, Freda asks Olsen about his marital status, and Olsen explains how the "nice girl" he knew before going to sea married someone else while he was away. The detail suggests the inconstancy of women on land and illustrates the dilemma of the sailor who must choose one love over another. That the sea keeps Olsen from returning to where he might again "find nice girl, maybe" also characterizes it as a jealous force (1:518). Moreover, Olsen's naiveté, which becomes increasingly apparent as he talks to Freda, contrasts with her manipulation and renders him a true child of the sea. He clearly belongs there and would be in constant peril among the deceitful inhabitants of the land. Lastly, *Amindra*, the ship where Olsen is taken, is a near-anagram of Timandra, a square-rigger on which O'Neill once labored under a first mate "who was too tough,"[18] We are left to presume that Olsen's fate is to be worked hard and underfed aboard the *Amindra*—a punishment, perhaps, for his having strayed from his true love, the sea.

In the *Glencairn* plays, O'Neill takes important strides in his stylistic development by acts of synthesis. He continues to dramatize the Schopenhauerian concept of will as an ironic life force that manifests itself in the opposition of Dionysian and Apollonian energies. Taking up Conrad's metaphor of the sea as a mother to lost children, he renders both maternal and Dionysian—a force of nature that reclaims men from their various Apollonian fixations and drives. The plays also demonstrate his ability to employ Christian symbolism in degenerate contexts further linking his Catholic and Nietzschean sensibilities. In further chapters, we will see how this fusion of concepts becomes more enhanced in the full-length plays of the early period.

Notes

[1] O'Neill made this remark in reference to *Moon of The Caribbees,* in a letter to Barrett Clark. Quoted in Oscar Cargill, Nathan Bryllion Fagin, and William J Fisher, *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism* (New York: New York University Press, 1966), 99.

[2] Richard Compson Sater, "O'Neill's S.S. *Glencairn* Cycle: Page Vs. Stage," *Laconics* 1, (2006), http://www.eoneill.com/library/laconics/1/1n.htm.

[3] O'Neill submitted *The Long Voyage Home* and *The Moon of the Caribbees* to literary publication *Smart Set* in May of 1917. In the cover letter to co-editor H.L. Mencken, he explained that like *Bound East for Cardiff* the plays "deal with merchant sailor life on a tramp steamer as it really is." He also explains that "[e]ach play is complete in itself and does not depend in any way upon the others." See Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 79.

[4] At age 22 in 1910 O'Neill first journeyed as an apprentice seaman aboard the Norwegian square-rigger, *Charles Racine*; then returned to New York as an ordinary seaman aboard a steam-powered tramp freighter, the SS *Ikala*. In 1911 he was a crew member on the luxury liner the SS *York* as it sailed to England. He became an able-bodied seaman aboard the SS *Philadelphia* later that year. It was mainly his experiences aboard the SS *Ikala* that provided inspiration for the *Glencairn* plays. See Robert Baker-White, *The Ecological Eugene O'Neill: Nature's Veiled Purpose in the Plays* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2015), 41.

[5] *Children of the Sea* was written in May of 1914. Two years later the play was slightly revised and retitled as *Bound East for Cardiff*. See Paul D. Voelker, "The Uncertain Origins of Eugene O'Neill's 'Bound East for Cardiff,'" *Studies in Bibliography* 32 (1979): 273.

[6] Arthur Gelb and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill: Life With Monte Cristo* (New York: Applause, 2000), 267 and 273.

[7] Charles-Gabriel Seligman, F. R Barton, and E. L Giblin, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 78.

[8] Egil Törnqvist, *Eugene O'Neill: A Playwright's Theatre* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2004), 172.

[9] Travis Bogard, *A Contour In Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 41.

[10] O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 350.

[11] Ibid., 87.

[12] The "wad of waste" Driscoll retrieves from his bunk is possibly a compound used to light nautical lamps. Frederick Pease Harlow describes making a flashlight using "waste" in *The Making of a Sailor,* his memoir of life at sea in the late 19th century. See Frederick Pease Harlow, *The Making of a Sailor, Or, Sea Life Aboard a Yankee Square-Rigger* (Salem, Mass.: Marine Research Society, 1928), 56.

[13] Bogard, *Contour In Time,* 81.

[14] The litany of St Joseph was approved for public recital by Pope Pius in 1909. See Reverend Francis Xavier Lasance, *The Young Man's Guide: Counsels, Reflections, and Prayers for Catholic Young Men.* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1910), 703.

[15] Bogard, *Contour In Time*, 85.
[16] Ibid., 84.
[17]From Nietzsche's notes looking back on *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886. Quoted in the introduction to Haussmann's translation. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. William A. Haussmann, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 1 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 25–26.
[18] Dowling, *Eugene O'Neill*, 61.

III. Tragedies of *Ownness*: Max Stirner's Philosophy of Egoism in the First Full-Length Plays

As O'Neill graduated from one-act to full-length drama, political philosophy became a more prominent thematic variable in the construction of his tragedies. The early full-length plays *Bread and Butter* (1914), *The Personal Equation* (1915) and *Beyond the Horizon* (1918) all deal with crises of *ownness*—the core principle of philosophical anarchism and the topic of Max Stirner's foundational text, *The Ego and His Own. Bread and Butter*, O'Neill's first full-length play, follows the aspiring painter, John Brown, who derails his artistic career after entering a bad marriage. Trapped in the relationship and unable to pursue his passion, the protagonist chooses self-annihilation. In *The Personal Equation*, Tom Perkins, the son of a ship's second engineer, joins a cause that takes possession of his ego and puts him in harm's way. His devotion to a revolutionary group and its female leader pits him against his own father who unintentionally shoots him in the head. In *Beyond the Horizon*, Robert Mayo chooses to marry and manage a farm rather than affirm the unique qualities that inspire his wanderlust. His choice imposes circumstances he is ill-suited to navigate, and like Brown, Mayo finds himself trapped in a life of estrangement and dreaming of another one unlived.

O'Neill immersed himself in the principles of philosophical anarchism as a frequenter of Benjamin Tucker's Unique Bookshop in midtown Manhattan. At 18 his friend Louis Holladay introduced him to Tucker, a publisher of radical treatises and an exponent of the non-violent form of anarchism knows as individualist or philosophic anarchism.[1] During a visit to the store in 1907, Tucker shared his excitement with O'Neill over his recently

publishing Max Stirner's book, which he called "the greatest work of political philosophy ever written": *The Ego and His Own: The Case of Individual Against Authority*.[2]

Stirner's book champions the cause of the individual ego, which he seeks to position in its rightful place above God and society. In the preface, he asserts:

> The divine is God's concern; the human, man's. My concern is neither the divine nor the human, not the true, good, just, free, etc., but solely what is *mine* [*das Meinige*], and it is not a general one, but is—*unique* [*einzig*], as I am unique. Nothing is more to me than myself![3]

This claim is supported by an extensive analysis of human consciousness as something "possessed" or "prepossessed" by the external concepts, usually those created by social and political institutions. All individuals seek self-realization, but Stirner argues that most are seized by beliefs, causes or various "fixed ideas" that control them to a point of self-denial or self-destruction. Religion, morality, political beliefs and superstitions imprison the individual who vainly attempts to make sense of the world with the "thoughts," "essences" and "spirits" that haunt his soul. Egoists, on the other hand, come to understand "sacred" ideas such as religion, morality, and justice as artificial constructions that should not obstruct the free choice of action.

To illustrate the growth of consciousness toward egoism, Stirner makes an analogy to the stages of life: childhood, youth, and adulthood. In each stage, a person's relationship to the external world changes:

> The child was realistic, taken up with the things of this world, until little by little he succeeded in getting at what was behind these very things; the youth was idealistic, inspired by thoughts, until he worked his way up to where he became the man, the

> egoist man, who deals with things and thoughts according to his heart's pleasure and sets his personal interest above everything.[4]

Children, observes Stirner, have "unintellectual interests" and do not concern themselves with ideas so much as objects. They are bored without them, and their minds grow as they unravel their mysteries. Young people, by contrast, have only intellectual interests. That is, youths occupy their minds with ideas, both lofty—God, Emperor, Pope, Fatherland etc.—and trivial—the customs of a club, codes of honor etc. The adult becomes more interested in his egoistic self, the satisfaction of his self-interest. The man accepts the world as it is while the youth is all the time wanting to improve it. The youth sees himself "only as spirit," and can be possessed by ideals, thoughts, and causes for which he might gladly give his life. The man, however, has "fallen in love with his *corporeal* self" and seeks satisfaction of his whole being. Hence, Stirner understands man as a progression of "self-discoveries." The child moves from looking at the world as objects to seeing what is behind them and seeing how the world works. Children must wrestle with reason, the human conscience, and other "objection(s) of the mind," which eventually yield intellectual powers. With these powers, the youth begins to occupy his mind with intellectual concepts until they eventually possess him or her. Later, the adult discovers himself to be behind his thoughts as their "creator and *owner*." He matures once he sees how thoughts, like spirits, formally "hovered over (him) and convulsed (him) like fever-phantasies," but he can now retake ownership of himself.[5]

The adult may be either an involuntary egoist—seeking self-interest but still possessed by "sacred" spirits—or a voluntary one, who no longer looks to subject his will to some alien "higher essence." The voluntary egoist understands that "higher essences" and ideals exist within the individual but should not have power over him. Stirner extends this analogy to the stages of religious history. He parallels the ancients to children, arguing that

their pre-Christian beliefs expressed strong connections to the "world of things." Christianity then initiated the "world of spirit." Paralleling the youth's obsession with abstract qualities, humanity worshiped a more conceptual deity. From there we stand at the entrance of modern times where we must seek to overcome our belief in the spirit and live for egoism.[6]

Stirner's objective is to challenge the various isms of modernity—nationalism, communism, humanism etc.—with the concept of *ownness*. *Ownness* is not only freedom and self-determination, but the power to take ownership of ideas and behavior:[7]

> 'Freedom lives only in the realm of dreams!' *Ownness*, on the contrary, is my whole being and existence, it is myself. I am free of what I am *rid* of, owner of what I have in my *power* or what I *control*. My own I am at all times and under all circumstances if I know how to have myself and do not throw myself away on others.[8]

To know *ownness* is to "resist values, beliefs, and identities that state, society, and culture attempt to impose on persons." A "unique one," argues Stirner, is the person who "exists in opposition to the state and society precisely because of the ability to assert ownership over who they are, what they think, and how they behave." [9] *Ownness* also implies the ability to acquire ideas and objects as property rather than be acquired by them.

Stirner expands the conventional definition of property to include "the internal and external objects appropriated by individuals as meaningful, valuable, or what they are willing to accept about themselves and the world."[10] This includes values, beliefs, relationships and a sense of self—precisely what the protagonists give up in O'Neill's early tragedies. Stirner's ideas are embodied in Brown, Perkins, and Mayo, who are taken in by some "fixed idea" and betray their own egoist drives. These protagonists fail to become "unique ones" in Stirnerian terms. They lose ownership over themselves and sacrifice their

own real "property"—individual autonomy. In giving dramatic shape to Stirner's succession of paradigms, O'Neill would, understandably, mingle them with Nietzsche's concepts of self-image and belonging as well as Schopenhauer's concept of cosmic will.

The concept of self-possession might seem a divergent point between Stirner and Nietzsche. The former argues that the egoist is self-possessed, and for the latter self-possession can be negative concept when it denies the Dionysian forces of becoming. But in O'Neill's work, the philosophies complement each other. The notion of a fixed idea taking hold of a character is, in O'Neill, a force corrupting the agency of self-determination, turning it into delusion. The egoist's urge to take ownership of his or her self is not a form of self-interest or complacency. It is a challenge, a struggle analogous to the anguish of the Dionysian ritual itself, wherein the individual must let go of self-fashioned identity and accept his or her existence as an expression of some larger life-force. The affinity one senses with the life force manifests itself as a demand to affirm uniqueness, the pursuit of which will require a dispossession or exorcism of existing possessive forces. Again, we come to what O'Neill shared with Arthur Dobson Quinn, tragic characters become estranged from the life force and try to make it express themselves while denying that they are part of its expression.[11] In the early full-length plays, this estrangement is a consequence of a flaw on the Apollonian side of the character while he is under the spell of a fixed idea. The failure to know oneself and one's limitations leads to misjudgment, self-aggrandizement, and the overstepping of boundaries, which is often manifested in the loss of self-control. Characters who refashion their self-image based on fixed ideas, who become possessed by notions that overextend their capacities, push themselves further and further from places of harmony toward tragic circumstances. These trajectories unleash destructive, Dionysian forces that are lethal and chaotic but restore harmony through death and rebirth.

In *Bread and Butter*, aspiring painter John Brown attempts to escape the mediocrity of American middle-class life and ascend to his "highest hope" of becoming an artist. The practical values and small-mindedness of his family pose daunting obstacles as he attempts to pursue his dream while holding on to his fiancée Maud Steel. The play opens on the Brown's living room in Bridgeport, described in the stage directions as "*sufficiently commonplace and ordinary to suit the most fastidious Philistine*" (1:115). This phrase, as if spoken by the protagonist, characterizes the Brown home as a place hostile to the aesthete. John is the idealistic youth set upon distancing himself from the world as it is; however, failing at uniqueness, he is eventually reclaimed by his common roots. Though determined to make a name for himself as an artist, he is unable to escape being a Brown—a name that, as his friend Babe Carter observes, would "[l]ook better at the top of a grocery store than the bottom of a painting (1:140)."[12]

Pragmatism and idealism collide in the first act when John and his father debate the merits of pursuing art as a career. In the wake of John's engagement to Maud, Mr. Brown wants to send his son to law school, but John is defiant and defends his position by citing the primacy of his talent: "My interest in life is different, and if I wish to be a man I must develop the inclinations which God has given me—not attempt to blot them out" (1:126). Brown has a strong egoist drive and, at first impression, understands that his cause is the only cause. But tragedy becomes inevitable when John loses his father's support and compromises his aspirations for the sake of his fiancée.

Mediocrity takes on a Dionysian aspect in this play in the sense of death and becoming; it is a force from which the self-fashioning individual futilely attempts an escape. Brown is the color of dirt and feces, the earth that eventually consumes men and women. Unlike the sea, which also reclaims human beings, the brown earth is a coarse substance—

lacking the sea's poetic mystery, perhaps—that simply breaks down dead flesh. The name also symbolizes the down-to-earth ideology from which John, the artist, seeks transcendence. In act 2, John is working to develop talents that would liberate him, encouraged by his art teacher Grammont. Just as the prospect of realizing his potential appears, his father enters to take him home. Grammont articulates his concern for John by referencing the story of the golden calf from Exodus 32: "And behold these worshipers of the golden calf, these muddy souls, will exert all their power hold him to their own level (*shakes his head sadly*). And I am afraid they may succeed if, as you say, he loves one of them" (1:139). Brown, the most authoritative of the "muddy souls," returns to take his son from the lofty heights of idealism back to a pragmatic life. As father and son argue, John berates Brown for treating his children like "possessions." "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" (1:143). Here the artist speaks like a true child of Stirnerian philosophy, stubbornly clinging to his uniqueness and demanding that authority respect his autonomy. In taking ownership of his life, John rejects any attempt to be subjected or possessed by a higher power. His criticism, however, proves ironic. Though he manages to free himself from his father at this moment, later in the play he succumbs to possession and willfully sacrifices what he hoped to gain with his liberation. Brown's ideology threatens the *ownness* John is seeking but, as Grammont predicts, the lethal blow is delivered by John's love interest, Maud Steele—a name O'Neill may have produced by playing with words. The word "Maud" with its similarity to "mud" invokes the symbolism Grammont introduces—in fact, John often calls Maud "Maudie," a clear synophone of "muddy." Hence, Maud's full name defines her primary function in the plot: Maud Steele will prove to be the mud that steals John Brown.

We discover in act 3 that Brown's attempt to reclaim his son has only complicated his plight. With his allowance gone, John must toil at a low wage job on the docks—an occupation that leaves him at the end of the day with "no more incentive, no more imagination, no more joy in creating." John maintains a correspondence with Maud but laments her inability to understand him. Despite his love for her, John vows not to go back to Maud "a confessed failure." He is determined to stay in New York and pursue his craft, "sink or swim" (1:153). However, when Maud, Mrs. Brown and John's brother, Edward, enter at the end of the act to retrieve John, he loses his conviction (as well as his temper) and returns home. During the scene, John becomes agitated when he discovers his brother has romantic designs on Maud. Thrown into anger, he strikes Edward when the latter accuses him of being unfaithful to her. Jealously and pride take possession of John at this moment, and although he knows what he must do, loss of emotional control prevents him from doing it. Relenting to her pleas, John tells Maud "All right—I'll come back—for your sake" (1:165), thus his choice here is not made in service to his own cause but in relinquishing it for another's well-being. The reversal is a consequence of unbridled emotion and resignation, suggesting that his defeat is self-inflicted.[13]

John's tragedy reaches completion after two years of married life culminate in self-destruction. When act 4 begins John has given up painting and fallen into a routine, which, like his former dock job, robs him of his motivation and feeds his cynicism. Despite a passionate plea, Maud denies him a divorce. John, now working for Maud's father, has no interest in his position and admits to being a "colossal failure" as a wage earner. He would quit but realizes unemployment would make life a "million times worse" than it had been without his father's allowance. John admits to his sister Bessie that his "struggle to appear happy has worn [him] out." Having "slid deeper and deeper into the rut," he has given up

painting altogether and drinks heavily because it "makes [him] callous and lets [him] laugh at [his] own futility." He admits he has "no more confidence," and his "incentive is gone." Having lost his purpose and let his talent go to seed, John describes his present state as "just plain degeneration" (1:179). That John's brother continues to pursue Maud compounds his estrangement. John's entrance in the act comes as Edward is declaring his love for Maud and arguing that she should leave John. Interrupting their exchange, John declares "Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife" (1:170). The reference to the Commandments is timely and compliments the analogy to the golden calf. John leaves the realm of artistic pursuit and, like Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, returns to find himself among people who cannot hold to the Commandments. Moreover, as with Moses and the Israelites, John's reunion with the people of Bridgeport sets off his anger. The coup de grâce at the end of the play is his final loss of self-control. Maud, again in the spirit of O'Neillian wordplay, vows to sling mud at Bessie and ruin her reputation after overhearing her urge John to get divorced and move to Paris (a last-ditch effort to salvage his uniqueness). John suddenly "*springs at her and clutches her by the throat*" then releases her and, "*searching wildly for a place of escape,*" he rushes upstairs to shoot himself declaring "By God, there's an end to everything" (1:183).

John's total breakdown of self-control completes his tragedy as one who has failed to achieve *ownness*. This failure is tragic from both Stirnerian and Nietzschean perspectives. From the Stirnerian point-of-view, the artist has lost ownership of himself, having sacrificed his autonomy and egoist drive for the sake of an external agent. John loses control of himself and control of his fate—he "throw(s) (him)self away on others." From the Nietzschean point-of-view, his tragedy is a cycle of failed individuation, wherein John is reclaimed by

the forces from which he sought to escape. John Brown, the tragic hero, attempts to step away from the tragic chorus of Browns and is inevitably reclaimed by them.

In *The Personal Equation*, O'Neill further employs Stirnerian philosophy towards the construction of tragedy. The protagonist, Tom Perkins, is an idealist who is brought down by the fixed idea that possesses him. As with *Bread and Butter*, a son clashes ideologically with his father and puts himself in harm's way for the sake of a love interest. Enthralled with the anarchist cause, Tom is eager to prove his devotion to a revolutionary agenda; however, as his comrade Enright observes in act 1, his zeal may stem more from romantic impulses than actual conviction. Tom is in love with Olga, a "lady anarchist" whom he hopes to marry (1:313). Olga is also a leader of the Members of the International Workers of the Earth (I.W.E.), a thinly veiled representation of the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.), the labor organization that thrived in the early 1900s, and which O'Neill explicitly references in *The Hairy Ape.* As it did in *Bread and Butter*, sexual attraction operates as a kind of possession that estranges the protagonist from himself. Enright's criticism of Tom in the opening scene poses a central thematic question: "What do [we] know of the real man?" (1:312). Who is Tom Perkins outside the forces that possess him? What is his identity beyond the obsession with Olga and the revolution? His tragedy reveals that he has no identity. The childlike state to which he is reduced at the end of the play metaphorically reveals what he has always been: a man without possession of his ego. Tom, much like his father whom he mocks and ideologically opposes, is a child unable to become an adult.

Tom and Olga exchange vows of love in act 1, but the moment becomes ominous when Olga subordinates their love to the goals of the revolution: "And I love you, Tom; but what difference does that make? Are we not comrades fighting in the ranks—before

everything? Don't you put that before our own miserable little egos?" (1:314). This moment, like many in the play, bears a satirical quality that a true philosophical anarchist would appreciate. Stirner's philosophy emphasizes the primacy of the ego, not its subjection, as the essence of meaningful social change. Denying her ego, Olga contradicts a fundamental aspect of philosophical anarchism and reveals that she, like her counterparts in opposing ideological camps, is possessed by a fixed idea. Turning again to the Old Testament, O'Neill advances the theme of "throw(ing) (one)self away on others,"[14] when Olga references the pagan god Moloch to illustrate her decision not to have children: "There are much too many of us here already. No; I will wait until life becomes a gift and not a punishment before I bestow it upon a child of mine. I will offer no children to Moloch as sacrifices." Olga regards children born in capitalist society as sacrifices because they enter an imperfect world "of drudgery and unhappiness." But Moloch can also be read as a metaphor for the ideologies that rob individuals of *ownness*—the various "isms" Stirner critiques. In this way, Olga's remark is ironic, as it foreshadows Tom's unwitting sacrifice to an ideological cause. Olga wants Tom to make a "better world" where she can be "proud and not ashamed to bear children" (1:316). Thus, Tom is keen to prove himself as a devotee to both Olga and the revolution. At the end of the act, he demands to take Olga's place as a saboteur and accepts a dangerous mission dynamiting the engines on his father's ship—the decision that leads to his tragic fall.

In act 2, we meet Tom's father, Thomas Perkins, the second engineer of the SS *San Francisco* who is extremely loyal to his employer, The Ocean Company, and emotionally attached to the marine engines he supervises. From their interaction, it is clear Tom has little respect for his father whom he describes to his comrades in act 1 as "a poor servile creature living in constant fear of losing his job." Though he is an expert on engine mechanics, the

company has repeatedly passed over Perkins for promotion because, in his son's words, "he's never had the courage to demand it" (1:318). O'Neill heightens the opposing ideological views between father and son by characterizing each according to a Stirnerian stage of life. With his childish attachment to machines and indifference to career advancement, Perkins embodies the Stirnerian child. Uncomfortable in positions of authority and failing to advance his own interests, Perkins perpetually betrays his ego. His main source of joy is in objects, and he never learns how to serve himself. He grows old as a child. Tom is his father's counterpart in the adolescent phase. He likewise fails to serve his ego but, in his case, it is because the world of ideas possesses him. He attaches himself to causes that are alien to the cause of the self. Both father and son are all too willing to make a sacrifice, but both serve something other than the ego.

The flaws in both Tom and his father stem from the loss of Mrs. Perkins, who died sometime before the play begins, and for whom each seeks a substitute. Perkins is explicit about his need for a replacement, explaining to his friend Henderson in act 2, "I was lonely—after she died. That's why I came to love the engines so" (1:337). The second engineer wants to believe the Ocean Company cares for him just as he wants to believe that the engines feel him and speak "like a friend" to him—behavior which even he admits is "childish" (1:336). In the absence of love, Perkins manufactures an illusion that possesses him to a point of willful subjugation. Perkins' devotion to his machines and his employer also builds upon the earlier reference to Moloch. To Perkins, the Ocean Company and its engines are a powerful force that has protected him, done him favors and alleviated his loneliness—a modern-industrial pagan deity to which he will unknowingly sacrifice his son. Tom's maternal substitute is Olga: "She's the girl I love, and I respect her as much as I

would my own mother if she were alive" (1:342). Like his father, Tom idealizes his substitute, and for her sake, he joins a revolutionary movement and risks his life.

Ideological perspectives collide when Perkins tries to give Tom the family house in an unconcealed effort to usher the boy into the role of husband, father, and head-of-household. Perkins has paid off his mortgage but does not want to rent or sell the property, preferring to make it Tom's wedding gift. To his surprise, Tom is not interested in the house and prefers to continue living out of wedlock with Olga. Perkins, not understanding his son's contempt for the institution of marriage, calls the arrangement "wicked" (1:342). The confrontation expresses the estrangement between generations—each is possessed by different ideals and cannot relate to the other. The argument over the house also recalls the symbol that Hartmann—the German leader of the I.W.E—used to describe man's soul in act 1: "The soul of man is an uninhabited house haunted by the ghosts of old ideals. And man in those ghosts still believes" (1:321). Hartmann is paraphrasing Stirner who declares in *Ego and Its Own*:

> Man, your head is haunted; you have wheels in your head! You imagine great things and depict to yourself a whole world of gods that has an existence for you, a spirit-realm to which you supposes yourself to be called, an ideal that beckons to you. You have a fixed idea [*fixe Idee*]![15]

By the end of the play, the Perkins house will take on the symbolism of Hartmann's haunted house. For the second engineer, the house represents domesticity and success, the ideals to which every generation should aspire. But Perkins is unable to occupy the house with these ideals, just as he is unable to occupy his own head with anything but an "ideal that beckons" him. To Tom the house represents the bourgeois ideals he does not want, thus he rejects the gift. Other ideals call out to Tom, take possession of him, and he too fails to possess his own

mind. After the violent encounter in the engine room, which leaves him mentally impaired, Tom returns to the house childlike and dependent upon his caretakers—a symbol of humankind in arrested development. Tom, the possessed adolescent, is unable to move into adulthood. By analogy, the revolution that would bring man forward has sent him backward, while its ideals become tormenting reminders of unrealized hopes. Electing to care for his son along with Olga, Perkins is also reminded of failed aspirations, thus all three characters are doomed to live in a "house haunted by the ghosts of old ideals."

