Chapter IV

SOCIETY AND HAPPINESS

The main concern of the present chapter is to examine O'Neill's attitude to human misery and to show how he distinguishes self-imposed and socially imposed sorrows from those sorrows which are irresolvably inherent in human existence. Let us begin by seeing how O'Neill in his plays treats of the socially imposed sorrows man has to undergo as a social being and how he explores the possibilities of ameliorating the human condition. Though we cannot expect any definite plan for social change from a literary writer, it is worthwhile to ponder on the prospects of a sociological nostrum based on the hints to be traced out in his plays. Any great piece of literary work can be expected to inspire and enable the readers to think out or at least dream out the possibilities of creating a happier society. In this respect too, O'Neill's works are great.

The impact of the ideas in a literary work on society is gradual and transitional. As long as society is the product of man, to that extent, man will be a product of society. Reform is feasible and able to achieve its aims only by improving the man. Though this educating process is very slow, this enlightening should go hand in hand with the social reforms based on the laws of Nature with a clear awareness of the peculiarities of human nature.

The optimist is the man who thinks it possible to hope that the world will not get worse. He who believes that nature is indifferent to human beings
is not to be regarded as a pessimist but he is an optimist if he finds an order, structure and uniformity in the laws of Nature. He who believes that Nature never pollutes man, but man pollutes man and nature is not to be treated as a pessimist but he is to be considered a realist. O’Neill belongs to this group.

The attempt to conceive imaginatively a better ordering of human society than the destructive and cruel chaos in which mankind have hitherto existed is by no means modern, it is at least as old as Plato, whose Republic set the model for the utopias of subsequent philosophies. Whoever contemplates the world in the light of an ideal—whether what he seeks be intellect or art or love or simple happiness, or all together must feel a great sorrow in the evils men needlessly allow to continue. If he is a man of vital energy—he will feel an urgent desire to lead men to the realization of the good which inspires his creative vision.

What has been the influence of the political and social circumstances upon the thoughts of eminent and original thinkers, and conversely, what has been the influence of these men upon subsequent political and social developments? This is, no doubt, a very general and very important question. O’Neill as a dramatist is not expected to suggest any kind of panacea for the social evils; but he has conscientiously attempted to highlight in some of his plays the tragic plight of individuals, whose destiny was determined by the social system. In plays like The Fog, Iceman Cometh, Days Without End etc. O’Neill depicts a pathetic picture of their doom—a doom which would have been avoided by a better ordering of the society either by the voluntary measures by the fellow-beings or by the political system of the benevolent
rulers. But many of us in ordinary times pass through life without ever
contemplating or criticising as a whole, either our own conditions or those of
the world at large. We find ourselves born into a certain place in society and
we accept what each day brings forth, without any effort or thought beyond
what the immediate present requires. Almost as instinctively as the beasts of
the world some of us seek the satisfaction of the needs of the moment, without
much forethought, and without considering that by sufficient effort, the whole
conditions of our lives could be changed. A certain percentage, guided by
personal ambition, make the effort of thought and will which is necessary to
place themselves among the more fortunate members of the community; but a
very few among these are seriously concerned to secure for all the advantages
which they seek for themselves. It is only a few rare and exceptional men who
are driven by an altruistic ideal with a kind of love towards mankind at large
that makes them unable to endure patiently the general mass of evil and
suffering, regardless of any relation it may have to their own lives. These few,
driven by sympathetic pain, seek first in thought and then in action, for some
way of escape, some new system of society by which life may become richer,
more full of joy and less full of preventable evils, than it is at present.
Historically speaking, in the past such men have, as a rule, failed to interest
the very victims of the injustices which they wished to remedy. But there have
been writers throughout the centuries, whose thoughts could have inspired
actions. Yet the more unfortunate sections of the population have been
ignorant, apathetic from excess of toil and weariness for their livelihood and
morally unreliable owing to the loss of self-respect resulting from their
degradation. But the modern world, by the increase of education and rise in
the standard of comfort among wage-earners, has produced new conditions, more favourable to the social reconstruction so as to do away with the dooms imposed on men by the environment which makes happiness inaccessible to individuals. It is the role of the writers to cultivate the desire for the amelioration of the society and to inspire the readers for it. But it is the duty of the social reformers and the function of the best possible political system to create the framework and methods of achieving this end. One who professes the same desire for the creation of a better, happier society is expected also to accept the methods of improving the human race either through education or through radical scientific measures.

O'Neill's tremendous success as a dramatist depends to a great extent upon the fact that he has had something to say about the modern social order. His technique and his form have been admirable vehicles for an interpretation of the conflict which arises out of the circumstances of the world in which we live. Any literary work which is divorced from man's struggle with an unfriendly and indifferent universe and imperfect social system loses the most abiding appeal that art can have for man.

O'Neill is a critic of American society and society as a whole. What are his standards for criticism? Why, since he criticizes the whole structure of modern society, has he never espoused even mild reform, let alone revolutionary movements? The theory according to which O'Neill criticizes society is complex, but nevertheless it is a theory, and may be formulated by working backwards from the plays it affected.
In the socially conscious twenties, O'Neill attracted most attention with those plays that could be, and largely were, interpreted as dramatizations of an intensifying class struggle or of a society undergoing a social upheaval. It is possible, of course, for a playwright to be an artist with plays of "social" content, as it is possible to be an artist with plays of "unsocial" or non-social content. Marxist critics at first applauded O'Neill because they thought his plays supported the ideology to which they were committed; when after a while they discovered that his social message was "confused" and that his major interest lay elsewhere, they turned upon him in sorrow and anger. In Soviet Russia, in spite of the honoured position O'Neill had always occupied in its theatres Days Without End was banned. Days Without End, according to Arthur Hobson Quinn "was a profound study of the conflict in a man's nature between his finer spiritual qualities and a cynical superstructure based upon "Atheism wedded to Socialism . . . living in free love with Anarchism, with a curse by Nietzsche to bless the union" . . . . In this play O'Neill's "'Godism' took various forms—socialism, syndicalism, anarchism, and always Roman Catholicism." 

It is not man as an individual alone that concerns O'Neill; it is a man in a social order, tortured, starved, disillusioned, thwarted and driven to disaster by the forces of a system which cares nothing for the general welfare of the poor, the downtrodden and the exploited people in the society.

In his early one-act play, "Fog" O'Neill refers to poverty as "the most deadly and prevalent of all diseases." Fog is symbolic of the state of mind of the business man who is adrift in a boat with a poet, a woman and a dead
child who died of poverty. When the businessman expresses concern over the child’s death, the poet replies by giving a picture of social injustice which surrounds the lives of the poor. He says: “What chance had that poor child? Naturally sickly and weak from underfeeding, transplanted to the stinking room of a tenement or the filthy hovel of a mining village, what growing opportunities did life hold out that death should not be regarded as a blessing for him?”

The businessman answers with a doubtful negative, which implies that he thinks there should be some way out. He expresses the usual vague hope of those who find it hard to face reality. The poet then pushes the problem still further by asking an embarrassing question: “If you could bring him back to life, would you do so? Could you conscientiously drag him away from that fine sleep of his to face what he would have to face? Leaving the joy you would give his mother out of the question, would you do it for him individually?”

The implications of these questions apply not only to the dead child in the boat, but to millions of unfortunate victims of our industrial system. These questions are similar to the fundamental question: “If you were God would you not prevent this monstrous abortion called the living poor? What right have we to permit life to be born that exists only for slavery or worse than slavery—a life of neglect and suffering to end in a charity bread line, and a pauper’s grave?”
The businessman in the play, irritated by the question, tries to escape by asserting that he is “not responsible for the way the world is run.” And the poet replies, “But you are responsible.”

I mean supposing we—the self-satisfied, successful member of society—are responsible for the injustice visited upon the heads of our less fortunate ‘brothers-in-Christ’ because of our shameful indifference to it. We see misery all around us and we do not care. We do nothing to prevent it. Are we not then, in part at least, responsible for it? Have you ever thought of that?

O'Neill has thought a great deal about that and has given his answer in many different plays. It is because he has thought of man in relation to his social system that his plays have become something more than a moment’s entertainment. In his plays man is neither a free and detached individual, nor an individual in relation to a few characters who are associated with him in the immediate actions in the play, but man is treated against a rich background of social forces. Behind the backdrop, before the beginning of the play, and beyond the ending lies a definite social system that is also important to an appreciation of the play. It is the social implication that makes his play have a life in the mind of the audience after it has left the theatre and scattered to the quiet of individual thought.

No writer ever made more digressions to generalize about life and its tragic lot than did Shakespeare or Goethe. O'Neill seems to be far more restrained than his modern contemporaries or any of his predecessors to make
digressions, but that he is concerned with the problem of man in relation to
the present social order is apparent in all of his plays.

Another play which supplies a rich background to social criticism is
*The Emperor Jones*. When Brutus Jones lost his nerve in the forest, the grim
shadows of his past came to haunt him. They were slavery, crime,
penitentiaries, the whole vicious, unjust and illogical structure of the modern
industrial world, which goads the poverty-stricken day and night to commit
crime, and then when it is committed, punishes the criminal it has helped to
make—punishes without references to the causes that inspired the crime. The
outdated, unhuman and unsympathetic man-made laws are implicitly
questioned to be reformed. Jones escaped the direct punishment, but he
could not escape the deep scars left by a vicious system. In the pantomime of
the prison scene and at the auction mart our social order as well as the
character of Jones is clearly revealed.

O'Neill's play *The Hairy Ape* gives the main outlines of his social
today as no other one play does. The play presents an extremely negative
view of the state of mechanized America, where the worker best adjusted to
the system is a "hairy ape," and where the "capitalist class" is even more
terribly dehumanized, for it has lost all connection with life, is simply "a
procession of gaudy marionettes" (Vol. I, HA 236). According to *The Hairy
Ape*, both government and religion are devices for maintaining the status quo.
Government is equally at the service of the marionettes. On the legislative
side the status quo is glorified and on the enforcement side, it is exemplified
by police who function to keep the workers from disturbing the wealthy and to
protect the wealthy from the ignorant terror of any threat like the I. W. W. On the whole, the state, as pictured in *The Hairy Ape* is a device for dehumanizing its citizens, and for preventing change.

