Chapter III

ABNORMAL BEHAVIOUR OF CABOT, ABBIE AND EBEN IN DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS

Desire Under The Elms is a sublime tragedy from the pen of Eugene O’Neill. Here he presents the growing materialistic values of 20th century people. Through Cabot he asserts his faith in God and divine justice. Through various scenes he confirms that it is not easy to feel the presence of God. Like R.W. Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, he finds conflict between attachment and detachment and finally chooses the way of liberation. Like Freud and Jung, he accepts the influence of natural passions and Abbie and Eben fail to control the hunger of the body. It is true that Cabot possesses all the material pleasures and yet leads a tense life. As father he fails to get the affection of Simeon, Peter and Eben. As husband he feels frustrated as the spirit of Eben's mother still feels restless. He seeks pleasure in the company of Abbie. But alas! She fails to satisfy his demand for love. As an old man he fails to satisfy her sexual hunger. Like the heroes of Shakespearean tragedies, his excessive greed is responsible for his agonies. Like King Lear, he wants to be told that he is loved by wife and children. He fails to understand the reality that he is being befooled in his own home as Abbie starts loving Eben from the depth of heart.
While writing *Desire Under The Elms* the artist has a quest to know the meaning of life. He asks the people to know the answers of a few questions such as — What is the purpose of life? What is the significance of existence? What is the role of a person in this universe? Can an atheist get bliss of life? Is it possible to ignore the Infinite? Can a person ignore the basic issues of life as discussed by philosophers and saints? Why do the people lead a life of confusion? How does greed lead a person to his doom? Can lechery be justified?

Through Cabot, Abbie and Eben the artist shows people moving forward from love to lust. Their attachment with the farm never allows them to think of the benefits of liberation. Even Simeon and Peter take gold coins from Eben to depart from the farm as it is not easy to give up the feeling of bondage. The major characters of this tragedy don’t inquire the meaning of right knowledge, right conduct and right philosophy. Do they have the capacity to seek knowledge and wisdom? No. certainly not. As they hardly think beyond their physical needs, they are bound to be dissatisfied, tense and unhappy. Conflict arises between father and son, brother and brother, wife and husband, son and mother etc. as they are attached. In *Abnormal Psychology* S.K. Mangal says:
The term conflict is variously used. There may be conflicts between the ideologies of two sects, cultures, religions and organizations. Conflicts may also arise between husband and wife; father and his son and teacher and the taught. They may also show their presence among brothers and sisters, members of an organization or community, states of a country and countries of the world at large. Apart from these external or outer conflicts there are inner or internal conflicts within the man which are more dangerous to his well-being. These conflicts are called psychological conflicts. (42)

There is no limit to the tensions of Cabot, Eben and Abbie. Cabot is not prepared to love Simeon, Peter and Eben from the depth of heart. Eben regularly feels depressed with the behaviour of his father as the latter compelled his mother to work hard on the farm. Even Peter and Simeon have no respect for Cabot as the latter is not prepared to give any part of land to them. Due to their love for gold, they decide to go to California and seek new jobs. They express their hatred for the greedy father and
even wish him to be dead. They feel shocked when Cabot departs to get married at the age of seventy-five. Why does he not entrust their part of the land to them? They get gold coins from Eben and leave home quietly. As Cabot has brought Abbie, Simeon remarks — Dog’ll eat dog! (45) Now Eben possesses the mental courage to face the situation and hopes to survive with the memories of his mother. How can Cabot steal the farm of his mother? As his mother has worked on the farm for fifteen years, it belongs to her. But Cabot does not attach any importance to this argument. He feels attached with the farm and even Eben is a helping hand here.

The situation changes with the arrival of Abbie in the life of Cabot. Due to his love for mother, Eben does not feel attracted towards Abbie. However, she is an attractive woman of thirty-five years. She is pleased to be in Cabot’s home as she seeks security in life. She fails to love old Cabot due to wide gap in their age-group. Cabot also gets married to get rid of loneliness in home — I was growing old in the spring. (156) He hopes to be comfortable and relaxed with the arrival of Abbie. Here the artist describes the conflict between husband and wife as young Abbie fails to control her lust. Here he imitates the Greek tragedy Oedipus Tyrannus as Abbie feels attracted towards Eben. She
inspires Eben to feel easy and frank with her. Let them be friends and not mother and son:

Ye mustn’t mind him. He’s an old man.
(A long pause, They stare at each other) I don’t want t’‘pretend playin’ Maw t’ye. Eben. (Admiringly) Ye’re too big an’ too strong fur that. I want t’be frens with ye, Mebbe with me fur ye with him. Mebb (With a scornful sense of power) I calc’late I kin git him most anythin’ fun me. (159)

Due to his hatred for Cabot Eben fails to trust him. He does not want to please his father as the latter compelled his mother to work hard on the farm for fifteen long years. She removed stones from the ground every day so that the fields may become fertile. The fields have become fertile now but Cabot does not want to share the profit of crops with Eben though the son also works hard on the farm like his mother. And the result is stress in the mind of Eben. Now his motives change and he fails to tolerate Cabot. His inner self is disturbed and he fails to decide the future course of action. However, he wishes that the soul of his mother should get peace. Regarding such stress James C. Coleman remarks:
Since stress — beyond a minimal level-threatens the well-being of the organism, it engenders automatic, persistent attempts at its resolution; it forces a person to do something about. What is done depends on many factors, including one’s frame of reference, motives, competencies, stress tolerance, environmental limitations and supports, prior mental set and social demands, and expectations. Sometimes inner forces play the dominant role in determining one’s stress reactions; at other times environmental conditions are of primary importance. (118)

As Abbie has led the life of an orphan, she has suffered a lot agonies in the home of her previous husband. After the death of that drunkard she becomes free. Now she needs home and means of income. She asks Eben to have sympathy for her. Their love will change the atmosphere of the family:

But yew won’t hate me long, Eben. I’m not the wust in the world — an’ yew an’ me’ ve got a lot in common. I kin tell that by lookin’ at ye. Waal — I’ve
had a hard life, too — oceans o’
trouble an’ nuthin’ but wuk fur reward.
I was a orphan early an’ had t’ wuk fur
others in other folks’ hums. Then I
married an’ he turned out a drunken
spreer an’ so we had to wuk fur others
an’ me too agen in other folk’ hums,
an’ the baby died, an’ my husband got
sick an’ died too, an’ I was glad sayin’
now I’m free fur once. ... (160)

Yet Eben behaves indecently with her and
addresses her as ‘old witch’. Still Abbie pockets the
insult and excites his passions. She kisses him
passionately and here one finds the victory of
passion against hatred. Yet Eben recollects \his
mother. Abbie promises to be his best friend in life
as he can’t neglect the demand of Nature. The hot
demands of passion are equally felt by them.
Ultimately Nature is bound to succeed as she says:

Hain’t the sun strong an’ hot? Ye kin
feel it burnin’ into the earth — Nature
— makin’ thin’s from — bigger n’
bigger — burnin’ inside ye — makin’
ye want t’ grow — into something’
else — till ye’re jined with it — an
it's your'n — but it own ye, too — an' makes ye grow bigger — like a tree — like them elums — (She laughs again softly, holding his eyes. He takes a step toward her, compelled against this will) Nature'll beat ye. (164)

Abbie fails to develop any liking for Cabot as she has obsession for Eben. Eventually she enjoys bed with Eben. The dramatist describes the growing lust of Abbie for Eben as she fails to control herself. In the beginning it is lust and not love:

... Eben sighs heavily and Abbie echoes it. Both become terribly nervous, uneasy. Finally Abbie gets up and listens, her ear to the wall. He acts as if he saw every move she was making, he becomes resolutely still. She seems driven into a decision — goes out the door in rear determinedly. His eyes follow her. Then the door of his room is opened softly, he turns away, waits in an attitude of strained fixity. Abbie stands for a second staring at him, her eyes burning with desire. Then with a little cry she runs over and throws her arms about his
neck, she pulls his head back and covers his mouth with kisses. (174)

In spite of all resistance, Eben responds to her love and starts flirting with her. All the time he is conscious of the peace of his mother’s soul. What will he feel with this love affair in her home? As the mother’s soul does not react, Eben feels satisfied. But the difference between love and lust is clear. In *Merry Wives of Windsor* William Shakespeare explains this difference and says:

_Fie on sinful fantasy!_  
_Fie on lust and luxury!_  
_Lust is but a bloody fire,_  
_Kindled with unchaste desire,_  
_Fed in heart, whose flames aspire,_  
_As thoughts do blow them higher and higher._  
_Pinch him, fairies, mutually:_  
_Pinch him for his villainy;_  
_Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,_  
_Till candles and star-light and moonshines be out.* (V, V) (91-100)
When Abbie reaches her new home she calls it her home, her room etc. But Cabot corrects her to assert — our home and our room. In the beginning she wants to possess everything for herself as her vision of life is narrow. She wants to prove that Eben can’t get any sexual enjoyment from the village prostitute Minh. She invites him to feel the real bliss of sexual affair.

