CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION
Eugene O’Neill has very effectively made the use of symbolism in his plays. This is an important technique which he has used consciously. This is done with care and designed to extend the scope and meaning of the play beyond the limited boundary of straightforward realism. Through the use of these, the dramatist has achieved a prominent place in the history of American literature. O’Neill was essentially a realist. But almost all his plays are suffused with the radiant glow of mystic symbolism. His art is progressive, within itself and as part of the dramatic history of America.

The plays of O’Neill are endowed with various qualities. He was unique in employing themes on the search for a meaning of life. He has made the use of a number of dramatic devices and techniques in search of a meaning of life and for the communication of the characters. The dramatic devices and techniques are as symbolism, expressionism, masks, aside and verbalization of inner thoughts. His sole aim was to invent a perfect way to communicate both thought and emotion whether it was a realistic or expressionistic or a psychoanalytical play. O’Neill’s problems are eternal and everlasting and pertaining to the entire human race. His subjects are also out of the common beat. He always concerned himself with the plight of man in the universe. The
inevitability of human tragedy is the recurring subject of O’Neill. O’Neill mastered the realism of setting from mechanical to a convincingly actual standard. His play *Beyond the Horizon* conveys the impression of a true realistic setting.

The examination of the plays of O’Neill reveals us certain conclusions regarding the treatment of symbolism and the theme of isolation and loneliness. These treatments and themes are explored through an analysis of their plots, situations, characters, dialogues and techniques. O’Neill is mainly concerned with the sociological, cultural, personal isolation of the individuals who are estranged from one another. The communication and mutual understanding in their lives are replaced by estrangement and hostility. His plays reveal the social life where one individual looks upon the other as a hostile force. There comes a state when he becomes isolated and estranged not only from others but also from himself. O’Neill, being an existentialist, deals with life in a very realistic and authentic manner. He also presents a faithful dramatization of human situation.

In the early plays, O’Neill’s use of the symbolism is apparent through the use of setting that will suggest the theme. In *Beyond the Horizon*, the dramatist alternates the scenes - one inside and one outside scene for each act - by this device suggesting the conflict. It is the conflict between the fixed prison and the yearning for freedom. This use of a symbolic setting gives him greater flexibility. This increases the imaginative quality of his drama. This method of symbolism has been characteristic of O’Neill from the very beginning of his work. The fog in his early one-act plays like *Fog* is symbolic of a stage of mind. This indicates that the impatient and passionate quality of O’Neill’s imagination.
This technique of symbolism is acceptable to the audience and has grown familiar with his development. This technique is a tribute to his inventive genius and his skill. O'Neill has satisfied the audience by a suggestion of reality in combination with his symbolism. He violates strict realism in order to give immediate symbolic meaning to his plays. The use of symbolism has lent a poetic quality to O'Neill's prose. It has universalized his theme. It has added an emotional quality to his realism. This method has made it possible for him at any moment in his writing to depart from the orderly, logical language prose into the psychological sequence of imaginative language. He has been able to remain true to the realism of his characters. At the same time, he suggests those strange warnings, intuitions, fantastic ideas that play on the periphery of consciousness.

There is an added quality to the symbolism that is the quality of mystical. As O'Neill has grown and developed as a dramatist, he has followed faithfully his original technique. His plays grew in scope and theme and with this growth, his symbolism grew more complicated. The changes that came with maturity were changes in degree not in kind. The rich experimental nature of O'Neill's work may be traced to his bold and imaginative use of symbolism. His first great success was The Emperor Jones. It was his use of symbolism in setting, in action and in plot-construction that stirred his audience to wonder and admiration. O'Neill had realized that modern drama need not necessarily be bound by the realistic set. Like the Elizabethans, he rose above the limitation of his stage. He made his stage a servant to his art, refusing to accept the limitation imposed by tradition.
O’Neill has used the symbolism in the various forms. In some of his plays, the symbolism took the form of masks, a technique that was pushed to its utmost limits in *Lazarus Laughed*. He has also made use of the psychological symbolism. It is the symbol that matters in the plays of O’Neill, because he has something more to say than can be said in plain unshaded words. There many big subjects of man’s relation to the apparently meaningless world. The modern science has revealed this relationship to the meaningless world which has been the problems of O’Neill. The use of symbolism by O’Neill indicates that he deprecates the drama which aims at and achieves success in straight realism. He lays down no inflexible dogma. But for himself, he needs the wider field and the deeper, often dimly felt meanings that some form of symbolism will give. The drama to O’Neill is a powerful medium through which the dark surging of man’s inner life sheds for a moment its unreal mask. His plays reveal the unreal reality, the concealed truth. They give form and substance to the drama. They lend to that airy nothing which is in reality everything, a local habitation and a name.

