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**SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ALIENATION IN O'NEILL'S  
*THE HAIRY APE AND A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN***

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## INTRODUCTION

The term “alienation” is usually used in philosophy, psychology, and sociology but recently it has been used in connection with art and literature. One dictionary definition of alienation is: “feeling of having no connection” (Cambridge international dictionary of English, 1995:32). It does not suggest a positive meaning but it is experienced in many different ways. In this study alienation is going to be referred to in theatre in connection with sociology and psychology.

Alienation implies either friction within a person or between a person and the community. As drama’s first prerequisite is conflict, alienation, which is a modern concept, is to be found in modern drama of a psychological or contraversial nature. The two devastating World Wars, dictorial rulers tormenting their own people, as well as their enemies, and poverty have given rise to a lot of people finding themselves in moral dilemmas as well as under assault from outside, therefore it was natural for O’Neill to interest himself in the use of this approach. This is probably one of the reasons why he is considered one of the foremost modern dramatists.

The concept of alienation first appeared in Marx’s notes in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. These are ideas from his notes but they do not make one complete theory. In this study the most important ideas which are related to the selected plays have been chosen. Marx considers the act and state of alienation of practical human activity and labour from two aspects:

1- The relationship of the worker to the product of labor as an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world;

2- The relationship of labor to the act of production within labor. This is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something alien and not belonging him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation, the personal physical and mental energy of the worker, his personal life, as an activity which is directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him (Moody and Schmitt, 1994:25).

This is self-alienation. But Moody and Schmitt discusses alienation in connection with Marx and describes alienation more broadly than Marx does:

Alienation is no longer powerlessness in the economic or the political realm but finding oneself in a world which one has not created, in which one not only does not recognize oneself, but is constantly reminded that one does not really belong. This is the alienation of the victims of sexism, racism, ageism, and class prejudice ( Moody and Schmitt, 1994:3).

A result can be recognized: if all you can do is survive, your life is not really your own, your person remains undeveloped, and most of your abilities are hushed up and so you are powerless as a person. You are unable to shape your world and to define your identity because your identity has been imposed on you, it is not your own. In that sense you will be called an alienated person.

All these explanations seem to imply that alienation is a universal condition for a lot of people.

The different aspects of alienation are explained in the existentialist tradition. The alienated person is seen as powerless and unhappy. Neither their lives nor their persons

are their own. Moody and Schmitt (1974:3) summarize Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre's ideas:

Kierkegaard describes alienation as an inability to act or to commit oneself. Alienated selves are too indecisive, too vague and unfocused to say: This is who I am; this is what I want; this is what I am going to do. Nietzsche criticizes modern men and women in very similar terms. Their desires are flaccid, their wills corrupted, they lack the courage to engage in risky projects or to pursue their goals through difficulties and conflicts. Heidegger sees alienation in our unwillingness to strike out for ourselves, being anxious, instead, to follow the latest fashion, to wear, say, or do whatever everyone else wears, says, and does. Sartre, finally, detects an inevitable distance between oneself and what one does: we are, he says, always pretending to be someone, but we never fully are that particular person because a part of us is always standing aside, observing our own performance of a role.

This study examines the "alienation" effect in O'Neill's plays in the light of all these above-mentioned ideas.

In Chapter One some information about the author, both his life and as a literary man and the chief characteristics of his time and drama are to be found. This section is significant in understanding his style and why he used alienation in his works so often.

In Chapter Two *The Hairy Ape*, one of O'Neill's early works, is studied and the characters' psychological and sociological alienation explained in the light of the above-mentioned theories of alienation.

In Chapter Three *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, one of O'Neill's late works, is under scrutiny to see how he reflects alienated persons in his plays through some

characteristic of that period. In this section the characters' psychological and sociological alienation, but mainly psychological one, is going to be studied.

The last chapter will deal with the reflections of the theme of alienation in both plays.





## 1. THE AUTHOR

Eugene O'Neill was born in a Broadway hotel in New York City in 1888. His father, James O'Neill, was a famous actor. In his childhood Eugene O'Neill travelled with his parents and played minor roles in theatrical travelling companies in the United States.

When he was eighteen, he entered Princeton, but after a year he was dismissed for general hell-raising. He never returned to Princeton. He went to New York City and found some secretarial jobs. At the age of twenty, he went to Central America in search of gold and then he sailed as an ordinary seaman on ships to South America, Africa, and Europe. This period of his life is very important for him. Later he used his experiences as materials in his works. After three years, he returned to New York but shortly after, in 1912, he stayed at a sanitarium because of an attack of tuberculosis. During six months in this sanitarium he had a chance to think about his life and what to do. So he decided to become a playwright, because he realized that he had a strong desire to reflect his feelings and experiences about life into drama. Later he studied drama at Harvard.

O'Neill wrote eight one-act plays and two full-length plays which are not very memorable. But later he improved himself and wrote his last four short plays which are very important in his career. *Before Breakfast*, one of his one-act plays, is very significant. In it he used psychological alienation efficiently. In his first short plays, his experience at sea is to be found as in *The Hairy Ape*. In his later works, his own experience of family life has provided material for his works like *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. But later he says *Adventures in American Literature*: "I have never written anything that did not come

directly or indirectly from some events or impression of my own” (Hodkins and Silverman, 1989:950).

O’Neill achieved a series of theatrical triumphs such as *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), which was awarded the first of four Pulitzer Prizes, *The Emperor Jones* (1920), *Anna Christie* (1921), *The Hairy Ape* (1921), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), and *Strange Interlude* (1928). In 1931 he wrote *Mourning Becomes Electra*, which is called a dramatic masterpiece. In 1936, after Sinclair Lewis, O’Neill became the second American who win the Nobel Prize for Literature. He became an international figure but his illness isolated him from public life.