At the play's climax, the forces that possess father and son drive them to a violent confrontation. For Olga and her comrades, Tom is ready to blow up the engines on the SS *San Francisco*, while his father nervously holds his ground as their protector. Tom, disguised as "Tom Donovan," must play the role assigned to him by the I.W.E. plotters—a stoker who will lead a mob and seek vengeance for the wrongs perpetrated by Ocean Company. When Tom reveals who he is to the stokers, it becomes critical for him to act on their behalf. Tom, "*laughing contemptuously"* at his father, delivers a blow to the engines that prompts Perkins to fire his revolver. Perkins is at first irresolute, but his regard for the engines compels a mechanical response that overrides his will, and he utters his final warning "*in dead tones as if he didn't know what he was saying"* (1:370). As he did with John Brown in the climactic moment of *Bread and Butter,* O'Neill draws our attention to a lapse of self-control. Perkins claims, "*with an air of stupefied bewilderment,*" that he pointed the gun over his son's head, having no intention of injuring his son. Tom fails to negotiate the standoff with his father as a mature adult. He disrespects the boundaries of their relationship, mocks Perkins' authority and strikes the engines, abandoning himself to adolescent insolence.

Tom's loss of identity is the final phase of his tragedy. In the last act, we discover him in the hospital recovering from a trepanation procedure as patient Tom Donovan. The truth behind his injury has been buried by the Ocean Company, and to the medical staff he is "one of those strange human strays" who leaves "no trace of who he is or where he came from." As if physically representing the idea of lost *ownness*, Tom does not know his own name and will live "like a little child for the rest of his life" (1:373). His tragedy, however, is not without impact. Confronting the painful irony of Tom's condition and the guilt of their involvement, Perkins and Olga discover the primacy of the ego's cause. Both characters loved Tom and yet betrayed him as a consequence of their possessions—the revolution for Olga and the Company for Perkins. After Tom's injury, Perkins declares that he "hates" the engines and that he is leaving the Company (1:380). Tom's tragedy is, therefore, a kind of exorcism, an experience that liberates his father from possessive forces. Olga also realizes that her love for Tom is greater than her commitment to revolution: "Even if it did mean giving up everything else in the world I would do it gladly. For I love him! He went to death or worse for me, not the I.W.E. I see that now" (1:378). Yet unlike Perkins, she cannot free herself from possession. In her last monologue, Olga recites the sentiments of the revolution: "What is my small happiness worth in light of so great a struggle? We fight, and at times like the present, it seems hopelessly. . . . Our sacrifice is never in vain," and so on. (1:387). The play's closing image of Tom "*with a low, chuckling laugh mimicking Olga"* and repeating "Long—live—the Revolution," reveals Olga's emotional attachment to her ideology as a source of perpetual anguish. It also removes the seriousness of the cause and suggests that her romantic conviction is a juvenile impulse trapping her in an adolescent phase of existence. The secondary action of act 4, in which Olga and Whitely argue over the ethics of supporting a war against Germany, alludes to the interchangeable aspect of

possessive forces. Whitely, like many of his comrades, is dropping the anarchist cause and taking up patriotism for the sake of stopping German militarism. Olga sees this as a betrayal of the revolution, but her conviction merely demonstrates the relativism of causes and the significance of the play's title. The term "personal equation" refers to the inherent bias of all individual observers, and in O'Neill's piece, everyone is stuck perceiving the world from his or her one subjective viewpoint, possessed by whatever force has taken hold of him or her.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, O'Neill most fully develops tragedy as failed *ownness* and the trajectory of a protagonist estranged from the life force by a fixed idea. Unlike *The Personal Equation* and *Bread and Butter*, *Beyond the Horizon* was a major critical and commercial success, earning O'Neill his first Pulitzer Prize in 1920. In a letter to the *New York Times* printed during the run of the show at the Little Theatre,[16] O'Neill explains that his inspiration for the play was an able-bodied Norwegian sailor whom he befriended aboard a British Tramp steamer traveling from Buenos Aires to New York. According to O'Neill, this man lamented that the "great sorrow and mistake of his life" had been leaving the family farm for life at sea. But O'Neill knew at once that the Norwegian's lament was disingenuous. "It amused him to pretend he craved the farm," when, in fact, he was a "bred-in-the-bone child of the sea." The Norwegian had acted upon his instinctual attraction to the sea, and the sea was where he belonged despite his existential complaints. Contemplating this man, O'Neill came up with the character of Robert Mayo: a man with an "inborn craving for the sea's unrest" but lacking the strength to follow this instinct. In Robert, the impulse "would be conscious, too conscious, intellectually diluted into a vague intangible romantic wanderlust." Robert's "intellectually diluted" instinct would be compounded by an inability to withstand temptation: "His powers of resistance, both moral and physical, would also probably be correspondingly watered." From this flaw, O'Neill created his tragedy and

envisioned a man who "would throw away his instinctive dream and accept the thralldom of the farm . . . for almost any nice little poetical craving—the romance of sex, say."[17] Hence, *Beyond the Horizon* was conceived as a tragedy, in which the instinct to dream is suppressed. O'Neill gives no evidence that Robert Mayo would have become a great poet—or that John Brown would have made a great painter—but the tragedy of *ownness* is more a matter of self-betrayal than greatness sacrificed. In not acting upon their instincts, in not serving their egos, Brown and Mayo find themselves in places where they do not belong. Mayo may arguably be possessed or "pre-possessed" by "romantic wanderlust," but he initiates tragedy when another fixed idea takes hold of him—the "romance of sex" or the idea of having Ruth for himself and the concomitant obligation to prove himself as a farmer. O'Neill characterizes this resolution as narcissistic, self-deluding and ultimately self-destructive.

O'Neill quickly establishes Robert Mayo as a character out of place in his milieu. The curtain rises on the "*delicate and refined*" young man sitting on a fence reading poetry. He is immediately teased by his older brother, "Andy"—a man "*with nothing of the intellectual about him*" who is at home with agrarian life. To Robert, the soil of the farm is nothing but dirt sullying his book of poetry, while to Andy it is "good clean earth."[18] Despite their antithetical natures, the brothers have a strong bond and joke over their differences—Andy picks up Robert's book and remarks "Imagine me reading poetry and plowing at the same time. The team'd run away, I'll bet." To which Robert responds, "Or picture me plowing. That'd be worse" (1:574). In the version of the play published by Boni and Liveright in 1920, Robert explains their difference as a matter of genetics: Andy has inherited traits from "the Mayo branch of the family"—a long line of farmers—while Robert takes after his mother and her family, the Scotts, who "have been mostly seafaring folks,

with a school teacher thrown in now and then on the woman's side."[19] Robert's decision to go to sea with his uncle is an affirmation of the Scott legacy, and "*with a trace of bitterness*," he observes how the Mayo farm took possession of his mother and denied her ownership of herself: "The farm has claimed her in spite of herself. That's what I'm afraid it might do to me in time; and that's why I feel I ought to get away."[20] Robert's words are a prescient articulation of the real crisis he faces in the play. If he lets the farm take possession of him, he will never own himself. As one of the Scotts, Robert has always lived on the margins of the farm and therefore, like John Brown in *Bread and Butter*, his only hope at achieving individuation is to leave the world of his family behind. Hence, he is primed to wander outside the boundaries of the farm. However, instead of turning outward, towards the horizon, Robert turns back to the farm and crosses a different line when he declares his love to the woman Andy has his heart set on—Ruth Atkins.

Having established the unique relationship between the brothers, O'Neill moves to a familiar thematic device: the disruption of harmony or established order by the dissonant protagonist. Here, dissonance is a consequence of Robert's boundary crossing—his stepping over the invisible line that encircles Andy and Ruth. The Mayo brothers' mutual respect speaks to their capacity for Apollonian limitation, wherein as opposites they coexist in harmony: "You see, you and I ain't like most brothers—always fighting and separated a lot of the time, while we've always been together—just the two of us" (1:575). Each brother knows his place with instinctive certainty and does not compete with the other for dominance of something outside of his boundaries. But when Robert uses his strengths to woo Ruth, dazzling her with his prose and telling her he loves her—something of which the boyish Andy is not yet capable—he ventures into what Andy regards as part of his territory (the farm) and disturbs the peace between them.

Robert's choice to abandon his instinctive goal sets tragedy in motion and harbingers to that end appear in the remainder of the first act. Again, O'Neill's use of an Old Testament reference hints at an underlying theme. Robert attempts to articulate why he must leave the farm using abstract and sentimental language: it is "Beauty" that calls him, "far off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East," and "the joy of wandering on and on—in quest of the secret which is hidden over there, beyond the horizon." In response, Andy warns his brother not to "say anything about spells and things" while on board the ship lest his uncle "chuck him overboard for a Jonah" (1:577). Jonah, who ran away to sea when God called on him to preach to the Ninevites, is an apt parallel for both Robert and Andy who in course of the play run away from themselves after succumbing to possessive forces.[21]

Robert's possession afflicts him following the entrance of Ruth Atkins to whom he must again explain the reason for his departure. In retelling his motivation, Robert becomes even more romantic, sharing childhood fantasies of "good fairies" performing "beautiful miracles" and calling him to play from beyond the horizon. Robert's words leave Ruth "*spellbound*" and infatuated. Intended or not, Robert's monologue generates intimacy with Ruth, and both move as if their self-possession were suspended: "*Unconsciously, she snuggles close against his side*," while Robert's arm "*steals about her as if he were not aware of the action*" (1:581). Robert then interrupts the moment, "*brought back to himself*," and, "*looking at her searchingly,*" embarks on a second monologue, in which he makes a declaration of love. Claiming his attachment to Ruth is the "one other" reason he is going to sea, Robert pours out his affection using the word "love" repeatedly: he has "loved [Ruth] all these years," the thought of leaving her "revealed to [him] in a flash—that [he] loved [her]," and had "loved [her] since as long as [he] could remember." While the emotional affirmation between the characters lends the scene a romantic tone, Robert's persistence

reveals his desperation—particularly the moment he "*gently pulls one of Ruth's hands away from her face*" as if to remove any barrier from his outburst of sentiment (1:582).

Robert needs Ruth to requite his love, but in pursuing this objective he, like John Brown, throws himself away. The Boni and Liveright version of the play includes lines that offer additional insight into Robert's attraction to Ruth. In his first monologue, Robert explains that he "*had* to believe in fairies" because his father was "contemptuous of all religion," had "bullied" his mother "into being ashamed of believing in anything" and had "forbidden her to teach Andy or (him)." "There wasn't much about our home but the life on the farm," Robert laments; consequently, he looked to the horizon as a refuge for his imagination.[22] Thus the refuge, the horizon, has strong associations with Robert's mother, who placed him in front of the window and told him to look out, and who inspired him to live out the desire to believe. Ruth, who comes from a religious household, accepts and even claims to understand Robert's childhood dreams—whereas Andy, the image of his father, could only see Robert's visions as "nutty." As Olga is for Tom Perkins, Ruth is Robert's maternal substitute, who, he believes, would allow him to continue dreaming and protect his dreams from the literal and practical world of his father. The ineluctable consequence of this substitution is the loss of ownership as Robert seeks fulfillment in Ruth and the perpetuity of dreaming rather than the realization of the dream.

Once Ruth requites Robert's love, she immediately begs him not to go on his trip, and Robert, suddenly "*bewildered*," suggests she accompany him (1:583). Ruth insists this is impossible as she is her mother's caretaker—a rationale that builds on the theme of ownership. Earlier in the scene, Ruth tells Robert "Oh, I'd like to be going away someplace—like you!" as she vents frustration with her mother who "never stops nagging" (1:579). Ruth also desires the freedom to wander but suppresses it for her mother's sake and

abides in incomplete ownership of herself. Thus, in the end, it is for Ruth's and her mother's sake that Robert remains on the farm—his life unlived for the sake of someone who must live for the sake of someone else. Ruth's appeal sways Robert when she reminds him of his declaration, "And you said—you loved me!" Attempting to mollify Ruth's sudden anxiety, Robert promises Ruth that he will remain on the farm and backs the promise with the rhetoric of substitution. Robert begins convincing Ruth, and himself, that what called him from beyond the horizon was love and, now that he has found it in Ruth, he need not seek it elsewhere. For love was "the secret beyond every horizon; and when [he] did not come [to it], it came to [him] . . . sweeter than any distant dream!" (1:583). Robert abandons the mysterious, intangible concept of "Beauty" (capitalized in the text) which he could not fully articulate to Andy, for the tangible beauty of Ruth Atkins whom he "*clasps . . . fiercely*" and "*kisses . . . passionately*" (1:583).

Trading the abstract for the concrete, the spiritual for the physical, Robert's act parallels John Brown's capitulation to Maude and the Browns at the turning point of *Bread and Butter.* Appropriately, O'Neill concludes the scene recalling the earlier Old Testament reference. Robert turns to the horizon "*as though for one last look.*" He spots the first star of the evening and names it "*Our* star."[23] He then "*shakes his head impatiently, as though he were throwing off some disturbing thought—with a laugh*" and runs off stage with Ruth (1:584). Overriding any second thoughts about his choice, Robert becomes the Jonah to which his brother had compared him earlier in the act—a fugitive fleeing the call to serve something larger than himself. O'Neill combines the biblical theme of evading purpose with Stirner's idea of ownership to dramatize self-betrayal as lost autonomy.

Strictly speaking, Stirner does not encourage his readers to find a "calling" and associates the notion with the "sacred interests" of possessive forces. Those who live for "a

good cause," "a doctrine" or "a lofty calling" avoid "worldly lusts" and "self-seeking interests," are merely embracing the phenomenon of "*clericalism*"—that is they renounce their own interests for the sake of an idea.[24] The "unique one" of Stirner's philosophy is not challenged with "finding, discovering or receiving a destiny concocted by others, but to decide how to live oneself out."[25] Robert uses the word "calling" repeatedly when describing his relationship to the horizon; however, the origin of the calling is not an institution or a social cause. It is pure imagination. Moreover, one can argue that in pursuing it Robert affirms his uniqueness. Stirner may have balked at the idea of illustrating the concept of ownership with a biblical reference, but for O'Neill, the Jonah story serves his exploration of a man hiding from himself. Having given up his ownership, Robert, in the next scene, seeks to redefine his identity and start a "new life," in which he will "settle right down and take a real interest in the farm" (1:592). Possessed by a "poetical craving"—his attraction to Ruth and the "romance of sex"—Robert attempts to change himself to suit his possession. The attributes he seeks to acquire by transformation liken him to his brother, alluding to the reality that Andy is the more suitable match and the eventual attraction Ruth will have for him.

Jealousy takes possession of Andy in scene 2 after he learns of the affection between Ruth and Robert and the latter's decision to remain on the farm. As it did in Robert, possession forces an act of substitution. Andy trades truth for lie when he tells his family that he does not love Ruth and wants to leave the farm to see the world. The announcement spurs his father to call out the lie and retain Andy, whom he needs to work and manage the property. Mayo's tactic returns to the theme of evasion and the story of Jonah when he tells his son that by going to sea he is "just skulkin' out o' [his] rightful responsibility" (1:595). Like Jonah and Robert, Andy is also running away, and in response, his father makes a

prophetic warning: “You’re runnin’ against your own nature, and you’re goin’ to be a’mighty sorry for it if you do” (1:596). Mayo’s speaking the truth only exasperates Andy who is possessed by the fixed idea that he must leave—a fixation rooted in his inability to endure the humility of losing Ruth to his brother.

The Mayo brothers destroy their own uniqueness by breaking from their natures and redefining themselves, which O’Neill also characterizes according to his conception of man’s tragic struggle “to make the Force express him” and deny being “an infinitesimal incident of its expression.”[26] For the Mayos, this struggle is a regression to childish behavior and a self-referential viewpoint. Robert makes delusional statements that he is recasting himself as a farmer—statements Mayo responds to “*skeptically*” and “*mollifyingly*” (1:592). Andy is impulsive and stubborn and eventually throws a temper tantrum screaming to his father: “I don’t care. I’ve done my share of work here. I’ve earned my right to quit when I want to . . . I hate the farm and every inch of ground on it” (1:597). The tirade that follows seals the brothers’ fate as Andy resolves to leave his family and join his uncle aboard the *Sunda*—a name appropriately similar to the word “sunder.” Once apart, Robert and Andy are never able to return to where their “own nature” can thrive and spend the rest of the play struggling with adversity and doomed to become the “failures” Robert labels them in act 3 (1:647). At the close of the scene, Robert and Andy are alone on stage when Robert suddenly yells “But it’s a lie, Andy, a lie!” presumably referring to the basis of Andy’s decision, to which the latter replies “Of course it is” and both brothers go off to bed knowing that Andy is leaving for no reason other than the shame of losing Ruth or his inability to suffer humiliation. However, the lie is not Andy’s only, as Robert has also chosen to live in self-betrayal. With the substitutions each has made, the brothers essentially trade places—one substituting for the other. This substitution is the larger lie of the play that Robert

attempts to correct before his death at the finale when he urges Andrew to marry Ruth and finally turns to the horizon.

Act 2 centers on the consequences of the brothers' dislocation, unfolding in moments of havoc and disjointedness that define life on the Mayo farm. The curtain rises on Mrs. Atkins and Mrs. Mayo arguing over Robert's inept oversight, which has sent the farm into rapid decline since the death of his father (1:604). The women, including Ruth, pin their hopes on Andy's imminent return and the certainty that he will restore order and make the farm "look more natural" (1:609). It is Andy's taking up his proper place, and not the man himself, on which the characters focus, emphasizing their desperate wish for stability and priming the narrative for a painful irony when he arrives only to say he must leave again. Robert and Ruth's relationship has lost all traces of harmony and the two communicate with an underlying resentment. Robert enters the scene like John Brown in act 4 of *Bread and Butter*: unshaven, disheveled, and cynical. He is at once detached from his wife—seemingly indifferent to the fact that she has read Andy's letter repeatedly—and attached to his daughter whom he defends from Ruth's attempts to discipline her: "Leave her alone! How often have I told you not to threaten her with a whipping? I won't have it" (1:609). Robert impulsively shields Mary from Ruth as he has displaced onto her his own desire to be free of the external world and its demands—to be left alone and allowed to dream. The relationship mirrors the dynamic between Robert and his own mother, who was once his protector from the coarseness and severity associated with his father and now embodied in his wife. As Robert's behavior is patterned by his mother, Ruth must assume the role of father, and the reversal of traditional gender roles furthers the chaos into which their world has plunged.

When Ben, the hired laborer, enters to announce he is quitting, the portrait of a dysfunctional estate is complete. Ben demands his pay and refuses to continue working on

the Mayo place due to its reputation as a disorganized farmstead where Robert is "pasturin' the cows in the cornlot," and "seasonin' his hay with rain" (1:613). In the brief exchange, Ben provides an antithesis to Robert, magnifying his hamartia. Though he has a low threshold for humility, as do all the male characters in the play, Ben demonstrates a healthy degree of *ownness*. He knows he is a "first-class hand" who does not belong on the Mayo farm and will not throw himself away for Robert's sake. Commenting on the altercation, Ruth observes that Ben, "wouldn't dare act that way with anyone else!" and they are "lucky Andy's coming back." The comment belies Ruth's resentment and sends Robert reflecting on how misplaced Andy is abroad and how captive he feels on the farm: "Oh, those cursed hills out there that I used to think promised me so much! How I've grown to hate the sight of them! They're like the walls of a narrow prison yard shutting me in from all the freedom and wonder of life!" (1:614). The statement brings him closer to his final confession in act 3 that the entire enterprise of redefining himself has failed.

The imagery in Robert's statement also harks back to the opening scene of the play, in which he muses on the poem "To Night" by Arthur Symons. At that moment, Andy snatches the book from Robert and reads the first stanza: "I have loved wind and light and the bright sea. But holy and most sacred night, not as I love and have loved thee" (1:574). The poem goes on to praise night as the realm in which God inspires dreams and contrasts it with the day where such "joys" are not present: "And Life, whom day shows plain / His prison-bars, / Feels the close walls and the hard chain / Fade when the darkness brings the stars."[27] Like the speaker of the poem, Robert is trapped by the day, which he can only experience as a prisoner. O'Neill builds on this theme in act 2 by having characters repeatedly comment on the oppressive heat. The sun, like the "*angry eye of God*" in *Thirst,* confines them to painful and inescapable realities—the collapse of the farm and the

breakdown in their relationships. Consequently, shade is an alluring refuge, particularly for Robert who routinely takes shelter under an oak tree at the top of a hill—the setting of scene 2. Robert tells Andy he comes to this place "because it's the coolest place on the farm. I've given up dreaming" (1:619). For Robert, the shade is both a refuge and a substitute for dreams unrealized, and his remark reveals the tragic pattern of his existence as a protagonist who has lost ownership of himself and become imprisoned by circumstances he cannot change.[28]

Andy's encounter with Ruth later in scene 2 furthers the motif of fixation and its divisive consequences. Ruth enters the scene "flushed and full of life" hoping that Andy's return means resuming his position on the farm and his former affection for her. However, Andy has resolved to return abroad and speaks with a conviction that echoes Robert's declarations in act 1. He vows to "make (his) pile" in Argentina by "working hard and a determination to get on." He feels "ripe for bigger things than settling down" on the farm. Like his brother, Andy is afflicted with a hubristic impulse to transform himself into something larger. The farm now "seems trifling" and he sees his fixed idea as the thing that will aggrandize him (1:626). In the next moment, he fixates on telling Ruth he has no romantic feelings for her despite the latter's efforts to stop him. Andy talks over Ruth—"Let me finish now that I've started."—telling her his previous sentiments were "silly nonsense" and that he regards her a sister. The ideas that have taken hold of Andy estrange the two characters, and Ruth suffers internally while Andy remains oblivious. After laughing hysterically, perhaps at the absurdity of seeing her expectation come to nothing, Ruth hides her face in her hands tells Andy to stop talking. When he continues, she finally shouts: "Oh, I don't care what you do! I don't care! Leave me alone!" (1:628). The anguish Andy caused his father by running away from the farm in act 1 is here inflicted on Ruth as he again denies

his connection to the place he belongs. O'Neill concludes the act, returning to the sun as a symbol of painful reality. Andy cuts his visit short to take a position as second mate aboard the *El Paso*—a place also known as "Sun City." The journey will ultimately lead to Andy's financial ruin and the complete demise of the Mayo farm. In the closing moment, Mary remarks that her mother is crying, but Robert explains that it is just "the sun [that] hurts her eyes" (1:630). Robert lies for Mary's sake but is symbolically correct in so far as the sunlight represents the hopelessness to which he too is confined.

Each act of *Beyond the Horizon* is set during a particular season and time of day that symbolize three stages of a tragic cycle. We first encounter Robert and Andy and Mayo in the twilight of a day in late spring representing the waning moments of an innocent period, in which the brothers have lived in harmony and affirmation of their uniqueness. By evening that harmony and their uniqueness are destroyed, and the vitality of the farm and its inhabitants soon declines following Andy's departure. The second act, with references to unbearable heat, occurs in the middle of a mid-summer day when the painful consequences of Robert and Andy's choices are felt most acutely. The last act begins just before dawn in the fall and traces Robert's final deterioration and the surrender of his individuation to the cycle of death and rebirth.

