



Eugene O'Neill

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

with Chinese Annotations

附中文注釋

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EUGENE O'NEILL

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Eugene O'Neill

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(中文註釋)

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INTRODUCTION

Eugene O'Neill
1888-1953

Eugene O'Neill was born in a New York hotel room in 1888 and spent his last illness in 1953 in a Boston hotel room crying: "Born in a goddam hotel room and dying in a hotel room!" He was born while his father, a popular romantic actor, was giving his 1,400th performance of the Count of Monte Cristo, a role that he would play for another quarter century. Eugene's birth was a difficult one and to alleviate the pain his mother took to morphine to which she would become addicted the rest of her life.

Until he could attend boarding schools, Eugene grew up in hotel rooms all over the country, but spending summers in New London, Connecticut, the family home and the setting of *Long Day's Journey into Night*. After attending various boarding schools he entered Princeton but was dismissed in 1903 allegedly for throwing a beer bottle through the window of Woodrow Wilson, president of Princeton university and future president of the United States.

In 1909 he married Kathleen Jenkins and had his first son, Eugene junior, who was to become a Greek scholar and commit suicide in 1950. The marriage ended in divorce in 1912. Eugene O'Neill had already shipped on various freighters and travelled to South America and Africa and come back completely penniless. He took the train to visit his father who was still playing the Count of Monte Cristo, in New Orleans this time. The father

refused to help him financially but offered him a part in *Monte Cristo*. After his divorce O'Neill entered a tuberculosis sanatorium.

O'Neill began to write during his fifteen month convalescence in the sanatorium. In the next year and a half after he left the sanatorium he wrote eleven one-act plays, two long plays, and a few poems, and read voraciously "the Greeks, the Elizabethans, practically all the classics, and all the moderns."

In 1914 he went to Harvard to learn playwriting and his father financed the publication of his first collection of one-act plays *Thirst and Other One-act Plays*, some of which are still popular—*The Moon of the Caribbees*, *Bound for Cardiff*, *The Long Voyage Home*, and *In the Zone*.

In 1920, *Beyond the Horizon* brought O'Neill his first Pulitzer Prize and established him as the leading playwright in America, a position he still retains.

In 1918 he had married Agnes Boulton from whom he had two children—Oona who was to marry Charlie Chaplin, and Shane who was to become a drug addict like his grandmother. The marriage ended in divorce in 1927. The next year he married Carlotta Monterey who was to stay with him until his death.

After his first Pulitzer Prize in 1920, O'Neill devoted his whole time to playwriting, and published such favorites as: *The Emperor Jones* (1921), *Anna Christie* (1922), *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *All God's chillun Got Wings* (1924), *Desire Under the Elms* (1925), *The Great God Brown* (1926), *Marco Millions* (1927), *Lazarus Laughed* (1927), *Strange Interlude* (1928), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), *Ah! Wilderness* (1933),

Days without end (1934), *The Iceman Cometh* (1946), *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1952). After his death *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* was published in 1956, a play he had written and dedicated to his wife in 1941, and *A Touch of the Poet* in 1957.

O'Neill won the Pulitzer Prize four times and the Nobel Prize for literature in 1936.

All of his plays, except *Ah! Wilderness*, are tragedies based on the idea that man is the victim of internal and external forces beyond his understanding and control. "The Great Sickness" was one of his many epithets for life. The success of his plays brought him fame, fortune, and lavish living in palatial homes, but his intimate relationship with his wives and children was always a tortured one and finally alienated them all except Carlotta Monterey who took care of him till the end.

ANALYSIS

Theme

As O'Neill's dedication of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* to his wife states, this play is autobiographical. Yet it is autobiographical in a special sense of the word. It does not necessarily mean that there was such an intensely dramatic day in Eugene O'Neill's life when he learned all at once that he had T.B. which could be fatal, watched his mother sinking back into drug addiction, discovered his father's bitter resentment for his being born, and listened to his elder brother's drunken confession of his wish that he would die, all this on an appropriately foggy day. All these horrors no doubt took place in O'Neill's life, but it is for dramatic purposes that they are compressed into the space of one day. O'Neill was a master of dramatic effects. He further distorted some details of real life happenings in order to give greater intensity to his characters. For instance, O'Neill's mother did not marry his father as soon as she came out of the convent, as the play states, but six years later. Eugene O'Neill himself, the Edmund of the play, had been married and divorced in 1912 when the story takes place and was the father of a three-year-old boy. O'Neill's father, according to one of his biographers, was not such a skinflint as the play makes out and did not hire a quack at Eugene's birth and so was probably guiltless of his wife's morphine addiction.

