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Long Day's Journey into Night: *Modernism, Post-Modernism and Maternal Loss*

> "Loss of legitimation, loss of authority, loss of seduction, loss of genius—*loss*."
>
> —Alice Jardine, *Gynesis*

Feminist theory has for some time been concerned with the implications for women of the sense of loss which emerges in both modernism and post-modernism and has increasingly identified both movements as responses to a "crisis in figurability", which is above all a crisis in figuring women. Alice Jardine, in particular, has pointed out that concern to articulate the "Other" may also be an attempt to pre-empt her articulation of her (other) self. Jardine's definition of history through its relation to its "Other" is very much in keeping with the discourses of crisis and loss (of legitimacy) which she analyses. She goes further than the male writers she discusses, however, in re-defining the terms in which that "loss" is understood. The new space[1] which is created by Jardine's re-configuration of woman and modernity is one where history is defined by its interruption, an interruption by the voice of what it designates as its silent and formless opposite.

These issues have been elaborated primarily in readings of fiction, poetry and theory. Theatre and drama, because they posed very specific problems for semiotics[2] have not figured prominently in discussions of gender, modernism and post-modernism. *Long Day's Journey into Night* may seem a

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strange starting place for a feminist analysis of modernism and post-modernism. Yet even the most conservative criticism reads this play as an enactment and embodiment of loss, specifically loss of the mother. That loss is rarely seen in the context of a more general "loss", a cultural loss of legitimacy and authenticity, endemic in and enabling modernism, articulated as "disinheritance" by an Other "coded as *feminine*." Critical emphasis has fallen on the play's autobiographical aspects. As Judith Barrow has pointed out, "It is probably to *Journey*'s disadvantage that its biographical roots are so well known."[3] This concentration on its biographical "roots" long obscured its theatrical ones and, in some cases, blinded criticism to the play's status as play and as cultural construct. Travis Bogard's study, published in 1972, provides an extreme example of this in his criticism of O'Neill's presentation of Edmund Tyrone. Edmund is the youngest son of the Tyrone family and the writer figure within the play too easily identified by criticism with O'Neill himself:

> Edmund is more than an imaginary figure. He is a figure from history and one upon whose truth to life an audience has a right to insist.[4]

This extraordinary insistence that the play be subsidiary to a (biographical) reality independent of it is the worst kind of literary voyeurism: a demand on the writer to exhibit all his scars. Such equations of the writer's life and work seem all the more bizarre when one considers the extent to which the characters in *Long Day's Journey into Night* self-consciously quote and construct themselves from other people's lines, other plays, scraps of philosophy. In Act 5 alone there are twenty direct quotations as well as a string of literary allusions. The compulsion to quote, to refer, to allude, is interwoven with the more obvious compulsions of the Tyrone family. Jamie Tyrone replies to one of his father's many literary rebukes with:

> I could see that line coming! God how many thousand times![5]

Any exploration of the intertextual webs woven and unravelled in the play leads towards a very different *Long Day's Journey into Night* to the confessional tour de force demanded by Bogard. This different play is structured by a "crisis in figurability" which is articulated, not as "the loss of the paternal fiction",[6] but as the loss of a maternal reality.

The Play of Addictions

Long Day's Journey into Night is not so much a play about addiction, as a play of addictions, the inter-play of the individual and shared compulsions of the

Tyrone family. Mary Tyrone is a morphine addict. Her husband, James, and sons, Jamie and Edmund, are, to varying degrees, addicted to alcohol. "Be always drunken", Edmund exhorts, drunkenly quoting Baudelaire (p. 114). Most of the characters in *Long Day's Journey into Night* are drunken, at least by the end of the play, and the men are throughout shown to be intoxicated by other men's poetry.

Repetition is the form of the action, though the form and the action are incomplete. Act 1 commences with a move from dining room to living room, from the shared meal, the traditional symbol of communality and family, to "living", the disintegration of that ideal communality into conflicting individualities. It is this "living" area which occupies the stage. Each subsequent scene opens with an unsuccessful attempt to reverse or repeat the opening move. Initially it is the male characters whose timing disrupts the domestic rhythms Mary tries to maintain, but it is her desire to keep the maid with her for company which disrupts the dinner routine. Tyrone comments, "You're for ever scolding me for being late, but now I'm on time for once it's dinner that's late." (p. 100). Eventually all semblance of family life breaks down and Tyrone, "a sad, bewildered, broken old man" (p. 107), goes in to dine alone.