Like John Brown in act 4 of *Bread and Butter*, Robert Mayo and his farm eventually reach a state of "just plain degeneration." In the opening stage directions, O'Neill correlates the "*decay and dissolution*" of the house with the resignation of its occupants. Ruth is "*emotionally exhausted*" and her appearance "*gives full evidence of the apathy in which she lives*" (1:631). Robert, who enters with his hair "*long and unkempt his face and body emaciated*" (1:632) is suffering from pleurisy and has become insular and indifferent to the farm after the loss of his mother and daughter. But even as his life is slipping away, Robert

dreams of taking possession of himself and begs Ruth to leave the farm with him and start over: "I'm going to sink my foolish pride, Ruth! I'll borrow the money from [Andy] to give us a good start in the city. We'll go where people live instead of stagnating and start all over again, (*confidently*) I won't be the failure there that I've been here, Ruth." For Robert, the farm has been a "curse" that destroyed his life, by keeping him from ever knowing *ownness* (1:635). In reasserting this desire, he collides with the same obstacle he did in act 1 when he asked Ruth to accompany him on his adventure. Ruth is tied to her mother and consequently the farm, so Robert, unable to sever that tie, must remain. Returning to the trap that has defined his existence, Robert coughs violently—a symbol of dissonance[29]—and Ruth can only respond by humoring his delusion. While under its spell, Robert is free to hope and create a metaphysical justification for the suffering he and Ruth have endured: "All our suffering has been a test through which we had to pass to prove ourselves worthy of a finer realization" (1:636). To suffer without a purpose is "unthinkable" to Robert because it implies his having thrown himself away for Ruth and the farm, wasted his life for the sake of a possession.[30]

The veil is lifted when Robert overhears Andy and Ruth discussing his condition. He suddenly understands his hope is illusory and lets go of it. Andy clings to the possibility of saving his brother, declaring: "There *must* be a chance," to which Robert replies "Why must there, Andy?" (1:644). At this moment, Robert accepts that he has thrown himself away and suffered for no purpose. There is nothing to be done that would make sense of his life. The moment likens Robert's tragedy to those of his Attic counterparts who in their downfall discover the futility of resisting their fate and come to understand it as a necessity. Robert knows he does not have the power to shape his destiny, and that his effort to redefine himself has been a vain attempt to "make the Force express him." However, the painful

discovery also yields the gift of insight, which he demonstrates in his analysis of his brother's life. Again, like John Brown, Robert acknowledges his failure—"I'm a failure, and Ruth's another"—but Andy, he claims, is "the deepest-dyed failure of the three" (1:646-7). Robert defines that failure not in monetary terms—though Andy is, in fact, broke—but with respect to the harmony and love one loses by running away:

> You've spent eight years running away from yourself. Do you see what I mean? You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership. And now— (*He stops as if seeking vainly for words.*) My brain is muddled. But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray you've gotten from the truth. So you'll be punished. You'll have to suffer to win back— (*His voice grows weaker and he sighs wearily.*) It's no use. I can't say it. (*He lies back and closes his eyes, breathing pantingly*) (1:647).

Robert's analysis offers an explicit articulation of the play's tragic theme: To go against one's nature, to run away from one's self as Andy and Robert have done, is to destroy the possibility of finding harmony and condemn oneself to a life dissonance, struggle and meaningless sacrifice. Having gone from farming to speculating in the wheat trade, Andy has "gambled with the thing [he] loved," implying that he took to exploiting and controlling the object of his passion rather than submit to it—trying to make it express him rather than accept himself as an expression of it.

Accepting of his fate and motivated by his insight, in the last moments of his life Robert attempts to restore order to the world he disrupted by returning to the location of act 1, scene 1 and reversing his decision. He knows that meaningful action is finding harmony and to this end, he positions himself in pursuit of the horizon and tries to convince Andy to

marry Ruth. The prospect their union, however, is faint as Andy is prone to possession—his recent financial calamity being the result of his greed, and the rage his flies into over Robert's death a symptom of poor self-control—while Ruth is too far resigned to engage in hope.

With the completion of *Beyond the Horizon*, O'Neill reached a milestone of thematic development by integrating Stirnerian philosophy with tragic form. Appropriating the concept of *ownness*, the playwright constructed tragic characters who succumb to possessive forces that corrupt their potential for "harmonious partnership" with their environment. O'Neill's tragic protagonists suffer delusions about their agency just as their predecessors in the genre, but their hubristic acts and fateful missteps are rooted in the failure to own themselves—to affirm their uniqueness and understand that affirmation as a simultaneous acceptance of their limitations. The first three tragedies also yielded thematic devices that O'Neil would employ throughout his career, including, not only possession, but personal degeneration, the necessity of hope, and the concept of belonging.

Notes

[1] Robert M. Dowling, "On Eugene O'Neill's 'Philosophical Anarchism,'" *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 29 (2007): 52.
[2] Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright*, 1st Cooper Square Press ed (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 122.
[3] Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, ed. David Leopold, trans. Steven Byington, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 7.
[4] Ibid., 17-18.
[5] Ibid., 16-17.
[6] Ibid., 19-89.
[7] John F. Welsh, *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism: A New Interpretation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 83.
[8] Stirner, *Ego and Its Own*, 143.
[9] Welsh, *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism*, 82.

[10] Ibid., 84-5.
[11] Eugene O'Neill, Travis Bogard, and Jackson R. Bryer, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 195. See also note 18 in Chapter 1.
[12] O'Neill returns to the name "Brown" to symbolize mundane pragmatism in his mid-career work *The Great God Brown.* In that play, William Brown is a mediocre but successful architect who, like John in *Bread and Butter*, struggles to free himself from the fetters of a sensible, down-to-earth milieu that denies the development of artistic expression.
[13] Here we see an early iteration of what will factor significantly in O'Neill's subsequent full-length plays particularly *"Anna Christie"*: loss of self-control. To lose one's temper is also something of a boundary crossing—a breaking down of self-possession, one's Apollonian side, which releases chaotic and destructive forces of death and rebirth.
[14] See note 8.
[15] Stirner, *Ego and Its Own*, 43.
[16] *Beyond the Horizon* premiered on Broadway at the Morosco Theatre, from February 3, 1920 to February 20, 1920, transferred to the Criterion Theatre from February 24, 1920 to March 5, 1920, and finally transferred to the Little Theatre, from March 9, 1920 to June 26, 1920. Directed by Homer Saint-Gaudens, the cast featured Erville Alderson (James Mayo), Richard Bennett (Robert Mayo), Robert Kelly (Andrew Mayo), Mary Jeffery (Kate Mayo), and Sidney Macy (Captain Dick Scott). See *Playbill*, PLAYBILL INC., www.playbill.com/production/beyond-the-horizon-morosco-theatre-vault-0000002553.
[17] *New York Times*, April 11, 1920. Section 10 page 2
[18] O'Neill uses the same phrase in his *New York Times* letter to describe the deck his Norwegian stood upon: "With his feet on the plunging deck he was planted like a natural growth in what was 'good clean earth' to him. If ever a man was in perfect harmony with his environment, a real part of it, this Norwegian was." See *New York Times*, April 11, 1920. Section 10 page 2.
[19] Eugene G. O'Neill, *Beyond The Horizon: A Play in Three Acts* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1920), 11.
[20] Ibid., 12.
[21] See Jon. 1:1-3
[22] O'Neill, *Beyond The Horizon: A Play in Three Acts*, 21.
[23] Looking west on a May evening in New England, Robert and Ruth would be observing Venus as the first star in the sky. A connection with Venus following a pivotal decision in the narrative suggests a reference to the Judgment of Paris. Robert, like Paris in choosing Aphrodite to receive Helen of Troy, yields to the allure of physical beauty and establishes the premise for a destructive conflict.
[24] Stirner, *Ego and Its Own*, 70–71.
[25] Welsh, *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism*, 93.
[26] See note 11.
[27] Arthur Symons, *Poems By Arthur Symons*, vol. 2 (New York: John Lane Company, 1902), 152.
[28] The heat/shade metaphor appears throughout O'Neill's oeuvre, most notably *Iceman Cometh,* which also deals with the need to find refuge from failed dreams. In that play Hugo Kalmar repeatedly quotes from the Ferdinand Freiligrath poem "Revolution": "The days grow hot, O Babylon! 'Tis cool beneath they villow trees!" (3:615)

[29] Robert's coughing here reminds one of Rose, the hard-luck prostitute in *The Web*. Both share the circumstance of being trapped and out of harmony with their environment. See the analysis of *The Web* in Chapter 1.

[30] Robert's insistence that his suffering has a purpose also illustrates Nietzsche's argument in *The Genealogy of Morals* that human beings cannot tolerate the senseless of their sufferings: "He [humankind] suffered also in other ways, he was in the main a diseased animal; but his problem was not suffering itself, but the lack of an answer to that crying question, "*To what purpose* do we suffer?" See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Horace Barnett Samuel, and J. M Kennedy, *The Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*, Second, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 13 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 210.

IV. "New Forces Out of the Old": Nietzsche, Stirner, Christian Symbolism, and Vedantic Philosophy in *"Anna Christie"*

In December 1921, O'Neill wrote a letter to the dramatic editor of the *New York Times* defending his ending to *"Anna Christie,"* arguing that he was trying to render the "dramatic gathering of new forces out of the old" and "have the audience leave with a deep feeling of life flowing on." He offers this perspective, which proposes a fluid universe where the past "is never the past but always the birth of the future," so that his critics might consider the play on philosophic grounds rather than employ the crude distinction of a "happy" or "sad" ending.[1] This plea and the rest of his arguments in the letter seem to have fallen on deaf ears when we consider the bulk of later critical responses—not to mention O'Neill's own subsequent detractions, which many have seized upon to justify their assertions. His statements, however, prove lucid when we consider the philosophical and religious aspects of the play and resist the impulse to simplify. O'Neill highlighted those aspects when he reworked *Chris Christophersen* into *"Anna Christie"* between the spring and the fall of 1920. A close analysis of that reworking reveals the complexity of his philosophical synthesis, in which he combined Christian symbolism, Nietzschean religious critique, his increasing knowledge of Eastern religion, and Stirner's philosophy of egoism to dramatize the transformation of "old forces" into new ones. The "old forces" include conventional (or "Western") ideas about morality and suffering, which O'Neill breaks down in *"Anna Christie"* forcing his characters (and his audience) to acknowledge alternative philosophic perspectives.

The three major characters are introduced to us with back stories of tribulation. Having lost his father and two brothers to maritime misadventures (and a mother to grief),

Chris Christopherson lives in constant apprehension of "dat ole davil sea." Anna is a victim of exploitation and sexual assault, who fell into prostitution and has come to bitterly hate the male sex. Mat Burke enters as a survivor of a shipwreck but, despite the near-death experience, he embraces the sea as a validator of courage. O'Neill employs Christian symbolism in the naming of his characters. Chris Christopherson was the actual name of a Swedish barge captain on whom O'Neill based the character, so it is no wonder he did not change it for the play.[2] The name means "Christ-bearer, son of Christ-bearer" and is apt for a man who embodies generations of suffering at sea[3] Mat, presumably short for Matthew—the Hebraic word for "gift of Yahweh"—is an appropriate title for Anna's love interest delivered to her by the sea in act 2. The title character's trade name, Anna Christie, is an echo of the medieval prayer *Anima Christi*, and the play's structure roughly parallels the prayer's verses, as discussed below. Suffering also defines the climactic moment of the play, in which Anna reveals her past, inflicting intense anguish on Mat and Chris. While their names invoke a Christian heritage, the action of the play moves the major characters away from it. Following the agony of destroyed illusion at the climax, all three characters can only move forward through a change of perspective. Anna, Chris, and Mat must accept suffering as neither a torment inflicted by an evil agent—like abusive men and the "davil sea"—nor a rite of passage in pursuit of destiny, but as a general condition. In this way, they are challenged to adopt a perspective detached from the moral axioms of Christianity. O'Neill is colliding Christian symbolism with the complex metaphor of the sea—a metaphor with Eastern characteristics—as this analysis will show—to break down Christianity and venture beyond its limitations.

In "Christ Symbolism in *Anna Christie*," John J. McAleer argues that O'Neill is symbolically connecting the play to the communion prayer *Anima Christi*, which he would

have learned at some point during his Catholic upbringing. The critic sees a parallel between O'Neill and literary successors like Hemingway and Faulkner, who used Christian references to "provide a familiar context in which the modern reader can view human suffering." The prayer, medieval in origin, became a popular selection of prayer books and services after Cardinal Newman translated it around 1854. McAleer argues that major turning points in the narrative of *"Anna Christie"* are inspired by the prayer's verses.[4] Here is Cardinal Newman's translation:

> Soul of Christ, be my sanctification;
>
> Body of Christ, be my salvation;
>
> Blood of Christ, fill all my veins;
>
> Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains;
>
> Passion of Christ, my comfort be;
>
> O good Jesus, listen to me;
>
> In Thy wounds I fain would hide;
>
> Ne'er to be parted from Thy side;
>
> Guard me, should the foe assail me;
>
> Call me when my life shall fail me;
>
> Bid me come to Thee above,
>
> With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
>
> World without end.
>
> Amen[5]

According to McAleer, the second line, "Body of Christ, be my salvation," is an appropriate title for the inciting incident of the play, in which Anna turns to her father "the Christ-bearer" to escape prostitution. The third line, "Blood of Christ, fill all my veins," refers to

the wine toast Anna and Chris make at the end of act 1—"fill all my veins" is a translation of "inebria me" (inebriate me). "Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains" characterizes Anna's encounter with the fog in act 2, which makes her "feel clean" by removing the figurative stain of prostitution. "Passion of Christ, my comfort be" is the love she discovers with Mat Burke. McAleer's arguments about the remaining lines are less precise. He claims once Anna is cleansed by the sea she must "submit to Passiontide and be wounded"—a reference to the seventh line of the prayer. This wound is inflicted when she confesses her past to Mat. Mat's curse on Anna following her confession includes "the curse of Almighty God and all the Saints," perversely echoing the penultimate line of the prayer.[6]

The parallels McAleer draws may be uneven, but historical context supports his main assertions. In the early twentieth century, the *Anima Christi* was still known as the "Prayer of Saint Patrick," as some scholars argued that it originated in seventh-century Ireland[7] Today this theory has lost validity, but in 1920 it is likely O'Neill would have associated the prayer with his Irish Catholic heritage if not directly with his father. The opening lines of the *Anima Christi* express the desire for sanctification in God, and the prayer may have had a special resonance for O'Neill during the period of reconciliation with his father. By the late 1910s, James O'Neill and Eugene were reconnecting, primarily due to the latter's literary achievements. When James O'Neill suffered a stroke on February 28, 1920, Eugene lamented the timing in a letter to his wife the next day, "To have this happen at the time when the Old Man and I were getting to be such good pals."[8] Later that year, winning the Pulitzer Prize for his first Broadway play, *Beyond the Horizon*, had warmed him to his father, who was worried his son would amount to nothing as an adult.[9] By the summer of 1920, James O'Neill was on his deathbed, and O'Neill's letters to Agnes Boulton confirm that the playwright was discovering a genuine emotional bond with his father[10] O'Neill's

return to his "Old Man" came at a time when the playwright had discovered his calling and was making strides in his career. For O'Neill, this reconciliation coincided with sanctification. The playwright had finally found his purpose in life as he was finding his way back to his father.

Stephen Black argues that because of James O'Neill's illness, father-child reconciliation became a more dominant element in the rewrite of *Chris Christophersen* (hereafter *Chris*), the earlier version of *"Anna Christie"* that opened in Atlantic City on March 9, 1920. Father and daughter create a new relationship in *Chris,* but in *"Anna Christie"* they rectify an old one[11] Further to this point, the circumstances of Anna's reunion with Chris in act 1 of *"Anna Christie"* are similar to O'Neill's own. Anna emerges from a low point in her life to reunite with her father—the sort of experience O'Neill knew firsthand. Anna leaves Minneapolis to make a new start with Chris in New York following tumultuous years that ended in a thirty-day jail sentence for prostitution. A comparable episode in O'Neill's life occurred at the time and place *"Anna Christie"* is set—Johnny-the-Priest's saloon "*around 1910*." O'Neill had hit rock bottom in December of 1911, and, after an attempted suicide, he joined his father and the rest of the family who were regionally touring *Monte Cristo*—a time he would remember as one of the "merriest periods" of his life[12] That tour ended in St. Paul, Minnesota, though Eugene was no longer with the company by then. In *Exorcism*—the one-act play based on his suicide attempt, which debuted on March 26, 1920—the main character, Ned Malloy, receives a visit from his father soon after his recovery from an intentional overdose. The brief reunion of father and son is characterized by forgiveness and renewal. Though his son has "taken a step which amounts to a crime," Malloy is willing to let "bygones be bygones" and frees his son from the past—this on top of a gift of fifty dollars and a month's stay at "some rest cure

institution."[13] Ned's remarks toward the end of the play offer insight into the sense of revitalization that must have taken hold of the playwright following his own brush with death. Just after his father's visit, Ned is once more surrounded by his drinking pals and celebrates his new lease on life:

> The Past is finally cremated. I feel reborn, I tell you! I've had a bath! I've been to confession! My sins are forgiven me! God judges by our intentions, they say, and my intentions last night were of the best. He evidently wants to retain my services here below—for what I don't know yet but I'm going to find out—and I feel of use already! So here's looking forward to the new life, reform or no reform, as long as it's new. To spring—and fresh air—and Minnesota.[14]

Ned rises from despair with a sense that God has a special purpose for him. Here O'Neill connects the sensation of rejuvenation with sanctification. Ned's excited state parallels the first lines of the *Anima Christi*—he feels sanctified, saved, and cleansed, and celebrates the moment in inebriation. Similarly, Anna is seeking a new life, and during the play, she will encounter the same sensations as Ned at the conclusion of *Exorcism*. The protagonists also mirror each other by the journeys they make: Ned leaves New York for a new beginning in Minneapolis, and Anna embarks on a similar quest in the opposite direction.

O'Neill may have renewed his familiarity with the prayer when he attended his father's funeral. James O'Neill was buried on August 12, 1920, following a Solemn High Mass at St. Joseph's Church in New London[15] The *Anima Christi*, traditionally spoken after receiving communion, might well have been recited on this occasion and would have been an appropriate choice for a staunch Irish Catholic. It is also noteworthy that in *Chris*, Anna does not have the "blood" or "water" moments described above. She does not have wine

with her father as she does in the later play. Although she does have an encounter with the fog in act 2, the experience is not cleansing or likened in any way to bathing—Anna merely describes it as "something way down inside me—something I've never felt before" (1:837). These details were added later, perhaps after O'Neill had experienced the "convincingly Catholic moment" of his father's funeral.[16]

McAleer stresses that the main concern of his essay is revealing the playwright's debt to Sherwood Anderson, who in *Winesburg, Ohio* experimented with Christian symbolism to show that man "suffer[s] to no purpose." With his use of the *Anima Christi*, O'Neill invokes the Christian narrative; however, when it becomes clear that Anna's joy is transient, he deviates from it to affirm Anderson's notion that "Christ died uselessly." According to the critic, O'Neill wants us to consider "the mystery of man's suffering" for which "Christ [is] an archetype and . . . Anna Christie a modern illustration."[17] Had McAleer accounted for the Nietzschean ideas embedded in the play, he might have expanded this thesis to include man's attachment to sin and morality as complications in that mystery. As explained below, O'Neill is not only reiterating Anderson's point; he uses Christian symbols to capture the religion's decadence and the necessity of breaking away from it.

Nietzsche critiqued Christianity and its institutions throughout his career and laid out his most extensive arguments in his last work, *The Antichrist.* His main contention is that Christianity had become debased since the days of Christ. Jesus declared that everyone is a child of God and that the Kingdom of Heaven is here and now (not in the afterlife). He preached revolt against the established order, but under the Apostles, his legacy became an institution that embraced "*barbaric* concepts and valuations in order to obtain mastery over the barbarians." Christ "*taught—not* to 'save mankind,' but to show mankind how to live."[18] Since the death of Christ, Christianity has suffered from the successive degradation of its

symbols:

> the whole history of Christianity—from the death on the cross onward—is the history of a progressively clumsier misunderstanding of an *original* symbolism. With every extension of Christianity among larger and ruder masses, even less capable of grasping the principles that gave birth to it, the need arose to make it more and more *vulgar* and *barbarous*—it absorbed the teachings and rites of all the *subterranean* cults of the *Imperium Romanum* and the absurdities engendered by all sorts of sickly reasoning. It was the fate of Christianity that its faith had to become as sickly, as low and as vulgar as the needs were sickly, low and vulgar to which it had to administer.[19]

O'Neill evokes the theme of Christian debasement both in his vulgar contextualizing of sacred symbols and his dramatization of Nietzsche's degradation narrative. Anna enters the play bearing the very qualities Nietzsche ascribes to Christianity under the Apostles—"sickly," "low," and "vulgar." Her entrance is appropriately preceded by glad tidings of her arrival—Chris's letter—and she appears "*run down in health*" in "*tawdry finery*" and "*showing all the outward evidences of belonging to the world's oldest profession*." Anna is also "*a tall blonde, fully developed*" and "*handsome after a large, Viking-daughter fashion*" (1:968). The reference to her formerly healthy body and pagan lineage suggests a connection to "Nietzsche's blond beast."[20] That Anna is a formerly splendid and powerful creature who has since degenerated likens her to Nietzsche's pre-Christian brute under civilized morality.[21] Another potent symbol of Christian debasement appears in the character of Johnny-the-Priest, the blue-eyed, white-haired bartender for whom a cassock seems more suitable than an apron (1:959). The comparison is more than visual if we think of Nietzsche's definition of the priest as an agent of degradation. Priests are regulators and

expiators of sins, men to whom a sinner must constantly submit to be saved. Just as the bartender thrives off the habits of inebriates, the priest "*lives* upon sins [and] it is necessary to him that there be 'sinning.'"[22] Johnny is a father confessor who ministers to penitents with spirits.

Throughout *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche contrasts Christianity with Buddhism, which he claims is the only "genuinely *positive* religion" because, unlike Christianity, it does not speak of "a struggle with sin" but rather "a yielding to reality" or "a struggle with suffering."[23] The plot of *"Anna Christie"* dramatizes this movement from one to the other, from West to East, from the perception that the individual must struggle with sin to a realization that suffering is constant and one fares better by yielding to reality. The legacy, the stain, and the guilt of Anna's "sin" are overcome by Mat and Chris in the final act as they violently and clumsily come to accept their existence as an ongoing struggle with suffering. By "struggle with sin," Nietzsche is referring to the concept of "guilt and punishment," which Christianity uses to subject the individual to the authority of priests. In *"Anna Christie,"* this struggle is displaced onto Mat and Chris when Anna confesses her past in act 3. In her monologue O'Neill takes care not to relate Anna's "sin," her initiation into prostitution, as a choice or an act of will, but more a surrendering to forces that overpower her. Referring to the fatal moment she merely says, "So I give up finally. What was the use?" (1:1008). This attitude conforms to the guiding idea of the play, that human beings are driven by forces stronger than their own agency. Following Anna's confession, Mat and Chris struggle with Anna's sin, and in finally accepting it they yield to reality. Mat's transition is characterized by repeated attempts to cling to his faith. His initial rage inspires a violent act of punishment, one he cannot execute. Then he curses Anna with the "curse of Almighty God and all the Saints," for having "destroyed" him (1:1011). Here Mat

seeks to wield the power of punishing the sinful. His rage taps into the "will to persecute" and the "hatred of reality," which Nietzsche associates with Christianity.[24]

In act 4 Mat returns to Anna, begging her to tell him that her story "was a lie," but to no avail (1:1019). When the two exchange vows of love, Mat asks Anna to swear on a crucifix, but the oath is humorously spoiled by the fact that she is not Catholic. In the last moments of the play, he discovers Anna and Chris are Lutheran, the traditional enemies of Catholicism, and must resign himself to the vague consolation, "'Tis the will of God, anyway" (1:1026). Love is moving Mat forward; it is part of "the dramatic gathering of new forces," and his efforts to subject it to the old force of his faith are futile. Just before the curtain falls, Anna asks for a toast to the sea, and Mat "*banishes his superstitious premonitions with a defiant jerk*" (1:1027). This defiance signifies change, and yet the moment remains ominous. Mat, swept up in affection for Anna, has let go of his old dogma but must now face the uncertain future with an uncertain faith. As life flows on, the struggle with sin is left behind, but the struggle with suffering continues, and the characters must either find new methods of coping or risk re-enacting the same struggles again and again.

Nietzsche further distinguishes the Buddhist from the Christian by the need to justify suffering. The latter interprets pain in terms of sin, while the former simply states, "I suffer." To master the barbarian, who scarcely understood suffering and required an explanation for it, Christianity offered the concepts of sin and the devil: "Here the word 'devil' was a blessing: man had to have an omnipotent and terrible enemy—there was no need to be ashamed of suffering at the hands of such an enemy."[25] Chris Christopherson's rants against "the ole davil sea" are a precise illustration of Nietzsche's point. Moreover, the play itself is a world of characters conditioned by illusions of the Christian barbarian. It is a world of

sins, devils, dogma, and superstition, which define the decadent state of modern Christianity according to Nietzsche.

