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**The Tragic Hero in Eugene O'Neill's
The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape
In the Light of
Karen Horney's Theory of Neurotic Pride**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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Disclaimer

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I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgment is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Date:

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Abstract

Abstract

This dissertation proposes to study the tragic hero in Eugene O'Neill's The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape in the light of Karen Horney's theory of neurotic pride. It attempts to verify whether Jones - a black character – and Yank - a stoker – in The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape respectively, who were subject to rejection because of their belonging to marginalised groups, could not develop into their real selves and reach self integrity. Instead, both protagonists, to feel worthy and secure, develop neurotic pride which causes them to mould themselves into their illusory idealised selves as an immortal emperor and a divine stoker. In Horney's view, both characters will grow into alienated beings who exist both as their actual selves in the real world (conscious) and their idealised selves in their fantasy world (unconscious). The encounter between conscious and unconscious anticipates the heroes' downfall.

Therefore, the choice of a psychoanalytical criticism suits the subject of our research as it addresses the mind, i.e., conscious and unconscious functioning. In fact, it sheds light on the heroes' psychic conflict which is the main cause of their tragedy. Among a number of psychoanalysts' theories we have opted for Horney's theory in particular because it presents a social view of the psyche, placing emphasis on social factors and their contribution to forming the unconscious. In other words, it shows how lack of warmth and love in Jones's and Yank's environment have made of them victims of neurotic pride whose only obsession is finding security.

After trying to bring evidence from the text that Jones and Yank are victims of neurotic pride as explained by Horney, this research attempts to redefine the link between O'Neill's personal experience and his fiction. In other words, it tries to investigate whether the playwright's interest in depicting neurotic characters such as Jones and Yank stems from his personal experience of neurosis. Here appears the second reason for choosing a psychoanalytical approach. In fact, in addition to the character's psyche, psychoanalysis also addresses the author's mind.

The last concern of our dissertation is exploring the stylistic aspect of both plays, Expressionism in particular. We argue that O'Neill's choice of Expressionism as the

dominant style in the two plays is linked with his interest in dramatising his characters' neurotic conflict and perhaps also his own. Indeed, Expressionism seems to suit the topic of our research as it brings into light the hidden neurotic conflict.

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Introduction

The tragic hero is an issue which goes back to the time of the Greeks. Indeed, the Greeks were the first tragedians; and it was upon their work that Aristotle formed his conclusions about tragedy. No doubt, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were pioneering tragic dramatists remembered for their famous tragedies of the like of The Persians, Oedipus and Alcestis respectively that display the change in the hero's fortune which provides fear and pity.

Over centuries, the concept of the tragic hero knew considerable variations, starting from Europe and influencing other countries such as the U.S. Indeed, with the coming of Realism in the 19th century there was a claim for a portrayal of more realistic characters; and the noble Greek tragic hero was thus displaced by the common man. Moreover, the reasons behind the hero's downfall changed through time. During the Middle Ages, where almost everything was related to religion, the idea of Providence or God's will came to replace the concept of "hamartia" which had been the main cause of the hero's tragedy according to the Greeks. In Renaissance, the idea of "hamartia" came back to dominate tragedy with the revival of Roman and Greek cultures. However, in the 19th century, the vision of the tragic hero became more materialistic. Indeed, the tragic hero was described as a being whose downfall was determined by material forces beyond his control.

What led to this new vision of the tragic hero were the ideas of secularization, the deterministic theories and also the scientific arguments developed at the time. Psychoanalysis¹, developed by Sigmund Freud, emerged as a new science; and the material force responsible for the hero's downfall took a psychoanalytical dimension. Indeed, the tragic hero became a victim of his unconscious. This modern vision with regard to the force behind the hero's downfall which started in Europe reached America in the 20th century and influenced a number of dramatists such as Eugene O'Neill.

Freud was the first who developed the concept of the unconscious, but he was certainly not the only one. Indeed, many psychoanalysts following some of his ideas and deviating from others studied the workings of the unconscious. In our dissertation, though we do refer to other psychoanalysts' theories such as Freud's and Carl Gustav Jung's, we are going to focus on Karen Horney's theory of neurotic pride. While Freud interprets the functioning of the unconscious by referring mainly if not only to sexual instincts, and Jung presents an archetypal psychology, Horney develops a social view of the individual's unconscious. According to her, absence of love and safety hinders the individual's growth.

¹ Psychoanalysis: Sigmund Freud considers psychoanalysis as "a science, as a medical practice, and as a way of approaching literary and anthropological texts. The latter two senses of psychoanalysis are the ones which have been most heavily relied upon by textual analysis...If one concept were signalled out as the most significant factor in making psychoanalysis central in both culture and criticism, it would probably be the unconscious...The unconscious works by its own logic and even language, and it is the task of analysis to tap into this logic (as it is the task of psychoanalytic criticism to tap into the text's unconscious logic)" See: Sue Vice, ed. **Psychoanalytic Criticism**. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, pp. 1-3.

Man's urgent need becomes safety, and the only way which seems to restore it is "self-idealization." In other words, man will develop an idealized self which his neurotic pride tries to maintain, and he will simultaneously draw away from his actual self towards which he directs hate. Therefore, man becomes a neurotic person who exists as his despised actual self in the real world (the conscious) and as his idealized self in his illusory world (unconscious). The disruptive power of the conflict between the neurotic's conscious and his unconscious will lead the neurotic to find pseudo-solutions. One of these is the expansive type which causes the neurotic to identify completely with his pride and results in his destruction. The latter will be the focus of our research.

Although many critics consider that the hero's destruction in modern tragedy is without significance since it is determined by his unconscious that he cannot control, modern tragedians still insist that the tragic action is significant. Influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, modern tragic dramatists argue that the modern tragic action is highly significant, because only through it life in a godless universe which is otherwise meaningless gets a meaning.

Our dissertation proposes to study the tragic hero in O'Neill's plays **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** in the light of Horney's theory of neurotic pride. In order to do so, it is necessary to answer some basic questions. The first is to know whether Jones's and Yank's downfall in **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** respectively, is the result of neurotic pride. In other words, it is imperative to verify whether the two heroes are victims of a neurotic conflict

between neurotic pride which drives them to mould themselves into beings of absolute perfection and self hate which makes them draw away from their actual selves on the one hand; and on the other hand their real selves which try desperately to emerge. Therefore, in the light of Horney's theory Jones and Yank collapse in the end when their imperfect actual selves come to the surface, and they realize that they are not their idealized selves with which they tried to identify. The second question is to investigate whether O'Neill showed any signs of neurosis and whether there is any relationship between his autobiography and his work. This is an important question to answer, because if there is any relation between his autobiography and his work and this link resides in the playwright's personal experience of neurotic pride there will be further evidence that the tragic hero in the two plays can really be analyzed in the light of Horney's theory.

The choice of a psychoanalytical criticism is stimulated by the fact that it addresses the minds among them characters and the author. This kind of approach, therefore, suits the subject of our study in that it attempts to explain the behavior of the tragic hero by providing insights into the characters' psyches on the one hand, and tries to investigate the extent to which O'Neil's tragedies reveal the playwright's own psyche on the other.

The first reason for choosing Horney's theory in particular cannot be dissociated from our choice of O'Neill. Indeed, there is a striking correspondence

between the patterns of human behavior which appear in the playwright's heroes and the behavior of neurotic persons as defined by the psychoanalyst. The second reason is that the study of O'Neill's tragic heroes in the light of Horney's theory of neurotic pride has never been, to my knowledge, the subject of any serious critical study in our University at least.

The purpose of choosing O'Neill among other modern American tragedians to be the focus of our study is first the revolutionary role that the playwright played in American drama. With O'Neill, the world was altered to the existence of a native American theatre of importance. Thematically, the dramatist had a pioneering role in introducing an American drama which carried a psychological insight. Aesthetically, O'Neill was the first American dramatist to experiment with Expressionism – a literary style which aims at distorting external reality to reveal the inner truth behind it (Expressionism will be studied in detail in the second section of the last chapter). Therefore, it helps uncover the functioning of the psyche.

Our selection of **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** for illustration is stimulated by the fact that both plays can be read as tragedies of neurotic pride. In addition, the two tragedies were written in the same period - in the 1920s in particular. Therefore they well illustrate the disillusionment of the post war period that O'Neill tried to reflect by dramatizing Jones's and Yank's neurotic conflicts. Moreover, the two plays are considered to be the most expressionistic

plays of O'Neill's and, therefore, they best express the inner conflict in Jones and Yank, and O'Neill's own conflict.

The concern to provide adequate answers to the questions which proceeded from the problematic of our research has determined its method and organization. The dissertation is actually divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 is a survey of the development of the concept of the tragic hero from ancient Greek tragedy to modern tragedy. Three main points are developed in this chapter. Firstly, the nature of the tragic hero and the question of rank. Secondly, the reasons behind the hero's downfall. With regard to this point, the focus is on the modern view of the unconscious since we are studying a modern dramatist. We first give a brief overview of Freud's and Jung's theories of the unconscious and then we introduce Horney's theory of neurotic pride which will be developed in the second chapter. Thirdly, the significance of the tragic action, and how it still maintains its meaning in modern time. The second chapter is an analysis of **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** in the light of Horney's theory of neurotic pride. Its purpose, therefore, is to answer the first problematic of our research. It mainly consists in a search for situations in the text which show that the tragic heroes in both plays can be considered as victims of their neurotic pride. The chapter is subdivided into four sections, dealing with the most important concepts on which Horney's theory is founded, namely: "Jones and Yank: Unhealthy Grown up Characters", "Neurotic Pride", "Self Hate", and "The Expansive Solution and Jones's and Yank's Tragedies." The third chapter is

subdivided into two sections. The first one explores O'Neill's autobiography. It attempts to answer the second problematic of our research. The second deals with the aesthetic aspect of the plays, Expressionism in particular. The purpose of the latter section is to reinforce the basic question of the problematic in that it helps uncover the hidden workings of Jones's and Yank's psyches and also the playwright's inner conflict that he would have projected in his characters. Finally, the conclusion endeavors to assess whether Jones and Yank can really be considered as tragic heroes in the light of Horney's theory of neurotic pride, and whether the two characters are creations of a neurotic mind.

Chapter I

The Tragic Hero

The interest in the tragic hero is not a revolutionary issue. Indeed, as early as Aristotle wrote the **Poetics**¹, a huge number of critics, continuing some of his theories and deviating from others, started writing about tragedy and the tragic hero in particular. Aristotle defines tragedy as:

An imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play, in the form of action, not narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. ²

This definition suggests that the plot - the imitation of an action - is the soul of tragedy. But, an action implies personal agents. Therefore, tragedy is the imitation of actions taken by man and this imitation of actions or the plot will admit of “a change of [the hero’s fortune] ...from good to bad,”³ and will produce either fear or pity.

However, to have a complete understanding of what tragedy is, the study of the nature of the tragic hero, the reasons behind the change of fortune and the significance of the tragic action is imperative. This chapter proposes to study these three elements by referring to the changes in their conceptions through

¹ **Poetics** was written by Aristotle in 350 B.C.E. The philosopher founded his conclusions upon the work of the Greeks who are the first tragedians.

² Aristotle. **Poetics**, 350 B.C.E. Trans. S. H. Butcher, 2000. Aug 2007.
<<http://www.classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/Poetic.htm>>, p. VI.

³ Ibid., p. XIII.

centuries, from ancient Greek time to the modern era.

1- The Nature of the Tragic Hero

Considering the nature of the tragic hero Aristotle considers that:

The change of fortune must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this moves neither pity nor fear, it merely shocks us. Nor again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of tragedy; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense nor calls forth pity or fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter villain be exhibited. A plot of this kind would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear, for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves.⁴

Aristotle adds that the tragic hero “must be one who is a highly renowned and prosperous personage like Oedipus, Thyestes, or other illustrious men of such families.”⁵ Therefore, Aristotle’s tragedy is that of a man who is neither totally good nor extremely bad and who is of an exalted rank. Despite his assumption about rank, Aristotle insists that the tragic hero he defines is a common man. His view can be understood only if we take into consideration the values of the society he lived in. Indeed, in his society a king has so great a responsibility that, as Clifford Leech points out: “if a king falls, a nation is affected.”⁶ This means that the king’s fate is the fate of every individual. Therefore, the king’s tragedy is the tragedy of the common man in that the king reminds us of our humanity because he is neither extremely bad nor totally good, but also because he stands for us.

⁴ Aristotle. *Op. cit.*, p. XIII.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Clifford Leech. **Tragedy**. London and New York: Methuen Co Ltd, 1969, p. 35.

In Europe, Aristotle's assumption that the tragic hero must be a person of exalted rank went unquestioned until the nineteenth century. This is emphasized by Leech: "We can safely say that dramatic tragedy from antiquity to the nineteenth century normally implied a concern with people in high place."⁷

As one cannot separate the history of the United States from that of Europe, one cannot deny the great influence of European writers on American literature. Indeed, the exalted tragic hero became the kind of protagonist to be found in American tragedy as early as Thomas Godfrey's **The Prince of Parthia**⁸ in 1759: "[Thomas Godfrey] had witnessed plays presented by the professional actors of the American company (or rather Hallam Company in the time of Godfrey). Inspired by them and stimulated by his college training, he wrote [**The Prince of Parthia**] modeled after the great Elizabethan."⁹

In addition to the few tragedies written by native-born Americans, the American company presented an important number of tragedies from the London

⁷ Clifford Leech. **Tragedy**. Op. cit., p. 35.

⁸ **The Prince of Parthia** was the first American tragedy to be written by a native-born American playwright: Thomas Godfrey in 1759, and to receive a presentation by a professional company: Douglass company. The latter was originally named Hallam Company: the first professional company of importance which came from England and arrived in the colonies in 1752. When Lewis Hallam- the manager- died, it was reorganized under David Douglass. In the 1760s, when hostility to British tyranny had grown, Douglass Company changed its name into American company. See: Garff B. Wilson, ed. **Three Hundred Years of American Drama and American Theatre**. 2nd Ed. London: Prentice Hall, Inc, 1982 [1973].

⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

stage: “the American company has an extensive repertory of plays.... The plays of Shakespeare remain the backbone of the repertory.”¹⁰ Therefore, in the 1760s, in Europe as in America the tragedies that were produced were all tragedies of noble men of the like of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth.

However, July 4, 1776 announced a new phase in the American drama. Actually, during the American Revolution (1776-1782,) the American company left the colonies and no drama of importance would be produced until the end of the war. Stimulated by the passions of the war and the partisan feelings of the Whigs and Tories, there resulted a lively exchange of insults in the form of satirical plays:

The American Revolution promoted a number of putative American playwrights to adopt dramatic form in order to translate a swirl of political, economic, and military upheavals in their midst. The majority of these plays stake out ideological positions that leave little doubt of their intention. Mercy Warren’s three political satires **The Adulateur**, **The Defeat**, and **The Group** resolutely stick Massachusetts royal governor Thomas Hutchinson and his followers on her well-hoisted poniard in the service of the Whig politics.... On the Tory side, there are fewer examples of closed political plays that have survived, but **The Battle of the Brooklyn**, for one, mocks the incompetence of Washington and his New York campaign of 1776.¹¹

After political independence was won, adaptations of European plays, be they tragedies or comedies, returned to dominate the American stage again despite the aggressive patriotism of many citizens of the nation. This is explained by the fact that for many decades there were no effective national or international copyright

¹⁰ Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit., p. 16.

¹¹ Jeffrey H. Richards. **Drama, Theatre and Identity in the New American Republic**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 37.

laws. Therefore, tested European successes were easily obtained and performed. As the American playwrights adapted European plays, they also copied the techniques of melodrama,¹² a genre which became increasingly popular in Europe in the 19th century:

The...blight that was afflicting playwriting in England, Germany, and France spread to American dramatists.... The nineteenth century was immensely fruitful in many ways; playwriting was a disappointment.... The blight that perverted American dramaturgy was the love of melodrama. Every type of play from high comedy to heroic tragedy was afflicted.¹³

The addiction to melodrama is due to the sentimental elements of this genre which offered a kind of liberation and refreshing change from the confines of neoclassicism.¹⁴ Also, the industrial revolution brought thousands of unsophisticated workers into the cities. These people were more likely to respond to simple plays than subtle ones. In addition, the contemporary playwrights, however nationalistic they were, still regarded European plays as a model to

¹² Melodrama: "Towards the end of the 18th c. French dramatists began to develop melodrama as a distinct genre by elaborating the dialogue and making much more of spectacle, action and violence...The flourishing of melodrama in the 19th c. produced a kind of naively sentimental entertainment in which the main characters were excessively virtuous or exceptionally evil (hence the luminously good hero or heroine and the villain of deepest and darkest dye)" See: J. A. Cuddon., ed. **The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory**. 4th Ed. London: Penguin Books, 1999 [1976], p. 502.

¹³ Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit., p. 65.

¹⁴ Neoclassicism: "The neoclassic period is usually taken to be the hundred odd years c. 1600-1780... [The writers of this period] thought that reason and judgment were the most admirable faculties (the 18th century. was after all, the Age of Reason.)" This view was rejected by the writers of the Romantic Movement (which emerged in the late 18th century. as an attack against Neoclassicism) who favored emotions over reason. See J. A. Cuddon. Op. cit., p. 541.

follow. Therefore, since European counterparts were producing melodrama, the American tragedians followed them

As regards the nature of the tragic hero, the view of melodramatic tragedians is not completely Aristotelian. Indeed, though a noble man, the new kind of protagonist who became the focus of melodramatic tragedies was an “excessively virtuous” or “exceptionally evil” character. This assumption of the tragic hero together with other unrealistic elements anticipated the weakening of the melodramatic form in late 19th century when the audience claimed a more realistic portrayal of characters:

The Romantic Movement in literature, beginning in the late eighteenth century, provided a climate favorable to the development of melodrama. A century later, the movement had run its course.... The conventions and attitudes of romantic literature were criticized for being outmoded and artificial. A desire for relevance and truth developed. Instead of exotic settings, there was a demand for the settings of everyday life.... Instead of princes, noblemen, and Byronic heroes; there was a demand for characters who represented the average person. Instead of the romantic problems of love and honor, there was a demand for a discussion of the disturbing economic social and personal problems of the day. ¹⁵

The new leaders of the art of novel and playwriting of the late 19th century said that Realism¹⁶ could answer the demands of the audience. Four giants among foreign dramatists namely, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Anton

¹⁵ Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁶ Realism: in literature, Realism is a movement in art which started in late 19th century. It is “the portrayal of life with fidelity. It is thus not concerned with idealization, with rendering things as beautiful when they are not, or in any way presenting them in any guise as they are not” See: J. A. Cuddon. Op. cit., p. 729.

Chekhov, and Bernard Shaw helped to free the world from the sterile tradition of nineteenth century playwriting. By introducing realism in their plays, these playwrights revolutionized world drama and American drama in particular to the extent that American playwriting is said to have begun at the turn of the 20th century:

The American drama is, for all purposes, the twentieth century American drama. There were plays written and performed on the American continent well before there was a United States, and during the nineteenth century the American theatre was widespread and active. But, as was also true in much of Europe, it was, with rare exceptions, not the home of a particularly rich or ambitious literature. The theater was a broadly popular light entertainment form, much like television today...like television, writers were more likely to be artisans skilled at producing the entertaining effects that audiences wanted, than artists looking to illuminate the human conditions or challenge received values. ¹⁷

Being realistic, twentieth century American tragedians aimed at portraying more believable characters in their plays. Like their Greek predecessors, their tragedies were not about extremely virtuous or evil protagonists. However, with regard to the question of rank, modern American tragedians deviated from Aristotle's view:

The overwhelming majority of modern American plays are about people from the same social background and economic world as the playgoers - the urban middle class. That is not a narrow range, and can stretch from the barely-getting - by and underemployed to the comfortably well-off. ¹⁸

¹⁷ Gerald M. Berkowitz. **American Drama of the Twentieth Century**. London and New York: Longman, 1992, p. 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

This new assumption in relation to the rank of the tragic hero stems from the fact that

Kings and princes have become less important throughout the world: a sovereign reigns but now hardly ever rule; his position is reduced so thoroughly to the symbolic that it is a burden that men think should not be inflicted on a human being.... A shop steward or a students' leader...can exercise authority more easily than a prime minister, a president of a business firm or a university.¹⁹

This kind of tragic hero is the protagonist to be found in modern tragedies such as those produced by Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, to name only a few.

2- The Reasons Behind the Hero's Downfall:

As we have seen, tragedy is an imitation not only of an action, but of events inspiring fear and pity. These feelings, pity in particular, are aroused only when we are aware that the hero's downfall is provoked by actions taken by the hero himself and at the same time we know that the protagonist is not totally free in the choice he has made. Speaking of the tragic hero, Leech says that: "we feel him to be free as we are. But only as free. Looking back on our own lives, we shall not see that there were neglected alternatives that we could have seized, yet we have a long experience of what it has felt like choice. In the paradox lies much of tragedy's strength."²⁰

For the Greeks, what causes the hero's tragedy is what Aristotle calls

¹⁹ Clifford Leech, **Tragedy**. Op. cit., pp, 35-6.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

“hamartia.” He explains that the hero’s misfortune “is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty.”²¹ As a result of his error, the hero is struck by Fate. The latter is considered as the supreme power which maintains the order of nature through different agents. Therefore, the Greek tragic hero who disturbs this order will necessarily be struck by Fate so that order is restored again. This is stressed by Northrop Frye:

The sense in Greek tragedy that fate is stronger than gods really implies that gods (one of the agents) exist primarily to ratify the order of nature.... The hero provokes enmity...and the return of the avenger constitutes the catastrophe...we notice...the frequency of the device of making the revenge come from another world, through gods or ghosts or oracles. ²²

The transition from the classical to the medieval world saw a great change in the literary scene. As far as tragedy is concerned, it is generally agreed that there was little or no tragedy in medieval literature. This is stressed by Leech: “For the Middle Ages, ‘tragedy’ was simply a story which ended unhappily.”²³ Actually, Roman and Greek tragedy was largely forgotten during that period and so was the idea of Fate which was replaced by Providence. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church, which was the dominant power in the Middle Ages, kept an eye on the content of the plays which were produced. Therefore, the plays that were

²¹ Aristotle. Op. cit, p. XIII.

²² Frye Northrop. **Anatomy of Criticism**. London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1957], pp. 208-9.