O’Neill was always trying to present the inner reality of human beings. He was following the example of his mentor Strindberg, and also it is said that he was influenced by Nietzsche, Ibsen, Wedekind, and some German expressionists. Although his characters and plots are not contrived, they are very real. This is the reason why his work is different from older melodrama. As a result, his writing was influenced by European expressionistic drama and by literary naturalists. O’Neill’s plays are generally autobiographical, pessimistic expressions of the agonies of his own life and the degeneration he noticed around him. O’Neill’s style in his plays was described clearly in *Concise Anthology of American Literature*:

O’Neill’s plays are sometimes disparaged for their social pleading, their nihilism, and their occasional lapses into over heated rhetoric. Yet his psychological probing of alienation and his depiction of the suffering of ordinary mortals made him America’s most influential playwright. O’Neill was a restless theatrical experimenter. ( McMichael, 1985:1547)

In 1943 he wrote *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, but it was performed after his death like his other important play *Long Day's Journey into Night*. In 1946 he returned to the theatre with *The Iceman Cometh* which portrays a haunted man struggling to be free of his illusions. He also incorporated dreams and illusions into his plays in order to represent the psychological reality of his characters. O'Neill suggests that such representation only repeats the alienation from human feelings.

All his life Eugene O'Neill was obsessed with his mother. He underwent psychoanalysis with Dr. Gilbert Hamilton. As it is said in Morton's study: "After six weeks of therapy, Hamilton concluded that O'Neill had an Oedipus Complex." (Moorton and Brown, et.al.1991:172). It can be said that he reflected his complex in his drama like the hero, Jim Tyrone, in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. O'Neill attempted suicide twice, one is in imitation of his mother's suicide, trying to drown himself.

O'Neill died in 1953. He married three times. After his death some of his plays were performed many times and some of them were adapted for films. He wrote more than forty plays.

The time in which O'Neill lived was important for the improvement of his career while in the twentieth century the population in America was growing rapidly and becoming into a powerful nation in material wealth, industrial and technological accomplishment, although its power, in the interim of the two World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) experienced a massive crippling depression. At the same time, industrialization increased and quickened the pace of life. But the result was the increasing of social, economic, and psychological problems. Individuals felt isolated and could not be bound to

each other by the structure of society. Mass production and mechanization lead to new problems between workers and employers. There were also new liberation movements of women and minorities.

In this period, American Literature reflects these diverse developments of society. American writers began to express the separateness of the self, isolation, and alienation. Realism and expressionism became modern dramatist's dominant visions. They were influenced by Henrik Ibsen, who used theatrical realism, and August Strindberg, whose plays typify the theatre of expressionism.

Eugene O'Neill was the foremost American playwright. Although he worked most effectively within the limits of realistic drama, he tried further experimentation in some of his plays.

## **2. SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ALIENATION IN *THE HAIRY APE***

We find at the beginning that the title contains an irony; after all, there is not a monkey or an ape without hair. The irony points to the fact that the play is not going to deal with an animal but a human being. Besides, the word “hairy” is also going to imply humiliation. Also the use of the definite article “the” shows that title is a direct reference to the hero. The word “ape” will probably symbolize him emphasizing his wild animal characteristics.

As the play is going to present a certain character we are about to be shown some specific characteristics of this person, although we are probably going to pass from the individual to the general species, that is to say, we will face a conflict between the specified type in the play and the standard human society. After all, an ugly appearance does not necessarily reflect the person’s inner world. Thus, a kind of sociological alienation and the emergence of social classes as a result of industrialization will give birth to lack of communication between these classes and cause psychological alienation; on the other hand, there occurs some self-search on the part of the individual and search for identity.

A comparison is noticed, even at the beginning of the play, between ancient and modern times and a looking back at the beginning of human life. The writer, while giving a description of the firemen, refers to them as the fathers of human beings. Also, while talking about their surroundings, the writer has felt there was a similarity between them and the apes in cages. Thus, he has created a pscho-anthropological approach. The

voices of the firemen and the references to the sounds and noises of the environment become significant also.

The picture of gorillas carries on the leitmotif of ape and the imaginary and imaginative image of chains evokes the leitmotif of cage and prison. We notice two opposites informing the play, the social aspect and the psycho-anthropological one. They present the foundation of the play and are felt all through. There are also naturalism and symbolism in Scene One where the dialogue contains a naturalistic approach:

The firemen's forecabin of a transatlantic liner an hour after sailing from New York for the voyage across. Tiers of narrow, steel bunks, three deep, on all sides. An entrance in rear. Benches on the floor before the bunks. The room is crowded with men, shouting, cursing, laughing, singing—a confused, inchoate uproar swelling into a sort of unity, a meaning-bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in cage. Nearly all the men are drunk. Many bottles are passed from hand to hand. All are dressed in dungaree pants, heavy ugly shoes. Some wear singlets, but the majority are stripped to the waist.

The treatment of this scene or of any other scene in the play should by no means be naturalistic. The effect sought after is a cramped space in the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage. The ceiling crushes down upon the men's heads. They cannot stand upright. This accentuates the natural stooping posture which shoveling coal and resultant overdevelopment of back and shoulder muscles have given them. The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of Neanderthal Man is guessed at. All are hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes. All the civilized white races are represented, but except for the slight differentiation in color of hair, skin, eyes, all these men are alike (O'Neill, 1974b: 165,6)

In this quotation, the writer's personal participation is fairly obvious; factual representation changes into emotional presentation.

The firemen work in an ocean liner, that is to say, a wonder of modern technology. The song was sung in this first scene of the play contains the yearning for the days of old-fashioned seamanship: "Far away in Canada, Far across the sea, There's a lass who fondly waits, Making a home for me" (O'Neill, 1974b: 170). Yank, the hero of the play, seems to be obsessed by two things in the play: women and home, although he also yearns for both. He left home at an early age to avoid continuous beating; so he wants a home now. Owing to his ugly appearance no woman takes notice of him, so he resents all women. He is aware that he cannot fulfil his dreams of marriage and a home, which hurts his ego and mocks the song which contains them. He thus deceives himself by shouting and screaming and bullying his colleagues. He knows he has no money, no social position, no physical attractiveness, yet he does not accept these facts. Therefore, he and his colleagues find consolation in their bodily strength only. They say they are the only forces that move the ship, and so they believe they have an important function to perform in the community:

I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin, I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh here it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes money! And I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel - steel - steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it (O'Neill, 1974b: 176).

