CHAPTER - VI
USE OF MYTH IN O'NEILL'S PLAYS

Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra, O'Neill told Benjamin de Cassers, 'influenced me more than any book I've read.' It provided him "a rhapsodic vision of human grandeur, a meaningful universe to replace the shattered rubble of his Catholicism." Nietzsche's Heraclitean doctrine of eternal recurrence found vent in O'Neill's The Fountain, and The Great Brown; and Zarathustra's Man "a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman a rope over an abyss", becomes a discernible theme of The Hairy Ape; while his "Laughing have I consecrated; Ye higher man, Learn, I pray you to laugh!" is O'Neill's Lazarus Laughed. Strange Interlude and Mourning Becomes Electra redescribe Nietzsche's Dionysian view life and antipuritanism. He taught him "struggle in place of resignation, ecstasy in place of apathy, affirmation of life in place of denial." And thus, Nietzsche's views offered him "a religion, an aesthetics, a mythology and a psychology" which exposed to O'Neill the importance of myth and ritual.

O'Neill's consciousness of his Irish heritage was inculcated in him by his father. The Irish migrants in America felt two fold alienation i.e. in their ancestral land in United Kingdom and in America also. This heritage generated in him a sense of cultural alienation. Speaking of the 'Irishness' he told his son, Eugene Jr.:

One thing that explains more than anything about me is the fact that I'm Irish. And, strangely enough, it is something that all the writers who have attempted to explain me and my work have overlooked.

The Celtic revival in British drama which was essentially Irish in character drew O'Neill's attention. It aimed to bringing drama
back to mythology, psychology, legends, folklore and symbols of Irish life. (The point attains relevance in the light of the above-cited remark) The imaginative realism and belief in the fairy world were specific characteristics of O'Neill's contemporary Irish playwrights like Yeats, Lady Gregory, Synge, Lennox Robinson and T.C. Murray etc. They gave the Irish myths and legends a tangible shape in their works and revived Irish mythology and folklore.  

It would be churlish to speak that O'Neill who was conscious of his Irish heritage was not influenced by this Irish movement in drama. He incorporated the Irish myth and its milieu. Specially the Irish myths of family curse is prominently present in his Beyond the Horizon, Desire Under the Elms, Mourning Becomes Electra and Long Day's Journey Into Night in many forms. In this myth a family is spelt under some curse which is inflicted for some misdeeds of ancestors. And the generations are tumbled to catastrophic repercussions and retribution. It may be God's as in Beyond the Horizon and Desire Under the Elms or by some membes of the family itself as in Mourning Becomes Electra. Bowen has cited an Irish Curse:

*May the grass grow at your door and the fox build his nest on your hearth stone. May the light fade from your eyes, so you never see what you love. May your own blood rise against you. May you die without benefit of clergy. May there be none to shed a tear at your grave and may the hearth stone of hell be your best bed forever.*

Mourning Becomes Electra becomes a re-expression of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra myth and even an extension of Electra as a part of the Greek revival in modern century. He revived the Greek myths and drama in the fashion of Giraudoux, von Hoffmansthal, Eliot, Satre and Shaw. He used the Greek counterpart resembling not only in
form, but in his pre-occupation with tragic views and issues of life like his Greek masters. His protagonists are haunted by unrelieved tragedy and melancholic tensions, and the man is lynched and battered by Fate. Reviving the chorus, asides, dramatic monologues of the Greek tragedy "he laboured with the spoken words to evolve original rhythms of beauty, where beauty apparently isn't.....and to see the transfiguring of tragedy, in as near the Greek sense as one can grasp it, in seemingly the most ignoble, debased lives."17 His conviction of translating the tranfigured modern values and symbols in theatre was the only subject worth writing about for him and the Greek dream was the noblest for him.

The American drama prior to O'Neill was detached from life and culture, though some plays were written in naturalistic and realistic vein. It sought to establish a relationship between the native drama and the culture as embodied in a myth to emphasize the representation and American character of drama after 1920. O'Neill distinctly displayed the qualities of a mythopoeist. He created his own myths out of the cultural attitudes of contemporary American society as reflected in his plays in the archetypal forms such as the myth of American Dream, of Innocence and the Fall, the Ednic myth or the Quest.