²³ Clifford Leech. **Tragedy**. Op. cit., p. 15.

regarded as tragedies at that time were rather morality plays²⁴ which centered on man's struggle between good and evil. The struggle involves the Christian's attempt to achieve salvation, despite the obstacles he encounters as he travels through life toward death: the hero (the Christian) sacrifices his life and is rewarded by Providence after death, and the villain is punished in life. Therefore, the "tragic moments" in Christian plays, as Leech points out, are "submitted within a total system which affirmed God's promise, God's plan."²⁵ Because the hero's downfall is not the result of an error he makes but is rather an expression of his mission to exercise God's will on earth for which he will be rewarded after death, his death does not arouse any feelings of pity. Therefore, the plays produced at that time cannot be regarded as tragedies.

In the Renaissance, Roman and Greek cultures were revived and the spirit of Greek tragedy came back to dominate tragedy. Indeed, **Macbeth**, which was produced in the Renaissance is one of the plays which are founded on the same principles of classical tragedy. Macbeth's misfortune is the result of an error he has made. Actually, the hero's murder of king Duncan is a violation of all the laws of hospitality, kinship, and human decency. Therefore, Fate must blow him so that order is established again. In his soliloquy, the protagonist admits his evil deed and expects revenge from nature:

²⁴ Morality plays are plays produced in the Middle Ages, and the most memorable ones are "**The Castle of Perseverance** (c. 1425); **Mind, Will and Understanding** (c. 1460); and **Mankind** (c. 1475). These are considered as a group because they occur in the Macro Manuscript." See J. A. Cuddon, *Op. cit.*, p. 520.

²⁵ Clifford Leech. **Tragedy**. *Op. cit.*, p. 15

...He's here in the double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman, and his subject,
Strong both against the deed: then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek; hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd against
The deep domination of his taking-off:
Striding the blast, a Heaven's cherubin, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye, ²⁶

Having violated the order of nature, Macbeth is punished and destroyed by the witches who predicted that he would become king; and who betray his hopes in the end.

The argument about that complex of related ideas including Fate and Providence was important through long centuries. It was not until the 19th century that the whole argument was abandoned, because the conception of the world was becoming more and more secular.

One of the most influential figures of the time who contributed in developing a secular conception of the universe was Friedrich Nietzsche. In his book **The Anti-Christ** Christianity comes under assault. The philosopher calls Christianity the religion of decadence:

Christianity is called the religion of pity...pity on the whole thwarts the law of evolution, which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for destruction; it

²⁶ William Shakespeare. **Macbeth**. London: Penguin Books, 1994. Act I, Sc 7, pp. 40-1.

defends life's disinherited and condemned...it is one of the chief instruments for the advancement of decadence - pity persuades to nothingness! One does not say 'nothingness': one says 'the Beyond'; or 'God.'²⁷

Further, in the same book, Nietzsche states clearly his disbelief in God which he considers as a false concept invented by the Christian church to maintain its power:

What does 'moral world-order' mean? That there exists once and for all a will of God as to what man is to do and what he is not to do; that the value of a nation, of an individual is to be measured by how much or how little obedience is accorded the will of God...the priest, abuses the name of God: he calls a state of society in which the priest determines the value of things 'the kingdom of God'; he calls the means by which such a state is achieved or perpetuated 'the will of God.'²⁸

He adds: "One must know today that a theologian, a priest, a pope does not merely err in every sentence he speaks; he lies...The priest as well as any one know that there is no longer any 'God.'²⁹

Added to Nietzsche's argument is the great influence of the nineteenth century scientists such as Charles Darwin whose view of the world was purely scientific. The scientist considers that:

Owing to [the] struggle for life, any variation, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if it be in any degree profitable to an individual of any species, in its infinity complex relation to other organic beings and to external nature, will tend to the

²⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche. **The Anti-Christ**. London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1895], p. 128.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 147.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 160.

preservation of that individual and will be generally inherited by its offspring. I have called this principle, by which slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term of Natural Selection.³⁰

Saying this, Darwin implies that the world is Godless, and life or existence is maintained by means of Natural Selection. In other words, the individuals who are more likely to adapt to their environment by developing useful variations will survive; and the weaker ones are doomed to disappear.

Secularization, scientific arguments together with deterministic theories constituted the main ingredients for the development of Naturalism³¹ in literature. This led to the emergence of a new tragic character that is described as a being who lives in a secular indifferent world and whose tragedy is not caused by an error he has made but is determined by material forces over which he has no control.

In the 19th century, the crisis of human relationships and of human personality became constituted in a new way as a systematic field of knowledge. The latter is

³⁰ Charles Darwin. **The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection**. London: Penguin Classics, 1982 [1859], p. 115.

³¹ Naturalism “describe[s] works of literature which use realistic methods and subjects to convey a philosophical form of naturalism; that is a belief that everything that exists is a part of nature and can be explained by natural and material causes- and not by supernaturalism, spiritual or paranormal causes...The main influences that went to forming a different point of view [Naturalism] were Darwin’s biological theories, Comte’s application of scientific ideas to the study of society, and Taine’s application of deterministic theories to literature..” See J. A. Cuddon. Op. cit., p. 537.

known as psychoanalysis (to be defined later on) developed by Sigmund Freud.

With the latter's findings, the material force responsible for the character's tragedy took a psychoanalytical dimension. The psychoanalyst developed his theory around a concept that he called the Oedipus complex:

If the child is to succeed in life at all, it obviously has to be taken in hand; and the mechanism by which this happens is what Freud famously terms the Oedipus complex...the boy's close involvement with his mother's body leads him to an unconscious desire for sexual union with her, whereas the girl, who has been similarly bound up with the mother and whose first desire therefore always homosexual, begins to turn her libido towards the father...what persuades the boy-child to abandon his incestuous desire for the mother is the father's threat of castration.... The boy makes peace with his father, identifies with him.... The little girl, perceiving that she is inferior because 'castrated' turns in disillusionment from her similarly 'castrated' mother to the project of seducing her father, but since this project is doomed, she must finally turn back...to the mother, effect an identification with her...the child has now developed an ego or individual identity...but it can do this only by...splitting its guilty desire, repressing them into the unconscious. The human subject who emerges from the Oedipal process is a split subject, torn...between the conscious and unconscious.³²

Therefore, according to the psychoanalyst, man is victim of his unconscious which he cannot repress. The working of the unconscious will be studied in detail later on in this chapter.

In drama, one of the leading figures who presented the individual's tragedy as one which is caused by the individual's own psyche was Ibsen:

What happens, again and again, in Ibsen, is that the hero defines an opposing world, full of lies and compromises and dead positions...the cry for light, the desire to climb at such a world, is persistent.... Ibsen's world...is recognizable always by this fact: the

³² Terry Eagleton. **Literary Theory: An Introduction**. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996 [1983], pp. 134-6.

struggle of individual desire, in a false and compromising situation, to break free and know itself...the self...makes its most terrible discovery: that there is not only a world outside it, resisting it, but other selves, capable of similar suffering and desire. It is possible then for fulfillment to be redefined: a getting away from the world and from others; the loneliness of the high mountain but the desire had included the joy of life: the life of earth and of men and women.... The conflict is then indeed internal: a desire for relationship when all that is known of relationship is restricting; desire narrowing to an image in the mind until it is realized that the search for warmth and light has ended in cold and darkness.³³

The modern view with regard to the force behind the tragic character's downfall reached America at the turn of the 20th century .One of the pioneering figures in modern American drama who had been influenced by Ibsen and his followers was Eugene O'Neill. This is stressed by Leech:

One of the few major playwrights of the twentieth century, Eugene O'Neill has a special position in his own America. Before his time serious American drama barely existed...from his beginnings [he] aimed at adapting and developing the things he learned from European masters. Ibsen, Strindberg, Gorky, Toller: of these, the first three manifestly exercised a direct influence upon him.³⁴

To reflect the disillusionment which characterized the period following the First World War, O'Neill made "a consistent and impassioned attempt to dramatize subconscious emotions. He frequently [used] the terminology of psychoanalysis."³⁵ The playwright considers that theatre "should give us what the church no longer gives us - a meaning. In brief, it should return to the spirit of the

³³ Raymond Williams, ed. **Modern Tragedy**. 2nd Ed. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004 [1966], pp. 124-8.

³⁴ Clifford Leech. **O'Neill**. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963, p. 1.

³⁵ John Howard Lawson. "Eugene O'Neill." **O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays**. Ed. John Gassner. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964, p. 42.

Greek grandeur. And if we have no Gods [sic] or heroes to portray we have the subconscious (unconscious), the mother of all gods and heroes.”³⁶ O’Neill’s pioneering role in introducing an American tragedy which carries a weight of psychological insight is one of the reasons why we have chosen to study his plays.

Unconscious functioning was first described by Freud. The latter provides a scientific basis for a theory of the unconscious by attempting to derive the mind from the body. Actually, Freud looks at the mind from three points of view: the “dynamic,” the “economic” and the “topographical.” In the first version of the topographical point of view, the psychoanalyst sees the mind as:

having a three-fold division, conscious, preconscious and unconscious. Conscious he equates with the perception system, the sensing and ordering of the external world; the preconscious covers those elements of experience which can be called into consciousness at will; the unconscious is made up of all that has been kept out of the preconscious-conscious system. The unconscious is dynamic consisting of instinctual representatives, ideas and images originally fixated in a moment of repression. But do not remain in a fixed state.³⁷

In the second version introduced in 1923, Freud comes to see the mind as

having three distinct agencies: the “id,” a term applied retrospectively to the instinctual drives that spring from the constitutional need of the body [the equivalent of the unconscious] the “ego” as having developed out of the id to be an agency which regulates and opposes the drives; and the “superego”, as representative of personal and

³⁶ Doris V. Falk. **Eugene O’Neill and the Tragic Tension**. New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1958, p. 26.

³⁷ Elizabeth Wright, ed. **Psychoanalytic Criticism**. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, p. 10.

social influences upon the drives.³⁸

Therefore, Freud conceives of the unconscious (or the id) as a place to which bodily instincts which are unable to be fulfilled are relegated. By bodily instincts Freud means sexual instincts or sexuality which he does not limit to reproduction but rather defines as “the function of obtaining pleasure from zones of the body.”³⁹ To describe the process of repression of sexual desires, Freud introduces the concept of the “Oedipal complex” that we have already explained. Actually, we have seen that the boy gives up his desire for sexual union with his mother for fear of being castrated, and the girl feeling inferior because castrated relinquishes her desire of seducing her father. Therefore, according to Freud the individual can develop a sexual identity only by repressing “guilty” desires to the unconscious via the working of the Oedipal complex. A sexual identity being achieved, “the complex declines [and] the superego is formed and becomes part of the topography of the psyche.”⁴⁰ This means that at adulthood the individual’s psyche, in addition to the unconscious (the Id) into which forbidden sexual desires are repressed, consists of the superego which is a representative of the individual’s sexual role as determined by society.

However, the decline of the Oedipal complex does not signal the disappearance of unacceptable desires. In fact, in the first version of the

³⁸ Elizabeth Wright. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

topographical point of view Freud describes the unconscious as consisting of “instinctual representative ideas and images originally fixated in a moment of repression.” But he adds that these instincts “do not remain in a fixed state.” Therefore, the unconscious is dynamic and can return at any moment to plague the individual. In the terminology of the second version, the individual is not only his superego, he is also his id; and no matter how the ego tries to regulate the id the latter can never be definitely repressed.

Freud considers that the return of the unconscious manifests itself through different forms, the most damaging one being neurosis. This is stressed by Terry Eagleton:

The “royal road” to the unconscious is dreams. Dreams allow us one of our few privileged glimpses of it at work. Dreams for Freud are essentially symbolic fulfillments of unconscious wishes; and they are cast in symbolic form because if this material were expressed directly then it might be shocking and disturbing enough to wake us up.... Dreams provide a main, but not an only, access to the unconscious. There are also what Freud calls “pare praxes,” unaccountable slips of the tongue, failures of memory, bunglings, misreadings and mislayings which can be traced to unconscious wishes and intentions...where the unconscious is most damagely at work, however, is in psychoanalytical disturbance of one form or another. We may have certain unconscious desires which will not be denied, but which do not find practical outlet either; in this situation, the desire forces in from the unconscious, the ego blocks it off defensively, and the result of this internal conflict is what we call neurosis...such neurosis may be obsessional...hysterical...or phobic.⁴¹

Therefore, neurosis is the most dangerous expression of the unconscious in that it causes the tragedy of the individual who becomes torn between the real world into which his ego tries to force him, and the world of illusion which is

⁴¹ Terry Eagleton. Op. cit., p. 136.

formed by his id and which becomes parallel to the real world

Freud does not limit himself to psychoanalysis as a medical practice, but also tries to explain how the unconscious functions in the production of art. In this concern, the psychoanalyst draws a comparison between the artist and a neurotic:

The artist, like a neurotic, is oppressed by unusually powerful instinctual needs which lead him to turn away from reality to fantasy. Unlike other fantasies, however, the artist knows how to work over, shape and soften his own day-dreams in ways which make them acceptable to others.⁴²

Therefore, in Freud's view point, art is a production rather than a reflection of reality. Actually, through characters and other work's contents the author is enabled to express his forbidden wishes which are otherwise kept in the unconscious.

Despite its originality, Freud's theory has been the object of criticism and controversy. Actually, although most Post-Freudian psychoanalytic theories continue to stress the strong influence of the unconscious elements affecting people's lives, their views on the nature of the unconscious diverge.

One of the psychoanalysts who deviate from the Id-psychology (Freudianism) is Carl Gustav Jung. The latter, like Freud, sees the mind as a center of conflicting forces: the unconscious and the conscious, beginning in childhood

⁴² Terry Eagleton. *Op. cit.*, pp. 136-7.

and following the development course throughout an individual's life. However, Jung, though he does not totally ignore sexual instincts, disagrees with Freud who considers them as the only explanation for psychic happenings. Jung argues that Freud's thoughts stem from the fact that: "the nineteenth century discovered the ...unquestionable truth that everything arises from material causes...matter, by chemical action, produces the psyche."⁴³

Instead, Jung comes to view the psyche as a soul whose functioning does not account only for the activity of the glands. He assumes that: "there are incorporeal spirits with which the soul associates; and that beyond our empirical present there is a spiritual world from which the soul receives knowledge of spiritual things whose origins cannot be discovered in this visible world."⁴⁴

Jung's approach to the psyche being not purely scientific, his view on the nature of the conscious and unconscious; and his explanation of how these two forces develop throughout an individual's life differ from Freud's. Jung argues that:

Every human child, prior to unconsciousness, is possessed of a potential system of adapted psychic functioning. In the conscious life of the adult, as well, this unconscious, instinctive functioning is always present and active...only in one respect is there an essential difference between the conscious and unconscious functioning of the psyche. While consciousness is extensive.... More than this, it contains, besides an

⁴³ Carl Gustav Jung. **Modern Man in Search of a Soul**. Trans. W. S Dwell and Carey. F Bayhes. London and New York: Routledge Classics, 1993 [1933], p. 180.

⁴⁴ Id.

indeterminable number of subliminal perceptions, an immense fund of accumulated inheritance - factors left by one generation of men intensive and concentrated, it is transient and is directed upon the immediate present and the immediate field of attention; moreover, it has access only to material that represents one individual's experience stretching over a few decades.... But matters stand very differently with the unconscious. It is not concentrated and intensive, but shades off into obscurity; it is highly after another.... If it were permissible to personify the unconscious, we might call it a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth and death...the collective unconscious, moreover, seems not to be a person, but something like an unceasing stream...of images and figures.⁴⁵

Therefore, in Jung's view point, the child does not emerge from the Oedipal process. Instead, Jung believes that the child emerges from the collective unconscious to become a separate self. Moreover, Jung considers that the nucleolus of the unconscious is not only sexual instincts, but images, or what he also calls "archetypes" which are common to all individuals.

However, Jung agrees with Freud with regard to the fact that the unconscious, when intruding into the conscious, leads to damaging psychic disturbances, neurosis in particular. Speaking of neurotic persons, Jung argues that: "Whoever protects himself from what is new and strange and thereby regresses to the past [the unconscious] falls into the same neurotic condition as the man who identifies himself with the new [the conscious] and runs away from the past."⁴⁶

But Jung distinguishes his view on neurosis from that of Freud. The psychoanalyst, unlike Freud, considers that neurosis is a possible not a necessary

⁴⁵ Carl Gustav Jung, *Op. cit.*, pp. 190-1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

product of the conflict between the conscious and unconscious. He states that:

“Freud’s teaching is definitely one sided in that it generalizes from facts that are relevant only to neurotic states of mind...Freud’s is not a psychology of the healthy mind.”⁴⁷

As regards art, Jung’s approach is to be distinguished from Freud’s. While Freud views art as the embodiment of the artist’s personal dream (his personal unconscious), Jung considers that the collective unconscious is the source of art. This is stressed by Elizabeth Wright:

For Jung the collective unconscious is the source of art, muddied somewhat by the “tributaries” from the personal unconscious. The more muddied it is the more it becomes a symptom rather than a symbol. We respond to art the way we do because of the psychological effect of the reactivation of the archetypes in us.⁴⁸

This being said, we notice that Jung, unlike Freud, considers that art is a universal experience or symbol shared by the artist and the reader rather than the artist’s private experience. In so doing, Jung dethrones the author from the central position that he /she had in Id-psychology, and sheds more light on the role of the reader.

Another psychoanalyst who is critical of Freud’s thoughts is Karen Horney. The latter, like Jung, deemphasizes the sexual nature of the unconscious. Yet the

⁴⁷ Carl Gustav Jung. Op. cit., p. 120.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Wright. Op. cit., p. 62.

way she defines the unconscious and its workings differs from Jung's. In fact, while Jung develops an archetypal psychology by stressing the role of the archetypes in the functioning of the unconscious, Horney presents a social view of the individual psyche which places much emphasis on social factors and their contribution to forming the unconscious.

Horney argues that social environment plays a crucial role in shaping the individual's personality. She explains that only in an atmosphere of love and warmth can man sense security which allows him to have a healthy growth, i.e. grow into his real self. Therefore, if these elements (love and warmth) are missing the individual, who feels unworthy and rejected, becomes a neurotic person whose main obsession is feeling secure. This obsessive need causes the neurotic to search for glory. He will mould himself into his idealized self in his illusory world (the unconscious) to experience superiority. In order to maintain his illusory glorified image of the self, the neurotic will develop inner dictates towards himself and neurotic claims towards people and life.

However, being alienated from his real self the neurotic will never know his value and thus will never find security. Instead, he will develop neurotic pride which he invests in unsubstantial factors that assert his glorified image. Given that the factors are unreal, neurotic pride is easily hurt. The main direct reactions to hurt pride are shame and humiliation which may lead to secondary reactions such as rage and fear.

The more a neurotic person tries to protect his pride which offers him apparent safety, the more he is drawn into his world of fantasy and thus he is driven away from his real self. The process of self-alienation is made more intense by self-hate (which is directed towards the actual unworthy self). The latter manifests itself in different forms such as relentless demands on self, self-contempt, self-torture and destructive impulses.

Both neurotic pride and self-hate make the neurotic move away from his actual self that makes him feel unworthy and which he substitutes for his glorified self. However, the more the neurotic moves away from his actual self, the less his chances to develop into his real self will be. Therefore, the neurotic becomes completely an alienated being. What is worse, the neurotic never completely loses sight of the real world. This makes him live in both his illusory and real worlds, and this causes him to experience an intense neurotic conflict. To relieve tension, the neurotic may opt for one of these three pseudo-solutions: the resigned type, the self-effacing type or the expansive type. In our research, only the latter will be considered and focus will be on the arrogant vindictive neurotic in particular. With regard to this type, the neurotic identifies with his pride. This pseudo-solution is destructive, because, having moved completely (or almost completely) into his world of fantasy (unconscious) the shock will be great when he gets confronted with the real world (conscious).

Horney's main concepts of neurotic pride, namely healthy growth Vs neurosis, neurotic pride, self-hate and the expansive solution will be studied in details in the second chapter of our research.

3- The Significance of the Tragic Action:

When discussing Greek tragedy, we have noted that the Greek tragic hero is not really the master of his actions, because as Williams argues:

The Greek tragic action was not rooted in individuals... It was rooted in history...Its thrust came, not from personality of an individual but from man's inheritance and relationship, within a world that ultimately transcended him. What we then see is a general action specified, not an individual action generalized.⁴⁹

It seems then that the Greek hero is innocent and one may wonder why he should be struck by fate for what is not to be regarded as his own deeds.

However, G. W.F. Hegel considers that: "the [Greek] tragic heroes are just as much innocent as guilty...No worse insult could be given to such a hero than to say that he had acted innocently. It is the honor of these great characters to be culpable."⁵⁰

The Greeks' view may appear paradoxical, but not if we understand their philosophy of life. Actually, what makes the tragic action significant is the fact that the Greek hero though he knows that he will fall faces the blows of fate with

⁴⁹ Raymond Williams. Op. cit., pp. 113-4

⁵⁰ G. F. Hegel. "The Collision of Equally Justified Powers." Ed. R. P. Draper. **Tragedy: Developments on Criticism**. London: Macmillan, 1983 [1980], p114.

courage; and despite the fact that he is innocent claims responsibility for his deeds.

This is emphasized by August Wilhelm Von Schlegel and Hegel respectively:

The tragic system of the Greeks is based on a moral development... In it the dignity of man is maintained almost in spite of the supernatural order; moral liberty contends with necessity and fate, which are supposed to rule the world, for possession of the inner sanctuary of the soul, and when human nature is too weak to win a complete victory in this struggle, at least an honorable retreat is secured for it.⁵¹

Oedipus has killed his father; he has married his mother and begotten children in this incestuous alliance; and yet he has been involved in these most evil crimes without either knowing or willing them... But the Greek, with his plasticity of consciousness, takes responsibility for what he has done as an individual and does not cut his purely subjective self-consciousness apart from what is objectively the case.⁵²

As for Christian tragedies, many critics assume that a Christian tragedy is impossible, because the end of the hero is not tragic and thus there is no tragic action. Walter Kaufmann reports their argument: "It [is] assumed that a tragedy must end in catastrophe, and it [is] felt that a Christian tragedy [cannot] be indifferent to the hero's fate after death. But if we feel assured that he will go to heaven, the end is not tragic."⁵³

Like Christian tragedy, although not for the same reason, modern tragedy was subject to criticism. In fact, Naturalism, which was the main philosophical

⁵¹ August Wilhelm Von Schlegel. "Ancient and Modern Tragedy." Ed. R. P. Draper. Op. cit., p. 105.

⁵² G. W. F. Hegel. Op. cit., p. 113.