Inheritance and Deficiency

What is the root of these disrupted repetitions which are repetitions nonetheless? Mary speaks of "the things life has done to us" (p. 53), and this use of the passive mode is typical. There is an inexorable determinism at the heart of many of O'Neill's plays. In *Mourning Becomes Electra* the Freudian family romance and heredity seem the strongest determining factors, exerting a kind of doom, the curse of the Mannons.[7] The reproduction of physical characteristics through the generations, in this as in other O'Neill plays, emphasises the extent to which each individual has from birth or at least childhood been assigned a pre-existing role in a drama that has already been played out many times before.

In *Long Day's Journey into Night* Mary Tyrone comments:

> The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future too. We all try to lie out of that but life won't let us. (p. 75)

The dramatic action confirms this, being primarily retrogressive rather than progressive. O'Neill's characters play out their roles in the social dramas identified by Marx and the psychological dramas of Freud's family romance. The Tyrone family are on one level case studies of the inevitable concentration of wealth in capitalism, the inevitable antagonism between brothers and between father and sons in the Oedipal family. Edmund posits a relationship between the two forms of determinism early in the play:

> our ruling plutocrats especially the ones who inherited their boodle are not mental giants. (p. 20)

Inheritance, heredity and deficiency, particularly mental deficiency, are all associated here. Such an association immediately links *Journey* to the Ibsen play which is never quoted or named, but which "haunts" *Long Day's Journey into Night* as surely as the past haunts the Tyrone family. In *Ghosts*, Mrs Alving acts upon Edmund's logic. In an attempt to save her son from heredity, she forestalls inheritance:

> I didn't want Oswald, my son, to inherit a single thing from his father.[8]

In *Ghosts* the father's legacy is one of dissipation of physical and mental health and of the family fortune. It has fallen to his wife to preserve and accumulate an estate to pass on to her son. In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, as in *Desire Under the Elms* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*, the father figure is not only the quintessence of prohibitive patriarchy, but also of accumulative capitalism. James Tyrone is repeatedly accused of acquiring property at the expense of his family's needs and desires.

In both *Ghosts* and *Long Day's Journey into Night* the individual is primarily a player of preordained roles rather than an independent actor. In *Long Day's Journey into Night* determinism presents itself as repetition, repetition of action, of phrases and of conflicts. The characters repeat the move from dining to living room, and repeatedly reach for the bottle. Key phrases recur. Mary asks again and again is her hair all right, where are her glasses? (p. 59). Edmund describes her, again and again, as a "ghost haunting the past" (pp. 118, 133). The same conflicts occur between different characters. The same argument about Jamie's worth takes place three times in Act 1; between Tyrone and Mary (pp. 15–16), between Tyrone and Edmund (pp. 22–23), and then between Tyrone and Jamie himself (pp. 26–28). The argument is reprised in Act 4, between Tyrone and Edmund (pp. 111–12).

Stasis and circularity are the very texture of the play. The repetition reaches an apotheosis in the final scene, for this play does not culminate in catharsis, nor even in destruction. It ends instead in a stasis which implies an inexorable continuity without change.[9] Mary has retreated into morphine and the past. The men are no longer capable of performing what must be their most basic and instinctive act:

> Tyrone lifts his glass and his sons follow suit mechanically, but before they can drink Mary speaks and they slowly lower their drinks to the table, forgetting them. (p. 155)

An intriguing set of Shakespearean resonances are sent echoing through *Long Day's Journey into Night* from Act 2, Sc. 2. "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is", comments Tyrone on his younger son, "To have a thankless child", (p. 77), Edmund concludes for him. The line comes from Lear's curse on Goneril:

> If she must teem,
> Create her child of spleen, that it may live
> And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!
> Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
> With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
> Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
> To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
> How sharper . . .[10]

This is Lear's curse on his daughter, but it epitomises Tyrone's sense of betrayal by his sons and describes Mary's "curse". Edmund, the "child" in question here, was the cause of the illness which initiated her morphine addiction. He is still stamping wrinkles on the brow of youth which the stage directions tell us is still occasionally evident in Mary.