A Myth assimilates and crystallizes tradition and cultural experiences of a society into a permanent system of values in a higher imaginative form. In this sense, it becomes a cultural product generally, as Wilder puts it, "dreaming soul of the race telling its story"19. Culture itself a primarily changing and the continous process, accomodates with itself the changing realities of life through the dialectics of thesis,
antitheses and synthesis. Thus, myth becomes a kind of permanent foil, a predicament and pervading idealization of life against the current realities of an advancing culture.

The Ednic myth of America as a paradise is one of such cultural beliefs and attitudes. O'Neill used it in his play by adopting it negatively because of the conflict between the weariness of actual life and the ideal of paradise. He interpreted the contemporary experience in terms of waste land, corruption and de-generation. Contrary to the writer's exalted tone about American life and values as inherited perfection of Eden, he viewed that the innocent American Adam and his ideal milieu were figments of imagination. To quote David Madden:

'It appears there are two major American Dream myths: the Old Testament idea of a Paradise hopelessly lost: followed by endless nightmare sufferings and New Testament's idea of a Paradise that a new American Adam will eventually regain. Most serious fiction is slanted against the New Testament vision, hope for clear vision lies in the ambiguous area between 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained'.

The myth of American dream emerged out of American myth of paradise. The Ednic myth becomes a theological metaphor of man's relation to God. Its significant meaning concerns moral, cultural and psychological life of America. The Arcadia theme originated out of it in the traditional belief that nature has been a constant source of pleasure and bounty, and a symbol of perfect life.

In Beyond the Horizon and Desire under the Elms the garden imagery has been transmitted in the metaphor of waste land against the milieu of farm, everglade, forest, town and rural life. O'Neill depicts the characters trapped by fate, whereas in Mourning Becomes Electra and A Moon for The Misbegotten he sketches the serenity of
small town, semi-rural atmosphere as pastoral background.

The farm as a metaphor keeps changing its meaning to each character in its setting of rolling hills, freshly ploughed, the inevitable apple tree and a farm that speak of symbolic abundance and family bliss. Robert's craving to answer the call of the unknown from beyond the horizon is a kind of Adam's longing for knowledge. His inability to shake off the curse gives him anguish, and he seeks grandeur in his exit from the Eden i.e. his farm. Andrew's loss of innocence after first voyage suggests his fall. Robert's death is Adam's expulsion from Eden or his release from hostile Arcadia. The archetypal situation of two brothers aggravates the importance of the pastoral milieu.

In Desire Under the Elms Eben and Ebbie as Adam and Eve become a prey to an evil caused by Cabot's greed and degeneration of nature. He emerges as a Satanic evil, a corrupter, and is frequently referred as 'snake' and 'the devil'. Here he may be seen as the Old Testamental patriarch too. These mythical patterns add new tragic dimensions.

The relationship between the Eben and Abbie is in accordance with the mythical pattern of life and with the relationship of Adam and Eve. It is marked by their growth into better and complete human beings. They suffer severely to realize the importance of love and mutual need. Their development and mutual recognition are necessarily allied with their newly attained ability to throw away the shackles of greed for farm and fear of death. Their exit from the farm is a bliss whereas the evil is censured to live in the stony bourns of the farm for infinite period.

The myth of Innocence portrays American man as the
unfallen Adam living in the blessed state. The atmosphere is of harmony, happiness and simplicity leading to idealism. The other aspects of this myths view man as a rebel and an outcast or a vagabond, a rootless rambler alienated from nature.

O'Neill in Dynamo depicted gradual loss of innocence through man's denial of life and God because of mechanization of an evil universe. Since the fall is kept out of interest, the play turns out to be unredeemed and unrelieved tragedy. Reuben's initial innocence is explicit from his moral commitment, his faith in God, his sexual innocence and romantic idealisation of womankind. But it is defaced later on.

Reuben is in adolescent romance with Ada like the young Adam. She is his idealization of life in the beginning but his mother's betrayal and harsh joke of Ada's father smoother his innocence. He developed hatred for his parents, and denounces God. Once stripped of his innocence he becomes disillusioned with the world and finds himself as an outcast-a rebel protagonist belonging to typical American tradition.

In his new yet disturbed innocence Ruben denies existence of God and seeks the substitute in electricity. His love for mother shifts to Dynamo which becomes 'Mother of Life' to him. His seduction of Ada at the alter of dynamo is a sacrificial ritual of sexual act. His own suicide after murdering Ada too comes in the fashion of a ritual of his new faith after purification through electrocution.