⁵³ Walter Kaufmann. Tragedy and Philosophy. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 330.

position that dominated modern tragedy, grew out of deterministic theories as we have already seen. The deterministic approach of naturalism was considered by a good number of critics as pessimistic, because the tragic character is described as a “human beast” (to quote from Zola⁵⁴) who is completely submitted to material forces which are out of his control. Therefore, the tragic action is without any significance since the tragic character does not show any heroism by trying to face the blows of fate but rather accepts his destiny. John Von Szeliski, comparing the traditional with the modern heroes, argues that: “the [traditional] hero is entertainment, power, pride: he is creative, he generates things... We do not identify because we find him to be the character ‘just like me’ but through his being better and stronger and more clever than we are at the same time he is not too unlike us.”⁵⁵ Szeliski adds that “all pessimistic protagonists are losers... we are not drawn to their power or spirit or potential, because, by definition, they are not expected to be powerful or successful.”⁵⁶

The view that modern tragedy is pessimistic is strongly challenged by modern tragedians. The latter insist that the tragic action in modern tragedy is highly

⁵⁴ It is “the novelist Emile Zola (1840-1902) who first outlined a theory of naturalism in literature. He regarded his novels, some of which he later turned into plays, as clinical laboratories in which he might scientifically explore the consequences upon his characters of their birth and background. Inevitably his creatures appeared to be the victims of society, and all his conclusions seemed pessimistic. See J. L. Styan. **Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Realism and Naturalism**. Vol. 1. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 6.

⁵⁵ John Von Szeliski. **Tragedy and Fear: Why Modern Tragic Drama Fails**. North Carolina: The University of the North Carolina Press, 1962, p. 101.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

significant, because only through this action life, which is otherwise meaningless, is given a meaning. This view on the significance of the tragic action finds its roots in Nietzsche's conception of Dionysian tragedy.

Nietzsche's assumption is founded upon Greek tragedy. In **The Birth of Tragedy** (1871,) Nietzsche assumes that all art is mimetic. However, he distinguishes between Apollonian and Dionysian arts. The first is physical mimesis in that it imitates the phenomenal or physical world. The latter is metaphysical mimesis as it reflects the will that creates the phenomenal world. According to the philosopher, the will is the essence of being which is represented by the chorus (music) in Greek tragedy. When we have insight into the essence of being we witness the horror and absurdity of existence which makes living impossible to continue. Therefore, a veil of illusion in the form of Apollonian state is required to permit action to carry on. Greek tragedy that Nietzsche wants to revive is both Dionysian and Apollonian in that it is "the Dionysian chorus which over and over again discharges itself in an Apollonian world of images"⁵⁷ which invokes a redemptive semblance.

The hybrid character of Greek tragedy allows the spectator to take delight in existence despite its horror and absurdity. Indeed, when the hero, the Dionysian man who allows the audience to access to the truth about the absurdity of

⁵⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche. **The Birth of Tragedy**. 1871, Trans. Lan Johnston, 2003, Chap 8, Aug 2007.< http://www.records.viu.ca/johnstoi/Nietzsche/tragzdy_all.htm>

existence, is destroyed we are happy because “he is only an illusion, and the eternal life of the will is not disturbed by his destruction.”⁵⁸ According to the philosopher, when we witness the hero’s destruction: “for a short time we really are the primordial essence itself and feel its...joy in existence. The struggle, the torment, the destruction of appearances now seem to us necessary, on account of ...the exuberant fecundity of the world will.”⁵⁹ In other words, the tragic action provides us with delight because the destruction of the hero is a proof of the eternal life of the will that gives meaning to life which is otherwise meaningless.

One cannot consider O’Neill’s conception of the tragic action without being struck by the similarity between Nietzsche’s view and the playwright’s own view. The dramatist considers that:

The tragedy of man is perhaps the only significant thing about him.... The individual life is made significant just by the struggle.... The struggle of man to dominate life, to assert and insist that life has no meaning outside himself where he comes in conflict with life, which he does at every turn; and his attempt to adapt life to his own needs, in which he doesn’t succeed, is what I mean when I say man is the hero.⁶⁰

Miller is another dramatist who rejects any claim that his work is pessimistic:

For myself, I can’t write anything if I am sufficiently unhappy.... I suppose my sense of form comes from a positive need to organize life not from a desire to demonstrate the inevitability of defeat and death.... All I know...that we are doomed to live and, and I

⁵⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche. **The Birth of Tragedy**. Op. cit, Chap 16.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Chap 17.

⁶⁰ Raymond Williams. Op. cit., p. 144.

suppose one had better make the best of it.⁶¹

When Willy Loman, the tragic hero of Miller's play **Death of a Salesman** (1949) was attacked as a sad man who has no ideals, the playwright answered:

[Willy Loman] has values. The fact that they cannot be realized is what is driving him mad.... The truly valueless man, the man without ideals, is always perfectly at home anywhere because there cannot be conflict between nothing and something. Whatever negative qualities there are in the society or in the environment don't bother him because they are not in conflict with any positive sense that he may have. I think Willy Loman is seeking for a kind of ecstasy in life which the machine of civilization deprives people of. He is looking for his selfhood.⁶²

Therefore, both playwrights believe that the world is valueless, and the struggle of the hero to assert his value in this world is the only thing which keeps life going on and thus makes the downfall of the tragic hero meaningful.

⁶¹ Arthur Miller. **The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller**. Eds. S. R Centola and R. A Martin. New York: Da Capo Press, Inc, 1996, p. 208.

⁶² Ibid., p. 198.

Chapter II

Jones and Yank

Neurotic Tragic Heroes

Produced in a politically critical period of American history; and being centred around characters who represent marginalised groups in the American society, O'Neill's **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** have caused a number of critics to orient their criticism towards politics. Indeed, because it presents the downfall of a black character, many critics have limited the theme of **The Emperor Jones** to racial relations. More than that, most of them have labelled the play as racist. Joel Pfister, for example, considers that the playwright, instead of enhancing the image of the African-American, has rather insisted upon his primitiveness by extending the “stereotypes...that inhabited the cultural swamps of [his] imagination.”¹ Another critic who expresses his uneasiness about the play is Travis Bogard who argues that “O'Neill makes no generalisation...that there is savagery in the hearts of all men. Instead, it is the Negro who is essentially uncivilized, wearing contemporary sophistication as a loosely-fitting mask,”² which makes him look like a civilized man.

The Hairy Ape too has been analysed along political lines. Indeed, because it portrays the tragedy of a member of the working class, some critics have put in focus labor politics when analysing the play. They argue that O'Neill does not

¹ Joel Pfister. **Staging Depth: Eugene O'Neill and the Politics of Psychoanalytical Discourse**. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995, p. 132.

² Travis Bogard quoted in Julia A. Walker. “**The Unconscious Autobiography of Eugene O'Neill.**” **Expressionism and Modernism in the American Theatre: Bodies, Voices and Words**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 131.

only dramatise Yank's exploitation by the capitalist system but he also makes the protagonist reject the system by seeking revenge on Mildred - a representative of the capitalists. David Morse considers that "the love-hate which Yank conceives for Mildred Douglass, a steel heiress, triggers off a wider hostility which places him open to the [capitalist] system and compels him into an inarticulate rejection"³ of the system.

However, not all critics respond with the same feelings to the plays. Actually, a good number of them assume that **The Emperor Jones** goes beyond racial matters. In other words, the play aims less at reporting the experience of a black man as opposed to a white than at analysing Jones's experience as a human being. As Matthew H. Wikander points out: "Jones stands for mankind."⁴ Among the universal themes which O'Neill explores in this play is man's struggle to maintain integrity. Shaughnessy emphasizes this point when he says that:

O'Neill studies the individual's struggle to preserve integrity, his unified self. If he cannot accept the culture's attempt to shape him...he may seek to preserve his selfhood behind an acceptable counterfeit (the mask or persona)... [In **The Emperor Jones**]O'Neill offers a brilliant study of a soul's unravelling...we witness the undoing of man's carefully constructed persona in the moment of surrender to death. In this play of less than an hour's duration the protagonist's destiny suggests something universal. At the end of the action we discover not the stereotype of the opening scene, but the

³David Morse. "American Theatre: The Age of O'Neill." **American Literature Since 1900**. Ed. Cunliffe Marcus. London: Penguin Books, 1968, p. 59.

⁴Matthew H. Wikander. "O'Neill and the Cult of Sincerity." **The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill**. Ed. Michael Manheim. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 226.

universal man.⁵

The theme of selfhood is also explored in **The Hairy Ape**. As a matter of fact, though O'Neill deals with class matters in his play he does not make an issue of them. Indeed, **The Hairy Ape** is very much different from the propagandist plays of the 1930s. Actually, if the latter, whose producers are mainly members of the Communist party, attack capitalism and suggest socialism as an alternative, **The Hairy Ape** does not show any commitment on the part of the playwright to socialist ideology. On the contrary, O'Neill is suspicious about the efficiency of the labour unions. Morse argues that "O'Neill sees...the populist cum-Communist and even the IWW (a militant labour union, widely feared because it advocated the use of violence) as insufficiently radical. Their preoccupation is with language and rhetoric rather than action."⁶ Therefore, O'Neill in his play questions capitalism just as he expresses his doubts about socialism. That is to say, **The Hairy Ape** demonstrates the problems created by the capitalist system but avoids Marxist solutions or any others. Therefore, the playwright's attitude can be explained by the fact that he explores class relations mainly if not only to reinforce a more universal theme: man's fight to preserve identity. This point is stressed by Wikander: "Yank's yearning to belong is universalised and it is as a member of the human species [rather than a member of a specific class] that he

⁵ Edward Shaughnessy. "O'Neill's African and Irish-Americans: Stereotypes or Faithful Realism." Ed, Michael Manheim. Op. cit, pp. 150-1.

⁶ David Morse. Op. cit., p. 59.

cannot find acceptance.”⁷

The theme of identity in **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** is best understood when the plays are set in the context of the twenties when they were produced. In fact, during that decade, where almost everything was defined in materialistic terms, the American man found himself torn between his old values and the new values of materialistic America. Therefore, he who belonged (or rather thought he belonged) now felt alienated. Added to excessive materialism, the 1920s were also the years of the Harlem Renaissance.⁸ Therefore, Jones as a black character best portrays man’s struggle to belong in the sense that the African-American of the 1920s who was trying to revive his culture was exposed to the values of materialistic America but also to the culture of White America to which he had never been really assimilated. This means that Jones more than a white character experiences an intense conflict about his identity and thus best portrays man’s fight to preserve selfhood. Moreover, the 1920s saw a return to the big business which had started during the Industrial Era and had been interrupted by WWI. This means that Yank, who as any other American is already exposed to the materialistic values of the time, will also experience an identity conflict as a member of the working class. Indeed, as a stoker in Industrial America, Yank is not regarded as a fully human being let alone a man

⁷ Matthew H. Wikander. Op. cit., p.226.

⁸ Harlem Renaissance is a “literary movement among black Americans which flourished from early in the 1920s to early in the 1930s....The movement’s emphasis is on the African heritage of the American blacks.” See J. A. Cuddon. Op. cit., p.374.

with an identity. This being said, Yank better than an American from the upper or middle class illustrates man's struggle to maintain self-integrity.

To dramatise the character's struggle to preserve self-hood, O'Neill cannot do without resorting to psychoanalysis. Indeed, as we have already noticed when studying "The Tragic Hero" the playwright has a leading role in introducing psychoanalysis in the American theatre. Most critics, such as David Krasner, agree that "Freudian and Jungian psychoanalyses...played an important role in shaping O'Neill's plays"⁹ which echo the psychoanalysts' concepts.

If we study Jones's downfall along the lines of Freudian psychoanalysis, we notice that O'Neill echoes some of the thought of Freud. In fact, Jones's tragedy can be regarded as a tragedy caused by the return of the unconscious in the form of neurosis as explained by Freud. In order to fulfil his repressed desire (the desire to acquire wealth and the prestigious status of the white class) Jones like a neurotic turns away from reality to fantasy. Indeed, the protagonist becomes so absorbed in his illusory world that he goes beyond the will of acquiring wealth and prestige to the desire of getting God-like power. The struggle between Jones's conscious (the black prison escapee and weak human being he is in the real world) and the unconscious (the invulnerable white-like emperor he desires to be in his fantasy world) becomes so deep that the hero is completely destroyed

⁹David Kresner, ed. "Eugene O'Neill: American Drama and American Modernism." [A Companion to Twentieth Century American Drama](#). Cronwall: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005, p. 144.

at the end of the play when he discovers that he is not the image he has projected of himself.

However, if O'Neill uses some Freudian concepts in **The Emperor Jones** such as conscious, unconscious, repressed desire and neurosis, he deviates from Freud in regard to the nature of the unconscious. Actually, Jones does have a repressed desire which he wishes to fulfil but his desire is not sexual. The protagonist is not driven by sexual impulses but rather led by the desire to reach a high position in society.

The Hairy Ape can be read more easily along Freudian lines. Indeed, Yank's tragedy can be traced back to the return of the unconscious which has a sexual nature. In fact, when Mildred insults him, the protagonist becomes completely identified with the culture of the "masculine primitive." According to Rutundo, this culture, which developed at the end of the 19th century as a reaction to the emergence of the New Woman, defines man as "the master animal who could draw on primitive impulse when reason would not work [and it evaluates men] according to their physical strength and energy."¹⁰ Walker argues that "Yank always gives up thinking in favour of force. And that force is always directed at Mildred - a skoit, a skinning tart, a white-fenced bum - who, if not a

¹⁰ Rutundo quoted in James A. Robinson "The Masculine Primitive and **The Hairy Ape**." **The Eugene O'Neill Review**. 1995, pp. 97-8.

representative of her class, is a representative of woman.”¹¹ Therefore, if Mildred were a man, Yank’s repressed desire to assert his manliness by boasting his physical superiority might not have been triggered. Being completely consumed with his sexual impulse, the protagonist collapses at the end when he encounters the gorilla which is physically more powerful than him.

Yank’s primitivism can also be related to Jung’s collective unconscious. Indeed, in the light of Jungian Psychoanalysis, Yank has failed to find a middle way which reconciles between the past and present. Like a neurotic, the protagonist has completely identified with the present by embracing the materialistic values of modern America (the conscious) and disregarded his past pre-human origins which enabled his ancestors to feel harmony with nature (the collective unconscious). O’Neill explains this point: “**The Hairy Ape**...was a symbol of man, who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal and has not yet acquired in a spiritual way.”¹² However, the protagonist’s attempt to ignore the collective unconscious is unsuccessful, and the latter returns to plague his conscious and thus cause his tragedy. Indeed, when he encounters Mildred, Yank realises that despite his identification with material (steel) which he thought had made of him a “civilized” man, his pre-human origins still linger in him. This realisation plunges Yank in a deep identity conflict. In search of belonging, the protagonist,

¹¹ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 140.

¹² Eugene O’Neill quoted in Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., p. 34.

instead of going forward by adapting his animal ancestry to modern time in order to recover harmony with nature, goes back to his remotest pre-human ancestry by shaking hands with the gorilla which crushes him to death.

Like the preceding play, **The Emperor Jones** reflects clearly O'Neill's influence by Jungian psychology. Indeed, Jones's tragedy can be traced to Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. The protagonist tries to identify with the new: the values of white materialistic America which he thinks will make of him a worthy being (the conscious); and move away from the past of his ancestors which consists of his African culture and which makes him feel unworthy (the unconscious). In so doing, Jones becomes a neurotic who is completely identified with the present. Therefore, when the past returns in the form of archetypal images Jones, forced to face reality, collapses. Falk stresses this point:

The significance of the play...lies in the character Jones, conveyed by a gradual breaking of his conscious ego and the revelation of his personal and collective unconscious...Jones's hopeless flight through the forest is...from himself.... As Jones proceeds lost in the forest...he is confronted with one ghost after another from his past.... First appear his "Little Formless Fears," then his guilt, in two visions - the ghost of the Negro, Jeff...and the ghost of the guard. These three episodes, stemming from fear and guilt, come from Jones's "personal unconscious" while the following ones [the slave auctioneer, the witch doctor, and the crocodile] emerges from his "collective unconscious".... He must fire his fourth and fifth bullets to dispel the vision of the slave auctioneer.... By this time Jones is naked and exhausted.... Jones has shed the last layer of his civilized outward self and has gone back to the dark primitive world of the unconscious.¹³

If O'Neill is aware of Freudian and Jungian concepts which he has used in his

¹³ Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., pp. 66-8.

plays, “he has unconsciously anticipated the findings...of Karen Horney.”¹⁴ In fact, although it was in 1950 that Horney published her book **Neurosis and Human Growth**, the striking correspondence between her description of neurotic persons in the book and the behaviour of O’Neill’s characters cannot escape our notice.

To study the extent to which Jones and Yank are neurotic persons as described by Horney, this chapter proposes to study in detail four essential concepts of Horney’s theory to which the first four sections of this chapter will be devoted. Section 1 attempts to demonstrate that the hostile environment in which the characters have apparently grown up would have prevented them from having a healthy growth of the psyche. Section 2 tries to verify whether unhealthy growth of the psyche or “neurosis” would have caused Jones and Yank to move away from their “real selves” and develop instead “idealised selves” in which they would have invested “neurotic pride.” In section 3 we try to demonstrate that, being too proud of their idealised selves, the invulnerable white-like emperor and the god-like stoker would have directed “self-hate” toward their actual selves which make them feel unworthy. Finally, the last section will explore the characters’ internal conflict between the pride system (which is composed of neurotic pride and self hate) and their real selves which desperately try to emerge. Actually, we should prove that, Jones and Yank, trying

¹⁴Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., p. 7.

to appease their conflict, would have opted for the “expansive solution” by identifying completely with their idealised selves. This would have driven them further in the world of fantasy and thus caused their destruction when they are finally confronted with reality.

Section 1

Jones and Yank

Unhealthy Grown Up Characters

Horney distinguishes between a healthy growth of the psyche and neurosis. She argues that:

the human individual, given a chance, tends to develop his particular human potentialities. He will develop then the unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and depth of his own feelings, thoughts, wishes, interests; the ability to tap his own resources, the strength of his will power; the special capacities or gifts he may have; the faculty to express himself and to relate himself to others with spontaneous feelings...he will grow, substantially, undivided toward self realisation.¹

Therefore, according to the psychoanalyst, the real self is the deep source of growth. However, Horney adds that this source develops and is expressed spontaneously only if the individual is given a chance. In other words, if all human beings have a real self, not all of them will reach a healthy growth. Actually, the psychoanalyst argues that in order for the individual to have a healthy growth:

he needs an atmosphere of warmth to give him both a feeling of inner security and the freedom enabling him to have his own feelings and thoughts and to express himself. He needs the good will of others, not only to help him in his many needs but to guide and encourage him to become a mature and fulfilled individual. He also needs healthy friction with the wishes and will of others. If he can grow with others, in love and friction, he will also grow in accordance with his real self.²

From what has been said, we notice how much emphasis Horney places on the role of society in making a healthy individual. Therefore, a study of the environment in which Jones and Yank have grown up is imperative to have an

¹ Karen Horney. **Neurosis and Human Growth. :The Struggle Toward Self Realisation.** New York and London: W.W Norton and Company, Inc, 1970, p. 17.

² Ibid., p. 18.

insight into the characters' psyches.

1- Environmental Conditions

It seems, at least on the surface, that Jones has fled to the West Indies to escape justice. However, if we dig deeper into the reasons behind his flight we find that escaping justice is only an apparent reason which hides a more pertinent motive. In fact, Jones's escape from prison where he was put after having killed Jeff has only anticipated his flight from a bigger prison: the New World where, as a black, he was subject to segregation and repression. Indeed, although the blacks had been granted the right for American citizenship (the 14th Amendment) in the 19th century, discrimination continued to be the law in the 1920s (when the play was produced) especially in the south:

The rural United States in fact endured a rash of anti-black, anti-Semitic, and anti-catholic incidents in the 1920s.... Lynchings and beatings of African-Americans were so commonplace in the 1920s that Harlem intellectuals declared such states as Alabama and Mississippi "killing fields."³

Segregation against the blacks in the United States is pointed out in the play by the character Smithers. Actually, when Jones pretends to have killed white men when he was in the States, Smithers cannot hide his disbelief about the emperor's tales: "I was...thinkin' o' the bloody lies you told the blacks 'ere

³Douglass Brinkley. **History of the United States**. New York and London: Penguin Group, 1998, p.371.

about killin' white men in the States.”⁴ What accounts for Smithers's disbelief is the fact that it was inconceivable that a black man kill a white man in the New World given the oppression to which black people were subjected at the time: “it ain't earthly for a black to kill a white man in the states. They burns 'em in oil, don't they?”⁵

Like Jones, Yank also seems to have grown up in a hostile environment. In fact, both characters, though not for the same reasons, have been subject to discrimination and rejection. While Jones is marginalised because of his colour of skin, Yank is rejected on grounds of class. As a stoker, the protagonist is put at the bottom of the class-made American society.

Added to the hostility that Yank receives from the capitalist society as a stoker is the painful treatment to which he was subject in his childhood. Indeed, from the few details that the protagonist reveals about his family history, we learn that his parents were abusive. They were frequently fighting at home and their anger was always turned against their defenceless child. The latter, no longer able to bear his parents' abuse, ran away from home and became homeless:

Yank:... on Satiday nights when dey bot' got a skinful dey could put up a bout oughter been staged at de Garden. When dey got trough dere wasn't a chair or table wit a leg under it. Or else dey bot'jumped on me for somep'n. Dat was where I loined to take punishment.

⁴Eugene O'Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. 1920 in **Early Plays of Eugene O'Neill**. Ed. J. H. Richards. London: Penguin Books, 2001, Sc. I, p. 272.

⁵Ibid., p. 273.

Naw. Worked along shore. I runned away when me old lady croaked wit de tremens. I helped at truckin' and in de market. Den I shipped in de stokehole.⁶

Having analysed the environment in which Jones and Yank have grown up, it becomes apparent now that both characters have not received love and warmth which Horney considers as essential elements for a healthy growth of the psyche. To stress the importance of these two elements, the psychoanalyst explains what happens when they are missing in an individual's environment:

A child may not be permitted to grow according to his individual needs and possibilities...they [people from the child's environment] may be dominating ...intimidating, irritable...indifferent, etc. It is never a matter of just a single factor, but always the whole constellation that exerts the untoward influence on a child's growth... As a result, the child does not develop a feeling of "we" but instead a profound insecurity and vague apprehensiveness, for which I use the term basic anxiety.⁷

Basic anxiety is thus a direct consequence of the absence of warmth and love. According to Horney, the child "feeling at bottom - as he does - isolated and hostile...can only develop an urgent need to lift himself above others."⁸ This need becomes an obsession, because only by fulfilling it can he feel safe and secured - though safety and security are only a pretence as we are going to see later. However, in his desperate search for security, the growth of his real self is hindered. The psychoanalyst explains that:

⁶ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. 1921 in **Early Plays of Eugene O'Neill**. Op. cit., Sc. V, p. 379.