Symbolism is a literary device and the writer makes use of the character, setting, incident, language and expresses his thoughts. The playwright clarifies his ideas, concepts in a short way by making the use of the symbols in his plays. The mind of the character is disclosed with the use of symbols. Eugene O’Neill has made the use of this dramatic device in his earlier and later plays. Symbolism and imagery in a play perform important functions. These devices increase the dramatic concentration and reveal the relation between abstract thought and sensuous experience. Strong emotional experience is stored in the brief space of an image or symbol. Concentration is the chief trait of drama. This is achieved with the help of imagery and symbolism in a play. The
imagery and symbolism reveal the existence of an area or universe which cannot be expressed without sacrificing rapidity and compression which constitute the essence of a drama. The symbol is evocative, and with it, the gap between the rational and poetic knowledge can be explained. The external or the phenomenal world is the object of consciousness, but the monumental world is perceived with the subconscious, ‘the world of will’.

O’Neill also experimented with language in a number of his plays using it for the naturalistic, expressionistic and symbolic purposes. He discovers a new meaning in life with his new approach and new language. In one of the early playbills of the Province Town Playhouse, he stated that he hoped to create a new language for the Theatre. The search led him into many and varied manners of speech, realism, expressionism, naturalism, symbolism, fantasy, poetry alone and in various combinations, as well as experiments with devices from older dramatic traditions. The assonance, dissonance, alliterations, figurative expressions, simile, imagery, rhythm and the Irish dialect have intensified the significance of his plays. O’Neill’s imagery in Beyond the Horizon, The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape has become symbolical. O’Neill accentuates the mood of the characters, and describes the tone of the setting with the help of the symbolic imagery which is recurrent.

O’Neill realized the significance of the old mythic patterns and used Greek pagan myths and Christian Gods to project the modern American cultural patterns, and created new gods out of the modern science and technology. Myth in the past Greek, Roman and Christian view epitomized communal beliefs, and there was no dichotomy
between the cultural beliefs and the actual experience at the end of the play. But the modern American in which the divergence between the community belief of the real play and the actual experience vanishes. O’Neill’s plays also depict the Freudian repression and the Jungian Anima in which going to the mother insures peace. New myths, developed around history, psychology, science, religion, gangsterism, and the modern press, have undertaken the role of Jack, the giant-killer, in upholding the cause of the common man.

The myths of the future have been formulated through the scientific romances and Marxism, Nazism and the general strike which are intricately intermingled with the vision of the future in mythical utopias. O’Neill produced new gods and created new myths in his plays. He views the subconscious as the mother of all gods and Fates. In Beyond the Horizon, The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape, and other plays of O’Neill, the characters clash with their unconscious which is projection of their fate. Myth employs language which is symbolic in his plays. The Emperor Jones embodies the archetypal concepts and individualism. The primitive Negro in this play with faith in exorcism and the religious rites feels a sense of integration when he dances with the witch doctor.

O’Neill’s plays are subtle portraits of the collective unconscious. In his plays, the mythic material has been transposed to the unique situation of man in which he is either broken or alienated, or has failed to discover his friendly. O’Neill, through the use of the mythic patterns in his plays, presents a searching analysis of the culture, religion, psychology and science of the American people, without being able to overcome his sense of despair, his loss of hope and creativity. Disillusioned with Christianity, he looks
to Nietzsche’s paganism for hope. The old myths recreated to provide a solution have not instilled any assurance in him, and his despair has been mixed with nostalgia for the past.