The word "comrades" used by Long, one of the firemen, makes us realize that he is a socialist. Salvation Army is a reflection of the Bible as it advocates the equality of all people and the idea of them helping each other. So these people have some concept of social injustice although they are too uneducated and confused to be eloquent enough in

discussing these points, which is another example of lack of communication and alienation as worked out in the play.

Paddy and Yank are opposite characters. Yank possesses self-confidence owing to his physical strength. Paddy, on the other hand, is not strong but is experienced, he has knowledge, and a realistic personality. Paddy also misses the good old days mainly because of the hard conditions which they work. He says:

Oh to be back in the fine days of my youth, ochone! Oh, there was fine beautiful ships them days-clippers wid tall masts touching the sky-fine strong men in them-men that was sons of the sea as if 'twas the mother that bore them.[....] oh, to be scudding south again wid the power of the Trade Wind driving her on steady through the nights and the days! Nights when the foam of the wake would be flaming wid fire, when the sky'd be blazing and winking wid stars.[....] And there was the days, too. Awarm sun on the clean decks. Sun warming the blood of you, and wind ower the miles of shiny green ocean like strong drink to your lungs. (O'Neill, 1974b: 173,4).

Yank, on the other hand, refuses to accept the harsh reality and resorts to physical violence in order to prove that he is right. All these firemen expect a fair recompence for their hard work, to establish a healty communication with people, and thus to possess a sense of individual worth. In this respect alienation is seen as the alienated labour.

The verb "make" is used frequently, which points to the idea that action or act of violence is prevalent. One other idea is turning into a steel engine. Yank's purpose is to create for himself a world of human interest, mutual understanding, and love. When he says he belongs in the boiler room, he feels he is good for his job, he performs his function, and expects all people to know this and acknowledge the worth of his work. Yank also



distinguishes between the underdeck stokers and the first cabin passengers saying: "We belong and dey don't." ( O'Neill, 1974b: 172). This make sense, represents and brings about human values. It is in these meanings that "belonging" functions as a leitmotif throughout the play. It is seen that each character has a sense of "being alienated" from the first cabin passengers whether they are aware of it or not.

In Chapter Two, Mildred, the daughter of the president of Nazareth Steel, is seen in the company of her aunt, who does not seem to notice the sun and the sea but enjoys the black smoke rising out of the funnel. This may indicate her pessimistic attitude or her shut-in and narrow upbringing. It is felt that Mildred is also suffering from a case of sense of identity, like Yank, with the difference that Yank believes that he is better than he is while Mildred does the opposite as can be seen from her severe criticism of and attacks on her parents. The young girl also wants to make herself useful and thus she finds her true identity. Yet she feels that she is a weakling who travels with a companion and under the shadow of her father's name. She finds a correspondance between the leopard's spots and her character and situation. As the spots are stuck to the skin of the animal her character is inseparable from her nature and environment. The spots of the leopard are not out of place in the wilderness where they camouflage it, but they attract too much attention outside the animal's true environment:

When a leopard complains of its spots, it must sound rather grotesque. [In a mocking tone] Purr, little leopard. Purr, scratch, tear, kill, gorge yourself and be happy-only stay in the jungle, where your spots are camouflage. In a cage they make you conspicuous (O'Neill, 1974b: 183).

The young girl's artificiality would not constitute a matter for criticism, it would even be quite acceptable, but in the society of the poor and the lowly it would stick

out like a sore thumb. She is continuously aggressive, she is never pleased with her high position, she complains even about her beauty and wealth. She complains:

Please do not mock at my attempts to discover how the other half lives. Give me credit for some sort of groping sincerity in that at least. I would like to help them. I would like to be of some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? I would like to be sincere, to touch life somewhere. [With weary bitterness] But I'm afraid I have neither the vitality nor integrity. All that was burnt out in our stock before I was born. Grandfather's blast furnaces, flaming to the sky, melting steel, making millions-then father keeping those home fires burning, making more millions-and little me at the tail-end of it all. I'm a waste product in the Bessemer process-like the millions. Or rather, I inherit the acquired trait of the by-product, wealth, but none of the energy, none of the strength of the steel that made it. I am sired by gold and damned by it, as they say at the race track-damned in more ways than one. [She laughs mirthlessly.] (O'Neill, 1974b: 182, 3)

Through this speech Mildred characterizes her position with a mixture of genuine earnestness and weary bitterness. She took up sociology at college, did social service work on New York's east side. She feels psychologically alienated among the rich people around her. The conversations between Mildred and her aunt shows the alienated relations and the contrast of generations as described by Mildred with a sociological clarity.

The author compared and contrasted a person from the poor and one from the rich. Their one difference is that Yank tries not to reveal his displeasure about his lot and Mildred is always complaining about her position and criticising her family. She is doing it consciously and she can afford it; after all, she still possesses all the advantages of coming from a rich and influential family. As to Yank, he cannot even feel he is a true member of his group, no matter what he says and how much he tries. This parallel in their efforts to establish their sense of identity defines their place in the community.

In Chapter Three, Yank makes his work into a play, by synchronizing his movements with the sounds of the machinery in the boiler room, thus admitting that he has become part of the machines. He stokes coal in time with the sounds of the boiler:

He ain't got no noive. He's yellow, get me? All de engineers is yellow. Dey got streaks a mile wide. All, to hell with him! Let's move, youse guys. We had a rest. Come on, she needs it! Give her pep! It ain't for him. Him and his whistle, dey don't belong. But we belong, see! We gotter feet de baby! Come on! (O'Neill, 1974b: 190).

Yank is able to transmit his enthusiasm to his mates. In this passage the world is humanized by work. In this scene, in which Mildred has insisted on descending to the boiler in order to have a glimpse of real life, finds more than she has bargained for, and she reacts accordingly, not only in disappointment but also humiliation, which is far worse than disgust or fear: "Take me away! Oh the filthy beast!" (O'Neill, 1974b: 192). This is humiliating for Yank, who until this time, had seen his work and himself as quite normal. After the girl's reaction, his world and principles are shattered and he, for a while, finds himself in a frightening vacuum. Even then, Yank has a side to his character which makes him superior to Mildred, his realization that he has a definite and useful function in life: "[...] they don't belong. But we belong, see!" (O'Neill, 1974b: 190). His sense of belonging gives him a sense of identity.