⁷ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 18.

⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

Safety becomes paramount, his innermost feelings and thoughts [his real self] have receded in importance - in fact to be silenced and have become indistinct (it does not matter what he feels, if only he is safe)... This beginning alienation from self is more basic because it leads to other impairments of their injurious intensity.... The individual alienated from himself needs – it would be absurd to say a substitute for his real self, because there is no such thing - something that will give him a hold, a feeling of identity. This could make him meaningful to himself; despite all the weakness in his structure, give him a feeling of power and significance.⁹

This substitute for the real self from which the individual is alienated Horney calls the “idealised self” or the “impossible self.” It is called so because it is only a product of his imagination, and can never be fulfilled in reality: “Gradually and unconsciously, the imagination sets to work and creates in his mind an idealised image of himself. In this process he endows himself with unlimited powers and with exalted faculties; he becomes a hero, a genius... a saint, a god.”¹⁰

Absence of love and warmth in Jones’s and Yank’s environment, if it has provoked troubles, has certainly caused the characters to develop a permanent anxiety. Indeed, it might not be fortuitous that Jones and Yank have moulded themselves into an invulnerable emperor and a God-like stoker respectively. Their search for superiority can well be explained by their willingness to overcome their feeling of anxiety as described by Horney.

2- Search for Glory

Analysing O’Neill’s black characters, Shaughnessy considers that “O’Neill’s

⁹ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

black [Jones in our case] exists in a state of resentment and fear.”¹¹ This fear which is the outcome of rejection on grounds of race urges Jones to mould himself into a divine emperor to experience a feeling of superiority and thus feel worthy and secure. In order to assert his divine image, the protagonist develops what Horney names “inner dictates.” The psychoanalyst explains that the neurotic:

holds before his soul his image of perfection and unconsciously tells himself: “forget about the disgraceful creature you actually are; this is how you should be; and to be this idealised self is all that matters. You should be able to endure everything, to understand everything...to be always productive” - to mention only a few of these inner dictates. Since they are inexorable I call them “the tyranny of the should.”¹²

Jones’s inner dictates manifest themselves in the myth he builds about his invulnerability. Indeed, the protagonist puts a high demand on himself, that is he should endure and face anything even death. Therefore, he constructs a myth that only a silver bullet, which is made by himself, may put an end to his life. This means that no one on earth can hurt him let alone take away his life: “I has de silver bullet moulded and I tells’ em when de time comes I kills myself wid it. I tells’ em dat’s ‘cause I’m de on’y man in de world big enuff to git me.”¹³ Jones becomes so tyrannised by the demand that he should be invulnerable that he ends up believing in the myth he himself has created. Indeed, at the end of the play when he feels threatened by the last apparition (the crocodile) the protagonist is

¹¹ Edward L. Shaughnessy. *Op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹² Karen Horney. *Op. cit.*, pp. 64-5.

¹³ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. *Op. cit*, Sc. I, p. 272.

confident that as long as the bullet is in his possession no one can hurt him. Jones shouts: “De silver bullet! You don’t git me yit.”¹⁴

From what has been said, we notice that Jones limits power to material (silver). Therefore, his conception of the self which he gets from such kind of power becomes materialistic in nature. By making his character identify with material, O’Neill dramatises the dehumanising effects of the excessive materialism of the 1920s which dominated all aspects of American life to the extent that man’s soul (self) was substituted for material. Ironically, silver which is meant to provide the emperor with power and worthiness, as money was meant to offer man greatness and happiness in the 1920s, is the same material which causes his destruction at the end:

O’Neill’s hero (Jones) is killed with the very prop he had devised to maintain the theatrical illusion of his power and it has been forged from melted money...such a detail provides evidence for Michael Hinden’s thesis that the play - like much of O’Neill cannon – is an indictment of the American drive for happiness through the acquisition of material possessions.¹⁵

Yank too identifies with material. As a matter of fact, like Jones, Yank develops a permanent fear as a result of the unfriendly atmosphere he experienced as a child and stoker. To overcome his weariness, Yank feels the need to make himself into a God-like stoker by fulfilling the task of making the world function. Actually, Yank should be able to create the energy that makes the

¹⁴ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit, Sc. VII, p. 290.

¹⁵ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 136.

world move by transforming iron into steel: “I start somep’n and de woild moves!...i’m what makes iron into steel! steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I’m steel – steel - steel!”¹⁶

It is worth noticing, however, that even Mildred - a representative of the capitalists - acquires a sense of belonging by associating herself with steel. The only difference between their self-conceptions is that Yank identifies himself with the energy that transforms iron into steel, while Mildred likens herself to slag. Walker argues that:

Though class enemies, Yank and Mildred are existential equals, as O’Neill illustrates when he has Yank ask with regard to Mildred “Ain’t she de same as me?”.... To emphasise this point, he has both characters identify themselves with steel. “Steel, dat’s me!” Yank says accosting the Fifth Avenue socialites “You guys live on it and think yuh’ve somep’n. But I’m in it see!”.... Mildred, too, identifies herself with steel. As the heiress of a steel fortune built by her father and grandfather, she recognises that steel has made her what she is “I’m a waste product in the Bessemer process...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.”¹⁷

By making characters of different social classes share a same experience, O’Neill universalises the theme of selfhood. Actually, their identification with material (steel) reveals the danger of the excessive materialism of the 1920s which shaped the individual’s conception of the self. This new conception does not provide modern man with a genuine sense of belonging, because it reduces the self to something inanimate and thus deprives him of humanity, which is the

¹⁶ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p.365.

¹⁷ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., pp. 147-8.

essence of mankind. This idea is crystallised in the character Yank who appears self-confident when the play opens and becomes completely confused when his steely self-conception is shattered by Mildred who calls him a beast.

The demands of enduring everything like an immortal being and creating the energy that makes the world move which Jones and Yank put on their selves respectively are not enough to make of them God-like figures, because reality outside does not treat them as such. As a matter of fact, the two characters need to prove to themselves their divinity as much as they need their surrounding to assert it. Therefore, Jones and Yank will claim whatever may assert their perfect images as right. They will develop what Horney calls “neurotic claims.” The latter are neurotic because, like the inner dictates which are irrational, “they assume a right, a title, which in reality does not exist.”¹⁸ Horney considers that some of these claims may be directed toward people:

People whose need is to be always right feel entitled never to be criticised, doubted, or questioned. Those who are power ridden feel entitled to blind obedience. Others for whom life has become a game in which other people are to be skilfully manipulated, feel entitled to fool everybody and, on the other hand, never to be fooled themselves.¹⁹

To maintain the myth about his invulnerability, Jones assumes that life is a game and arrogates to himself the right to mislead the natives into believing in his myth. In his conversation with Smithers about how he has become emperor,

¹⁸ Karen Horney. *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Jones argues “Ain’t a man’s talkin’ big what makes him big - long as he makes folks believe it?...i knows I kin fool ‘em - I knows it - and dat’s backin’ enough fo’my game.”²⁰

Jones’s conception of life as a game does not spring from his genuine thoughts and feelings, but finds its roots in the experience he had in the New World. In fact, it is from the Pullmans that the protagonist learns that deception is the means to acquire power. This is emphasised by Shaughnessy: “The protagonist [Jones] has meanly imitated those [the Pullmans] who play the power game successfully.”²¹ Jones says it explicitly to Smithers: “for de little stealin’ dey gits you in jail soon or late. For de big stealin’ dey makes you Emperor and puts you in de Hall o’ Fame when you croaks... If dey’s one thing I learns in ten years on de Pullman ca’s listenin’ to de white quality talk, it’s dat same fact.”²² Jones’s behaviour can be regarded as an outcome of colonial experience as it is pointed out by Frantz Fanon. The latter argues that the colonized who thinks that the colonizer is a model ends up willing to identify with his master:

The gaze that the colonized casts at the colonist’s sector is a look of lust, a look of envy. Dreams of possession. Every type of possession: of sitting at the colonist’s table and sleeping in his bed, preferably with his wife. The colonised man is an envious man.... The colonised always dreams of taking the colonist’s place. ²³

²⁰ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 271.

²¹ Edward L. Shaughnessy. Op. cit., p. 151.

²² Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 271.

²³ Frantz Fanon. **The Wretched of the Earth**. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2005 [1961], pp. 5, 10.

Therefore, Jones, now free in the West Indies, tries to imitate the Pullmans by perpetuating the same deceitful way of government. To maintain the power he has gained by deceiving the natives, Jones feels entitled to blind obedience. His belief in the necessity of resorting to tyranny to secure his position in the West Indies is also derived from his experience in the New World. Indeed, the protagonist's unfair treatment of the natives recalls the whites' violent practices against the blacks in the U.S. There, a black man was so oppressed and kept in such a low position that it was inconceivable that he may arise against his white oppressor. Smithers tells Jones: "it ain't ealthly for a black to kill a white man in the states."²⁴ In the light of Fanon's theory, Jones is the oppressed who has become oppressor: "The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor."²⁵ Actually, the violence to which the protagonist was subjected in the U.S was transmitted to him and became fossilized in his behaviour. Thus, the emperor can only express himself through violent and oppressive ways to maintain his position in the same way as his master.

We cannot study Fanon's black slave – Jones being a representative – without referring to Hegel's conception of master-slave relationship which Fanon applied to the colonial context. Hegel considers that the self should not be conscious of the objects in the world only, but should also be conscious of itself. He adds that "self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness,"

²⁴ Eugene O'Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 273.

²⁵ Frantz Fanon. **The Wretched of the Earth**. Op. cit., p. 53.

i.e., be recognised by another. However, the process of self-consciousness is an unequal relationship of strict opposition. In fact, “it is essential as one needs the other for recognition, and at the same time the other is a threat and imposes limitation on one’s own freedom,”²⁶ as they are acknowledged as equal beings. Therefore, Hegel concludes that the direct outcome of this confrontation is that one is turned into a master: a “conscious existing for itself which is mediated with itself through another consciousness;” and a slave: a “dependent conscious whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another”²⁷consciousness.

However, Fanon’s black slave is different from the Hegelian slave with regard to the process through which he gains back freedom. In Hegel’s view, the slave who has been turned into an object (a being for other) by his master finds his liberation in labour. Actually, the slave recognises himself in the first place as an object (labour). Consequently, the master who depends on the object that the slave produces becomes himself an object. By turning the master into an object, the slave will claim to be a subject (a being for itself).

The process of liberation is different as far as Fanon’s black slave is concerned. The latter does not look at the master as an object. He rather

²⁶ H. W. F. Hegel. **The Phenomenology of Mind**. Trans. J. B Baillie. New York: Harper Torch Book, 1967 [1807], p. 800.

²⁷ H. W. F. Hegel. **The Phenomenology of Spirit**. Trans. A. V Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977 [1807], p. 115.

“considers the master’s subjectivity as something he wants to himself,”²⁸ and thus remains stuck within a fixation with the identity of the white master. In other words, Fanon’s black slave does not move from objectivity to subjectivity but claims to be considered as a subject, i.e., as the master. This is apparent in the behaviour of Jones who wants to imitate the white coloniser. Only violence, according to Fanon, can allow the black to reach subjectivity in that way. Jones is an example of a black slave who resorts to violence to get control over the natives.

It seems that Jones needs more support from outside to maintain his illusory God-like image. Indeed, adding to the claims that the protagonist directs towards people are those he directs towards life as explained by Horney: “unable to face precariousness of his life as a human being, the neurotic individual develops claims of his invulnerability, or claims of being the anointed, of luck always being on his side”²⁹ which offer him an apparent sense of safety.

The second type of claims becomes manifest when Jones’s divine image starts crumbling. Unable to face any fact that may threaten his position, Jones goes beyond himself and people to claim protection from life. Indeed, when Smithers informs him that the natives are after him, the emperor, sensing danger, claims

²⁸ **“Hegel and Fanon on the Question of Mutual Recognition: A Comparative Analysis.”**
<http://www.up.ac.za/dspace/b.tstream/2263/7520/1/Hegel%20_2008_.pdf>

²⁹ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 46.

that the bullet will bring him luck: “Silver bullet bring me luck any way.”³⁰ The protagonist’s reply shows a change in his behaviour as far as neurotic claims are concerned. In fact, the same silver bullet which he himself has made and used as a means to deceive the natives becomes now a symbol of luck. In other words, Jones now claims less the right to deceive the natives than the right to be provided with protection from life. Another claim that the emperor directs towards life is the right to have the protection of the Baptist Church of which he was a member in the U.S. “Doesn’t you know dey’s got to do wid a man was member in good standin’ o’ de Baptist Church?.... Let dem try deir heathen tricks. De Baptist Church done protect me and land dem all in hell.”³¹ Here again we notice Jones’s influence by the white civilization as Edwin A. Engel stresses it: “Jones shares with the white man...a utilitarian attitude towards religion.”³² However, the protection that the protagonist asks for is more spiritual than materialistic. Therefore, how could he ask for God’s protection while he had abandoned Jesus and came to the West Indies to gather wealth: “I’s after de coin, an’ I lays my Jesus on de shelf for de time bein.”³³ What accounts for Jones’s attitude is irrationality. The irrationality of his claims prevents him from seeing reason and realising how illusory his projected image of the divine emperor is

³⁰ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 273.

³¹ Ibid., p. 276.

³² Edwin A. Engel. **The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O’Neill**. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 50.

³³ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit, Sc. I, p. 276.

In addition to their being irrational, neurotic claims are also egocentric. Horney argues that the neurotic “is consumed with himself because he is driven by his psychotic needs and compelled to adhere to this peculiar solution.”³⁴ Jones’s egocentricity is apparent in his obsession with his image of the invulnerable emperor. Like the other traits discussed above, it will drive him away from reality and draw him into his world of illusion. In fact, the protagonist wants so much to identify with his illusory glorified image that he fails to perceive how shaky his self-vision is. He cannot notice that the whole myth about his invulnerability lies in a silver bullet which he detains exclusively but only temporarily. Therefore, if Jones perceives himself as an invulnerable being, the natives look at him as a superman who can be destroyed if they could get a silver bullet themselves. Indeed, as soon as the natives succeed in making a silver bullet, Jones’s myth is shattered. Actually, the oppressed people rise against their oppressor while none dared to affront him before. This reveals the extent to which Jones’s egocentricity has mistaken him and prevented him from realising how far he is from the God-like emperor with whom he has identified.

Even more, neurotic claims are vindictive in nature. The psychoanalyst argues that: “the person may feel wronged, and insist on retribution... Vindictive elements are certainly operating when claims are made with reference to past frustration or suffering; when they are made in militant manner; when the

³⁴ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p.48.

fulfilment is felt as a triumph and frustration as a defeat.”³⁵

According to Horney’s theory Jones, because he was subject to humiliation in the New World, feels the need to triumph vindictively to avenge his honour. Talking to Smithers the protagonist boasts of the reversal of roles. He triumphantly reminds Smithers (a white man) how he (a black man) has climbed to a high status and become the master: “Talk polite, white man.... I’m boss heah now, is you forgettin’?”³⁶ What may appear paradoxical is Jones’s despise for the natives who are black like himself. Indeed, when the emperor speaks of how he has fooled the niggers, he uses a language which is pervaded with vindictiveness: “[laughing] And dere all dem fool, bush niggers was kneelin’ down and bumpin’ deir heads on de ground like i was a miracle out o’ de Bible.”³⁷ What may account for Jones’s attitude is self-hate which is a concept to be developed in details in another section. In all its forms vindictiveness misleads Jones into believing that he is equal to the perfect being with whom he wants to identify and thus drives him further into his fantasy world.

Like Jones, Yank too develops neurotic claims to maintain his image of the God-like stoker. The protagonist’s main claim is directed towards people. Indeed, he arrogates to himself the right never to be questioned by his surrounding. Yank’s obstinacy manifests itself on two occasions in the play when Long and

³⁵ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 48.

³⁶ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, pp. 270.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 271.

Paddy attempt to challenge his conception of himself as a divine being. First it is Long who tries to “correct” the stoker’s vision by attempting to bring him to class-consciousness. However, his socialist speech fails to have the slightest effect on Yank who stubbornly refuses to admit that as a stoker he is reduced by the capitalist system to an unworthy slave who belongs nowhere. Indeed, the protagonist responds to Long defensively:

Yank: De cap’tlist class, huh? Aw nix on dat Salvation Army-Socialist bull.... I’ve listened to lots of guys like you, see. Yuh’re all wrong.... What’s dem slobs in de foist cabin got to do wit us? We’re better men dan dey are, ain’t we?.... Dey’re just baggage.... We belong and dey don’t. Dat’s all.³⁸

Then it is Paddy’s turn to try to change Yank’s self-conception. In the speech where he recalls nostalgic memories, Old Paddy attempts to make the protagonist aware that, unlike old sailors, the stokers of the technological age who have been caged in the ship where they have no contact with nature, have lost their humanity and become alienated. But the obstinate Yank is indifferent to Paddy’s arguments as he was to Long’s:

Yank: Aw, yuh crazy Mick!.... Sure I’m part of de engines! Why de hell not! Dey move, don’t dey?.... Dat’s new stuff! Dat belongs! But him, he’s too old.... All dat crazy tripe about nights and days...dat’s all a dope dream! Hittin’ de pipe of de past, dat’s what he’s doin’. He’s old and don’t belong no more.³⁹

With all their arguments, Long and Paddy fail to alter Yank’s self-conception. Indeed, the stoker refuses to be contradicted by either of them.

³⁸ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 362.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 364.

However, one insult from Mildred fills the protagonist with a sense of complete loss. Walker stresses this point:

It is the neurasthenic Mildred who is finally able to break Yank's steely self conception, where Long and Paddy each has failed. For, when Yank's understanding of the world is finally challenged, it is not through reasoned debate but through an insult that is only vaguely understood.... Although he tries to understand what has happened to him, all he knows is what he feels.⁴⁰

What accounts for Yank's avoidance of the language of reason is that thought will bring him to consciousness and shatter his illusory image of the perfect being. However, Yank is sensitive to the language of feelings. This can be explained by the fact that the main motive behind the protagonist's search for glory is the need to feel secure and safe. Therefore, the stoker's life becomes governed first and foremost by feelings; and no room is left for rationality.

Irrationality is not the only trait of Yank's claims. Indeed, like Jones's the stoker's claim is also egocentric. As a matter of fact, by measuring himself up to God in his capacity to create the energy that assures the functioning of the world, Yank claims to be the centre of the universe: "I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start!"⁴¹ His words echo Jesus's revelation that God gave onto him in the Bible: "I am the first and the last, the beginning and the last."⁴² Yank's egocentricity makes him draw further in this

⁴⁰ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 149.

⁴¹ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 365.

⁴² "The Coming of Jesus." **Good News, Bible**. Revelation (22:13).

world of fantasy. Indeed, because the protagonist is so consumed with himself, he remains indifferent to Long's and Paddy's visions which decentralise his authority. The only "reality" that Yank can perceive is that he is steel and as such he is the source of life. Therefore, he remains prisoner in his world of imagination which nurtures such a vision of the self.

What draws Yank even further into his imaginary world is his vindictiveness which is another quality of his claim. Actually, frustration and humiliation being at the origin of the protagonist's search for glory, the stoker claims the right to triumph vindictively over the others as if to avenge his honour in the same way as Jones. Indeed, talking of the capitalists, who are partly responsible for his marginalisation, Yank uses a contemptuous language: "Dem boids don't amount to nothin'. Dey're just baggage."⁴³

However, like Jones who is spiteful of the natives who are of the same race as himself, Yank directs vindictiveness towards the people of his own class. Talking to Long, Yank says: "Yuh're de Bunk. Yuh ain't got no noive, get me? Yuh're yellow, Dat's what."⁴⁴ Like Jones, Yank's contempt for his own class can be explained by self hate. Being directed towards the capitalists or his stoker mates, the protagonist's vindictiveness "asserts" his superiority and thus causes him to identify with the God-like stoker and remain in his world of imagination.

⁴³ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 362.

⁴⁴ Id.

Both inner dictates and neurotic claims allow Jones and Yank to build up their images of the God-like beings and drive them away from their real selves. What adds to the characters' alienation is the unhealthy pride that they both will invest in their illusory images. What is more, the more pride Jones and Yank will invest, the more hate they will direct towards the black prison escapee and unworthy stoker they actually are, and which make them feel unworthy. Both neurotic pride and self-hate will drive the characters even further into their fantasy worlds and alienate them completely from their real selves. These two phenomena will be the following points of our discussion.

Section2

Neurotic Pride

With all their efforts towards glory, Jones and Yank will not gain what they desperately need: self-confidence. In fact, being alienated from their real selves, the two characters will never know their values and thus will never feel confident about the beings they really are. Instead Jones and Yank will develop what Horney calls “neurotic pride.” The psychoanalyst distinguishes a healthy pride, which is justified, from a neurotic pride which concerns only neurotic persons:

Healthy pride...is on substantial attitudes. It may be a warranted high regard for special achievements, such as feeling proud of a deed of moral courage or of a job well done, or it may be a more comprehensive feeling of our own value, a quiet feeling of dignity...neurotic pride is by comparison unsubstantial, and is based on entirely different factors, all of which belong to or support the glorified version of oneself.¹

1- Unsubstantial Factors

The factors in which the neurotic invests his pride are of different kinds. One of these factors is prestige value. Horney explains that to base one’s pride on prestige value is to be proud, for example, of “coming from a respectable family, of being native born...belonging to a political or professional group enjoying prestige.” However, the psychoanalyst adds: “This kind of pride is the last typical for neurosis. To many people with considerable neurotic difficulties these things mean no more than they do to the comparatively healthy persons.” Though this kind of pride seems to be the same for healthy and neurotic persons, there is still an essential difference between the two: “the main difference is that the neurotic

¹ Karen Horney. Op. cit., pp. 88-9.

is at bottom unrelated to the group”² to which he pretends to belong.

Prestige value is one of the main factors on which Jones bases his pride. In fact, when Jones arrives in the West Indies, he does not make himself into any emperor but tries to imitate a white emperor in particular. Indeed, when discussing neurotic claims, we have seen that the protagonist has derived his conception of power from the white civilization.

Yank too bases his pride on prestige value. However, his reaction is different from Jones’s. In fact, Jones imitates a white emperor to enjoy the prestige of the white class, while Yank identifies with the stokers who, like the other groups of the working class, did not enjoy any kind of prestige in the 1920s. However, it is worth noticing that Yank unlike Jones does not identify with the stoker as a class but as a group to which he attaches a great deal of respect and prestige.