The links between *"Anna Christie"* and *The Antichrist* suggest that O'Neill had recently discovered or rediscovered Nietzsche's text. This seems even more probable when we consider the period in which O'Neill was revising *Chris* into *"Anna Christie,"* which we know, from O'Neill's correspondence with producer George C. Tyler, occurred between late March and late November of 1920.[26] During this time H. L. Mencken's new translation of *The Antichrist* was disseminating among Bohemian circles and getting reviewed by major publications. Nietzsche's major works had been available in English as early as 1896, and Antony M. Ludovici's translation of *The Antichrist* became part of *The Complete Works of Nietzsche*, edited by Oscar Levy, in 1911; hence, O'Neill would have been able to read an English version of the text long before Mencken's was published. However, he also would have had an interest in the new translation, as Mencken was co-editor (with George Jean Nathan) of *The Smart Set*—which published two of his first plays.[27] Mencken, in fact, wrote a letter of praise in response to O'Neill's first submission to *The Smart Set* in 1917, stating "you have done something new and done it well."[28] Their mutual respect was established around the time when Mencken's new translation was putting Nietzsche back in the news. Had O'Neill been paging through the Sunday Book and Magazine section of the *New York Tribune* on March 28, 1920, perhaps searching for a review of *Beyond the Horizon* that had just been published by Boni & Liveright , he would have encountered a full-page headline difficult to overlook: "Nietzsche's 'The Antichrist' Proves, on Reading, to be Anti-Paul."[29] Under that is a subheading: "A Rebel's Outburst—Nietzsche's Lifelong Antipathy to Christianity Concentrated in 'The Antichrist.'" The article that follows summarizes

Nietzsche's arguments and the invective against Paul on the occasion of Mencken's recent translation, which was published by A. A. Knopf:

> Despite its title "The Antichrist" is not so much anti-Christ as anti-Paul. Nietzsche maintains the theory that the original teachings of Jesus, teachings of quietism and spiritual anarchism, were perverted by Paul into a creed of hatred and revenge, a creed that spitefully disparaged health and joy and exalted sickness and sorrow. . . . The charm of the author's style, its combined flexibility and vigor, is admirably preserved in Mr. Mencken's translation.[30]

While we cannot claim with absolute certainty that this article or any review ever caught O'Neill's attention, it is clear from the changes to *Chris* that at some point in the revision process O'Neill became decidedly "Anti-Paul." That is, O'Neill changed the character of Paul from Anna's sympathetic but unambitious love interest in *Chris* to the assailant who "started [her] wrong" in *"Anna Christie."* In the first play, Paul is a Swedish American from a Minnesota farm who decided against rural life and went to sea. In the second play, O'Neill recasts the Minnesota farm boy as a dark figure from Anna's past, the inland cousin responsible for violating her. The revised Paul is to Anna what Nietzsche's Paul was to Christianity: the initial degrader. In spreading the doctrines of moral judgment and eternal life, according to Nietzsche, the Apostle Paul transformed blessedness in life into a promise of "existence after death," "the shameless doctrine of personal immortality." Nietzsche argues that Paul spread concepts of heaven and hell "in order to rob 'the world' of its value." He corrupted a way of life embodied in Christ into the dogma of sin and salvation. Paul originated the struggle with sin, which has since defined Christian identity. Similarly, by defiling Anna, her cousin Paul established Anna's struggle with her identity as a sinful

being. Nietzsche also argues that Paul turned Christianity into a faith tainted by vengeful feelings and unattainable promises. He goes so far as to say that Paul "represents the genius for hatred, the vision of hatred, the relentless logic of hatred."[31] In *"Anna Christie"* Paul put Anna on the path to prostitution, and his legacy lives on in Anna's hatred of men. Egil Törnqvist believes that Anna's backstory in *"Anna Christie"* is a "disguised allusion to the Nietzschean antithesis between Christ and his disciples." In "Nietzsche and O'Neill: A Study in Affinity," Törnqvist points to the repeated use of "Paul" in the text—Anna's rapist and the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, where she became a prostitute—to conclude that "Anna is Christ against the disciples."[32] "It is hardly accidental that the name Paul occurs twice and is both times connected with Anna Christie and depravity."[33]

The reshaping of the Paul character in *"Anna Christie"* was no minor adjustment. It was pivotal in defining the new Anna and could even have occurred before or in conjunction with that transformation. Once the playwright imagines Paul to be a corruptor of Anna, once he recasts him as not a kindred spirit but as a destroyer of her innocence, Anna necessarily embodies degradation. In changing the Second Mate into a sexual predator, Anna goes from prim and proper typist to hardened prostitute. With this move, O'Neill was no longer envisioning her as a New Womanhood figure but as a working-class woman who had been exploited and sexually preyed upon.[34] Two such women whom O'Neill knew personally, and who could have been models for the role, were Terry Carlin's old mistress Marie Latter—the subject of Hutchins Hapgood's 1909 novel, *An Anarchist Woman*[35]—and O'Neill's anarchist friend Christine Ell, who was seduced by her stepfather, labored in sweatshops, worked as a prostitute and later escaped that life by a fortuitous marriage.[36]

Many have preferred to look narrowly at O'Neill's rewriting of *Chris* and assume he merely replaced Paul Andersen with Mat Burke, a dull antagonist with a more vivid one, but

the transformation was more complicated. The new notion of Paul as a corruptor redefined Anna and thereafter made the stoker a more suitable love interest. As supporting characters, Andersen and Burke are worlds apart in terms of class and background, but they share a love for the sea, and O'Neill enabled the stoker to be reformed by Anna much like the second mate. One can argue, as Törnqvist does, that Mat is a counterpart of Anna's rapist-cousin Paul, that he also bears a disciple's name and is further degrading Anna by attempting to convert her to Catholicism. However, as noted above, this attempt fails. The moment of swearing over the crucifix ends in humorous irony, and at the end of the play, Mat relaxes his Catholic orthodoxy to pursue his love for Anna. Love as an agent of reform in *Chris* inspires Andersen to rekindle his ambition and in *"Anna Christie"* it frees Mat from the illusions of Catholic dogma. The great reform in *Chris* leads to an unequivocally happy ending bearing all the hallmarks of melodrama—love, marriage, and the prospect of a middle-class life. In *"Anna Christie,"* love triumphs, but this only signals preparation for a greater danger. Mat and Chris overcome their struggle with sin but face an uncertain future, which activates their proclivity for superstition. Mat, "in gloomy acquiescence," agrees with Chris that their having signed onto the same ship "ain't right." The men can find no meaning in the coincidence and see it only as one of the sea's "dirty tricks," thus succumbing to the belief in a supernatural agency to explain circumstance (1:1026). While Anna and Mat's reunion may be a joyous occasion, O'Neill was trying to pull the ending away from the optimism of *Chris* by focusing on Nietzsche's "barbaric" though all-too-human need to know why one suffers, the persistent habit of clinging to superstitious beliefs in the face of uncertainty.[37]

In *"Anna Christie,"* O'Neill also mingled the theme of debasement with the idea of stasis, which he had developed in *Chris* but only to a contrived and sentimental conclusion.

In act 3 of *Chris*, Paul explains to Anna the sailor's idiom "swallowed the anchor" as "to shrink from any more effort and be content to anchor fast in the thing you are!" He applies the term to Chris for becoming afraid of the sea when it was his life, to Anna for being "afraid to be [her]self," and to himself for becoming a second mate (1:881). For all three, love is a force that changes their stagnant circumstances and returns each to where he/she belongs—Paul to aspirations of becoming a captain, Anna to becoming the wife of a seaman, and Chris to becoming a bo'sun. Yet despite this dramatic reversal in the final moments of the play, the overall effect is an even greater sense of stasis. The characters are fixed in a tableau of contentment, where no questions remain, and the audience can rest assured of their permanent happiness—the very antithesis to the "deep feeling of life flowing on" that O'Neill envisioned for *"Anna Christie."* O'Neill wanted love to succeed while somehow avoiding a static conclusion. To achieve this effect, he would need to render characters succeeding in one contest while simultaneously affirming the condition of perpetual struggle. Thus in *"Anna Christie"* love succeeds as characters no longer struggle with sin, but that success can only be a brief respite in the ongoing struggle with suffering. In a letter to George Jean Nathan in 1921, O'Neill referred to the end of the play as a "Comma": "And the sea outside—life—waits. The happy ending is merely the comma at the end of a gaudy introductory clause, with the body of the sentence still unwritten. (In fact, I once thought of calling the play 'Comma.')"[38] Nietzsche's ideas aid O'Neill's rendering of mankind's struggle with the forces of stasis, and they are evident in *Chris*, but in *"Anna Christie"* they become more pronounced and allow the characters to overcome stasis while life continues to unfurl its tribulations.

Removing the proverbial anchor one may have swallowed amounts to freeing oneself of former habits, liberating oneself from the past—a task precious few O'Neill characters

ever accomplish. The characters of *"Anna Christie"* achieve a degree of liberation from past habits with the aid of love and the mysterious force of the sea. This was O'Neill's intention in *Chris*, and to achieve it he rewrote the play not only with a more complex integration of symbolism and Nietzschean themes but also with a more sophisticated approach to the sea as a metaphor for fate—one that drew from his growing knowledge of Eastern religion.

O'Neill's interest in Hinduism goes back at least as far as his Greenwich Village days. According to Doris Alexander, Terry Carlin gave him *Light on the Path* when the two first came to Provincetown in 1916, and the book spoke to O'Neill's fascination with the "mysterious forces beyond the individual life of man," which he was seeking to dramatize.[39] Written by Mabel Collins in 1895 as an occult treatise, *Light on the Path* establishes rules of behavior for "the personal use of those ignorant of Eastern wisdom." The book's precepts are supported by the notion of Karma, which O'Neill must have taken to with alacrity considering how central it is to the plot of *"Anna Christie."* According to Collins, to obtain karma one must "Kill out all sense of separateness":

> If you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create karma, which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated. Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are a part of it; your karma is inextricably interwoven with the great Karma.[40]

Separateness plagues both Anna and Chris, whose self-isolating attitudes are mocked by the sea. Chris has attempted to sever himself and his daughter from the "ole davil," but after a chain of dramatic ironies, he reaches the final act realizing that he must accept his daughter's marriage to a seaman and his own calling as a bo'sun. Despite the suffering the sea inflicts, Chris comes to acknowledge what Anna knows to be true in act 2 when she

declares, “Here is where is you belong” (1:980). Similarly, Anna enters the play with a hatred for men that is undone by the ironic events that follow. It is as if the sea were denying Anna her isolation when Mat washes up to the barge despite her “*resentful*” plea, “Why don’t that guy stay where he belongs?” (1:983). Separation is further denied during their interaction on the deck of the barge, which results in Mat’s romantic attachment to Anna despite her efforts to keep their acquaintance merely friendly. In the above passage, Collins reminds her readers that they share in the “sin and shame” of the world through the link between individual karma and “the great Karma,” meaning that of the universe. As a way of looking at Anna’s prostitution, this statement reads like a moral to the play itself. Immediately after revealing her past in act 3, Anna reminds Mat and Chris—“and all men”—of their share in her shame as patrons of whorehouses. At this moment in the play, we can observe the intersection of Nietzschean ideas and the principle of Karma. Anna forces Mat and Chris to acknowledge that sin is shared, and from that perspective, it is not a premise for individual punishment but a collective condition. Appropriately, after the revelation, Anna and Mat have strong impulses of separation, which they cannot sustain. Anna again declares that she hates men and then speaks directly to Mat with “*extreme mocking bitterness.*” But “*pleading creep[s] in*” as her bitter tone gives way to an appeal for reconnection (1:1009). Similarly, Mat moves to smash Anna’s skull but cannot complete the task. He then exits after hurling a string of violent curses at her and declaring he’s “shipping away out of this” (1:1011); however, in the next act he returns, having failed to emotionally extricate himself from Anna.

Karma as a principle of unity and oneness operates on multiple levels in *“Anna Christie,”* and O’Neill’s handling of it suggests further reading on the topic. At some point, he acquired *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* by Friedrich Max Müller, which outlines

the development of Hindu thought from sacred texts and identifies the shared ideas of Hinduism and Buddhism. The exact date of acquisition is not known, but the ideas employed in *The Fountain* suggest that O'Neill had read Müller's text by at least the summer of 1921 when work on that play began.[41] It is possible he had started the book earlier if we consider that his personal copy was the 1919 edition.[42] Given the complexity of the sea metaphor in *"Anna Christie,"* it is likely that O'Neill was familiar with at least one system of Hindu philosophy, the Vedanta, when writing the play. What Collins had called "the great Karma" corresponds to what Müller identifies as the Brahman in Vedantic thought, which is understood as the cause of the universe; all things are Brahman and all individuals must seek to know that they are Brahman.[43] According to Müller, the phrase "Tat tvam asi" ("Thou art That") from the *Chandogya Upanishad* is essential to the doctrine of the Vedanta. "Tat" (that) is established as the Brahman and "tvam" is "the Self in its various meanings, from the ordinary 'I' to the divine Soul or Self, recognized in man." The object of the Vedanta is to show that subject and object, the self and the other, "are in reality one."[44] Anna discovers this principle during her encounter with the fog in act 2. Standing in a dense shroud of it on the barge she says she feels "old" and attempts to articulate the sensation to her father:

> CHRIS: (*mystified*) Ole?
>
> ANNA: Sure—like I'd been living a long, long time—out here in the fog. (*frowning perplexedly*) I don't know how to tell you yust what I mean. It's like I'd come home after a long visit away some place. It all seems like I'd been here before lots of times—on boats—in this same fog (1:982).

In a similar moment between a protagonist and a father, Edmund in act 4 of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* also tries to describe the merging of the self with the universe when he relates an experience from his maritime life to James Tyrone: "I belonged, without past or

future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of man, to Life itself! To God, if you want to put it that way" (3:812). O'Neill blesses Anna and Edmund with a momentary realization of the object of the Vedanta. How fully Anna appreciates the moment is not revealed, but it coincides with a turning point in her development. The simultaneous sense of belonging—"like I'd come home"—and liberation from the present also makes Anna feel clean as if she'd "t[aken] a bath." Unity with the Brahman purifies Anna, bringing her back to the world from which she was estranged by a sordid past. Yet this unity is paradoxical. It liberates Anna from shame and separation but denies her recourse to isolation when Mat enters in the next moment. Anna is once again part of the universe, and that universe includes men as much as "Gawd's will" (1:982).[45]

James A. Robinson claims that O'Neill's sea has another Brahman aspect in how it unifies time and space while simultaneously assuming a *māyā*-like or illusory quality, "beguiling man into various false assumptions about reality."[46] Anna's newfound love for the sea in act 2 seems dangerously naïve to her father who constantly reminds her that the "ole davil" deals in "dirty tricks." Chris's caution seems warranted when we observe how frequently illusion and irony are connected with the sea. Almost immediately after her purifying encounter with the fog, Anna deceives Mat into thinking she has been a governess. Chris is ironically deceived when he brings Anna on the barge for his exclusive company only to lose her to the first sailor she meets. Mat believes fate led him to a "fine, dacent girl" in Anna until she reveals her past (1:987). Anna reunites with her father and falls in love with Mat; however, in the end, her actions result in their enlisting on the *Londonderry*, and so she may only have been the sea's agent in reclaiming them the whole time. Robinson takes a pessimistic view of the last moment, arguing that the final trick is on Anna who

escapes her past but "falls victim to the family curse, and duplicates her mother's fate of wedding a sailor who abandons her for the sea."[47] O'Neill offers the possibility of this reading but no assurances. We can only take away that fate is pushing the characters toward further challenges and uncertainties. For all the trickery embodied in O'Neill's Brahman-like sea, we must remind ourselves that it rescues the characters from stasis and the struggle with sin. Anna, Mat, and Chris suffer, but in their willingness to give in to larger forces they do not become mired in notions of good and evil. Moving beyond a world of moral choice, they recognize that fate creates and shatters illusions, like the sea tossing and tempering the lives of its children, moving them toward the revelation that suffering is perpetual but can be endured.

Max Stirner's philosophy of egoism seems a likely inspiration for *Chris* and its three major characters who must affirm their uniqueness and not "swallow the anchor." Anna's New Womanhood ideology, her desire to "know as much as [she] can and see and live as much as [she] can," (1:825) aligns with the philosopher's call to prioritize the ego, but O'Neill's application seems too direct, if not crude. In *"Anna Christie"* Stirner's ideas have a subtler resonance. In that play, they prove useful in debunking stale notions of morality and suffering and reveal how stasis is a result of possession.

One of the more striking applications of Stirner is O'Neill's modeling the three main roles in *"Anna Christie"* on the stages of life analyzed in *The Ego and Its Own*—childhood, youth and adulthood or the egoist phase.[48] Chris corresponds to Stirner's child, both for his immature behavior, remarked upon frequently in the text, and his superstitious attitude to the sea. The boyishly boastful Mat Burke represents Stirner's youth: living by a code of manliness and chivalry, idealizing maritime life and the woman he wants to marry. Given her willful, "I'm my own boss," attitude, her lack of religion and her indifference to moral

convention, Anna aspires toward true egoism (1:1007). Struggling with Anna's sin, the child and youth are challenged to become adults by letting go of superstitions and notions of morality for the sake of the ego's cause—that is their own existential development. That Chris and Mat revert to superstition in the final moment threatens this development and suggests they may fail to advance to the egoist stage. This advancement hinges upon the ability to exercise restraint—to heed Apollo's wisdom and respect limitations and boundaries. For Mat and Chris, possession pushes boundaries but never leads to the tragic consequences suffered by protagonists in O'Neill's earlier tragedies. Here, we watch them teeter on the verge of excess but fortunately never quite lose control. Meanwhile, they suffer the anguish of destroyed illusions and must reconsider who they are and where they belong.

One curious detail that survived the redrafting of *Chris* into *"Anna Christie,"* is the inclusion of two longshoremen who enter just after the curtain rises. The two men go directly to the bar, order whiskey and chase it with lager and porter. Then Larry enters and the two men leave, with one declaring "Let's drink up and get back to it." At first glance, there seems nothing noteworthy about this moment, yet it has specific relevance to the play's central theme. The two longshoremen are men moving on, workers enjoying a brief respite between work shifts. They drink responsibly and do not linger. Their mode of behavior is echoed two beats later in the play when Johnny accepts a drink from Chris. Johnny also drinks responsibly. He orders a small beer, then "*immediately*" declines Chris's offer to "have oder drink" (1:964). After reminding Larry about Chris's letter, he exits to return home. Larry and the two longshoremen demonstrate moderation and the ability to drink while remaining aware of one's circumstances. Alcohol does not tether them to the bar or immobilize them (as it does the derelict patrons of Harry Hope's saloon in *The Iceman Cometh*). The brief displays of temperance that open "*Anna Christie"* establish a

background mood into which the inebriated Chris enters in complete contrast, effectively heightening our awareness of his immoderate behavior and weak will. Unlike the bartender and the union workers, Chris is not moving from one station to the next with a sense of purpose. He is static and self-indulgent—getting drunk simply because he has come ashore and, as Larry points out, mired in his relationship with "that same cow" Martha, whom he keeps on the barge. Chris enters like a child who must be supervised by the responsible adults in the bar, Johnny, Larry, and even Martha, who reminds him to sober up for his daughter's arrival. Anna's letter catches her father off guard and jars him to take immediate steps toward reform. It is as if their familial roles were reversed and Chris was a delinquent child fearing the arrival of a parent. Though her ensuing entrance into the bar is highly ironic, Anna's initial presence via the letter is as an agent of change, and it foreshadows her ultimate action of the play: bringing her father and Mat to new stages of their lives by exorcizing the forces that possess them.

The moderation motif returns later in the first act when Martha restrains Anna from having another drink before Chris returns. By keeping Chris and Anna sober, Martha enables their reunion, strained and awkward as it is, to come off without an altercation or retreat. When Anna and Chris finally stand before each other, both must begin their uncomfortable reckoning with the truth—Chris's neglect and Anna's profession. Anna asks: "Why didn't you never come home them days? Why didn't you never come out west to see me?" Chris attempts to explain himself, sitting "*dejectedly*" in the chair, speaking "*sadly*" and "*bowing his head guiltily*." His only excuse, "Dat ole davil sea" and the craziness it inflicts on men, sounds to Anna like an evasion of responsibility—"Then you think the sea's to blame for everything, eh?" The "*trace of scorn*" in Anna's voice exposes the deeply rooted resentment we hear from her in act 3 (1:974-5). At this moment, however, both

parties are able to sufficiently restrain themselves until Anna, once she's gathered an impression of her father and his life, decides she can take no more. Chris returns to the bar, and she "*stammeringly*" confesses "Gawd, I can't stand this! I better beat it!" But just as she stands to leave, an internal conflict forces her back into the chair where she sobs (1:977). The encounter with her father has triggered strong emotions and the impulse to escape, but Anna makes the very difficult choice of dealing with, rather than fleeing from, her circumstances—of enduring suffering rather than escaping it. This choice sets the play in motion and establishes the path of dramatic action towards larger confrontations with unbearable truths. At the end of act 1, a narrative shape begins to emerge, in which vulnerable characters collide with harsh realities to acquire greater maturity and perspective.

Anna's impulse to flee from Chris follows a pattern of behavior that she is finally able to break. From her conversation with Martha we know that she "could never stand being caged up nowheres," and the impulse to escape eventually landed her in a house of prostitution (1:970). After being exploited and sexually abused by her cousin, she ran away to St Paul only to find herself "caged in" again:

> ANNA: 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! *(Defiantly.)* And I ain't sorry neither (1:972).

Anna's past makes her a prime candidate for the role of egoist. From her earliest days, she has suffered a denial of self, serving the interests of those holding power over her—or in Stinerian terms: throwing herself away on others. Naturally, she attempts to reclaim herself any way she can. That she regarded prostitution as an opportunity speaks to the intensity of

her desire for egoistic freedom, which would not be held back by any moral code. Her experiences have made her defiant and wary of male encroachment. In this way, she also keeps Stirnerian "spirits" and "ghosts" at bay, refusing to be possessed by the fixed ideas of religion, morality or social duty. By act 3 she is an unrepentant egoist, which she states explicitly at the climactic moment of the play: "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!" (1:1007).

The belonging Anna experiences when she embraces the fog in act 2 also reads as a moment of dispossession. Anna has proved herself a budding egoist, but to continue moving forward she must overcome her fixed ideas about men. In its mysterious way, the fog provides her with the opportunity by thrusting Mat Burke upon her. It is fitting that Anna cannot articulate her thoughts on the deck, while Chris continues his rant at the "Ole davil sea!" A superstitious child, Chris can only regard the sea as a "spook," in the Stirnerian sense. It has always possessed him, conjured his fears and inspired false beliefs; consequently, he has never been able to surrender to it, as Anna does, and his life has, therefore, remained static. The events of the play, however, eventually enable Chris to make some philosophic progress: "Ay tank now it ain't no use fight with sea. No man dat live going to beat her, py yingo!" (1:1015). This insight comes on the heels of Anna's revelation in act 3, which exposed the horrible irony of his scheme to keep her on land. The painful truth enlightens Chris and moves him out of stasis. Signing on as bosun to the *Londonderry*, Chris accepts what Anna says in the fog: "You belong on a real ship, sailing all over the world" (1:980).

Mat Burke enters the play under hard circumstances— a survivor of a shipwreck— and like Anna seems determined to move forward, but like Chris, he is held back by what

possesses him. He is fast with Anna, proposing at their first encounter, but marriage will not change his life until he is able to detach it from his idealism. As the quintessential "youth" of Stirner's model, Burke is possessed by the "world of spirits." His mind is occupied with romantic visions of the world and himself as a great man living up to a heroic code. He immediately inserts Anna into his idealistic scenario, insisting that she must be the one he was meant to wed. He insists "God's will" is behind his meeting Anna and refers to "God" so frequently one cannot doubt his complete possession by the spirit of religion. For Mat, sacredness exists wherever he chooses to put it—God, the sea, a woman etc. His language and actions suggest that O'Neill also modeled Burke on Stirner's *involuntary egoist*—he "who is always looking after his own and yet does not count himself as the highest being." The *involuntary egoist* serves himself but must conceal the act with service to something higher:

> Because he would like to cease to be an egoist, he looks about in heaven and earth for higher beings to serve and sacrifice himself to; but, however much he shakes and disciplines himself, in the end, he does all for his own sake, and the disreputable egoism will not come off him. On this account, I call him the involuntary egoist.[49]

Burke's egotism is a denial of egoism. Inflated with pride, he acts toward his own ends but must always justify his actions with reference to something higher than himself. His desire for Anna, for example, does not originate in him but in God who must be leading him to the woman of his dreams.

When Anna confesses her past, she makes it impossible for Mat to continue as an *involuntary egoist* by tearing herself from the idealism he ascribes to her. Upon hearing her secret at the play's climactic moment, Mat is seized with a murderous impulse and stands over Anna, wielding a chair. Though he feels entitled to "smash (her) skull like a rotten

egg," he is able to restrain himself; however, his rage spills over into exclamations that she has made his life meaningless:

> BURKE: Was there iver a woman in the world had the rottenness in her that you have, and was there iver a man the like of me was made the fool of the world, and me thinking thoughts about you, and having great love for you, and dreaming dreams of the fine life we'd have when we'd be wedded!
>
> . . .
>
> Yerra, God help me! I'm destroyed entirely and my heart is broken in bits! I'm asking God Himself, was it for this He'd have me roaming the earth since I was a lad only, to come to black shame in the end (1:1010).

Burke's anguish cannot be appreciated merely as a shattered hope or bitterness at feeling deceived. By revealing the truth, Anna exorcizes the spirits that possessed Mat, an act that pushes the limits of his self-restraint. He expresses his rage in theological terms because Anna (or the idea of Anna) is bound up with his possessions—notions of "God" and "morality." Burke cannot continue linking his desire for Anna with service to some higher essence. Still attached to that essence, Burke must regard Anna as unclean. "Unchastity," observes Stirner, "can never become a moral act" and will remain "a transgression, a sin against a moral commandment; there clings to it an indelible stain."[50] This moment illustrates Stirner's explanation as Burke refers to Anna as a blemish, "I'll be drinking sloos of whiskey will wash that black kiss of yours off my lips" (1:1011).