On the other hand if O'Neill's theological predilections are examined, then the dynamo emerges as an incarnated evil or a Satan who after snaring and seducing the innocent Adam deprives him of his
blissful existence of innocence. Further, the myth of machine is also planted to show excessive mechanization of the world which has deprived man of his faith and peace. Here, O'Neill almost subscribed to Thoreau's view of the locomotive as in intrusion into the idyllic and peaceful state of his Walden.

Ah, Wilderness! is a homely bourgeois comedy about an American family. Written in light vein the play becomes a projection of the myth of innocence—the typical American Edenic inheritance where man always remains a child, and makes himselfvincible to the sordid realities of existence. Innocence is unravished by familial, racial, ancestral or any kind of prejudice, as projected in the play.

By setting the action of the play in pre-1918 era, O'Neill aimed at writing "a play true to the spirit of the American large small-town at the turn of the century." The 4th July celebration has entered the play as an American ritual of wonder and ecstasy in life and celebrates festivity at the victory of democracy, equality and freedom. It is an appreciation of life, and that all is right with the world. The use of firecrackers, the dance, sound of music in distance, the sense of the turn of the seasons in an eternal cycle of life, moon light defining the use of chiaroscuro is made out not only to heighten the grandeur of the ritual but to suggest an atmosphere of peace and bliss and well-being in the family which becomes symbolic of the Edenic state.

In Richard, O'Neill has created his idealized youth as he himself called it "a nostalgia for a youth I never had", but "would have liked my boyhood to have been." He is an embodiment of innocence. His is a rebellious nature. He is radical reader and sneers at the conventional 4th July celebration. His rebellion is a part of innocence
born out of juvenile delinquency. His escapade with a whore is his bid for tasting forbidden fruit as well as his defiant gesture against his mundane life. He retraces only after venturing up to the bourns of the garden, and returns to his mother without losing innocence.

The play is set in an atmosphere of secluded garden of Eden uninhibited or untouched by sorrow, suffering or scarcity. Along with idealism and romanticism which are healthy contours of progress and culture the playwright has glossed over human depravities and weakness like drunkenness of Sid and meanness of McCombers.

In the context of the rise of scientific and humanist temper, the metaphor of fall attained a new meaning. Whitman's eulogy of the unfallen American Adam made others to think of the mythical fall as propitious and a disguised bliss in terms of their own experience and understanding of life. In his fall has man risen, since maturity, a moral consciousness and a tragic sense of man's life were realized only in the fallen state. Thus, man was reborn to perfection and became a symbol of man's defiant wrestling against something tyrannical to seek individuality, an awareness of self and rise to the human level. The fall was discussed philosophically as the first tragedy which is a Beauty of human life. Adam became wiser after his fall and he extracts our sympathy as a cursed under-dog.

After the fall 'man' was rendered split by the duality of good and evil, and it represented the first encounter between the good and evil in man. In Genesis this confrontation is personified by the archetypal pattern of two brothers i.e. Cain and Abel, Ismael and Issac. These episode are a sort of variations of the archetypal action of man's fall from Eden. These patterns are visible in Beyond the Horizon as
Andrew and Robert in *The Great God Brown* as Brown and Dion; in *Long Day's Journey into Night* as Jamie and Edmund. In *Days Without End* they are combined in the figures of John Loving.

The fall is a representation of reversal of fortune, alienation, and self-flagellation in O'Neill's plays. It is a sort of material and spiritual reversal from a state of well-being and grace. The fall of Andrew, Marco and Billy Brown is prompted by their weakwills. They are trapped by the evil of money. They worship their own new God of matrialism and relinquish God. Their fall and retribution-physical, psychological or spiritual is a recognition of higher system of justice and mercy.

The American paradise has come to mean a corporeal place of both spiritual and material happiness. And the fall would mean descendent to an outcast, queer and helpless condition. The loss of paradise that America was has led to disillusionment and frustration.

The metaphor of fall sprouts in many directions. First, it suggests total despair a characteristic of O'Neill's protagonists. Secondly, it is the loss of past and a feeling of nostalgia prevails, and the characters hope to regain the past and the paradise through revolutionary means. The miasma of past haunts almost all the characters in his plays. They resort to revolutionary means to re-attain the paradise of past as in *The Hairy Ape* and *The Iceman Cometh*.