What may explain Yank’s attitude is his conception of prestige. As a matter of fact, the protagonist does not associate prestige with class because he is unaware of class lines. The stoker’s class unconsciousness is apparent in his inability to understand Long’s Marxist talk, but also in his attitude towards Mildred.

Indeed, Yank interprets Mildred’s insult as an offense against his superiority as a man rather than a proof of a hierarchical structure which grants the

² Karen Horney. Op. cit., pp. 88-9.

³ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 267.

capitalists (whose representative is Mildred) the right to abuse the working class as Long wants to make him understand when he takes him to Fifth Avenue. This is stressed by Deanna M. Totem Beard:

Yank decides he must avenge himself against Mildred for her misguided sense of superiority over him.... Yank and Long...go to Fifth Avenue to look for Mildred. While there, Long shows Yank push store fronts prominently displaying expensive merchandise, he wants Yank to understand Mildred's insult as a condition of the class structure: "Then yer'll see it's er class yer've got to fight not 'er alone."⁴

Yank seems to hold a strong belief in America's democratic ideals. Actually, his words "one of us guys could clean up the whole mob wit one mit.... Dem boids don't amount to nothin'. Dey're just baggage. Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't"⁵ reveal his belief in an egalitarian America where an individual is valued according to his industry rather than his class or any other accident of birth. Therefore, the stokers being the moving force behind the ship, the protagonist assigns a high status to this group and is proud of belonging to it.

However, reality treats Yank differently. In the 1920s as in any other period of American history, the egalitarian ideals proved to be only written slogans. Like the Old World, the New World has always been a class-made society despite its pretence that classes are non-existent. Edward Passen argues that

⁴Deanna M. Totem Beard. "American Experimentalism, American Expressionism and Early O'Neill." Ed. David Krasner. A Companion to Twentieth Century American Drama. Op. cit., p. 62.

⁵Eugene O'Neill. The Hairy Ape. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 362.

“Most Americans appear to be convinced that the New World is and always has been different from and more innocent and egalitarian than the Old...yet the evidence is abundant that classes, class lines, and distinction of states do exist and have always existed here, as elsewhere in the modern world.”⁶

Therefore, in the context of the America of the 1920s, stokers are regarded as a group of the working class which is at the bottom of society. That is to say, what appears at the beginning of the play as self-confidence is in reality no more than neurotic pride. Indeed, Yank is proud of belonging to the stokers as a prestigious group as he personally perceives it, not as an oppressed class as it really is. Thus, though in different ways, both Jones and Yank, in order to enjoy prestige value, claim to belong to prestigious groups of which they are not members.

In addition to prestige value, neurotic pride may also rest on attributes and faculties which a person arrogates to himself in his imagination. Horney argues that neurotic persons are: “anxious to preserve their illusions of being a saint, a mastermind, of having absolute poise, etc; and they feel as if they would lose their individuality if they budged an inch from these estimates of themselves.”⁷ This kind of neurotic pride, unlike the preceding one, is easily distinguished from

⁶ Edward Passen. “Status and Social Class in America.” **Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States.** Ed. Luther S. Luedtke. Washington: United States Information Agency, 1987, p. 270.

⁷ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 91.

healthy pride because it is based on factors that can only support a perfect version of the self which a healthy grown up person does not seek.

Jones does not only imitate a white emperor but he also wants to measure up to God by assigning to himself the God-like faculty of deciding on death and life matters. Therefore, in addition to prestige value, the protagonist will also invest pride in his invulnerability. “I’m de on’y man in de world big enuff to git me.”⁸ This kind of pride is also apparent in Yank’s behavior. Indeed, as we have seen, like Jones Yank also moulds himself into a God-like figure by arrogating to himself the faculty of creating the energy that makes the world function. From this attribute the stoker will derive much of his pride: “I’m de end! I’m de start.”⁹

2- Reactions to Hurt Pride

Jones’s and Yank’s pride, being invested in unsubstantial factors, is easily hurt. Horney considers that: “the two typical reactions to neurotic pride are shame and humiliation. We feel ashamed if we do, think, or feel something that violates our pride. And we feel humiliated if others do something that hurts our pride”¹⁰ on which our glorified image of the self rests.

This kind of reaction to hurt pride is noticed in Jones’s behavior. In fact, when Smithers reminds the protagonist of the day he first landed in the West Indies

⁸ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 272.

⁹ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 365.

¹⁰ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 95.

where he had no prestigious status as the one he has now, the emperor feels humiliated and answers: “Talk polite, white man! Talk polite, you heah me! I’m boss heah now, is you forgettin.”¹¹ Jones’s answer reveals that at bottom, he still distinguishes between himself and the white community to which Smithers belongs. It is the fact of bringing to consciousness what Jones tries to keep in his unconscious that hurts his pride.

Even more, Jones feels ashamed of the very fact of being hurt. Horney argues that: “insults...hurt...[the neurotic] in a twofold way: feeling humiliated by others and feeling ashamed of the very fact of his being hurt...he is vulnerable to an absurd degree, but his pride does not allow him to be vulnerable at all.”¹² Because Jones is a superman in his world of fantasy, feeling hurt is taken as a sign of weakness and makes him feel humiliated. When the protagonist arrives at the forest and fear of the dark and the beating of the tom-tom seizes him, he feels humiliated and tries to hide his feelings: “he sits down and begins to lace up his shoes in great haste, all the time muttering reassuringly” You know what? Yo’ belly is empty, dat’s what’s de matter wid yoo.... Wid nothin’ but wind on yo’ stumach, o’ course you feels jiggedey.”¹³

Yank too feels humiliated when Mildred shatters the image of the perfect being that he has projected of himself: “He [Yank] feels himself insulted in some

¹¹ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, pp. 269-70.

¹² Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 98.

¹³ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 278.

unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride.”¹⁴ By calling him a “beast”, the woman brings to the protagonist’s consciousness the images of the abused child he was and the unworthy stoker he actually is, which he has kept deep in his unconscious. Therefore, Yank once again will sense feelings of unworthiness and uncertainty about his identity which have been the main cause of his process of self-idealization. Indeed, after this incident Yank can no longer feel that he belongs:

Yank a stoker on a transatlantic liner, has always glorified in his work and in his brute strength until he is startled and infuriated when Mildred Douglass...visits the stokehole. Driven to thought and unable to rationalize his place in the scheme of things, Yank is obsessed by the idea that he doesn’t belong.¹⁵

Yank’s identity conflict after Mildred’s insult shows how false his previous sense of belonging was. In fact, what the stoker felt at the beginning was no more than neurotic pride invested in an illusory image of the self which is violated at the slightest contact with reality.

Jones’s and Yank’s reactions to hurt pride are not limited to humiliation. In fact, the latter, in addition to its being a reaction is also a cause for other reactions which Horney calls “secondary reactions.” Among these reactions is rage. The psychoanalyst argues:

¹⁴ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. III, p. 373.

¹⁵ Edward M. Gagey. **Revolution in American Drama**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947, p. 50.

That any hurt to our pride may provoke vindictive hostility is well known. It goes all the way from dislike to hate, from irritability to anger to a blind murderous rage.... For instance, a person is enraged against his boss who he feels has treated him cavalierly ...what operates here is the straight law of retaliation. The patient [the neurotic] without knowing it, has felt humiliated and returns in kind.¹⁶

Jones's humiliation is turned in different instances into rage. When the protagonist loses his way in the forest that he pretends to know like a book, he feels humiliated and flies into rage. Indeed, Jones scratches a match forgetting that in so doing he will draw the niggers' attention:

Jones: Is I lost de place? Must have! [He scratches a match on his trousers and peers about him. The rate of the beat of the far-off tom-tom increases perceptibly as he does so...suddenly with a frightened gasp, he flings the match on the ground and stamps on it] Nigger, is you gone crazy? Is you lightin' matches to show dem whar you is? ¹⁷

In this case, Jones has turned his rage against himself. In fact, being humiliated by the fact of having lost his way in the forest, the protagonist unconsciously scratches a match to be caught by the natives and thus be humiliated. This point will be understood when we discuss "self-hate."

Rage is not self-directed only. When Jones is confronted with the first apparition: the "Little Formless Fears" which mirror his fear and reveal his weakness, the protagonist feels ashamed and shoots at them: "Jones looks down, leaps backward with a yell of terror, yanking out his revolver as he does so- in a

¹⁶ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 99.

¹⁷ Eugene O'Neill. The Emperor Jones. Op. cit., Sc. II, p. 279.

quavering voice: What's dat? Who's dar? What is you? Git away from me befo' I shoots you up."¹⁸ In so doing, Jones restores his image of the powerful being and feels worthy again: "The sound of the shot, the reassuring feel of the revolver in his hand, have somewhat restored his shaken nerve. He addresses himself with renewed confidence.... Dey're gone. Dat shot fix'em."¹⁹

In **The Hairy Ape**, rage is definitely the main reaction to hurt pride. As we have already seen, Yank who is sensitive only to the language of feelings can but respond with feelings by turning his rage against the person who has hurt his pride. In fact, from the point the stoker gets humiliated by Mildred who calls him a "beast" onwards, the protagonist devotes himself to seeking revenge on the woman. By crushing down Mildred, Yank will restore, at least in his imagination, his image of the divine stoker and thus regain his dignity. This point is stressed by Falk:

Yank sees his first possibility of restoring his old self respect in revenge upon Mildred. He looks for her in order to insult her - "I was goin' to spit in her pale mug, see" - but she is heavily guarded, and he cannot reach her.

A shipmate takes him to Fifth Avenue and advises him to avenge himself on that class of society which Mildred represents. He tries to do so by assaulting some passers-by still asserting, "I'm steel and steam and smoke and de rest of it!" but finds himself in jail as a result... His next step, then, upon release from jail, is vengeance upon the father's steel mills and the social structure they represent.²⁰

¹⁸ Eugene O'Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. II, p.280.

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., pp. 31-2.

Humiliation does not only provoke rage but it may also engender fear. According to Horney, the latter may occur as a reaction to anticipated humiliation. It may “concern examinations, public performances, social gathering, or date.”²¹ Actually, the neurotic wanting to make a good impression on people is afraid of not performing as superbly as his exacting should demand. Moreover, fear may also be the result of a humiliation that has taken place. The psychoanalyst argues that “many people react with trembling, shaking, perspiration, or some other expression of fear to a lack of deference or arrogant behavior on the part of others.”²² This reaction of fear is partly the neurotic’s fear of having his pride hurt, and partly a fear of his own rage toward people whom he thinks have humiliated him.

Fear is recurrent throughout **The Emperor Jones**, but its strongest expressions are experienced by Jones in the jungle. Indeed, the “Little Formless Fears” which is the first apparition that the protagonist encounters in the forest expresses his fear of having his pride hurt by the natives who dared rise against him. Actually, Jones’s shooting at the “formless creatures” suggests his rage but also his fear to face the fact of being humiliated by the rebelling niggers. Moreover, the first apparition may also reveal the emperor’s fear of an anticipated humiliation as explained by Horney. No doubt, in the deep recesses of the forest the protagonist cannot even find his way, and becomes afraid of

²¹ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 100.

²² Ibid., p. 101.

falling short of being the superman who will crush down the rebels and get into the Martinique easily as he had boasted to Smithers.

Reactions to hurt pride, the secondary ones in particular, prove how much Jones and Yank are involved in the process of actualizing their idealized selves. However, the more the two characters try to protect their pride the more they are driven away from their real selves. What adds to their self-alienation is the process of self hate which operates simultaneously with neurotic pride but in the opposite direction.

Section 3

Self-Hate

Before discussing the process of self-hate in both **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**, it is imperative to distinguish between some concepts such as the actual self, the idealized self and the real self. The last two have already been defined. But to get a complete picture of the self, we are going to define them again and compare them to the actual self.

1- Actual Self, Real Self and Idealized Self

Horney considers that

The actual self is an all inclusive term for everything that a person is at a given time; body and soul, healthy and neurotic...the idealized self is what we are in our irrational imagination, or what we should be according to the dictates of neurotic pride. The real self is the original force toward individual growth and fulfillment...it is also the possible self.¹

When we discuss self-hate in the two plays, we are going to refer to the actual self. Actually, the more Jones and Yank move towards self idealization the greater their need to move away from their actual selves will be. Horney explains that: “the glorified self becomes not only a phantom to be pursued; it also becomes a measuring rod with which to measure his actual being. And this actual being is such an embarrassing sight when viewed from the perspective of a god-like perfection that he cannot but despise it”² and turns away from it.

¹ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 158.

² Ibid., p. 110.

However it is worth noticing that the more the two characters move away from their actual selves, the less their chances to be their real selves will be. Therefore, when discussing self-alienation in the two plays we are referring to alienation from both the actual self and the real self.

According to Horney self-hate may be expressed in different ways. It is in its expressions that the process of self-hate can be understood. Therefore, the second point of this section will be an analysis of the main expressions of self-hate in both **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**.

2- Expressions of Self-Hate

One of the expressions of self-hate is relentless demands on the self. According to Horney, “the shoulds are as determined by self-hate as by pride.”³ In other words, the neurotic makes impossible demands on himself in order to measure up to his idealized image of the self, but also to express his hate toward the weak self he actually is.

This first type of self-hate is expressed both in **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**. In fact, Jones’s willingness to measure up to a white like invulnerable emperor is a product of his desires to actualize his idealized self in which he will invest his pride as well as express his hate towards the black prison

³ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 118.

escapee he actually is and whom he wants to crush down by making on himself impossible demands. Similarly, Yank's attempt to build himself into a God-like stoker stems not only from his will to actualize his perfect image of the self which will be the source of his pride but also from his need to direct hate towards the unworthy stoker he actually is.

Relentless demands on the self cannot be separated from another expression of self-hate which is self contempt. Horney argues that the neurotics "may place insufficient value upon their time, their work done or to be done, their wishes, opinions, and convictions."⁴ In fact, because a neurotic puts impossible demands on himself he will automatically turn self-contempt towards his actual self which cannot fulfill these demands. What is worth noticing when studying self-contempt in both plays is the heavy consequences that this expression of self-hate may have on the neurotic's relations with others. Actually, the psychoanalyst argues that neurotic persons have a tendency "to compare themselves with everybody with whom they come in contact and to their own disadvantages,"⁵ because they consider themselves inferior.

Comparative inferiority is clearly displayed in **The Emperor Jones**. In fact, following the development of events in the play, we notice that as soon as the protagonist gets into the woods, the word "nigger" (which has a negative connotation) that he has been using to refer to the natives to express his contempt

⁴ Karen Horney. Op. cit. p. 133.

⁵ Id.

for them, is now used to refer to himself as well: “Cheah up, nigger, de worst is yet to come,”⁶ “Nigger, is you gone crazy mad?”⁷ “De moon’s rizen. Does yu heah dat, nigger?”⁸ Actually, like a neurotic, Jones being a black man compares himself to the white man to his disadvantage. It is this feeling of comparative inferiority which has driven Jones to imitate a white emperor and call the natives “niggers” to express indirectly his contempt for himself. However, in the darkness of the forest where his actual self is revealed to him little by little through the different visions as we are going to see later, the protagonist identifies himself more with the black natives whom he despises than the white community to which he has unsuccessfully tried to belong.

The protagonist’s feeling of comparative inferiority which stems mainly from his color of skin can be explained in the light of Fanon’s psychology. In fact, Fanon considers that a black man becomes conscious of his color of skin only in a white society. The latter does not only bring him to color consciousness but also teaches him that white is good and black is evil. Because the idea that black is the color of evil is now fossilized in his mind, the black man feels the need to value what is considered as unworthy. Therefore, he hates and rejects himself (being evil) and adopts the white ways as if to show that a black man can be a

⁶Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. II, p. 278.

⁷ Ibid., p. 279.

⁸ Ibid., Sc. III, p. 281.

“good” member in society.⁹

Having grown up in the U.S. Jones was forcibly imbued with the whites’ view about color differences as explained by Fanon. Indeed, the protagonist will live in a constant struggle to justify his existence by attempting to value himself. Therefore, he will try in vain to embrace the supposed superior white way of life by imitating a white emperor. However, failing to become what he is not, Jones can but direct despise towards the black being he actually is and which he thinks is his source of trouble and the cause of his feeling unworthy.

Though not for color matters, self-contempt is also apparent in Yank’s relations with his surrounding. In fact, the protagonist’s feeling of inferiority is expressed in his judgments of himself that he considers unworthy as explained by

⁹ Voici en effet ce qui se passe. Comme je m’aperçois que le nègre est le symbole du pêché, je me prends à haïr le nègre. Mais je constate que je suis un nègre. Pour échapper à ce conflit, deux solutions. Ou bien je demande aux autres de ne pas faire attention à ma peau ; ou bien au contraire, je veux qu’on s’en aperçoive. J’essais alors de valoriser ce qui est mauvais - puisque, irréflexivement , j’ai admis que le Noir est la couleur du mal. (159)

Le noir, dans la mesure où il reste chez lui, réalise, à peu de choses près plus le destin du petit Blanc. Mais qu’il aille en Europe, il aura à repenser son sort. Car le nègre en France, dans son pays, se sentira différent des autres. On a vite dit: le nègre s’infériorise. La vérité est qu’on l’infériorise. Le jeune Antillais est un Français appelé à tout instant à vivre avec des compatriotes blancs. Or la famille Antillaise n’entretient pratiquement aucun rapport avec la structure nationale, c’est-à-dire Française, Européenne. L’Antillais doit alors choisir entre sa famille et la société Européenne ; autrement dit, l’individu qui monte vers la société - la Blanche, la civilisée- tend à rejeter la famille - la Noire, la sauvage. (121) See Frantz Fanon. **Peau Noire Masques Blancs**. France: Edition de Soleil, 1952.

Horney. The latter argues that a neurotic will develop a need to “alleviate or balance self contempt with the attention, regard, appreciation, admiration, or love of others...the result is a total dependence on others for self evaluation.”¹⁰ The stoker’s change of attitude towards himself after Mildred’s insult is well understood in the light of the psychoanalyst’s theory. Indeed, when Yank sees Mildred shrink back in horror from him, his pride and initial self-confidence are shattered. Actually, the stoker’s physical strength which represented at the beginning of the play the energy on which the ship and the passengers ultimately depended and which provided him with a feeling of superiority now makes him associate with an ape. This point is stressed by Falk: “Yank no longer feels after this incident that he belongs...He can think only of Mildred’s image as a brute...The muscular strength which made him feel superior before, now only identifies him with animals, with the body itself, not with the power that body can produce.”¹¹

The protagonist’s identification with a beast appears already when he starts questioning himself after the incident: “Hairy Ape, huh? Sure! Dat’s de way she looked at me, aw right. Hairy Ape! So dat’s me, huh?”¹² Though these words are said to Paddy, we feel that Yank is rather addressing himself. The fact of asking himself whether he can really be an ape as Mildred called him is a proof that the

¹⁰ Karen Horney. Op. cit., pp. 136-7.

¹¹ Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., p. 30.

¹² Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. IV, p. 376.

stoker has started considering himself as such. However, the more the protagonist questions himself the more he identifies with an ape because he has unconsciously accepted to evaluate himself according to Mildred's opinion about him. Yank's self-contempt culminates in his complete surrender to Mildred's projected image of him as a "beast" when he tries to shake hands with the gorilla.

Yank's change of self-conception after Mildred's insult can well be explained in the light of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy of Existentialism. In **L'Être et le Néant**, the philosopher distinguishes between two types of being: Being-in-itself (En-Soi) and Being-for-itself (Pour-Soi, consciousness or cogito). The former is associated with the world of objects, and it emerges with the Pour-Soi. The latter is the free subject which creates its existence, and it is the human being. According to Sartre, man will never become his En-Soi, but he is only striving to. This is what constitutes human freedom in the sense that man is never a fixed object but he is always being realised.

However, man's freedom is violated as soon as he comes into contact with another man: the other. In Sartre's view, the latter is the constitutive of the fundamental inter-human relationships. The philosopher explains that "being seen constitutes me as a being without any defence against a liberty which is not my liberty. In this sense we may consider ourselves as slaves in so far as we

appear to the other.”¹³ In other words, the other’s glance transforms the Being-for-self (Pour-Soi), which is the creation of my own liberty, into a Being-for-others which is constituted according to the other’s liberty. This is exactly what happens to Yank. Indeed, at Mildred’s glance, the protagonist’s strength, which had associated him with a divine stoker (Pour-Soi), reduces him now to a body: an ape (Being-for-others).

According to Sartre, there are two fundamental reactions to the other’s glance.

Herbert Marcuse explains that there is either an:

attempt, on the part of the Ego, to deny the liberty and mastery of the other and to make him into an objective thing, totally dependent on the Ego; or...to assimilate his liberty, to accept it as the foundation of the Ego’s own liberty and thereby to regain the free Ego. The first attitude leads to sadism, the second to masochism.¹⁴

Yank falls in the second type of reactions. Indeed, the stoker has not returned Mildred’s glance. Instead, he has surrendered to the image of the ape which is the creation of Mildred’s free Ego. In so doing, Yank directs self-torture towards his actual self which is another by-product of self-hate.

However, self-torture can also manifest itself in an indirect way. Horney argues that the neurotic may develop sadistic actions toward people but these

¹³ Jean-Paul Sartre quoted in Herbert Marcuse. “**Existentialism: Remarks on Jean Paul Sartre’s L’Etre et le Néant.**” **Philosophy and phenomenological Research.** 3(1948), p. 318.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 317.

actions “may originate in sadistic impulses against himself.”¹⁵In other words, the neurotic hates himself through others, and thus tortures them to torture himself.

Indirect self-torture is manifest in **The Emperor Jones**. In fact, by torturing the natives Jones is indirectly torturing himself. His pretence to be invulnerable to anything but a silver bullet is a trick to reign over the people of the West Indies, but at the same time it is also a way to torture them. No doubt, until the day when they succeed in making a silver bullet themselves, the natives have been subjected to a double torture. Indeed, they have been tortured by the emperor’s unfair practices against them as well as the idea of being unable to protest against his tyranny given the fact that he is an invulnerable ruler. Because he hates the black man he actually is, the emperor tortures the black natives to torture himself.

In addition to all the forms that we have discussed so far, self-hate may culminate in direct self-destructive impulses and actions. The latter may be directed against the body. Horney summarizes them as follows:

In neurosis we find minor self destructive activities, which mostly pass as bad habits - such as nail biting, scratching, picking at rashes.... But there are also sudden impulses of stark violence...a sudden penetrating vision of some imperfection, flaring up and passing quickly, is followed just as abruptly by a violent impulse to tear out one’s eyes, to slash one’s throat.... This type may also have at times suicidal impulses.¹⁶

¹⁵ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 148-9.

