

⁶⁸ A case in point is the lamb in *Curse of the Starving Class*. The lamb is traditionally sacrificed for salvation, yet when Wesley becomes Weston, his first action is to slaughter the lamb. The lamb also signifies innocence and the fact that it has maggots might also point to the disease that this family is suffering from. The slaughter signifies his submission to the Curse and no redemptive value is placed on his submission, on his “sacrifice” as it were. The spiritual hunger beleaguering the Tate family will not be satisfied by this sacrifice. The redemptive value is thwarted. *Buried Child* also displays the use of a number of myths at the same time and many of them have to do with the myth of regeneration. These include the Prodigal Son, the Corn King and the Fisher King. Perhaps Shepard’s most revolutionary contribution to the American continuum of family tragedies can be seen that both the Tates and Dodge’s family are archetypes without being stereotypes. The clearest example is probably Dodge, who though he may be a weak, poor and fatally flawed Patriarch of traditional drama, is still a patriarch. He is a sort of down on his luck Ephraim Cabot, the farmer, possessor of land, who faces opposition from a league of misbegotten sons, who if not the canonical type of sons of classic and Renaissance drama, are nonetheless sons in the same mould and possible usurpers of the throne. Regional materials are agencies of a vision of realities that are not necessarily bound by geography. Shepard goes beyond the regional, beyond the national by making opaque references to the mythos of Icarus, Oedipus, the “House” and war between brothers (the Cain and Abel, which is manifest in *True West*.)

⁶⁹ Some have noted the similarities between Dodge’s family and the figures in the famous American Gothic painting by Grant Wood. Yet their behavior has also earned them the qualification of being similar to those out of paintings by Hieronymus Bosch. This is because of their eccentric behavior. They are constantly saying or doing something disturbing, unexpected or inexplicable.

⁷⁰ Katherine Weiss suggests that up until the mid-1990s, most critics read Shepard’s family trilogy “as reaffirming and ultimately optimistic” (2002: 323). However, though at moments Shepard’s family plays may “appear to be offering a renewal of life [...] restoration consistently fails in providing security and meaning, revealing, without ordering, the paradoxes within the American cultural identity and the uncertainty of being” (2002: 323). In this sense, the farm in both *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* also represents the state of decline and fragmentation of both families. More recently, Johan Callens sees positive aspects in *Buried Child*: It “reminds us of this original, mythical state of One-ness, a feminine and organic bond between man and nature through water and fertility symbols. The play also illustrates the ideal’s deterioration in the course of colonization, through incest, infanticide, and regression of the male characters into irresponsible, childish behaviour, all connected through the underlying water symbolism. Nevertheless, incest also represents an attempt, however misguided, to make the holistic Dream come true, by re-establishing the union between mother and child. Moreover, the ritualistic revelations of the family’s crimes functions as exorcism and guarantees survival and continuity. Commentators have so far neglected this mythic-symbolic dimension of *Buried Child*, thus also overlooking the positive part of Shepard’s female characters in it.” (2007: 46)

⁷¹ Hutcheon’s argument defends the necessity and persistence of postmodernist notions even in the 21st century, in which Postmodernism sometimes falls into discredit, especially among those who see it as a dead end and a justification for political inaction. Taking up the notions of Ajay Heble, she says that “the postmodern’s suspicion of truth-claims and its denaturalizing and demystifying impulses” have made it untrustworthy and “it can be hard to achieve activist ends (with firm moral values) in a postmodern world.” (Hutcheon in Goulimari 2007: 17)

⁷² Benjamin Oipari approaches the play from a FST (“Family Systems Theory”) point of view and claims that the family is unhealthy because of the ugly secret they are harbouring and their refusal to come to terms with it: True to Family Systems Theory (FST), it is not the inciting event itself, such as a secret or traumatic stressor, that determines the family’s inability to function. Rather, it is

the family's reaction to an event, or their ability to cope in an emotionally stable manner. Open families who talk about the precipitating event are likely to see the event in less shameful terms because they are able to express their emotions in an open forum. On the other hand, individuals in closed systems who shut themselves off both from the outside and from other members in the system, who refuse to acknowledge that anything bad even happened, are doomed to dysfunction because their silence only reinforces their shame. Closed systems are prone to disorder because they are resistant to change in spite of the dysfunction surrounding them. (See Opiari (2010): 123-138.)

⁷³ Blau wryly suggests that Tilden “hypostatizes the corn, grounding himself in it, because he wants what it represents, the continuity of a myth which offers the possibility of a rebirth of the child he might have fathered, the buried child in the missing person, the life we haven’t lived. (1984: 528) He then goes on to suggest that the thwarting is made all the more complete by the possibility that Shepard is using the corn as a pun. “There is the corn of myth and there is plain corn. Corniness.” (1984: 528)

⁷⁴ Demastes also suggest that Shepard’s “central concern involves codes and their loss in modern American society. His works decry the loss of old values as well as the fact that new codes can no longer be simply and prescriptively substituted” (1987: 232). His thesis is that the new or “reclaimed code” as he calls it can no longer be rationally conveyed and for this reason the playwright “directly challenges the embalming surfaces and linear and causal expectations of the old realism (233). Also see Demastes’s study on chaos theory and modern drama *Staging Consciousness: Theater and the Materialization of Mind*. He describes how Shepard’s plays are an assault upon “bivalent consciousness,” the notion that “text is equated with linear, serial, rational processes we’ve generally associated with consciousness, [...] while performance attempts to capture the nonlinear, parallel, and sensory processes operating along the preconscious neural network” (2002: 143). He suggests that with Shepard “text itself often operates in a fuzzy fashion to undermine serial coherence even as performance frequently contribute in a fuzzy manner to that urge for coherence” (2002: 144). In this way conclusions or closure are often undermined or altered. He theorizes that it is for this reason Shepard turned to a more traditional linear-based mode of realism. “[S]trict linear consciousness is the force that Shepard tries to move beyond, though he realizes that he (and we) can never fully escape its clutches. Nor do we really want full freedom from its influences, only less tyrannical control.” (2002: 145)

CONCLUSION

I.

Dysfunctional families and a portrayal of the workings of fate are a particular in the works of many American dramatists and a continuum in American dramatic literature. Perhaps more than any other American playwrights, the work of Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) and Sam Shepard (1943) provide excellent examples of this notion. In this dissertation, I have focused on two major works by each playwright to show just how they worked out this major theme with a view to point out similarities and differences. *Desire under the Elms* and *Long Day's Journey into Night* by O'Neill and *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* by Sam Shepard.

American drama is one of the many pieces in the puzzling "American Century," as many have called the 20th century, and an extremely important one. Indeed, the American stage has often become a mirror of the nation's own obsessions and pitfalls. Perhaps more than other dramatic traditions, America is invariably in search of itself, seeking new ways to express old notions, grappling with new upheavals in society, struggling to change with times that are constantly shifting and moving ever more quickly. On the other hand, American theater seems to show three styles or defences against radical change, or rather, three continuums throughout the 20th century: 1) The predominance of the realist mode; 2) The middle-class family (melo)drama; and 3) The fusion of the two into tragedy/tragicomedy. The first two perhaps are merely attempts to make sense of a seeming chaos and disorder, to explain the nation to itself in a familiar and comfortable manner for all. The curious thing is that there seems to be an overwhelming tendency to terminate in the latter. This might be a way of skirting an all too pervading ambiguity in American society.

Many are the explanations of the nature of the creative process and its relationship with reality. For dramatists, the task is especially daunting. What every dramatist must solve for himself is, as Robert Brustein has suggested, "how to find, without spurning

reality altogether, that necessary link between the natural and imaginative worlds” (Brustein 1999: 15). In a so-called post-humanist and post-modern age, it might seem a bit adventurous to bring back the figure of the author and his work and place them on center stage for public scrutiny and to talk about the notions of “authenticity” and “originality”. It is becoming increasingly more difficult and, at times, daring to attempt to defend both of these concepts when writing or speaking about 20th century writers. Nevertheless, when considering American playwrights Eugene O’Neill and Sam Shepard, it is safe to say that these two characteristics, authenticity and originality, lie at the heart of their best works. Harold Bloom defines originality in a literary work as “a strangeness that we can either never altogether assimilate, or that becomes such a given that we are blinded to its idiosyncrasies” (Bloom 1994: 4). Both O’Neill and Shepard share this originality, constantly worked to experiment with the medium of theater, resorted to the use of realism in their major works, used autobiography as a kind of purgation and both expressed the mystery and anguish of the American family and finally of America itself.

It is unknown and would be presumptuous perhaps to say that O’Neill was a direct influence on Sam Shepard yet Harold Bloom’s ideas on influence are apropos for the purposes of our debate. “Influence is simply a transference of personality, a mode of giving away what is most precious to one’s self, and its exercise produces a sense, and, it may be, a reality of loss “Every disciple takes away something from his master” (Oscar Wilde’s *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* qtd. in Bloom 1973: 6). A closer look shows that this is not surprising since a more detailed reading of both reveals many interesting parallels between the two playwrights. For many readers, theater-goers and critics, the differences seemingly outweigh the similarities. On the one hand, the serious, pessimistic and tormented Eugene O’Neill presents quite a different figure from the handsome, Hollywood movie actor-cum-playwright Sam Shepard. Yet, upon closer scrutiny, the similarities are quite striking. Both are profoundly autobiographical writers weaving their own lives and obsessions into the framework of their plays. Both are profoundly, if not peculiarly, American dramatists. Both suffered from troubled upbringings, dysfunctional families and disturbing father-son relationships, which would form the groundwork of a type of continuum in their works. Both are concerned with tracing the loss and decay of American values, sometimes obsessively so. Both have been accused of misogyny, though Shepard less so in the more recent past. Both saw the theater and art itself as a sort of redemption. Both created dazzling theatrical experiments using avant-garde techniques in style, language and structure. Both incorporate the much maligned “eternals” such as myth, memory and the

effect of the past on the present into the fabric of their plays. Both have a firm belief in the artist's role in society. Both occupy distinguished places in the American canon of dramatic literature. When writing their "family plays," both rely on the continuum of the realist mode.