As the dedication also makes clear *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* is an attempt at self psychoanalysis on the part of Eugene O'Neill. It is like a session on the psychiatrist's couch, where the patient tries to objectify,

to force up from the unconscious to the conscious level, the childhood experiences as far back as birth and the later influences which brought about his present emotional complex and guilt feeling. As the dedication again reveals the writing of the play had the desired effect of exorcizing the ghosts from O'Neill's soul. One of Eugene O'Neill's sons once remarked about *Long Day's Journey* that it was such a personal problem that he did not know how a theater audience could be interested in it. Yet all theater audiences have considered the play the best achievement of O'Neill. The pattern of human relationship presented in it, especially the mixture of love and hate that is at the basis of family relationship, the desire to hurt and to protect, to blame and to excuse, have such a universal value that *Long Day's Journey* has achieved great popularity all over the world. It is a dark, tragic play, yet the final lesson one draws from it is optimistic—individuals are what life has made of them, life is to be blamed for their faults. Compassion is all.

Plot

In a way *Long Day's Journey* is plotless. It does not grow to a climax and end in a resolution of tension. Rather it is a steady progression towards greater darkness, greater drunkenness and drugged withdrawal, greater misery. Yet the final act is a satisfying end, for each character is given a chance to explain himself, expose his deepest wounds, confess his faults, give an explanation for all the horrors that precede, and finally face the truth he has been evading all day. For all its tragic darkness, the final act is a luminous baring of souls, like a session

on the psychiatrist's couch.

Characters

In explaining himself each character turns back to his childhood experience.

James Tyrone

He was born in extreme poverty, was abandoned by his father when he was ten and had to support a large family from then on. Consequently his one great fear was to end up his life in the poorhouse. What his sons and wife call his miserliness is not real miserliness for James Tyrone has no love of money for money's sake; it is a morbid obsession with poverty, the poverty of his childhood. Yet this obsession, excusable in a man who experienced such a miserable childhood, is the main cause of his failure in life. It explains his playing the same role on the stage for a lifetime because it paid well, and his ruining his fine talent as an actor. It is also the cause of his wife's addiction to morphine, the ruin of his family life, for it is with the idea of saving money that, when she was in labor, he hired a quack who gave her morphine to calm her pains. It is also the root of his resentment of Edmund for being born in such pains that his mother needed a doctor. The obsession led James to drag his first born into the world of the theater for which he was not made and where he ruined himself morally. The irony of such a life is in the fact that in being obsessed to avoid the poverty of his childhood he only achieved misery in his family life where he never enjoyed the closeness he had experienced in childhood with his own poverty stricken family.

Mary

Her troubles are also traceable to her youth. A well-to-do convent girl, used to the nicer things in life, sheltered from the world by the nuns, spoiled by a loving father, she had fallen for the romantic actor, seeing in him the part he played on the stage rather than the real man. She soon finds herself married to a drunkard, spending her life waiting for him in one-night cheap hotel rooms, and rejected by her own society. Her terrible loneliness drives her to drugs. Her desire for a real home makes her live in the past. The irony of this couple's life is that while James Tyrone escaped from the poverty of his childhood to a safe income, his wife fell from a well-to-do home to the life of a homeless waif.

Jamie

The jealous brother, the never-do-well, who wants company in his failure and corrupts his younger brother so he will not become a successful writer, the very thing he himself wanted to be. He has a soul capable of appreciating beauty, he memorizes long poems but cannot like his brother write poetry. A basic disgust for himself drives him to self-destruction. He, too, is haunted by a childhood experience, the guilt he carries always with him for having caused, through jealousy, the death of his new born brother by entering his room while sick with measles.

Edmund

Represents Eugene O'Neill himself, the creative artist, who has experienced ecstasy once and has been

lost in the dark after that one experience. He is haunted by the guilt of his difficult birth causing his mother's moral ruin.

The final irony of the play resides in the fact that all these characters take to drink and drugs to escape reality and yet find this way their own truth: "in vino veritas," wine brings out the truth.

For Carlotta¹, on our 12th Wedding Anniversary

Dearest: I give you the original script² of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A badly inappropriate gift,³ it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last⁴ and write this play—write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones.⁵

These twelve years, Beloved One, have been a Journey into Light—into love. You know my gratitude. And my love!

