

## CHAPTER-I

### INTRODUCTION

Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), a major American dramatist, began his career writing one-act plays, which contain interesting plot and the vivid and naturalistically perfect description of man and tradition. In theme, he expresses the vigorous poetry of naturalism bounded by the atmosphere of the sea and the moods of man. With the introduction of *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), his first full length play, and his plays which followed it, O'Neill began to enlarge the techniques of his playwriting and became successful to find suitable methods for expressing insights and attitudes keeping the real meaning hidden. Realistic and naturalistic play became insufficient for him to express ideas, obsessions, emotions and experience appropriately. So, passionately dissatisfied and restlessly seeking for some reliable ground of the theatrical artistry, he frequently took resort to Stindbergian nihilism and Freudianism. Realism emphasizes only on the reflection of exactly what it looks couldn't help O'Neill to reflect the spiritual sickness of life. And to avoid the mere surface in his plays, expressionism became ever reliable means. He didn't follow to one or the other style for any length of time but alternated and interposed styles with one another and employed a variety of styles for his work and for self-expression. His experimentation, with symbolic figure, split personalities, masks, internal monologues, scenic effects, choruses, rhythms and sound effects decorate his plays.

It is not only the styles and techniques but the theme also varies tremendously from one to another play, as Joseph Wood Krutch believes, "His themes have, at the same time been extraordinarily varied" (79).

His experimentation with multiple subject matters accelerates many critics to criticize his plays from different angles as *Beyond the Horizon* (1920) and *Desire Under the Elms* (1924) are criticized. Both the plays are essentially domestic tragedy where he experimented with Greek tragic elements but manipulated to apt the aesthetic for modern American plays. In Greek tragedy, fate used to play the central role. It is obvious that from the beginning of the human civilization in Greece till to the 20<sup>th</sup> century western literary development, many authors and writers have explored and analyzed the complex role of fate in human's life. The term 'fate' has been defined and understood differently according to the span of time. In Greece, fate was considered as the words or oracle of God. Whereas, in 20<sup>th</sup> century fate has been treated as an inseparable hidden force lying beneath the human's civilization. In the same respect, O'Neill has also treated fate as emotional forces of life that are hidden deeply inside, such as emotion, jealousy, resentment, revenge and lust, and outside forces as circumstance, chance, time and community. These inside and outside forces of life, we can clearly find, embedded in his two tragedies *Desire Under the Elms* and *Beyond the Horizon*.

O'Neill himself insisted that he was concerned with the tragic spirit and for him the tragic alone has that significant beauty which is truth. Doris Alexander quoted the lines of O'Neill's interviews:

This was what Eugene meant, when he would cry, "Life is a tragedy, hurrah!" [. . .] I see life as a gorgeously ironical, beautifully indifferent, splendidly suffering bit of chaos the tragedy of which gives Man a tremendously significance, while without losing fight with fate he would be tepid, silly animal. (262)

He believes if a human desires to struggle with “the unattainable” then one meets the tragic doom. Tragedy, for him, emerges from the gulf between human aspirations and their consistently denied fulfillment-transcendence deriving from the greatness of the dream and the persistence with which it is pursued. He emphasizes the idea of the "hopeless hope" which though unachieved, to struggle to achieve itself is the victory and success of human. He always shows the tragic struggle between the littleness of man and the vast nature of universe. For him, man struggles with his own fate. As a dramatist, he believes life is a continuous struggle that's why; human predicament is the theme of his almost all plays. Thus, O'Neill's vision of life is undoubtedly tragic that the clear example we can find in his plays *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*.

The two plays by O'Neill, *Desire Under the Elms*, and *Beyond the Horizon*, are the basic material of this dissertation in which "tragedy" and "fate" are its theoretical tool. So, this dissertation simply tries to bring the theory of tragedy and fate, and also tries to analyze how the "fate" is playing the significant role, confining the characters and bringing death and fragmentation in Mayo's and Cabot's family.

*Beyond the Horizon* (1918), Eugene O'Neill's first full-length play to reach the stage, won O'Neill the first of his four Pulitzers. It is divided into three acts, each having two scenes, symbolically; each act has an expansive outdoor, suggesting longing, and a confined indoor, suggesting loss, scene. This play explores the tragedy as the tragic consequences of the characters having chosen the wrong life-financial ruin, illness, thwarted love and self-betrayal. Andrew, one of the major characters falls in love with Ruth to whom his brother Robert also loves. But the problem comes when the marriage between Robert and Ruth takes place. Desperately seeking consolation, Andrew, leaving