*Beyond the Horizon* is the first major play written by O’Neill which established his reputation as a playwright by winning the first Pulitzer Prize for him. As his first full-length play, it is naturally built upon all his significant earlier works. The play deals with his sense of special relationship between man and his environment. The play depicts the tragic story of Robert Mayo, the true tragic protagonist who has lost his harmony with the environment. Owing to this loss of harmony, he is unable to belong to his circumstances, and so suffers from a sense of isolation throughout his life. His loss of belongingness and the conflict between his dream and desire compel him to live between hope’s eternal optimism and the inevitability of despair. Ultimately, he remains an alienated person till the end of his life. The plays deal with the tragic story of two brothers, Robert and Andrew.

Both the brothers change their ways and are finally separated from each other. Shortly after the marriage, the reality falls upon romance. The false fabric, which has covered both Ruth and Robert, begins to break and they are now to face the pangs of the bitter realities of life. The setting of Act II becomes quite different from that of the first. The room is no longer set in order. This symbolizes the change from prosperity to disintegration in the family and characters. The chaos of the room symbolizes the chaos in the lives of the characters, especially Robert and Ruth. Robert is proved as a misfit to the environment. Still he tries his best to manage the farm for the sake of his child and wife. But there occurs a strange change in the character of Ruth. She becomes peevish,
and is indifferent towards Robert. One day she even tells him that she did not love him. She loved Andrew. Andrew is a farmer. He is a son of the soil. He feels happy only over the land. This shows that both the brothers are sharply opposite to each other in their nature on account of which they are alienated from themselves. Robert dies, but his sacrifice will not fulfill his hopes because the realities with which Ruth and Andrew have been acquainted will ever stand between them. They will never be able to establish any real contact. Therein lies the tragedy of Robert’s life. By losing their identity, their sense of belongingness, all the three major characters have failed to establish the real communion among themselves and have remained alienated from one another as well as from their environment.

_The Emperor Jones_ was a resounding success for the Provincetown Players, one that would ironically lead to their demise. Audience flocked to the box office wanting to become members in order to see the play. This play would seem to have limited attractions for a modern audience, but recent London revivals attest otherwise. There is a network of symbolism in the play _The Emperor Jones_. He uses it from the beginning to the end of the play. And all these symbols are related to one another and moves around the central figure, Brutus Jones. The action of this play starts in the afternoon that symbolizes confidence. In this play, the night, day, forest, daylight, moonlight are full of symbolism. We come across that the beating of tom-tom, the silver bullet, the white colour, dazzling scarlet, red colour of the blood, the crocodile are all symbolically used in the play. Here, we find that the time is also symbolic. The night is the symbol of terror, retrogression and disintegration.
The play deals with the rise and fall of Brutus Jones, the Negro and fugitive emperor. He becomes the emperor through deception and corruption. He becomes the possessor of great wealth on an island in the West Indies. O’Neill has made use of the expressionistic technique very effectively in this play to manifest the psychological terrors and obsessions of Brutus Jones. He is both a symbol (type) and an individual. He is a symbolic figure, but he has also his own individual and distinctive qualities. He is very much different from the other Negroes. There is something distinctive about him. He has more intelligence, more strength of will, and is more self-confident that other members of the race who are generally crazy, weak of will and servile. His gaudy dress is symbolic of savage fondness for loud colours.

Brutus Jones plans for future life. He has collected a lot of wealth in a foreign bank. His mind contains unconscious ideas and symbols arising from his unique personal situation to make up the structure of his personal unconscious. Finally, from this personal unconscious emerges his own unconsciousness, his ego. We find the primary symbolism of his movement through the forest in a circle, hypnotized by the rhythm of a drum beat and ending where he began. Jones makes the exploitation of the natives. He has convinced the native people that he will be killed only by a silver bullet. The playwright has used the symbols of the dance and the silver bullet. The crocodile stands for the evil of the self. We also find that Jones is shot by the natives using the silver bullet. This is the symbol of the destruction of self by its own pride and greed. Brutus Jones symbolizes the irrational and brutish in every man; the silver bullet is the symbol of his pride. It also symbolizes worldly wealth and greed for money. The dark and dense forest stands for the inner darkness and confusion of Jones.
In this play, he has used a lot of sounds with a specific intention. The sound that is heard throughout the play is the beating of the tom-tom. It is a kind of big drum that the natives play on various occasions for various reasons. The tom-tom seems on the very spot, so loud and continuously vibrating are its beats. The dramatist has used the colour symbols in this play. The silver bullet, the white, the dazzling scarlet red colour of the blood are all symbolically used by the dramatist in this play. The dramatist has made use of the forest as the symbol of the primitiveness of the Negro as contrasted with the culture and civilization of the whites. It also symbolizes the inner darkness of Brutus Jones. There is the image of light in the surrounding darkness which symbolises Jones’ spiritual isolation. Throughout his life, he tries to maintain a life of his own, cut off from society, indulged in gambling and killing. Vaguelessly he seeks a new identity, but always finds him insecure. Though lastly, he cries for God out of fear and insecurity, yet he refuses God from the beginning. He himself is responsible for his destruction. Being isolated from his immediate environment, he feels lonely, alienated and unhappy, and this leads him to seek an identity of his own. When he fails to achieve this lost harmony, he suffers from a sense of isolation.