People in a community are aware of the idea and fact of the division of labour, expecting recognition and appreciation in recompense for their work. They are conscious of their contribution no matter how humble and menial their work may be. At this point Marx's idea of alienation labour becomes significant.

When Mildred was descending into the boiler room, she knew what she wanted: to see the environment in which “the other half” worked. Yet, although she is coming with the best of intentions, she is not aware to what extent she can carry this intention, or whether she can go the whole way in trying to discover the kind of work the firemen are involved in, and their working conditions.

Mildred’s entry into the boiler room creates an absurd situation, comparable to one if Yank had been able to enter the luxury dining hall in a mansion, where Mildred was a guest or the hostess. The brightly lit room and the gay atmosphere of the party would be too much for somebody like Yank, who was accustomed to the hellish darkness of the innards of an ocean liner, and he would be adversely influenced by the gaiety and lights. In this respect, Mildred reacts as Yank would in her environment, in a most negative and frightened way. Their only similarity is that both are well-meaning. Yank wants to do his job well and Mildred only wanted to see at first hand how her father’s luxury liner was run. She is shocked at the misery in which the firemen work, and Yank’s self-imposed “I possess and have identity” is first shaken to the ground and then blown to pieces.

Yank’s pride is destroyed by Mildred’s horror at the conditions of the boiler room and her scorning and despising him. Yank both believed that he was good at his job, a worthwhile one, and he was hiding behind this conviction. Now he is in a state of collapse, after being insulted and hurt deeply, instead of appreciated and respected for his work.

By the side of the thin anemic girl, Yank seems to grow in size and strength and even to the stature of the primitive man. This implies that those who live on others’

efforts get weaker and those who work extremely hard become bigger and stronger, at least physically, as seen in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. Thus, we are made to think that the happy medium lies somewhere in between these two extremes.

Yank has been transformed into animal both physically and mentally, while Mildred and her class have become animal-like in terms of mental powers, having lost their human qualities. Thus the author criticises the social system which has created social classes, leading to several types of alienations.

In Scene Four we are surprised at Yank for not bothering to wash himself of the coal dust, and the reason for this is that he has already identified himself with coal. Yank is found in the position of Rodin's *The Thinker* when he begins to think first, and it makes his mates strange and alien to him. There is reason to think that after his humiliation by Mildred, Yank's humanity and self-respect received a hard blow; he does not even feel hungry any more. The climactic end of the scene finds Yank making an attempt to take personal revenge but his mates bear Yank down.

As a result of Yank's bewilderment, the scope of reference of the symbolic leitmotif of "belonging" is also modified. Earlier, when Yank had an unshaken belief in his unity with industrial civilization, he had no doubt whatsoever about who belonged and who did not: he did, and the first cabin passengers did not. But now Yank is not sure about things and even about himself as he used to be.

Scene Five, three weeks after the affair in the stokehole, Long has taken Yank to Fifth Avenue, New York City, to show that Yank's individual experience is part of a

general pattern. The emergence of a class problem is first noticed, later there appears the question of religion. Yank talks about his family and their religious inclinations. He is disturbed by the cleanliness, orderliness, and the modern appearance of Fifth Avenue and wants to turn his way into side streets. He realizes the behaviour of the rich and well-dressed people: the women are done up exaggeratedly like puppets, the men are also well-dressed, but they have, by the side of their puppet-like quality, a soulless appearance. While walking they look neither left nor right, they walk right on.

An incongruity is noticed about the people coming out of church; their conversation is entirely about mundane topics. They seem as if they had attended the church service only to fulfil a formality, an obligation. They have no serious interest in religion; all they think about is making more and more money.

The lack of concern about worthwhile considerations on the part of the rich and fashionable people of New York are exaggerated, and the author reflects this to the spectator with the same degree of exaggeration: "The women are rouged, calcimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in Prince Alberts, high hats, spats, canes, etc."(O'Neill,1974b: 207) for them a fur coat made from the skin of an ape is worth much more than the life of a human being. As Long, who is one of Yank's mates, says: "They wouldn'd bloody well pay that for 'airy ape's skin-no, nor for the 'ole livin' ape with all 'is 'ead, and body, and soul thrown in!" (O'Neill,1974b: 208) This is the point where the title of the plays gains its utmost irony: on the one hand an ape's skin is more expensive than the life and being of Yank, who wants to fulfil his mission in life, on the other hand there is a threat to Yank's life in this attitude because Yank is a danger to them while he lives, so he

has to die, even though his skin is worth nothing compared to that of a real ape. At this point urban alienation comes to the fore.

Yank has been presented by the author as a man whose main reason for pride, as far as he is concerned, is his brute strength, although the spectator has come to know him better than that. It is ironic and tragic that Yank's better part - his faith in his only mission in life, which is pride in his being a good worker - is forgotten even by himself. He, therefore, identifies himself with the gorilla, and tries in vain to pull out electric poles and pavements. In this respect social antagonism is emphasized. The scene ends with Yank taken to prison.

In Scene Six Yank is in prison on Blackwells Island. In Scene One steel was a symbol for modern technology, in Scene Six it is a cage in which wild animals are imprisoned. Human beings are also kept behind steel bars. Thus we are shown a progress which extends from humanity to animalism.

Yank realizes that these bars were produced by Mildred's father. This is where Yank does not see steel anymore as he did in the boiler room of the ocean liner but as a cage and a line of bars in the zoo. He assumes again the attitude of Rodin's *The Thinker*. When Yank is in a desperate state of mind or faces a crisis, he begins to appear like Rodin's statue. If we think that the statue represents a man who has started to think for the first time, it becomes clear that Yank has only just learned to think, perhaps owing to some unaccustomed facts which he was forced to face. But one day one of the prisoners reads out an article from the *Sunday Times* against the Wobblies (the members of the organization the Industrial Workers of the World):

[...] They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God's revealed plan for the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape! (O'Neill, 1974b: 217).