The fall is inseparably associated with the idea of responsibility or a sense of guilt. Based on the cause and effect relationship it illustrates man's fall as a result of his sin or guilt. But man came to viewed not as a sinner or guilty but as a victim. This guilt phenomenon has been, therefore, personified in different forms. The
complete history of Genesis, representing the enactment of the cyclical drama of man's life, has been the subject matter of several plays. These plays view the entire history of man as repetition of the fall from Eden. O'Neill's play too have the influence of the Depression days. He was driven by strong social consciousness and examined reasons of the evil in the society, and role of individual in it. An awareness of strong economic and social injustice was injected by the experiences of monetary struggle for survival during the traumatic Depression years. In majority of his plays a family (Society) consisting of men, women and sons is glossed over. The archetypal family of the myth purveys the framework. The characters and society seem to be patterned in accordance with the suggestions of the myth of the garden of Eden. Thus, the significance of this popular myth shifts from the traditional view of the original sin and guilt to a rather humanistic view of man.

Another important myth of quest or dream is also incorporated in the theme of O'Neill's play. It is described by the literature of all ages in variant forms. It mainly represents man's continuous struggle to reattain the lost paradise, and depicts man as manoeuvring hard to regain the past with an awareness of helplessness and nostalgia for bygone days.

The myth of Eden crystallizes the tendency of continuously going on quest into a spiritual and poetic symbol which is the result of perennial and collective experience inherited by the posterity. A universal pursuit of beauty, happiness and knowledge, riches and salvation is represented by Endymion's journey, the search for the Holy Grail and the Faustian quest. In a way these are variations of a permanent dream symbolizing inherent quest of man to regain the
earlier Ednic state.

Man's longings for unattainable and unrealised dreams render him hopeless and helpless and there exists a prevailing tension between hope and despair. The quote Robert Heilman:

*When a constantly receding horizon at least becomes stationary, the dream energies that once pushed off into non-infinite distance undergo drastic redirection..... when horizontal mobility is cut off...... it becomes vertical mobility: instead of going to a new world of higher quality, one goes higher in the world as it is ......'success'. Instead of moving away--escaping, perhaps into a new security against the ills that flesh is heir to, one strives for the security here and now, in the current terms that are assumed to provide it-money, property, things, pleasures.*

The traditional form of the quest for a lost Eden in America has special meaning. This dream was identified variously. It was identified with the retreading frontier in the initial stage. As the myth of frontier vanished, it was identified with the myth of success. Like myth of success the myth of American dream has assumed myriad forms of unending exaltation of youth, innocence, a quest for new frontier in terms of new adventures and experience. According to Heilman:

*.... the discrepancy between dream and actuality, between the ideal and the instinctive and habitual ways of life is the most representative situation. And that we must live with paradox that dream is essential and yet will never make a complete imprint on actual life, that we do not dare surrender the dream and yet are unable to surrender to it.*

The dilemma of man for the dream has been aggravated by the oppressing intrusion of increasing industrilization and urbanization. The dream is, then, interpreted in other terms, since man cannot live without it. And when he tries to seek its realization, his inability and failure make him hopeless, depressed and fugitive.
The American writers have extensively used the myth of dream expressing a quest for an Utopia or an El Dorado, for riches or success for knowledge, and for power etc. The American drama portrays the search of paradise or pursuit of a dream- the American Dream which was in Twenties a household word, if not a household God. Connotatively, its meaning is associated with both the pious and the profane to modern ears. With the increasing emphasis on dream rhetoric the phrase has been relegated to the dead language category of the cliche.

Modern American drama starting with O'Neill has depicted darker and negative side of the myth of dream which gets originated out of disillusionment, dissatisfaction and contentment with high flown ideals existing in the American dream. The pursuit of the American dream in O'Neill's plays often results in failure and leads to hopelessness than hope. It ultimately becomes the source of tragedy. His plays, in larger sense, can be said to be metaphors of the American Adam's search of paradise.

O'Neill engaged himself in dramatizing variations of this quest or dream in his plays. He elevated this theme almost to a cult. It becomes a force in human affairs which prevails in every aspect of life. Most of his characters long for an ideal and possess dream which is beyond realization or at least they are unable to attain it. In the cases of most characters the revealed situation is replete with irony of fate or circumstances. The dream is made an improbability by the connivance of fate or 'Behind Force'. The characters are astrayed by some quest or dream which in the long run destroys them. As a source of tragedy, it becomes a kind of romantic illusion which at one time is strength of a
character but later becomes a weakness or hamartia.

