

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to point out how inseparable the playwright Eugene O'Neill is from his plays. He himself was a victim of the same sense of doom and self-pity that are found in many of the leading characters of his drama.

Almost every one of Eugene O'Neill's plays, as we have seen, is autobiographical, either consciously or subconsciously. Even in his early sea plays which are only sketchy dramas, his Irish belief that man is the victim of relentless 'force' and, willingly or unwillingly, he always moves toward destruction symbolized by the dark and cruel sea in works like Bound East for Cardiff , The Long Voyage Home and Anna Christie . Often, he revealed the destructive force hidden within man himself. Avarice destroys Ephraim Cabot in Desire Under the Elms , greed destroys the captain in Gold , revenge destroys Lavinia in Mourning Becomes Electra , sex destroys Nina Leeds in Strange Interlude .

O'Neill himself is represented by the 'tragic' figure of James Tyrone, Jr., in A Moon for the Misbegotten , of Cornelius Melody in A Touch of the Poet , or of Edmund Tyrone in Long Day's Journey Into Night .

Another group of plays which reflect the man behind them dwells on the love-hate theme familiar in his unhappy married life : Welded , All God's Chillun Got Wings , Days Without End . There are also the plays showing parental antagonism as in The First Man , Strange Interlude , Dynamo , A Touch of the Post and especially Long Day's Journey Into Night , all of which show clearly his own unsatisfactory relationship with his parents.

Several important incidents in his life are expressed in the plays. In In the Zone the sailor accused of being a spy is in fact O'Neill who once was arrested on suspicion of being a German spy. Exorcism and Before Breakfast have miserable sensitive protagonists who commit suicide which O'Neill once attempted.

The Straw has a tubercular reporter who in the end becomes a writer, like O'Neill. In Days Without End the main character loses his faith in God and yearns to regain it, also like O'Neill. In The Fountain the hero rejects his mistress; this reflects O'Neill's running away from marital responsibility. The Iceman Cometh recalls O'Neill's sordid experiences on the waterfront. In A Moon for the Misbegotten , he lays emphasis on his sorrow on the occasion of his own mother's death.

All these things Eugene O'Neill had experienced, so that is why it is very important to trace his life and his environment that shaped the man as a dramatist. Together with this can be found his philosophy of life, his dreams and his conception of life and death. ✓ O'Neill put his own family life into his plays by representing it in different lights——sometimes on the brighter side as in 'Ah, Wilderness !' and sometimes in a sombre light as in 'Long Day's Journey Into Night' .

✓ To understand O'Neill's plays one must understand O'Neill, his nature and personality. He was essentially a product of his upbringing and environment. There was tragedy in his life, and loneliness, disillusionment and despair. He reached the lowest depths of anguish which enabled him to scale tragic heights in his dramas.

This was the man behind the plays.