Shakespeare's Edmund is the brilliant bastard, the original individualist, who is in every sense illegitimate. Edmund Tyrone is also a usurper. He has taken the place of Eugene, the dead son of Mary and Tyrone,[11] and of the other absent Eugene, Eugene O'Neill, whose surrogate and distortion on stage he is. In the best tradition of modernist nostalgia, literary consumption is what prevents the "true" artist, the "original" O'Neill from presentation in and of himself. He is mediated by his representative, illegitimate Edmund, and his thought or meaning is displaced by its representation. Moreover, this 'autobiographical' 'tragedy' unfolds in the shadow of a long literary inheritance which not only determines the forms, but also the meaning of the life and the work.

The Ghost of Meaning

Artaud, using a very different vocabulary, but very similar imagery to the Tyrones, expressed the opinion that:

> a gifted actor instinctively knows how to tap and radiate certain powers [to do this] he must consider a human being as a double, like the Kha of the Egyptian mummies, like an eternal ghost, radiating affective powers.[12]

The actor (James Tyrone and his sons), the physical human being, becomes—in this description—only a double, an empty signifier referring

to a reality elsewhere, a "real" entity which is not human but a "Mummy", not living, but an abstraction from the human. The signified of which he is the ghostly double is always elsewhere. Therefore presence, order, identity are always somewhere else, somewhere other than where he is. Meaning, or rather his function in pointing to it, drains this signifier of substance. He becomes a ghost, a pointer always pointing away from himself towards the elusive other, the reference that will give his role meaning. Any signifier, but particularly a living, breathing one, is radically impoverished as well as aggrandised by its signifying function:

> The form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal. The meaning will be for the form an instantaneous reserve of history, a tamed richness . . . once made use of, it becomes artificial.[13]

Its specificity, its individuality and distinctness must disappear to refer to some universal "truth" elsewhere.

O'Neill's characters refer, pointing away from themselves, to the poetic personae and characters of previous players, previous writers. These previous figures are imbued with the authority of a "real" existence elsewhere, off-stage, albeit in the world of books. To some extent Tyrone, Jamie and Edmund are the ghosts of Lear, Othello, Iago, Baudelaire, Swinburne, Nietzsche. The play is haunted by the past and by other men's words, but it also haunts them. These actors inhabit a present which can only, with horrifying persistence, refer back to the past. They are indistinct, one identity merging into another. Even their paralysis seems like a convention. They are conventionally modern and hover on the brink of actions and texts where progress and redemption were possible, where character was clearly defined and active. James Tyrone haunts, is the ghostly double of, the Shakespearian heroes he once played, but which his own 'tragic flaw', the greed bred by insecurity, has ensured he will never play again. His sons are the ghosts of ghosts, shades generated by the Post-Romantic anti-heroes, Baudelaire, Swinburne and Nietzsche.

Medusa in the Holy Family

Long Day's Journey into Night is still a play of family ghosts. If Tyrone Senior is a pale shadow of an idealised Father and Jamie the all too inadequate ghost of the Son's role, then Edmund is the holy consumptive Ghost of Eugene O'Neill. Edmund, "the sea-mother's son", concludes his first poetic monologue on fog and its merits by asking:

> Who wants to see life as it is, if they can help it? It's the three Gorgons in one. You look at their faces and turn to stone. Or it's

> Pan. You see him and you die—that is, inside you—and hate to go on living as a ghost. (p. 113)

His father's response is that Edmund has "a poet in you but a damned morbid one!" (p. 114). The reference to the Gorgons implies that "once again, only *women* are seen as responsible for, indeed guilty of, blocking the flow of desire."[14]

Pan, the musical rival of Apollo,[15] foreshadows the rivalry of moderns to Shakespeare which father and son debate in this act. Their ghostliness is thus attributed to the anxiety of (patrilinear) inheritance through this reference to Pan, even if death by seeing is an attribute borrowed from the maternal Gorgons. Pan's closest associate, however, is Dionysus.[16] The trinity which the Tyrone men parody inevitably invokes another submerged and far older one where the father and son are interchangeable (like two actors alternating roles) in relation to an eternal mother goddess, through whom rebirth and renewal are available.