Naturalistic in its outlook, expressionistic in its method—*The Hairy Ape* was a turning point in O'Neill’s play-writing development. Wasting little pity on the hopeless primal horde, O'Neill next turned to the figure nearer his heart: the life-weary soul who could not belong, even to a world of apes, but who found the apes’ prescription for survival—drinking and dope-dreaming—as effective as they had.

*The Hairy Ape* incorporates another aspect of European expressionism, the concern with political and social change. However, it does not pursue a message or aim at social reform in the manner of the works of German playwrights. O'Neill as usual emphasizes the individual search, particularly the inner clash of the natural animalism in man with man’s own vision of a supernatural force and with the yearning for a human “home,” the deep desire to belong. O'Neill synthesizes a number of experiences and symbols, including the world of ships and seamen, the black-white polarization in society etc. The brutalizing effect of a materialistic society makes man’s condition apparently hopeless, yet the yea-saying quality in man gives him hope. The central character in the play, Yank, who according to O'Neill is “every human being,” tries to regain a sense of assurance and self-respect by service to the industrial workers of the world, but he is insultingly rejected. Called an ape so often, he tries to rejoin the naturalist ape-world, only to be crushed to death. The conclusion may be interpreted as a forecast of the main
theme of *Iceman Cometh*: once a man's illusion of his self-justification and self-esteem is destroyed, he belongs to death.

The real danger to modern civilization is the stupidity and timidity of the ruling classes. As the machine created wealth it destroyed the joy of living, the only thing that wealth is good for. In *The Hairy Ape* O'Neill presents a problem that has broader implications than the immediate success or failure of Yank. Yank becomes aware of the fact that he does not "belong." He finds out that while he has been doing his work, the world has been gradually but quite rapidly revolutionized by machinery, a revolution that has not carried him with it. He finds that a new world which disregards human rights and aspirations has left him stranded. The one thing which had made his life endurable was that he felt that he "belonged," that he was a necessary, vital and human part of a social order. But one day he woke to find the fact that he counted for nothing as an individual. If he could have reasoned it out clearly, he would have known that as soon as a machine known as an automatic stoker could be invented, he would be thrown overboard. He would have known that the progress of invention is for the benefit of those who exploit the workers and not for the good of society as a whole. And this is not Yank's problem alone, but the problem of our whole social system. There are millions of men and women who are blood relations of Yank in this modern industrial world. Like Yank they have grown up in the faith that they "belonged," that they were a necessary and respected part of a social order, but they have lived to find out that they are nothing of the kind. As they walk up and down the world looking for work only to be turned away with a brutal word, as they stand in thousands of bread lines to receive food not much
better than slop that charity flings them; as they shiver from cold, and see their loved ones die from want consoled only by the fact that they, too, will soon be dead, they come to the realization that they do not belong. They see an abundance of food clothing and shelter lavishly wasted on every hand, but nothing is offered them. They taste only the food that has been allowed to rot, because of a system which does not or cannot change its ideals. They stand on the sidewalks of the world, desolate, abandoned, even hated and disposed for being something they did not ask to be.

Yank tries desperately to cope with the problem and for his pains is thrown into jail where a fellow-prisoner makes a plain and direct criticism of the social order by reading a senator’s puerile defence of a system that offers imprisonment or starvation as its only answer to social injustice. This speech, quoted in full, shows the extent to which O’Neill introduces a direct approach to the social problem. Thus spoke Senator Queen as reported in the *Sunday Times*:

There is a menace existing in this country today which threatens the vitals of our fair Republic—as foul a menace against the very life-blood of the American Eagle as was the foul conspiracy of Catiline against the eagles of ancient Rome! I refer to that devil’s brew of rascals, jailbirds, murderers and cut-throats who libel all honest working men by calling themselves the industrial workers of the world; but in the light of their nefarious plots, I call them the industrial wreckers of the world. . . . This fiendish organization is a foul ulcer on the fair body of our Democracy. . . . Like Cato I say
to this Senate, the I. W. W. must be destroyed! For they represent an ever-present dagger pointed at the heart of the greatest nation the world has ever known, where all men are born free and equal, with equal opportunities to all, where the Founding Fathers have guaranteed to each one happiness, where Truth, Honour, Liberty, Justice, and the Brotherhood of Man are a religion absorbed with one's mother milk, taught at our father's knee, sealed, signed, and stamped upon in the glorious Constitution of these United States!" (Vol. I, HA 242-243). . . .

They plot with fire in one hand and dynamite in the other. They stop not before murder to gain their ends, nor at the outraging of defenceless womanhood. They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God's revealed plan for the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape! (Vol. I, HA 243-244)

In *The Hairy Ape*, O'Neill is not dealing with the condemnation of a particular political order; but he probes into the deeper aspects of the psychological implications of the machine age. It is not work that Yank is seeking. What Yank wants is to know that he "belongs." The problem of identity in the modern society is the question. He wants to find out what it is that has happened to the world which separates him from the realization that what he is doing is a necessary and fitting part of the life of the world.
The typical speech of the senator attributes to the workers all the sins of which he and his class are guilty. Yank is a symbol of the deep protest that rises like a wave against the whole structure of modern civilization. He is man crying out against a system which has not only exploited man’s body but his spirit as well. It is a play about the disintegration of modern civilization and about the condemnation of the whole structure of machine civilization, a civilization which succeeds only when it destroys the psychological well-being of those who make it possible.

The sickness of the machine age is not wholly a problem of relating production and consumption. It goes much deeper than that. The whole concept of life, of man’s relation to the world, of his place in it is involved. Yank was not concerned about distribution—vitally important as that is—he wanted to be a creative part of the social structure. He feels the need for a sense of belonging, which man in the eighteenth century belonged as a creative worker. Yank is a protest against the mordant success of the machine age. O’Neill makes this clear as Yank moves from one defeat to another striving vainly to find some answer to his problem. In prison he heard of the I. W. W.’s and thought to find among them an answer. They throw him into street, just as the Communist of today would deny him a place. The communists would not accept Yank, because Yank is an individualist not a partyman. What he wants is to be a creative worker proud of what he as an individual has created.

Yank in the pose of “The Thinker” reviews the whole situation, ending by admitting that his greatest crime was that of being born. The machine age
has done something to man that wages, food, home, family, shorter hours and a "lousy vote" won't remedy. Because of its deep psychological and philosophical implication, The Hairy Ape cannot be classed with a type of social drama which solves a problem and points a way out. O'Neill has presented the paradox of modern civilization with great insight into its fundamental tragedy. Like Yank we all say, "where do we go from here," and the answer is "Hell" (Vol. I, HA 251).

When elementary needs have been satisfied, the serious happiness of most men depends upon two things—their work and their human relations. Work should be free and not excessive, full of interest that belongs to a collective enterprise in which there is rapid progress, with something of the delight of creation even for the humblest unit. The only human relationship that have value are those that are rooted in mutual freedom, where there is no domination. Yank finds the absence of all these in the so-called modern civilized society. He feels that work is a necessary part of his personality; it is an extension of his ego; it makes him feel that he is a necessary part of the life of the world in which he lives. Any work undertaken in the right spirit is capable of bringing a man into fruitful contact with the outer world. Work of which the motive is solely pecuniary cannot have their value, but only work which embodies some kind of devotion whether to persons, to things, or merely to a vision. And love itself is worthless when it is merely possessive, it is then on a level with work which is merely pecuniary. Modern industry tends to destroy this psychological counterpart of work, and in so far as it does, it leaves the worker a nervous, irritable and dissatisfied misfit. Yank was such a worker, and at the same time, conscious of the thing he had lost. He did not
want a job simply because it would be a means to earning a living; he wanted a job in which he could live. He points out the disease of our acquisitive and consumptive society. He does not merely stress the fact that workers are exploited to create wealth for the few, but shows how in our modern machine-made world they are deprived of the sense of harmony and mental well-being that comes from doing something that seems important and necessary to satisfy his ego.

In *The Hairy Ape*, O'Neill faces Yank with three possible attitudes towards modern society. The first is his own at the beginning of the play: complete acceptance of industrialized society, identification with speed and power. This attitude becomes impossible for Yank the moment he sees how he appears to a cultivated sensibility, and, more important, realizes that he is owned and controlled by the men who own the steel. The second attitude toward modern society is represented by Paddy, the chantyman, who longs for the days before society became industrialized. Yank does not object to the idea of returning to the past, but he is contemptuous of it as an impossible "dope dream." The third attitude with which O'Neill faces Yank is that of Long, the radical. O'Neill gives a clear account of what Long as well as the I. W. W. thinks is wrong with society, and what he considers to be the remedy. Long starts with the same assumption that underlies the whole play—the structure of society is rotten. The cause of this rottenness, for Long, is the economic system: "They dragged us down 'til we're only wage slaves in the bowels of a bloody ship, sweating, burning up, eating coal dust! Hit's them's ter blame—the damned Capitalist class!" *(Vol. I, HA 212).* Since the basic evil
is capitalism, the workers, according to Long must be educated to a knowledge of the economic structure of society.

O'Neill, through Yank, agrees with Long's diagnosis of the social problem, but not with his solution to it, nor with his method of achieving a solution. The one idea of Long's that Yank accepts is the idea that he is enslaved by capitalism. Yank prefers to work with the spirit of medieval guilds to anything that survives in this mechanistic age—the spirit of craftsmanship, of giving one's heart as well as one's hands to one's work, of doing it for the inner satisfaction of carrying out one's own ideals, not merely as obedience of orders.