This dissertation has attempted to show that, although they worked at different periods of the 20th century (generally speaking O'Neill dominated the American stage during the 1920s, 1930s and was revived again in the 1950s, while Shepard's importance presence was mostly felt from the late 1960s up until the late 1980s), their artistic styles and goals must, of necessity, be different. On the surface, it may safely be stated that O'Neill wrote his plays heavily influenced by the tenets of what is known as Modernism and that Shepard wrote plays with similar themes but influenced by what is referred to as Postmodernism. In this sense, O'Neill is much more of a traditionalist and, in spite of his profound pessimism and atheism left room in his plays for what he himself referred to as a "hopeless hope." Like other modernists, O'Neill was more heavily steeped in tradition whether it be classical, mythical or Elizabethan. Shepard, on the other hand, does not seem to adhere to any such tradition and his plays echo more secular notions, many of which come from pop mythology and, like Beckett, his plays leave little room for hope and are more nihilistic. Any hope there might be in Shepard's work is shrouded by an all pervasive ambiguity that makes resolution impossible.

Many readers will say that their usage of realism is for radically different purposes. That their usage of the mode differs greatly is obvious. However, the fact remains that when writing about the family, there seems to be an urge to use this mode. Is it because it is the "Great American Tradition" or is there something more at stake here? It is convenient, comfortable and almost a facile trick to refer to O'Neill as a modernist (Biggsby 1982, 2000; Bogard, 1972; Carpenter 1979 and Manheim 1982, 1998; among others) and Shepard as a postmodernist (Bottoms 1998; Callens 2007; Rosen 2007; Simard 1984 and Shewey 1997, among others). Needless to say, although neither of them would rest easily in the Procrustean bed of simplicity, the temptation is still there and this dissertation has been focused with this in mind.

O'Neill was the most active American playwright of the first half of the 20th century, actively involved in the febrile changes taking place in the arts and sciences and challenging previous notions of human understanding. After many years of experimenting with Expressionism, masks and Freudianism, he returned to an intimate and haunting realist mode in an attempt to exorcise the ghosts of his family's past. Shepard's story is

similar if not exactly the same. Arriving in New York City at the age of 19, he plunged immediately into a fervid avant-garde scene and began spinning out a kaleidoscope of experimental works. Yet, when settling down to write his own more intimate “family plays,” he too returned to a more realist mode. While their respective means for using the realist mode may differ, their “attempts to fathom the depths can be—and are—prompted by the same ghosts.” (Demastes 1996: 247)

That Americans, at large, are obsessed with the idea of the nature of reality and how to depict it, experience it and describe it can be summed up in the colloquial expression that friends sometimes use at parting. It is still not uncommon to hear the old adage “it’s been real.” Whether it is being used in earnest or ironically does not diminish its power or the speaker’s intention, and the listener will instantly understand the meaning. Americans are notorious for being laconic and wanting to define an experience in as short a time as possible. What is it that has been “real”? Has whatever it is been “really” exciting? Really moving? Really touching? Really sentimental? What exactly is meant by this expression? I would argue that what is “real” is embodied in the familiar and comfortable notion of home and family, the code by which America depicts itself.

Dealing with realism in the postmodern age is like walking a tightrope. Does realism indeed even exist? On the one hand, are those who say that the contemporary world is dominated by simulacra, as Baudrillard suggests in *America* (1989) where the individual subject no longer exists, where reality, referentiality and difference “have been rendered impotent,” where language has been emptied of any meaning and replaced by “a spiral of images and simulation” (Baudrillard qtd. in Watt, 1998: 123). On the other hand, it may be as Frederic Jameson has suggested in his “Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” that in a world of commodity capitalism, where language itself has suffered “a linguistic fragmentation” and where the “unavailability of the older national language itself,” America, like other advanced capitalist countries, today uses “a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm” (rpt. Hardt and Weeks 2000: 201). In this view, speakers resort to the use of “dead styles” or clichés, as the old notions of the “high-modernist ideology of style” have collapsed and the individual can no longer cling to what was once “unique and unmistakable as your own fingerprints, as incomparable as your own body” (202). Jameson states that, indeed, “in this new social world which is ours today, we can go so far as to say that the very object of realism itself—secular reality, objective reality—no longer exists either.” (178)

If describing the nature of reality is of crucial importance to the “man in the street,” it is even more so for the writer, be it of fiction, drama or poetry. Philip Roth perhaps captured this dilemma when he remarked that “the American writer in the middle of the twentieth century has his hands full in trying to understand, describe and then make *credible* much of the American reality” (qtd in Bradbury & Rutland 1991: 314). How to make sense of a seemingly senseless world? Indeed, one might consider the whole history of American literature to be founded on this continuum and conundrum. Though undoubtedly Roth was referring to fiction writers, the comment would apply to American playwrights as well. Gerald M. Berkowitz has suggested that throughout the 20th century domestic drama and realism, as the core of American drama, have been in place and are constantly being redefined by successive generations of playwrights (Berkovitz 1992: 2-3). Realism continues to exert a powerful, perhaps somewhat balm-like influence on the theater-going public and grapples with everyday issues and is almost always engaging. If not, then why do playwrights keep resorting to the style?

II.

This dissertation has been organized into different sections as follows: “Family in the American Vein” points out how Eugene O’Neill integrated elements of his own life into his plays and how, to a certain extent, *Desire under the Elms* and *Long Day’s Journey into Night* can be read as autobiographical. I point out that from his early works on, O’Neill was concerned with portraying how fate influences character. Throughout O’Neill’s works, generational conflicts are continuously waged, many times with a tension between affection and selfishness. The father figure usually treats the son with indifference, disappointment and selfishness. In this sense, the sons are seen as victims of destructive oppression and their response to this destructive oppression is a mixture of bitterness together with volleys of verbal violence that reveal truths, which are sordid at best. We also see how in *Desire under the Elms*, the Cabot family is beset by family dysfunction, covetousness and how the sons of Eben Cabot are terrorized by a puritanical father and how his son Eben gets his revenge upon his father through a quasi-incestuous relationship with Cabot’s last wife. *Long Day’s Journey into Night* shows sons who also chafe under the influence of the father but this time O’Neill was able to show precisely this notion by using his own family and autobiography.

Shepard's plays, on the other hand, are perhaps a bit less autobiographical but nevertheless they are also engaged with the family in America and more with emphasizing that the family also serves as a metonymy of America itself. Implicit in Shepard's work in this sense is a sense of lost unity, of the severing of the connection between individuals once established through shared values and beliefs. His characters live discontinuous lives and some connection has been broken between themselves and the past (mythic and historical), themselves and their families, their loves and it can be seen even in the language they speak. America itself seems deracinated and myths have developed into fantasies.

Curse of the Starving Class draws upon memories and characters from his own family and also deals with more familiar themes of heredity and the increasing fragmentation and alienation of the American family. But Shepard is not just talking about the family itself, but pointing towards the culture at large as well. We can point out that in Shepard there are notions of unwanted children. For example, in both *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child*, the sons do not seem to have been particularly wanted. In *Buried Child*, one of the sons has been murdered and the family fails to recognize the grandson when he returns. *Buried Child* also contains oedipal overtones. This play also has similarities to O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms* as we are confronted again with the idea of a "curse" being passed on down in a family. Offspring view themselves as failures, exploited and isolated and controlled by elements outside themselves and destined to live out a "curse" passed on by former generations. Shepard is especially concerned with the struggle between father and son and the plays under study here focus upon the son's attempt to extricate himself both physically and psycho-spiritually from his father or father-surrogate.

If the Oedipus complex in O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms* and *Long Day's Journey into Night* in conception and depiction are informed by a classically and literarily oriented perspective, Shepard, on the other hand, uses the oedipal impulse as a primitivist and mythic imagist. In his early plays, the son finds himself at odds with the father, but is able to extricate himself, if only temporarily. Later on, the son must come face to face with the father and this presents the final and most challenging trial. The son realizes that the two of them cannot exist simultaneously. Socialization or reconciliation brings depersonalization and only one will survive.

In "Tragedy and Tragicomedy: Breaking Generic Boundaries," I have attempted to show that both playwrights are attempting to portray the modern American tragedy. If

O'Neill was perhaps more consciously working in a more traditionalist mode and was more influenced by the classics than Shepard, this does not diminish the impact of Shepard's work. O'Neill made numerous attempts at creating tragedy and both *Desire under the Elms* and *Long Day's Journey into Night* are often referred to as modern tragedies. On the other hand, rarely are Shepard's plays referred to as tragedies as his work falls more into the characteristics of what can be more accurately referred to as tragicomedy. Though both *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* are structured tragically, Shepard is constantly undercutting the tragedy with ironic overtones. Both the private and the social play equal parts in their work, which portray every person's potentially fatal involvement with the external and internal forces that shape his/her life. Once again, we see that though Shepard is perhaps less academic than O'Neill, who worked in a more classical vein, I believe that his return to family and realism was also an attempt to update the theater as tragic.

Desire under the Elms, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* are all concerned with heredity and (pre)determination. O'Neill and Shepard use these notions to show the progression from family as "fate" to family as "curse." *Long Day's Journey into Night* shows that the family cannot be avoided for affective and historical reasons whereas *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* show that any escape from the family is thwarted by biology. In addition, the dominant motif of the family that is actively destroying itself has been present in tragedy since the Ancient Greeks and reappears as a major theme of the American families of O'Neill and Shepard in the 20th century. Moreover, in the history of modern drama and particularly modern tragedy, the focus seems heavily weighted on the family. If we suppose that the family is the central unit in society and are witness to that family life presented as diseased and corrupt, it can undermine our confidence that there can ever be any coherent order in that society.

Like earlier tragedy, modern tragedy explores the painfulness of a world where fictions of a rational social order can no longer be maintained. Early tragedies had a more outward look and asked questions about the position of human beings in the universe. Modern tragedy or tragicomedy centers on the family and has a tendency to look inwards. The emphasis is on the disorder of the mind as much as the disorder present in the wider world. The heroes or heroines are as likely to be confronting the worst elements in themselves as confronting the worst elements in the world.

O'Neill's approach to tragedy was as a modernist. The modernists were possessed by a dilemma that was philosophical and caused a psychological devastation that O'Neill would attempt to turn into tragedy. The tragedy for modern man is to seek a higher life with the knowledge that it cannot be attained. Therefore, in the absence of God, if God indeed is really dead, then one can dramatize human fate only in terms of human interactions. Not only did O'Neill add this notion to the so-called modernist movement, but also to contemporary American dramatists like Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, among others.

Perhaps O'Neill's primary contribution to American drama with *Desire under the Elms* was undoubtedly the way he was able to portray a contemporary American tragedy. With this play O'Neill managed to create a world where Americans could feel and witness the mysteries that Greek audiences would have understood. In this sense, he has succeeded in creating a type of secular tragedy. Like other art forms, theater creates worlds that may be realistic, absurd or fantastic for example, but nonetheless engage an active or passive public. O'Neill was evidently engaged in expressing the "impelling, inscrutable forces behind life" together with the relationship between man and God as previously noted.