Yank's getting into the gorilla cage may be the result of self-destructive drives. In fact, after being named "filthy beast" by Mildred, Yank can no longer consider himself a worthy being. All his attempts to regain a sense of dignity only prove his being an ape. Desperate, the protagonist is moved by an intense desire to crush down the ape with which he identifies now. This leads him to a suicide attempt by penetrating into the gorilla cage and fighting with the ape which crushes him to death. Yank's words: "He got me, aw right, I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged,"¹⁷ reveal how much his self-esteem is low once in the cage. His hate for his actual self at this moment is so great that his evaluation of himself is made according to an ape.

Added to the destructive impulses which are directed against the body, are those directed against other values of life. Horney argues that the neurotic, to crush down his self that he hates, will unconsciously ruin any value that may help his self prosper. The psychoanalyst explains that hate is shown for instance "when [the neurotic] loses or quits one job after another, or if one relationship after another goes on the rock...he often drives the employer or friend to the point where he or she really can no longer put up with him,"¹⁸ and thus turns against him.

This second type of self-destructive actions is noticed in Jones's behaviour. In

¹⁷ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. VIII, p. 395.

¹⁸ Karen Horney. Op. cit., p. 151.

fact, with less tyranny the emperor could have reigned over the natives for a longer period of time. But as a neurotic person, Jones could not have helped his self-destructive actions. The protagonist has gone so far in his exploitation of the natives and has unconsciously driven them to a point where they can no longer bear him. Indeed, the emperor has developed oppressive relationships with the common natives and even with his court who dare talk or drink rum only down town where they take refuge when Jones is asleep. When Smithers asks the emperor where the court have gone, he answers: “where dey mostly runs to minute I closes my eyes - drinkin’ rum and talkin’ big down in de town.”¹⁹ By ruining his relationships with his surrounding, Jones has anticipated his own ruin. Indeed, as soon as the natives make a silver bullet themselves they rebel against him and shoot him dead.

In all its forms of expression and in conflict with neurotic pride, self-hate will result in completely alienated characters. In fact, if in their fantasy worlds Jones and Yank are God-like figures which their neurotic pride tries to assert, in the real world they remain the black escapee and unworthy stoker respectively. Therefore, the two characters feel as their glorified selves but also as their actual selves that they hate. These mixed feelings will make them uncertain about their identity and prevent them from being their real selves which desperately try to emerge.

¹⁹ Eugene O’Neill. The Emperor Jones. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 269.

Section 4

The Expansive Solution

And

Jones's and Yank's Tragedies

Neurotic pride together with self-hate exert a destructive power on Jones and Yank who lose their feelings of identity. In an attempt to recover a sense of wholeness the two characters opt for what Horney calls “the expansive solution.”

1- From Triumph to Downfall

Horney argues that the neurotic, to relieve tension, may identify with:

his glorified self. When speaking of himself he means...his very grandiose self... The appeal of life lies in its mastery. It chiefly entails his determination, conscious or unconscious, to overcome every obstacle in or outside himself - and the belief that he should be able, and in fact is able to do so.¹

In other words, Jones and Yank go beyond trying to measure up to God-like figures to considering themselves as such. They are nearly like psychotic persons in that they turn almost completely away from reality. Indeed, when the plays open, Jones appears as the invulnerable white-like emperor and Yank as the energy (steel) that makes the world move. However, the characters' complete identification with their idealised selves is only a pseudo-solution which is going to anticipate their downfall as we are going to see.

By identifying with the image of the invulnerable white-like emperor, Jones goes beyond the will to appease his internal conflict to the desire to triumph

¹ Karen Horney. Op. cit., pp.191-2.

vindictively. He falls into the category of the arrogant vindictive neurotic persons - a subtype of the expansive type. Horney argues that the neurotic vindictive “is identified with his pride. His main motivating force in life is his need for vindictive triumph.”² Of course, vindictiveness is common to all neurotic persons but in this category it is intensive.

Jones’s vindictiveness is shown in his desire to humiliate the natives and boast of his superiority as if to show them how much he has been wronged and misjudged in the United States. Only in so doing, it seems, can he gain self-confidence. The protagonist’s identification with his unhealthy pride will move him to the extreme of his fantasy world (the unconscious) and thus make his downfall inevitable. Falk stresses this point: “Jones has...given the natives the real key to his destruction - the self and its pride.”³

Yank too is a vindictive neurotic. His vindictiveness is mainly manifested in his violent rages. Horney argues that “when seized by vindictive wrath, they [vindictive neurotics] may indeed jeopardize their lives, their security, their jobs, their social positions.”⁴ This is apparent after being insulted by Mildred. Indeed, the protagonist’s impulse for revenge is so strong that he does not think of consequences. His intense desire to humiliate Mildred and restore his image of the divine stoker leads him to affront the people of Fifth Avenue (the people of

² Karen Horney. *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

³ Doris V. Falk. *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁴ Karen Horney. *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

Mildred's class) and causes his arrest by the police.

However, the characters' identification with their unhealthy pride is only a pseudo- solution which allows them to triumph momentarily and offers them apparent safety. The inability of Jones and Yank to feel secure and self-confident can be explained by the fact that the two characters, though almost like psychotic persons, still cannot totally ignore their actual selves which are the main cause that makes them feel unworthy and unsafe. In other words, however far unhealthy pride may drive Jones and Yank into the unconscious, they never really lose sight of the conscious.

Contact between the conscious (reality) and unconscious (illusion) anticipates the characters' downfall. In fact, when the natives succeed in making a silver bullet and thus shatter the myth about Jones's invulnerability; and when Mildred calls the stoker a "beast" the two characters will gradually descend from their high positions of God-like figures to the lowest level of existence. In other words, the protagonists return to their despised actual selves from which they drew away. Their gradual downfall is displayed by the circle-like form of the plot – an expressionistic technique that will be studied in detail in the last chapter of our research.

Failing to escape from reality, Jones makes a desperate attempt to end his internal conflict which has become unbearable. However, this time the protagonist, in order to ease tension, does not try to assert his image of the divine

white-like emperor as he did before but rather attempts to destroy this image. In fact, Jones seems to realise that his unhealthy pride is the main cause of his downfall. When he fires the last bullet at the crocodile, the hero has in fact fired at his glorified self which is the product of his destructive neurotic pride. This point is emphasised by Falk: “the evil represented by the crocodile is the evil of the self...in killing it Jones has killed himself...that distorted image of the self”⁵ in which he has invested his pride.

It is worth noticing, however, that if Jones has returned to his actual self he has not succeeded in reaching self-realisation. Indeed, the protagonist will never know his real self because he has not grown spontaneously into what he wants to become but has forcibly developed into what he thinks he should be. In fact, under different circumstances, Jones may not have wished to become a divine white-like emperor. However, absence of warmth in his life has killed his genuine feelings and made of him a being whose main motive in life is getting safety. Therefore, Jones identifies with an invulnerable white-like emperor, thinking that the white colour and the status of an emperor are the symbols of power which he should acquire if he wants to lift himself above others and gain self-assurance.

Like Jones, Yank identifies with his despised self to put an end to his intense internal conflict. Falk argues that:

⁵ Doris V. Falk. *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

Since he can belong neither to steel - the image of himself as a strong productive power - nor to 'de woild' - society, his last resort is to withdraw behind the barrier and surrender to the only self-image with which he thinks he can become integrated, that of the ape.... When Yank falls to the floor of the cage he is finally integrated with the image of himself as the hairy ape.⁶

Like in The Emperor Jones, the protagonist's last movement in The Hairy Ape, is falling down on the ground. Yank's physical downfall symbolises his tumbling short from his glorified self as steel which is a product of his unhealthy pride to the image of an animal. The steel cage in which the stoker is crushed down by the gorilla symbolises his identification with a beast but also stands for his unhealthy pride which has imprisoned him in his world of fantasy and caused his destruction.

Yank's surrender to the image of the ape does not provide him with a sense of belonging. Indeed, the protagonist dies still wondering where he belongs as his last words suggest: "Christ, where do I get off at? Where do I fit in?"⁷ Therefore, like Jones, Yank will never know his real self, because like the former he has developed into what he thinks he should be. Being marginalised, Yank becomes obsessed with only one need, that of acquiring a status which allows him to triumph and gain safety. Thus, the protagonist identifies with his physical strength thinking that it is the means that will allow him to reach a high status. In so doing, Yank has trodden over his genuine feelings and thoughts which, if given a chance to be freely expressed, would have allowed him to reach self-

⁶ Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., pp. 32-3.

⁷ Eugene O'Neill. The Hairy Ape. Op. cit., Sc. VIII, p. 395.

realisation and find his real self.

2- Heroism in The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape.

Throughout our analysis, we have noticed that Jones's and Yank's tragedies are caused by the return of the unconscious in the form of neurosis. More precisely, their destruction is the result of their unhealthy pride which drives them too far into the unconscious world (where they momentarily experience themselves as God-like figures) and which forcibly causes their downfall when they are confronted with the conscious world and their masks tumble. Therefore, the reason behind the characters' tragedies is to be found within themselves and not in a force outside. This has led many critics, like Szeliski as we saw in the first chapter, to consider Jones and Yank and O'Neill's characters in general as pessimistic because by definition they are bound to fall. Thus the tragic action is meaningless since it is not an outcome of a heroic struggle but rather an expected destiny of passive characters.

Nonetheless, the tragic action in both **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** is not without meaning if considered from Nietzsche's point of view by which O'Neill has been much influenced. In the light of Nietzsche's theory:

The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of "aim," the concept of "unity," or the concept of "truth." Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking: the character of existence is not "true," is false.

The philosopher carries on by assuming that “we have measured the value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world.” which is man’s invention. Therefore, “Once we have devaluated these three categories (aim, unity and truth), the demonstration that they cannot be applied to the universe is no longer any reason for devaluating the universe.”⁸ The only thing that gives value to the universe in Nietzsche’s view is the will to power: “Do you want a name for this world? A solution for all its riddles?This world is the will to power and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power and nothing besides.”⁹

Therefore, in the light of Nietzsche’s theory, Jones’s and Yank’s tragedies are meaningful. In fact, as we saw earlier when we studied the Dionysian and Apollonian concepts, Jones’s and Yank’s downfall expresses the destruction of the Apollonian state, i.e. the images of the invulnerable white-like emperor and divine stoker that Jones and Yank have projected of themselves respectively. However, the Dionysian state, i.e. the unconscious will which is the origin of these images remains imperishable. This being said, it does no longer matter which images Jones and Yank have projected of themselves because their destruction expresses the manifestation of the will through which Jones and Yank

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche. “**European Nihilism.**” Book I. **The Will to Power: An Attempt at Revaluation of All Values.** (1883-1888). Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J Hollingdale. New York: Rondon House, 1967 Jan 1st 2002. Aug 18th 2008.<[http:// www. Nietzsche. hltof. com/ Nietzsche_the_will_to_power/index.htm](http://www.Nietzsche.hltof.com/Nietzsche_the_will_to_power/index.htm)>

⁹ Ibid., “**Discipline and Breeding.**” Book IV.

affirm their existence. It is their will and only their will that gives “meaning” to their lives which are otherwise meaningless.

O’Neill’s own view on the tragic action reflects his great influence by the philosopher. Falk argues that:

While in O’Neill’s view the struggle to exist among the masks [the image that a character projects of himself] may be soul destroying, the projection of the masks is life giving; for it is toward one self-image or another that we move. The self unrelated to itself, that is, without an image toward which to move, cannot progress in any direction. Therefore, according to O’Neill, we must, for life’s sake, project a self-image.¹⁰

From what has been said, we notice that in O’Neill’s view point Jones and Yank are not to be regarded as passive characters. On the contrary, if their attempts to project God-like images of themselves have caused their destruction, it has shown their great will not only to survive but to assert their existence.

The meaning of the tragic action in Nietzsche’s view is well understood when we take into consideration the context of the 1920s when both plays were produced. Indeed, though WWI allowed America to have a prosperous economy, it plunged the country in a deep disillusionment and anxiety. The latter were reflected in the decline of old American values. Indeed, “the social and psychological conditions of the period separating the First and Second World

¹⁰ Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., p. 37.

Wars were not favourable to a balanced analysis of the American character”¹¹ which saw a significant change embodied in the new American lifestyle. Actually, the twenties were a time of high urbanisation, new infrastructure, cinema, radio, jazz and automobile. Mass production and technological prowess turned America into a highly materialistic society where no room was left for spirituality. The war also “introduced a decade of general scepticism”¹² which contributed into creating feelings of anxiety. Scepticism originated from the numerous contradictions that surfaced across the nation. Indeed, though the 1920s were the years of the Harlem Renaissance, membership in the Ku Klux Klan increased dramatically. Also, women who won the right to vote were at the same time encouraged to withdraw from political activities. Moreover, despite economical prosperity, the workers, especially unskilled ones, were highly exploited. In addition, in a land of freedom and democracy we saw a great intolerance towards immigrants and whatever was foreign. This culminated in the Red Scare which spread suspicion even among the members of the same family. All these factors made of the American an anxious and disillusioned being. Therefore, a projection of an illusory image of himself was a necessity to escape the bitter reality and give a meaning to his life.

What is worth noticing is the fact that Horney’s view on the neurotic’s destructive struggle reminds us of the playwright’s conception of the struggle of

¹¹ Luther S. Luedtke. “The Search for American Character” in **Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States**. Op. cit., p. 13.

¹² Id.

the tragic hero that he tries to portray in his plays. Indeed, the psychoanalyst considers that, though destructive, the expansive solution “gives meaning to their [neurotic persons] lives and gives them a certain zest of living.”¹³ The correspondence between the playwright’s and the psychoanalyst’s views is an important point to consider. Actually, added to the fact that Jones’s and Yank’s tragedies can be traced back to unhealthy pride as we have tried to demonstrate throughout our analysis, the fact that Horney and O’Neill share the same vision with regard to the meaning of the neurotic’s and the hero’s downfall respectively is further evidence that Yank and Jones can be regarded as tragic heroes in the light of Horney’s theory.

¹³ Karen Horney. *Op. cit.*, p. 212.

Chapter III

The Relationship Between

O'Neill's Autobiography

And his

Characters' Neurotic Conflict

And the Use of Expressionism

To Express this Conflict

This last Chapter is divided into two sections. The first attempts to investigate whether there is any relationship between O'Neill's personal experience and his work. In other words, does O'Neill's interest in depicting characters that can be studied in the light of Horney's theory of neurotic pride spring from the fact that the playwright himself was victim of neurosis? The second tries to study how O'Neill's use of expressionism as the main aesthetic aspect in the two plays helps unfold Jones's and Yank's neurotic conflict and perhaps also his own inner conflict.

Section 1

Jones and Yank

Creations of a Neurotic Mind

The study of an author's life to explain his work was already an established mode in the 19th century when pre-Freudian psychologists tried to relate genius to madness. Indeed, the artistic products of a number of artists of the like of Nietzsche and Baudelaire were labelled as creations of their decadence. The tendency to relate an artistic creation to the artist's madness caused pre-Freudian psychoanalysts to become more concerned with the artist's pathology which led to what come to be called pathography.¹

The attitude towards pathological studies changed under Freud's influence. Indeed, "rather than being bent on validating a particular pathology... [Freud] wished to throw light on the psychoanalytic process,"² and its functioning. This shift of interest is now reflected in the term psychobiography. According to Freud the latter enables us to have insights into the artist's hidden motives that have created his genius.

A classical example of psycho-biographical studies is Marie Bonaparte's study of Edgar Allan Poe. Freud considers that her study enables us to:

¹ Pathography is the "study of the artist not for the sake of the work or even the man, but for the purpose of classifying a particular pathology." See Elizabeth Wright. *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

understand how much of the characteristics of his work were determined by their author's special nature; but [it also allows us to] ... learn that this was itself the precipitate of powerful emotional ties and painful experiences in his early youth. Investigations of this kind...show what motive forces aroused [the artist's genius] ...and what material was to him by destiny.³

Therefore, Bonaparte's interest is not in Poe's pathology per se, but rather in what might have caused this pathology; and how the manifestation of the latter contributed to creating Poe's talent as a gothic writer.

A psycho-biographical study suits the theme of our research work. In fact, if we can demonstrate, at least to some extent, the hypothesis that O'Neill has experienced a neurotic conflict there will be further evidence that the characters Jones and Yank can really be regarded as neurotic persons in which the playwright has projected his own conflict. To verify this hypothesis, we attempt in this section to study first the dramatist's past and see whether he was subject to loneliness or disturbance which are, in Horney's view, the central cause of neurosis. Second it is imperative to find evidence that lack of affection and stability in O'Neill's life has caused him to experience neurosis.

O'Neill seems to have been prepared for a restless life from birth. Leech considers that the playwright "had been born in a New York hotel...and there was never to be a stability of background in his life"⁴ from then on.

³ Freud quoted in Elizabeth Wright. Op. cit., p. 35.

⁴ Clifford Leech. **O'Neill**, Op. cit., p.7.

Leech's statement is corroborated by a series of successive events that affected the playwright. Actually, after several years of restless life spent in hotels, O'Neill was going to spend the rest of his childhood moving from one Catholic school to another. One of his earliest terrors came when he was sent off,

at age seven, to the sisters of charity; to St Aloysius where he experienced intense feelings of estrangement. These terrifying memories of being estranged and abandoned are reported later by his wife Carlotta Monterey: “He talked of his pain each fall...where he suffered from the frustration of childhood; this was the experience of which he talked with the greatest bitterness - never forgetting the shock to his love for his parents and his trust in them when they banished him to school”⁵ and left him alone - at least this was how it appeared to O’Neill at his very young age.

It is worth noticing, however, that even during the short time O’Neill spent with his family he was subject to the same feelings of loneliness that he experienced away from home. His mother Ella, a drug addict, rather than giving her son love and attention, caused him to feel rejected and unworthy. Wilson argues that “After knowing that her [Ella’s] addiction began as a consequence of his birth [morphine administered to ease Ella’s pain] he would forever be haunted by ... [the] guilt.”⁶ of having caused his mother pain by the very fact of being born.

⁵ Edward L Shaughnessy. **Down the Nights and Down the Days: Eugene O’Neill’s Catholic Sensibility.** Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2000, pp. 18-9.

⁶ Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit, p. 218.

O’Neill’s father James offered his son no more security than his wife did. James, always haunted by the fear of poverty, provided his family with only a cheap, second rate living. His haunting fear filled his wife and children with disgust and caused them to live under continuous stress. Eugene’s disgust at his

father's stinginess is pointed out in the playwright's autobiographical play **Long Day's Journey into Night**. For instance, Edmund's words: "One bulb! Christ, don't be such a cheap stake! I've proved by figures if you left the light bulb on all night it wouldn't be as much as one drink,"⁷ echo Eugene's own disgust and frustration.

Stress and lack of affection in O'Neill's childhood is not reflected in **The Emperor Jones** where we are not provided with details about the protagonist's infancy. However Yank's short memories about his childhood recall the playwright's relationship with his parents when he was a little boy, though not in the same details because **The Hairy Ape** is not an autobiographical play. Indeed, both O'Neill and his character Yank felt rejected and abandoned by their parents who did not provide them with a loving harmonious atmosphere.

The feelings of estrangement that O'Neill experienced at the different schools he attended were apparently intensified by the paradox between the promises of the schools and his personal experience in real life. In fact, "religion asked and

⁷ Eugene O'Neill. **Long Day's Journey into Night**. London: Jonathan Cape LTD, 1956, Act. IV, p.109.

promised love. Still he felt betrayed. Slowly he began to lose confidence in the promise"⁸ and became confused.

The playwright's sceptical feelings about religion are reflected in both **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**. Indeed, Jones's resignation from the Baptist Church in the U.S. and travel to the West Indies to gather wealth; and Yank's despise for Long's talk about equality of rights in Christianity echo O'Neill's own disbelief in the efficiency of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In his adulthood, O'Neill was going to be affected by the same loneliness and restlessness he had experienced while he was a child. His married life was characterised by painful successive separations. Wilson reports that:

when he was twenty-one, he eloped with a girl named Kathleen Jenkins but left her soon afterward.... O'Neill's next wife was Agnes Bolton whom he met in 1917 and married in 1918.... In the mid 1920s O'Neill...met the actress Carlotta Monterey and fell in love with her.... In 1929 the playwright divorced his second wife and married Carlotta...their marriage was a tempestuous one, filled with bitter fights, separations and reconcilations.⁹

It might not be fortuitous that neither Jones nor Yank is married. In fact, though an emperor, Jones remains single. Similarly, Yank seems to have no company other than his stoke mates and no home other than the stokehole. In fact, Yank's referring to the liner as a person, a woman in particular, in scene III

⁸Edward L. Shaughnessy. Op. cit., p.18.

⁹Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit., p. 218.

for instance, when he says "Let her ride!.... Call de toin on her! Drive her into it! Feel her move!.... Speed, dat's her middle name! Give her coal, youse guys! Coal, dat's her booze! Drink it up, baby!"¹⁰ suggests that the stokehole

represents more than home for Yank. It also stands for the woman he could not have had given his restless life as a seaman. This can be traced back to the fact that the playwright, who has not lived a harmonious married life himself, could not have reflected it in his characters from whom he cannot remain detached.

Added to emotional restlessness is O'Neill's feeling of estrangement that he experienced as a seaman. The years spent at sea on a sailing ship seem to have engendered an insufferable distress to the extent that O'Neill attempted suicide. This is pointed out by Wilson: "Eugene...during his years as a sailor became a hard drinker. After one trip from Buenos Aires to New York, he tried to commit suicide by taking sleeping pills,"¹¹ to put end to his feelings of loneliness.

Life at sea is reflected in **The Hairy Ape**. Indeed, through the character Yank we sense the playwright's own feelings of loneliness and distress that he experienced as a sailor. Like O'Neill, Yank who did not receive love and affection at home when he was a child will be subject to more loneliness on a sailing ship. Feelings of estrangement are so intense that the stoker cannot and does not even come to know what home is: "Home? Home, hell! I'll make a

¹⁰ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. III, p. 371.

¹¹ Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit., p. 218.

home for yuh! I'll knock yuh dead. Home! T'hell wit home! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Dis is home, see. What d'yuh want wit home?"¹²

Another point to consider when studying O'Neill's autobiography is his Irish origins. In fact, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, Irish people were considered to be an inferior race. David Roediger points out that in the U.S. there was a census bureau which "collected statistics on ...native and foreign populations, but kept the Irish distinct from even the latter group."¹³ John Szwed adds that the Irish were depicted in the same way as the blacks on stage. In fact, "before the Negro was mimicked on stage, the Irish man had served the same purpose,"¹⁴ because the Irish were believed to have descended from the blacks.