According to O'Neill the truly vicious effects of the capitalist state are both physical and spiritual. He was not satisfied with the justice and liberty of the status quo. Obviously, O'Neill did take the idea of progress for granted. If he is able to generate a vision of how man can spiritually evade what is tragic in the predicament of man's life on earth, he should be equally capable of envisaging the possibilities of progress for humanity at the materialistic level. Whether he sees great hope for mankind in improved methods of production is not explicitly stated in the play. But he sees the correlation between a man's satisfaction in his work and the material rewards he gets from it. Undoubtedly O'Neill too shares the idea that an objection to poor working conditions stems from weakness, for he characterizes Long throughout the play as a weakling, a coward.

But Long sees a solution of the spiritual problem in a solution of the physical problem. He believes that if you "change the unequal conditions of
society” (Vol. I, HA 243), you will solve the problem, or achieve the necessary conditions for a solution of the problem. In his concern for the spiritual answer, Yank, however, has rejected entirely any hope in an alteration of the physical conditions. Although he is against the organization of the state and the economic system as it is, he is contemptuous of any hope in a changed social or economic system. In his final comment on the I. W. W., Yank rejects any hope of bettering man by bettering society on the physical plane. But on the spiritual plane, at the individual level O’Neill shows the paths of rising above the inherent selfish, jealous, cruel, and egoistic aspects of human instincts in plays like *Lazarus Laughed, Marco Millions* etc. The spiritual uplift of individuals in the society through the enlightenment to create in them the egoless, passive mind will naturally lead to the bettering of the human species at the physical level also in the course of time. But it is convincing to us only when it is made accessible to people through the education for enlightenment, primarily to the rulers of the world and gradually to those who are ruled, out of which some will have to take things for granted since they are unable to feel the need for it and also unable to experience the enlightenment to rise above the physical plane.

Finally, Yank rejects Long’s finding of the solution of the spiritual problem in a solution of the physical problem. He rejects the methods of attaining it, suggested by him and the I. W. W. Both Long and the I. W. W. believe in using legal means to abolish the old order and establish the new. O’Neill’s attitude in the play is anarchistic—individualistic anarchism that sees the structure of society as evil and so sees salvation in purely spiritual terms.
O'Neill was aware that the prospects of an immediate change in the political system, and the chances of the reconstruction of society and the creation of a happier world were meagre and vague and the feasibility of the hopes for a better society in the near future turns out to be mere dreams, though a few of them are possible to be fulfilled gradually.

However, O'Neill's vision of the desperate plight of mankind manifests his own desire to understand the world which in itself displays his desire to reform it. With these desires is inherent his quest for finding a reprieve for his sufferings. Moreover, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that these two kinds of desires are the two engines of progress without which human society would stand still or retrogress. If all the socially imposed miseries are eliminated, and if all men are happy at the social and economic level, within the status quo political system, impulses to knowledge or the desire for knowledge will take the place of the desire for reforms. Such a desire for knowledge and the attainment of it, will in effect lead to the spiritual salvation or to a transcendental vision to rise above the unavoidable or existentially inherent tragic predicament of man. For instance, O'Neill's *Lazarus Laughed* could teach modern man to live joyously and die peacefully and fearlessly. O'Neill did not consider many of the historical religions capable of fulfilling either of these religious functions.

If O'Neill has been successful in delineating the sufferings of humanity, it goes without saying that all the suggestions for salvation and the reprieve from the troubles in human life are inherent in the depiction of the sufferings itself, especially when such miseries could have been avoided by a restructure
of the society. It is not the function of a literary writer to draw outlines for social reforms. O'Neill's treatment of the pathetic plight of man on the planet, earth in different plays throws light also on the various paths of deliverance for man at the spiritual level. But to expect any sociological nostrum or any intellectual panacea as the definite remedy for the social evils or the existential and irresolvable problems of humanity, from an O'Neill is to do injustice to literature itself. To judge the greatness of a play from the action or dialogue in it, at the end and to derive messages and deduce conclusions from the ending of the play is not the right approach to any literary work.

We have seen in *The Hairy Ape*, how O'Neill deals with the problem of 'identity', and the question of the loss of man's sense of 'belonging' in the modern society and shows how the working class are exploited in the capitalist society by the more rich and sometimes by the more intelligent leading to the concentration of wealth, power and pomp in the hands of a few.

Even when man has achieved the materialistic prosperity, he feels a sense of spiritual vacuum, an intolerable loneliness. Only the impulses to knowledge, love, and human comradeship can fill that vacuum of solitude. With a satirical portrait of the 'Capitalist class' O'Neill treats the vanity of materialism through a typical specimen, Marco Polo in the play *Marco Millions*. Marco Polo, as presented by O'Neill is an American businessman of the present, not a thirteenth-century Venetian merchant. Marco's values and his political philosophy are a parody of the American businessman's point of view. He is the perfect businessman. "He has memorized everything and learnt nothing. We have given him every opportunity to learn. He has
memorised everything and learned nothing. He has looked at everything and seen nothing. He has lusted for everything and loved nothing” (Vol. II, MM 387). His capacity for experiencing life is limited to his trade. As Kublai says of him: “He has not even a mortal soul; he has only an acquisitive instinct” (Vol. II, MM 387).

O’Neill chose Marco Polo as his principal character because through him and his exploits he could contrast the East and the West. For he seems to hold that the profit motive is at the root of the evil in the modern civilization. The profit motive in human relationships destroys that which is best and noblest in man, making him into a beast who is capable of no great passions and no real love of the beautiful and the good. This business-minded trend of mind does not make him rise above his belly’s needs. This leads him to deal with all human values in the terms of profit and loss in the market place. He knows no leisure, for his mind is forever stewing in the stink of his profits. Only that which is innocuous and pecuniary can give him pleasure.

Through him he could picture the mordant disintegration of Western civilization as it undermines all things beautiful and good in its pursuit of profits. This play, then, is a further indictment of the whole system of Western ideals. In 1924, O’Neill spoke of the United States as “the most reactionary country in the world.” Certainly, it was with this judgement in mind that he designed Marco’s programme as mayor of Yang-Chau. Marco’s plan for taxation is aimed at making the rich, richer, and his whole economic philosophy is single-mindedly directed toward the same end. To the appalled
Kublai Kaan Marco boasts of the "unprecedented amount" of taxes he has "sweated out" of the local citizens, and explains how he has done it.

I simply reversed the old system. For one thing I found they had a high tax on excess profits. Imagine a profit being excess! Why, it isn't humanly possible! I repealed the tax on luxuries. The tax wasn't democratic enough to make it pay! I crossed it off and I wrote on the statute books a law that taxes every necessity in life, a law that hits every man's pocket equally, he be beggar or banker! (Vol. II, MM 392)

Marco is the ruler of the Western world, and with Marco in power, how long can it last? That is what O'Neill asks, and from what the world looks like today it might well be said that his question is of vital importance. While economists and bankers worry over Communism and a new system of distribution, O'Neill points to the whole philosophical conception of life which dominates our world and indicates where the real cause of disaster lies. Life is the only justification for living, and life is not measured by scientific and technological inventions for comforts and luxuries and by profits in dollars and cents.

Marco's economic programme leaves the citizen of Yang-Chau no political liberty. The following dialogue between Marco and Kublai reveals by implication the thoroughness of O'Neill's indictment of the prevailing ideals:

Kublai : I have received a petition from the inhabitants of Yang-Chau enumerating over the thousand cases of your gross abuse of power!
Marco: Oh, so they've sent the vile slander to you, have they? That's the work of a mere handful of radicals.

Kublai: Five hundred thousand names are signed to it. Half a million citizens accuse you of endeavouring to stamp out their ancient culture.

Marco: What! Why? I even had a law passed that anyone caught interfering with culture would be subject to a fine! It was Section One of a blanket statute that every citizen must be happy or go to jail. I found it was the unhappy ones who were always making trouble and getting discontented. You see, here's the way I figure it, if a man's good, he's happy—and if he isn't happy, it is a sure sign he's no good to himself or anyone else and he better be put where he can't do harm. (Vol. II, MM 392)

Marco's rule as mayor of Yang-Chau was meant as a parody of the businessman's rule of the United States. In this play, O'Neill adds to him criticism of the state, a criticism of the relations between states. Perhaps the most appalling aspect of Marco's programme is his formula for international relations. He tells the Kaan how to gain peace, to end war: "There is only one workable way and that's to conquer everybody else in the world so they'll never dare fight you again!" (Vol. II, MM 394).

The emptiness, vanity and spiritual sterility of the ruler, Marco, are revealed in another passage. Marco summarizes:
There’s nothing better than to sit down in a good seat at a good play after a good day’s work in which you know you’ve accomplished something, and after you’ve had a good dinner, and just take it easy and enjoy a good wholesome thrill or a good laugh and get your mind off serious things until it’s time to go to bed. (Vol. II, MM 398-399).

These words show how a layman is able to experience happiness in day-to-day life at the physical level for whom pleasures and possessions are sources of complacence and of even happiness. His capacity for experiencing happiness in life is limited to the above activities.

Thus *Marco Millions* like *The Hairy Ape* is chiefly concerned with the spiritual evils of the modern state. But *Marco Millions* was generally agreed to be an improvement in attempting to show the deficiencies of Western selfishness and materialism in conflict with a spiritual salvation, symbolized by oriental mysticism. *Marco Millions*, then, confirms the rejection of capitalism in *The Hairy Ape*, giving a fuller expression of its material evils than the earlier play presented. According to Barrett H. Clark O’Neill’s reading of Marx\(^\text{11}\) is evident in his analysis of the material evils of the capitalist state, but it was his reading of Nietzsche\(^\text{12}\) that determined his most consistent criticism of the state—its spiritual sterility. As a matter of fact, the following summary of Nietzsche’s view of the state might serve as an explanation of O’Neill’s picture of the state in his plays: “The state is the Devil who tempts and intimidates man into animalic conformity and thus keeps him from rising into the heaven of true humanity; the Church is the Antichrist who has perverted Christ’s
original call to man to break with father and mother and become perfect; she
has sold Christ to Caesar and become the chief accomplice of the State in
compelling uniformity."