However, O’Neill expressed his contempt, as he told. Bowen, for the patent brand of the so called American dream in a social political context, though he granted an individual right to dream. He expressed his awareness of the absolute swindlery of the American dream, as a slogan of economic and social significance. To quote him:

_This American Dream stuff gives me a pain. Telling the world about our American Dream! I don’t know what they mean. If it exists, as we tell the whole world, who don’t we make or work in one small hamlet in the United States? If it’s the constitution they mean, ugh, then it’s a lot of words. If taught history and told truth, we’d teach school children that the United States has followed the same greedy rut as every other country..._25

Although O’Neill flouted the idea of American dream, yet in his almost each play there exists a dream or a quest or a romantic ideal. In his early sea-plays, the dream takes the form of the wanderlust which is exhibited in the constant cravings of the sailors to toss around on the seas. In The Moon of the Carribeans the romantic quest is corporealized in the unique and rare glimpse of the moon’s beauty in the calm tropical sea. But the dream remains unfulfilled.

In Bound East for Cardiff there is reversal of dream. The sailors are fed up with sea-life and yearn for land. Yank’s dream of sea-life has become a nightmare for him and when he gets glimpse of approaching death, the death assumes a new form. He longs for land. His romantic dream of sailing is shattered by intolerable sea-life. He says:

_The sailor’s life ain’t much to cry about leavin’ - just one ship after another, hard work, small pay, and bum grub;...... Never meetin’ no nice people; never gittin’ out a sailor-town, hardly, in any port: travellin’ all over the world and never seein’ none of it; without no one to care whether
you're alive or dead.26

This dream turns just the opposite for him as he says to Driscoll:

_It must be great to stay on dry land all your life and have a farm with a house of your own... way in the middle of the land where yuh'd never smell the seas or see a ship... It must be great to have a home of your own, Drisc._27

Yank belongs to the group of those characters who long for dry land and farm, for they are fed up with the sea-life. The character belonging to other group crave for the sea, for they are not fascinated by life on farm.

Marco as a symbol of modern man is on his quest for human values in the East-a symbol, a source of inspiration and light. His quest is never fulfilled, as he is so overpowered by the degrading ideals of the Western civilization that he is throttled to death on his way. A hero of the rescue operation in a shipwreck on another foggy night is victimized by fate. He is drained to the dregs of existence by the indifference of the society and fate, and his dream too dies prematurally.

_In the Zone, The Long Voyage Home, and Ile the dream of a pastoral farm haunts to homesick, runaway, and dispirited sailors. In The Zone has a historical context depicting the atmosphere of distrust, hysteria and futile violence during the World War I. Smitty, symbolizing the poetic and sensitive self, is rejected by his hostile and antagonized fellows. His 'dreaminess' which is said to be allegedly verging on madness becomes the cause of his catastrophic end._

_In The Long Voyage Home dream of the dejected sailors, who long to see their homes and reach their farms, never come true. Man who is the wanderer and stranger always remains on the quest of_
home where his dreams of 'togetherness' with family and 'belongingness' with farm are materialized. For Olson, the protagonist, the home and land are dreams beyond the horizon. The world 'home' rings in his heart consistently. Cocky mocks his nostalgia for home: "Goin' back to 'ome an' mother. Goin' to buy a bloomin' farm an' punch the blarsted dirt, that's wot' he is"\(^28\) He speaks to Freda: "I got all sea I want for my life--to much hard work for little money. Yust work, work, work on ship. I don't want more."\(^29\)

Therefore, he tells her his dream of going his home. He says:

\[
\textit{And I want to go home dis time. I feel home sick for farm and to see my people again... my mother get very old, I want see her. She might die and would never.}^{30}
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But his dream too is shattered by destiny. Like all other children of 'sea' in O'Neill there is no real home. Olson's fate as an estranged and alienated being is sealed and he is shanghaied on an unreliable ship.

In Beyond the Horizon the shattering repercussions of an impossible romantic dream are projected. Robert craves for something beyond the horizon but fate will otherwise. And for Andrew too, who longs to farm, the same happens. But the dreamers born with dreams even in the face of death. Robert crawls to the top of the bank of the road to see the sunrise. He is happy at last on his deathbed: "free-free"-freed from farm to wander on and on eternally.\(^31\) In his death he sees his release from the farm and at last he is able to listen to the all of old voices calling him.