home, goes beyond the horizon and Robert remains in the farm. It is the misplacement of their skill, because Robert is suited for a wanderer's life, the desire he has nurtured from his childhood, whereas Andrew is for the soil and Ruth. As a result, Robert and other family members are entrapped in the farm in such a way that the chain of tragic events occurs in Mayo's family. Though, Robert tries his best to produce good harvest from the farm, he couldn't do so. He even couldn't please his wife Ruth and mother in law. On the one hand his own father and mother die, on the other hand, their only daughter also dies in her early childhood. Finally, Robert himself crawls out of the hated house to die on the road he should have traveled; straining his eyes toward the hills he never crossed. Robert is physically dead, but so are the spirits, if not the bodies, of Andrew and Ruth, each torn apart by anger, hatred, and greed. Thus, it is a play that follows the inexorable process of death due to the confinement in the farm.

Similarly, farm confines the characters of *Desire Under the Elms*. This play, written and produced in 1924 when O'Neill was at the height of his powers, has been enormously criticized and anthologized. It is criticized because many consider incest, revenge, and child murder to be "unsuitable subjects" for the theater and anthologized because as a play it has both puritan and ascetic value. This drama also re-enacts many of the tragic incidents of the old Greek myths and it is considered his first effort at writing in the style of Greek tragedy. But my contention in this dissertation is to see farm, which is functioning as an antagonist force and bringing family fragmentation and death. The plot of the play revolves around the farm. All the major characters of the play long the farm, which ultimately spoils their family unity and kills the helpless and innocent child.

The play is about greed, and possessiveness, greed for land, wealth, and security. As Ephraim brings his new wife, three-way struggle develops to possess the farm. Abbie Putnam desires farm for her security and betterment of her future. Eben, the youngest son, desires to possess what was his mother's. Old Ephram, on the other hand, desires to escape from his tragic scenes of aloneness by possessing the farm. In this way, the characters are moving around the farm to possess it, but in the final scene Abbie smothers the child from the issue of farm raised by Eben to prove her sacred love to him.

In fact, *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms* are the tragedy but characters meet tragic doom due to Robert's ignorance and lack of taste about farm in *Beyond the Horizon* whereas it is lust for farm in *Desire Under the Elms*. In both the plays the forces of fate center on the farm. Almost all the characters are totally affected by farm and confined in it, which brings misunderstanding and leads to domestic tragedy.

#### I. Review of literature

O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms* are open to interpret action at different levels. Most of his plays have been interpreted with reference to their technique of amalgamation as well as the treatment of the subject matter. Both plays have been interpreted from various angles; yet they can be still viewed from an angle, which brings the "farm" in both plays with special meaning. "Farm" in both plays, affects equally for all the characters and brings "family fragmentation" and death. It is the only cause of almost every problem that occurs in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*. In the plays, the characters struggle in it for their security and livelihood, and at the same time, they have to confront defeat and death.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, Robert's determination to forge his trip and to marry Ruth creates the major problem in Mayo's family. Jordan Y. Miller and Winfred L. Franzer view as:

Robert and Ruth, young and romantically impressionable, can not see beyond the thrilling intimacy of their suddenly discovered love; their impetuous decision in the play's opening sequence to forge their expected paths, he to make the voyage with his uncle, she to marry steady, industrious brother, Andrew, is a believable consequence. (49)

Indeed, believable consequence is one but the wrong choice brings them to desolation. Robert, without taste or aptitude for farming, is about off for three years on his uncle's ship, he wants to see places "beyond the horizon". Another rougher-hewn, affectionate, and sensible Andrew wants only to work in the family farm. The play traces the irony of their fate; marriage yokes the dreamer Robert to domesticity, whereas practical Andrew goes to sea. All the major characters can't see their vitiation of their life. Their impetuous decision and stubborn nature in the opening sequence of the play to forgo their expected path spoil their family unity and bring death. Jordan Y. Miller and Winfred L. Franzer further add, "All of the characters have their Just claims on audience sympathy; each is equally wrongheaded and stubborn" (50). Responsibility for their family fragmentation and death doesn't go only to Robert, but because each of the character in the play shares equal part for their vitiation.

*Beyond the Horizon* is O'Neill's vital and valid tragedy in which the three major characters succumb to their destiny. Rightly, Lionel Trilling has stated:

In his first long play *Beyond the Horizon* dreamer destroys his life by sacrificing his dream to domesticity; and the practical creator, the farmer destroys his by turning from wheat-raising to wheat-gambling. It is a conflict O'Neill is to exploit again and again. (295)

It is a tragedy of misfit. Robert yearns to go to sea and see what lies beyond the horizon but the dreamer destroys his life devoting to domesticity and farm. Andrew, a born farmer had to work in the farm, but destroys his life involving in business. Ruth, on the other hand, spoils herself marrying with Robert. So, all these characters are struggling with farm and fate. Joseph Wood Krutch further gives his supportive comment, “[. . .] with its story of two brothers so trapped by fate that the one who wanted adventure stays at home while the one who wanted to stay at home is driven to find wealth” (83). Finally, the reunion between the brothers reveals the tragic consequences of each having chosen the wrong life.