Yank becomes interested in the Wobblies and decides to join their organization because he wants to belong somewhere and he thinks that this is what he needs.

In Scene Seven Yank has left prison and he has visited the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), which he takes to be a secret terrorist organization. It is, in fact, some kind of labour exchange but it is inefficient and the personnel do not care about their work. They cannot understand whether Yank is looking for a job or whether he is a government agent trying to accuse the organization of terrorist activities. There was a complete lack of communication between Yank and the personnel. There was at last a show of force between them and Yank is thrown out of the office. Yank has resorted to brute force, which shows he is ready to turn into an animal at any time. The irony of it is that, although Yank is supposed to be as strong as a gorilla, he is defeated easily not only by the police but also by ordinary civilians: "You are a brainless ape" (O'Neill, 1974b: 225). So *The Hairy Ape* image appears again. He is likened to a gorilla which has just come out of the jungle and whose head is empty. This refers to his physical and mental capabilities. When Yank talks about breaking and destroying we can see how his mind works.

Yank's forgetting his name is indicative and symbolic of both his loss of identity and search for his true identity. There occurs also a lack of communication between Yank and the community. Another problem is that Yank has been accused and questioned by the representatives of the community. He had never been in a circumstance



where his name was used or asked. Thus when they ask him what his name is he cannot remember it.

It becomes clear that home, children, right of vote, democracy, trade union, etc. are not enough to make a man happy. What is important is an identity, a personality, the knowledge that he is one of the human beings, yet he does this without really being conscious of what he wants and what he is doing. He wants to establish contact with people and society as it is seen in Fifth Avenue and in I.W.W, whether this be a love and hate communication. But he is not aware of this feeling clearly. His efforts in this direction become more pronounced and turn towards human beings when he has realized that his identification with steel was only an empty thought, impossible to put to effect. When he fails again he feels he is nowhere.

In the boiler room Yank had identified with steel, he was in harmony and communication with it. He felt it was he and his colleagues that made the boat move. This had become his main objective and he was achieving it by using his physical strength. Thus he was able to prove to himself that he was good for something, which gave him mental and spiritual power. When he felt he had lost touch with the world and the people, he still tried to find something to stick to, to establish contact with people, but he did not manage it; and worse, he fell into a state of depression.

In Scene Eight, Yank seems to be placed somewhere by the author himself, which the characters in the play had not managed to do. It may be for this reason that the scene smacks of the symbolic while certain points have been over-emphasized by the author. Yet the author's mention of the idea of belongingness is significant. At the

beginning of Scene Eight Yank's appearance in the form of Rodin's "The Thinker" is transferred to the position of the gorilla. As Martine (1984:95) points: "What is the range of human consciousness?"

Yank's entering the cage of the gorilla causes a great amount of disturbance and shouts and screams on the part of the apes, which signifies that Yank is not welcome even there. There may be two reasons why Yank goes in the gorilla cage: to solve the question of the similarity between the gorilla and himself, and now he has nowhere else to go to. In the cage, Yank experiences a sense of satisfaction because he sees huge physical strength as something which he and the gorilla share, identifying himself with the great ape.

Say, yuh're some hard-lookin' guy, ain't yuh? I seen lots of tough nuts dat de gang called gorillas, but yuh're de foist real one I ever seen. Some chest yuh got, and shoulders, and dem arms and mits! I bet yuh got a punch in eider fist dat'd knock em all silly. Ain't we both members of the same club-de hairy apes? (O'Neill, 1974b: 229).

We can deduce from this that his gaining knowledge of self is a great development because he still gives a great emphasis on physical strength and is ready to solve any problem resorting to brute force.

His words "I was in the cage" (O'Neill, 1974b:229), are significant because previously he refused to think that the boiler room was comparable to a cage, now he admits that they are identical. Yet, his feeling that his world (or all the world) is like a cage, indicates that he has gained self-knowledge, having started to think like Paddy. This is a kind of development of his mind. Yank comes closest to Paddy's position which once he had rejected vigorously. This is what he tells the gorilla:

[...] I seen de sun come up. Dat was prety, too-all red and pink and green. I was looking' at de skyscrapers-steel-and all de ships comin' in, sailin' out, all over de oith-and dey was steel, too. De sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was a breeze blowin'. Sure,it was great stuff. I got it aw right-what Paddy said about dat bein' de right dope-on'y I couldn't get in it, see? I couldn't belong in dat. It was over my head. And I kept tinkin'-and den I beat it up here to see what youse was like (O'Neill, 1974b:229,30).

The author's finding a similarity between the gorilla and Rodin's statue of the "Thinking Man" establishes yet another correspondance between Yank and the gorilla: they appear as one another's mirror image.

Yank has tried to run away from people, and went in the gorilla cage, which was his way of taking revenge and which produces a dramatic monologue on his part, but he is killed by the gorilla, with which he had identified. So his death is a kind of suicide, a kind of protest. The reaction that Yank receives from the gorilla is stronger than he received from human beings. His dead body being thrown into the gorilla cage symbolizes that Yank is acceptable to people and apes only when he is dead. At last he belongs as Houchin (1993:51) mentions:

Yank's gorilla, embodies what has been called the power that would destroy one's egocentric system, [...] the divine being that is the image of the living self within the locked labyrinth of one's own disoriented psyche; Yank's soul escapes from his body with the gorilla's assistance just as the gorilla escapes with Yank's help, from his cage. Together the gorilla and Yank like body and soul,eternalize the total personality for which Yank was searching when at the end, perhaps the Hairy Ape at last belongs.

We may conclude that because of extreme capitalism a man loses his humanity, finding himself in a worse position than that of his ancestor, the cave man, or even the gorilla. Lack of communication leads a man to losing his human qualities: Lack of

communication ends in lack of sensitivity and alienation from the surroundings and human contact.