The last scene of this play takes place near the dividing line of forest and plain. We have the characters like Lem, Smithers and the soldiers. They are in search of Brutus Jones. The reports of several shots come from the forest. The beating of the tom-tom suddenly ceases. They come to know that Brutus Jones is dead. He is a criminal and exploits the native people. He has certain faults. He is proud, overconfident and cunning. But in the end, we find that he is killed by the native people with a silver bullet. The scene of this final vision is laid at a stone altar near a tree - sexual as well as religious symbols.
Jones has shed the last layer of his civilized outward self and has gone back to the dark-primitive world of the unconscious. Then he has thrown himself at the foot of the altar to pray. At this time, he realizes that he has returned to the clearing where he entered the forest. He is back where his journey began. Here the rites of exorcism must take place. A Congo witch-doctor enters and begins a wild dance in which Jones joins. The whole spirit and meaning of the dance has entered into him.

Henry Smithers is a Cockney (London) trader. He carries his business to the island where Jones is the emperor. He is a hypocrite, a very monster of jealousy, and cunning, mean and treacherous person. He is very much pleased at the emperor’s death. From the symbolism of the dance, and the use of the silver bullet, evil represented by the crocodile is the evil of the self. Jones, in killing the crocodile, has killed himself, which distorted image of the self. This was his life motivation. He has performed the justice demanded by the dance.

The title *The Hairy Ape* symbolizes the diagnostic character of a savage and ferocious animal in man with an unusual sense of animality. The blending of the constantly repeated image of the ‘ape’ with tragic reality is the remarkable aspect of O’Neill’s dramatic technique. The play conveys the image of man’s primitiveness. The living human reality of the present is like the ape. *The Hairy Ape* shows how Yank is brutalized by an impersonal mechanical social order. In this play, Yank is one who challenges the supremacy of the machine-age and sacrifices his life to move the workers by making them realize the necessity of revolt against their powerful masters. Besides the impersonal and mechanical social order, another factor responsible for the feeling of
isolation and loneliness in O’Neill’s heroes is their failure to discriminate between the world of dream and the world of reality.

Man is present in a continual repetition of his past. The ape is ingrained in man. He cannot avoid the awaiting doom if he does not control the ape thriving within him. There are two small important words ‘hairy’ and ‘ape’. These words become the root cause of tragedy in the life of the protagonist, Yank. These words signify the strength and the brutality in the character of Yank. Yank is proud of his physical strength and superior feelings of belongingness. Yank is a true devotee of work. He considers himself as the force behind the moving ship. O’Neill’s characters are the willing victims of romantic dreams or illusions. They suffer and feel isolated because of their refusal to give up their dreams. The tensions in his plays are nearly always connected with man’s struggle against isolation and loneliness. The secret of his dramatic intensity is to be found not in his theatricality. But this is to be found in his rebellion and anger, in his inability to resign himself to an arid view and way of life. He could not be at ease in a world without God, love and trust in life.

His plays make it certain that he is the dramatist of failure, estrangement and isolation all through his illustrious literary career. The ending of the play *The Hairy Ape* is ambiguous. It is fantastic, unnatural and unconvincing. It ends on a tragic, sad and unconvincing note.

“Ladies and gents, step forward and take a slant at de one and only - one and original - Hairy Ape from de wilds of - (He slips in a heap on the floor
and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs.)"