Their chosen misfit deeds and actions create the vast gulf among the family members, each of them persists to their own stubborn nature. A weak and frail Robert couldn't maintain the domestic problems. Jordan Y. Miller and Winifred L. Franzer have their critical view as:

The strain of manual labour in keeping the farm in working order is too much for the weak-willed, weak bodied dreamer Robert. His helpless inability to act drives Ruth to understandably angry recriminations as they lose their only child and sink into financial collapse and emotional despair. (50)

Robert is merely a dreamer who desires to forget himself in poetry and nature. His frail body does not allow him to work in the farm. From his childhood, he had been dreaming to go "beyond the horizon", and accordingly was ignorant about the farm. To be the farmer at once right after his marriage with Ruth, is quite challenging task for him, but he struggles in the farm. His wife as well as nagging mother-in-law comes to understand the reality that he is not the right person to be the husband of hers and reveals, his brother is the rightful one for her and farm. In this regard Alexander Woollcott writes:

*Beyond the Horizon* unfolds the tragedy of a young farm-born dreamer, whose romantic mind and frail body yearn for the open sea, the swarming ports of the mysterious east, the beckoning world beyond the line of hills, which shut in the acres of his home. By all that is in him he is destined for a wanderer's life, but fate, in a wanton mood, tethers him to this little hill-cupped farm and watches coolly the misery and decay this means for all his house. (135)

Almost all the problems of the play have been originated because of this hill-cupped farm where Robert is confined. He could do nothing more than watching the misery and decay of his family. Rightly Doris Alexander has commented, "The tragedy of the man who looks over the horizon, who longs with his whole soul to depart on the quest, but whom destiny confines to a place and a task that are not his" (260).

Even the setting of the play goes on changing in gradual process, and the change itself reflects the family disintegration and death as well. Jordan y. Miller and Winfred Franzer observe the setting of Mayo's house as:



In the first act the small sitting room of the Mayo's farmhouse is "clean, well-kept" showing "the orderly comfort of a simple, hard-earned prosperity enjoyed and maintained by the family as a unit." In each succeeding act the room reflects the disintegration of that family unit. At first a bit shabby and uncared for, by the final scene, corresponding to the desolation of Robert and Ruth after the death of their child, it "presents an appearance of decay and dissolution," with torn, dirty curtains, broken furniture, and blotched wallpaper. (50)

The opening sequence of the play shows the well-maintained room, but as the plot develops the room is also turned to shabby and uncared one. The torn, dirty curtains, broken furniture and blotched wallpaper exemplify the desolation of Mayo's family.

Thus, in *Beyond the Horizon*, farm affects the total members of Mayo's family as in *Desire Under the Elms*. Robert's ignorance to the farm brings death and family fragmentation in *Beyond the Horizon* whereas it is the lust for farm that brings problem in Cabot's family in *Desire Under the Elms*. But for both families, farm is the root cause to bring fragmentation and death.

*Desire Under the Elms* is about greed and possessiveness, greed for farm, wealth and security. In the beginning of the play when Cabot arrives with his new wife Abbie Putnam, the three-way struggle develops for the possession of the farm. Alan S. Downer believes:

Its theme is variations on the first word of the title. Abbie Putnam, the young wife, desires a home, security; Simeon and Peter, the older sons, desire freedom from the hard labour of a New England rock-bound farm;

Eben, the youngest son, desire to possess what was his mother's (with the obvious Freudian implication); and old Ephraim, the father desires to escape from his tragic sense of aloneness by possessing the farm he has made out of impossible land, since human love fails him in each of his wives and each of his sons. (471)

Ephraim, seventy-six-year-old, offers to marry Abbie, thirty-five-year-old, who accepts him at once and moves into the Cabot's homestead determining that the farm would be hers after someday. At the age of seventy-six, he marries thirty-five years old Abbie, a deed intended to cheat his sons of their inheritance. He himself even fears of loneliness, so he wants to keep the farm under his domain.