The effort to cleanse himself of Anna, of course, fails and Burke faces the necessity of overcoming what possesses him. Haunted by images of Anna that he cannot force out of his mind, Burke in act 4 returns from his "bat" bruised and bloodied as if the emotional torment had been inflicted on his body. Still unable to reconcile Anna with ideals, he begs

her to deny what she has told him: “Tell me it’s a lie, I’m saying! That’s what I’m after coming to hear you say” (1:1019). Burke wants Anna’s permission to deny reality, to deny the truth of her existence for the sake of preserving his moral spirit. He wants to remain a “youth” attached to his involuntary egoism. Anna, however, cannot oblige. She knows that the truth has moved her forward, and Burke must move forward too. He must “forgive and forget,” though his moral spirit resists. Reconciliation is finally achieved when he hits upon the notion of his having changed Anna and taking responsibility for her forward movement:

> BURKE: (*Slowly.*) If ‘tis truth you’re after telling, I’d have a right, maybe, to believe you’d changed--and that I’d changed you myself ‘til the thing you’d been all your life wouldn’t be you any more at all.
>
> ANNA: (*Hanging on his words--breathlessly.*) Oh, Mat! That’s what I been trying to tell you all along!
>
> BURKE: (*Simply*) For I’ve a power of strength in me to lead men the way I want, and women, too, maybe, and I’m thinking I’d change you to a new woman entirely, so I’d never know, or you either, what kind of woman you’d been in the past at all (1:1023).

Burke’s discovery marks his first steps to egoism. As he acknowledges changing Anna and leading her away from the past, he awakens a new sense of agency. He takes heart in his own ability to transform and forgive without reference to a higher power. In the next moment, he takes a step backward, asking Anna to swear on a crucifix. However, when he realizes Anna is not Catholic and later that she’s Lutheran, Burke demonstrates the progress he’s made towards overcoming his prepossessions. His desire for Anna will not be held back by any moral impediment, “God forgive, no matter what you are, I’d go mad if I’d not have

you! I'd be killing the world" (1:1025). Though not the pure egoist, in the play's final moments Burke is closer to becoming his own master.

O'Neill's reworking of *Chris* into *"Anna Christie"* demonstrates the playwright's amalgamation of at least four significant influences: Nietzsche, Stirner, Indian Philosophy and his Catholic heritage. The publication of H.L. Mencken's translation of *The Antichrist* and O'Neill's rediscovery of the Latin hymn *Anima Christi*, which he had symbolically connected to the reconciliation with his father, were pivotal in transforming a vaguely Stirnerian play into a drama of sophisticated philosophical layering. Anna enters the play embodying Nietzsche's concept of degraded Christianity and exits demonstrating Stirner's notion of the egoist. Unlike O'Neill's tragic characters, Anna does not succumb to a loss of self-possession in the face of obstacles (and is fortunate that her love interest does not either.) She exposes the hypocrisy of "struggling with sin," and in her character arc, O'Neill combines Nietzsche's philosophic implications with Stirner's prescriptions. Overcoming the dogma of "guilt and punishment" is only possible when one is dispossessed of its spirit; to accept the general condition of suffering one must let go of superstition and strive to achieve *ownness.* While we may deduce these precepts from the play, O'Neill reminds us, in the end, that he is not writing a comedy so much as an avoidance of tragedy—a temporary one, in fact, in which we must acknowledge that the maturity or spiritual progress of its characters can relapse at any moment. *"Anna Christie"* is a milestone in the playwright's stylistic development and demonstrates his unique talent for synthesizing disparate ideas and traditions. Though not a tragedy, the play exhibits the O'Neill's worldview and thematic variables relevant to his work in that genre. In his article on Christian symbolism, McAleer argues that "*'Anna Christie'* is owed a higher place in the O'Neill canon than customarily

given it."[51] Today this statement has even greater validity when we consider the breadth of its philosophic underpinnings.

Notes

---

[1] Eugene G. O'Neill, "Mail Bag," *New York Times*, December 18, 1921.
[2] Robert M. Dowling, *Critical Companion to Eugene O'Neill: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 62.
[3] John J. McAleer, "Christ Symbolism in *Anna Christie*," *Modern Drama* 4, no. 4 (1961): 393.
[4] Ibid., 391, 392–95.
[5] John Henry Newman, *Meditations and Devotions of the Late Cardinal Newman*, ed. W. P. Neville (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901), 256.
[6] McAleer, "Christ Symbolism in *Anna Christie*," 392, 394
[7] Alice King MacGilton, *A Study of Latin Hymns* (Boston: R.G. Badger The Gorham Press, 1918), 32.
[8] Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Jackson R. Bryer and Travis Bogard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 118.
[9] Robert M. Dowling, *Eugene O'Neill: A Life in Four Acts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 202.
[10] Agnes Boulton and Eugene O'Neill, *A Wind Is Rising: The Correspondence of Agnes Boulton and Eugene O'Neill*, ed. W. D. King (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), 50, 150–57.
[11] Stephen Black, *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 263.
[12] O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, 378.
[13] Eugene O'Neill, *Exorcism: A Play in One Act* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 43–49.
[14] Ibid., 55.
[15] Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Ella, James, and Jamie O'Neill: 'My Name Is Might-Have-Been,'" *Eugene O'Neill Review* 15, no. 2 (1991): 29.
[16] Ibid.
[17] McAleer, "Christ Symbolism in *Anna Christie*," 389, 392, 396.
[18] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. H. L. Mencken (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1920), 74, 106.
[19] Ibid., 107-108.
[20] Egil Törnqvist, "Nietzsche and O'Neill: A Study in Affinity," *OLI Orbis Litterarum* 23, no. 2 (1968): 97–126.
[21] Nietzsche's term "blond beast" first appears in *Genealogy of Morals*, but the concept of a wild animal degraded in captivity appears in other metaphors such as the lion in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche makes the analogy between the Christian Church and a zoo, implying that priests do not improve but degrade mankind the way animals are degraded in captivity. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce*

Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 183.

[22] Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 88.

[23] Ibid., 69.

[24] Ibid., 72, 94.

[25] Ibid., 75.

[26] After reading the Philadelphia reviews of *Chris*, O'Neill wrote to Tyler on March 17, 1920: "I can think of no way of improving the play at present writing. Which means to write a completely new play and throw the present play in the ash-barrel" (O'Neill, *Selected Letters*, 121). O'Neill sent the first major rewrite of *Chris*, retitled *The Ole Davil*, to Tyler on November 28, 1920: "I promised you last spring that I would have a brand new play around the old theme of Chris ready to submit to you this fall. I haven't mentioned it since because I wanted to wait until the play was an accomplished fact" (138). This draft bore the major changes that distinguish *"Anna Christie"* from *Chris*. The scenario might have been written between April 27 and 28 of 1920. In O'Neill's correspondence with Agnes Boulton, he notes having the play "much in [his] mind" on the twenty-seventh and finishing the new scenario on the twenty-eighth. See Boulton and O'Neill, *A Wind Is Rising*, 142, 146.

[27] Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 339.

[28] O'Neill's correspondence with Mencken was lost in 1928; however, the playwright quoted the editor when he inscribed a copy of *Moon of the Caribbees and Six Other Plays* and presented it as a gift. The full inscription reads: "To H. L. Mencken—From whose first letter—and the first letter of genuine critical appreciation I ever received—I am proud to quote the following 'You have done something new and done it well.' Which If I knew anything of Gaelic, I'd print motto-wise on the red [pen] hand of this O'Neill's crest." See Carl Bode, *Mencken* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 188.

[29] The review came out on Monday, March 29, under the "Books" column and was written by Heywood Broun.

[30] "Nietzsche's 'Antichrist; Proves, on Reading, To Be Anti-Paul," *New York Tribune*, March 28, 1920. It is evident from the O'Neill-Boulton correspondence that the *New York Tribune* was a much-read paper by the newlywed couple. Though Romeike provided them with clippings, both O'Neill and Boulton refer to articles in the *Tribune* and had the opportunity to read them at the home of their neighbors Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook. Presumably, Glaspell and Cook had a subscription or regularly obtained copies of the *Tribune*. See Boulton and O'Neill, *A Wind Is Rising*, 105–34.

[31] Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 118, 172, 119.

[32] Many of Törnqvist's arguments in this essay are reprinted in chapter 3 of *Eugene O'Neill: A Playwright's Theatre*.

[33] Törnqvist, "Nietzsche and O'Neill," 113.

[34] Dowling, *Critical Companion*, 94.

[35] According to Beth Gates Warren, Marie Latter befriended Christine Ell when she arrived in New York city around 1918. Shortly thereafter she met O'Neill who was rehearsing the New York production of *Moon of the Carribees* at the Provincetown Playhouse. "The similarities between O'Neill's character [Anna Christie] and the real-life Marie are unquestionably striking. Anna Christie's personal history closely replicates Marie Latter's, and her speech patterns eerily echo the cadence and phrasing found in Latter's

correspondence." See Beth Gates Warren, *Artful Lives: Edward Weston, Margrethe Mather, and the Bohemians of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 149.

[36] William Davies King, *Another Part of a Long Story: Literary Traces of Eugene O'Neill and Agnes Boulton* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 62-65.

[37] The persistence of the superstitious mind is an appropriate closing thought for *"Anna Christie"* when we recall the story of Boulton and O'Neill's cat at Peaked Hill Bar. They named the cat after the play's heroine. Sheaffer notes that O'Neill had a superstitious attachment to the cat, believing her to be tied to the fate of his play. When O'Neill learned that the cat's tail had become infected, he rushed it to a local doctor, demanding that he "keep it alive . . . at least until the play opens." The story reminds us that even disciples of Nietzsche know all too well the firm grip of superstition. See Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill, Son and Artist*, 1st Cooper Square Press ed (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 64.

[38] Further on in the letter, O'Neill explains that he had not "done enough to make [his] "comma" clear." Sharing an afterthought with Nathan, he explains that he might have given Burke more speculation about "the oath of a non-Catholic" to create in all three characters "a vague foreboding that although they have had their moment, the decision still rests with the sea which has achieved the conquest of Anna." See O'Neill, *Selected Letters*, 148.

[39] Doris Alexander, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 216.

[40] Mabel Collins, *Light on the Path and Karma* (Point Loma, CA: Theosophical Publishing Company, 1904), 6.

[41] If O'Neill had not read Müller prior to working on "*Anna Christie,"* Robinson suggests that "the dramatist independently developed an outlook akin to Vedantic thought by responding to intuitions the sea evoked in him." See James A. Robinson, *Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought: A Divided Vision* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 97.

[42] Ibid., 13 nn. 6 and 7.

[43] Friedrich Max Müller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899), 115–31.

[44] Ibid., 115.

[45] It is worth noting that Müller's book also includes a discussion of the multiple meanings of Brahman that may have interested O'Neill. Brahman is the cause of the universe, but the word derives from "Barh" or "Brih" meaning "to swell or grow." It also can be interpreted as "growing strong, bursting forth, increasing." Müller summarizes the arguments of various scholars who see a connection between the word's etymology and the concept of prayer. Many read Brahman in the sense of the "lifting up of the will above one's individuality," or "religious meditation." Some see Brahman as both prayer and deity. The multiplicity of meanings—utterance of prayer, cause of the universe, deity—has inspired some to connect Brahman with the Greek concept of *Logos*. Müller ultimately dismisses any notion of "borrowing or interaction between Indian and Greek philosophy." However, reading Brahman as prayer or *Logos* implies that *"Anna Christie,"* is a coupling of Eastern and Western prayers—the Brahman and the *Anima Christi.* See Müller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, 49–55.

[46] Robinson, *Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought: A Divided Vision*, 97.

[47] Ibid., 98–99.
[48] See Chapter III, pages 62-64.
[49] Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, ed. David Leopold, trans. Byington, Steven, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 37.
[50] Ibid., 53.
[51] McAleer, "Christ Symbolism in *Anna Christie*," 390.

V. Apes and Ghosts: Philosophy, Tragedy, and Comedy in *The Hairy Ape*

O'Neill's talent for churning out compelling philosophic drama had fully matured when he sat down to write *The Hairy Ape* in December of 1921. After completing the first draft in just three weeks, he wrote a letter to Kenneth Macgowan, sharing his reflections on its style and content:

> Well, *The Hairy Ape*—first draft—was finished yesterday. . . . I don't think the play as a whole can be fitted into any of the current "isms." It seems to run the whole gamut from extreme naturalism to extreme expressionism—with more of the latter than the former. I have tried to dig deep in it, to probe in the shadows of the soul of man bewildered by the disharmony of his primitive pride and individualism at war with the mechanistic development of society. And the man in the case is not an Irishman, as I at first intended, but, more fittingly, an American—a New York tough of the toughs, a product of the waterfront turned stoker—a type of mind, if you could call it that, which I know extremely well. . . . Suffice it for me to add, the treatment of all the sets should be expressionistic, I think.[1]

As the playwright rightfully observes, his script evades generic categorization primarily because much of it calls for naturalistic dialogue on expressionistic sets. The main character "remains a man" and is, in fact, based on an acquaintance of O'Neill's, but his surroundings occasionally take on abstract or non-realistic aspects. The contrast reflects O'Neill's attitude toward expressionism, which he later labeled a "dynamic" genre that better expresses modern life than conventional forms but too often at the expense of character.[2] The play offers unfiltered glimpses into working-class existence as it pursues a philosophical question: How does a human being harmonize "primitive pride" and "individualism" with

the "mechanistic development of society"? O'Neill's deep "dig" into this question is also a hybrid affair as he brings together various philosophies to dramatize the concept of "belonging" and his protagonist's frustrated pursuit of it. O'Neill based his New York "tough of the toughs" character, Yank, on a stoker from Liverpool of Irish descent and a drinking friend, who took his own life unexpectedly. He was the basis of the earlier characters, Driscoll and Mat Burke, hence the initial thought that he would be Irish. His suicide inspired *The Hairy Ape* as O'Neill worked his imagination for what it was that shook the "hard-boiled poise" of a man whom he thought he knew so well.[3] That *The Hairy Ape* was the final product of this reflection suggests O'Neill regarded the Liverpudlian's self-destruction as a kind of modern tragedy. As such, the playwright tells the story employing the philosophic concepts from which he constructed tragic drama: Schopenhauerian will, Stirnerian possession and Nietzschean Apollonian-Dionysian duality. The scene-by-scene analysis that follows explores the use of these concepts as well as the comedic elements that occasionally lighten the tragic mood and justify the play's subtitle: *A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life in Eight Scenes.*

In the meticulous stage directions that open *The Hairy Ape*, O'Neill's description of the fireman's forecastle on a transatlantic liner emphasizes both the animal aspect of his subjects and their cage-like environment. The stage picture invokes two Nietzschean concepts: the Dionysian spirit and the *great blonde beast* who degenerates in the modern world. Among the "*[t]iers of narrow, steel bunks*," a crowd of men, nearly all of whom are drunk, is "*shouting, cursing, laughing* [and] *singing.*" Their "*confused, inchoate uproar swell[s] into a sort of unity, a meaning*," which is compared to "*the bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in a cage*." O'Neill intends for the set to underscore this analogy. It "*should by no means be naturalistic*" and must create the effect of "*a cramped space in*

the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel," in which various elements combine to suggest the "*framework of a cage.*" The description of the men's physique accents their bestial qualities—"*over developed shoulder muscles*," "*hairy chested*," having "*long arms of tremendous power*," and even "*low, receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes.*" (2:121)

Here we find the first iteration of the cage motif, which reappears at narrative turning points throughout Yank's quest to belong. The caged human beast is Nietzsche's metaphor for humankind suffering under the moral restrictions of Christianity. In *Twilight of the Idols*, the philosopher criticizes the concept of improving human beings through morality and compares the enterprise to domesticating animals:

> People have always wanted to 'improve' human beings; for the most part, this has been called morality. But this one term has stood for vastly different things. The project of *domesticating* the human beast as well as the project of *breeding* a certain species of human have both been called 'improvements': only by using these zoological terms can we begin to express the realities here—realities, of course, that the typical proponents of 'improvement,' the priests, do not know anything about, do not *want* to know anything about . . . To call the domestication of an animal an 'improvement' almost sounds like a joke to us. Anyone who knows what goes on in a zoo will have doubts whether beasts are 'improved' there. They become weak, they become less harmful, they are *made ill* through the use of pain, injury, hunger, and the depressive affect of fear. – The same thing happens with the domesticated people who have been 'improved' by priests. In the early Middle Ages, when the church was basically a zoo, the choicest specimens of the 'blond beast' were hunted down everywhere, – people like the Teuton nobles were subjected to 'improvement.' But

> what did an 'improved Teuton look like after being seduced into a cloister? He looked like a caricature of a human being, like a miscarriage; he had turned into a 'sinner,' he was stuck in a cage, locked up inside all sorts of horrible ideas . . . There he lay, sick, miserable, full of malice against himself, hating the drive for life, suspicious of everything that was still strong and happy. In short, a 'Christian,' . . . To put the matter physiologically: when struggling with beasts, making them sick *might* be the only way to make them weak. The church understood this: it has ruined people, it has weakened them, – but it claims to have 'improved' them.[4]

In *The Hairy Ape,* O'Neill places Nietzsche's metaphor in the context of industrialization. Whereas Nietzsche's caged beasts are human beings under the moral bondage of Christianity, the playwright's are those enslaved by industrialized labor. Nietzsche's beasts degenerate under domestication by the church and O'Neill's by the harmful effects of modern life; not only the injurious nature of their toil—the coal dust that poisons their lungs, the drudgery that breaks their backs, etc.—but the profound sense of alienation, which will overwhelm Yank by the end of the play. It is significant that Yank scoffs at toxic conditions and the idea that the stokehole is a hell—the label his agitating shipmate, Long, puts on it as he tries to organize the stokers (2:124-125). As Paddy observes in scene four, Yank is the beast that enjoys the cage (2:140). His declaration pits him against the secondary characters in the scene and sets him up for the inciting incident, in which his belief that he "belongs" in this world of steel and coal is shattered.

The wildness of the "inchoate uproar" is both brutish and festive—"*shouting*" and "*cursing*" are mingled with "*laughter*," "*singing*" and drunkenness—lending it a Dionysian quality. The hairy and bestial characteristics of the stokers are reminiscent of satyrs as much as they are "Neanderthal Man," and we may assume O'Neill is substituting the goat-like

characteristics for apish ones.[5] The play begins as if from a window into a pen of clashing and carousing human animals who respect their alpha male, Yank, the one who "*seems broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest.*" To them, he is their "*most highly developed individual*" who commands respect and receives preferential treatment (2:121-22). The scene proceeds in the vein established by the opening image, with details that have both mythical and anthropological implications. Stokers fawn on Yank as a natural leader, and his status also marks him as the tragic hero—the Dionysus figure whose suffering arcs the play.[6] And yet Yank is clearly not Dionysian in the festive sense. He is more of a killjoy who first speaks to stop men from singing about beer then speaks again to stop his shipmate, Paddy, from leading a rendition of the Irish folk song "Whiskey Johnny." Moments later another "*very drunken sentimental tenor*" strikes up another tune and Yank, again, "*fiercely contemptuous*" shuts him down.

O'Neill's choice of opening actions in establishing the character is not arbitrary. According to Nietzsche, popular songs are strongly associated with Dionysus. In chapter six of *The Birth of Tragedy*, he declares that "every period which is highly productive in popular songs has been most violently stirred by Dionysian currents, which we must always regard as the substratum and prerequisite of the popular song."[7] Music is a central focus of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Recalling its original complete title, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music,* reminds us that one of Nietzsche's concerns was how tragedy emerged from the dithyramb, the lyric song performed in worship of Dionysus.[8] In the performing the "Dionysian dithyramb," argues Nietzsche, "something never before experienced struggles for utterance—the annihilation of the veil of Mâyâ, Oneness as genius of the race, ay, of nature." The dithyramb expresses the essence of nature symbolically, but to comprehend this expression "a man must have already attained the height of self-abnegation."[9] Dionysian

music expresses self-denial and oneness with Primordial Unity. Yank, who disrupts music, represents the opposite value: individuality.[10] Introducing Yank in this way, O'Neill delineates a modern, individualistic temperament that challenges a collective one. Yank resists collective expression (song) and collective identity (class consciousness) holding instead to his distinctly American individualism, which is itself another kind of cage that will severely isolate him by the end of the play.

O'Neill may have also taken inspiration for Yank's attitude from another Nietzschean concept in the *Birth of Tragedy*, the un-Dionysian—a Hellenistic attitude that emerged as a counterpoint to Dionysian wisdom and art. The un-Dionysian was evinced in the endings of new Attic dramas that no longer offered the audience metaphysical comfort to tragic dissonance but rather resolutions involving the use of the *deux ex machina*. According to Nietzsche,

> it combats Dionysian wisdom and art, it seeks to dissolve myth, it substitutes for metaphysical comfort an earthly consonance, in fact, a *deus ex machina* of its own, namely the god of machines and crucibles, that the powers of the genii of nature recognised and employed in the service of higher egoism believes in amending the world by knowledge, in guiding life by science, and that can really confine the individual within narrow sphere of solvable problems, where he cheerfully says to life: "I desire thee: it is worth while to know thee."[11]

There is much in Yank's statements and actions in the first scene that characterize him as un-Dionysian. The chanties Paddy and the other stokers attempt to sing are forms of metaphysical comfort in that they alleviate the grind and confusion of their existence while collectively expressing primal emotions through the spirit of Dionysus. Yank, however, has too much pride in his individualism to partake in this ritual. He believes in his own strength

and the power of machines to overcome and subject the forces of nature to "the service of higher egoism." He has no need for metaphysical comfort because he does not see his situation as in any way wretched or even unfortunate. There is no reason for lament or reform—hence he stops music and rebuffs Long's attempt to lead a revolt. Yank would also rather cogitate than sing ("Nix on de loud noise . . . Can't youse see I'm tryin' to think"), a preference the chorus of stokers appropriately mocks in their chant: "Drink, don't think!" Yank is a new species of primate, one trying to think its way out of tragedy and metaphysical comfort, embracing industrialism and the mechanized devices that are re-defining man's relationship with nature. To him, Paddy and his pre-industrial world are extinct—"Nix on dat on old sailing ship stuff! All dat bull's dead, see? And you're dead too"—and Long's "socialist bull" is a cowardly attitude adopted by those who "aint go no noive" (2:122-24). Yank validates his perspective with a false sense of symbiosis, a belief that he is integral to a larger force and as such he "belongs."[12]

Yank's sense of belonging moves the narrative forward, and in the first scene, he offers it as an ideology to supplant Long's agitation and Paddy's nostalgia. Despite their conditions, stokers can take pride in themselves and their work without any resentment towards wealthy passengers because they are the ones doing a "man's job," their strength makes the ship move: "Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? Well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't. Dat's all" (2:125). Yank perceives the brute strength of the stokers as part of a massive industrial might that moves the world. In the debate that ensues between Paddy and Yank, the latter stresses the obsolescence of man's connection to nature, which the former laments as the very quality that defines belonging. In response to Yank's stated ideology, Paddy grieves extensively over the lost harmony it implies. His monologue, launched "*in a voice full of sorrow*," emphasizes the former man-nature

connection, remarking on clipper ships "wid tall masts touching the sky," men who were "sons of the sea as if 'twas the mother that bore them," "[s]un warming [their] blood," and "wind over the miles of shiny green ocean like strong drink to [their] lungs." This connection, argues Paddy, constitutes true belonging: "'Twas them days men belonged to ships, not now. 'Twas them days a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one" (2:126-7). Man can be one with nature not with industry, and to contrast the two Paddy drops the lyrical quality of his speech and utters descriptions of the latter "*scornfully*" in a staccato tone:

> Is it one wid this you'd be, Yank—black smoke from the funnels smudging the sea, smudging the decks—the bloody engines pounding and throbbing and shaking—wid divil a sight of sun or a breath of clean air—choking our lungs wid coal dust—breaking our backs and hearts in the hell of the stokehole—feeding the bloody furnace—feeding our lives along wid the coal, I'm thinking—caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the Zoo! (2:127).

As zoo-bound apes, sailors turned stokers are the modern counterparts of Nietzsche's Teutons who were torn from their natural milieu and forced to abide under the mores of the medieval church. Paddy's point is that the stokehole is no place for a man to experience belonging as it severs him from the natural world and destroys his body and soul. Paddy recoils at Yank's fervor for industrialization and asks: "Is it a flesh and blood wheel of the engines you'd be?" To which Yank responds: "Sure ting! Dat's me. What about it?" (2:127). In his counter-monologue Yank defends this title and stresses that Paddy and the world he represents are no longer relevant. Paddy is "nutty as cuckoo," "too old," "dead," and the natural world with which he harmonized is gone too: "All dat crazy tripe about nights and days . . . about stars and moons . . . about suns and winds, fresh air and de rest of it—Aw

hell, dat's all a dope dream!" Yanks metaphor here implies that the idea of harmony with nature is not only antediluvian, it is a fantasy—an idealistic vision with no basis in reality. Yank, by contrast, represents modern existence and its forces. He is "livin'," "young," "in the pink," a participant and proponent of recent ingenuities: "I belong and he don't. He's dead but I'm livin' . . . Sure I'm part of de engines! Why de hell not! Dey move, don't dey? Dey're speed, ain't dey? Dey smash trou, don't dey? . . . Dat's new stuff! Dat belongs!" (2:128).