Mary Tyrone emerges in the closing moments of the play, not as this fierce pagan Goddess, but as her debilitated Christian displacement, Mary's namesake. This figure has, of course, a very specific resonance in the Irish Catholic Tyrone household. Suddenly bursting in on the games of recollection, quotation and Casino of the male Tyrones, Mary makes her final entrance against a blaze of light, wearing a blue robe, her white wedding dress over her arm. She has returned in memory and psychological reality to the time before her marriage. She is the perfect, ambivalent embodiment of the Virgin Mother she invokes, her white dress the symbol of both virginity and marriage.

Mary's establishment of herself in this role offers no hope of renewal or salvation or nurture. In her retreat into a time before her marriage, she denies the reality of her husband and sons. For Edmund:

> The hardest thing to take is the blank wall she builds around her. Or it's more like a bank of fog in which she hides and loses herself. Deliberately, that's the hell of it! You know something in her does it deliberately—to get beyond our reach, to be rid of us, to forget we're alive! It's as if, in spite of loving us, she hated us! (pp. 120–21)

In removing herself from them and from the social, historical, literary and interpersonal processes that define them, she denies the male Tyrones a sense of relation to the processes of life and death which, as mother, she is culturally constructed to hold in reserve for them. They wish her to make and to be "home" for them: the lack of homeliness in their lives

is emphasised throughout *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Instead Mary mourns that she has never had a home of her *own*; "I've never felt it was my home" (p. 38), "I am alone. I've always been alone" (p. 40). She retreats psychologically to her own childhood home. Mary, even in her drug-induced stupor, thus transgresses a fundamental interdiction on women in patriarchy:

> that prohibition that enjoins woman—at least in this history—from ever imagining, fancying, re-presenting, symbolizing, etc. (and none of these words is adequate as all are borrowed from a discourse which aids and abets that prohibition) her own relation of *beginning*. The 'fact of castration' has to be understood as a definitive prohibition against establishing one's own economy of the desire for origin. Hence the hole, the lack, the fault, the 'castration' that greets the little girl as she enters as a subject into representative systems.[17]

In establishing her own, "mad" relation to origin, Mary Tyrone denies her men the possibility of any sense of home. She denies them their relation to origin. This rupture of the "make believe of a beginning"[18] denies the possibility of an ending. It marks the modernist dislocation of teleology and the displacement of purpose by drive, the displacement of a trajectory of beginning, middle and end by cycles of compulsion, repetition and addiction. The mother's search for her own story, even if her search is thwarted until it becomes no more than the desire to return to oblivion through morphine, de-realises all of the diverse literary, philosophical and personal stories told by the men. Her attempt to represent herself situates them in a realm of representation and they are reduced to an attempt to construct an identity out of antecedent, more legitimate representations. They seek from her the consolatory denial of the fictionality of their identities. She punishes them with the truth.

Quotation and Origin

Mary's strange truths frame and interrupt the literary disputes between father and sons. These disputes, particularly the long conversation between Tyrone and Edmund in the last act, are dialogues between a pre- and post-modern view of literary authority. Tyrone insists on the timelessness of Shakespeare, which makes him superior to the more modern poets and philosophers preferred by his sons. Great art, to Tyrone senior, is that which has universal significance. In the context in which Tyrone makes his defence of this aesthetic, however, its darker implications are foregrounded:

> TYRONE: Why can't you remember your Shakespeare and forget the third-raters? You'll find what you're trying to say in him—as you'll find everything worth saying. (*He quotes, using his fine voice.*) 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.'
>
> EDMUND (*Ironical*). Fine! That's beautiful. But I wasn't trying to say that. We are such stuff as manure is made on, so let's drink up and forget it. That's more my idea. (p. 114)

Pointing Edmund away from the modern and towards the distant "classic", Tyrone underlines the position of inauthenticity which for his son is the central dilemma of the aspirant writer. This dilemma is one which Edmund shares with the writers he admires and quotes.

A persistent pattern emerges in Edmund's quotation of pre-modernist verse. His quotes are intrinsically misquotes, already revisions of earlier work. Both the Dowson poems quoted in Act IV, "Cynara" and "They Are Not Long",[19] derive from Horace's Odes.[20] Enclosed in "They Are Not Long" is another "misprision"[21] of the lines James Tyrone will later quote from *The Tempest*,[22] to counter this "third rate" stuff:

> Out of a misty dream
> Our path emerges for a while, then closes
> Within a dream.