Nietzsche saw the source of the search for wealth, power, in personal
weakness. Nietzsche was bitter, too, about the chief goal of the citizens of the
modern state—the acquisition of wealth. “Wealth they acquire and become
poorer thereby. Power they seek for, and above all, the level of power, much
money—these impotent ones!” The “weak, lacking the power for creation,
would fain shroud their souls in a royal cloak and unable to gain mastery of
themselves, seek to conquer others. Men dedicate their lives to the
accumulation of riches; nations make wars to enslave other nations.”

O’Neill’s portrayal of those who seek wealth, power, always reflects these
ideas of Nietzsche. Marco Polo, for instance, whose one pursuit in life is the
acquisition of money, is particularly satirized by O’Neill for his spiritual
impotence.

In the plays Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape, O’Neill depicts the
effect of society upon the individual and in Marco Millions he shows the effect
of one individual upon the entire culture. What O’Neill condemns in the play
is the typical twentieth-century American success. His intent was satirical and
his focus economic. Yet it is probable that part of O’Neill’s violent
reprehension of the Polos of the world comes from the fact that human nature
in general is selfish, jealous, harsh, narrow, wicked, acquisitive, jealous and
loveless. The temperament of the human mind in itself at times keeps man
from any normal relationship with his fellow-beings. Marco cannot love Kukachin, for his temperament is incapable of real love.

In forming Marco, he sought only a slanted projection of Marco Polo to satirize the American businessman and to show the tragedy inherent in American culture. He depicted the corrupting effect Marco had upon Eastern culture and by extension, depicted the base corruption and soullessness of American society. In the process, O'Neill revealed the inherent temperaments in human nature in general. Feeling that the United States was the greatest spiritual failure, he set out to depict the cause of her failure. As he states: “we are the greatest example of ‘for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’” In the modern society with all its unworthy claims of the refinements of civilization, we see around us the Marco Polos of the world; and as the embodiment of spiritual sterility, Marco gains the world, but in so doing, he loses his soul, if indeed he ever was aware of its existence. Thus O'Neill’s most bitter condemnation of the status quo is thus based on his Nietzschean philosophy. Both O'Neill and Nietzsche believe that the state produces soulless conformity, that those who seek worldly power, money, do so, out of inner weakness and sterility. All those who seek wealth, power over others, in the plays of Eugene O'Neill, do so out of personal weakness. When they do gain power, wealth, they are “poorer thereby.” This interpretation of financial, worldly success, was behind O'Neill’s declaration that the United States is “the greatest failure.”

The Great God Brown completed in the same year (1927) presents as in Marco Millions, a similar picture of the American businessman in the
character of Billy Brown. O'Neill's own comment on Brown states his criticism explicitly: "Brown is the visionless demi-god of our new materialistic myth—a success—building his life of exterior things inwardly empty and resourceless, an uncreative creature of superficial preordained social grooves. . . "17

Based on the Nietzschean belief that those who seek worldly power, money, do so out of inner weakness and sterility, O'Neill stresses the personal weakness of those who strive for wealth in different plays. Billy Brown is helpless without the creative strength of Dion Anthony. Marco Polo becomes despondent when lack of external activity forces him to think. Sam Evans, the successful businessman of Strange Interlude, is totally without inner resources. "How weak he is!" (Vol. III, SI 69) his wife thinks early in the play. When he gains power, it is purely external: "What a fount of meaningless energy he's tapped! . . . always on the go . . . typical terrible child of the age . . . keep moving . . . don't think of ends . . . the means are the end . . . keep moving! . . ." (Vol. III, SI 122).

In an earlier play, Lazarus Laughed, which preaches the message of 'love' as the means of salvation for humanity, O'Neill condemns the craving for political power as an attempt to compensate the inward weakness, emptiness. The depraved, power-mad Caligula is above all, weak, frightened, spiritually dead. After murdering Tiberius, he cries savagely to the empty amphitheatre, "kneel down! Abase yourselves! I am your Caesar and your God!" (Vol. I, LL 370). But, a moment later, he becomes aware of his loneliness, and ends by "grc~velling in a paroxysm of terror" (Vol. I, LL 371).
Apparently, O'Neill applied this philosophy without reservation to all members of society. Though he could castigate the rich, as in *Marco Millions*, for milking the poor, by satirizing Marco Polo’s striving to add several more millions to his millions, does O'Neill back any movement to establish a new form of state? His cynicism regarding all social structures religion, Church and State alike projects well in his letter to Barrett Clark in the later nineteen-thirties:

*A true play about the French Revolution ought to make a grand satire on the Russian one. Or . . . a play or novel depicting the history of any religion would apply rationally in the same way. God with a change of whiskers becomes the state—and then there’s always a Holy Book—Laws—dogmas etc.—etc., until you become sick. It appears we apes always climb trees—and fall out of them—with a boringly identical behaviour pattern!*18

O'Neill believed that deliverance for man from his sufferings is possible at the individual level. Though individual perfection is an ideal, altruism cannot always be said to be an attempt to compensate the inner weakness of man since the striving for political power is different from the striving for bettering the people voluntarily with an altruistic ideal at the subjective level.

Now the question is whether: O'Neill believed that if man’s needs are satisfied and his social well-being is assured through a new political system or a restructure of society, man can be made happy. We have seen in his one-act play *Fog* how the social evil of poverty and the pathetic plight of the more unfortunate ones who happened to be born and live in impoverished
conditions, could have been avoided either by the ruling class or the more fortunate ones around them, who happened to be born rich. As long as plants grow on earth, nature is abundant with resources for food and other amenities with its proper utilization, population is not a problem and poverty remains a socially imposed evil. Then what are the factors responsible? And what is that which divides the society into the rich and the poor? A social or political system that ensures equal distribution of the natural resources or wealth alone is not the only answer as long as inherited intelligence cannot be distributed equally to attain happiness equally by all.

Though O’Neill was dissatisfied with the status quo evils of capitalism as we see it in *The Hairy Ape* and *Marco Millions*, he does not seem to believe that mere socialism could do something about the unbearable present. O’Neill believed that the materialistic world of today further brutalized and frustrated man, while religion and proposals for social and economic reforms were beyond his feeble ability to understand and to carry out. This is why in *The Hairy Ape* he represented Man with a capital ‘M’—individually an ape, collectively the primal horde. With neither a past nor a future, man cannot attain happiness which seems to glide away, when he nears it.

It is not proper to expect O’Neill to have any preconceived notion about any of the ‘isms’ before he wrote any of the plays. None of the particular political systems, already founded by man, interested O’Neill. But he laments on man’s fear of change and his indifferent reactions to the socially imposed evils which they allow to continue instead of trying to combat it.
In *Days Without End*, written during the depression of the thirties, he showed an awareness of national disaster but expressed contempt rather than compassion for the victims. The hero, John Loving comments on the depression, which is typical of O'Neill's individualistic point of view:

I listen to people talking about this universal break-down we are in and I marvel at their stupid cowardice. It is so obvious that they deliberately cheat themselves because their fear of change won't let them face the truth. They don't want to understand what has happened to them. All they want is to start the merry-go-round of blind greed all over again. They no longer know what they want this country to be, what they want it to become, where they want it to go. It has lost all meaning for them except in as a pig-wallow. And so their lives as citizens have no beginnings, no ends. They have lost the ideal of the Land of the Free. Freedom demands initiative, courage, the need to decide what life must mean to oneself. To them, that is terror. They explain away their spiritual cowardice by whining that the time for individualism is past, when it is their courage to possess their own souls which is dead—and stinking! No, they don't want to be free. Slavery means security—of a kind, the only kind they have courage for. It means they need not think. They have only to obey orders from owners who are, in turn their slaves! (Vol. I, DWE 542)

Here O'Neill sarcastically condemns the complacent attitude of the people, who seem to believe that "God's in His heaven— / All's right with the
world!” (Robert Browning: *Pippa Passes*). Does O’Neill find out the ways of deliverance for man from his miseries at the individual level and social level in his plays? If so, did he turn out to be like embracing the ideas of individualism, or Anarchism, Capitalism, or Socialism, Syndicalism, or Guild Socialism at the social level and transcendentalism and mysticism at the individual level, singly, mixedly or partially wholly of all the above-isms, in general or some in particular? Nevertheless, the advocacy of the principles of any particular political system seems to be far-fetched as far as a literary work is concerned; though implied messages of certain humanistic ideals can be upheld in it.

O’Neill’s own spiritual-intellectual peregrinations were best summed up by himself, mockingly, in the potently autobiographical *Days Without End*, in which the protagonist John Loving is a persona for the playwright. In Act 1, Father Baird, a benign Catholic priest who wishes to bring the apostate Loving, the one divided self in John Loving back to Catholicism, gives a good-natured and satirical account of the spiritual wanderings of John Loving, which were also the wanderings of O’Neill himself and many of his generations after his apostasy from Catholicism. Loving was a militant sceptic and constantly communicated with Father Baird as he discovered each new spiritual-intellectual panacea. He had begun with unadorned atheism, but this soon became wedded to Socialism, which in its turn and because it was too “weak-kneed,” gave way to anarchism. Then came 1917 and the Bolshevik dawn and a new love-affair with Karl Marx, whose writings O’Neill is reported to have read as stated by Barrett H. Clark.¹⁹ He was further exhilarated by the practices of the Russian State, especially by its attempt to banish marriage and by its official atheism. But the inevitable disillusionment set in, with a
consequent general disgust for all sociological nostrums. After a long silence Father Baird finally heard again from Loving, who had by then found a new "hiding place" as far away home as possible, namely, oriental mysticism, beginning with China and Lao Tze but passing on to Buddha and the ecstasies of solitary contemplation—"I had a mental view of him regarding his navel frenziedly by the hour and making nothing of it!" (Vol. I, DWE 503). But the lure of the East did not last and Loving soon turned westward once more, to Greek philosophy, especially Pythagoras and numerology. Finally—the last Father Baird had heard Loving come to rest in evolutionary scientific truth, a confirmed mechanist. At the end, the Russians are described by Father Baird as erring school boys throwing spitballs at "Almighty God" and the Russian State is a slave-owning state, "the most grotesque god that ever came out of Asia" (Vol. I, DWE 503).