As an Irish man, O'Neill has been subjected to racial discrimination. Although Irish-Americans could assimilate into white America with greater ease than the African-Americans, racial prejudice against the Irish immigrants never really disappeared. This caused O'Neill to live as a stranger in the United States. In **Long Day's Journey into Night**, Edmund expresses the playwright's inability to feel at home: "I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does

¹² Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 361.

¹³ David Roediger. **The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class**. New York: Verso Press, 1991, p. 129.

¹⁴ John Szwed quoted in Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., pp. 129-30.

not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong."¹⁵ O'Neill's

feelings of estrangement are expressed in an indirect way through other characters such as Jones. This is emphasised by Shannon Steen. Indeed, Walker considers that: “Shannon Steen has...argued that Jones’s blackness functions as a cipher for O’Neill’s own feelings of social marginalisation.... She theorises that it [Jones’s blackness] provided O’Neill ‘a pleasurable distance’ from which to experience his melancholy loss of social acceptance”¹⁶ in the United States.

From what has been said, it becomes clear that O’Neill has experienced instability and lack of affection in life which he has consciously or unconsciously reflected in his characters Jones and Yank. Therefore, what remains to be verified now is the hypothesis that lack of warmth may have caused O’Neill to fall victim to neurotic pride like his characters.

In fact, “in 1912 it was discovered that he [O’Neill] had tuberculosis. The next several months, spent in a sanatorium, were another crucial period in his life because that gave him time to get well, to decide that playwrighting was to be his life’s work, and to struggle with his doubts and fears”¹⁷ in order to achieve the status of a famous dramatist.

¹⁵ Eugene O’Neill. **Long Day’s Journey into Night** .Op. cit., Act. IV, p. 135.

¹⁶ Shannon Steen paraphrased and quoted in Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 130.

¹⁷ Garff B. Wilson. Op. cit., p. 218.

The quotation above implies that it was at the most desperate moment of his life, i.e. when he was in the sanatorium, and did not know whether he would live or pass away, that O'Neill projected an idealised image of himself; and decided to become a serious playwright. Leech goes along with Wilson and argues that:

Certainly that time [1912] in his life must have been vivid to him for two reasons: it was an image of chaos, the chaos that he felt life 'underneath' always was only preciously disguised by the decorum of social living, it was the life he turned his back on when he truly became a writer...in becoming a professional writer...he put a barrier between himself and the men of the sea and the beach.¹⁸

Leech's words echo Horney's concept of neurotic conflict. Actually, the critic points out that O'Neill, under stress, moved away from himself (the sick, restless and alienated O'Neill: his despised self) and became obsessed with the idea of moulding himself into a professional writer or playwright (his idealised self).

O'Neill does not only mould himself into a famous playwright but, like his characters Jones and Yank, will put much pride into his new status:

What happened...was that O'Neill became a victim of his own success. Having won a Pulitzer Prize for **Beyond the Horizon** the year before [1921] and moved **The Emperor Jones** to Broadway earlier in the year, O'Neill found himself in hot demand, with two plays in production at two different theatres.... **Anna Christie** (1920; 1921) ...was, for the most part, well received, it would go on to earn him a second Pulitzer Prize. Given these recent and soon to be triumphs, O'Neill has every reason to take pride in his accomplishment and further pursue his professional ambitions.¹⁹

¹⁸ Clifford Leech. **O'Neill**. Op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁹ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 138.

However, O'Neill's identification with his pride does not seem to provide him with safety. This might be due to the fact that the playwright invested his pride not into the being he wanted to become (real self) but rather into the being he thought he should be (idealised self). Actually, the process of making himself a famous dramatist might not have been spontaneous. It might have come as a reaction to marginalisation and lack of warmth experienced in life.

What adds to the playwright's restlessness and confusion about his identity is the fact that his idealised self rests most and foremost upon his success in dramatic theatre which is new and thus an uncertain literary genre compared to prose and poetry. Walker argues that "the genre's uncertain literary status was a source of great anxiety.... [Thus] he [O'Neill] may have felt he did not belong"²⁰ and consequently he could not experience safety.

O'Neill's inability to experience a real sense of belonging is displayed by the relationship between Yank and Paddy in **The Hairy Ape**. Actually, Yank's identification with his status as a stoker in the modern age on one hand and contempt for the status of the old sailor that Paddy remembers nostalgically and tries to celebrate on the other echo O'Neill's fears of losing his status as a playwright of which he is too proud as his father lost his own. This is emphasised by Walker: "Yank not only disparages the life that Paddy yearns for, but revels in having rendered it obsolete. Thus, if O'Neill were revelling in his own theatrical

²⁰ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 144.

success, if he were celebrating the death of his father's theatre, he also might have feared that, in identifying too loosely with theatre himself he, too, would someday be rendered obsolete,"²¹ and would lose his status as a famous dramatist which offered him apparent feelings of belonging.

O'Neill's intense fear to fall short of being a famous playwright and thus lose his sense of belonging culminates in the downfall of the characters he presents in his plays. In fact, it is hardly accidental that most of the playwright's plays are tragedies and most of these tragedies are tragedies of pride as Falk points out: "The greatest heroes and heroines of O'Neill's plays belong to literary tradition of the fall through pride."²² His interest in this kind of tragedy may stem from his worry that his pride with which he apparently identified and which allowed him to experience an illusory sense of belonging would cause his destruction when reality treated him differently. Therefore, it is possible to consider, at least to some extent, Jones's failure to maintain his status of the invulnerable white-like emperor and Yank's loss of his sense of belonging as tragic images which reflect O'Neill's worries that he has projected in his characters.

²¹ Julia A. Walker. *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

²² Doris V. Falk. *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

Section 2

Expressionistic Devices

In

The Emperor Jones

And

The Hairy Ape

To end up our dissertation, we suggest a last section which attempts to explore the aesthetic aspect in both **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**. This will reinforce the basic theme of our research. Indeed, the conflict between conscious and unconscious in both plays can be better understood when we study the expressionistic elements that O'Neill has skilfully used.

The choice of Expressionism among other aesthetic devices to be the focus of the present section is not haphazard. Indeed, the first reason for our choice can be linked to the first question of the problematic of our research work. In fact, as a reaction against Naturalism, which reported the world in a photographic manner, Expressionism came to uncover the inner reality behind this photographic image. Kasimir Edschmid in "**On Literary Expressionism**" states that:

No one doubts that what appears to us as external reality cannot be what is genuine. Reality has to be created by us.... The commonly believed, imagined, noted fact must not be taken for granted.... That, however, is only within us. Thus the entire space of the Expressionist artist becomes a vision. External facts only have significance in so far as the hand of the artist reaches through them to grasp what stands behind them.¹

From the definition above, we notice that inner truth is really what Expressionism seeks to uncover. This is made clearer when we consider

¹ Kasimir Edschmid quoted in Ernst Schurer. "**Provocation and Proclamation, Vision and Imagery: Expressionist Drama between German Idealism and Modernity.**" **A Companion to the Literature of German Expressionism**. Ed. Neil H. Donahue. New York: Camden House, 2005, p. 245.

Nietzsche's contribution. In fact, Expressionism exhibits a hybrid character that is similar to that of Nietzsche's aesthetic theory in **The Birth of Tragedy**.

Indeed, Expressionism as a literary art presents both Dionysian and Apollonian principles in that it seeks to bring into light the horror of the trans-phenomenal world that justifies the existence of the physical world of appearances. The inner world in Expressionism is displayed as "a world violently distorted."² In the light of Nietzsche's theory, this is explained by the fact that the Dionysian truth that Expressionism tries to uncover is the direct representation of the will. Therefore, as the latter echoes emotions which do not respond to the order of logic, it can only be represented in a distorted and seemingly illogical way. This being said, the choice of Expressionism among other aesthetic modes is justified as it will help uncover the hidden workings of neurotic pride in both Jones's and Yank's psyches.

The second reason for putting Expressionism into focus can be related to the second problematic of our research. As a matter of fact, from the same definition above, we notice that Expressionism expresses the artist's vision of the world. This means that, in addition to bringing into light the hidden truth behind the world of appearances, Expressionism also "express [s] the inner state of the artist."³ Therefore, Expressionism will not only unfold hidden realities about

² Chris Baldick. "Expressionism." **The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms**. 2nd Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 <<http://www.answers.com/topic/expressionism>.>

³ Russ McNeill. "Modern Art: From Impressionism to Expressionism."
<http://www.records.viu.ca/~mcneil/lec/modern_art.ppt>

Yank and Jones, but will also reveal inner truth about O'Neill. In other words, , Expressionism will allow as well to witness the neurotic conflict the playwright might have experienced and that he consciously or unconsciously reflected in his characters.

Lastly, it would be unfair to study O'Neill's plays, his early productions in particular, without considering the dramatist's genius use of expressionistic techniques. Actually, though Expressionism has its roots in Germany, it is agreed that "**The Hairy Ape**... [is] the exemplar of the American expressionism, the country's first modern drama."⁴ In other words, O'Neill is the playwright who introduced expressionism in American drama. More than this, the dramatist even stated that "**The Hairy Ape** is a direct descendent of **Jones** written long before I had ever heard of expressionsim."⁵ Therefore, credit should be given to the artist for his pioneering role in expressionism (at least in America), and expressionistic devices should not be neglected when studying his work.

For all these reasons, we believe that a close analysis of the main expressionistic techniques in **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** is necessary as it helps bring forth the hidden aspects of neurotic pride which have been studied earlier.

⁴Deanna M. Totem Beard. Op. cit., p. 53.

⁵Clifford Leech. **O'Neill**. Op. cit., p. 35.

1- Visual Effects

a- Setting

The setting which was no more than a decoration has become one of the most visual effects in theatre since the last half of the 19th century. Credit should be given to the European visual artists Adolph Appia (1862-1929) and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) whose theories fostered the New Stagecraft.⁶

Influenced by their theories, Robert Edmond Jones (1887-1954) began to pick up the trends of this New Stagecraft during the first half of the 20th century and introduced them in American drama. His definition of the setting echoes Appia's and Craig's idea that setting and other elements, the player in particular, should form an organic unity: "A stage setting has no independent life of its own. Its emphasis is directed towards the performance. In the absence of the actor it does not exist."⁷ Therefore, the setting is not a picture only but an image which is given meaning only when associated with the player as it allows the audience to have insight into the player's mood.

The setting in **The Emperor Jones** is fully expressionistic. In fact, the organic

⁶ The New Stagecraft is a movement which emerged in the second half of the 19th century. It "aimed at the harmonious synthesis of the setting, lighting, acting, etc. and it embraced a very wide range of stylistic techniques, including...expressionism. This New stagecraft...was primarily a visual movement." One of the assumptions of this movement is that "scenery no longer is considered as a decoration but rather it must perform a specific function. It needs to serve the play in an organic way." Dennis R. Henneman. "**Robert Edmund Jones Review.**" pp.1-2. <<http://www.unix1.cc.yosu.edu/~drhennem/rejones.pdf>>

⁷ Robert Edmond Jones. **The Dramatic Imagination.** New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941, pp. 69-70.

unity between Jones and the setting is quite remarkable: “The place is evidently situated on high ground.... The room is bare of furniture with the exception of one huge chair.”⁸ The remoteness of the setting suggests Jones’s marginalisation by the white community which has caused his feelings of anxiety. Moreover, the height of the place symbolises Jones’s glorified image as an invulnerable white-like emperor. If we combine the latter symbol with the emptiness of the chamber which stands for Jones’s insecurity, the setting reveals that Jones’s identification with the image of the divine emperor does not allow him to get rid of his feelings of insecurity. In addition to this, it is worth noticing that O’Neill opens his play by depicting the setting while the description of Jones comes only after. In the light of Horney’s theory, this can be explained by the fact that environment, which is symbolised by the setting, plays an important role in moulding Jones. In other words, Jones might not have existed as a neurotic individual if he had grown up in an atmosphere of warmth and love.

It might be for the same reasons that O’Neill opens **The Hairy Ape** by describing the stokehole and then introduces the character Yank. As in the preceding play, the setting is highly expressionistic: “The room is crowded with men.... 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.”⁹ The protagonist’s exclusion is not from a particular social group only but from

⁸ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 267.

⁹ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 358.

the human species as a whole. Yank's alienation expressed by the setting has created his feelings of anxiety and transformed him into a neurotic person whose urgent need is to identify himself with his illusory image as a divine stoker so as to overcome these feelings.

In scene III, the same setting displays the encounter between conscious and unconscious or reality and illusion. In fact, Mildred's penetration into the stokehole parallels Yank's violation of pride. Indeed, the woman's presence makes Yank conscious of the "real" world and challenges his illusory image of himself which he gets from the stokehole and which is the source of his pride:

When Mildred comes from the cool, fresh air of the first cabin...to the hot, murky atmosphere of the stokehole, and dressed in white, stands before the grimy workers, the contrast between the two worlds is impressive...so, for the first time Yank becomes conscious of the barrier between his world and the world to which Mildred belongs.... His view of the world and his perception of himself is attacked.¹⁰

Yank's illusory image as a God-like stoker that Mildred challenges is conveyed by the expressionistic setting of scene VI. Indeed, the prison of Black Well Island which is made of steel reveals how much the stoker is entrapped by his glorified steely self-conception. In the cell, Yank reflects upon his self-vision and opens his eyes on a new "reality" which is different from his. The protagonist "realises that steel does not belong anymore for now he is imprisoned

¹⁰ Mathias Sparr. "Expressionistic Elements in Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape and The Great God Brown." English's Seminar WS. Modern American Drama I. 1998/1999. Aug 2008, p.8. <<http://www.grim.com/en/fultext/anl/33html>>

by steel”¹¹ both physically and figuratively. In other words, Yank’s steely self-conception has not provided him with a sense of belonging as he thought but has rather imprisoned him in his imaginary world.

b- Masks

Another visual device in **The Emperor Jones** which displays the protagonist’s downfall is mask symbolism. In fact, O’Neill has shown a renewed interest in this ancient prop (which goes back to the Greek times) as a device to reveal man’s hidden conflict:

I hold more surely to the conviction that the use of masks will be discovered eventually to be the freest solution of the modern dramatist’s problem as to how – with the greatest possible dramatic clarity and economy of means – he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us.¹²

Though there is no explicit use of masks in the play, we still find a preoccupation with masking and unmasking through which the tension between Jones’s despised self and glorified self is revealed. Indeed, at the beginning of the play, Jones who is wearing “a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs etc.... Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs, and a belt with a long barrelled, pearl-handled revolver,”¹³ is in fact wearing a mask of a white emperor

¹¹ Mathias Sparr. Op. cit., p. 9.

¹² Eugene O’Neill. “Memoranda on Masks.” **Playwrights on Playwriting: The Meaning and Making of Modern Drama from Ibsen to Ionesco**. Ed. Toby Cole. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961, p. 65.

¹³ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 269.

(his glorified self). However, when the emperor enters into the forest an “exercise of unmasking,” to use O’Neill’s words, begins. Indeed, the more Jones penetrates into the jungle, the more he gets stripped off his clothes, which symbolise his glorified image, until he ends up “naked except for the fur of some small animal tied about his waist.”¹⁴ Jones’s nakedness at the end of the play symbolises his despised self which he has desperately tried to veil by wearing a mask of A God-like white emperor.

O’Neill makes a skilful use of masks in **The Hairy Ape** as well. However, in this play mask symbolism is more explicit. Indeed, Yank is described as having a “black smudge of coal dust...stick [ing] like make-up”¹⁵ around his eyes. The black make-up is like a mask that the stoker wears to prevent people from perceiving his despised self. By identifying with steel, Yank projects of himself an illusory image as a divine stoker which allows him to triumph temporarily and offers him apparent feelings of belonging. However, when he encounters Mildred who calls him an ape, the mask tumbles. Indeed, from then on Yank will identify with his despised self from which he has turned away. This is expressed by another visual element: the monkey fur. On Fifth Avenue, Yank looks at a monkey fur; and his face grows “pale with rage as if the skin in the window were a personal insult.”¹⁶ The sight of the fur hurts Yank’s neurotic pride, because the skin reminds him of the image of the beast that Mildred has projected of him and

¹⁴ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. VII, pp. 288-9.

¹⁵ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. V, p. 379.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 381.

to which he has surrendered.

c- Apparitions

Another important visual effect to consider in **The Emperor Jones** is the apparitions. Indeed, the different visions that Jones encounters during his journey reveal that the more the protagonist tries to flee from the black prison escapee he actually is and which makes him feel unworthy the more he becomes driven to it. Actually, as the hero proceeds, lost in the wilderness, he is confronted with one apparition after another; each of which can be regarded as a representation of an aspect of his actual self. The “Little Formless Fears” and the ghosts of Jeff and the guard he murdered in the U.S represent his guilt – the guilt of the murder he has committed but also the guilt of his pride. On the other hand, the slave auctioneer reveals the humiliation that the blacks (Jones included, being a member of the black community) suffered and which is the principal cause of Jones’s self-hate.

d- Colours

Jones’s downfall and return to the despised actual self is also displayed by the dichotomy between white and black colours. In fact, white is everywhere in the imperial place as the introducing stage direction makes clear: “The audience chamber in the palace of the Emperor – a spacious, high ceilinged room with bare, white-washed walls. The floor is of white tiles. In the rear, to the left of

centre, a wide archway giving out on a portico with white pillars.”¹⁷ The white colour suggests “Jones’[s] belief in the superiority of the white man” whose ways he adopts. In so doing, the emperor “attempts to intimidate his black subjects with the whiteness that actually intimidates him”¹⁸ and prevents him from considering the black man he actually is as a worthy being. On the other hand, the blackness of the jungle stands for the protagonist’s black colour of skin which is associated with inferiority. Therefore, Jones’s journey into the forest expresses his return to his despised actual self from which he has desperately tried to move away. Actually, the emperor’s failure to preserve his image as a white-like emperor is displayed by his inability to find the white stone that marks the place where he has buried his food: “White stone, white stone, where is you?”¹⁹ Hence, while the “whiteness he had earlier wanted to appropriate fails him...the blackness of the jungle engulfs him in a mortal embrace,”²⁰ and he thus returns to his despised self.

The use of colours in an expressionistic way is noticed in **The Hairy Ape** as well. Yank’s gradual downfall from his glorified image as a divine stoker to the image of an ape that Mildred has triggered becomes more certain in scene VII when the stoker visits the I.W.W. Indeed, “the fact that the building is massed

¹⁷ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 267.

¹⁸ Toshio Kimura quoted in Crame Manel “A Ghost in Expressionist Jungle of O’Neill’s **The Emperor Jones**.” **African American Review**. 2005. Jan 2009.
<http://www.Findarticles.com/p/articlesmi_m2838/is_1-2_39/ai_n15763301/pg_12 >

¹⁹ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. II, p. 279.

²⁰ Crame Manel. Op. cit.

in black shadow gives a hint of an unhappy ending,”²¹ and foreshadows Yank’s tragedy. Actually, the black shadow suggests that the stoker’s belief that the I.W.W will help him take revenge on Mildred and regain his status as a divine stoker is only an illusion. Indeed, right after being treated as a spy and rejected by the I.W.W, Yank goes to the zoo where he completely surrenders to the image of the ape by trying to shake hands with the gorilla that kills him.

2- Sound Devices

Sound devices in drama are an outcome of the mechanical age. In fact, a loud collision between aesthetics and technology resounded at the start of the 20th century in particular. Realism as an aesthetic form appeared exhausted and futile, incapable of explaining the disillusionment which followed WWI. Therefore, new forms of experimental expressions were necessary to develop in order to explain the inner reality behind the illusory appearances that Realism had tried to portray. These new forms were collectively referred to as modernism.

It was Walter Benjamin’s accomplishment to link modernism with modernity. In his celebrated essay “**The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,**” Benjamin argues that, with the advent of revolutionary means of production, photography in particular, art lost its aura as it became designed for reproducibility. Therefore, “the total function of art reversed. Instead of being

²¹ Mathias Sparr. Op. cit., p. 9.

based on ritual, it beg [an] to be based on another practice - politics.”²²

Influenced by Brecht’s ideas, Benjamin wanted to politicise modernism in that he assigned to the artist a task which goes beyond portraying reality to trying to alter that reality by shocking the audience.

Among the modernist techniques that should be used by the artists, dramatists in particular, to shock the audience are Expressionistic sound devices. The latter shock the spectator in that they provide revealing insight into the character’s psyche.

In **The Emperor Jones** the hero’s inner psychological conflict is emphasised by the beating of a tom-tom which echoes Jones’ heart pounding. Actually, the “heart pounding rhythm...places the audience directly inside Jones’s head. They, like Jones, experience the desolation of being both inside and outside his reality,”²³ and witness the conflict between his conscious and unconscious. In fact, the more Jones penetrates into the dark recesses of the forest, the faster the rhythm of the tom-tom is. The accelerating rhythm reveals Jones’s mounting fear when his unconscious is confronted with his conscious; and his image of himself as a divine emperor proves an illusion.

²² Walter Benjamin. “**The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.**” **Modernism/ Postmodernism**. Ed. Peter Brooker. New York: Longman Publishing, 1992, p. 47.

²³ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 132.

In **The Hairy Ape**, Yank's frustrated mind is displayed by the metallic sound effect. The mechanical sound is a reflection of the machinery of the 1920s that dehumanised modern man. Eusebio V. Lacer argues that:

up to scene 3 in H A, the metallic sounds suggest the stoker's feelings of belonging in the ship, of forming an inseparable unity with the engine.... In scene 4, Yank is no longer the leader of the group because the others feel, as he also does, that now he does not belong in the stokehole. The metallic sound has thus, turned against Yank: Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery Thinker the word has brazen metallic quality as if their throats where phonograph horns.²⁴

The mocking tone of the voice reveals the contempt with which Yank as a God-like stoker turns against Yank as an ape. When Yank is confronted with reality (or at least with a different reality) after Mildred's insult, his sense of belonging is shattered. Therefore, the metallic sound which expressed at the beginning of the play Yank's feelings of belonging to the ship now "bring [s] closer to us the feeling of alienation expressed by... [the] hero"²⁵ who becomes a "hollow" man – to quote from T.S Eliot.

3- Style of Acting:

Another expressionistic device that is worth considering when studying the neurotic conflict in the two plays is the style of acting. In **The Emperor Jones**, "almost all of Jones's visions appear in pantomime – the convicts working on the

²⁴ Eusebio V. Lacer. "O'Neill's **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**: The Alienation of the American Anti-Hero." **Journal of American Studies of Turkey**. Eusebio. 18 (2003), p. 37 <http://www.ake.ege.edu.tr/jast/number_18/eusebio.pdf>

²⁵ Tiusanen Timo. **O'Neill's Scenic Images**. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 12.

chain gang, the auctioneer soliciting bids from the bells and dandies at the slave auction, the captives rowing themselves to enforced servitude, the witch-doctor beckoning Jones to his sacrifice.”²⁶ Indeed, despite the fact that Jones speaks to the apparitions, they never answer back. O’Neill’s subordinating dialogue to gestures suggests Jones’s unspoken truth about his despised self. In fact, throughout his journey in the forest, the protagonist is so afraid to face the truth that he becomes deaf to any revelation that may shatter his illusory image as a divine white-like emperor and associate him with his despised self which he has desperately tried to ignore.