The stage directions specify that it is "the Symons translation of Baudelaire's prose poem" (p. 114) that Edmund quotes, a translation that did not appear until thirteen years after the "day in August, 1912" on which *Long Day's Journey into Night* is set.[23] T.S. Eliot objected that Symons had not only translated, but transformed Baudelaire, so that he "became a poet of the 'nineties, a contemporary of Dowson and Wilde" and contrasted this view with the earlier view of Baudelaire as a "classicist".[24]

The Shakespearian quotes follow a different pattern. They invoke a tragic paradigm where resolution, even redemption, is possible. The apparently innocuous quote by Jamie in the first act, "the Moor, I know his trumpet" (p. 18), identifies his father with the jealous hero of *Othello*.[25] This foreshadows Mary's later accusation, "He's been jealous of every one of my babies" (p. 104). The same quote identifies Jamie himself with Iago. And of course in this scene it is Jamie who casts suspicion on Mary as Iago on Desdemona. As it is Iago who is truly jealous and a usurper so it is Jamie, too, who corrupts Edmund out of jealousy of his parents' affections.

By quoting Iago's line, Jamie tells a kind of truth. The relationship to such authoritative texts (unlike that to Dowson and Swinburne) seems, at

this stage, to offer the possibility of authoritative truth. The tragic paradigm invoked offers the possibility of an eventual and conclusive ending, but the offer is another fraud. Identity is as unstable in Shakespearian drama as elsewhere and Tyrone's reminiscences emphasise that while the roles are fixed the actors are interchangeable and secondary:

> In 1874 when Edwin Booth came to the theatre in Chicago where I was leading man, I played Cassius to his Brutus one night, Brutus to his Cassius the next, Othello to his Iago, and so on. (p. 131)

Seen from the perspective of the conflict between the male Tyrones, the patterns of quotation become a case study in Bloomian agonistics. Edmund strives to be 'original'. His struggle for priority in an Oedipal conflict with his father is also a struggle for priority in a struggle with his literary fathers. The struggle between father and son is the struggle for a literary authority which is unavailable, incomplete, and must remain so. Tyrone and Edmund's conversation, sprinkled with quotations, full of aspirations towards artistic authority and integrity, significantly presents itself on stage as a period of anticipation. The audience, as well as the Tyrones, wait for Mary to put a stop to these frenetic attempts at validating reference, legitimising quotation.

The Sea-Mother's Son

When O'Neill initially contemplated an autobiographical play (or series of plays) in 1927, it was under the working title of *The Sea-Mother's Son*.[26] Judith Barlow (p. 64) convincingly linked that project with another referred to in a letter to George Nathan in 1929, "a stage play combined with a screen talky background to make alive visually and vocally the memories in the minds of the characters."[27] *The Sea-Mother's Son* was abandoned, but the autobiographical project metamorphosed into *Long Day's Journey into Night* and the "screen talky background" became row after row of well thumbed books. Living memory was replaced by literary inheritance:

> Against the wall between the doorways is a small bookcase, with a picture of Shakespeare above it, containing novels by Balzac, Zola, Stendhal, philosophical and sociological works by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, Engels, Kropotkin, Max Sterner, plays by Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, poetry by Swinburne, Rossetti, Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Kipling etc.... In the left wall.... Farther back is a large glassed-in bookcase with sets of Dumas, Victor Hugo, Charles Lever, three sets of Shakespeare, The World's Best Literature in fifty large volumes, Hume's *History of England*, Thiers' *History of*

> *the Consulate and Empire*, Smollett's *History of England*, Gibbon's *Roman Empire* and miscellaneous volumes of old plays, poetry, and several histories of Ireland. The astonishing thing about these sets is that all the volumes have the look of having been read and reread. (p. 9)

This meticulously documented library comprises the whole weight of a civilisation.