Shortly after the introduction of Abbie in Cabot's house, the struggle to possess the farm develops more and it finally leads to the family fragmentation and death of small child. Julius Bab believes, "*Desire Under the Elms* is a drama of property-lust which admirably catches the sodden mood of those who are bound to soil" (349). All the characters in the play have the sense of belonging to the farm. They want the farm, despite the fact that when Ephraim first bought it, many people considered it worthless. But now their security and property are deeply rooted in it. The true importance of it becomes clear by the end of the play. It is what drives all of the characters and affects their feelings, emotions and outlook on life.

Similarly, the long hate relation between Abbie and Eben converts into love relation, and as a result they beget the child. But young Eben learns that Abbie has reduced him to father a new heir who will insure her own inheritance of the farm. He denounces her, and she smothers their innocent and helpless infant to prove that her love

for Eben is not calculating but real. The lust for farm brings this tragic scene, which not only imprisons Abbie but also makes Ephraim alone. Jordan y. Miller and Winifred L.

Franzer claim:

As a final irony, despite the tragedy the farm has brought down all the Cabot's, the departing sheriff, whose eye is not on the holy, but on the mundane, exclaims, "It's a Jim-dandy farm, no denyin. Wished I owned it". (71)

The play is obviously a tragedy and the major issue for it is the farm. The greed for the farm is not an exception even for sheriff who wants to possess it so, farm enchants for every character in this play. In this regard Joseph Wood Krutch has the belief:

They are also personages who, in the sense so important to their creator, "belong" to something. They "belong" both to their soil and to the traditions of their culture; to both of these they feel an obligation which, when it comes into conflict with individual desires, is the source of conflicts which shake them to the bottom of their souls. (99)

Throughout history, land has been a source of greed and power in many civilizations, and it can create social status, as it is a limited commodity. Land is more than likely what brought Ephraim Cabot's ancestors to America.

Whatever the critics on both the plays have remarked, the influence of 'farm' on the lives of the characters of both of the plays can be given and analyzed with special meaning. All the references of these excerpts from various critics and the plot of the text can be treated as support to conclude that the farm in both of the plays has the powerful presence, which finally brings despondency, death and family fragmentation in Mayo's and Cabot's family.

## CHAPTER-II

### American Drama

#### i. Pre – O’Neill American Drama

American literature begins with the orally transmitted myth, legends, tales and lyrics of Indian cultures. There was no written literature among the more than five hundred different Indian languages and tribal cultures that existed in North America before the first generation of the Europeans arrived. Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury believes, “This America first came into existence out of the writing basically by Europeans and then went on demanding a new writing which fitted the continent’s novelty and strangeness” (4). In the beginning Europeans basically based their writings on the problems of settlement, the harshness and grandeur of its landscape.

Among the Europeans, Pilgrims were also entering the new space and new history of America. Those pilgrims were puritans who wrote of the new world and the allegory of the puritan diaspora. They believed the tale of God’s will to reveal itself in history. History, travel record, scientific observation, the diary, the sermon, the meditation or the elegy became the central expressions of the American Puritan mind. About theater, Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury comment, “Theater was condemned, and prose fiction, in the age when the novel was finding itself abroad, was deeply distrusted. Poetry, though important, had a rigorously defined place” (8). Although, French and Spanish catholic priests had used drama for religious education, dramatic performance in America was condemned in the beginning of 1600. The New England Puritans and some other protestant groups believed that theater was an invention of the devil, which was bad for the morality. Arthur Hobson Quinn writes “Our native drama, eventhough it

antedated the novel and the short story, has particularly no history until the later half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (215).

The first drama written in America *Androborus*, by governor Richard Hunter, was printed in 1714. Eventhough the drama was printed, it was not acted and had no influence in the development of acting drama. Of more direct influence, however, on early dramatic writing, were the performances of plays by the company under David Douglas. Since 1703 onwards theatrical performances started to operate in America in partial way. But the permanent establishment of professional acting dates from the arrival of Lewis Hallam and his company from England in 1752. To this company the first American dramatist Thomas Godfrey offered his play *The Prince of Parthia* in 1759.

The romantic tragedy, *The Prince of Parthia*, became the influencive drama for coming generation as Arthur Hobson Quinn comments as:

This play, the first written by an American to be produced by a professional company, is a romantic tragedy, laid in Parthia about 200B.C, and is written in blank verse of flexible and dignified character. It is not worthy beginning for American dramatic poetry, but it led at the time to no school of writing. It is interesting, however, to note that at a later period the most significant literary drama in this country was produced in the field of tragedy to which *The Prince of Parthia* belongs. (217)

During the revolution a number of political satires, pamphlets and sermons, were written but importance was less given for fiction and drama. Ruland and Badbury write, “Public poetry was regarded by the American audience as a central literary form. By contrast, drama and fiction excited far more social suspicion [. . .] in 1774 the Continental

Congress actually banned plays and other expensive diversions and entertainments” (78). So till to 1787, from the point of view of the production of dramatic writing, nothing was worthy of records. But from 1787 onwards, American company started to give dramatic performances in the places like New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Annapolis. During this time, the first American comedy *The Contrast*, written by Royal Tyler had been performed. The theme of the play is the contrast between simple native dignity as typified and follies represented by Dimple, Charlottee and Letitia. *The Contrast* lives, on page and stage, because it masters its contradictions and becomes a successful American version of the English Restoration comedy of manners with a great deal of its wit and style.