O'Neill was forced to find that sense of inevitability or fate that had previously been inscribed to the gods, to man's own psychology and hence to society. As to why the family takes such a central role in O'Neill's plays (and we should say Shepard's work for that matter), it is because we are simultaneously torn by love and hate, for we love the one parent and hate the other as our rival. And so the family, because it is the center of home, is also the center of hate.

In a world where older values no longer apply, we find ourselves up against the modernist notion of alienation, which is also a constant in O'Neill's work. One way of presenting the conflict or dialectic between illusion and reality was to use myth. *Desire under the Elms* includes all the trappings of a classical tragedy. Like *Buried Child*, the action takes place in springtime, traditionally a time for renewal. Determinism is shown through a "curse" that seems to possess the Cabot farm. Determinism can be found in the form of a mysterious force or presence that can be felt on the farm that compels the characters to act the way they do.

Separating the past from remembrance is a major theme of *Long Day's Journey into Night*. How do memories clash, reshape or infuse the past? The present includes pressure from the past where good is something irretrievable and the present is always

unsatisfactory. The Tyrones all react in terms of past grudges, betrayals and suspicions always looking for a scapegoat. What is clear by the end of the play is that the journey from day to night will be repeated again and again and neither traveling forward in time nor circling back via memory in the last analysis will make a significant difference.

In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, O'Neill fuses the present and the past and the influence of the past on the present pervades the work from the beginning to the end. If O'Neill was able to transform classical myth into modern secular tragedy with *Desire Under the Elms*, he was to achieve even more success with *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Through tools like the fog in *Long Day's Journey*, which represents inner states of mind, he was able to substitute some of the mythical "otherness" of "fate" found in classical tragedy. This fog has uncanny similarities to the rain that falls persistently through the action of Shepard's *Buried Child*, cutting off another American family from the outside world. Another way of expressing the "otherness" of fate is expressed through verbal repetition. The usage of mind-altering substances also permeates *Long Day's Journey* as alcohol and morphine cause the characters to lose control of themselves and perhaps speak too much.

O'Neill conceived "classic fate" as "family fate." In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, time becomes a crucial theme. The title itself is the first indication of the importance of time in the play as it traces an inexorable descent into darkness. In this sense, O'Neill's play is clearly part of the continuum of the theme of lost American innocence. Their dilemma and that of the culture at large stems from being in time and longing for an ideal which is not. In *Long Day's Journey to Night*, he decided to repeat the same theme on a more intimate level by focusing on the individual within a smaller unit and a single generation, and this, of course, has become the family.

Modern tragedy as a genre begins to weaken after O'Neill. If to a certain extent modern tragedy was a liberal formulation, where the dilemmas of the heroes, as agonizing and resolutionless as they might be, were more readily discerned, and feelings of entrapment by unjust practices ended in tragic reversals, modern tragicomedy has no such pretences. Rather, it denotes a movement away from a sense of social experience that is anchored in tangible issues of moral right and wrong, of the good and the just and its betrayal.

Modern tragicomedy poses a number of challenges to modern(ist) drama. The belief in the dramatic illusion of reality and the sense of what human nature is, and how the theatrical persona "represent" it, are called brutally into question. This posits one of the

main differences regarding how this drama differs from that written by modern dramatists. There are few (if any) referents to hold onto. Gone are the sureties of time, place and identity of the older dramatists. There appears to be little past and the future portends little more. Tragicomedy seems to have robbed dramatic realism of individuality in opposition to social constraints, which, as mentioned before, were discernable by the spectator. Formerly, the spectator used to be able to grasp the exact notion of the moral dilemma. Even in O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms*, it is clear that everyone desires something whether what is desired is attainable or not.

Fate is still very present in these plays as well. If fate of one sort or another hovers over all of tragedy, then tragicomedy is no different. There is still an external force, an external "something" that determines human action, but it has no public face, no visible manifestation. One has only to think about Sam Shepard's plays that are driven forward by an inscrutable fate, an "unseen hand" so to speak, that is nowhere to be found but is palpable nevertheless. Fate becomes a random encounter with unseen traces which seem just out of reach. The traces are unknown, yet can be felt. They seem to belong to the past, to myth, to wealth. They are everywhere but never tangible or determinate. The ultimate cause of anything can never be established. In the age of reason, the sense of human mastery is lost, which is one of the characteristics of the postmodern moment.

Although Shepard's turn to family was similar to O'Neill's, what is probably just as important is that the movement away from tragedy in its Aristotelian form has become total by now. Unlike O'Neill's families, Shepard's families seem to lack any sort of preordained unity, they are never really established as realities that can be logically explained. Neither the structure nor the status seems to have any grounding. What is significant about Shepard's family characters is that they may perturb the audience but that moralizing about their behavior becomes pointless.

In this sense, one may claim that in Shepard nihilism holds sway. There is nothing to inherit in his families nor can the fate of inheriting it be escaped is what Shepard seems to say. This might also point to one of the main differences between Modernism and Postmodernism. Modernism has grounding, in this case the father as an authoritative figure. With Shepard's postmodern grounding, the patriarch's authority (or lack of it) is not an issue because it is hardly even tested. The father-figures, like the son(s) in rebellion, seem to be merely going through the motions indicating the death of traditional values as well. By this, it is now a great, inexorable force which the protagonists cannot fully acknowledge until it has destroyed him. Heredity has become omnipotent. This break with

tradition—the father as a figure of authority—has led from respect (if not necessarily love) to a state of almost total nihilism.

Finally in the chapters “Dangling between Modernism and Postmodernism” and “The Postmodern Moment,” I describe how O’Neill and Shepard were engaged on staging similar anxieties but from a different aesthetic and critical perspective. Whereas most of the scholarly work on O’Neill focuses on modernist tendencies, most approaches to Shepard are as a postmodernist. Both Modernism and Postmodernism deal with notions of fragmentation and, as we have seen, both playwrights use the family to display this idea. A key to understanding Modernism is the notion of fragmentation leading up to the 20th century feeling of alienation. If the 19th century was witness to the rise of mass urban existence, the 20th century gave way to even a greater degree of fragmentation.

Modernism is firmly grounded in notions of aesthetics with an author creator. The immutable essence of humanity found its proper representation in the mythical figure of Dionysus. Eugene O’Neill particularly regarding the notion that if the “eternal and immutable” could no longer be presupposed, then it was the task of the modern artist to take up a creative role and define the essence of humanity in a world gone mad. If the notion of creative destruction was an essential condition of modernity, then perhaps the role of the artist as genius and hero is preordained even if the consequences of his/her actions turn tragic.

That Shepard’s ideas on playwright and aesthetics in general were different to those of O’Neill is clear when we see that at first Shepard was more interested in the counter-culture like rock’n’roll. Though constantly experimenting, O’Neill wrote in a more classic vein, whereas Shepard was writing in a more informal and postmodern style. O’Neill thrived on the literary, whereas Shepard was more influenced by jazz and pop music.

To my mind, O’Neill will be remembered for his late plays in which he was able to recreate the private and the personal while portraying the ravages of hereditary guilt. In *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, the Tyrone family past has been broken up into fragments but these fragments make up a whole that the viewer or reader is able to grasp. By contrast, in Shepard the fragments have shattered and recovering the past is an impossible task.

The formal and literary attributes of Modernism are well known. Tradition must be remade, a new cultural style follows the cross between the inner dynamics of a literature and the large scale pressures of history, shedding the romantic tradition with faith in self-

sufficiency, the necessary irresponsibility, and thereby the ultimate salvation of art. Yet at the same time, the modernist writer presents dilemmas he/she does not wish to resolve necessarily, but offers his/her struggle with them, while thriving for sensations. Life is no longer knowable and character dissolves into a type of psychic battlefield and insoluble puzzle. *Long Day's Journey into Night* fits into this pattern quite easily and comfortably. It is a play where character is a psychic battlefield, beliefs in the past are discovered to be sham, human existence cannot be transformed, being a hero is nigh on impossible and borders on the absurd, life is unknowable, becoming more a series of sensations, albeit blunted by mind-altering drugs, than anything linear.

Perhaps one of the better ways to begin to divulge modernist techniques at work in *Long Day's Journey into Night* is to consider the notion of time. In many ways, it can be considered a play about the sense of loss produced by the ravages of time. When Mary Tyrone utters one of the most quoted lines of the play—"We can't help what the past has made us" (*Long Day's Journey into Night* 87)—she is speaking about the tragedy that time, like the past, is irretrievable.

It is usually argued that Shepard was working more in a postmodernist vein than O'Neill as Shepard's characters along with his dialogues are more fragmented. The past is also portrayed as fragments that fail to coalesce. Shepard himself has declared that things are shifting all the time. But Postmodernism and Modernism often overlap and Postmodernism has an ambiguous relationship with Modernism. To recapitulate, it is safe to say that most would agree that Postmodernism displays a loss of faith in the "unfinished product" of modernity as well as a cultural longing for and an inability to return to and have done with the past.

The most classic distinction is also a truism—Modernism privileges time whereas the postmodern privileges space. The temporality in Modernism unites a historical thing of progress, sometimes allowing for the development of utopias. In Modernism, there is a belief in origins and hierarchy, in process, development and causality. There is a reason for the way things are, however difficult it may be to unearth this meaning. On the other hand, in Postmodernism, there are only remains and traces. There is no progress, no moving forward, nor was there ever.

However, Shepard can be clearly considered a postmodernist playwright as can be seen in *Buried Child*. For instance, if one resorts to Shepard's postmodernist idea of play, we realize that the idea of "experimenting"—i.e. breaking with everything—has been a

constant in his life. If Shepard's realist plays are somewhat more confusing and difficult to grasp, the end result is almost identical to that of O'Neill. The audience somehow recognizes the characters. By the time Shepard writes *Buried Child*, the family as well as the nation has become so uncertain that the paradigms of realism have indeed collapsed and there is very little to hang onto anymore. Gone are the imperfect but strong father figures like Ephraim (a biblical archetype in *Desire under the Elms*) and James Tyrone (poor Irish immigrant who has made a decent life for himself in spite of the odds) and enter a much weaker father figure like Weston Tate (*Curse of the Starving Class*) and Dodge (*Buried Child*), both drunk, ineffectual and indolent.