[The Hairy Ape, Scene VIII, Pp. 59-60.]

In the last Scene of this play, the symbol is visually presented, in the shape of the gorilla in its cage. Eugene O'Neill has made the use of symbolism in the setting of the play, the characters, dialogues, techniques, language etc. The language of the play is also symbolic. The title itself is symbolic. It refers to primitive civilization. The phrases and the words as - ‘filthy beast’, ‘hairy ape’, ‘belong’, ‘I do not belong’, etc are symbolically used in the language.

Eugene O’Neill has studied this crisis of identity in American society very closely. Yank has lost his sense of belongingness, so he is now motivated by his strong desire for revenge on Mildred. Then arises the immediate problem for him: Where he stands? He has been identified with the ship and the stoke-hole. Then he loses his old identity, the immediate problem for his is to find out a fresh one. To search for identity or self is the basic nature of each and every individual. His search for a new identity and his urge for belongingness lead him to Fifth Avenue for taking revenge on the upper aristocratic society. This is represented by Mildred. Mildred Douglas’s father is the President of the Steel Trust. She is the representative of a world entirely different from that of Yank. She is pale, colourless, decadent and an artificial product of society. She never dreamt of seeing such a sequence and a person like Yank. Her looks and attitude express much more than what she comments. Yank feels himself insulted in some
unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride. The story here begins to change Yank’s life. He becomes confirmed about the look of Mildred when Paddy conveys him:

“Sure, ‘twas as if she’d seen a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo!”

[The Hairy Ape, p.62]

This is the greatest blow to Yank’s blow. He begins to think that he suffers humiliation at the hands of a woman. His body has become now a prison for him. After that crucial incident, he no longer feels that he belongs. Therefore, he tries to escape from the prison where he cannot be content to belong. The more he thinks about the incident, the more helpless he feels. Finally, he reaches a position where he is described as Rodin’s ‘Thinker.’

Yank stands for every individual. Yank is the representative of those who are in search for identity. Yank is a symbolic character of the modern steel age. Yank represents very individual who has the sense of belongingness. The world in which Yank enters is artificial, materialistic world. This is a world of different type beyond his knowledge. In this world, people lead a mechanized life. Yank also tries desperately to impinge his identity on the upper class society. Yank wants his own recognition. This is not only a problem for Yank. But it is the problem of the whole social system to which persons like Yank belong.

Yank’s experience in Fifth Avenue makes him aware of his position because this world is far away from the people of his stature. He becomes more helpless than
before. This helplessness in a crowded civilized world compels him to seek recognition through his second nature i.e. violence. At last, he finds himself in jail after assaulting a person of the upper class. According to him, in the beginning, steel represented steamers, engines, buildings. But now he finds the real steal which symbolizes cages, cells, locks, bolts, bars like the dream of every American which is based on,

“Liberty! Justice! Honor! Opportunity! Brotherhood!

[The Hairy Ape, p. 76]

But these are far from reality. Dreams and realities are poles apart. Throughout the play, Yank is linked with the evolutionary process - a thinking ape. Society, faced with the desire of the beast to become human, places him in cage after cage. This arouses emotions of protest against a world that victimizes any of its citizens this way. Yank’s unconscious self accepts the fact that he is a ‘Hairy-ape’ in a cage of steel. The word ‘hairy-ape’ continues to torture him. He considers prison as a zoo. Behind the steel-bar in the prison cell, Yank starts realizing the naked reality of life. He feels that his power and strength is nothing but a false ego. This is merely a dream, an illusion. His force of thinking steel is reality - is in reality no strength at all. The idea that he is steel is completely wrong. He becomes aware that the power does not belong to him. Instead, it belongs to Mildred’s father.

O’Neill’s characters suffer from isolation and loneliness also when they try to possess any human being by playing nasty tricks. This kind of possessiveness arises out of insecurity. This becomes the cause of their isolation. People in his plays suffer from
isolation and loneliness also owing to their false pride and ego. Another important aspect of his plays is the search for the lost mother’s love. It is the significant cause of man’s isolation and loneliness. There is a profound love of a man for the lost mother. This is the symbol of lost happiness. Man remains isolated throughout his life. We also find the sufferings of an individual in the plays of O’Neill through his isolation from ‘self’. The characters in his plays are isolated and feel lonely due to their false pretensions and racial complex. Brutus Jones in *The Emperor Jones* is a victim of self-alienation by hating the Negroes to whom he really belongs.