### **3. SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ALIENATION IN *A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN***

The title of the play contains an irony. The word “misbegotten” has an emotional impact and seems highly suggestive. It implies people from a minority or those who were born unexpectedly or accidentally. “Moon” symbolizes a light in the dark, a light of hope, which is a good sign for those who have suffered from adverse circumstances, although this light is not so bright or strong as the sun; it is a limited light . Starting from this point, one may think that “normally begotten” people may deserve to receive sun light. Yet, the moon represents love, hope, and romanticism, so there is a connection between it and some other theme in the play. This significant title implies a comparison between the “misbegotten” and the “normally begotten”.

In the play characteristically, Jim Tyrone, who has no pipe dream, is described as a living dead. This is what Josie discovers during their moonlit romance at the end of the play. With his feeling of not being fully born into life, Jim Tyrone is “misbegotten” in a sipiritual sense, while Josie is “misbegotten” physically: she weighs “around one hundred and eighty”.

O’Neill was deeply concerned with his play titles. The titles are self-referential for the plays as Maufort argues (1989:103):

As for the variation from one period to another, we may note, that the early titles, just like the plays themselves, tend to be very short, often consisting of one word, whereas the late ones, referring to very comprehensive plays, often run to four or five words.

More important, however, is to note how pregnant with meaning and how poetical the later titles tend to be when compared to the early ones.

The play takes place at the house of Phil Hogan in Connecticut, in 1923. In the descriptions of scenery at the beginning of the play, the house and the rustic background complement each other and thus we also get a good idea of the nature of the inhabitants. The rough-edge dialogues tell us something about the physical setting. Especially the appearance of the house and that of Josie reflect each other.

Josie's brother Mike does not seem to be entirely convinced of his own religious beliefs. He scorns others but he can commit their mistakes. He mainly boasts of and relies upon the sound of his so-called religious convictions.

When Mike runs away from home, Josie gives him some pocket money, which he calls "stolen money". Yet, he takes it without any pangs of conscience when she says he will need it. This change of mind appears to be an inconsistency in his character. Mike is one of the alienated characters in the play. He is economically powerless and he has no ability for any kind of work. He remains undeveloped. All he can do is survive.

Despite Josie's rough and rude way in which she speaks, Josie is full of love and care for people. She only says what she thinks or what she thinks she ought to say. She is never two-faced. She does not want her brother to suffer as she does and encourages and helps him to leave home so that he may live a normal life. Thus she takes on herself the duty of helping their father and looking after him on her own. She brought up her brother after her mother's death. This is the first mother-like behaviour of Josie that the audiences has come across. She says: "It was the little boy you used to be that I had to mother, and

not you, I stole the money for” (O’Neill, 1974a:7). The second mother-like behaviour will be seen at the end of the play. In this respect Josie is an alienated character. Her role is imposed on her. She is not the centre of her life, she is the centre of the family.

Mike is almost as selfish and two-faced as his father. He plans to marry off his sister to a rich man so that he may get some profit out of this marriage. As his mother had died when she was giving birth to him, he holds himself responsible for her death. It is for this reason that he has turned into a religious fanatic.

Josie is very fond of Jim Tyrone, who is the owner of the farm on which they live, only she wonders if she can marry him when so many well-dressed and sophisticated Broadway tarts had failed to capture him. She lacks self-confidence. She thinks that men do not find her attractive enough as she is over-weight . Her father tries to encourage her, having thought that Mike’s plan to marry her off to Tyrone is a good idea , saying: “There’d be no harm trying it, anyway” (O’Neill, 1974a:18). After all, it is difficult to make a decent living . They even owe Tyrone six months’ rent money for their small and decrepit farm.

The father and the daughter are involved in a kind of game, at least from Josie’s side. She has been trying to give everybody the impression that she has been sleeping with men. The father pretends to believe this lie so that Josie’s self-imposed ugliness may not turn into a mental disease. She gives the same impression to Tyrone too, perhaps also thinking that he would prefer light women and speaks to him in that way:

JOSIE (Puts a hand on his shoulder and pushes him down): Don’t get up. Sure, you know I’m no lady (she sits on the top step-banteringly) How’s my fine Jim this beautiful

day? You don't look so bad. You must have stopped at the Inn for an eye-opener-or ten of them.

TYRONE: I've felt worse. (he looks up her sardonically) And how's my Virgin Queen of Ireland?

JOSIE: Yours is it? Since when? And don't be miscalling me a virgin. You'll ruin my reputation, if you spread that lie about me (O'Neill, 1974a: 27).

Josie's using a crude language is due to her idea that the Broadway tarts talk like this and that Tyrone likes and is impressed by this kind of talk. Josie's complexes have started to influence even her way of thinking in an adverse way. In fact she is a virgin. We can detect a strong undercurrent of sensitivity below the rough and crude dialogue of the characters in their talk.

Also the father and the daughter talk about financial affairs, not their feelings for each other. In their talk when the father notices that Josie is a bit relaxed, he tries to frighten her and invents a lie that Tyrone has decided to sell the farm to someone else. Thus he starts his plan going, which is to bring Tyrone and his daughter together. Here we may find a father teaching his daughter how to court a man to be incongruous. He is also trying to impose a role on her daughter.

Although Harder, a neighbour of Hogan, is not one of the main characters of the play, the author made him a convincing person. His living a simple life, despite the fact that he is rich and can buy what he likes, points to an incongruity in his mental make up.

Whenever Tyrone tells Josie that he likes big breasts she blushes although this is what she would like to hear. She tries to make use of any situation which brings them



together. We may detect a manifestation of Oedipus complex in Tyrone's references to Josie's big breasts. On the other hand, Josie has an Elektra complex. This is why, after having brought up her young brother as his mother, she looks after Tyrone and feeds him. Until now the author has given clues about the inner world of the characters and their complexes but when the climax starts the audience will come across the alienated people's reality.