A significant element of *Buried Child* that places it in more of a postmodern mode is that, while it seems to follow the conventions of classical drama and the well-made play, it shuns and even seems to sneer at the rational closure of such plays. Once again, we should point out the difference with O'Neill, who follows a more classic staging in his plays. The action of *Buried Child* begins in a relatively realistic manner that gradually becomes unfixed. Dodge and his family are defined by their place and circumstance rather than by creating their own set and scene. Time and place are also fixed and the characters cannot control the outside world through their own perceptions.

Shepard begins to explore the way in which outside forces determine character and the characters' reactions to their restrictive environment and their fate. The language used to convey the action in the play is flat, characterless, and repetitive and much of the dialogue is used to talk about non-rational events. Though Shepard resorts to realism in this play he also resorts to symbolic actions and events that seem to have their source anywhere else than in the normal probabilities of character and situation. That *Buried Child* uses paradigms of drama is undeniable yet it makes leaps of the mode into myth as well.

The tension in Shepard's plays and especially here, is designed to form coherent structures of images and language which are at the same time jolted by contradictions. This is another possible way of explaining the dichotomies between the different versions of the past provided by Dodge's family in *Buried Child*. The juxtaposition of such a complex nature is designed to present an experience of the discontinuous in nature. In addition, what seems clear and what most observers agree on is that Shepard uses some kind of a fantastic mode when animating the characters in *Buried Child* rather than their own psychological motivations. Some commentators refer to this as the "superreal." Rather than having an interest in creating a family like Arthur Miller's Lomans that one can empathize with,

Shepard is more engaged with achieving an effect upon the audience. The fact that the effect is disconcerting is precisely what he wants.

Buried Child does conform to the mode. The sets, the characters and props are all realistic enough but at the same time there seems to be a supernatural world, which makes them more postmodern, and some viewers or readers begin to wonder if the child Dodge killed and buried in the yard is exerting these supernatural powers over the farm. How else can these things be explained?

III.

The realist tradition and the American family play have nearly always combined the tension between the public and the private and the so often recurring tragedy or tragicomedy. Even playwrights who previously rejected the realist tradition return to it. My work underway includes studies of classic American family dramas like Tennessee Williams (*The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Ton Roof*), to more established and classic postmodern dramatists like Edward Albee (*The American Dream*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Sylvia or the Goat*) as well as African-American playwrights like August Wilson (*Fence*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*) and Suzan Lori-Parks (*Topdog/Underdog*). Can we include these playwrights and their works on the continuum of this idea of Family as Fate? If so, do these plays also point to the nation itself at large as well? How do these playwrights fuse the idea of family and nation? Can they be classified as political?

Additional work will attempt to study other works and playwrights as well such as Mac Wellman (*Crowtet*), Paula Vogel (*How I Learned to Drive*), Tony Kushner (*The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism and Capitalism with a Key to the Scriptures*) Nancy Silver (*Raised in Captivity*), Lanford Wilson (*Fifth of July*), Christopher Durang (*The Marriage of Bette and Boo*), John Guare (*The House of Blue Leaves*), Tracy Letts (*August: Osage County*), and Horton Foote (*The Orphans' Home Cycle*).

Additional work underway also focuses on O'Neill and the absurd or O'Neill as a precursor to postmodern American drama, particularly in his late works, the monumental *The Iceman Cometh* and the short play *Hughie*, both of which are often cited by critics as

links between a modernist sensibility and a more postmodernist one. The main thrust of the work focuses, and elaborates on, some of the themes of this dissertation like tragicomedy, theatrical artifice, language and characterization. Just what makes these plays different from his previous works? What do they have in common with works that are considered to be more postmodern? This idea could also be expanded to include Shepard and try and shed more light on the differing views as to whether his work should be considered modernist or postmodernist. Here we might focus on his plays concerning the role of the artist such as *Angel City* or *The Tooth of Crime*.

Finally, I would like to encourage others to carry out comparative studies between two or more authors. The study of two authors from various points of view, whether it be biographical, thematic, stylistic, monographic etc. is a challenging and rewarding experience that not only enhances understanding of the works of the authors, but may help to better understand the nation as well. At the same time, it may open up new approaches to these authors and their works as well. For instance, an earlier draft of this dissertation contained a brief study on the different approaches taken by O'Neill's biographers Shaeffer (1968, 1973); Gelb (1962, 2000); and Shepard's biographers Oumano, (1986; Wade, 1997; and Shewey, 1997). These add a curious notion not only to the differences between Modernism and Postmodernism but to the Americas that both authors inhabited while engaged, as I have attempted to show throughout this dissertation, in (re)telling the classic story of "Family as Fate."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WORKS CITED

- Aaron, Joyce. "Clues in a Memory." In *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard*. Ed. Bonnie Marranca. New York: PAJ Publications, 1981. 171-74.
- Abbott, Michael. "The Curse of the Misbegotten: The Wanton Son in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill and Sam Shepard." *Eugene O'Neill Review* 18.1-2 (1994): 193-98.
- Adler, Thomas P. "Repetition and Regression in *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*. Ed. Matthew Roudané. Cambridge University Press, 2002. 64-82.
- Albee, Edward. *The American Dream and The Zoo Story*. New York, New American Library, 1961.
- Alexander, Doris. *Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade (1924-33)*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992.
- , *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays: Separating Art from Autobiography*. Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2005.
- Almeryda, Michael. "Sam Shepard." Available at <http://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/sam-shepard/#/> (Accessed 28 January 2013).

- Amidon, Rick E. *An American Odyssey: Kinship and Cowboys in Sam Shepard's Drama*. Ann Arbor, Mi.: University of Michigan Dissertation Information Service, 1988.
- Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double*. Trans. Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Press, 1958 [1938].
- Asselineau, Roger. *The Transcendental Constant in American Literature*. New York: New York University Press, 1980. Rpt. in *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. Ed. Di Mauro, Laurie, Vol. 49, Detroit: Gale, 1993. 283-86.
- Auerbach, Doris. "Who was Icarus's Mother? The Powerless Mother Figures in the Plays of Sam Shepard," in *Sam Shepard: A Casebook*. Ed. Kimball King. New York: Garland Publishing, 1988.
- Auerbach, Doris. *Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit and the Off Broadway Theatre*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982.
- Ben-Zvi, Linda. "O'Neill and Absurdity." In *Around the Absurd: Essays on Modern and Postmodern Drama*. Eds. Ruby Cohn and Enoch Brater. Ann Arbor, Mi.: University of Michigan Press, 1990. 33-55.
- Berkowitz, Gerald M. *American Drama of the Twentieth Century*. Essex: Longman Group, 1992.
- Berlin, Norman: *O'Neill's Shakespeare*. University of Michigan Press, 1993.
- . *Eugene O'Neill*. London: MacMillan Press, 1982.

Biafra, Jello. "Nostalgia for an Age that Never Existed." In *Prairie Home Invasion*.

Jello Biafra and Mojo Nixon, *Alternative Tentacle*, 1994. Available at

http://www.jellobiafra.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=25:prairie-home-invasion&catid=17:jello&Itemid=75 (Accessed 6 December 2012).

Bigsby, C.W.E. *Modern American Drama (1945-1990)*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

----- "Born Injured: the Theatre of Sam Shepard." In Roudané. 7-33.

----- *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama*. London: Cambridge University Press, Vol. 1, 1982.

Blau, Herbert. "The American Dream in American Gothic: The Plays of Sam Shepard and Adrienne Kennedy." *Modern Drama* 27. 4 (March 1984): 520-539.

Bloom, Harold. "Introduction." In *Sam Shepard (Bloom's Major Dramatists)*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia, Chelsea House, 2002.

----- *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

----- *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Bogard, Travis. *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. New York: Grove Press, 1972. Also available at www.eOneill.com (Accessed 11 October 2009).

Bogard, Travis and Bryer, Jackson (Eds.). *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*. New

- York: Limelight Press, 1994 [1988].
- Bottoms, Stephen J. *The Theatre of Sam Shepard: States of Crisis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Bradbury, Malcolm and Ruland, Richard (Eds.). *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: a History of American Literature*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Brown, Roger. 'Causality in O'Neill's Late Masterpieces.' In *Eugene O'Neill's Century: Centennial Views on America's Foremost Tragic Dramatist*. Ed. Moorton, Richard F. Jr. Greenwood Press, New York, 1991. 41-54.
- Brustein, Robert: "Journeying to the Past." Available at <http://www.americanrepertorytheater.org/inside/articles/journeying-past> (8 October 2009).
- , *The Theatre of Revolt: An Approach to Modern Drama*. Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1999 [1964].
- Callens, Johan (Ed.). *Sam Shepard: Between the Margins and the Centre*. London: Routledge, Parts I and II, 1998.
- Callens, Johan. *Dis/Figuring Sam Shepard*. Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, S.A., 2007.
- Carpenter, Frederic I. *Eugene O'Neill*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979.
- Chanady, Amaryll Beatrice. "Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy." New York: Garland, New York, 1985. Also available at <http://cafeirreal.alicewhittenburg.com/tcritica.htm#chanady> (6 December 2009).

Chaudhuri, Una. *Staging Place: The Geography Of Modern Drama*. Theater: Theory/Text/Performance Series. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Chirico, Miriam M. "Moving Fate into the Family: Tragedy Redefined in O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 24: 1-2 (Spring/Fall 2000): 81-100. Also available at <http://www.eoneill.com/library/review/24-1.2/24-1.2i.htm> (Accessed 6 December 2009).

Chothia, Jean. "Trying to Write the Family Play: Autobiography and the Dramatic Imagination." In *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*. Ed. Michael Manheim. Cambridge University Press, 1998. 192-206.

----- *Forging a Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Chubb, Kenneth et al. "Metaphors, Mad Dogs and Old Time Cowboys: Interview with Sam Shepard." In Marranca. 187-209.

Clark, Barret. *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and his Plays*. New York: Dover, 1947. 152-153.

Clum, John M. "The Classic Western and Sam Sheppard's Family Sagas." In Roudané. 171-188.

Coe, Robert. "Image Shots Are Blown: The Rock Plays." In Marranca. 57-66.

Connor, Steven. *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the*

Contemporary. Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Cotsell, Michael. 'O'Neill as a Freudian' In *The Theater of Trauma: American Modernist Drama and the Psychological Struggle for the American Mind, 1900-1930*. NY: Lang, 2005, 263-73.

Crum, Jane Ann. "Notes on *Buried Child*." In King, Kimball (Ed.) *Sam Shepard: A Casebook*. New York and London: Garland Publishers, 1988. 73-80.

Dardis, Tom. *The Thirsty Muse: Alcohol and the American Writer*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Davis, Walter A. *Get the Guests: Psychoanalysis, Modern American Drama, and the Audience*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.