Soon there is no limit to their love-making. Abbie and Eben make love freely and hope to get a child. But Abbie plays a tricky game with Cabot and assures him to provide a son for the farm and herself:

(She kisses him lustfully again and again and he flings his arms about her and returns her kisses. Suddenly, in the bedroom, he frees himself from her violently and springs to his feet. He is trembling all over, in a strange state of terror. Abbie strains her arms toward him with fierce pleading) Don’t ye leave me, Eben! Can’t ye see it hain’t enuf — lovein’ ye like a Maw — can’t ye see it’s got t’ be that an’ more — much more — a hundred times
more — fur me t’ be happy — fur yew
t’ be happy. (178-179)

She explains him the meaning of happiness with free sex. Why to play the pseudo-game of mother and son? How can she be the mother of a young man like Eben? One day she tells Cabot that Eben tortures her mentally and she doubts his intentions. As Cabot promises her to set him right, she withdraws her charge. Eben is the only fish in her net and she wants to play the sure shot. The days of merry-making pass soon and Eben and Abbie forget their hatred for each other. Love makes them forget their possessiveness.

At times Eben feels tense as he fails to forgive Cabot for his attitude towards his mother. Will her soul forgive him at all? Now Eben feels that his mother may get peace in her grave. Due to mutual understanding Eben and Abbie forget worldly considerations and even Cabot fails to find fault in their conduct.

The irony is that Cabot begets a son at the age of seventy six and arranges a party at home. So far he wants to carry the farm and animals to the next
world with himself as he possesses them mentally. Once he tells Abbie:

But if I could, I would, by the Eternall 'R if I could, in my dyin' hour, I'd set it afire an' watch it burn — this house an' every ear o' corn an' every tree down t' the last blade o' hay! I'd sit an' know it was all a-dying with me an' no one else'd ever own what was mine, what I'd made out o' nothin' with my own sweat 'n' blood! (168)

As the farm needed a son, he is happy. He finds God in the stones. Since he gets a son from Abbie, he feels blessed from God. He wishes to establish a church in the rocks to prepare the altar of Christ here. Now he is sure to plough the land with fresh vigour and zeal:

Ye'd on'y to plow an' saw an' then set an' smoke yer pipe an' watch thin's grow. I could o' been a rich man — but somethin' in me fit me an' fit me — the voice o' God sayin': "This hain't wuthe nothin' t' Me. Git ye back t' hum!" I go afeerd o' that voice an' I
lit out back t' hum here, leavin' my claim an' crops t' whoever'd a mind t' take 'em. Ay-eh. I actoolly give up what was rightful mine! God's hard, not easy! Build my church on a rock — out o' stones an' I'll be in them!

These days there is a total conversion in the character of Abbie and Eben as their lust turns into love and Cabot is not conscious of the real situation. Unwillingly he accepts that he has got a new child in his home. The villagers make fun of him and treat the child as the son of Eben and not his brother. The situation does not take a serious turn as Eben is not in the party. However, Abbie and Eben are not happy to get the result of their love-making. There is no trace of selfishness in both of them as they can do every thing for each other. But this joy does not last long as Cabot creates misunderstanding in the mind of Eben. The old man warns Eben that the new master of the farm has taken birth and the scheme of Abbie has succeeded.

In the thanks giving party Cabot asks the guests to celebrate the birth of his son with full zeal:
Look at me! I'd invite ye t' dance on my hundredth birthday on'y ye'll all be dead by then. Ye're a sickly generation! Yer hearts air pink, not red! Yer veins is full o' mud an' water! I be the on'y man in the country! Whoop! See that! I'm a Injun! I've killed Injuns in the West afore ye was born — an' skulped 'em too! They's a arrer wound on my backside I e'd show ye! (187)

So far this son means the reward of love for Eben. Let the soul of his mother get peace. But tables are turned by Cabot as he disturbs Eben's plans:

Ye think ye kin git 'round that someways, do ye? Waal, it'll be her'n too — Abbie's — ye won't git 'round her — she knows yer tricks — She'll be too much fur ye — she wants the farm her 'n — she was afeerd o' ye — she told me ye was sneakin' 'round tryin' t' make love t' her t' git her on yer side ... ye ... ye mad fool, ye! (191)
Now Eben feels cheated and plans to take revenge from Abbie. He fails to understand the trick of Cabot and behaves in abnormal manner with Abbie. She tries her level best to prove her love for him. But his anger has crossed all limits. Cabot does not care for Eben's mood and tells him:

She did. An' I says, I'll blow his brains t' the top o' them elums — an' she say no, that hain't sense, who'll ye git t' help ye on the farm in his place — an' then she says yew'n me ought t' have a son — I know we kin, she says — an' I says, if w do, ye kin have anythin' I've got ye've a mind t'. An' she says, I wants Eben cut off so's this farm'll be mine when ye die! (With terrible gloating) An' that's what's happened, hain't it? An' the farm's her'n! An' the dust o' the road — that's you'rn't! Ha! Now who's hawin'? (191)

When Abbie gets a male child, there is positive effect upon all the members of the family. Cabot feels that he will transfer the farm to the new son. Eben feels that there is a product of his love and hence he is the father of the child. Abbie feels
delighted as her love has positive effect upon all the members of the family. But the above speech creates negative effect upon Eben and he feels shocked after talking to his father Cabot. Now he doubts the pure love of Abbie for himself. It creates tension in the whole family. His behaviour becomes abnormal. Robert Lundin illustrates such conflict and says:

Approach-avoidance conflicts are probably the most common in our lives, but they can be disrupting. Frequently, events in our daily existence have both positively and negatively reinforcing properties. A child may look forward to and dread his first day at school. A girl anticipates with joy the possibilities of a new date but fears she may be positively reinforcing properties in its interest, but the long hours involved in finishing it can be aversive. A student may want to take a course because he enjoys the subject matter, but he finds the instructor a bore. (111-112)

Eben fails to tolerate this nonsense and hence forgets his love for Abbie. Within no time there is sudden conversion in his personality and he calls
Abbie a whore. Abbie feels shocked now as she fails to understand the cause of his anger. For some time both of them feel frustrated as Eben does not want to talk to her. He fails to understand — How can she be so selfish towards him? Such conflicts are naturally born in daily life of people as Robert Lundin says:

Like frustration it is reasonable to assume that conflict also has an additive effect in that too much conflict, particularly in the early developmental periods, will reduce one’s tolerance for it and hence lead to maladaptive behaviour. Since conflict is an inevitable part of our daily existence, we must either learn to resolve the conflicts whenever possible or, at least develop a degree of tolerance for them. (115)

At this stage Abbie loves Eben from the depth of heart and can make every possible sacrifice to please him. Just she wants to be forgiven by him. Let him forget his hatred and continue to love her:

Abbie: (Pleadingly) Eben, listen — ye must listen — it was long ago — afore
we done nothin’ — yew was scornin’ me — goin’ t’ ee Min — when I wa lovin’ ye — an’ I said it t’ him t’ git vengeance on ye!

Eben : (Unheedingly). With tortured passion) I wish ye was dead! I wish I was dead along with ye was dead afore this come! (Regingly) But I’ll git my vengeance too! I’ll pray Maw t’ come back t’ help me — t’ put her cuss on yew an’ him!

Abbie : (Brokenly) Don’t ye, Eben! Don’t ye! (She throws herself on her knees before him, weeping) I didn’t mean t’ do bad t’ ye! Forgive me, won’t ye? (193)

When Cabot manipulates the situation, Eben feels emotionally tense. Due to sad situation he wants to go to California and live with Simeon and Peter. How can he adjust in the home of Abbie? How can he tolerate this betrayal in the name of love? But Abbie is a changed person now and not Goneril or Regan. She promises Eben to prove her pure passion for him. Actually she is no more possessive now as love is supreme for her. She reveals her inner self to Eben:
If I could make it — 's if he’d never come up between us — if I could prove t’ ye I wa’nt schemin’ t’ steal from ye — so’ everythin’ could be jest the same, kissin’ an’ happy the same’s we’ve been happy afore he come — if I could do it — ye’d love me agen, wouldn’t ye? Ye’d kis me agen? Ye wouldn’t never leave me, would ye? (195)