Did O'Neill in his plays aim at the social uplift of man by improving the living conditions of man in the society along with his deep concern for the bigger task of the spiritual uplift of humanity? O'Neill believed that individuals must gain the "courage to possess their own souls" before man can begin to think of establishing a just and happy society. Larry Slade of The Iceman Cometh comments: "The material ideal free society must be constructed from men themselves and you can't build a marble temple out of a mixture of mud and manure. When man's soul isn't a sow's ear, it will be time enough to dream of silk purses" (Vol. I, IC 590). Does it mean that O'Neill believed that it is not a better state that makes better men, but better men who make a better state? For the creation of a happier society, the bettering of man and the bettering of the living conditions of the people should go hand in hand.
simultaneously at the individual level, social level and state level. O'Neill knew that the bettering of men is the more difficult task which demands the liberation of their 'self' from the ego of their greed and pride. This is what O'Neill meant by the "courage to possess their own souls," which is a prerequisite for establishing a just and happy society. O'Neill was in search of a substitute for the religious dogmas to enable men to "possess their souls." The history of mankind and what O'Neill saw around him and the uncertainty about the future taught him that historical religions failed to perform even its primary functions of developing man's conscience and of cultivating sympathy for the fellow-beings. In his search for an exemplary ideal, could O'Neill find any dialectics to derive answers to his scepticism and intellectual quests? In *Lazarus Laughed*, O'Neill showed a Nietzschean saviour come to teach men how to live joyously and peacefully and to die fearlessly and thus how to "possess their own souls;" but the saviour was killed, and the weak, soulless, depraved Caligula remained in final power. But finally, O'Neill had to accept the fact that love for one's own life and love for one's fellow-beings is the ultimate remedy for the unhappy lot of man. Thus O'Neill connects the criticism of the status quo with belief in love and in social responsibility, and thereby he achieves some positive hope for humanity in *Lazarus Laughed*. In the play *Days Without End*, we find that after many years of criticizing society and searching for an answer to life, John had at last found love. In this play John's wife, Elsa, who has brought love to him is said "to live in some lost world where human beings are still decent and honourable" (Vol. 1, DWE 518). It is the land of heart's desire, the land of dream as the protagonist of *The Fountain* is said to find a fountain of youth.
in a far country of the East Cathay, Cipango,—a spot that Nature has set apart from men and blessed with peace. It is a sacred grove where all things live in the old harmony they knew before men came... and in the centre of the grove there is a fountain—beautiful beyond human dreams. . . . (Vol. III, The Fountain 386)

The impossibility of the romantic dream which inspires these characters is sometimes explicitly stated, and always implied. The dream of perfect peace and security, is freed from all the vicissitudes and hardships in their lives. One group of dreamers possesses what the other group idealizes, and each imagines the other to be perfectly happy. Both therefore seek escape from reality into an impossible ideal.

O'Neill’s early plays suggest both the beauty and the impossibility, of the romantic dream. From The Long Voyage Home to The Fountain, his heroes imagine the unreal. With tragic inevitability, they suffer defeat. But, nevertheless, all achieve tragic exaltation by remaining true to their dream. Denying the values of the material world, they transmute defeat into victory. Thus they seem to exemplify “the great truth that there is nothing so precious in our lives as our illusions.” As is true of the great heroes of all tragedies . . . they are destroyed by their virtues.

But all of these early plays describe the romantic dream in such a manner as to suggest that its very impossibility constitutes its beauty. The heroes seem to idealize it because it can never be realized. O’Neill himself stated it in a interview in 1921:
... any victory we may win is never the one we dreamed of winning. The point is that life in itself is nothing. It is the dream that keeps us fighting, willing—living! Achievement in the narrow sense of possession, is a state finale. The dreams that can be completely realized are not worth dreaming. The higher the dream, the more impossible it is to realize it fully. But you would not say, since this is true, that we should dream only of easily attained ideals. A man wills his own defeat when he pursues the unattainable. But his struggle is his success! He is an example of the spiritual significance which life attains when it aims high enough, when the individual fights all the hostile forces within and without himself to achieve a future of nobler values.

Such a figure is necessarily tragic. But to me he is not depressing, he is exhilarating! He may be a failure in our materialistic sense. His treasures are in other kingdoms. Yet isn't he the most inspiring of all successes?

The character in these plays not only exemplify the truth that nothing is so precious to us as our illusions, but they also imply that our illusions are really more precious than the truth; they praise the will to illusion as if it were man's major virtue. Therefore, the plays, although realistic in dealing with the dream's inevitable defeat, become unrealistic in implying its immeasurable value. For a dream is truly valuable only when it leads toward the actual realization of possible ideal.
Man can continue to exist only on pipe dreams and as long as man lives in things of the moment, it is the dreams that give significance to life. The idea of the importance of dreams to a man grew in O'Neill's mind and it was expressed to Miss Mary Mullett, the journalist in the first important full-scale interview O'Neill gave to the press in 1922. In it he stressed especially the “exaltation” of the tragedy of the Greeks, in which “when they saw a tragedy on the stage they felt their own hopeless hopes ennobled in art.” He had used the phrase “hopeless hopes” as early as in 1919 in a letter to John Peter Toohey, the press agent of the manager, George C. Tyler, which set forth the same philosophy of living. And in 1925 he repeated almost verbatim his earlier remarks to Mullet when he was interviewed by Flora Merrill, who printed his views in the New York World for July 19:

The tragedy of life is what makes it worthwhile. I think that any life which merits living lies in the effort to realize some dream, and the higher that dream is, the harder it is to realize. Most decidedly we must all have our dreams. If one hasn’t them, one might as well be dead—one is dead. The only success is in failure. Any man who has a big enough dream must be a failure and must accept that as one of the conditions of being alive. If ever he thinks for a moment that he is a success, then he is finished.

The significance and pervasiveness of the dream became almost obsessive with O'Neill. In The Iceman Cometh, O'Neill shows how men find solace in dope-dreams and how they entertain the illusions of the “hopeless hopes” for creating a happy society through a social reconstruction based on
radical measures of different political systems or communities, such as those of Anarchism, Syndicalism or Guild Socialism or similar radical movements of Progressivism. The different characters in the play, representing different political communities seem to express no hope of converting any such dream of social reconstruction into a reality in the near future.

Robert Brunstein discovers a universal governing scheme in *The Iceman Cometh*, in which he correlates the pipe-dreams indulged in by a dozen stew bums with the branches of human science and institutions, to reduce them all to illusions and create "a paradigm of existential revolt." It is possible to read O'Neill's late plays in terms of the social and political communities that underlie them, besides the interpretation of it at the domestic and universal levels. John Henry Raleigh has laid the groundwork for the kind of reading by examining "Irish-American ethnic traits in the more autobiographical plays" and by analysing details of local colour which contribute to the milieu of New York city at the turn of the century in *The Iceman Cometh*, O'Neill's own statement that all the characters of *The Iceman Cometh* are people he knew personally is pertinent here. In the *New York Times*, October 6, 1946, Karl Schriftgiesser reported O'Neill's comment during an interview on the characters of *The Iceman Cometh*: "I knew them all," he said, "I've known them all for years." His voice dropped gropingly into his remembrance of things past. "All these people I have written about, I once knew."

Since several of the major characters in *The Iceman Cometh* have had affiliations with recognizable political factions of the era (particularly
Tammany Hall and radical anarchism), it would seem plausible to analyse the play in terms of political factions, save for one problem. The leading character, Hickey's affiliations lie with the progressive movement and the reform waves of this era in general. Parrit, the other outsider, brings in the main political alternation, the radical leftism of the Anarchist movement and the I. W. W in which Larry Slade is the nihilist-anarchist. Although both groups find adherents and make converts among the barroom regulars, both finally face the illusory quality of their truths, and succumb to the establishment values of Harry Hope establishments. This third political community is difficult to name. It could be the political alternative of syndicalism or guild socialism. Its members are have-beens, most of them victims of their own corruption in a time of national reform. O'Neill seems to be projecting the demerits of any kind of a political alternative appropriate for humanity today to preach about salvation to save the roots of our community values. In any alternative political system, even if the absence of any central authority to guide the system is solved, as long as individuals are not improved and if leaders or the rulers who guide the people lose their intellectual integrity, all such systems become a failure at the practical level and such ideals of achieving progress all on a sudden through new social and political systems become utopian. O'Neill knew this and so he did not seem to put his trust in any sociological nostrums to deliver man from his sufferings. Suspending the feasibility of any social and political reform does not make O'Neill a pessimist but a realist.