\textbf{The Fountain and Marco Millions} depict the quests of Jaim and Marco. These plays share something in common because the
playwright planted historical legends of Juan and Macro in the themes. Juan's quest is embodied in the search for the mythical fountain of life which is supposed to exist in the city of Cathay, which would provide him the water of life. Marco's quest is represented in his mission to China to have a dip in the spiritual waters of the mystic experiences of the Orient. O'Neill depicted the dark side of the myth of the success which draws its strength from the dehumanized values of materialism in the figure of Marco.

Jones and Yank represent man's eternal quest for belongingness and harmony. They are Everyman who decays and disintegrates when his quest for identity, meaning of life and for human values fails because of alienation from environment.

In The Iceman Cometh the drunken bums have pipe-dreams which promise a golden tomorrow and glorify yesterday. All the characters in Mourning Becomes Electra have dreams to escape to the South Sea island which abounds in peace, love and beauty.

A Touch of the Poet depicts Con Malody's illusions of aristocracy. He lives on his pride and pretensions. As an Irish migrant in America he lives unaccepted by both his fellow migrants and aristocratic Yankees and he becomes an alien and outsider.

The emblematic title of the play is a microcosm of the cycle plays" A Tale of Possessors, Self-dispossessed" with its central questions: "What happens to a man who cannot deny his dreams? What happens to his women when he fails to deny them?"32

Con's wife Nora and Sara, his daughter, have their distinct pride. Nora has pride in her bondage to her husband whereas Sara in her freedom. Nora's idealistic and reverential attitudes towards her
husband is contrasted by Sara's pragmatic attitude towards her father's aristocratic pretentions. Nora says to Sara, "I've pride in my love for him: I've loved him since the day I set my eyes on him: I will love him till the day I die." But Sara's declaration for opting a love that would give her freedom instead of slavery for life makes Nora realize for time being that her love is only a pipe-dream and she cries:

For the love of God, don't take the pride of my love from me, Sara, for without it what am I at all but an ugly, fat woman gettin' old and sick! Sara is a champion of the American dream. She considers her father to be silly and defrauded by the crafty Yankees into purchasing the inn, when he had opportunity to make himself all his lies pretended to be. She says:

He had education above most yanks, and he had money enough to start him, and this is a country where you can rise as you like, and no one but the fools, who envy you care what you rose from, once you've the money and the power goes with it.

In the play the dream-element is very powerful. Sara's paramour Simon, as says his mother, is "an invertible dreamer - a weakness he inherited from me. I'm afraid, although I must admit the Harfords have been great dreamers too, in their way. Even my husband has a dream- a conservative, material dream naturally." She goes on:

The Harfords never part with their dreams even when they deny them. They cannot. That is the family curse.

Sara too feels that Simon is "a born dreamer with a raft of great dreams, and he's very serious about them." He is a Thoreauvian idealist, and would build a cabin in his Walden pond. He dislikes his father's business. To quote Sara:

He wanted to prove his independence by living alone in the wilds, and build his own cabin and do all the work,
and support himself simply and feel one with Nature, and think great thoughts about what life means. And write a book about how the world can be changed so people won't be greedy to own money and land and get the best of each other but will be like heaven on earth.39

On the other hand it is of little significance to Nora who feels that Simon might have got a touch of poet like Con.

Con lives on pipe-dreams, and is charmed by Napoleon and Byron. His pipe-dreams are the only reality to sustain his otherwise meaningless existence. Sara denounces her father's pretensions fiercely:

*God help you, it must be a wonderful thing to live in a fairy tale where only dreams are real to you... Father. Will you never let yourself wake up.... Is it stark mad you've gone, so you can't tell any more what's dead and a lie, and what's the living truth?"*40

Sara, thus, punctures Con's pipe-drams and his face is 'convulsed by spasm of pain as if something vital has been stabbed in him........"41

Con's mare is a symbol of his pride, pretensions and dreams. Nora feels that the mare is his last stick to fight the grim battle of his life with some hope. She says: "She's his greatest pride. He'd be heart broken if he had to sell her."42 She considers the shooting of the mare a damnest joke. But Con says when she asked its cause:

*Wasn't she the livin' reminder, so to spake, av all his lyin' boast and dreams? He meant to kill her first with the pistol, and then himself with the other. But faix, he saw the shot that killed her had finished him, too."*43

He feels to have been re-born into a new man, and it is a new awakening of his real self-spiritually. The death of the mare marks the end of his illusion of being a Napoleonic or Byron. His encounter with reality makes him a dead phantasm of his existential being. His image as a gallant officer is doomed. The make-believe world of aristocratic splendour of his life is crumbled. The death of his mare is
a death of his dreams, and even worse that it leaves him crushed and broken.