To prove her passion, she acts rashly and kills her newly born child. How can she tolerate any one between herself and Eben? But the situation takes a serious turn and Eben loses his temper. He asks the soul of his mother to take revenge from her. It is too late when Abbie realizes her folly. Had she killed Cabot in place of her son, it would have solved the riddle. Pathetically she asks Eben to forgive her for this cruel deed. The son was a part of Eben’s personality and she had no right to kill him. She is a killer in true sense and even Cabot is angry with her now. How could she kill her son for her love? Yet she justifies herself:

I didn’t want t’ do it. I hated myself fur don’t it. I loved him. He was so
purty — dead spit ‘n’ image o’ yew. But I loved yew more — an’ yew was goin’ away — far off what I’d never see ye agen, never kiss ye, never feel ye pressed again me agen — an’ ye kind ye hated me fur havin’ him — ye said ye hated him an’ wished he was dead — ye said if it hadn’t been fur him comin’ it’d be the same’s afore between us. (197)

In a bitter mood Eben tells her to be ready to face the situation. How has she shattered his world of joy? How can he forgive her for this cruel deed? Was he not a part of his father? He will take revenge of the murder of his son:

Ha! I kin see why ye done it! Not the lies ye jest told — but ’cause ye wanted t’ steal agen — the last thin’ ye’d left me — my part o’ him — no, the hull o’ him — ye saw he looked like me — ye knowed ye was all mine — an’ ye could n’t b’ ar it — I know ye! He killed him fur bein’ mine! (All this has driven him almost in one. He makes a rush past her for the door —
then turns — shaking both fists at her, violently) But I'll take vengeance now! I'll git the Sheriff! I'll tell him everythin’!

Nobody can put Eben in the category of Iago, Edmund, Cassius and Claudius as he enjoyed sex with Abbie. Actually Abbie is the seducer and victimizer in the beginning. Just he wants to torture Cabot as there is no respect in his mind for his father. Cabot asks him to get married and settle his home. But Eben takes this proposal lightly as the farm, he feels, belongs to him now. Since Abbie loves him, there is certainty in his life. But his sense of security is shattered by Abbie’s folly.

Abbie seeks the solution of the problem with the killing of the child. On the contrary she invites tension for herself with this action. Tension grows in the mind of Cabot and Eben. Eben approaches the police officers to take action against the killer. The murder of the newly born child is not tolerated by Cabot also. He fails to accept the cause of the murder of the innocent child. In an angry mood Abbie tells him:
Don't ye dare tech me! What right hev ye t' questior, me 'bout him? He wan't yewr son! Think I'd have a son by yew? I'd die fust! I hate the sight o' ye an' allus did! It's yew I shoul've murdered. If I'd had good sense! I hate ye! I love Eben. I did from the fust. An' he was Eben's son — mine an' Eben's — not your'n! (200)

It was a terrible threat for Cabot. How could he tolerate this nonsense in his house? He decides to seek the help of law to punish the evil-doer. Let Abbie suffer for her sin:

I got t' be — like a stone — rock o' judgment! (A pause. He gets complete control over himself — harshly) If he was Eben's, I be glad he air gone! An' mebbe I suspicioned it all along. I felt they was somethin' onnateral — somewhars — the house got so lone some — an' cold — driven' me down t' the barn — t' the beasts o' the field. ... Ay-eh. I must've suspicioned — somethin'. Ye didn't fool me — not altogether, leastways — I'm too old a
bird — gwowin’ ripe on the bough ...
(He become aware he is wandering, straithens again, looks at Abbie with a cruel grin) So ye’d liked t’ hev murdered me ’stead o’ him, would ye? Waal, I’ll live to a hundred! I’ll live t’ see ye hung! I’ll deliver ye up t’ the judgment o’ God an’ the law! (201)

Abbie takes law in her hand to solve the problem. When she is arrested, Eben joins her and regards himself responsible for the death of the child. Abbie just wants to get the love of Eben even at this crucial stage. As he kissed her, she responds passionately. There are no regrets in her heart now as her love has been accepted by him.