O'Neill's optimism is inherent in his belief in the possibilities of any kind of a spiritual and intellectual panacea to create a happy mind in
individuals. For this he has been attempting in his plays to evolve a philosophy that will substitute religions of unconvincing dogmas. Thus he enters into the realms of the philosophies of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and the mysticism of the East. Throughout most of his career, generally avoiding the topical and transitory, O'Neill preferred to treat ideas that are transcendental, universal and abstract—God, Man, Life, Death, Love, Hate, Happiness, Peace, etc. The relation between man and man did not interest him so much as the relation between man and God. As mentioned earlier, he is reported to have said: "I am interested only in the relation between man and God."\(^{29}\) The duty of the modern playwright, he thought was "to dig at the roots of the sickness of today," the cause of which was "the death of the old God and the failure to find a new one. Without God life has no meaning, and the fear of death cannot be comforted."\(^{30}\)

O'Neill believed that with neither a past nor a future, Man could do nothing about the unbearable present. The materialistic world of today, with all the impact of science and technology on modern society resulting in man's spiritual decline further brutalized and frustrated him, while religion and proposals for social and economic reforms were beyond man's feeble ability to understand and all attempts for reforms would meet with failures owing to what is vicious in human nature in general. Man is abysmally ignorant. "Belonging" to nothing, the brute can comfort himself by "dope-dreaming." Man can sustain hopes and subsist on it as long as he is capable of dreaming. O'Neill was a realist who wrote tragedies and so his plays did not have a happy ending. O'Neill did not want to hope by wilful blindness that a better society and better people can be created all on a sudden in the near future.
The absence of such wilful blindness is not the absence of optimism. But he finds the ray of hope for man in transcendental love as he urges in *Lazarus Laughed*, which might be the same message preached in various religions, but O'Neill redefines religion by separating it from all its misleading dogmas and redefine the hackneyed term 'love' at the transcendental levels and thereby help to create in man a zest for living with a love for one's own life itself. O'Neill expresses this hope in *Lazarus Laughed*: "Love is man's hope—love for his life on earth, a noble love above suspicion and distrust" (Vol. III, LL 351-352). Through this message O'Neill aims at giving dramatic reality to the deeper, inner universal struggle of man to free himself from the walls of his ego and from the invisible forces that bind him.

The importance of O'Neill as a social critic lies in the fact that he emphasizes the psychological aspect of the modern social order. Man is inherently and subconsciously sensitive to beauty and goodness and at the same time he is unconsciously antipathetic to its opposites. It is the mark of a truly great man and the moral duty of every man to get rid of all the prejudices that hinder a person from liking or loving another person or a bias that makes a person hate another consciously or unconsciously and by viewing persons and things in the right perspective and to see the other side of every question. For this, he has to struggle against the tyranny of his own prejudices and contradictory emotions. And his greatest victory consists in his final achievement of the perfect understanding of his fellow-feelings for other people. He has to transcend his selfish emotions and achieve illumination and this state of mind is another dimension of transcendental love. The social evil of racial injustice has to be seen in this perspective. O'Neill hated all the
sham that prevents us from loving people as they, really are. His play God's
Child Got Wings is a tragedy of the Negro in general, of a supersensitive
member of the race in particular and it deals with one of the great problems of
social inequality in modern America. Here the potentialities of a manifestly
tragic theme—that of racial injustice—are actually increased by making the
protagonist at once a "good" man and a man of feeling.

Throughout the play, the spiritual part of Jim Harris's nature is given a
preponderance over its animal cravings and impulses, so that, although Jim is
the victim of biological, social and psychological forces, he benefits in the
end in a way that was denied to both the Dreamy kid and Emperor Jones.
Having reproached God for cruelty subjecting him to undeserved,
ever-increasing agony, he experiences sudden mystical illumination before the
curtain falls. Usually, when the normal expression of the will to power is
threatened by a feeling of racial inferiority, trouble may be anticipated from a
person with such an inferiority complex. But in the case of Jim Harris it did
not happen. Having lost the peace of mind which guarantees mental health,
the victim mistrusting himself, may turn either to maliciousness, and envy or to
obedience, submission and humility. Jim's neurotic behaviour chose the latter
course. O'Neill did not need the primitive theories of animal instincts in the
teachings of Alfred Adler or Freud's theory of the psychological milieu to
explain Jim's behaviour. Here Jim's problem is not one of physical starvation
but of psychological persecution.

It is evident that the roots of Jim's "inferiority complex" are nourished
by the American experiences of his ancestors. "The survival of ancestral
habits—the recrudescence of servility, the persistence of the dog-like devotion of slave for master—predestine him to fail in his quest for equality and justice, a quest he pursues down a down path.” He failed because the social system denied him something that he wanted more than wages and votes, it denied him the right to belong. O’Neill is not so naive as to believe that the racial prejudice is the result of a conscious programme. In fact, this problem too becomes an existential problem of heredity to be solved by mystical illumination at the spiritual level and the racial prejudice at the social level can be solved by changing the attitudes of the people who are responsible for the injustice. Thus whether the problem remains resolvable or irresolvable depends on two kinds of analysis, spiritual and social.

What then is the ultimate conclusion of O’Neill’s social philosophy? Is it the victory of love accompanied by the triumph of the status quo? The lyric acceptance of love that gives man the zest for living, that gives significance to his life, that makes him feel that he exists is the principal dialectics of O’Neill’s social philosophy. In Days Without End, we find that the hero, John, after many years of criticising society and searching for an answer to life, had at last found ‘love.’ Nevertheless, part of the divided-self of John, i.e., Loving continues to criticise the state, the conventional religion and accept nothing. Loving is thus torn between the impulse toward love and acceptance of the status quo society and religion on the one hand, and death “the warm, dark peace of annihilation” (Vol. I, DWE 534) and the criticism of the society and the status quo on the other. Throughout the play these two alternatives war with one another until finally love wins.
In the play *Servitude*, O'Neill wanted to connect a critique of the social system with Nietzschean individualism and with his philosophy of love for others. This does not mean that O'Neill stands for the status quo. The coupling of the status quo society with brotherly love in *Servitude* has only an accidental significance. What O'Neill does in the play is that at the mystical and spiritual level, he was trying to find answers to the social problems, by relating the criticism of society with his idea of love and self-sacrifice. The fact that O'Neill did not believe in a sociological nostrum of a particular political system, in itself does not mean that O'Neill cannot connect the criticism of the society with his belief in love and social responsibility. But O'Neill had, on occasions, retained and also expressed hopes for humanity at the spiritual level in some of his plays, as already mentioned, through a dialectic which generates transcendental love. It is also implied in the play *Servitude* that the positive concept of love for others is possible even at the conventional level with its hackneyed implications also for those with undeveloped minds to which the transcendental love or the transcendental knowledge is not accessible.

*Servitude* tells how Mrs. Frazer leaves her stockbroker husband, rejecting all his values, in order to follow an ideal she has learnt from the playwright, called Roylston. She appears in Roylston’s house late one night to learn from him whether she has been right to follow the philosophy of his plays. What she sees of Roylston’s family life convinces her. She was wrong, and she tells him what she thinks of him. “...you were on such a high pedestal— I thought of the superman, of the creator, the maker of new values. This morning I saw merely an egotist whose hands are bloody with the human
sacrifices he has made—to himself.” From Roylston’s Nietzschean individualism, Frazer turns to the philosophy of the self-sacrificing Mrs. Roylston, telling her: “How much you have taught me! Happiness, then, means servitude?” Mrs. Roylston replies: “Love means servitude and my love is my happiness.” With this precept in mind, Mrs. Frazer goes back to live happily ever after with her stockbroker husband. We see simple love and happiness at the simple level in this play. This does not belittle the transcendental love and his ideas of mysticism that we find in his other plays. In the play *Ah! Wilderness!* too, O’Neill combines radical ideas, social criticism and revolt against authority with his philosophy of love. But O’Neill was not content with the philosophy of love alone. He wanted to seek final meanings in life and to seek ultimate answers to the problems of human predicament in both mysticism and humanism, and not in one dialectic alone.

Let us, before concluding this chapter, see how far O’Neill in *The Iceman Cometh* refutes the feasibility of improving the social well-being of humanity and consequently, the possibility of the spiritual uplift of man by means of a social or political revolution. Viewed through the conflict of the three dominant political communities of the 1912 era, O’Neill’s play *The Iceman Cometh* does depict a large social theme, and it is grouped with his autobiographical play *Long Day’s Journey into Night* to chronicle our history and social strife through the particular social affiliations of realistic, individualized characters. O’Neill’s biographers have discovered actual prototypes for each of the regulars among the playwright’s friends at the Manhattan saloons and flophouses which he habituated around 1912, the year in which this play takes place. Harry Hope’s barroom family contains
representatives from a number of ethnic pools—Irish, Scotch, English, Slavic, Afrikander, and Black; in fact, only Willie Oban comes from American White Anglo-Saxon Protestant stock. O'Neill is clearly representing a cross-section of humanity here by drawing his characters from many nations and national subgroups, a community of despair.

We find that all the regulars including Migloin and Joe have flocked to third political community of Harry Hope's establishment, where they constitute a kind of microscopic community which has the affiliation with Tammany Hall cronyism. Harry Hope's leadership and the mixed virtues of the company he maintains reflect the Tammany machine acutely, and they indicate the weaknesses that are causing the community to crumble. A regime of benign corruption and face-to-face dealings resulted in a coherent neighbourhood community, one which protected its newest, weakest arrivals and fattened its established leaders. Harry represents a system under which men, not laws, rule, but rule without breaking the moral laws which shall bind Harry's barroom community together. But human weakness permeates this system too. Harry's "rule of men" has no abstract law behind it to protect it from the new era; things have changed so much outside the saloon that Harry fears to leave it, because the new impersonalized neighbourhoods will not remember or respect his old reputation and his old face.

Harry's pipe-dream of walking the ward again points to a higher illusion, which can be generalized as a community illusion. Indeed, each character's pipe-dream points toward a general illusion—racial illusions (Joe, the only blackman in the play), national illusions (Cecil and Piet longing for
England and Africa), political illusions (Hugo's revolutionary illusions), status illusions (Rocky, Pearl, and Marge maintaining respectability), domestic illusions (Chuck and Cora's oft-delayed marriage), Larry Slade's philosophical illusions. If we add to these religious and psychological illusions of the play's two antagonists, salvationist Hickey and neurotic Parritt, we have a cross-section of the branches of human endeavour and intellectual achievement.