Demastes, William W. *Staging Consciousness: Theater and the Materialization of Mind*. Ann Arbor, Michigan. The University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Demastes, William W. (Ed.). *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1996.

----- *Beyond Naturalism: A New Realism in American Theatre*. New York, Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1988.

----- "Understanding Sam Shepard's Realism," *Comparative Drama* 21.3 (Fall 1987): 229-248.

DeRose, David. *Sam Shepard*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992.

- Dickson, Hugh. *Myth on the Modern Stage*. University of Illinois Press, 1969.
- Diggins, John Patrick. *Eugene O'Neill's America: Desire under Democracy*. The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Dizard, Jan E. and Gadlin, Howard. *The Minimal Family*. The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.
- Dugdale, John. *File on Shepard*. London: Methuen/Heinemann, 1989.
- Earley, Michael. "Of Life Immense in Passion, Pulse, and Power: Sam Shepard and the American Literary Tradition." In Marranca. 126-32.
- Eisen, Kurt. *The Inner Strength of Opposites: O'Neill's Novelistic Drama and the Melodramatic Imagination*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994.
- Eliot, T.S. *Four Quartets*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1943.
- Engel, Edwin E. *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill*. 1953. Rpt. in Di Mauro 241-44.
- Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. London: Penguin Books 1983 (3rd ed.).
- Fambrough, Preston. "The Tragic Cosmology of O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms*," *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter* 10. 2 (Summer-Fall 1986): 25-29. Rpt. In Di Mauro. 294-96.
- Featherstone, Michael. *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage Publication, 1995.

Federman, Raymond. *Critification: Postmodern Essays*. State University of New York Press, 1993.

Felluga, Dino. "Introduction to Postmodernism." (2002). Available at <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/English/theory/postmodernism/> (Accessed 1 October 2009).

Finley, Karen. *The Theory of Total Blame* Rpt. in *Grove New American Theater*. Ed. Feingold, Michael. New York, Grove Press, 1993.

Fleche, Anne. *Mimetic Disillusion: Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams and U.S. Dramatic Realism*. Tuscaloosa and London: The University Of Alabama Press, 1997.

Foster, Hal. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. New York: Bay Press, 1983.

Frutkin, Ren. "Paired Existence Meets the Monster." In *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard*. Ed. Bonnie Marranca. New York: PAJ Publications, 1981. 108-116.

Frye, Northrup. *The Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, 1957.

Fuentes, Carlos. *En esto creo*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2002.

Geis, Deborah R. *Postmodern Theatric(k)s: Monologue in Contemporary American Drama*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Gelb, Arthur and Gelb, Barbara. *O'Neill: Life with Monte Cristo*. New York: Applause Books, 2000.

----- *O'Neill*. New York: Harper, 1962.

Glore, John. "The Canonization of Mojo Rootface: Sam Shepard Live at the Pantheon," *Theater* 12 (1981): 53-59.

Graham, Laura J. *Sam Shepard: Theme, Image and the Director*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

Grant, Gary. "Shifting the Paradigm: Shepard, Myth and the Transformation of Consciousness," *Modern Drama* 36.1 (March 1993): 120-30.

Green, Jeremy. *Late Postmodernism: American Fiction at the Millenium*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Griffin, Ernest G. "O'Neill and the Tragedy of Culture," *Modern Drama* 31 (1988): 1-15.

Grimm, Reinhold. "A Note on O'Neill, Nietzsche and Naturalism: *Long Day's Journey into Night* in European Perspective," *Modern Drama* 26 (1983): 331-34.

Hart, Lynda Lee. *Sam Shepard's Metaphorical Stages*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Hartman, Murray. "*Desire under the Elms*: In the Light of Strindberg's Influence," *American Literature* 33.3 (November 1961): 360-69. In Laurie Di Mauro. 252-55.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Hassan, Ihab. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of

Wisconsin Press, 1982 [1971].

Hays, Peter L. "Child Murder and Incest in American Drama," *Twentieth Century Literature* 36 (1990): 434-48.

Heilman, Robert B. "Shepard's Plays: Stylistic and Thematic Ties," *Sewanee Review* 100. 4 (Fall 1992): 630-44.

Hutcheon, Linda. "Gone Forever but Here to Stay: The Legacy of the Postmodern." In *Postmodernism. What Moment?* Ed. Goulimari, Pelagia. Manchester University Press, 2007. 16-18.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetry of Postmodernism, History, Theory and Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1988.

Huyssen, Andreas. *After The Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. MacMillan Press Ltd, 1988.

Jameson, Frederic. "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." In *The Jameson Reader*. Eds. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 2000. 188-232.

----- "Beyond the Cave: Demystifying the Ideology of Modernism." In *The Jameson Reader*. Eds. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 2000. 175-87.

----- "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." 1983. In *Modern Drama*. Ed. W. B. Worthen. New York: Harcourt Brace Publishers, 1995. 1130-139.

- Kalson, Albert E., and Schwerdt, Lisa M. "Eternal Recurrence and the Shaping of O'Neill's Dramatic Structures," *Comparative Drama* 24 (1990): 133-50.
- Kaye, Nick. *Postmodernism and Performance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Kennedy, Andrew K. *Dramatic Dialogue. The Duologue of Personal Encounter*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Kernan, Alvin B. (Ed). *The Modern American Theater: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967.
- Kleb, William E. "Curse of the Starving Class and the Logic of Destruction," *Contemporary Theatre Review*. Overseas Publishers Association, 1998. 1-18.
- Kushner, Tony. "The Genius of O'Neill," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 26 (2004): 248-56.
- Lippman, Amy. "Rhythms and Truths: An Interview with Sam Shepard," *American Theatre* 1.1 (1 April 1984): 9-13; 40-41.
- Luedtke, Luther S. "'From Fission to Fusion:' Sam Shepard's Nuclear Families." In *New Essays on American Drama*. Eds. Gilbert Debesscher and Henry I. Schvey. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989. 143-66.
- Lukács, George. "The Sociology of Modern Drama," *The Tulane Drama Review* 9: 4 (Summer 1965): 146-170. Available at <http://es.scribd.com/doc/49885362/Lukacs-The-Sociology-of-Modern-Drama> (Accessed 15 February 2013).
- Malkin, Jeanette. *Memory-Theatre and Postmodern Drama*. University of Michigan

Press, Ann Arbor 1999.

-----, *Verbal Violence in Contemporary Drama: From Handke to Shepard*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Manheim, Michael. "The Transcendence of Melodrama in *The Iceman Cometh*." In *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*. Ed. James J. Martine. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co. Boston, 1984. 145-58.

Manheim, Michael. *Eugene O'Neill's New Language of Kinship*. University Press, Syracuse, New York, 1982.

Mann, Bruce J. "Character and the Fantastic in Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*." In King. 81-94

Marranca, Bonnie. "Alphabetical Shepard: The Play of Words." In Marranca. 13-33.

Maufort, Marc. *Songs of American Experience: The Vision of O'Neill and Melville*. New York: Peter Lang, 1990.

McDonough, Carla S. *Staging Masculinity: Male Identity in Contemporary American Drama*. North Carolina and London, McFarland and Co., 1997

McGhee, Jim, *True Lies: The Architecture of the Fantastic in the Plays of Sam Shepard*. New York: American University Studies Peter Lang, 1993.

Meyers, Jay Ronald, "O'Neill's Use of the Phaedra Legend in *Desire under the Elms*," *Revue de littérature comparée*, Vol. XLI, No. 1 (January-March, 1967): 120-25.
In Di Mauro. 257-59.

Miller, Arthur. "Tragedy and the Common Man." *The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller*.

- New York: Viking Press, 1978. 3-7.
- Mottram, Ron. *Inner Landscapes: The Theater of Sam Shepard*. University of Missouri Press, 1984.
- Murphy, Brenda. *American Realism and American Drama (1880-1940)*. Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Nash, Thomas. "Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*: The Ironic Use of Folklore," *Modern Drama* 26.4 (December 1983): 486-91.
- Nightingale, Benedict. "Buried Child," *New Statesman* (11 July 1980): 57.
- Nixon, Mojo. "When Did I Become my Dad"?. In *The Real Sock Ray Blue*. Mojo Nixon and the Toadliquors, 1999.
- Nolan, Patrick J. "Desire under the Elms: Characters by Jung," *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter* 5. 2 (Summer-Fall, 1981). In Laurie Di Mauro. 286-89.
- O'Neill, Eugene. *The Moon of the Caribees*. In *Complete Plays (1913-1920)*. Ed. Travis Bogard, Library of America, Vol. 1, 1988. 525-44.
- *Long Day's Journey into Night*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1955.
- *The Iceman Cometh*. New York: Random House, 1946.
- *Hughie*. In *Collected Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. New York: Random House, 1934. 261-263.

- , *Desire under the Elms*. In *Nine Plays*. New York: Liveright, 1932. 135-206.
- , *Desire under the Elms*. In *Nine Plays*. Introd. Joseph W. Krutch. New York: Liveright, 1932. xi-xxii.
- , *The Hairy Ape*. In *Nine Plays*. New York: Liveright, 1932. 37-88.
- Opipari, Benjamin. "Shhhhhame: Silencing the Family Secret in Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*." *Style* 44.1-2 (Spring/Summer2010): 123-38.
- Orr, John. *Tragicomedy and Contemporary Culture*. The University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- , *Tragic Drama and Modern Society: Studies in the Social and Literary Theory of Drama from 1870 to the Present*. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Oumano, Ellen. *Sam Shepard: The Life and Work of an American Dreamer*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Pfister, Joel. *Staging Depth: Eugene O'Neill and the Politics of Psychological Discourse*. Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Porter, Laurin R. "Modern and Postmodern Wastelands: *Long Day's Journey into Night* and Shepard's *Buried Child*," *Eugene O'Neill Review* 17 (1993): 106-19.
- , *The Banished Prince: Time, Memory, and Ritual in the Late Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988.
- Proehl, Geoffrey S. "Foucault on Discourse: O'Neill as Discourse," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Edmund* 4.2 (1990): 125-54.