In the second half of his monologue Yank elaborates on his definition of belonging, glorifying modern industry and dismissing the past as if he were a disciple of Futurism.[13] He repeatedly references speed with violent overtones and explicit rejection of the pre-industrial mode of life: "I move wit it! . . . It ploughs trou all de tripe he's been sayin'. It blows dat up! It knocks dat dead! It slams dat offen de face of de oith!" Again, Yank's perspective parallels the myth-destroying spirit of the un-Dionysian—"dat's me!—de new dat's moiderin' de old!" The crux of his belief is an egocentric vision that posits his singular motion, his personal labor, as the force that moves the world: "Everyting else dat makes de woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move witout somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves!" (2:128). With this statement Yank joins the company of O'Neillian heros embodying the "eternal tragedy of man" and his "glorious, self-destructive struggle to make the Force express him instead of being, as an animal is, an infinitesimal incident of its expression"[14] Yank wants to believe the "Force" expresses him and in his desire, we can observe an alignment between Yank's idea of belonging and Schopenhauer's concept of will. Yank belongs to the industrial world because he sees it as an extension of himself:

> I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin; I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel—steel—steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it! (2:128-9).

The claim that he is the force, "de punch," behind various industrial phenomenon lifts Yank to the cosmic level that Schopenhauer reserves for the will—a universal power behind the finite world: "the inmost nature, the kernel, of every particular thing, and also of the whole. It appears in every blind force of nature and also in the preconsidered action of man."[15] Will wills the finite world including the "infinitesimal" actions of men. Yank, however, sees himself as the force behind will, and not, as O'Neill puts it, an "incident of its expression." When this illusion suddenly fades, when the veil of Maya he places over nature to raise his dignity is torn to shreds, Yank realizes that he does not belong. Yank's egocentrism also reflects an anthropocentric mindset, which industrialization inspires as it gives humankind greater mastery over nature. In this lies the distinction between Yank's and Paddy's sense of belonging. Paddy's lyric description of the feeling of oneness with nature acknowledges an individual as a "part" of something and able to express joy in sensing the vastness of a unifying force. A human being, as infinitesimal as he or she is, can yet find harmony. Yank, however, sees himself as a modern-day *axis mundi* (axle of the world), the alpha and omega that makes the world move—hence it is fitting that Paddy calls him a "flesh and blood wheel of the engines."[16]

Nietzsche's characterization of the Dionysian celebrations, which he describes in chapter one of *The Birth of Tragedy*, is another inspiration for the concept of belonging. On the occasion of nature's "reconciliation with her lost son, humankind" there is "singing and

dancing"; "hostile barriers" between human beings "break asunder," and "man expresses his sense of belonging to a higher community." It is in the affirmation of the Dionysian spirit that man can experience the supernatural within him—the sense of being god-like—and the revelation of the Primordial Unity, the force or will behind life, can be felt without terror: "Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: all nature's artistic power reveals itself here, amidst shivers of intoxication, to the highest, most blissful satisfaction of the Primordial Unity."[17] Nietzsche's (and Paddy's) version of belonging stresses the awesomeness of a greater force that dissolves individuation and generates a "god-like" experience via connection to it. Yank's un-Dionysian version stresses the power of the individual to become god-like and see "I" in all phenomena. Yank believes he belongs as the artist, while Paddy discovers he belongs as "a work of art." Yank's version is also divisive in that he judges others according to his values and decides who belongs and who does not—"All de rich guys dat tink dey're somep'n, day aint nothin'! Dey don't belong." He underscores this self-referential attitude in their next exchange. After hearing Paddy begin a rendition of the "*Miller of Dee,*" prompted by the lyrics of the song, he encourages him to "[c]are for nobody," "To hell wit 'em all! And nix nobody else carin.' I kin care for myself, get me!" (2:129). While this fierce independence might be regarded as Stirnerian, it is, in fact, quite different from the sense of *ownness* we see in a character like Anna Christie. Yank's independence is loveless and self-isolating. It is more egotism than egoism. Moreover, his conceit is ironic as he does not care for himself, but, in fact, throws himself away for the sake of steal.

Yank's individualism is mocked in humorous irony when in the closing moments of the scene he and the men respond "*mechanically*" to the eight bells that signal their shift in the stokehole. Men begin filing through the door "*in what is very like a prisoners'*

lockstep"—an artistic choice that O'Neill later shared was "symbolic of the regimentation of men who are slaves of machinery." This idea, O'Neill explained in a 1922 interview with *The American Magazine*, "applies to all of us, because we all are more or less the slaves of convention, or of discipline, or of a rigid formula of some sort."[18] The image mocks Yank, who despite his individual strength and the confidence in belonging, is, in fact, a slave who must respond mechanically to an imposed routine. Paddy, in a fit insubordination, cries out to Yank as he exits: "Let them log me and be damned. I'm no slave the like of you. I'll be sittin' here at me ease drinking, and thinking, and dreaming dreams." Yank, again speaking in the un-Dionysian spirit, associates Paddy with fog and vaunts the power of the ocean liner to cut through it: "Fog, dat's all you stand for. But we drive trou dat, don't we? We split dat up and smash trou—twenty-five knots a hour!" (2:129-30). From O'Neill's works previous to *The Hairy Ape*, we know fog to be a complex symbol invoking the power of nature to confound human beings, to claim them as its own, and to take on supernatural qualities. Yank's attitude denies these powers of nature and heralds their subjugation to the power of man.

In scene two, O'Neill shifts to an antithesis of imagery and character, while sticking to the philosophic subtext of disharmony between nature and humankind. Far from the hellish bowels of the ship, the wealthy Mildred Douglas and her aunt recline on the promenade deck of the liner. The stage directions emphasize contrast, referring to the women as "*two incongruous, artificial figures, inert and disharmonious*" with the natural elements, "*the beautiful, vivid life of the sea*" and the "*sunshine on the deck in a great flood.*" By her description Mildred embodies the very separation of man and nature: "*looking as if the vitality of her stock had been sapped before she was conceived, so that she is the expression not of its life energy but merely of the artificialities that energy had won for*

itself in the spending" (2:130). Born in the wake of lost vitality, Mildred's was the first purely artificial generation of her stock. The language here suggests that she, like Yank, is a new type of human, one with no connection to her organic roots who merely expresses the human capacity for "*artificialities*." Early in the scene, Mildred refers to herself as "a waste product in the Bessemer process" implying that she is an unwanted derivative of her family's industry—steel. She has "none of the energy," "none of the strength" that generated her wealth. Mildred is not what Yank claims to be—steel—and has none of the brute strength or confidence he possesses. In this regard, the two are opposites yet both have a desire to belong. Having proved himself among the hard laborers, Yank is declaratively certain that he belongs, but for Mildred, it is a matter of escaping her class. Her efforts to "discover how the other half lives," which include slumming in New York's East Side and the Whitechapel district of London, reflect the need to break out of her artificial milieu with its mannerisms and frivolities—"[t]he inanities" as she calls them—in order to connect with a genuine struggle for life: "I would like to be of some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? I would like to be sincere, to touch life somewhere." (2:131).

As it does in the first scene, action rises from an intergenerational conflict. Mildred's aunt, like Paddy, challenges the attitude of the new age, but from an entirely antithetical position. The aunt does not represent humankind's connection to nature, but rather the artificial world generated by their division. She disapproves of Mildred's slumming and urges her to remain "as artificial as [she] is," meaning her unruly niece would be much happier remaining among her own kind. Moreover, the attempts to rid herself of her artificiality by seeming sincere is nothing but a "pose"—an inherently fake posture that denies her true nature. Mildred counters with a metaphor for her condition, comparing herself to a leopard complaining of its spots: "When a leopard complains of its spots, it must

sound rather grotesque. (*In a mocking tone.*) Purr, little leopard. Purr, scratch, tear, kill, gorge yourself and be happy—only stay in the jungle where your spots are camouflage. In a cage, they make you conspicuous" (2:132). This metaphor reappears in scene four after Mildred, despite her spots, ventures into the cage of the stokehole all too conspicuously. After the dramatic encounter between Yank and Mildred in scene three, the former is lost in thought and neglects to shower after his shift. Referring to the coal dust on his skin, other stokers remark: "It'll get under your skin. / Give yer the bleedin' itch, that's wot. / It makes spots on you—like a leopard" (2:138). The reference at this point in the text suggests that Mildred's spots, which remind her that she does not belong, have rubbed off on Yank. Following their confrontation, the thought of not belonging begins to haunt Yank. Metaphorically, he has suddenly become the animal in the cage, the creature outside a natural habitat, who now struggles to find where it fits in.

Mildred's encounter with Yank in scene three advances the main action of the play, but beyond its technical function in the plot, it is a symbolic collision with philosophic dimensions. Mildred enters the stokehole wearing a white dress, symbolizing the veil of Maya, the Apollonian symmetry and illusion that conceals Primordial Unity.[19] Here those illusions are represented in the artificialities of Mildred's privileged class, which is completely removed from Dionysian forces of wild, animalistic vitality and regeneration contained in the stokehole.[20] O'Neill sets up the moment maintaining the sharp contrast to an almost comical degree. His description of the stokehole is hell-like while emphasizing the animal quality of the men who seem to be enduring punishments. The stokers shovel coal in a mechanical rhythm before "flood[s] of terrific light and heat" that pour from "fiery round holes" creating silhouettes of them "in the crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas" (2:135). In her white dress with its Apollonian associations, Mildred could not be more

conspicuous, but at this moment O'Neil uses the symbol in a different way than he has previously. The veil of Maya on Mildred is not shrouding her own potential to release Dionysian forces—as it has on female characters in the context of sexual attraction. Here those forces are already present, and Mildred suddenly appears among them as if she were the veil that must be ritualistically torn to shreds. The traumatic moment of her encounter with Yank is a symbolic rending of the veil. Yank loses control of himself in a fit of rage directed at the engineer sounding the command whistle. He unleashes a string of violent threats at his target: "I'll crash yer skull in! I'll drive yer teet' down yer troat! I'll slam yer nose trou de back of yer head! I'll cut yer guts out for a nickel," while "*brandishing his shovel murderously over his head in one hand [and] pounding on his chest gorilla-like, with the other*."[21] When Yank suddenly turns to Mildred believing her to be the engineer, he takes on his most ferocious, animalistic aspect, "*snarling* [a] *murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth.*" O'Neill conveys Mildred enduring Yank's fury as if it were a violent assault: "*paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed.*" And the force behind it is as if it were a savage, unmitigated force of nature, an "*unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless.*" (2:137). The moment captures the dark and destructive Dionysian forces released in tragedy that destroy *principium individuationis*, Yank has lost his self-possession, his Apollonian energy, and become bestial. Hence, it is appropriate that Mildred refers to him as "the filthy beast," and, moreover, that Yank is mysteriously affronted by the remark: "He feels himself insulted in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride" (2:137). Mildred has denied Yank his individuation, his self-image as an alpha male and alpha-omega of where he belongs. The woman embodying artificiality has destroyed Yank's artificial sense of harmony, from which he derives his power.[22] His status suddenly shifts from highest to lowest, from being

the wheel that moves the world to a mere beast of burden. Furthermore, the insult, "beast," echoes Nietzsche's metaphor, and identifies Yank as an animal in a cage who belongs elsewhere.

At the moment prior to the encounter, a threat to his perceived rank triggers his anger. Yank is in the middle of defying the engineer, demonstrating how his self-proclaimed significance oversteps social boundaries: "Take it easy dere, you! Who d'yuh tinks runnin' dis game, me or you? When I git ready, we move. Not before! When I git ready, get me!" (2:136). He is on the verge of a tragic moment, in which his inflated pride may prove self-destructive. However, the crushing blow—a final, irrevocable transgression or a violent response from his superiors—does not come and instead he suffers a psychological blow in Mildred's wrecking of his self-image. Thus, he experiences a tragic moment but lives to reflect on it, and we find him in the next scene in the "*exact attitude of Rodin's 'The Thinker'*" (2:138).

Mildred's descent into the stokehole in scene three is also not without sexual undercurrents and exploring them illuminates the philosophy of the play while broadening our appreciation of it as a "comedy." Both stage directions and character lines depict the stokehole as hell. Paddy, Long and the crewmembers repeatedly refer to it as such—"six days in hell then Southampton," "We lives in 'ell," "the hell of the stokehole," etc. (2:123-127). Following O'Neill's fiery imagery that sets the scene, Paddy remarks that he is destroyed by "this divil's own watch" (2:135). Mildred also calls the place "hell" in scene two (2:133). These elements combined with repeated references to the stokers as apish and their appearance in the scene as "chained gorillas" relates Mildred's journey into the stokehole to the sixteenth-century proverb: "to lead apes in hell." The phrase, familiar to us (and probably to O'Neill) by Shakespeare's use of it, expresses the imagined punishment

inflicted upon women who die virgins—having not copulated on earth, they are forced to copulate with apes in hell.[23] Though the text does not offer a complete picture of Mildred's personal life, O'Neill hints at an absence of sexual activity. Mildred's desire to break from her surroundings and "touch life somewhere" implies an isolated, discontented existence. And in response to her aunt calling her a "poser" Mildred replies: "You're right. But would that my millions were not so anemically chaste," implying that her money has preserved her virtue but robbed her of life. Her slumming is an attempt to discover what her millions cannot provide, which she claims is sincere, but which her aunt regards as a "morbid thrill." (2:133-4) The stokehole visit is exemplary of the latter as it holds gloomy and exciting prospects. It is both an endeavor to remedy the circumstance of being "anemically chaste" and a vision of its punishment. O'Neill captures both elements with an expressionistic quality that abstracts the location while retaining details that convey the reality of the moment. Mildred's ghost-like appearance in the white dress and Yank's subsequent description of her as being "all in white like dey wrap around stiffs," inspires a reading of the scene as a vision of Mildred's afterlife (2:142). In any case, her state as she wanders in the stokehole is one of mounting apprehension. She "*turns paler*," feels her "*pose is crumbling*," begins shivering with fear, but forces herself to get closer to the men to prove her strength and hopefully connect with them. Peter Egri has observed the sexual connotations in Yank's lines as he shovels coal into the furnace he feminizes.[24] As the scene begins, Yank uses metaphors that imply feeding: She's gittin' hungry! Pile some grub in her! Trow it into her belly!" As the shoveling continues, the work becomes more intense, the men begin to sweat, and the language becomes more suggestive of sexual gratification: "Sling it into her! Let her ride! Shoot de piece now! Call de toin on her! Drive her into it! Feel her move! Watch her smoke!" (2:136). Egri's observation further suggests a connection

to the proverb. As apes in hell, the stokers are trapped in an underworld and made to perform sexual acts, and if we read them as satyrs this activity also seems fitting. The satyrs of Greek drama were equipped with large *phalloi*; here the stokers wield shovels, which they handle "as if they were part of their bodies" (2:135). These apes/satyrs, however, do not direct their sexual energy at an actual woman but rather at a feminized machine, implying that the Dionysian spirit is compelled to fuel industrialization. Reading Mildred's outburst at Yank comically, Yank is a "filthy beast" in the sense of having an unrestrained, animal-like sexuality.[25] His virility, for which she has an eye,[26] is not controlled properly and is entirely spent on servicing the machine and raging over how he services it. Thus, the ape that might couple with Mildred, either to punish her chastity or provide a thrill, does not perform as he should. Discussing the scene in an interview, O'Neill commented that his depiction of coal shoveling here is expressionistic for the sake of contributing to the rhythm: "For rhythm is a powerful factor in making anything expressive. People do not know how sensitive they are to rhythm. You can actually produce and control emotions by that means alone."[27] Following O'Neill's assertion, the mechanical rhythm that sets scene three has presumably had an effect on Yank's emotions. The "*mechanical regulated recurrence,*" the artificial tempo that surrounds Yank and forces his loss of temper, produces the rage that renders him a beast.

Paddy sarcastically hints at the potential for romance between Yank and Mildred in scene four when he taunts Yank with the assertion that the two must have fallen in love: "'Twas love at first sight, divil a doubt of it! If you'd seen the endearin' look on her pale mug when she shriveled away with her hands over her eyes to shut out the sight of him! Sure, 'twas as if she'd seen a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo!" (2:141). Paddy observes that behind the intensity of Mildred's reaction and Yank's subsequent rage must lie

some mysterious force of attraction that can inspire both fear and ardor. This insight is also expressed in his counter to Yank's assertion that he has "fallen in hate" not love: "'Twould take a wise man to tell one from the other" (2:139). Paddy sees love in hate and sexual excitement in utter terror because he can appreciate the Dionysian. As the oldest satyr of the group, he holds a Silenus-like status and bears the wisdom to go with it. He appreciates the glimpse at Primordial Unity that occurs in the collision between Yank and Mildred—a moment that, as Nietzsche observed, is both ecstatic and horrific. Both characters suddenly lose their individuation. Yank, surprised by Mildred, endures an abrupt stripping of his self-image, while Mildred's simultaneous shock breaks the rebellious spirit that defines her. The experience leaves both wondering who they are, but having shared it, connects them in a way that justifies Paddy's remarks.

In taunting Yank and retelling the story, Paddy changes Mildred's actual slur from "filthy beast" to "hairy ape," saying: "She looked it at you if she didn't say the word itself" (2:141). The substitution makes the incident more comical but exacerbates Yank's wounded pride and launches the revenge quest that advances the plot. With Paddy leading the stokers in jibes and humorous commentary, the scene takes on the quality of satyr play. Having asserted himself as a heroic personage to be respected, here Yank becomes the *spoudaios* or serious figure to be mocked by the satyr-chorus.[28] Long, the agitator, also fights to be taken seriously and sets the tone of the scene by jumping up on a bench and crying out for justice only to be mocked, rebuffed and forced to "slin[k] back out of sight" (2:141). The apish stokers, like their Greek counterparts, are determined to break down the pomp and rigidity of serious figures. Yank's brooding "*Thinker*" posture at the top of the scene elicits sarcasm from the group, and as he becomes consumed with rage the stokers eventually pile on him to cool his spirits. The action here establishes a motif that is repeated in the subsequent scenes

of the play until Yank's final demise. In each setting, Yank's temper flares and he must be violently subdued. The action of the satyr/stoker chorus is repeated by the police in scene five, the prison guards (after the curtain) in scene six, the I.W.W. workers in scene seven and the gorilla in scene eight. In each of these scenes, Yank is isolated, unable to connect with anyone, and fails to re-establish his sense of belonging. O'Neill's intention to focus on Yank's alienation and the dynamic between him and the chorus is documented in his 1932 essay "Second Thoughts," a sequent piece to "Memoranda on Masks:"

> In *The Hairy Ape* a much more extensive use of masks would be of the greatest value in emphasizing the theme of the play. From the opening of the fourth scene, where Yank begins to think he enters into a masked world, even the familiar faces of his mates in the forecastle have become strange and alien. They should be masked, and the faces of everyone he encounters thereafter, including the gorilla.[29]

O'Neill's suggestion would give the other characters more coherence as a chorus while heightening the protagonist's perception of an alien world where he cannot integrate. Such a choice may also push the play too far towards expressionism and raise O'Neill's own concern about the genre—that it erodes access to character.[30] Another clear downside of more masks would be that they visually announce Yank's failure to find belonging at the top of every scene. Naturalistic details maintain the play's intrigue and ground philosophical ideas that might otherwise seem contrived and unembodied.

Our fascination with Yank rises as he continually fails to achieve revenge and is unable to overcome his wounded pride. In Stirnerian terms, he is possessed by the idea that he must belong, and he cannot disassociate this idea from the impulse to punish Mildred. In this way, Mildred, whom Yank fittingly refers to as a "ghost," symbolizes the Stirnerian spirt he cannot exorcize. To rebuild his self-image, he must prove that he belongs, and

Mildred doesn't—"I belong and she don't, see!" (2:142). As the presumed axle of the world, Yank cannot tolerate the humility of living at the margins, of not being "da punch" that moves everything else; but he is reminded of that loss by the ghost-like image of Mildred seared into his memory. He is forced to acknowledge that the wealth she belongs to is the true axle of the industrial world, and he is a mere monkey dancing on command: "She grinds de organ and I'm on de string, huh? I'll fix her." Yank, at any cost, must reclaim his dignity, and he believes he can only do so by destroying the ghost that has stolen it from him.

Yank's attempt to exact revenge on Mildred's class in scene five reveals the ultimate futility of his quest and sets a precedent that persists throughout the play. After a plan to intercept Mildred on the gangplank in Southampton is foiled by detectives, he joins Long on a trip to Fifth Avenue where his fellow stoker unsuccessfully tries to awaken his "bloody clarss consciousness" (2:146). O'Neill returns to the juxtaposition of natural and artificial worlds that set scene two, contrasting the sunshine on the street with the "*artificial light*" in shop windows. "*The general effect is of a background of magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by commercialism, a background in tawdry disharmony with the clear light and sunshine on the street itself*" (2:144). Yank's temper flares after he and Long notice the monkey fur in the store window. Long remarks "*with grim humor*" on how the price exceeds that value placed on the body and soul of a hairy ape, and Yank suddenly clenches his fist and grows "*pale with rage*," "*as if the skin in the window were a personal insult*." The monkey fur, lit artificially by the display lamp, captures the "*tawdry disharmony*" between the natural world and the artificial one humankind has constructed around itself. The remains of the animal, torn from its environment and degraded by commercialization, sends Yank's mind back to Mildred, "Trowin it up in my face! Christ! I'll fix her," and the degradation he suffered when she deprived him of his sense of belonging. Notably, O'Neill

visualizes Yanks becoming "pale" in his anger (not red), a more symbolic choice that hints at the ultimate fatality of his violent emotions. (2:146).

When Yank's rage spills into a quarrel with Long over whether "peaceful means" are the appropriate response, it becomes clearer that the character's quick temper is the basis of his hamartia—the misjudgment that brings on his tragedy. Long's admonishments: "[k]eep yer bloomin' temper" and "Remember force defeats itself," allude to the protagonist's eventual self-destruction. The recurrence of Yank's volatility and its consequences illustrates the necessity of Stirnerian *ownness* and Nietzschean self-mastery. From the Stirnerian perspective, the spirit that possesses Yank bars his self-determination. Yank is not free to act when he is haunted by Mildred and obsessed with belonging. Moreover, so long as Yank defines belonging as involvement in a human-constructed force, he will always seek to be possessed. For Nietzsche, passion is not an end in itself. Self-control and moderation are an important part of self-overcoming. Power reveals itself in self-mastery when passions have gone through the process of sublimation.[31] Nietzsche observes in *Human, All Too Human*:

> A man who will not become master of his irritability, his venomous and vengeful feelings, and his lust, and attempts to become master in anything else, is as stupid as the farmer who lays out his field beside a torrent without guarding against that torrent. [32]

Yank's fieriness is completely ineffectual in achieving any measure of retribution. Despite his efforts to provoke them, the Fifth Avenue pedestrians are so mannered and remote in their "*detached, mechanical unawareness*," that they cannot acknowledge his existence. O'Neill heightens the expressionism of the scene, capturing the artificiality of affluent society with non-naturalistic action and appearance. As with Mildred, he visually

characterizes the wealthy mob that exits the church as deathly and ghost-like—"*talking in toneless simpering voices*," "*calcimined,*" a "*procession of gaudy marionettes resembling Frankensteins*" (2:147). Yank refers to them as "stiffs laid out for de boneyard!" as he tries to incite responses with ribaldry (2:148).