Mary at one stage tells Edmund, "It's just a pose you get out of books! You're not really sick at all!" (p. 78). This is on one level true. Everything about Edmund is second or third hand. His sea journeyings in imitation of Conrad are described by his father as "a game of romance and adventure to you. It was play" (p. 128). The artist is an actor too and his disease is an intensification of the second-hand textuality of the others. In Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Mrs Alving comments:

> It's not just what we inherit from our mothers and fathers that haunts us. It's all kinds of old defunct theories, all kinds of old defunct beliefs, and things like that. It's not that they actually live on in us; they simply lodge there and we cannot get rid of them. I've only to pick up a newspaper and I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines. Over the whole country there must be ghosts, as numerous as the sands of the sea. And here we are, all of us, abysmally afraid of the light.[28]

Manders's response is significant, "Aha, so there we see the fruits of your reading." Literary consumption is Edmund Tyrone's psychological and artistic disease and literature in *Long Day's Journey into Night* plays much the same role as syphilis in *Ghosts*.

Mary is not an actor nor an artist. In her drugged state, however, she utters strange truths.[29] "Edmund is made apprehensive by her strangeness", we are told (p. 53). When she is speaking honestly and uncovering painful truths, Mary is described as speaking in a "strange" voice. These strange truths she seems to bring back or dredge up from the past or "elsewhere". "Mama, stop talking", pleads Edmund (p. 58), but Mary has long ceased to be the silent object of the son's discourse.

Mary does not quote, she is an original and as damned as the bad copies. For her "truth" is an exile from the symbolic order, where meaning may be painful and inadequate but is sane and workable, an exile to insanity and the annihilation of self. "The woman has nothing to laugh about when the symbolic order collapses."[30] Her search for her own origin and refusal to be an origin is a refusal of her role in the socio-symbolic contract which "society as

a whole understands as murder"[31] and which her son understands specifically as the murder of God or any absolute:

> EDMUND. (*bitingly*) Did you pray for Mama?
> TYRONE. I did. I've prayed to God these many years for her.
> EDMUND. Then Nietzsche must be right. (*He quotes from Thus Spake Zarathustra.*) 'God is dead: of his pity for man hath God died.' (pp. 66–7)

"Every God, even including the God of the Word, relies on a mother Goddess."[32] The mother in *Long Day's Journey into Night* marks the collapse of the maternal guarantee against death and against the failure of "the lacunary network of signs" to uphold identity. No longer a Goddess, she is just one more bewildered ghost haunting her own past, asking her own questions. This should make her what her son aspires to be, an original, but for Mary this means taking up the only position of feminine uniqueness available, that of Virgin Mother, "universal and particular, but never singular . . . alone of all her sex."[33] This same unique role, says Kristeva (pp. 181–82), was inherited as a safeguard against maternal defection:

> A skilful balance of concessions and constraints involving feminine paranoia, the representation of virgin motherhood appears to crown the efforts of a society to reconcile the social remnants of matrilinearism and the unconscious needs of primary narcissism on the one hand, and on the other the requirements of a new society based on exchange and before long on increased production, which require the contribution of the superego and rely on the symbolic paternal agency.

"That clever balanced architecture"[34] has been crumbling since the Enlightenment. In *Long Day's Journey into Night* the image of the Virgin Mother in the play's closing minutes represents not submission to the child-god,[35] but his abandonment. The play exhausts literary discourses, undermines the "symbolic paternal agency" and denies primary narcissism the maternal idealisation for which it hungers. In other words, it exposes the fraud and fear which support the father's word and the son's argument with it.

Such exposure is part of the modernist project insofar as any son's attempt to re-define literature must undertake the risky project of providing a new covering for phallic power as linguistic and literary power and a more effective barrier against its maternal undertow. *Long Day's Journey into Night* sets up a space where Mary, speaking from outside her allotted space in

patriarchal discourse, from outside and beyond the crowded literary domain her husband and sons inhabit, can be the touchstone for a new kind of literary authority. The inscription of her "strange truths" in this play for literary validation signifies the aspiration towards an authenticity which would be once more a maternal resource available to the son. This time she will legitimise Eugene. O'Neill, in other words, is engaged in the attempt to pre-empt the mother's articulation of her (other) self, identified by Jardine. In this context, the modernist confrontation with the Other, with the feminine, with maternal loss and maternal and semiotic power can be understood as a failed attempt to face and banish the Medusa once and for all or a (more successful) attempt to harness her power.