- Rabillard, Sheila. "Shepard's Challenge to the Modernist Myth of Origins and Originality." In *Rereading Shepard: Contemporary Critical Essays on the Plays of Sam Shepard*. Ed. Leonard Wilcox. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. 77-96.
- . "Sam Shepard: Theatrical Power and American Dreams," *Modern Drama* 30.1 (March 1987): 58-71. Rpt. In *Drama Criticism*, Ed. Lawrence J. Trudeau, Vol. 5. Detroit: Gale, 1995. 363-70.
- Racey, Edgar F. "Myth as Tragic Structure in *Desire under the Elms*." In *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. John Gassner. Boston: Prentice-Hall, 1964. 57-61. In Di Mauro. 255-57.
- Raleigh, John. "Communal, Familial, and Personal Memories in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*," *Modern Drama* 31 (1988): 63-72.
- Ranald, Margaret Loftus. *The Eugene O'Neill Companion*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984. In Di Mauro. 291-92.
- Richardson, Brian. "The Struggle for the Real: Interpretive Conflict, Dramatic Method and the Paradox of Realism." In Demastes, 1996. 1-17.
- Robinson, James A. "Buried Children: Fathers and Sons in O'Neill and Shepard." In Maufort, 1989. 151-57.
- Rosen, Carol. "Emotional Territory: An Interview with Sam Shepard," *Modern Drama* 26.1 (March 1993): 1-11.
- Rosen, Carol. *Sam Shepard: A Poetic Rodeo*. Palgrave MacMillan New York, 2004.

Roudané, Matthew. "Death of a Salesman and the Poetics of Arthur Miller." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*. Ed. C. W. E. Bigsby. Cambridge University Press, 2003. 62-84.

----- "Shepard on Shepard: An Interview." In Roudané 64-82.

Saddik, Annette J. *Contemporary American Drama*. Edinburgh University Press: Edimburgh, 2007.

Schroeder, Patricia. *The Present of the Past in Modern American Drama*. New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1989.

Schvey, Henry I. "The Master and the Double: Eugene O'Neill and Sam Shepard," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 5.2 (1991): 49-60.

Schvey, Henry I. "A Worm in the Wood: The Father-Son Relationship in the Plays of Sam Shepard" *Modern Drama* Vol. 36, No. 1, Mar. 1993, pp. 12-26.

Schwarz, Alfred: "Toward a Poetic of Modern Realistic Tragedy." In *Gale Research Group: Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism* 44, Ed. Johann Cerrito. Detroit, Gale Research Group, 1994. 193-198. Originally in *Modern Drama* 9.2 (September 1966): 136-46.

Sewall, Richard B. "Eugene O'Neill and the Sense of the Tragic." In *Eugene O'Neill's Century: Centennial Views on America's Foremost Dramatic Dramatist*. Ed. Richard F. Mooton Jr. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1991. 5-6.

- Shaughnessy, Edward L. *Down the Nights and Down the Days: Eugene O'Neill's Catholic Sensibility*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.
- Sheaffer, Louis. *O'Neill: Son and Artist*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- . *O'Neill Son and Playwright*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968.
- Shepard, Sam. *Rolling Thunder Logbook*, Da Capo Press, 2004.
- . *Buried Child*. In *Plays Two*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997. 61-132
- . *Curse of the Starving Class*. In *Plays Two*. 133-200.
- . *Fool For Love and Other Plays*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.
- . *Hawk Moon*. New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1981.
- . *Motel Chronicles*. San Francisco. City Lights Books, 1982.
- . "Language, Visualization and the Inner Library." In Marranca. 214-19.
- . "The Unseen Hand." In *The Unseen Hand and Other Plays*. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1981. 1-50.
- Shewey, Don. *Sam Shepard*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1997.
- Simard, Rodney. *Postmodern Drama: Contemporary Playwrights in America and Britain*. University Press of America, 1984.

Simon, Bennet. *Tragic Drama and the Family: Psychoanalytic Studies from Aeschylus to Beckett*. Yale University Press, 1993.

Simpson, Mona *et al.* 2000 [1997]. "Sam Shepard": *The Paris Review Interviews: Playwrights at Work*. Ed. George Plimpton. London. The Harvill Press P. 329-45.

Sloterdijk, Peter. *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*. Trans. Jamie Owen Lee. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Sparr, Landy F.; Erstling, Susan S.; Boehnlein, James K. "Sam Shepard and the Dysfunctional American Family: Therapeutic Perspectives," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 44.4 (October 1990): 563-76. Rpt. *Drama for Students* 14 (2002): 113-16.

Stambolian, George. "Shepard's *Mad Dog Blues*: A Trip Through Popular Culture." In Marranca. 79-89.

States, Bert O. *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987.

Steiner, George. *No Passion Spent: Essays (1978-1995)*. Yale University Press, 1996.

----- *The Death of Tragedy*. Yale University Press, 1961.

Taav, Michael. *A Body Across the Map: The Father-Son Plays of Sam Shepherd*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.

Thiessen, Bryan. "Alone in the Dark: Isolation in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into*

Night". Laconics, at [eOneill.com](http://eoneill.com) . Also available at

<http://www.eoneill.com/library/essays/thiessen2.htm> (Accessed 28 January 2013).

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.

Tucker, Martin. *Sam Shepard*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1992.

Vanden Heuvel, Michael. *Performing Drama/Dramatizing Performance: Alternative Theater and the Dramatic Text*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Wade, Leslie A. "States of Shock, *Simpatico*, and *Eyes for Consuela*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*. Ed. Matthew Roudané. Cambridge University Press, 2002. 257-78

----- . *Sam Shepard and the American Theatre*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997.

Waterstradt, Jean Anne. "Another View of Ephraim Cabot A Footnote to *Desire under the Elms*," *The Eugene O'Neill Newsletter* 9. 2 (1985) 27-31. Rpt. in Di Mauro. 292-94.

Watt, Stephen. *Postmodern/Drama: Reading the Contemporary Page*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.

Weales Gerald. "The Transformations of Sam Shepard." In Marranca. 37-44.

Weiss, Katherine. "Sam Shepard's Family Trilogy: Breaking Down Mythical Prisons." In *Staging a Cultural Paradigm: the Political and the Personal in American*

Drama. Eds. Bárbara Ozieblo and Miriam López-Rodríguez, Brussels: Peter Lang, 2002. 323-38.

Weissman, Philip: "Conscious and Unconscious Autobiographical Dramas of Eugene O'Neill," *Journal of the American Twentieth Century* 5.3 (July 1957). In Di Mauro. 244-47.

Wheale, Nigel. *The Postmodern Arts: An Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Whiting, Charles G. "Digging Up 'Buried Child,'" *Modern Drama* 4 (December 1988): 548-56.

Wilcox, Leonard. "Modernism vs. Postmodernism: Shepard's *The Tooth of Crime* and the Discourses of Popular Culture," *Modern Drama* 30.4 (1987): 560-573.

Williams, Megan, "Nowhere Man and the Twentieth Century Cowboy: Images of Identity and American History in Sam Shepard's *True West*," *Modern Drama* 40.1 (Spring 1997): 57-73.

Winther, Sophus Keith. "*Desire under the Elms*: A Modern Tragedy," *Modern Drama* 3 (December 1960): 326-32. In Di Mauro. 249-52.

Winther, Sophus K. "Strindberg and O'Neill: a Study of Influence," *Scandinavian Studies* 31 1959 103-20 [M217]

Wood, Michael. "The Thing," *London Review of Books* 27.1 (6 January 2005). Available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n01/wood01_.html (Accessed 25 October 2009).

Worthen, W. B. *Modern Drama*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995.

Zinman, Toby Silverman. "Sam Shepard and Super Realism," *Modern Drama* 29
(1986): 423-30.

OTHER WORKS CONSULTED

Abbotson, Susan C. W. "Sam Shepard: a Biographic Essay and Production Overview." In Roudané 292-310.

Adler, Thomas P. "Theatre in Review: Curse of the Starving Class," *Educational Theatre Journal: University College Theatre Association of the American Theatre Association* 29. 3 (1977): 409-10.

Bercovitch, Sacvan (Ed.). *Cambridge History of American Literature: Poetry and Criticism (1940-1995)*. Cambridge University Press, New York, Vol. 8, 1996.

Berman, Paul. "A Review of *a Lie of the Mind* and *Curse of the Starving Class*," *The Nation* 242. 7 (February 22, 1986): 215-18. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Sharon Hall, Vol 44, Detroit: Gale, 1987.

Bloom, Michael. "Visions of the End: The Early Plays." In Marranca. 72-78.

Bloom, Stephen F. "Empty Bottles, Empty Dreams: O'Neill's Use of Drinking and Alcoholism in *Long Day's Journey into Night*." In *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*. Ed. James J. Martine. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984. 159-77.

Bradbury, Malcolm and McFarlane, James W. (Eds.). *Modernism 1890-1930*. London: Penguin Books, 1987.

Brashear, William R. "The Wisdom of Silenus in O'Neill's *Iceman*." *American Literature* 36.2 (May 1964): 180-88.

Brooks, Xan "Great Dream of Heaven," *The Guardian* (23 November 2002). Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2002/nov/23/featuresreviews.guardianreview> (Accessed 10 January 2005).

Bryer, Jackson R. (Ed). *The Theater We Worked for: The Letters of Eugene O'Neill to Kenneth Macgowan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Calinescu, Matei and Fokkema, Douwe (Eds.). *Exploring Postmodernism*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987.

Cantor, Norman F. and Cantor, Mindy: *The American Century: Varieties of Culture in Modern Times*, Harper Perennial, 1997.

Cargill, Oscar; Bryllion, N. and Fisher, William (Eds.). *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism*. New York University Press, 1970.

Carme, Manuel. "A Ghost in the Expressionist Jungle of O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*." *African American Review* 39.1-2 (Spring/Summer2005): 67-85.

Coe, Robert. "Interview with Robert Woodruff." In Marranca. New York: 151-58.

Cohn, Ruby. *Dialogue in American Drama*. Bloomington/London: Indiana University, 1971.

Connors, Thomas. "Extreme O'Neill." *American Theatre* 26.2 (February 2009): 22-25.

Cunningham, Frank R. "Eugene O'Neill and Reality in America." In Demastes. 1996. 107-22.

Driver, Tom F. *Romantic Quest and Modern Query: A History of the Modern Theater*.

New York: Delacorte Press, 1970.

Dubost, Thierry. *Struggle, Defeat or Rebirth: Eugene O'Neill's Vision of Humanity*.
North Carolina: MacFarland and Company, 1997.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher
Limited, 1983.

Falk, Doris V. *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension: An Interpretive Study of the
Plays*. Second Edition, 1982. In Di Mauro. 247-49.

Floyd, Virginia. "'Hughie' and 'By Way of Obit.'" In *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill: A
New Assessment*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985. 555-65.

Gelber, Jack. "The Playwright as Shaman." In Marranca. 45-48.