Lines spoke by the crowd as they exit the church symbolically link its lifeless artificiality with the denial of Christ. The voices praise the sincerity of "Doctor Caiaphas," echoing the name of the high priest who plotted the murder of Christ. According to the crowd, he has just preached a sermon on the false doctrines of "radicals"—presumably referring to figures like Long or leaders of labor organizations like the I.W.W., an institution, as we learn in scenes six and seven, falsely maligned for revolutionary intent. The bantering continues with a suggestion to organize a solely American fundraiser ("a hundred percent American bazaar") for "rehabilitating the veil of the temple"—presumably, to restore the veil that concealed the Holy of Holies, which was torn upon Christ's death, recounted in Matthew 27:51. The veil of the temple recalls another veil symbol invoked in the play: the veil of Maya. In Christian, Vedantic and philosophic contexts the idea of repairing the veil implies a distancing from cosmic forces—in the case of Christianity, the desire to return the temple to a state before Christ, essentially denying his death and resurrection. As a Vedantic symbol, "rehabilitating" the veil suggests revitalizing the illusion by which Maya functions. For Schopenhauer, the statement denotes more "representation," or more false appearances that conceal the noumenal reality of "will."[33] For Nietzsche, a rehabilitated veil would be a stronger barrier from Primordial Unity, a more Apollonian existence well protected from the Dionysian forces that threaten to rend it. Hence, grounding the Fifth Avenue figures in a religious/philosophic perspective that seeks to further illusion justifies the playwright's choice of exaggerated artificiality. Their affected

mode of existence expresses their attachment to Apollonian illusion as does their obliviousness to Yank, who in his lewdness here embodies the Dionysian spirit they deny. The most insentient moment, and perhaps the most comical, comes as Yank punches a man in the face who remains completely "unmoved" by the blow. The altercation illustrates the ineffectual nature of Yank's rage and mocks the seriousness with which he exerts himself. As he was at the end of scene four, the overheated Yank is quelled, this time by a platoon of policemen. (2:149)

The complications in scene six further isolate Yank while deepening his desperate drive for revenge. After emerging from the pose as Rodin's *"The Thinker,"* Yank announces himself to the prisoners on Blackwell's Island as "a hairy ape," marking his adoption of the insulting epithet that initially sparked his rage. Referring to himself in this way acknowledges his marginal status as an angry and defiant individual who only belongs among similarly disenfranchised types. Thus, following his announcement, Yank declares that his fellow prisoners must be what he is—"Ain't dat what youse all are—apes?" Yank recounts his traumatic experience in the stokehole, again emphasizing Mildred's death-like artificiality, "[h]er hands—dey was skinny and white like dey was painted or somep'n." In this retelling of the event, Yank accents the injustice of it all. This woman, "who was like some dead ting de cat brung in," could not possibly belong unless it was in a toy store or on a garbage can. Yet somehow, she makes him feel as though he did not belong, able to rob him of his confidence with an insult, able to find the "noive to do him doit," as he puts it (2:151). Again, Yank's fury is triggered by a primate reference, here Senator Queen's accusation that the I.W.W. stands for "Industrious Wreckers of the World" who plan to turn civilization into "a desolation where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to an ape!" (2:153).[34] Queen's statement is the most explicit affront to Yank yet, implying

that as the "hairy ape" he does not belong among those created in God's likeness. Queen's speech also thematically parallels Doctor Caiaphas's sermon, which called for greater protection of man's pristine image, "God's masterpiece," against chaotic, "topsy-turvy" forces. The Apollonian-Dionysian conflict is now unequivocally in the context of socioeconomic class division. Queen's perception of the I.W.W., in its unrestrained savagery, threatens the perfect image of humanity. In response to Queen's polarizing speech, Yank discovers he must take the side of the Dionysian force—"Wreckers, dat's de right dope! Dat belongs! Me for them." Returning to the *"Thinker"* posture, Yank re-assesses his condition and emerges fully conscious of Douglas as the enemy to him and the proletariat.

Maurice LaBelle argues that, by thinking, Yank demonstrates that he is more evolved than his Neanderthal peers and is moving away from their "Ancient Life" towards a modern one that must synthesize the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict.[35] Yank's cogitations occur after the incidents that force him to doubt his sense of belongin: Mildred's remark and the imperviousness of the Fifth Avenue crowd. From LaBelle's premise, it follows that Yank's mental space is disturbed by the disparity between Apollonian and Dionysian elements, here represented as class conflict. The disparity becomes more and more pronounced until the moment in scene six when Yank suddenly understands the repressive nature of the capitalist/Apollonian force:

> *Suddenly* YANK *jumps to his feet with a furious groan as if some appalling thought had crashed on him—bewilderedly.*) Sure—her old man—president of de Steel Trust—makes half de steel in de world—steel—where I tought I belonged—drivin' trou—movin'—in dat—to make *her*—and cage me in for her to spit on! Christ (*He shakes the bars of his cell door till the whole tier trembles. Irritated, protesting exclamations from those awakened or trying to get to sleep.*) He made dis—dis cage!

> Steel! *It* don't belong, dat's what! Cages, cells, locks, bolts, bars—dat's what it means!—holdin' me down wit him at de top! (2:154)

Yank's revelation reverses the perspective that formerly defined his sense of belonging as he suddenly understands what the play's symbolism has been hinting at: modern industrial capitalism has exploited the Dionysian spirit, subjected it to economic forces to promote Apollonian artificiality. It is now undeniable that he is a beast of burden, caged for Mildred's sake, kept down and as far away from her kind as possible. With this recognition Yank, the ape who once loved the cage, now violently rattles it. Even though he once declared, "And I'm steel—steel—steel!" (2:129) he now vows to destroy it: "But I'll drive trou! Fire, dat melts it! I'll be fire—under de heap—fire dat never goes out—hot as hell—breakin' out in de night" (2:154). Yank's fiery temper reaches its highest point, becoming all-consuming and rendering him the antithesis to Apollonian self-restraint, respecting no boundaries, and breaking out of his cell. The demonstration is bold; however, he is ultimately overpowered when the guard turns the fire hose on him. The event foreshadows his inevitable downfall—Yank expresses himself in a temper that flares and goes out.

While intensifying his bitterness and clarifying his target, Yank's revelation does nothing to bring him closer to belonging. He enters I.W.W. headquarters in scene seven, eager to join and desperate to be accepted: "Can't youse see I belong? Sure! I'm reg'lar. I'll stick, get me?" (2:157). But Yank cannot become a regular and finds that he does not belong at the I.W.W. either. Despite its anarchic reputation, the organization has a specific code of conduct known as "legitimate direct action" (2:158). It is not a place for excess, and the Secretary must expel Yank once he shares his criminal intent to dynamite a Douglas steel factory. Yank assumes the thinker pose a fourth time, signifying another crisis to his sense of belonging: "So dem boids don't tink I belong, neider. Aw, to hell wit 'em! Dey're in de

wrong pew—de same old bull—soapboxes and Salvation Army—no guts!" This last insult comically refers to what Yank seeks in his quest to belong: something with "guts." The I.W.W. promises comfort, stability and workers' rights, but these do not satisfy the visceral need to be a part of something larger:

> What does dat get yuh? Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly. Feedin' your face—sinkers and coffee—dat don't touch it. It's way down—at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it, and yuh can't stop it. It moves, and everything moves. It stops and de whole woild stops. Dat's me now—I don't tick, see?—I'm a busted Ingersoll, dat's what. Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me (2:159).

Yank's analogy to motion and stasis echoes his axis mundi speech from scene one; however, here his will is not the origin of that motion. Now, he locates that force in a mysterious place "way down" in his gut, which he cannot control. Kurt Eisen identifies this moment as one of anagnorisis. Yank, in experiencing self-knowing, refers to himself as a "busted Ingersoll"—a broken watch[36]—figuratively expressing that he has lost what makes him "tick" and symbolically that he has fallen "out of sync with the modernity."[37] When Yank felt connected to steel he felt as though he were part of the great force of industrialization, but the events of the play have proved his perception to be false and left him estranged and unable to harmonize with his surroundings.

In Stirnerian terms, Nazareth Steel merely possessed Yank and used his energy to further its own cause. But what was Yank's cause? How does Yank serve his ego? What work can he do to find harmony with something larger—the way Paddy once found harmony with the sea or Andy Mayo with the farm in *Beyond the Horizon*? Dispossessed of the spirit of steel, Yank would seem primed to take ownership of himself; however, he has

no sense of identity outside of his relationship to industry—a fact hinted at by his struggling to remember his own name (Robert Smith) when asked by I.W.W. Secretary. Smith believes he belongs as "Yank," but once separated from steel and his false sense of belonging, he has no identity to which he can return. He is still owned by the world and cannot take ownership of himself. Yank is discovering that the machine age has generated wealth but destroyed the vitality of life.[38] It has divided humanity into two groups, neither of which can offer him a sense of belonging: those who own capital and have lost their vitality, and those losing their vitality because they want capital.

Angry and bewildered by his return to alienation, at the end of the scene Yank is seized with a simian impulse and, turning "*a bitter mocking face up like an ape gibbering at the moon,*" he asks the man in the moon for guidance (2:159). The moment is visually humorous while symbolically expressive of Yank's struggle with his own Dionysian spirit. He can no longer deny the animal inside him or the pessimism inherent in the Dionysian destruction of individuation. When a policeman asks Yank what he has been doing, he replies: "Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge. Write it in de blotter. I was born, get me!" (2:160) As if having discovered the wisdom of Silenus, Yank comes to understand that it is best not to be born; that separation from the primordial unity is torment, individuation is tragedy. Such a perspective leaves Yank directionless and closer to understanding there is nowhere on earth he belongs. In parting he asks, "where do I go from here?" and receives a rude but symbolically appropriate response from the policeman: "Go to hell" (2:160). In the modern world, where thriving means living amid artificiality, the Dionysian spirit is relegated to hellish confinements, spaces where its power is exploited for industry (the stokehole), for consumerism (Fifth Avenue window displays) or for sheer spectacle (the zoo).

The gorilla's posture at the zoo in scene eight marks the last iteration of the "*Thinker*" motif and further associates the image with hell. Hell has been defined in the play as the place where one thinks, where one ponders the loss of belonging, where the un-Dionysian cogitates on some means to negate tragedy. If it is a sign of a more highly evolved creature, it is also a statement that evolution has led humankind into an underworld. O'Neill's reference to Rodin's iconic sculpture now seems more inspired by the smaller version atop the of *The Gates of Hell* than the larger one that came to generally represent philosophy or intelligence.[39] The beast in the cage has been a defining metaphor for Yank, and looking upon the zoo-bound animal, he arrives at a greater understanding of his own plight:

> So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white-faced tart! I was you to her, get me? On'y outa de cage—broke out—free to moider her, see? Sure! Dat's what she tought. She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too—worser'n yours— sure—a damn sight—'cause you got some chanct to bust loose—but me— (*He grows confused.*) Aw, hell! It's all wrong aint it? (2:161)

Just as Yank becomes frustrated with his thought process, he hits upon Nietzsche's comparison and begins to comprehend that his cage is one he can never escape because it is not literal. The gorilla may escape its bars, but Yank is imprisoned in the modern world and will never be able to live in a place where he belongs. Having spent the night reflecting and watching the sun come up, Yank comes to appreciate Paddy's sense of humankind being connected to nature but laments that he "couldn't get *in* it," "couldn't belong in dat" (2:161). Yank is purely modern, born too late to even recollect belonging or "get[ting] *in*" to the world Paddy knew. In scene one he declared the "dope dream" of the past dead, here he is acutely aware of being isolated by that death. He also mocked and dismissed Paddy for

"Hittin' de pipe of de past" (2:128) and here envies the gorilla who can "sit and dope dream in de past." Yank faces the reality that he has no past and no future, "on'y what's now—and dat don't belong." Isolation in the present is, therefore, a kind of hell: "I ain't on oith and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call hell, huh?" (2:162).

To be between earth and heaven, past and future, is the condition of the modern individual, who knows neither the harmony of the natural world—the earth as the gorilla lived in it or as Paddy sporadically experienced it—nor that of some distant utopia—the heaven of ideals, such as the social order that inspires Long and the I.W.W. In a 1924 interview O'Neill explains how Yank is to be regarded as a symbol of this limbo:

> *The Hairy Ape* was propaganda in the sense that is was a symbol of man, who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal and has not yet acquired in a spiritual way. Thus, not being able to find it on earth, nor in heaven, he's in the middle, trying to make peace, taking the "woist punches from bot' of 'em." This idea was expressed in Yank's speech. The public saw just the stoker, not the symbol, and the symbol makes the play either important or just another play. Yank can't go forward, and so he tries to go back. This is what his shaking hands with the gorilla meant. But he can't go back to "belonging" either. The gorilla kills him. The subject here is the same ancient one that always was and always will be the one subject for drama and that is man and his struggle with his own fate. The struggle used to be with the gods, but is now with himself, his own past, his attempt "to belong." [40]

Yank's fatal attempt to "go back to 'belonging'" symbolizes the struggle of modern humans with their past, and in the context of the scene is the result of the character's own hamartia.

Yank loses his patience trying to think or talk about belonging, he can only respond instinctually: "It beats it when you try to tink it or talk it—it's way down—deep—behind—you 'n' me we feel it." At this moment the stoker can no longer remain within the limits of self-control, he will never think his way to belonging and must have action. Inspired to perpetrate violence on those he resents, he identifies with the animal and lets go of the man: "Sure! Bot' members of dis club! (*He laughs—then in a savage tone.*) What de hell! T' hell wit it! A little action, dat's our meat! Dat belongs! Knock 'em down and keep bustin' 'em till dey croaks yuh wit a gat—wit steel!" (2:162). Yank understands that a rampage with the gorilla will end in death—"We'll knock 'em offen de oith and croak wit de band playin.' Come on, Brother"—but would rather die with a comrade, with a sense of belonging, than continue living in alienation. Thus, setting the gorilla free is an act of suicide, in which Yank, perhaps like the Liverpudlian on whom the character is based, chooses to destroy himself, having found no way of satisfying his need to belong. By placing his death at the hands of the gorilla and not a police officer who would kill both "wit a gat [gun]—wit steel," O'Neill emphasizes what he states in the interview: it is Yank's going backward, his looking to fit in with the animal that kills him. Since scene four, Yank's push to know belonging has triggered members of the chorus to waylay him, and here that action is carried out by the gorilla. The stage directions suggest that his death is lamented by the other primates in the monkey house: "*He slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail.*" With the sound of his fellow apes keening for him, we are left to ponder the final sentence: "*And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs*" (2:163). The tragic nature of the play becomes evident despite its humorous moments (including this one). Yank, or the modern human being, has dared to step away from the chorus of primates;

in his mechanized development he has ventured far from nature for the sake of his individuation, but having failed, is recalled by that chorus and returned to where he belongs.

O'Neill intended his investigation into belonging to have universal resonance. "Yank is really yourself, and myself," he told an interviewer a year after *The Hairy Ape* opened. "He is *every* human being."[41] Inspired by the suicide of a friend, O'Neill drew from the philosophic models of Stirner, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche to articulate the need to belong as a premise for tragedy. He envisioned the journey of his protagonist who searches for "the thread that [would] make him part of the fabric of life,"[42] as a collision of Apollonian and Dionysian forces, a struggle with Stirnerian possession and an estrangement from cosmic will. O'Neill set these philosophic complications squarely in the context of class conflict and demonstrated how firmly modern human beings are entrenched in a meaningless middle ground. Yank's character arc is undeniably tragic, yet O'Neill managed to lighten the mood with a humorous imagery and satyr-play inspired scenarios. In the end, the chorus reclaims their hero who fails as an individual but returns to nature to validate its constancy as a regenerative force. Overcoming the limbo in which Yank finds himself is perhaps a task for a more advanced human, and if there is a final comedic viewpoint from which we can laugh at the play it may be from that of Nietzsche's Übermensch. In the Prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the narrator speaks on the ape-human relationship:

> What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, thing of shame.
>
> Ye have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once were ye apes, and even yet man is more of an ape than any of the apes. Even the wisest among you is only a disharmony and hybrid of plant and phantom. But do I bid you become phantoms or plants?

Lo, I teach you the Superman![43]

For the Übermensch, and possibly for O'Neill, Yank is a "laughing stock" in the sense that humankind in its modern predicament is also a "laughing stock"—an absurd creature who has evolved only to create disharmony between itself and nature. Modern humans are a mixture of primal instincts and artificialities, which they cannot reconcile. They may yet be regarded as a "painful embarrassment" for the humans Nietzsche envisions who might look back on our modern world and consider its apes and ghosts.

Notes

---

[1] The letter to Macgowan is quoted in Travis Bogard, *Contour In Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 240–41.

[2] In an interview printed in the *Herald Tribune* on November 16, 1924, O'Neill explained his perspective on expressionism: "For expressionism denies the value of characterization. As I understand it, expressionism tries to minimize everything on the stage that stands between the author and the audience. Their theory, as far as I can make out, is that the character gets in the way. . . . I personally do not believe that an idea can be readily put over an audience except through characters. . . . The real contribution of the expressionist has been in the dynamic qualities of his plays I have something of this in *The Hairy Ape.* But the character of Yank remains a man and everyone recognizes him as such." See Eugene O'Neill and Mark W. Estrin, *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Estrin, Mark W., Literary Conversations Series (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 62.

[3] O'Neill and Estrin, 31 and 68.

[4] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Aaron Ridley, and Judith Norman, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 183-184.

[5] Edwin A. Engel observes the satyr/ape substitution in his essay "Ideas in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill." See Ernest G. Griffin, ed., *Eugene O'Neill: A Collection of Criticism*, Contemporary Studies in Literature (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 24.

[6] Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy* that all tragic heroes are representations of Dionysus. "It is an indisputable tradition that Greek tragedy in its earliest form had for its theme only the sufferings of Dionysus and that for some time the only stage-hero therein was simply Dionysus himself. With the same confidence, however, we can maintain that not until Euripides did Dionysus cease to be the tragic hero, and that in fact all the celebrated figures of the Greek stage Prometheus, Oedipus, etc. are but masks of this original hero, Dionysus." See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. William A. Haussmann, The Complete Works of

Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 1 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 81.

[7] Nietzsche, 51.

[8] See note 23 in chapter 1. The original title appeared in 1872 as *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. In 1886 the text was re-issued as *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*. See also Keith Ansell-Pearson, ed., *A Companion to Nietzsche*, 1. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 506.

[9] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 32.

[10] In chapters 5 and 6 of the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche challenges the idea that Greek lyric poetry was subjective, that is proceeding from an individual viewpoint. "The Dionysian musician is, without any picture, himself just primordial pain and the primordial re-echoing thereof." The individual musician is not singing about himself, but rather of an eternal self: "this self is not the same as that of the waking, empirically real man, but the only verily existent and eternal self-resting at the basis of things, by means of the images whereof the lyric genius sees through even to this basis of things." Hence the lyricist's use of 'I' is always transcending the self and attempting to speak of a larger, primal suffering embodied in Dionysus. Paddy and the singers in the stokehole, affirm the tradition of the folk song and its connection to Dionysius with lyrics in the first person that capture a sense of collective suffering. See Nietzsche, 46–47.

[11] The un-Dionysian spirit also inhabited what Nietzsche labeled in *The Birth of Tragedy* as *theoretical man*—a type Hellenic character that embodied the theoretical optimism of Socratic faith in knowledge and realism in art. See Nietzsche, 135–36.

[12] Thierry Dubost, *Struggle, Defeat, or Rebirth: Eugene O Neill's Vision of Humanity* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 1997), 110.

[13] Robert J. Cardullo argues that like Yank, the futurists were similarly preoccupied with technology, speed and the power of machines. "The futurists welcomed steel and all the other products of industrial society— with its electricity, urbanization, and revolution in the means of transport and communication—with an all-embracing optimism, for they saw them as the means by which people would be able to dominate their environment totally." Furthermore, "speed, change, and motion of the industrial age were also fundamental to the futurists' love of the modern and their rejection of the static, lethargic past—the very "natural" past about which Paddy rhapsodizes in Scene 1 of O'Neill's play. See R.J. Cardullo, "Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape in Relation to Greek Tragedy, Italian Futurism, and Divine Comedy," *Moderna Sprak* 106, no. 2 (2012): 30.

[14] "[A]nd the one eternal tragedy of Man is his glorious, self-destructive struggle to make the Force express him instead of being, as an animal is, an infinitesimal incident of its expression." See note 11 in Chapter 3 for the full excerpt of the letter to Arthur Hobson Quinn on April 3, 1925. Eugene O'Neill, Travis Bogard, and Jackson R. Bryer, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 195.

[15] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea.*, trans. R. B. Haldane Haldane and J. Kemp, vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1909), 143.

[16] In Paddy's metaphor for Yank, flesh and blood wheel of the engines, and Yank's assertion that he is the beginning and the end and makes the world, there is a trace of mysticism that points at O'Neill's interest in Eastern philosophy and The Upanishads in particular. The axis mundi concept appears in many cultures but can be found in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: "And verily this Self is the lord of all beings. And as all spokes are contained

in the axle and the felly of a wheel, all beings, and all those selfs (of the earth, water, &c.) are contained in that Self." O'Neill could have read Max Müller's translation first published in 1884. See Max Müller, ed., *The Upanishads*, trans. Max Müller, vol. 15, The Sacred Books of The East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884), 116.

[17] Nietzche's description appears in the last paragraph of chapter 1 in the *Birth of Tragedy:*

> Under the charm of the Dionysian, not only is the covenant between man and man again established but also estranged, hostile or subjugated nature again celebrates her reconciliation with her lost son, man. Of her own accord earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey approach from the desert and the rocks. The chariot of Dionysus is bedecked with flowers and garlands: panthers and tigers pass beneath his yoke. Change Beethoven's jubilee-song into a painting, and, if your imagination be equal to the occasion when the awestruck millions sink into the dust, you will then be able to approach the Dionysian. Now is the slave a free man, now all the stubborn, hostile barriers, which necessity, caprice, or "shameless fashion" has set up between man and man, are broken down. Now, at the evangel of cosmic harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, blended with his neighbour, but as one with him, as if the veil of Mâyâ had been torn and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious Primordial Unity. In song and in dance man exhibits himself as a member of a higher community: he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the point of taking a dancing flight into the air. His gestures bespeak enchantment. Even as the animals now talk, and as the earth yields milk and honey, so also something super natural sounds forth from him: he feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted and elated even as the gods whom he saw walking about in his dreams. Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: the artistic power of all nature here reveals itself in the tremors of drunkenness to the highest gratification of the Primordial Unity. The noblest clay, the costliest marble, namely man, here kneaded and cut, and the chisel strokes of the Dionysian world-artist are accompanied with the cry of the Eleusinian mysteries: Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen? Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt? (Ye bow in the dust, oh millions? Thy maker, mortal, dost divine?) See Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 26–27.

[18] O'Neill and Estrin, *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*, 35.

[19] The white dress is a garment frequently found on O'Neill women—Evelyn Sands in *Abortion* and Ruth Atkins in *Beyond the Horizon* to mention those discussed in this study. In the dramatic contexts of physical attraction between characters, the dress as a veil of Maya conjures Apollonian associations with beauty, symmetry, and order as it shrouds the character of one's desire and the Dionysian forces that character is capable of releasing.

[20] Maurice M. LaBelle, "Dionysus and Despair: The Influence of Nietzsche upon O'Neill's Drama," *Educational Theatre Journal* 25, no. 4 (December 1973): 437, https://doi.org/10.2307/3205596.

[21] Yank's behavior recalls acts of previous O'Neill protagonists who lose their tempers at dramatic turning points, i.e., John's Brown's in *Bread and Butter*, Andy Mayo's in *Beyond the Horizon* and Mat Burke's in *"Anna Christie."* The loss of self-possession in these moments is something of a hallmark for the playwright's tragic heroes. Mat Burke, of course, is not a tragic protagonist but his struggle self-mastery is significant to the plot of *"Anna Christie."* See the discussion of this topic in chapters 3 and 4.

[22] Dubost analyzes the encounter as an example of how O'Neill's protagonists often self-reflect not in isolation but after colliding with other characters. Here Mildred's look "has broken the artificial harmony which, so he [Yank] thought, allowed him to form a coherent whole with the boat, the steel and the steam, elements symbolizing a power he felt himself to be a part of." In response, adds Dubost, Yank must find out "who he really is." See Dubost, *Struggle, Defeat, or Rebirth*, 153.

[23] The phrase appears in act 2 scene one of *Taming of the Shrew* as Katherine complains of her father's choice to marry her younger sister before her; and in act 2 scene one of *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which Beatrice contemplates the fate of women who die unmarried. Gwendolyn B. Needham researches the phrase and its meaning in her article, New Light on Maids "Leading Apes in Hell": "Though more innocent interpretations have since been offered, the proverb's original implication was probably even grosser. . . . It was that persons who do not mate normally on earth must couple with apes in hell." See Gwendolyn B. Needham, "New Light on Maids 'Leading Apes in Hell,'" *The Journal of American Folklore* 75, no. 296 (April 1962): 115, https://doi.org/10.2307/538172.

[24] See Peter Egri, "Belonging Lost: Alienation and Dramatic Form in Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*" in *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*, ed. James J. Martine (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984), 85. Normand Berlin also interprets Yank's feeding the furnace as "making violent love to a woman." See Normand Berlin, *O'Neill's Shakespeare*, Theater--Theory/Text/Performance (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 45.

[25] To call a man a "beast" has two possible connotations that date back at least as far as Shakespeare. The word may refer to either inhuman cruelty or having an animal-like sexual appetite. See Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, *Shakespeare's Insults: A Pragmatic Dictionary*, Arden Shakespeare Dictionaries (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 48. "Inconsistent with human nature" and "wanting in manhood" are how Shakespeare's uses the term "beast" according to the annotations of Charles and Mary Cowen Clark that appear in *Cassell's Illustrated Shakespeare*. See William Shakespeare, *Cassell's Illustrated Shakespeare. The Plays of Shakespeare*, ed. Charles Cowden Clarke, vol. 1 (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1864), 158.

[26] Mildred remarks on the Second Engineer in scene two: "An oaf—but a handsome, virile oaf" (2:134).

[27] O'Neill and Estrin, *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*, 35.

[28] See Mark Griffith, *Greek Satyr Play: Five Studies*, California Classical Studies, number 3 (Berkeley, CA: California Classical Studies, 2015), 24.

[29] See "Second Thoughts" a sequent essay to "Memoranda on Masks" Eugene O'Neill and Travis Bogard, ed., *The Unknown O'Neill: Unpublished or Unfamiliar Writings of Eugene O'Neill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 408. It is noteworthy that masks do not appear in O'Neill's stage directions for *The Hairy Ape* and were added to the original production at the suggestion of costume designer Blanche Hays.

[30] O'Neill and Estrin, *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*, 62.