The play, on the other, reveals the Old Testamental pattern of theme-proud father, yielding and humble mother, repulsion and revolt of children which works in most of O'Neill's plays.

More Stately Mansions further illustrates the theme of the cycle that is was of no use for a man to obtain the world, if he lost his soul in the contract. These two plays from O'Neill's vision of a crucial period of the 19th century (1830-1840) of the American history in the language of the theatre.

As a mythopoeist O'Neill endeavoured to create about the Harfords of Massachusetts by recalling their past, informing their present collectively, and anticipated their future. The characters are drawn from the representative American family. As a microcosm of the American history the playwright depicts the myth of dream and the success through the rapid growth of Harford company from the proprietorship of small mills to the possession of banks and ships etc. The myth projects American commitment to greedy expansion. He dramatized the story of the family to increase the national account. Simon, with a touch of poet, has a dream of a better world but cannot reject his thirst for power. Later, his split-personality becomes a symbol of duality in the American character and life. The forces of greed and materialism impendently ascend to the wipe out everything noble from the national heritage of America.

The play exposes the deterioration of Simon's dream into nothingness. His Utopian dream is usurped by material greed and worldly possessions. He seeks security in wealth. In Act I, Scene I,
Deborah reminds him of his dream of greedless Utopian which he seems to have given up under the vulgar and lustful influence of Sara. In his response to Deborah he exhibits his commitment to his dream. He admits, "I'll admit, I do get deadly sick of the daily grind of the counting-house." He wants to live "in freedom with Nature, and earned just enough to support myself, and keep my dreams." Sara, who emerges just at the moment of good-bye warns Deborah, "Stay in your dreams and leave me and mine alone." At this, Deborah decides, "I will never dream again! Never! I will face change and ugliness and Time and Death, and make myself resigned!" Then, she is seen as a fugitive in the chamber of her mad dreams—the garden of her home in the city in the next scene four years later.

Simon gets disillusioned with his Utopian dream which is devoid of greed. As a self dispossessed by his possessions he seeks "the greatest satisfaction and a sense of self-fulfilment and pride out of beating competitors in the race of power, and wealth and possessions" His new versions of earlier dreams is a realistic anti-Utopia. To quote him:

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- - - all you have to do is read your daily newspaper and to see what man is doing with himself. There's the book that ought to be written -- a frank study of the true nature of man as he really is and not as he pretends to himself to be -- a courageous facing of truth about him and in the end, a daring assertion that what he is, no matter how it shocks our sentimental moral and religious delusions about him, is good because it is true and should in a world of facts, become the foundation of a new morality which would destroy all our present hypocritical pretences and virtuous lies about ourselves.
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Now, Simon feels that power is freedom, but freedom becomes a myth to him. As a hard-core acquisitive businessman he is
eluded by it. He feels: "As if at the end of every dreams of liberty one did not find the slave, oneself, to whom oneself, the master is enslaved."  

On the basis of his experience he asks his brother to "shun marriage and keep a whore instead." Sara and Deborah appear him to be one-both merged into one- in their conspiracy to alienate him. He is distressed to see that Deborah has left him" to be a Napolean among traders." He craves for his lost dream for time being, yet then discards it and feels: "The possession of power is the only freedom, and your pretended disgust with its a lie."  

'The door' as a symbol provides the play a new meaning. The closing of the door underscores Deborah's tendency to retreat into the fairy land of dream and its opening suggests her coming into the grip of a new reality of her situation by which she is overtaken after her husband's death. The temptation to escape is like pushing open a door in the mind and then passing through with the freedom of one's life-long desires, as suggested in the setting. Deborah, who in her day dream conceives herself to be the wife of the king of France, gets later determined to shut the door, and cast away the devil in her by patching up with Sara.  

The door of the Summer House symbolizes the entering the cell of self to Simon. It holds out future of hope, love and fulfilment for him. He compares himself to the king of the fables who is dispossessed of his kingdom by an enchantress. The king must seek a magical door to obtain happiness and hope. At the moment the king has got one, the enchantress' voice challenges his courage to open the
The door, and failing which he would be turned into a pauper. The king's fear turns him into a beggar. This mythic analogy is very suitable, as Simon's condition is equal to the king of the fable.