Gilman, Richard. "Introduction" to *Sam Shepard Plays Two*. London: Faber and Faber,
1997. xi-xxvii.

Grace, Sherril E. *Regression and Apocolypse: Studies in North American Literary
Expressionism*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: The University of Toronto Press,
1989.

Gussow, Mel. "From Plays to Fiction: Thanks, Dad; Sam Shepard's Rascals Are Inspired
by Memories of a Mysterious Father," *The New York Times* (October 15, 2002).
Available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/15/books/plays-fiction-thanks-dad-
sam-shepard-s-rascals-are-inspired-memories-mysterious.html?pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/15/books/plays-fiction-thanks-dad-sam-shepard-s-rascals-are-inspired-memories-mysterious.html?pagewanted=all)
(Accessed 4 February 2009).

Haney II, William S. "Artistic Expression, Intimacy, and the Primal Holon: Sam Shepard's *Suicide in B-Flat* and *The Tooth of Crime*." *DisClosure* 15 (2006): 71-92.

Hartland, Richard. *Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: An Introductory History*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *Chaos and Order: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science*. University Of Chicago Press, 1991.

Hayman, Donald: *Theatre and Anti-Theatre New Movements since Beckett*. Oxford University Press, 1979.

Honzl, Jindrich. "Dynamics of the Sign in the Theatre." In Worthen. 1120-129.

Howe, Irving: *The Decline of the New*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970.

Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen and Co., 1981.

Kaye, Nick. *Postmodernism and Performance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Kernan, Alvin B. (Ed). *The Modern American Theater: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967.

Krasner, David. *American Drama: 1945-2000*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd: 2006.

Kushner, Tony. "The Genius of O'Neill," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 26 (2004): 248-56.

- Lyons, Charles R. "Shepard's Family Trilogy and the Conventions of Modern Realism." In *Rereading Shepard: Contemporary Critical Essays on the Plays of Sam Shepard*. Ed. Leonard Wilcox. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. 115-30.
- Marranca, Bonnie and Dasgupta, Gautam. *American Playwrights: A Critical Survey*. Drama Book Specialists, 1981.
- Moffet, Sandy. "O'Neill and the American Canon." Available at http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/the/the203/articles/american_canon.html (Accessed 5 July 2005).
- Moorton, Richard F., Jr. "The Author as Oedipus in *Mourning Becomes Elektra* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*." *Papers on Language and Literature* 25.3 (Spring 1989): 304-25.
- O'Callaghan, Jade. "Ages of the Moon." Available at <http://www.sam-shepard.com/ages.html> (Accessed 30 November 2009).
- Orbison, Tucker. "Mythic Levels in Shepard's *True West*," *Modern Drama* 27.4 (December 1984): 506-19.
- Porter, Laurin. "Hughie: Pipe Dream for Two." In *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*. Ed. James J. Martine. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co. Boston, 1984. 178-87.
- Radavich, David. "Rabe, Mamet, Shepard, and Wilson: Mid-American Male Dramatists in the 1970s and '80s," *Midwest Quarterly* 48.3 (Spring 2007): 342-58.
- Raleigh, John. "O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* and New England Irish Catholicism." In *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. John Gassner.

Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964. 124-41.

Rich, Dennis J. "Exile without Remedy: The Late Plays of Eugene O'Neill." In *Eugene O'Neill: A World View*. Ed. Virginia Floyd. New York, 1979. 257-76.

Roudané, Matthew. *American Drama since 1960: A Critical History*. New York and London: Prentice Hall International, 1997.

Sarap, Madan. *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism*. Herfordshire: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1988 (2nd ed.).

Scanlon, Tom. *Family, Drama and American Dreams*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978.

Shorter, Edward. *The Making of the Modern Family*. New York: Fontana, 1977.

Styan, J.L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice, Volume 1: Realism and Naturalism*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

----- *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice, Volume 2: Symbolism, Surrealism and the Absurd*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

----- *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*. Vol. 3, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

----- *The Elements of Drama*. Cambridge University Press, 1960.

Swortzell, Lowell. "Get my Goat: Eugene O'Neill's Attitude towards Children and Adolescents in His Life and Art." In Moorton. 145-64.

- Szilassy, Zoltán. *American Theatre of the 1960s*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.
- Törnqvist, Egil. "O'Neill's Lazarus: Dionysus and Christ," *American Literature* 41.4 (January 1970): 543-55.
- Trachtenberg, Stanley (Ed.). *The Postmodern Moment: A Handbook of Contemporary Innovation in the Arts*. London: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Turner, Frederic Jackson. *The Frontier in American History* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921. Available at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm#Page_3 (Accessed 7 December 2012).
- Watson, Peter. *The Modern Mind: An Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2003.
- Westgate, Chris J. "Negotiating the American West in Sam Shepard's Family Plays," *Modern Drama* 48.4 (Winter 2005): 726-43.
- Willadt, Susanne. "States of War in Sam Shepard's *States of Shock*," *Modern Drama* 36.1 (1993): 147-166.
- Wright, Charles. "Off-Off-Broadway Way Back When," *The New York News* (2004). Available at http://www.theatermania.com/new-york/news/10-2004/offoffbroadway-way-back-when_5191.html (Accessed 10 November 2009).
- Zappa, Frank. "Art and Popular Culture." Available at http://www.artandpopularculture.com/Frank_Zappa (Accessed 6 November 2009).

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

Departamento de Filología Inglesa II



TESIS DOCTORAL

**FAMILY AS FATE
IN EUGENE O'NEILL AND SAM SHEPARD
(LA FAMILIA COMO DESTINO
EN EUGENE O'NEILL Y SAM SHEPARD)**

James William Flath

Madrid, 2013

Directores:

**Dr. Félix Martín Gutiérrez
Dr. Gustavo Sánchez Canales**

Resumen de la Tesis doctoral *La Familia como destino en Eugene O'Neill y Sam Shepard (Family as Fate)* dirigida por el Dr. Félix Martín Gutiérrez (**Universidad Complutense de Madrid**) y el Dr. Gustavo Sánchez Canales (**Universidad Autónoma de Madrid**), y defendida por el doctorando James William Flath Massad. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2013.

Resumen

La familia ha sido un tema recurrente en toda la historia de la humanidad en general y en la historia del teatro en particular. En este sentido, las obras de Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) y Sam Shepard (1943) no son una excepción y podemos afirmar, sin ningún género de duda, que una gran parte de sus obras más importantes está precisamente dedicada a la familia.

Se ha escrito mucho sobre O'Neill y Shepard, los dos dramaturgos cuyas obras abordo en esta tesis. Por ejemplo, Sheila Rabillard (1993), Jim McGhee (1993) y William Demastes (1996, 2002) se han centrado en los elementos realistas y fantásticos, mientras que otros críticos como John Orr (1989, 1991) Vanden Heuvel (1991), Stephen Watt (1998), Joel Pfister (1995), Christopher Bigsby (2000, 2002) y Carol Rosen (2004) han estudiado su obra desde una perspectiva modernista y/o postmodernista. Además, otros especialistas como Jean Chothia (1979, 1998), Bonnie Marranta (1981), Michael Manheim (1982), Deborah Geis (1993) y Thomas Adler (2002) han analizado de manera exhaustiva cómo se utiliza el lenguaje. Otros como Laurin Porter (1988, 1993), Jeannete Malkin (1992, 1999) y John Raleigh (1988) se han centrado en cómo se retrata el tiempo y la memoria en las obras de estos autores. Desde un punto de vista psicoanalítico, también se han llevado a cabo análisis entre los que destacan los trabajos de Patrick Nolan (en Di Mauro 1993 [1981]), Luther Luedtke (1989) y William Kleb (1998). Otros estudios se han centrado en la influencia del teatro europeo —sirvan a modo de ejemplo, el teatro de Shakespeare, Chejov, Strindberg y Racine— en la influencia del teatro estadounidense (contemporáneo), como los trabajos de Travis Bogard (1972), Murray Hartman (en Di Mauro 1993 [1961]), Jay Ronald Meyers (en Di Mauro 1993 [1967]), John Patrick Diggins (2007) y Doris Alexander (1992, 2005), o en la influencia del teatro griego clásico en los dramaturgos estadounidenses como los estudios de Peter Hays (1990), Richard Sewall (1991), Bennet Simon (1993) y Sophus Keith Winther (en Di Mauro 1993 [1960]).

La presente tesis doctoral pretende, por un lado, acercarse al teatro de O'Neill desde una perspectiva autobiográfica tratando de mostrar que su obra se inspira en el teatro griego clásico (Eurípides, entre otros). En este sentido, trata de infundir en la familia americana cierto tono trágico para mostrar en qué medida el pasado también condiciona lo que ocurre en el presente. Este es uno de los *leitmotifs* presente no solo en *Long Day's Journey to Night* sino también en sus obras anteriores. Por otro lado, analizo las obras de Shepard desde una perspectiva parecida con el fin de demostrar que su intención es romper con esa tradición tan querida por O'Neill y por otros dramaturgos norteamericanos. En lugar de utilizar referencias clásicas a la tradición, Shepard enfoca sus obras más desde una perspectiva contracultural y aborda las tradiciones de manera posmoderna, es decir, recurre a la tradición para dar la vuelta al retrato de una familia norteamericana donde el pasado ha sido reducido a fragmentos que son imposibles de recomponer de manera coherente. Aunque los escenarios, los temas y los personajes de las obras de temática familiar son diferentes en Shepard y en O'Neill, hay un elemento dramático que permanece constante en ambos autores, a saber, la presencia de un joven atormentado por conflictos irresueltos relacionados con su pasado familiar y personal. Aunque los intentos por huir de ese pasado están condenados al fracaso en ambos autores, varía el modo en cómo se plantea dicho conflicto.

En cambio, Shepard, que también aborda el tema de la familia, hace mayor hincapié en su aspecto biológico y hereditario. La diferencia fundamental entre ambos dramaturgos es que, ya en sus primeras obras los personajes creados por Shepard, a diferencia de los de O'Neill, tratan de huir de la familia. En estas obras está latente el deseo o la necesidad de mostrar una ruptura con la familia y, por extensión, con la tradición.

En cuanto a la estructura de la presente tesis, cabe decir que consta de cuatro capítulos. Cada capítulo empieza con una introducción sobre el tema estudiado en cuestión y le sigue un análisis de dos obras de teatro de O'Neill y dos de Shepard. Por razones de espacio, solo analizo *Long Day's into Night* y *Desire under the Elms* de O'Neill y *Curse of the Starving Class* y *Buried Child* de Shepard.