With the arrest of Abbie, Cabot feels shocked and a feeling of detachment overpowers him. All his greed has withered away and he has no sense of possessiveness anymore. He liberates the animals and plans to join Simeon and Peter in California far away from his fertile fields. Nobody cares for the question — Who will look after the fields now? Eben calls himself a sinner and hence not afraid of prison life. He tells Abbie:
I got t’ pay fur my part o’ the sin! An’
I’d suffer wust livin’ ye, goin’ West,
thinin’ o’ ye day an’ night, bein’ out
when yew was in — (Lowering his
voice) ’r bein’ alive when yew was
dead. (A pause) I want t’ share with
ye, Abbie — prison ’r anything’! (He
looks into her eyes and forces a
trembling smile) If I’m sharin’ with
ye. I won’t feel lonesome, leastways.

In a detached mood Cabot feels relaxed as he
turns to God to seek mercy and divine grace:

I’ hell with the farm! I’m leavin’ it!
I’ve turned the cows an’ other stock
loose! I’ve druv ’em into the woods
what they kin be free! By freein’ ’em.
I’m free in’ myself! I’m quittin’ here
today! I’ll set fire to hose an’ barn an’
watch ’em burn an’ I’ll leave yer Maw
t’ haunt the ashes, an’ I’ll the fields
back t’ God, so that nothin’ human kin
never touch ’em! (204)
Here the artist has exposed the tensions of Cabot, Abbie and Eben. They don’t feel satisfied and contented with their possessions. They never feel liberated due to their sense of possessiveness. The artist asserts that it is not easy to follow the path of truth, virtue, restraint, righteousness and fortitude. Passions have got to be controlled for a peaceful life. Cabot aptly asserts that it is difficult to follow the ways of God.

Lotus Ranold finds the influence of the theories of Freud and Jung upon Eugene O’Neill and says:

In the background are the sternly religious conflict between joy and duty the familiar psychological of Freud and the racial unconscious of Jung. Thus Abbie seduces Eben in the front parlour that signifies his dead mother’s personal space, claiming her son and the farm as her own. And her Eben also follows his father. Just as all three sons had succeeded their father in their patronage Min, the village prostitute, so Eben impregnates Abbie, in an Oedipal union, with phaedriien overtone. (66-67)
It is surprisingly that Abbie takes a hasty step to prove her love for Eben. Her irrational action is disgusting as Margaret Loftus Ranald says:

... Abbie suffocates their child to keep Eben's love, driving the grief stricken young father to report her to the Sheriff. But the power of his passion calls him back to share her fate and in a repetition of the ending of Beyond The Horizon, the two lovers walk forth into the sunrise to face them all too certain future. This conclusion seems more affirmative than in the earlier play, and O'Neill leaves the audience with a sense of love's eternity. (67)

Here the artist asserts the value of ethics as passions have got to be controlled with sense of reason. Ranald Wainscott says that there is mixture of sexual passion, greed and anguish in this tragedy. Finally Abbie and Eben feel shattered and disgusted Cabot's greed gives him pain and nothing else. Abbie ruins the family to satisfy Eben. Jean Chothia remarks:
Abbie in *Desire Under The Elms* must assuages Eben’s pain at the loss of his mother, dead before the action begins, by becoming his surrogate mother as well as his love. Elsewhere the emphasis is more clearly on the alien notion of the man who has in some way betrayed or failed to live up to the expectations of his woman. (194)

As a follower of Aristotle’s theory of tragedy, Eugene O’Neill creates the feelings of pity and fear in the hearts of the audience. Cabot, Abbie and Eben are finally doomed due to the sense of possessiveness. Cabot fails to get love from his sons as he never loves them himself. Eben lacks reason and remains passionate till to end. Abbie deserves to be pitied as she fails to please the husband as well as the lover. This tragedy is remarkable for probable situations. But the artist concentrates upon the feelings, emotions, passions and obsessions of modern people. The members of Cabot family are guided by passion and folly, and not wisdom. Jean Chothia remarks:

In *Desire Under The Elms* the invasion of the stage space by the outside world binds the audience all the more sharply
to the action of the central characters. In part III, the neighbours came to the Cabot house to celebrate the birth of Abbie son. Their boisterous sniggerings of their suspicions about Ephraim's cuckoldry for a while possess the stage but pale into insignificance before the stamina of the old man, who dances the fiddle itself into silence, and the intensity of the passion of the young people, who come secretly together in the room above the malicious whispering. (200-201)

Thus, Eugene O'Neill describes the tensions of Cabot, Eben and Abbie in this tragedy. All of them suffer due to their greed and lust.
WORKS CITED