GENE

*Tao House⁶
July 22, 1941.*

1. Carlotta: Carlotta Monterey, O'Neill, 的妻子，本是出名演員，婚後毅然放棄往日的絢麗生活，悉心照料O'Neill直到1953年O'Neill過世為止。兩人平日常有誤會爭執，但仍然不失為美滿夫妻。
2. Original script: 原稿。
3. inappropriate gift: O'Neill 爲了表達他對 Carlotta 的感佩和摯愛，特在他們結婚十二週年紀念日將本書題獻給 Carlotta。但本書內容係以一 O'Neill 家庭身世爲素材的悲劇性故事，所以說是不合宜的禮物。
4. Which gave me the faith .
to face my dead at last: 意謂 Carlotta 對O'Neill的溫情熱愛使他對真正的愛有了信心；就是這信心使得他終於能夠透過愛的寬容與同情去面對死去的父母和哥哥，把他們公正地寫下來。
5. four haunted Tyrones: 指O'Neill的父母，哥哥，和他本人。四人在往日陰影籠罩下互相誤解，互相折磨一生。
6. Tao House: O'Neill 曾到東方遊歷，對老子「道德經」所揭示的清心寡欲之道頗有感發，回國後便在舊金山營建一幢新屋，命名爲「道德居」，以示對老子思想的嚮往。

CHARACTERS

JAMES TYRONE

MARY CAVAN TYRONE, *his wife*

JAMES TYRONE, JR., *their elder son*

EDMUND TYRONE, *their younger son*

CATHLEEN, *second girl*

SCENES

ACT 1 *Living room of the Tyrone's summer home
8:30 A.M. of a day in August, 1912*

ACT 2 SCENE 1 *The same, around 12:45*
SCENE 2 *The same, about a half hour later*

ACT 3 *The same, around 6:30 that evening*

ACT 4 *The same, around midnight*

ACT ONE

SCENE *Living room of James Tyrone's summer home on a morning in August, 1912.*

At rear are two double doorways with portieres.¹ The one at right leads into a front parlor² with the formally arranged, set appearance of a room rarely occupied.³ The other opens on a dark, windowless back parlor, never used except as a passage from living room to dining room. Against the wall between the doorways is a small bookcase, with a picture of Shakespeare above it, containing novels by Balzac, Zola, Stendhal, Philosophical and sociological works by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, Engels, Kropotkin, Max Stirner, plays by Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, poetry by Swinburne, Rossetti, Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Kipling, etc.

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| 1. double doorways with portieres: | double door 雙扇門。(一門雙扉，即中文「門」字本意。) portières, 門帘。 |
| 2. front parlor: | 前客廳。 |
| 3. with the formally arranged, set appearance of a room rarely occupied: | formally arranged, 指擺設力求表面上的美觀，而非使用上的方便；set, 指傢俱什物沒有擾動。整個片語意謂前客廳看起來是這麼樣一個不常使用的房間。 |

In the right wall, rear, is a screen door⁴ leading out on the porch which extends halfway around the house.⁵ Farther forward, a series of three windows looks over the front lawn⁶ to the harbor and the avenue that runs along the water front. A small wicker table⁷ and an ordinary oak desk⁸ are against the wall, flanking the windows.⁹

*In the left wall, a similar series of windows looks out on the grounds in back of the house. Beneath them is a wicker couch¹⁰ with cushions, its head toward rear. Farther back is a large, glassed-in bookcase¹¹ with sets of Dumas, Victor Hugo, Charles Lever,¹² three sets of Shakespeare, *The World's Best Literature in fifty large volumes*, Hume's *History of England*, Thiers' *History of the Consulate and Empire*, Smollett's *History of England*, Gibbon's *Roman**

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| 4. screen door: | 紗門。 |
| 5. the porch which extends halfway around the house: | porch，西式房子屋前的門廊，通常供乘涼談天用。此處門廊伸延較長，環抱了整幢房子的前半部。 |
| 6. front lawn: | 庭前草坪。 |
| 7. wicker table: | 籐桌。 |
| 8. ordinary oak desk: | 普通的橡木書桌。 |
| 9. flanking the windows: | 指籐桌和橡木書桌分別放在三個窗子兩側。 |
| 10. couch: | 一種長椅榻，通常有靠背和扶手，供躺著休息或睡覺用，也可供數人並坐。 |
| 11. glassed-in bookcase: | 有玻璃門的書櫥。 |
| 12. sets of Dumas, Victor Hugo, Charles Lever: | 大仲馬，雨果，和勒維的全套作品。 |