Isolation is an important aspect of the plays of O’Neill. This is a symbolic aspect of his plays. Isolation in the plays of O’Neill is shown through the love-hate relationship among the characters. In his opinion, man is a lonely sufferer in this helpless world. He finds himself totally isolated in a spiritually sterile universe. Therefore he cannot have a sense of harmony in it. In his search for identity, and also his need to belong, he feels his lustiness more intensely. All the protagonists of his plays feel isolated, alienated, and despaired for lack of the centre of belonging. The tension in his plays is commonly related with the struggle against isolation and loneliness. We learn from his works that a man has to face tough times in a world without God, love and faith in life. Man may belong, but it is possible only after sacrificing his life. It happens in the case of Yank, Robert Mayo.

The present research study reveals that the theme of loneliness and isolation is one of the variations on a common theme in American drama. This stands for symbolism. The theme of quest to which all the major dramatists are engaged in some
form or the other. In the plays of O’Neill, this theme has been raised almost to a cult, a
force in human affairs that seems to dominate all the other aspects of life. These aspects
become the aspects of symbolism which has been treated effectively in almost of his
plays by O’Neill. This treatment of symbolism in his plays changes from the early to the
later plays when his own outlook on life grows more pessimistic and negative. At the
same time, the theme of isolation and loneliness also changes as well. Isolation and
loneliness are caused by the vague and romantic dreams of the characters. These
characters finally meet the failure of unfulfilment of these dreams. In the later plays,
O’Neill deals with that aspect of the dream of his characters which keeps the dream alive
and worth-pursuing. The character experiences a submerging of self into the universal
whole in a mystical fashion.

His plays make it certain that he is the dramatist of failure, symbolism,
estrangement and isolation all through his illustrious literary career. He is a critic of the
American society of this kind and also of society as a whole. He thinks of man in relation
to his social system. It is not man as an individual alone that concerns him but man in his
social order - tortured, starved, disillusioned, disappointed and driven to disaster by the
forces of system which cares nothing for the jungle welfare of this society. He treats man
not as a free, detached individual, not merely as an individual in relation to a few
characters, but as a person against the background the background of social forces. It is
the social implication that makes O’Neill’s plays lively in the minds of the audience. His
importance as a social critic lies in the fact that he emphasizes the psychological aspects
of modern and social set-up. He points out the disease of America’s acquisitive society.
He does not merely stress the fact that workers are exploited to create wealth for the
few. He shows the fact how in our modern, machine-made world, they are deprived of the sense of harmony and mental well-being. Man’s work is a necessary part of his personality. It is an expression of his ego. This makes him feel that he is a necessary part of the life of the world in which he lives.

Modern industry tends to destroy this psychological counterpart of work. This industry leaves the worker a nervous, irritable and dissatisfying misfit in the society. Living in an impersonal, mechanical, urbanized and industrialized social environment, he is constantly on the rack. He suffers from inner emptiness, isolation and feeling of insecurity. This is bedeviled from within and without. The isolation from the society has become the major symbolic treatment in the plays of O’Neill. There is the symbolic way of the search for identity. Man has lost the sense of harmony in nature. He is unable to establish harmony with his fellowmen. His work has grown soulless and mechanical. He feels lonely and isolated. This mechanical life of man has led him to the loss of human identity. The modern man is a misfit in a world he himself has created. Torn between what man is and what he ought to be, he is forced to become aware of himself. He is in constant search of his true self. In this modern technological and material society, everything becomes a problem to be solved by reasoning and calculation. Owing to the pressure of society, man is forced to live in a self-estranged state. Eugene O’Neill has directed his attention to investigate the nature of a strictly American brand of illusion and its clash with social reality.