To Sara, the door is neither a retreat into dream nor an opening into a reality. The metaphorical door is of love, wealth and power over man. She has come to believe in the false world of aristocratic values which she renounced in the end.54

In *Long Day's Journey into Night* James feeds on the dreams of his past days. Mary had her own dope dreams and Jamie is haunted by the dream of what he could have been but is no more. Edmund is distressed because his dreams do not come true when he had made voyage. His last voyage had left him physically and spiritually fragmented. But it was worth dreaming as they were the moments of visualizing unique glare of original beauty and mystery. Those were the moments of freedom, peace and ecstasy and it marked the end of his quest. He felt transported into the dream.

The myth of Innocence and the Fall too is discernible. Apparently, the playwright assayed to make the turbulent fairy tale of his family as equivalent of his discovery in his youth that his mother was a dope addict and a family-curse had played its trick with his birth. He too fell from the state of innocence, as he made Edmund feel that everything seemed rotten to him in life.

The dream-impulses is a powerful life-force in the protagonist of O'Neill. His art reflected life and the life reflected in his plays illustrates the perverse dilemma of seeking dreams in reality which is resistant to expectations. He strove to probe the metaphysical
implications and entanglements of those issues which carry him to the heart of the existential absurdities and which plague modern man continuously. His portrayal of mankind in an American dream is epitomized by his protagonists like Robert, Brown, Marco etc. who do not live bereft of the Original Sin. Each of the protagonists lives after the fall and their subsequent struggle with the irreconciliabilities of life where innocence has irrevocably been lost, sets the universally mythic conflict and confrontations into motion.

O'Neill's plays are deft portrayal of the general American tendency of discontentment and restlessness in heart with life. Its origin goes back to the quest for the garden of Eden. The mythical and historical structures in his plays, which provide substance and form to American culture and tradition, make the theme and study of his plays more significant and meaningful. The myth of garden of Eden and its varied forms are at the root of America's origin directly or indirectly. It is an unique allegory of the cultural phenomenon like duality, nostalgia and tension in the psyche. The various shapes of perennial struggle and failure and success are indebted to the myth of Eden for their existence.

These myths and their variants portray eternal variations of human attitude towards God, life, society and self. Myths provide O'Neill's plays with an eternal interest which are excessively rich with poetic and symbolic forms and images. The themes of his plays are loaded with contemporary myths which he used and recreated. These myths are fed by inexhaustible springs of symbols. The myths of the Innocence, the Fall, the Quest, the Dream etc. are planted by the
playwright to suit his needs of depicting man's constant urge for breaking the surface of reality. They are to be seen in all relevant aspects in his plays, as they focus on all times. They assume the nerve-system by which the continual stream of life is preserved.
NOTES

4. Cited in Gelb, O'Neill, p. 122. O'Neill's wife Agnes Boulton has also noted: "This book had more influence on Gene than any other single book he ever read. It was a wort of Bible to him...." Boulton, Part of A long Story (New York, 1958), p. 61.


9. Ibid. p. 77.


24. Ibid., p. 17.
27. Ibid., p. 486.
29. Ibid., p. 502.
30. Ibid., p. 506.
34. Ibid., p. 21.
35. Ibid., p. 22.
36. Ibid., p. 63.
37. Ibid., p. 65.
40. Ibid., p. 39.
41. Idem.
42. Ibid., p. 19.
43. Ibid., p. 127.
46. Idem.
47. Ibid., p. 34.
48. Ibid., p. 35.
49. Ibid., p. 54.
50. Ibid., p. 55.
51. Ibid., p. 55.
52. Ibid., p. 78.
53. Ibid., p. 80.
54. The nomenclature in this play also is significant. Sara in Hebrew stands for 'princess' or 'queen' that she became by bossing over the affection, love and wealth of the Harfords. She became successful in realizing her dream of stately mansions and of possessing her husband's power and pelf because of her personal charm and appealing personality. Simon, in Hebrew stands for 'famous that hears'. He rather ironically hears both to his mother and wife but cannot listen to the call of this earlier dream and his soul because of his indulgence in the process of expending his business by unscrupulous means. Deborah in Hebrew stands for 'a bee' and she sticks to Simon in a bee-like fashion, and specially to her day-dreams.

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