El primer capítulo, "La familia al estilo norteamericano," ofrece una breve panorámica sobre cómo se ha tratado la familia en el teatro norteamericano y cómo la noción de familia como destino es una constante en dicho teatro. En este primer capítulo,

trato de argumentar las razones por las que se incluye O'Neill y Shepard en las cuatro obras mencionadas anteriormente.

En el segundo capítulo, "A caballo entre modernismo y postmodernismo," se estudia la naturaleza misma del debate modernista/postmodernista y se muestra que, mientras que O'Neill ha utilizado un lenguaje modernista, Shepard ha empleado uno postmodernista, aunque a veces las dos formas de expresión coinciden en ambos autores, lo que produce algunas de las escenas más ricas e intensas de la historia del teatro de Estados Unidos. En este capítulo, abordo, por un lado, el realismo y su función en el teatro moderno, particularmente en el teatro norteamericano y, por otro, cotejo el realismo tradicional de O'Neill con el realismo paródico de Shepard. En el caso de este dramaturgo, lo que se consigue es socavar la tradición mediante la utilización del pastiche. Este capítulo ilustra igualmente la utilización del lenguaje en ambas obras. Por un lado, cómo O'Neill crea unos personajes y unos diálogos que constituyen la quintaesencia del ser norteamericano en sus obras *Desire under the Elms* y *Long Day's Journey into Night*, y, por otro, cómo Shepard también emplea un lenguaje parecido en el que la comunicación entre los miembros de la familia está casi totalmente rota.

El capítulo tres, "Tragedia y tragicomedia: la ruptura de los límites entre géneros," es un análisis sobre la importancia de la tragedia y la tragicomedia en ambos dramaturgos, en el que se explica que O'Neill trata de trabajar de un modo más clásico para presentar la tragedia en una lengua que sus contemporáneos entienden en Estados Unidos. Shepard, en cambio, esboza la tragedia y adopta un enfoque más postmodernista en sus obras, es decir, se inclina más por el género de la tragicomedia. En sus obras está latente la noción de tragedia, a veces con un tono más irónico y nihilista que en el caso de O'Neill. Los efectos del destino, el tiempo y la memoria se estudian detalladamente en este capítulo ya que encarnan la noción de tragedia y son la principal causa del trágico declive y decadencia de las familias retratadas tanto en las obras de O'Neill como en las de Shepard.

En el capítulo cuatro, "El momento postmodernista," planteo que O'Neill escribió sus obras bajo la influencia decisiva de los principios de lo que se conoce como modernismo y que Shepard aborda la misma temática pero influido por lo que se denomina postmodernismo. En este sentido, O'Neill es más bien un tradicionalista y, a pesar de su profundo pesimismo y ateísmo, deja un espacio abierto en sus obras para lo que él mismo denomina como "esperanza desesperada." Al igual que otros modernistas, O'Neill estaba mucho más anclado en la tradición, ya fuera clásica, mítica o isabelina. Por el contrario, Shepard no parece estar vinculado a ninguna de esas tradiciones y de sus obras se

desprenden nociones más seculares, muchas de las cuales proceden de la mitología popular norteamericana y, de la misma manera que Beckett, sus obras dejan poco lugar a la esperanza. Aunque se considera que la obra de Shepard tiene un carácter más nihilista que la de O'Neill, y a pesar del destino oscuro que se cierne sobre sus personajes, hay lugar para la noción de "esperanza desesperada" debido a la ambigüedad que todo lo permea y que no permite extraer interpretaciones contundentes.

Por esta razón, y a fin de no romper la estructura de esta tesis, el capítulo titulado "momento postmodernista" aborda solo *Curse of the Starving Class* y *Buried Child* de Shepard. Naturalmente, cabe esperar que un estudio comparativo de estas características no esté exento de determinadas dificultades y contenga inevitablemente cierto grado de solapamiento de ideas ya que algunas nociones o pasajes pueden repetirse en otro capítulo. Por ejemplo, el modo en que ambos dramaturgos abordan la memoria y el pasado, o la relación entre padres e hijos, no solo está relacionado con su enfoque e interpretación de las nociones de tragedia/tragicomedia, sino que guarda relación con la naturaleza de lo que se define como modernismo y postmodernismo.

Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation *La Familia como destino en Eugene O'Neill y Sam Shepard (Family as Fate)* supervised by Dr. Félix Martín Gutiérrez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Dr. Gustavo Sánchez Canales (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.) and submitted by James William Flath Massad. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2013.

Summary

Family has been a constant throughout the history of mankind in general and the history of drama in particular. The plays of Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) and Sam Shepard (1943) are not an exception in this respect and we can safely say that a large amount of their best work is precisely devoted to family.

Much has been written about O'Neill and Shepard, the two dramatists under study in this dissertation. Sheila Rabillard (1993), Jim McGhee (1993) and William Demastes (1996, 2002) have devoted attention to realist and fantastic elements, whereas critics like John Orr (1989, 1991) Vanden Heuvel (1991), Stephen Watt (1998), Joel Pfister (1995),

Christopher Bigsby (2000, 2002) and Carol Rosen (2004) have studied their work from a modernist and/or postmodernist point of view. In addition, the use of language has been extensively studied by critics like Jean Chothia (1979, 1998), Bonnie Marranca (1981), Michael Manheim (1982), Deborah Geis (1993) and Thomas Adler (2002). Moreover, the use of time has also been explored by Laurin Porter (1988, 1993), Jeannete Malkin (1992, 1999) and John Raleigh (1988). Psychoanalytic studies have also been made by critics like Patrick Nolan (in Di Mauro 1993 [1981]), Luther Luedtke (1989) and William Kleb (1998), as well as studies devoted to the influence of European—e.g. Shakesperean, Chekhovian, Strindbergian, Racinian—drama on (contemporary) American drama like Travis Bogard (1972), Murray Hartman (in Di Mauro 1993 [1961]), Jay Ronald Meyers (in Di Mauro 1993 [1967]), John Patrick Diggins (2007), Doris Alexander (1992, 2005) and the influence of classical Greek drama on American dramatists like Peter Hays (1990), Richard Sewall (1991), Bennet Simon (1993) and Sophus Keith Winther (in Di Mauro 1993 [1960]).

On the one hand, I will approach O'Neill's drama from an autobiographical viewpoint and will attempt to show how he resorts to classical Greek drama (Euripides, among others). In this sense, he was endeavoring to infuse the American family with tragic overtones in order to show that in America the past also shapes what happens in the present. This is a common motif in *Long Day's Journey to Night* but is also present in his earlier works as well. On the other hand, I will analyze Shepard's plays with a similar focus in order to demonstrate that his intention is to break with that tradition so beloved by O'Neill and other American playwrights. Rather than use classical references to tradition, Shepard worked more with a countercultural focus and when resorting to the traditions he did so in a more postmodern way using tradition to subvert the portrayal of an American family, in which the past has been reduced to fragments that are impossible to string together in a coherent fashion. Although the settings, themes, and characters of the family plays vary in Shepard and O'Neill, one dramatic element that remains constant in each is the presence of a young man haunted by unresolved ties to family and personal heritage. Though attempts to evade this past are doomed to failure in both playwrights, their approach will be different.

Conversely, Shepard, who also addresses the theme of (the) family, places more emphasis on its biological and hereditary aspects. The key difference between both

dramatists is that Shepard's characters, unlike O'Neill's, attempt to break away from their family in his early works. Some of his early plays underscore the wish or the need to show a break with the family and by extension with tradition.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Each chapter begins with a general Introduction or overview of the issue addressed and followed by an analysis of two O'Neill plays and two Shepard plays. For reasons of space, I will only analyze O'Neill's *Long Day's into Night* and *Desire under the Elms* and Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child*.

Chapter One, "Family in the American Vein," gives a brief overview of how the family has been treated in American drama and how the notion of family as fate is a continuum in American drama. The reasons for including O'Neill and Shepard are looked into particularly through the four plays mentioned above.

Chapter Two, "Dangling Between Modernism and Postmodernism," explores the very nature of the Modernism/Postmodernism debate and shows that O'Neill can be said to have been working in a modernist idiom and Shepard in a postmodern idiom and at times an overlapping of the two modes occurs making for some of the richest and most exciting plays in the American canon. This chapter also looks at realism and its role in modern drama, particularly American drama and just how it was used by O'Neill and how it is parodied and undercut by the use of pastiche in Shepard's work. This chapter also illustrates the use of language in both playwrights, how O'Neill uses a uniquely American dialogue in *Desire under the Elms* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and how Shepard uses a realistic language as well but where communication between family members has almost totally broken down.

Chapter Three, "Tragedy and Tragicomedy: Breaking Generic Boundaries," explores tragedy and tragicomedy and explains that O'Neill attempted to work within a more classical mode and write tragedy in an idiom that his contemporaries would understand in America. Shepard, on the other hand, eschews tragedy and adopts a more postmodernist approach to tragedy and works more with the genre of tragicomedy. His plays underwrite notions of tragedy, at times with a more mocking and nihilistic tone than O'Neill. The effects of fate, time and memory are studied in detail in this chapter as they embody notions of tragedy and are major causes of the tragic downfall of the families portrayed in both O'Neill's and Shepard's plays.

Chapter Four, “The Postmodern Moment,” explains that O’Neill wrote his plays heavily influenced by the tenets of what is known as modernism and that Shepard wrote basically the same type of plays but influenced by what is referred to as the postmodern. In this sense, O’Neill is much more of a traditionalist and, in spite of profound pessimism and atheism, left room in his plays for what he himself referred to as a “hopeless hope.” Like other modernists, O’Neill was more heavily steeped in tradition whether it be classical, mythical or Elizabethan. Shepard, on the other hand, does not seem to adhere to any such tradition and his plays echo more secular notions, many of which come from pop mythology and, like Beckett, his plays leave little room for hope. Shepard is commonly referred to as being more nihilistic yet, like O’Neill, in his family plays, in spite of the gloom hovering over them, there is room for that same notion of “hopeless hope” even if it is shrouded by an all pervasive ambiguity.

For this reason, and in order not to try to break the structure of this dissertation, “The Postmodern Moment” deals only with Shepard’s *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child*. This of course suggests that such a comparative study is not without its pitfalls and inevitably is prone to a certain degree of overlap and several passages and ideas may be repeated in another chapter. For example, how both playwrights deal with memory and the past, or the relationship between fathers and sons have to do not only with their approach and interpretations of the notions of tragedy/tragicomedy, but point as well as to the nature of just what defines Modernism and Postmodernism.