When Josie has decided to go along with her father's plan to trap Tyrone she is dressed in black, which implies dignity, and the white flower which she wears on her breast signifies virginity. Josie is just like a prospective bride but Tyrone has not yet arrived. Her throwing off the flower corresponds to returning her wedding ring. Hogan's singing this song: "Oh the praties they grow small over here over here" (O'Neill, 1974a:47), shows his cunning, he wants to encourage her. He even tries to make Josie jealous by mentioning the Broadway tarts. Her hesitation about their plan is based on her already existing complex in this connection. Her father imposes his plan on her. His purpose is for Josie to drink with Tyrone, relax thus, and behave in a gentle way, which is an insulting position looking at it from Josie's point of view. Josie feels embarrassed and Hogan is aware of the girl's mood turning against him. Behind the rough and crude words of both of them one can detect sensitivity and emotion. They seem to enjoy this kind of banter, devoid of politeness, which has become a habit with them. In these conversations the writer has used what is made to sound like everyday language. This rough-sounding language helps us understand the characters and the play better. The author has reflected, without exaggeration, certain characteristics of certain people successfully, in their way of expressing themselves, their ideas, and emotions through their talk and the visual images like the flower on Josie's breast.

Tyrone is a person who says what he thinks. He tells Josie openly why he is so late and that he has come to see her so that he may get rid of his thoughts which bother him; he uses her as some kind of shelter, yet he loves her. He comes to see her because he loves and needs her. His lateness in arriving is due to his being confused. He does not want to deceive her by coming to see her, he also thinks that if he shows his love for her she will become more attached to him; he cannot trust himself fully and feels that he is doing her an injustice. He loves her and so he needs her. Because of the dilemma that Hogan has put them into, they do not know what to do. Tyrone realizes that the girl thinks much of him and is affected by that although he has tried to suppress his feelings for her. Josie gives the men both a drink and joins them in it in order to get rid of this complicated mood, which she also finds herself in. Tyrone's first reaction is relaxation, which was what he wanted; but he is also embarrassed. He feels foolish because his desire for affection has come out into the open. Irony is noticed in this scene. On the one hand there is a mother-son relationship and lovers' union on the other; with both relationships having become one. Tyrone's song, which is more like a dirge, adds sadness to the scene instead of romanticism. He sings: "And baby's cries can't waken her in the baggage coach ahead" (O'Neill, 1974a: 98). There is melodrama in the air, which adds sadness to the theme of love.

Tyrone talks about death when his head is resting on his sweetheart's breasts, which is incongruous; he should have been in a happy and peaceful mood: "[...] Let the dead past bury its dead" (O'Neill, 1974a: 75). This incongruity points to an emotional disturbance in him. The fact is that he is so used to the unpleasant surroundings and brash atmosphere of Broadway that he feels out place in the romantic, moonlit atmosphere.

Tyrone, in fact, leads a monotonous and stifling way of life. He lives in a room in a small hotel in the town, which adds to his continuous depression. So he tries going back to Broadway for the tarts, which makes him feel even worse. This two-way monotonous and shameful way of living has given him a permanent lack of self-respect. On the one hand his lack of will power and loneliness make him alienated from the life of normal people, on the other hand he again feels himself alienated from the natural or normal sexual relationships. He wants a real relationship with a woman, not a tart. It is also because of all this that he hates the idea of Josie behaving like a tart and opposes her saying: “[...] What are you talking about? For God’s sake, you’re not a tart” (O’Neill, 1974a:82). Also as he identifies her with his mother he cannot stand seeing Josie in this humiliating role. It is understood by his frequently mentioning Josie’s warm breasts and also by this speech: “That’s right. Mother me, Josie, I love it” (O’Neill, 1974a:45).

In this Scene, Tyrone and Josie watch each other closely. Their relationship may be already looked upon as love. Yet, when they are together feeling their love for each other, they are also aware of the existence of serious problems threatening their relationship. This is the tragic aspect of the play. They have to persist in trying to find a way out of their dilemma.

Jim Tyrone seeks to confess and has chosen Josie to hear his confession. She is a suitable surrogate for his mother because she is fine, beautiful, warm-hearted, and a virgin. These are always a desirable attributes for the mother of such a son.

Tyrone begins his confession to Josie: “It was long ago. But it seems like tonight” (O’Neill, 1974a: 82). It is felt that the story has been going through his mind ever

since it happened like the recurrent nightmares in a traumatic neurosis, which Freud (1955) discusses in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

When Tyrone says: “There is no present or future-only the past happening over and over again-now” (O’Neill, 1974a: 82). By this he means his alienation because of the powerlessness about changing his fate. Moorton and Brown (1991:42) mentions O’Neill’s characters as one of his crisis: “Is of being persued by a malignant fate or pursued by some ‘daemonic’ power, but psychoanalysis has always taken the view that their fate is for the most part arranged by themselves and determined by early infantile experiences”.

Tyrone, however, feels that he cannot posses Josie, he is mentally disturbed, and we notice the emergence of his Oedipus complex. What he is imposing upon those beautiful eyes, hair, smile, and warm breasts is a mother’s love and affection. The reason why Tyrone was not fond of his father is the presence of this Oedipus complex, the idea that he might share his mother with his father. There is some kind of jealousy. When his mother dies Tyrone thinks that she has deserted him and he takes some kind of revenge on her by associating with tarts.

In the end, there is nothing to be done for love, and what Josie can do is to love Tyrone like a mother and feel sad, because love of mother and love of sweetheart have mixed together, which is sad and leads to alienation of the lovers from each other.

It is clear that Tyrone trusts Josie as he trusted his mother. All she would do was to take the place of his mother, absolve him of his sins, and forgive him like his mother. So she says:

No! You won't go! I won't let you! (she hugs him close – gently) I understand now, Jim, darling, and I'm proud you came to me as the one in the world you know loves you enough to understand forgive-and I do forgive! (O'Neill, 1974a: 99).



## CONCLUSION

This study has aimed at analysing *The Hairy Ape* and *A Moon For The Misbegotten* in the light of man's sociological and psychological alienation. At the end it is seen that O'Neill is very successful in using the dramatic presentation of alienation in these two plays. Also the aspects of the conflict, characterisation, composition, and style of the plays show O'Neill's power of using the alienation effect.

It has interested me the fact that these two plays' representation of life, in different ways and degrees, has been established a strong sense of human relationships, and often contradictory feelings and attitudes.