On the realistic level, the play describes a group of drunken bums who live on dream and drunkenness. Many of the characters have been identified with O'Neill's actual friends of that time:36 "Hugo Kalman," the anarchist with Hippolyte Havel, an actual friend of Emma Goldman, "Larry Slade," the disillusioned philosopher, with O'Neill's own mentor, Terry Carlin, "Jimmy Tomorrow," the gentle dreamer, with James Findlates Byth etc. The play, therefore, is "autobiographical" in setting, in characterization and finally in philosophy. O'Neill once explained to an interviewer. "The philosophy" that "there is always one dream left, one final dream, no matter how low you have fallen, down there at the bottom of the bottle I know because I saw it."37

The plot of *The Iceman Cometh* is built around the annual visit of Hickey to Harry Hope's saloon on the proprietor's birthday. In the past Hickey had regularly come to initiate a monumental drunken party, and the denizens all idolize his hearty good fellowship. But this year he tells them that he has reformed, and he tries to "sell" them his new brand of "salvation." He wheedles and argues to persuade them to give up their alcoholic "pipe-dreams" and to face reality by venturing forth from the saloon into the
outside world. They do so reluctantly, but they soon return in despair and seek to drown their sorrows again in drink. But now the alcohol seems to have lost its power. All are awakened from their dreams of escapism into the sorrows of reality.

The true plot of *The Iceman Cometh* is psychological, but it has sociological and philosophical implications. The plot does not consist in physical action, but in the gradual revelation of the motives for Hickey’s sudden reformation and for his attempt to reform all his drunken friends. Why has this jovial American salesman of hardware suddenly become a fanatical, messianic salesman of salvation? Why is he trying to destroy the harmless pipe-dreams of his alcoholic friends and to force them to face reality? Is it because O’Neill wanted to make Hickey the revolutionary for social action to ensure the well-being of the total humanity? O’Neill wanted to expose the futility of any feasible social action to raise men from the lower depths of their materialistic society to a spiritual uplift for the reason of man’s inherent weaknesses which makes love, understanding and compassion for his fellowmen an ideal difficult to achieve. In this respect *The Iceman Cometh* is different from Maxim Gorky’s play *The Lower Depths* since “‘truth’ or ‘reality’ for Gorky is not a metaphysical but a humanist concept” and so Gorky’s hero prophesies that “the ideal of social well-being will in itself ensure spiritual well-being.” But O’Neill believed that ‘truth’ is different from the ideals of social action. We are asked to turn to the history of mankind from the beginning to the present: “To hell with the truth! As the history of the world proves, the truth has no bearing on anything. It is irrelevant and immaterial,
as the lawyers say. The lie of a pipe-dream is what gives life to the whole misbegotten mad lot of us, drunk or sober” (Vol. I, IC 578).

The sudden revelation of the ambivalence of human motives and of the ambiguity of ‘truth,’ itself—coming as it does at the end of the play—bursts like a bomb shell in the mind. The last act of *The Iceman Cometh* demands a revaluation of all the earlier action. What is the truth about Hickey and his drunken friends? Are men’s dreams the only realities? “We are such stuff as dreams are made on.” But then nirvana, or the recognition that all life is an illusion, becomes the final goal of life. And man’s recognition that he can never know ‘the secret’ becomes the ultimate wisdom. The play ultimately implies also that pipe-dreams and illusions are better and sweeter than truth and reality and it is these pipe-dreams that bring happiness to humanity and keeps up the zest for living. Viewing the play from another angle, *The Iceman Cometh* gives highest expression to O’Neill’s lifelong belief that emotion is more important than action and it leads to the dramatic realization that human beings even at their lowest may understand and feel compassion for one another, and the philosophy in it appears to be optimistic.

While conceding to the dignity of man, “the crown of creation,” “the paragon of animals,” with his infinite faculties of noble reasoning, O’Neill is disillusioned to exhort us to “Laugh yes to our insignificance! Thereby will be born your new greatness!” (Vol. III, LL 309) and also asks us to find the greatness of man in the fact that “no God can save him until he becomes a god!” (Vol. III, LL 289-290). Since man is a pitiful, will-less toy of fate in this ‘unweeded garden’ of life. This fate might be ‘mystery,’ chance or accident
or heredity or the inherent human weaknesses that hinder the spiritual and social uplift of humanity by means of social or political action even under the initiative of leaders who are endowed with the creative impulses of reforms. This has been the essence of O'Neill's dialectic and social philosophy. The fact that the mitigation of the pangs of human sorrows is beyond the powers of human faculties is once again emphasized by O'Neill in *The Iceman Cometh*, where we find Hickey's attempts of social and political reforms end in failure for reasons of the weaknesses in human nature itself.

Coming back to the political allegories in *The Iceman Cometh*, we see that Hickey's mission of social reform, his social standing, his occupation, his formative background, his instrument of social improvement, all can be traced to the dominant force which has brought the barroom regulars to their fallen condition—the values and tactics of American Progressivism. Though he never mentions politics, and claims that he only wants his pals to find peace through admitting the illusory quality of their pipe-dreams, Hickey can be linked to the dominant political forces of his own day, and even of our times. The reform would mean either the local and specific improvements as what the liberal political leaders were asking of America or the reform in the status quo, for massive redistribution of wealth and power and luxuries after providing equal opportunities for attaining happiness, through education, employment and entertainments, which are open to all equally irrespective of one's social status by birth. In this respect it is noteworthy how Amartya Sen who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in his book *Inequality Reexamined* investigates inequalities related to such categories as class, gender, and
communities and demonstrates the far-reaching significance of these conceptual differences." 

In *The Age of Reform*, Hofstadter argues that the main adherents to progressivism were the people who had been the dominant force in the economy of the previous decades—farmers, small-city businessmen, and the non-urban intelligensia such as editors, teachers, and clergymen—by who were superseded by urban industrialists and monopolist interests. Hence their reform motions often looked back to a nostalgic idealization of American life "before" urbanization.

In short, Hickey's Progressivism was intended to combat new social inequities and restore old verities. The idea of progress through progress was fine, except for the realities which most progressive thinking failed to recognize. The reformers had never lived in a stable economy which gave their ideals concrete grounding. They had no way out other than to depend on other countries for help to make the economy stable. Neither the social inequities nor the economic power-shift, or the regnant value system could be effectively changed with the piecemeal and often self-serving reforms proposed by the progressives. Furthermore, these reforms often destroyed ad hoc social institutions, like the big-city political machines, which had risen in response to concrete historical needs of those more intelligent who wanted to concentrate power and dominance, and which provided positive results.

Progressivism was essentially a reaction and an idea, never a political party. It had adherents in all the parties, and three of them wanted to be president in 1912. If we take Progressivism in the broader way, and do not
attempt to connect Hickey to any one historical figure or organization, we can find a wealth of Progressive ideology in the play.

Other aspects of Progressive ideology also have their reflection in *The Iceman Cometh*, like nativism, racism, fear of immigration, fear of industrialization, isolationism etc. Perhaps the most characteristic and frightening aspect of Progressivism lies at the heart of Hickey’s mission—salvation by admitting to the truth, which means wallowing in the guilt which man surfaces. The Progressives found themselves feeling guilty about a good deal of their civilization—but this does not mean that they took effective responsibility for it. Hofstadter in *The Age of Reform* shows how the urban machine politics brings the shame of the cities home to every American citizen. Hofstadter is perceptive to see that the guilt culture of the Progressives does as much to address their own cultural needs and verify their socio-cultural beliefs as it does to attack real evils. The typical Progressive was protestant and prosperous, he believed in the concepts of law and citizen’s obligations, genuinely abhorred the social decay he saw around him in the society and felt a personal responsibility for interfering in its spread. The progressive’s religion gave him no public and sanctioned means of relieving himself of guilt for his actions, no Catholic confession such as most of the new urban immigrants had recourse to. This is true of religious affiliations within the play too. The progressive’s prosperity actually led to this abstract conceptualization of law and citizenship, luxuries which the disenfranchised immigrants were denied, and led him to think that if the laws were right, one need only enforce them and elect better men to see that this be done. It was impossible for the guilt-obsessed progressive to understand that the
immigrants he wanted to help felt no religious obligation to feel guilty, nor a
social obligation to conceive of a rule of good law and venal men—in fact, in
their own experience both abroad and in urban America, men, not laws, had
been good to them, but the system would have destroyed them.

But Hickey's programme of Progressive reform fails for reasons of the
weaknesses inherent in human nature which made even their leaders prone to
corruption. Who is to be blamed? The immigrants did not want to admit "we
are to blame," as the Progressives wished to hear, but that "life is to blame"
(LDJN 53), as Mary Tyrone in: Long Day's Journey into Night intoned.

Among the barroom clan in The Iceman Cometh, the complex collision
of values and vested interests coheres around Hickey's mission, his guilt, and
his failure to make any converts at Harry Hope's saloon, any except the
suicidal Parritt and the nihilist anarchist Larry Slade. They speak for the third
political community within the play, the alternative offered by radicalism.

Surprisingly for a confirmed leftist, O'Neill presents most of this
revolutionary heroism in a negative light. In fact, his ultimate revolutionary is
no leftist but the successful salesman Hickey. Through the casual remarks and
the personal histories of the three failed revolutionaries—Hugo, Larry and
Parritt—we can see reflections of contemporaneous radicalism as the
Anarchist movement, the growth of the International Workers of the World,
and the career of the living Anarchist Emma Goldman. Larry describes
Hickey as such only half in jest: "Wake up, Comrade! Here's the Resolution
starting on all sides of you and you're sleeping through it. Be God, it's not to
Bakunin's ghost you ought to pray in your dreams, but to the great Nihilist, Hickey! He's started a movement that'll blow up the world!” (Vol. I, IC 634).