Until the last act *Long Day's Journey into Night* is resolutely post-modern; it "puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself."[36] As origin, Mother, Mary should not be an actor, but the scene of the action. Yet Mary is there, on stage, and she speaks her "strange truths". As lost origin, the loss of which denies the possibility of the original or truthful, she symbolises what modernism mourned, sought and feared. In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the pain of loss, the understanding that the loss is necessary and the struggle to articulate from the other side of the unknown do battle. Only in Mary's closing speech does it succumb to the nostalgia which besets modernism. In this respect O'Neill's conclusion is reminiscent of Joyce's conclusion to *Ulysses*. Both finally fake the voice of the (M)Other.

Notes

1. Alice Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). The relevant chapter is entitled "Spaces for Further Research."

2. See Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980).

3. Judith Barlow, *Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late Eugene O'Neill Plays* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1985), p. 66.

4. Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 435.

5. Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), p. 28. Subsequent quotations from this text are given in parentheses in this essay.

6. Alice Jardine, *Gynesis*, p. 67.

7. Eugene O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966), p. 288.

8. Henrik Ibsen, *The Oxford Ibsen*, V (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), translated and edited by J.W. MacFarlane, p. 377.

9. I would argue this despite Judith Barlow's conclusion from the pattern of O'Neill's revisions to the play that he "de-emphasized the circularity as he worked on *Journey*." See *Final Acts*, p. 81. There is a difference between de-emphasising and eliminating.

10. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, ninth edition 1972), edited by Kenneth Muir, 1.4.279–87.

11. O'Neill transposed his own name and that of his dead brother, Edmund, for the purposes of the play.

12. Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works*, IV, "The Theatre and its Double" (London: Calder and Boyars, 1974), translated by Victor Corti, p. 101.

13. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), translated by Annette Lavers, p. 118.

14. Alice Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*, p. 68. See also Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", translated by Keith and Paula Cohen, *Signs*, 1976, I, no. 1, pp. 875–899, on the reverberations of the Gorgon myth in patriarchal culture: "They riveted us between two horrifying myths: between the Medusa and the abyss" (p. 883).

15. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated by Mary M. Innes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), p. 250.

16. That association is stressed in *The Golden Bough*. Dionysus sometimes appeared as a goat and in that guise "he can hardly be separated from the minor divinities, the Pans, Satyrs and Silenises." See J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 11, p. 291.

17. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), translated by Gillian C. Gill, p. 83.

18. George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 35.

19. Ernest Dowson, *The Poems of Ernest Dowson* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), edited by Mark Longaker, p. 58 and p. 38.

20. Horace, *The Complete Odes and Epodes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), translated and edited by W.G. Shepherd. "Cynara" derives from Book 4.1.3–4, and "They Are Not Long" from Book 1.4.15.

21. Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 83–105.

22. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1966), edited by Frank Kermode, 4.1.156–58.

23. Charles Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal, Petits poèmes en prose, Les paradis artificiels* (London: Casanova, 1925), translated by Arthur Symons.

24. Karl Beckson, *Arthur Symons: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 313. Eliot's review, "Poet and Saint . . .", appeared in *Dial* 82 (May 1927), p. 427, and again, as "Baudelaire in Our Times", in *For Lancelot Andrews* (1929).

25. William Shakespeare, *Othello*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, seventh edition 1958), edited by M.R. Ridley, 2.1.177–8.

26. Judith E. Barlow, *Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late Eugene O'Neill Plays*, p. 63.

27. O'Neill to Nathan, 12 November 1929.

28. Henrik Ibsen, *The Oxford Ibsen*, V, p. 384.

29. Pan, associated by Edmund with the maternal Gorgons, is also associated with the Delphic Oracle, another speaker of strange truths. See Joseph Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins* (Berkeley and Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, second edition 1980), pp. 408–9.

30. Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 150.

31. Ibid., p. 200.

32. Ibid., p. 176.

33. Kristeva, p. 183.

34. Kristeva, p. 182.

35. "The Virgin assumes the paranoid lust for power by changing a woman into a Queen in heaven and a Mother of the earthly institutions (of the Church). But she succeeds in stifling that megalomania by putting it on its knees before the child-god." Kristeva, p. 180.

36. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1984), translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, p. 81.