*The Hairy Ape* is concerned with human alienation in the complex industrial society that has lost faith in any metaphysical purpose in life. Whereas O'Neill's directions for the zoo and the prison continue the expressionism of the first half of the play, those for Fifth Avenue and I.W.W scenes are more naturalistic. The apish traits of the stokers express the imposed alienation of the lower class; the properties of the family of the president of the Steel Trust and the exaggerated people in Fifth Avenue represent the alienation of the upper classes. Urban alienation is used in a graphic way in the Fifth Avenue scene.

Mildred is as alienated spiritually as Yank in that shocking moment in the boiler room, despite all her wealth and life in the high society. Yank's development lies in moving from the illusion of a non-alienated state through an awareness of alienation, and to a completely unsuccessful attempt to find unalienated values. In this respect the leitmotif

of “belonging” and “not belonging” is the expression of an unalienated and an alienated state. In this play economic pattern, industrial system, and social order are the elements used in pointing to alienation.

On the one hand alienation presents the social discrimination between the upper class and the lower class; on the other, it shows the opposition of civilisation and nature. These two conflicts are not independent from one another. The upper class is represented as civilised and also natural; but the lower class is represented as uncivilised and natural. In this respect urban alienation becomes significant. These conflicts make the society and civilization difficult to live in without pain.

There are not many dialogues in *The Hairy Ape*. In the play Paddy, Long, and Mildred speak in monologue rather than resort to dialogue. But *A Moon for The Misbegotten* depends on the dialogues.

There is also another similarity between the characters of these two plays. Alcohol is used as a means to relief. People drink in order to forget their mental and spiritual anguish and thus find some comfort; drink becomes a medicine. Then the characters start admitting their sins, yet go on fearing being deserted by others.

The substance of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is also new, although it is reminiscent of the material used in O'Neill's other plays. We cannot, any way, speak of an O'Neill play which is typical of him because all his works are different from one another. Only, this play has a similarity to *The Hairy Ape* for sharing the psychological and sociological alienation, especially psychological, which is felt to be stronger than in *The*

*Hairy Ape*. The dialogues in the moonlit scene are the most important parts of the play. Tyrone's sexual alienation has been put down to his Oedipus Complex, and thus their psychological alienation with their self identity. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* may be said to be a psychological study although it does not address itself to only a certain group of spectators, so it can be appreciated by everyone and becomes of universal significance. The subject of the play does not belong only to the era in which it was written, it is valid for today too; O'Neill has not tried to limit himself to his time only. In fact O'Neill is in advance of his age in this play, a reason why it becomes more and more popular after so many years.





## SUMMARY

For this dissertation *The Hairy Ape*, one of O'Neill's early works and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, one of his late works, have been chosen for study. In these two plays the psychological and sociological alienation of the main characters and their place in the society have been dwelt upon. The choice of the two plays would thus shed light on how the author used the theme of alienation in his early and later drama.

In *The Hairy Ape*, the chief hero Yank has been chosen for the discussion of the main theme, with Mildred, Paddy, Long, and others, adding to the sociological, economic, and psychological approach. They begin their dramatic lives on an ocean-going liner and Yank's life ends in a gorilla cage in a zoo, after interesting and gripping incidents. Search for self-identification and the sense of belonging are studied in the framework of friction between individuals social classes.

In *A Moon for the Misbegotten* the hero Jim Tyrone and the heroine Josie are studied from the point of view of their sociological but also, and mainly psychological, alienation. The scene is a poor farm house. The heroes' past and their complexes are revealed in powerful dramatic dialogue, which is full of stress and hidden meanings, as well as some humour.

In the dissertation the theme of alienation was first explained briefly, with the differentiation between sociological and psychological aspects of the theme. Giving some information about the author and the chief characteristics of his early and late periods was

necessary for a better understanding of the author and his work *The Hairy Ape* and after it *A Moon for the Misbegotten* are studied in the light of chosen theme.

In the conclusion part, the reflections of the theme of alienation were analyzed and compared in both plays.



## ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Eugene O'Neill'in ilk eserlerinden *The Hairy Ape* ve son eserlerinden *A Moon for the Misbegotten* adlı oyunları seçilmiştir. Bu iki oyundaki karakterlerin psikolojik ve sosyolojik yabancılaşmaları ve toplumdaki durumları incelenmektedir. Seçilen oyunların yazarın ilk ve son dönem oyunları içerisinde seçilmiş olması yabancılaşma unsurunu yaşamının farklı dönemlerinde oyunlarına nasıl yansıttığını görmek açısından önemlidir.

*The Hairy Ape* adlı oyunda yazarın yarattığı karakterlerden Yank temel alınarak diğer karakterlerden, Mildred, Paddy, Long ve diğer başka karakterlerin psikolojik yabancılaşmaları ve sosyolojik yabancılaşmadaki durumları bir gemide başlayıp bir hayvanat bahçesinde son bulan etkili bir hikaye içerisinde kimlik arayışı, aidiyet duygusu motifleri, toplumsal sınıflaşma çerçevesinde incelenmektedir.

*A Moon for the Misbegotten* adlı oyunda Josie ve Jim Tyrone adlı kahramanların psikolojik ve sosyolojik yabancılaşmaları, -daha yoğun olarak da psikolojik- bir çiftlik evinde geçen sahnelerle anlatılan, karakterlerin geçmişleri, kompleksleri ve üzerlerine yüklenen roller aracılığı ile incelenmektedir. Bu iki oyundaki karakterlerin psikolojik ve sosyolojik yabancılaşmalarını ortaya çıkarmak için yapılan çözümleme bazı bölümlerden oluşmaktadır. Doğru yargılara varabilmek için giriş bölümünde yabancılaşma kavramı tanıtılıp, psikolojik ve sosyolojik yabancılaşmanın tiyatrodaki yansımaları açıklanmaktadır. Birinci bölümde yazar hakkında bilgi verilmekte ve oyunların yazıldığı dönemlerin özelliklerine kısaca değinilmektedir. İkinci bölümde *The Hairy Ape*, üçüncü

bölümde ise *A Moon for the Misbegotten* oyunlarında psikolojik ve sosyolojik yabancılaşma incelenmektedir.

Sonuç bölümü ise, her iki oyundaki yabancılaşma temasının yansıtılması analiz edilerek karşılaştırılmıştır.



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