If Larry is O'Neill's spokesman, as he had seemed to be earlier in the play, does his final conversion to Hickey's nihilism summarize O'Neill's position in the play? Before we make this speculation, we should examine some of the contemporaneous history which the three leftist spokesmen reflect. Hugo Kalmer, a one-time editor of Anarchist periodicals, becomes a butt of fun for the bar room pals. Louis Scheaffer believes “Kalmar” abbreviated “Karl Marx.” In his lucid moments Hugo feels guilt about his abandoning the movement. And Hickey exposes his pipe-dream, that he is a democratic lover of the masses and not a tyrannical dictator who scorn the “jackass mob” and the “stupid proletarian monkey-face.” Hugo Karlman's age and East European origins link him with the famous anarchists who are mentioned in the play—Kropotkin, who believed in collective communist-anarchism; Malatesta and his concept of the “insurrectionary dead” and “propaganda by dead,” and Michael Bakunin, “whose charisma, belief in collectivism and complete abolition of the state, make him Hugo's closest prototype.”

O'Neill paints in Larry a full portrait of the man of social responsibility and conciliation which is only sketched in certain aspects of the other regulars even their leader Harry Hope. There is a radical conservative's irony in O'Neill's finding a crystallization of the values, he attributes to the passing age of machine corruption in his most articulate spokesman for radical revolution. If Hugo represents the European communist origin of American collectivist
anarchism, Larry Slade speaks for native unionism of the I. W. W. (International Workers/Wreckers of the World) variety, most sympathetically portrayed by O'Neill in *The Hairy Ape*, where its goal is to change the unequal conditions of society by legitimate direct action. As a Syndicalist, Larry once believed in the "one Big Union" which provided a basic for building a free, happy, and content society in the future. But Larry's days in the movement ended at the turn of the century, that watershed for most of the characters in the play. As Harry Hope grouses, I. W. W. now means "the 1-won't-workers" for Larry and Hugo. Larry suffered from impartial intelligence, and a too-open mind, not Hugo's egomania; he took to "seeing all sides of every question" (Vol. I, IC 590) and had to abandon the movement's zealous single-mindedness. Now Larry indulges in his illusion of thinking that he has no illusions, that he has lost faith in the movement's ideals, that his philosophical equilibrium and "Foolosopher's" grandstand position on the sidelines of life protect him from the pain of involvement in the lives of others. All of Larry's concerned and engaged qualities, all the qualities indicated by the fact that the above mentioned protective illusion is illusory, emerge as the most attractive qualities O'Neill attaches to political radicalism in the play.

Don Parritt's mother Rosa's historical prototype is Emma Goldman. As Winifred Frazer documents "O'Neill's connections with Goldman, the young left-wing writer had befriended and been influenced by the famous "Red Emma" by the time the play takes place."45 O'Neill felt that Goldman's deportation to Canada in 1919 for propagating the ideas of Anarchism, represented a betrayal of America's founding principles by the American people themselves. However, the fraction of Goldman's heroic and principled
career in support of human rights that creeps into *The Iceman Cometh* shows her least attractive characteristics, her high-minded denunciation of an admitted traitor, and her placing of social causes above the desire to maintain, a stable love relationship and children. Parritt sees only hypocrisy and egotism in his mother Rosa, who, he thinks, never loved him half so much as she loved abstract causes, since for Rosa, "The Movement is her life . . . that family-respect stuff is all bourgeois, property-loving crap" (Vol. I, IC 667). If O'Neill believes the opposite and if he is unfair to or silent about the best achievements of America's leftist heroes, it is because he feared the moral abstractions and single-minded salvationist thinking that informed radicalism is at its most puerile and terroristic. This is the belief in abstractions about justice, communal equality and liberty which finds no place for human weakness or even human individuality, the same blindness of vision that he shuns in Hickey's Progressivism and which prompts him to Pink Hickey with radical nihilism, with an attempt to blow up the world and the community microcosm represented by the barroom family, the community of illusions.

In the play *The Iceman Cometh*, we do not need to elaborate further the positive values which O'Neill found in his choral hero, the barroom clan, its tolerance for individual differences, its sanctioning of social face-saving or illusions, its belief in face-to-face and personalized community dealings, its fear of moral abstractions which do not stem from lived experience and men's interaction, and finally, its kindness and love. Larry does not turn his back on these values in essence even when he claims to have embraced Hickey's salvation of death at the play's end. In fact, he has just broken down his own illusion of non-involvement in responsibility for the lives of others.
Written in the wake of the Great Depression in 1939, produced after the war in 1946, *The Iceman Cometh* looks back upon another pivotal pre-war year, 1912 and reflects both the depression economy and psychology of the period following 1912. Today, the play also looks forward to similar situation and crisis. The play further helps us realize that the crisis is as old as our history, and that in our history lie both the misdirections we must avoid and the values for community that we ought to preserve.

O’Neill did not want to mean the Anarchist Communism, i.e., the communal ownership of land capital or any other economic system as a panacea for combating the socially imposed evils from which the present world suffers. He knew that socialism whether it is of the state or of the guild alone was by no means a sufficient remedy. Before the Russian Revolution, Syndicalism in France, the first World War in America and Guild Socialism in England were all movements embodying suspicion of the state and a wish to realize the aims of socialism without creating an omnipotent bureaucracy. But as a result of admiration for Russian achievements, all these movements died down in the years following the end of the first World War. But today the history of state socialism in Russia teaches the world its paths of ups and downs and its dangers and the causes of its decline.

O’Neill reserves his impressions on the relevance of a change in the economic and political system, in creating a happier world community. However, the readers are left to themselves to deduce their own conclusions. In democracy, if the preservation of justice to the maximum extent possible is pertinent, in socialism the problem of preserving as much liberty as possible is
also equally relevant for the general well-being and happiness of the humanity.

In the modern world of exploitation through globalisation or liberalisation by the more powerful countries over the weak and the powerless it is pertinent to reflect that in any system of Government, whether it be democracy or socialism, an individual with an altruistic ideal lacks the moral right to be happy and content while people around him are unhappy in the midst of starvation. Similarly, the economic prosperity of a few countries does not entitle its inhabitants to be happy and proud, while the people in other countries around them fall ill through privations. The same is more pertinent in the case of the exploitation by the more privileged over the neglected poor within their own country. Nevertheless, we should wish and try to adopt any political or economic system that aims at providing the general well-being of the total humanity with equal opportunities for happiness, justice and for the enjoyment of liberty, and with the absolute abolition of the differentiation of the class distinctions of “the rich” and “the poor.” In any socio-political system, the possession of money, land or any kind of private ownership will become unnecessary if the basic necessities of the people are satisfied and luxuries and comforts of life are equally and sufficiently distributed to all. Consequently, it will follow that the pursuits of the people will naturally and necessarily aim at nobler motives in the fields of art, science, literature or epistemology as a whole, or agriculture, skilled works etc. in accordance with their aptitudes. In a society, as long as the range of health, talents, intelligence, and aptitudes varies from person to person and so long as nobody with a healthy mind and healthy body will wish to idle away time and
energy, for a long period, every individual will try his best to prove his excellence in whatever field each has the aptitude or skill. In such a society, only incurable diseases or ill-health and the death of the people dear to each will be the causes of sorrows; all other miseries would not trouble any more. And in such sorrows caused by the death of the dear ones, time will serve as the best healer.

O’Neill has been analysing in his plays, how the social system has turned potential happiness for the people into sure and grim tragedy. He wanted to emphasize the fact of a social system which is destructive in itself, which thwarts every effort of man to achieve happiness, which encourages to become selfish which puts a value on misery and pain as a good in itself, and worst of all rewards unhealthy competitions and everything that is predatory and destructive, condemning beauty, well-being, and happiness.

It may be that in such protest against injustice as O’Neill reveals in his social dramas lies the hope for a better world. He has given dramatic power to this particular aspect of our modern social order and by so doing has helped to make the problem real to his audience. O’Neill has helped us to realize that we are clearly standing on the frontier between two eras—one which both Western civilization and communist ideology have failed to liberate humanity, draw it instead into disaster and causing the new spirit to recoil in disillusionment, and one where humanity in search of deliverance will try a new road and take a new direction, and will liberate its essential nature. Over this dark and dispirited world, it will set a holy lamp like a new sun, by its light, the man alienated from himself will perceive anew his primordial nature,
rediscover himself, and see clearly the path of salvation. Today more than
anything else, humanity needs a spiritual interpretation of the universe. It
needs a spiritual interpretation of humanity as well. It is possible only by
elevating our minds and lives to evolve a mystic insight within ourselves. The
mystic insight is experienced only when the mind is freed from all
preoccupation with self and when the mind feels the possibility of the
universal love and joy in all that exists and such a mind is of supreme
importance for the conduct and happiness of life.
NOTES


2 Cargill et al. intr. 9.


4 Ibid. 12.

5 Ibid. 13.

6 Ibid. 14.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid. 15.

9 Ibid.


12 Clark O'Neill 14-15.


16 Clark: O'Neill 153.

17 Ibid. 105.

18 Ibid. 144-145.

19 Ibid. 14.


23 Ibid. 20.


33 Ibid. 113.

34 Ibid.

35 All these generalised illusions were formulated by Robert Brunstein in *The Theatre of Revolt* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1965) 98.


38 Helen Muchnic, “The Irrelevancy of Belief: *The Iceman* and *The Lower Depths*,” *Comparative Literature*, III (Spring 1951) 107. See also Cargill et al. 123.


41 Emma Goldman was an American Anarchist who was arrested and deported to Canada for her radical Anarchist Movement.
Michael Bakunin (1814-1876) is regarded as the founder of Anarchist Communism as Carl Marx is regarded as the founder of modern socialism. But Bakunin did not produce, like Marx, a finished and systematic body of doctrine. The nearest approach to this will be found in the writings of his follower, Kropotkin. The modern Anarchism is associated with the belief in the communal ownership of land and capital with the utmost possible diminution of the power of the state and the minimum interference of the Government. It is said that Karl Marx, to some extent, is indebted to Michael Bakunin for evolving his ideas of modern socialism.

42 Louis Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Artist (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973) 495.