[31] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton (New Jersey): Princeton University, 2013), 251.

[32] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human: A Book for Free Spirits. Part II*, trans. Paul V Cohn, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 7 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1911), 230.

[33] Douglas L. Berger, *The Veil of Māyā: Schopenhauer's System And Early Indian Thought* (Binghamton, N.Y: Global Academic Pub, 2004), 63.

[34]Joel Pfister argues that with Senator Queen O'Neill was satirizing Attorney General Mitchell A. Palmer, overseer of the "Palmer Raids" that targeted Socialists, Communists, and members of the I.W.W. Palmer's rhetoric demonized the socialist thought and he vowed to rid "the nation of alien filth" (quoted in Pfister). See Joel Pfister, *Staging Depth: Eugene O'Neill and the Politics of Psychological Discourse*, Cultural Studies of the United States (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 137.

[35] LaBelle, "Dionysus and Despair," 438.

[36] Interestingly, Ingersoll, an American watch company founded in 1892, went bankrupt in December of 1921—an event contemporaneous with O'Neill's writing of *The Hairy Ape.* See "Ingersoll Watch Makers Bankrupt," *New York Times*, December 28, 1921, 16.

[37]Kurt Eisen, *The Theatre of Eugene O'Neill: American Modernism on the World Stage*, Critical Companions (London New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017), 55.

[38] Sophus Keith Winther, *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), 198.

[39] Cardullo, "Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape in Relation to Greek Tragedy, Italian Futurism, and Divine Comedy," 27.

[40] O'Neill and Estrin, *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*, 61.

[41] Ibid., 35.

[42] Ibid.

[43] For the sake of clarity I have taken this passage from Thomas Common's 1909 translation. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Thomas Common, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 6–7. The same passage in Alexander Tille's 1896 translation appears as follows:

> What with man is the ape? A joke or a sore shame. Man shall be the same for beyond-man, a joke or a sore shame.
>
> Ye have made your way from worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once ye were apes, even now man ape in a higher degree than any ape.
>
> He who is wisest among you is but a discord and hybrid of plan and ghost. But do I order you to become ghosts or plants?
>
> Behold, I teach you beyond-man!

See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Alexander Tille, The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. 8 (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 5.

Afterword

This dissertation has analyzed selected plays from Eugene O'Neill's early period to reveal the richness of their philosophical content and the themes the playwright would explore over the remainder of his career. Currently, it is the middle and late period plays that are often cited in philosophical readings of O'Neill's work. My hope is that the arguments of this study will lead to a revision of this general perspective among O'Neillians. After *The Hairy Ape*, the presence of philosophy in O'Neill's plays is arguably more overt. From the middle period onward, the philosophical ideas explored in the early plays become more pronounced, particularly in such plays as *The Great God Brown*, *Mourning Becomes Electra,* and *More Stately Mansions.*

The Great God Brown (completed in 1925) documents what is possibly O'Neill's most extensive use of *The Birth of Tragedy* in a heavily symbolic drama concerning the plight of the modern individual.[1] The action centers on the relationship of two friends, William Brown and Dion Anthony, each representing a side of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality respectively. In the play's central conflict, O'Neill metaphorically expresses how these two aspects of human nature have become irreparably divided in the modern world. Dion Anthony is a talented artist who cannot reconcile his Dionysian spirit with Christian morality. In a *New York Times* article published after the opening of the play, O'Neill explains its themes and symbolism. Dion Anthony's name is a combination Dionysus and St Anthony, signifying the character's own internal conflict: "the creative pagan acceptance of life, fighting eternal war with the masochistic, life-denying spirit of Christianity as represented by St. Anthony." Dion cannot thrive under the restrictions and expectations of the modern world and ultimately degenerates from a spontaneous and creative soul into a

cynical, self-destructive devil: his "creative joy in life for life's sake [is] frustrated, rendered abortive, [and] distorted by morality from Pan into Satan, into a Mephistopheles mocking himself in order to feel alive." The character representing the Apollonian side, William "Billy" Brown, has lost connection with vitality, the Force of life behind the veil of Maya, and lives among artificialities—much in the vein of Mildred and the denizens of Fifth Avenue in *The Hairy Ape*. "Brown is the visionless demi-god of our new materialistic myth—a Success—building his life of exterior things, inwardly empty and resourceless, an uncreative creature of superficial preordained social grooves, a by-product forced aside into slack waters by the deep main current of life-desire."[2] Characters are masked in the play, and Dion transforms as the character fails to reconcile his pagan spirit with modern reality. Brown's envy of Dion symbolically expresses the spiritual emptiness of the modern Apollonian state and its need to reconnect with the Dionysian life force. Brown steals Dion's mask believing himself to be gaining a creative power but only suffers as Dion did: "he thinks he is gaining the power to live creatively while in reality he is only stealing that creative power made self-destructive by complete frustration."[3] Brown only suffers after donning Dion's mask, and his only course is death and possible rebirth.[4] Thus, the ultimate modern individual, striving all the time to succeed, ironically destroys himself in his quest. *The Great God Brown* affirms Nietzsche's "*mystery doctrine of tragedy*"—the understanding that there is a "oneness of all existing things" that is opposed by the drive to individuation.[5]

O'Neill again drew heavily from Apollonian-Dionysian duality to construct what was perhaps his most revered play of the middle period: *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Completed and produced in 1931, the six-hour drama in three parts stood as the playwright's most ambitious work, which he planned as a "modern psychological drama using one of the

old plots of Greek tragedy for its basic theme."[6] As with his previous endeavors to create characters driven by larger forces towards self-destructive ends, he mingled modern philosophy with Greek tragedy—in this case, he retells Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* and imbues it with Nietzschean themes. Egil Törnqvist has explained how tension is generated in the play between pagan elements, associated with Christine and the Blessed Isles, and Puritanical ones, namely the ascetic and rigid nature of the Mannons. This rigidity is symbolized in the Mannon house with its "*Grecian temple portico*" (2:893) which resembles the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Christine refers to the house as a "tomb," one that reminds her of "[t]he 'whited' one of the Bible—pagan temple font stuck like a mask on Puritan gray ugliness! It was just like old Abe Mannon to build such a monstrosity—as a temple for his hatred," (2:903-904). The temple-like house that is also a "tomb" symbolizes the Apollonian opposition to the Dionysian life force. Törnqvist suggests O'Neill took inspiration for the Mannon house as a symbol of conflict from a passage in *The Birth of Tragedy* in which Nietzsche describes Doric art as "defiantly-prim" and "a permanent war-camp of the Apollonian." It was in response to the "titanic-barbaric nature of the Dionysian," argues Nietzsche, that the "new power of the Apollonian [rose] to the austere majesty of Doric art and the Doric view of things."[7] In *Mourning Becomes Electra* as in *Great God Brown*, the Apollonian force exhibits the corrupt nature of moral strictures that govern the social setting. Here, the death-like house that is also a temple of hatred reflects the family's Puritanical morals, its intolerance of sinfulness, which generates self-hate—an idea Nietzsche also explored in *The Antichrist* and which O'Neill first dramatized in *"Anna Christie."* Denying the Dionysian drives Ezra, Adam, and Orin to want to flee with Christine to the pagan Blessed Isles where the concept of sin does not exist. The longing to reach these islands highlights the separation of the Apollonian and Dionysian forces and

returns to the theme of humankind striving to find unity with life. The Blessed Isles, Törnqvist believes, are taken from part 4 of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in which a fortune-teller asks Zarathustra "Must I yet seek the last happiness on blissful islands, and far away among forgotten seas?"[8] The tragedy for the Mannons is that they are so haunted by their ghosts—their past and their traditions—that they can never reach their Blessed Islands.[9] Maurice LaBelle also supports a Nietzschean reading of the play and analyzes Lavinia as another character in O'Neill's oeuvre who cannot make vital contact. Her connection to her father roots her in Apollonianism that contrasts with Christine's Dionysianism. The latter is defined by sensual qualities while the former is "cold and calm as an icicle" (2:952). Lavinia's lifelessness stems from the absolute devotion to her father, which traps her in the past and frustrates her pursuit of sexual pleasure. She finds momentary joy in the encounter with the South Sea Islander, Avahanni, but upon returning to the Mannon house is unable to pursue love and falls to masochism and self-hate.[10] The curse inflicted on the inhabitants of the Mannon house likens it to multi-generational tragedies suffered by those belonging to the House of Atreus. In the Mannon case, we do not see gods at work but rather the consequences of a divided universe and possessive forces, like those Stirner critiqued, that rob individual characters of *ownness*. Orin and Lavinia are victims of such forces. Orin is first consumed with an Oedipal infatuation for Christine, then with guilt for killing Adam Brant, which is compounded by Christine's suicide. He attempts to expiate the sins of the family by writing its history, but this fails as does the hope that he could start anew with love interest Hazel Niles. Lavinia is likewise trapped by guilt and fixation. Defending her intimacy with Avahanni, Lavinia declares she has "a right to love!" but cannot take ownership of herself with enough will to realize this right (2:1031). In the last scene, she glimpses at hope, asking Peter to "forget sin and see that all love is beautiful," and to

understand that their love "will drive the dead away." However, in the next moment the dead return when she mistakenly calls Peter, "Adam." The Freudian slip reveals that the forces that possess her are too powerful— "The dead are too strong!" (2:1052).

In the late period play *More Stately Mansions*, O'Neill continues to investigate the concept of self-loathing that results from Apollonian-Dionysian division and the possessive forces that destroy *ownness*. The play was to be the fourth installment of *A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed,* an eleven-play cycle that follows generations of an American family from 1754 to 1932. Completed as a draft in 1939, *Mansions* was labeled "unfinished" by the author with instructions for it to be destroyed upon his death. The manuscript containing four acts and an epilogue eventually made its way to posthumous production and publication—though not without controversy—and is the sequel to the only other existing play of the cycle, *Touch of a Poet.*

Before the backdrop of American industrialization in the 1830s, O'Neill takes up the theme of possession within the context of marital tensions between an Irish immigrant, Sara Melody, and the eldest son of an established mercantile family, Simon Harford. When the play opens Simon bears a strong connection to the Dionysian life force both in his love for Sarah and his connection to nature which has inspired him to write a book on the fundamental goodness of human beings in the manner of humanist philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. The connection is quickly destroyed, however, when Apollonian forces, taking the form of desired success and the acquisition of power, impinge upon him. As Simon becomes more engrossed in growing his business and augmenting profit, he renounces the principles behind his vision of a greedless society. By act 2, he has dropped his utopian vision and the dream of writing a book. He regards Rousseau as "a weak moral sentimentalist—a coward who had neither the courage nor the ability to live in the world of

facts and accept the obvious truth about man—which is that man is compounded of one-tenth spirit to nine-tenths hog" (3:360.) In a parallel development, Simon's love for Sarah degenerates into lust and ultimately contempt after he lures her into an arrangement in which she acquires shares of the company in exchange for sexual favors—in effect replacing her as a wife with his image of her as his mistress. The agreement permits Simon to possess his wife in the objective sense as she unknowingly becomes possessed by the company—acquiring its shares and its principles while losing her own. Pitching the idea to Sara, Simon repeatedly emphasizes that their love relationship must be traded quid pro quo. Whenever Sara brings up love, Simon rebuffs the notion and demands the relationship of transaction. Simon's new ideology disavows the idealistic dimension of the human being so that he may indulge in purely practical considerations. Subjugating the nature of man to the nature of the marketplace, the philosopher cum capitalist dispossesses himself—erasing the identity shaped by ideals and becoming solely concerned with the expansion of his company. In this way, his identity, his life itself, becomes subsumed by the company, which gradually takes control of him as he labors to control it. Having sacrificed the ideals that made him unique, Simon gives up ownership of himself or becomes self-dispossessed. Hence, O'Neill's literary critique of capitalism exposes it as a corrosive force on the individual and a negation of Stirner's concept of egoism. Were it not for the Epilogue, *More Stately Mansions* would be a considered a tragedy. The last act concludes with Simon having regressed to a child-like state and Sara having to assume the role of caretaker. However, O'Neill restores order before the final curtain, by depicting the family as survivors of greed. Presumably, through Sara, the couple has managed to exorcize its possessive forces a year later. Simon recovers from brain fever and no longer behaves like one of his children, while Sara has let the company fail and retained only a small piece of land to pursue a modest life with her family.

She is content letting go of her dream of owning a great estate, and Simon is grateful to be released from the soul-destroying obsession of acquiring power and wealth.

O'Neill's use of philosophy to generate tragic and non-tragic drama succeeded in conjuring the power of fate to mock human agency—an ambition he brought to the craft of playwriting when he came to it in 1913. To achieve this, he had to substitute the power of the gods and the legitimacy of prophets with other devices that linked the plight of human beings to "the impelling, inscrutable, forces behind life."[11] He found them in the theories of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Stirner, three figures he had begun reading as a teenager, who had dismantled religious and superstitious notions of the universe and asserted the existence of mysterious energies with creative and destructive powers: the "will" of Schopenhauer, the "possessions" of Stirner and the "forces" of Nietzsche. It was these authors who gave him the ability to pursue the ambition he confessed to Arthur Hobson Quinn in 1925: "to develop a tragic expression in terms of transfigured modern values and symbols in the theatre which may to some degree bring home to members of a modern audience their ennobling identity with the tragic figures of the stage."[12] Though O'Neill referred to his hope as "very much of a dream," by 1922, three years before he wrote the letter, he had, in fact, already made tremendous strides toward achieving it in his earlier plays.

Notes

---

[1] Michael Hinden, "The Birth of Tragedy and *The Great God Brown*," *Modern Drama* 16, no. 2 (1973): 134.
[2] Eugene O'Neill, "The Playwright Explains," *New York Times*, February 14, 1926.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Hinden, "The Birth of Tragedy and *The Great God Brown*," 136.
[5] See Hinden, 138. For the "*mystery doctrine of tragedy*" see Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. William A. Haussmann, The

Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 1 (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909), 83.

[6] Quoted in Doris Alexander, *Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade, 1924-1933* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 149.

[7] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 42.

[8] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Alexander Tille, The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. 8 (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 350.

[9] Egil Törnqvist, *Eugene O'Neill: A Playwright's Theatre* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004), 46–47.

[10] Maurice M. LaBelle, "Dionysus and Despair: The Influence of Nietzsche upon O'Neill's Drama," *Educational Theatre Journal* 25, no. 4 (December 1973): 441, https://doi.org/10.2307/3205596.

[11] Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 87.

[12] O'Neill, 195.

Bibliography

Alexander, Doris. *Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade, 1924-1933*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992.

———. *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays: Separating Art From Autobiography*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005.

———. *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.

Ansell-Pearson, Keith, ed. *A Companion to Nietzsche*. 1. paperback ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Baker-White, Robert. *The Ecological Eugene O'Neill: Nature's Veiled Purpose in the Plays*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2015.

Berger, Douglas L. *The Veil of Māyā: Schopenhauer's System And Early Indian Thought*. Binghamton, N.Y: Global Academic, 2004.

Berlin, Normand. *O'Neill's Shakespeare*. Theater--Theory/Text/Performance. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Black, Stephen A. *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Bode, Carl. *Mencken.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969.

Bogard, Travis. *Contour In Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Boulton, Agnes, and Eugene O'Neill. *A Wind Is Rising: The Correspondence of Agnes Boulton and Eugene O'Neill*. Edited by W. D. King. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015042554520.

Brietzke, Zander. *The Aesthetics of Failure: Dynamic Structure in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001.

Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Caldwell, William. *Schopenhauer's System in Its Philosophical Significance*. London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896.

Cardullo, R.J. "Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape in Relation to Greek Tragedy, Italian Futurism, and Divine Comedy." *Moderna Sprak* 106, no. 2 (2012): 25–41.

Cargill, Oscar, Nathan Bryllion Fagin, and William J Fisher. *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism*. New York: New York University Press, 1966.

Clark, Barrett H. *Eugene O'Neill, The Man And His Plays.* New York: Dover, 1947.

Collins, Mabel. *Light on the Path and Karma*. Theosophical Publishing Company, 1904. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah592d.

Dowling, Robert M. *Critical Companion to Eugene O'Neill: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York, NY: Facts On File, 2009.

Dowling, Robert M. *Eugene O'Neill: A Life In Four Acts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

———. "On Eugene O'Neill's 'Philosophical Anarchism.'" *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 29 (2007): 50–72.

Dubost, Thierry. *Struggle, Defeat, or Rebirth: Eugene O Neill's Vision of Humanity*. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 1997.

Egri, Peter. "Belonging Lost: Alienation and Dramatic Form in Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*" in *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*, ed. James J. Martine, 77-111. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984).

Eisen, Kurt. *The Inner Strength of Opposites: O'Neill's Novelistic Drama and the Melodramatic Imagination*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994.

———. *The Theatre of Eugene O'Neill: American Modernism on the World Stage*. Critical Companions. London New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017.

Falk, Doris V. *Eugene O'Neill and The Tragic Tension: An Interpretive Study of the Plays*. 2nd edition. New York: Gordian Press, 1982.

Floyd, Virginia. *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A New Assessment*. Literature and Life Series. New York: F. Ungar, 1985.

Francis Xavier Lasance. *The Young Man's Guide: Counsels, Reflections, and Prayers for Catholic Young Men.* New York: Benziger Brothers, 1910.

Gassner, John. *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

Gelb, Arthur, and Barbara Gelb. *O'Neill*. New York: Harper, 1962.

———. *O'Neill: Life With Monte Cristo*. New York: Applause, 2000.

Griffin, Ernest G., ed. *Eugene O'Neill: A Collection of Criticism*. Contemporary Studies in Literature. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

Griffith, Mark. *Greek Satyr Play: Five Studies*. California Classical Studies, number 3. Berkeley, CA: California Classical Studies, 2015.

Harlow, Frederick Pease. *The Making of a Sailor, Or, Sea Life Aboard a Yankee Square-Rigger*. Salem, Mass.: Marine Research Society, 1928.

Heraclitus of Ephesius. *The Fragments of the Work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on Nature*. Translated by Ingram Bywater. Baltimore: N. Murray, 1889.

Hinden, Michael. "The Birth of Tragedy and The Great God Brown." *Modern Drama Review* 16, no. 2 (1973): 129–40.

"Ingersoll Watch Makers Bankrupt." *New York Times*. December 28, 1921.

Jonas, Mark E, and Douglas W Yacek. *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Education: Rethinking Ethics, Equality and the Good Life in a Democratic Age*, 2019.

Joseph Conrad. *Great Short Works of Joseph Conrad*. A Perennial Classic. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Kaufmann, Walter. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.

King, W. D. *Another Part of a Long Story: Literary Traces of Eugene O'Neill and Agnes Boulton*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

LaBelle, Maurice M. "Dionysus and Despair: The Influence of Nietzsche upon O'Neill's Drama." *Educational Theatre Journal* 25, no. 4 (December 1973): 436. https://doi.org/10.2307/3205596.

Levin, Eric. "A Touch of the Postmodern: Marco Millions and Nietzschean Perspectivism." *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 33, no. 1 (2012): 14–23.

MacGilton, Alice King. *A Study of Latin Hymns*. Boston: R.G. Badger The Gorham Press, 1918. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433068259476.

Magee, Bryan. *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Manheim, Michael, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. http://libproxy.tulane.edu:2048/login?url=https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL052155389X.

McAleer, John J. "Christ Symbolism in *Anna Christie*." *Modern Drama Review* 4, no. 4 (1961): 389–96. https://doi.org/10.1353/mdr.1961.0061.

Müller, Friedrich Max. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.ax0002719235.

Müller, Max, ed. *The Upanishads*. Translated by Max Müller. Vol. 15. The Sacred Books of The East. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884.

Murphy, Brenda. *American Realism and American Drama, 1880-1940*. Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

———. *The Provincetown Players and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama; 23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Needham, Gwendolyn B. "New Light on Maids 'Leading Apes in Hell.'" *The Journal of American Folklore* 75, no. 296 (April 1962): 106. https://doi.org/10.2307/538172.

Newman, John Henry. *Meditations and Devotions of the Late Cardinal Newman.* Edited by W.P. Neville. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Human, All-Too-Human: A Book for Free Spirits. Part II*. Translated by Paul V Cohn. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 7. Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1911.

———. *The Antichrist*. Translated by H. L Mencken. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1920.

———. *The Birth of Tragedy And Other Writings*. Edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs. Translated by Ronald Speirs. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

———. *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*. Translated by William A. Haussmann. 18 vols. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 1. Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909.

———. *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation*. Translated by Paul V Cohn, Adrian John France Collins, Thomas Common, Robert Guppy, William A Haussmann, J. M Kennedy, Oscar Levy, et al. 18 vols. Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909.

———. *Thoughts Out of Season Part II: The Use and Abuse of History, Schopenhauer as Educator*. Translated by Adrian Collins. 18 vols. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 5. Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909.

———. *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Translated by Alexander Tille. The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. 8. New York: Macmillan, 1896.

———. *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Translated by Thomas Common. 18 vols. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 4. Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909.

———. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None.* Edited by Robert B. Pippin and Adrian Del Caro. Translated by Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Aaron Ridley, and Judith Norman. *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Horace Barnett Samuel, and J. M Kennedy. *The Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*. Second. The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche. First Complete and Authorised English Translation, vol. 13. Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1909.

"Nietzsche's Antichrist; Proves, on Reading, To Be Anti-Paul." *New York Tribune*, March 28, 1920.

O'Neill, Eugene. *Complete Plays*. Edited by Travis Bogard. 3 vols. The Library of America. New York: The Library of America, 1988.

———. *Exorcism: A Play in One Act*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

———. *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*. Edited by Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

———. "The Playwright Explains." *New York Times*, February 14, 1926.

O'Neill, Eugene, and Travis Bogard. *The Unknown O'Neill: Unpublished or Unfamiliar Writings of Eugene O'Neill*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

O'Neill, Eugene, and Mark W. Estrin. *Conversations with Eugene O'Neill*. Edited by Estrin, Mark W. Literary Conversations Series. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990.

O'Neill, Eugene G. *Beyond The Horizon: A Play in Three Acts*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1920.

———. "Mail Bag." *New York Times*, December 18, 1921.

Palmer, John A. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Nigger of the "Narcissus": A Collection of Critical Essays*. Twentieth Century Interpretations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

Pfister, Joel. *Staging Depth: Eugene O'Neill and the Politics of Psychological Discourse*. Cultural Studies of the United States. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Richter, Robert A. *Eugene O'Neill and Dat Ole Davil Sea: Maritime Influences in the Life and Works of Eugene O'Neill*. Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport, 2004.

Robinson, James A. *Eugene O'Neill and Oriental Thought: A Divided Vision*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4409999.

Sater, Richard Compson. "O'Neill's S.S. *Glencairn* Cycle: Page Vs Stage." *Laconics* 1, no. 1 (November 2006). http://www.eoneill.com/library/laconics/1/1n.htm.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Idea.* Translated by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp. 3 vols. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1883.

———. *The World as Will and Representation,* 2 vols. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover Publications, 1966.

Seligman, Charles-Gabriel, F. R Barton, and E. L Giblin. *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910.

Shakespeare, William. *Cassell's Illustrated Shakespeare. The Plays of Shakespeare*. Edited by Charles Cowden Clarke. Vol. 1. London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1864.

Shaughnessy, Edward L. *Down the Nights and Down the Days: Eugene O'Neill's Catholic Sensibility*. Irish in America. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.

———. "Ella, James, and Jamie O'Neill: 'My Name Is Might-Have-Been.'" *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 15, no. 2 (1991): 5–92.

Shaw, George Bernard. *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy.* New York: Brentano's, 1922.

Sheaffer, Louis. *O'Neill, Son and Artist*. 1st Cooper Square Press ed. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002.

———. *O'Neill, Son and Playwright*. 1st Cooper Square Press ed. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002.

Sinha, Chrandreshwar Prasad. *Eugene O'Neill's Tragic Vision*. New Delhi: New Statesman Publishing Co., 1983.

Stirner, Max. *The Ego and Its Own*. Edited by David Leopold. Translated by Steven Byington. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Strong, Tracy B. *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Stroupe, John H. *Critical Approaches to O'Neill*. AMS Studies in Modern Literature ; No. 17. New York: AMS Press, 1988.

Symons, Arthur. *Poems By Arthur Symons*. Vol. 2. New York: John Lane Company, 1902.

Törnqvist, Egil. *A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Super-Naturalistic Technique*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.

———. *Eugene O'Neill: A Playwright's Theatre*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004.

———. "Nietzsche and O'Neill: A Study in Affinity." *OLI Orbis Litterarum: International Review of Literary Studies* 23, no. 2 (1968): 97–126.

Vienne-Guerrin, Nathalie. *Shakespeare's Insults: A Pragmatic Dictionary*. Arden Shakespeare Dictionaries. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

Voelker, Paul D. "The Uncertain Origins of Eugene O'Neill's 'Bound East for Cardiff.'" *Studies in Bibliography* 32 (1979): 273–81.

Warren, Beth Gates. *Artful Lives: Edward Weston, Margrethe Mather, and the Bohemians of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011.

Welsh, John F. *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism: A New Interpretation*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010.

Winther, Sophus Keith. *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study.* New York: Russell & Russell, 1961.