What should be pointed out when studying the pantomimic images is the fact that the movements are not natural but mechanical. Indeed, the words “rigid,” “automaton,” “mechanical” are recurrently used by O’Neill anytime he refers to his stage figures or describes their movements. What is more, Jones joins unwillingly in these mechanical movements. The protagonist’s compulsion to join in the movements “den [ies] him any sense of performative freedom,”²⁷ and reveals his inability to ignore his despised self to which he forcibly returns.

The mechanic-like movement is also noticed in **The Hairy Ape** in both the stokers and the capitalists. Indeed, in scene III, O’Neill describes the stokers as a

²⁶ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 133.

²⁷ Robert Conklin. “The Expressionism of the Character in O’Neill’s **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape**.” **West Virginia University Philological Papers**. 39 (1993), p. 104.

“line of men, stripped to the waist...looking neither to right nor left, handling their shovels as if they were part of their bodies, with a strange, awkward, swinging rhythm.”²⁸ In scene V, a similar description is used by the playwright when he refers to the people on Fifth Avenue: “The crowd from church enter from the right, sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to right nor left.”²⁹ In so doing, the dramatist universalises the theme of alienation and dehumanisation in the materialistic modern world where both groups are reduced to machines and fail to belong in man kingdom. To emphasise this point, O’Neill contrasts in the last scene the two groups to animals who are given human features. Ironically, the playwright points out that the animals look more human than the workers and the capitalists who become inanimate.

Yank’s alienation by identifying with steel is also pointed out by O’Neill’s ironical use of the Thinker’s pose. Indeed, “Yank is stunted in his ability to think. Thus modelled in soot if not in bronze, Yank’s pose is meant to inscribe him ironically as a material and sensuous being, an element of nature unable to ascend to a higher plane,”³⁰ and belong to mankind. The irony about the pose is better understood at the end of the play when the gorilla assumes the attitude of Rodin The Thinker.

²⁸ Eugene O’Neill. The Hairy Ape. Op. cit., Sc. III, p.370.

²⁹ Ibid., Sc. V, p. 381.

³⁰ Julia A. Walker. Op. cit., p. 147.

4- Plot

The plot in expressionist drama displays the hero's journey into the self (soul); and does not represent himself only but stands for humanity as a whole as J. M. Palmier³¹ puts it when he considers Strindberg's drama. The journey is hard as the hero struggles to assert his identity in a society which tries to shape him; and it has usually a circle-like form as it brings the hero back to the point of departure, showing his failure to preserve selfhood. In addition to being circular, the journey is short. This is displayed by the short scenes,³² in the play. The short duration of the play suggests that life is too short to allow man, represented by the hero, to reach integrity. Indeed, despite his efforts, death always strikes him before he reaches his purpose.

When considering the plot, we notice that it is closely related to the setting. Following the development of the events in **The Hairy Ape**, we notice that the plot has a circle-like form. This is expressed by the different cage-like settings in the play. Indeed, "the repeated image of the cage, with Yank as beast...

³¹ Palmier considers that : " le théâtre de Strindberg est avant tout l'histoire du développement d'une âme. Le drame expressionniste décrit aussi un itinéraire, un chemin de croix...c'est un chemin pénible, complexe Si le drame expressionniste est l'histoire d'un homme, cet homme, qui peut être n'importe qui, est le symbole de l'humanité. " (88-90). See Jean Michel Palmier. **L'Expressionisme et les Arts**. Tome 2. **Peinture – Théâtre – Cinéma**. Paris: Payot, 1980, pp, 88, 90.

³² Considering the short scenes Palmier argues that: " Cette structure du drame à stations se retrouve dans de nombreuses œuvres expressionnistes, en particulier dans **De L'Aube a Minuit** de Kaiser. Mais l'issue est l'échec : son héros ne parvient pas à transformer sa vie en l'espace d'une journée. Il en meurt." Ibid., p. 90.

dominates the rest of the play,”³³ and reveals that the protagonist has left the stokehole (described as a cage) only to find himself in prison and finally ends up in the Gorilla cage in the zoo. The circle-like form of the plot serves the purpose of rendering Yank’s gradual downfall and his identification with his despised self from which he has tried to move away.

The structure of **The Emperor Jones** is not different from that of **The Hairy Ape**. Indeed, Jones “realises he has returned to the clearing where he entered the forest; he is back where his journey began,”³⁴ after firing the fifth bullet. Like in **The Hairy Ape**, the circle-like form of the plot expresses Jones’s return to his despised self from which he has turned away. Actually, his words “what is - dis place? Seems like – seems like I know dat tree – an’ dem stones – an’de river. I remember – Seems like I been heah befo”³⁵ suggest his return to the place from which he has entered but also reveals his travel back to his actual self .

5- Nightmarish Atmosphere

The dominant atmosphere in expressionist plays is dream-like. The latter is well described in the preface to Strindberg’s **A Dream Play**:

The author has in A Dream Play attempted to reproduce the detached and disunited although apparently logical – form of dreams. Anything is apt to happen, anything seems possible and probable...imagination spins and weaves in new patterns: an

³³ Margeret Loftus Ronald. “**From Trial to Triumph (1913-1924): The Early Plays.**” Ed. Michael Manheim. Op. cit., p. 63.

³⁴ Doris V. Falk. Op. cit., p. 68.

³⁵ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones.** Op. cit., Sc. VII, p. 288.

intermingling of remembrances, experiences, wishes, fancies, ideas, fantastic absurdities and improvisations.³⁶

One of the theatrical patterns which contribute to creating a nightmarish atmosphere in **The Emperor Jones** is the beating of the tom-tom. What gives the latter a nightmarish quality is the fact that its rhythm corresponds to a “normal pulse beat”³⁷ which stands for Jones’s heart-beat. Therefore, throughout the play the emperor’s heart-beat is mixed up with the natives’ drum beating; and the audience cannot really make any distinction between fancy and reality. This allows the spectator to witness Jones’s experience as a neurotic person who lives in both the real and illusory worlds.

Sound effects in **The Hairy Ape** have the same nightmarish quality as in the preceding play. Throughout the play, Yank hears a whistle that his stoker mates do not. Therefore, the sound has no real existence but is an outcome of the protagonist’s imagination only. In scene III, just before Mildred calls him an ape, Yank shouts at the whistle as if the sound provided from a real person: “Toin off dat whistle! Come down outa dere, yuh yellow, brass-buttoned, Belfast bum, Yuh!”³⁸ The personification of the whistle foreshadows the return of the protagonist’s despised self which Mildred will associate to him and which he tries to chase by shouting at it.

³⁶ Mathias Sparr. Op. cit., p. 5.

³⁷ Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 275.

³⁸ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. III, p. 372.

In addition to fanciful sounds, O'Neill makes use of visions in **The Emperor Jones** which are a blend of remembrances and fancies. In fact, as we have seen, each apparition recalls one real aspect of Jones's despised self. However, their soundless character, mechanical movement, and immediate disappearance at Jones's shooting give them a dream-like quality. The mixture of reality and illusion displays the intrusion of the protagonist's actual self into his imaginary world.

Another powerful theatrical element which creates a dream-like atmosphere is exaggerated descriptions. The latter are heavily used in **The Hairy Ape**. When the play opens, we are struck by O'Neill's description of the stokers as "hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small, fierce resentful eyes."³⁹ The inhuman quality of the stokers' features foreshadows the despised image of the beast to which Yank will submit at the end of the play. In fact, the audience witnesses Yank's acting as a God-like stoker and expects his awakening from illusion to the nightmarish reality which associates him with an ape. The fifth scene too is one of expressionistic distortion. Indeed, on Fifth Avenue, the adornments are of "extreme wealth," the furs "having...bathed in a downpour artificial light," and the light has an effect "of a background of magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by commercialism, a background in tawdry disharmony with the clear light and

³⁹ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. I, p. 358.

sunshine on the street itself.”⁴⁰ These details about Fifth Avenue are obviously far too exaggerated. Even the people living there are described in a grotesque way. O’Neill characterises them as “a procession of gaudy marionettes.”⁴¹ These distortions serve to reveal the inner nightmarish reality that the middle class try to hide behind appearances. By using distortions when describing the stokers and the middle class, O’Neill reveals that both classes are dehumanised in the materialistic modern world and both try to project an illusory image of themselves to find a place in society.

The setting is also worthy of consideration when studying the nightmarish atmosphere in the plays. In **The Emperor Jones**, the forest in which most of the events take place, is described as “a wall...dividing the world,” as if when penetrating this wall Jones would move from the real world to a mysterious fantastic world. What deepen the gloomy feelings about the forest are the huge and numerous trees which are like “enormous pillars of deeper blackness,” which thus renders the place one of extreme and unbearable darkness. Added to this is the “brooding, implacable silence”⁴² which increases the unpleasant feelings about the place and pervades the audience with a sense of insufferable fear and gloom.

⁴⁰ Eugene O’Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. V, pp. 378-9.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 381.

⁴²Eugene O’Neill. **The Emperor Jones**. Op. cit., Sc. II, p. 278.

A similar gloomy setting is to be found in **The Hairy Ape** when O'Neill describes the stokehole in scene III:

In the rear, the dimly-outlined - bulks of the furnaces and boilers. High overhead one hanging electric bulb sheds just enough light through the murky air laden with coal dust to pile up masses of shadows everywhere.... There is a tumult of noise – the brazen clang of the furnace doors as they are flung open or slammed shut, the grating, teeth-gritting grind of steel against steel, of crushing coal...the roar of leaping flames in the furnaces, the monotonous throbbing beat of the engines.⁴³

The dim light, the heat of the boilers, the black shadows of coal dust and the mechanical deafening noise of the engines create an atmosphere of utter depression.

There are obviously a number of expressionistic features in **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** that we have not considered in the present chapter. However, our choice to focus on some expressionistic devices and ignore others should by no means be explained by the fact that the non-studied devices are less important. In fact, the object of this chapter is an attempt to bring forth only the basic Expressionistic techniques that bring further evidence to the problematic of our research work. Indeed, all the expressionistic elements studied so far really help reveal Jones's and Yank's hidden processes of neurotic pride. In addition, O'Neill's resort to expressionism to unfold his characters' neurotic conflict can be explained by the fact that the playwright himself might have experienced a neurotic conflict.

⁴³ Eugene O'Neill. **The Hairy Ape**. Op. cit., Sc. III, pp. 370-1.

Conclusion

It is undoubtedly venturesome to attempt to assign a main theme to O'Neill's drama which ranks among the richest and most complex in American theatre. In fact, there are as many themes as there are critics' approaches and interests in his oeuvres. Therefore, it is only possible to conclude in our research that O'Neill's interest in selfhood cannot be excluded.

In our analysis of O'Neill's **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** it appears that man's search for identity is a destructive struggle that necessarily leads to his tragedy, mainly his death. Since this struggle is an inner conflict, psychoanalysis seems to be the most suitable approach to the plays. In the light of the second chapter we saw that Jones's and Yank's psychic struggle can be analysed along the lines of Freud's and Jung's theories. This can be explained by the fact that the dramatist, who of course knew the general outlines of the psychoanalysts' theories of the unconscious, was stimulated by them and thus echoed some of their ideas in his plays. However, what is interesting and at the same time striking is the fact that Horney's theory of neurotic pride of which O'Neill was not aware provides a theoretical framework which reflects and illuminates Jones's and Yank's inner conflict.

To the first question introduced by the problematic of this research, which is to know whether Jones and Yank are victims of neurotic pride, the answer is positive. The main cause responsible for neurosis according to Horney appears in

the two plays. As we noticed, both tragedies present characters who experience or experienced life in an environment lacking in love and safety. Indeed, because of his colour of skin Jones was subject to discrimination in white protestant America. Similarly, Yank as a stoker is marginalised in the capitalist American society. Being rejected and, therefore, feeling unworthy both Jones and Yank have developed anxiety.

What accounts for the fact that O'Neill's characters have really developed anxiety is their attempt to mould themselves into beings of absolute perfection - idealized selves - which is for Horney the direct consequence of anxiety. Indeed, Jones as a white-like emperor who is invulnerable but to a silver bullet, and Yank as a divine stoker are figures who are far from being ordinary or real. They are images which can only be an outcome of imagination. Therefore, Jones's and Yank's search for glory can well be explained by the characters' urgent need to release anxiety, because perfection allows them to feel powerful and worthy.

Moreover, what may assert that Jones and Yank are really anxious characters is the period in which **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** were produced. Indeed, both plays are products of the post war period – an age of anxiety, which O'Neill has tried to reflect in his characters.

Further evidence that Jones and Yank can be regarded as being engaged in the process of self-idealisation is the way they try to assert their idealised selves. Indeed, there is an obvious correspondence between the characters' behaviour

and what Horney calls inner dictates and neurotic claims. Both Jones and Yank put on themselves impossible demands which are the ability to endure everything like an immortal being, and being capable of creating the energy that makes the world move respectively. Moreover, the two characters need support from outside to be able to experience themselves as perfect beings. Indeed, both develop neurotic claims towards people and even towards life. Actually, Jones's arrogating to himself the right to mislead the natives, to be blindly obeyed, to get luck from the silver bullet and protection from the Baptist Church; and Yank's demand that he must never be questioned are obviously all neurotic claims.

Despite their efforts, Jones and Yank fail to find safety in their lives. Instead, it appears that both protagonists have developed neurotic pride which we consider in our research the principal cause that leads to their downfall. What can confirm this hypothesis is the fact that both characters are proud of belonging to prestigious groups, while we know that Jones is not a member of the white community, and Yank belongs to the working class which is a marginalised group in capitalist America and not a prestigious group as he believes it is. Moreover, Jones and Yank are boastful of God-like qualities which they do not possess in reality. Therefore, both characters invest their pride in factors which are, as Horney explains, unsubstantial. Indeed, this appears clearly in a number of situations in the plays. Whenever Jones's colour of skin is hinted to, or the characters' power is questioned reactions of humiliation appear, and in most

cases it turns to rage and fear. The latter are to Horney purely reactions to hurt pride (neurotic pride).

Equally, we noticed in both plays that the more Jones and Yank invest pride in the invulnerable white-like emperor and the God-like stoker respectively, the more hate they direct towards the black prison escapee and unworthy stoker they actually are. Indeed, we saw that the protagonists never really lose sight of their actual selves which make them feel unworthy, and which they try to crush down. This is apparent, for instance, in Jones's lingering inferiority complex, Yank's inability to consider his judgements worthy and mainly the destructive actions in the end of the plays when Jones gets shot by the bullet he made himself and Yank enters voluntarily the gorilla cage where he is killed.

What asserts even more the first question of our problematic, i.e. that Jones and Yank are neurotic persons, is the fact that both characters' patterns of behaviour associate them with Horney's expansive type, the arrogant vindictive neurotic in particular. Indeed, both protagonists, in an attempt to release the inner conflict between their neurotic pride and self-hate, identify completely with their neurotic pride and ignore their actual selves. Their pride becomes so excessive that it turns to vindictiveness. Many signs of vindictiveness as explained by Horney are present in both plays, such as Jones's torturing the natives and Yank's revenge upon Mildred.

The expansive (aggressive) type is only one of the personality types that Horney has developed in her theory. As we saw, two other personality types may be the result of the individual's need to protect himself against his neurotic conflict. In fact, instead of moving against people and trying to prove his superiority, the individual, thinking of himself as helpless, may move towards the others and ask for their approval and affection. This results in a compliant (resigned) personality. Or else, the neurotic, feeling unvalued, moves away from people and strives to become self-sufficient. The individual then develops a detached (self-effacing) personality.

Jones's and Yank's death at the end of the plays is evidence of how much the characters identified with their neurotic pride. Indeed, their downfall is the outcome of their being confronted at last with their actual selves from which they desperately tried to draw away. It is worth noticing, however, that the characters end up identifying with their actual despised selves, but they fail to reach self integrity. This is apparent mainly in **The Hairy Ape** where Yank dies wondering who he really is. This is further evidence that Jones and Yank can be studied in the light of Horney's theory of neurotic pride, because, as we saw, Horney considers that the expansive vindictive type is only a pseudo-solution which does not provide the individual with a real sense of belonging. Moreover, Horney shares O'Neill's view on man's search for identity which they both consider as a tragic but heroic struggle as it gives meaning to life. This is therefore another point which reinforces the first question of our problematic.

Whether O'Neill was himself a neurotic person, and that he tried to reflect his inner conflict in his characters is the second question of the problematic and it is perhaps also positive. In fact, although there is no explicit evidence that the playwright suffered from neurosis, we did notice in the first section of the third chapter that he was subject to some experiences which may have caused him a neurotic conflict. Actually, loneliness at school, insecurity at home, paradoxical feelings about religion, successive separations with women with whom he was in a relationship and estrangement as a seaman are all signs of an unstable restless life. In parallel, we pointed to an important event in his life which is the time he spent at the sanatorium where he decided to become a famous dramatist. In the light of Horney's theory, we can conclude that at the most desperate moment of his restless life, O'Neill turned away from his unworthy actual self and projected of himself an idealised image in which he undoubtedly invested too much pride given the success he reached. In this respect, it is important to point out that, unlike his characters, O'Neill's image of a famous playwright is not illusory. However, it is equally important to notice that like Jones and Yank, O'Neill's idealised image as a famous dramatist did not really provide him with a feeling of belonging, especially if we take into consideration his attempt to commit suicide which can be interpreted as a sign of self-hate in the light of Horney's theory.

Therefore, at least to some extent, O'Neill could have been subject to a neurotic conflict. This hypothesis is made still more likely in the light of the

possible link between the stylistic aspect of the plays and the thematic one. In fact, as noted in the second section of chapter 3, Expressionism helps uncover inner reality, the artist's inner self included. Therefore, O'Neill's choice of Expressionism could have been stimulated by his will to express his characters' inner conflict and, unconsciously, the psychic conflict he may have experienced himself. The correspondence between O'Neill's personal experience and the experiences of his heroes on the one hand, and the link between the aesthetic and thematic aspects of the plays on the other are further evidence that the playwright's tragedies can be considered as tragedies of neurotic pride.

It would be awkward to conclude by saying that **The Emperor Jones** and **The Hairy Ape** are tragedies of neurotic pride only, given the fact that our humble research work illuminates solely some patterns of the characters' behaviour and some aspects of O'Neill's life. No doubt, Jones's and Yank's tragedies can be related to different causes depending on the approach we choose to apply to the plays. Therefore, it is only possible to conclude that the plays can be read in the light of Horney's theory. It is equally important to notice that, although in the first chapter we referred to three points with regard to the tragic hero, namely the nature of the tragic hero, the causes behind his downfall and the meaning of the tragic action, the focus of our research was mainly on the second point. It would be interesting to explore the meaning of the tragic action in O'Neill's plays especially since most critics consider that the modern tragic character is an anti-

hero while in O'Neill's view the tragic action qualifies the tragic character as a hero.

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Appendices



Eugene O'Neill

<<http://www.ovationtv.com/people/87>>



The Emperor Jones

< <http://www.theaterdogs.net> >



The Hairy Ape

<<http://www.timeout.com>>

Abstract in Arabic

ملخص

تقترح هذه الأطروحة دراسة البطل المأساوي في كلا من الإمبراطور جونز و القرد الأشعر للمؤلف المسرحي الأمريكي يوجين أونيل في ضوء نظرية الكبرياء العصابي للمحللة النفسية كارن هورني . أولا نحاول التحقق ما اذا كان جونز - من اصل اسود - و يانك - وقاد من الطبقة العاملة - في الإمبراطور جونز و القرد الأشعر على التوالي، اللذان لم يحضا بالقبول في المجتمع الأمريكي نظرا لانتمائهما إلى فئات مهمشة، لم يتمكننا من ادراك الذات الحقيقية بل، و للشعور بالأمان ، لجأ كلا منهما إلى الكبرياء العصابي الذي أدى بهما إلى تكوين الذات المثالية المتمثلة في كل من الإمبراطور الخالد و الوقاد المقدس. كلا من البطلين إذن كون شخصية غير متوازنة حيث انه يتواجد كذاته الواقعية في عالم الحقيقة - الشعور - و كذاته المثالية في عالم الخيال - اللاشعور. هورني تعتبر ان الاصطدام المحتوم بين الخيال و الواقع هو الذي يسبب النهاية المأساوية للبطلين.

إن اختيارنا لنقد التحليل النفسي يناسب موضوع بحثنا بما انه يتناول الذات – عمل الشعور و اللاشعور – بحيث يسلط الضوء على الصراع النفسي للبطلين الذي يعتبر السبب الرئيسي لنهايتهم المأساوية . من بين عدد كبير من نظريات نقد التحليل النفسي اخترنا نظرية هورني للكبرياء العصابي لأنها تعرض نظرة اجتماعية للذات حيث تركز على للعوامل البيئية و مساهمتها في تشكيل اللاشعور . بعبارة أخرى هذه النظرية تظهر كيف أن انعدام الحب و الاعتراف في بيئة كلا من جونز و يانك جعل منهما ضحايا الكبرياء العصابي حيث اصبح هاجسهما الوحيد هو العثور على الأمان.

بعد محاولتنا لتقديم أدلة في النص التي تبين أن جونز و يانك ضحايا الكبرياء العصابي نحاول التحقيق فيما إذا كانت هناك أي صلة بين التجربة الشخصية لاونيل و مؤلفاته . بعبارة أخرى نحاول التحقيق فيما إذا كان اهتمام المؤلف المسرحي في تصوير شخصيات تعاني من الكبرياء العصابي ينبع من تجربته الشخصية للكبرياء العصابي . هنا يظهر السبب الثاني لاختيار منهج التحليل النفسي .في الواقع إضافة إلى الجانب النفسي للبطلين التحليل النفسي يتناول كذلك نفسية المؤلف المسرحي.

أخيرا سنكشف الجانب التصميمي لكلا من المسرحيتين - نمط التعبيرية على وجه التخصيص . علينا القول أن اختيار أونيل للتعبيرية لتكون النمط المهيمن في كلا من المسرحيتين مرتبط باهتمامه في التعبير على الصراع النفسي للبطلين جونز و يانك و ربما أيضا صراعه الذاتي. حقا نمط التعبيرية تتناسب مع موضوع بحثنا حيث تسلط الضوء على الصراع النفسي الخفي.