The play *Marco Millions* is a romantic satire on Occidental hard-headedness set against a colourful background of medieval oriental civilization. The first act of this play is
pure symbolism. We have the use of symbols in the prologue. In it, three great religions are represented, each being an outward symbol without inward meaning, except as a justification for such prejudices as serve the practical ends of each who professes it. The six scenes of Act-I symbolize the progress of Polo from the West to the East, from the world of limited, practical values to the world of eternal values. Kukachin’s death song expresses the mystical or inner justification of her fate. *Marco Millions* is an excellent study in the social concept of the Western business ideal. Marco serves as a symbol for big business. It is a satire on the modern businessman.

*All God’s Chillun Got Wings* deals with the tragic marriage between Jim Harris, the intelligent, sensitive negro boy, and Ella Downey, his white wife. They cannot adjust themselves with their circumstances. They become isolated beings. They suffer from a sense of isolation and loneliness. In this play, O’Neill has dealt with the racial consciousness that is deep-rooted within the society.

*Desire under the Elms* reveals the conflict in the mind of its characters that arises from their desire to possess. It dramatizes the fierce struggle of three main characters to possess a rockbound farm in order to give a direction and meaning to their insecure and lonely lives. It deals with the tragedy of a New England farmer of 1850’s, Ephraim Cabot, who is unable to communicate either with his wives or with his sons. The title of the play symbolizes that the persons who seek shelter under the ‘Elms’ have several desires within.
Lazarus Laughed is the play of mask-symbolism. In this play a large number of characters wear masks. It is an exposition of the philosophy of life and death. Lazarus wants to lift man above the animal nature. Miriam, his wife is a symbol of the conscience of humanity. The play is a vast symbolic pageant, tracing the progress of Lazarus as he preaches to the Jews, the Greeks, and finally, the Romans.

There is also the use of the mask symbolism in The Great God Brown. We come across that how a man loses identity wearing a mask of unreality, and moves away from his own self. Besides showing the two faces of man, the mask expresses the basic polarities inherent in human existence, such as life and death, saint and Satan, art and materialism, and creation and destruction. Magaret is a practical lady. She can compromise with life easily. In the beginning of the play, she admires the artistic quality of Dion, and accepts him as her husband. In the play, Cybel symbolizes the rootlessness of the modern world and its corrupt value-system. Choosing the life of a prostitute, she has separated herself from the society. She prefers to lead a solitary life.

The play Dynamo was written in France in 1928. According to Doris V. Falk, the play is a symbolical and factual biography of what is happening in a large section of the American (and not only American) soul right now. O’Neill has used the Oedipus pattern in order to give the symbolic conflict a basis in “factual biography.” Reuben prays to the dynamo as Barrett H. Clark says,

“O Dynamo, God of Electricity, which gives life to all things, hear my prayer! Receive me into the Great Current of Your Eternal Life. Bless me with Your
secret so that I can save men from sin and sorrow and death! Grant me the miracle of Your love,”

[Barrett H., Clark, 1947, p. 121]

The play *Mourning Becomes Electra* means ‘it befits Electra to mourn.’ It is a realistic presentation of a Greek play *Oresteia* by Aeschylus. The masks used by the playwright as the symbols reveal the hidden desire of the characters. The characters have a ‘mask-like face’ and it suggests their split, and inner disharmony. The use of external and internal scenes becomes symbolic in the play. The song sung by Seth, the housekeeper of Mannons is also suggestive. It explores the theme of the play. It also symbolizes an unnavigable gulf.

In *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, O’Neill has depicted the most agonized picture of man. It is the most personal of O’Neill’s plays. It deals with the inter-family isolation and shows how an outwardly prosperous and happy family suffers from isolation. It depicts the story of four Tyrones, the money-loving father, James Tyrone, his wife Mary, their elder son, Jamie, and the younger son, Edmund. These characters suffer from isolation and separation.

The title *Long Day’s Journey into Night* is very symbolic and suggestive. It signifies the characters’ separation from reality. It is not a forward journey but in the backward direction, especially for Mary. For her, it is a sad journey into the fog of hope and dream which clearly separates her from reality. For Jamie, it is a hopeless journey into the night of cynicism and frustration. For him, it begins and ends in darkness, offering him nothing.
to soothe his agitated mind. And for Edmund, it is a journey beyond night in a hopeful state of unreality. Mary is also the inverse image of the Earth Mother for whom her sons long.

In this way, because of the use of symbolism as a technique O’Neill became successful in presenting his themes very effectively.