As Tyler, William Dunlap, a dramatist and founder of national theater, contributed a lot in the history of American dramas. He wrote at least fifty plays but almost half were the adoption from French, German and Elizabethan sources. His own best play was *Andre* written in 1798.

In the early nineteenth century, the playwrights like James N. Barker of Philadelphia and John Howard Payne of New York came with their talent. Barker dealt in almost all his plays with theme of native material like the witchcraft delusion in New England whereas Payne dealt with the largely adoption from English, French and Germanic sources. Later on Rachel Crother, William Vaughan Moody bears the mark of genius before O'Neill's arrival. Rightly Homer E. Woodbridge claims:

Up to the Great War we produced almost no plays of more than immediate contemporary interest-almost none which had literary value or prospect of permanence. In 1917, professor Arthur Hobson Quinn, who probably

knows as much as about American drama as any man living published a collection of *Representative American Plays*. The book includes seventeen pieces of various periods, from Thomas Godfrey's *Prince of Parthia* in 1767 to Rachel Crother's *He and She* in 1911. The result is depressing. Not more than four or five of the plays have any distinction as literature; perhaps only one, William Vaughan Moddy's *The Faith Healer*, bears the mark of genius [. . .] to get up much interest in the American theater before O'Neill one must consider it from the historical or sociological point of view. (307)

The dramatic writing began in America from Governor Richard Hunter, but America couldn't get influensive drama. Eventhough nineteenth century became prosperous in technology and fine actors; it couldn't reach the attic in great playwrights. Rightly Peter B. High comments:

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American theaters had many fine actors, but no great playwright. The American public demanded entertainment rather than art. Most plays were pure melodramas filled with tears and moral lessons [. . .] In the bigger theaters, a lot of money was spent to make the productions as big and existing as possible. (223)

Dramatists were busy to fulfill the demand of audiences and the purpose was to entertain them. It was fruitful period for the theater owners and playwrights to earn money and popularity because the craze for drama was high.

Towards the end of nineteenth century, the American theater was in the grip of the handful of businessmen, who had very little interest to develop drama as a genuine

art. As a result, commercial theaters increased and they produced dramas with popular formulaic traditions like romantic happy ending and sentimental melodrama. About pitfall of the commercial tradition of the theater Miller and Frager comment, “In a system geared to profit as its sole means of survival, any idealized concept of dramatic art was necessarily sacrificed to money making”(2). The commercial theater companies had exploited the talent of the playwrights as well as of the star actors. They didn’t allow them to produce any new kind of drama. But we can’t ignore their credit in establishing the foundation of American drama. The opening of the twentieth century produced some playwrights of some significance in America. Clyde Fitch and Langdon Mitchell as the leading playwrights won some popularity in the contemporary audience as they added some literary sophistication of European tradition. But the commercial monopoly in the theater couldn’t last long. The “little theater movement” which was started in American in the second decade of the new century launched a rapid radical turmoil in the American drama. In 1917, the Actor’s Equity was established which eroded the dominating influence of the business oriented and formula-bound producers. The “little theater movement” opened the welcoming gates for the revolutionary European theatrical and dramatic stylistics in American theater. The leading drama producing company, the Theater Guild produced innovative arts. The Theater Guild and Eugene O’Neill were the most vital forces in the permanent alteration of American dramatic art. Now the American writers and audience were no longer content with shallowness of the traditional and commercial theater because the aesthetic taste of the public started to change.



ii. O'Neill and His Era

The catastrophic World War I was one of the most dominant factors to bring about change in American theater. The American innocence and the ideal “Dream” of happiness and integration turned to a traumatic nightmare when America involved in the cataclysmic war. The past ideal innocence and simplicity as well as predictability of life was replaced by the prevailing complexity, disillusionment and disorder. Europe was haunted by the traumatic nightmare in the massacre of the whole generation of its male youth. Thus, the war proved to be a catalyst to change the spirit of the drama. The cultural and social upheavals so extensively launched during the wartime intensified a prompt departure of the drama from the past. Since life was no longer predictably comfortable, the aesthetic taste of the public changed.

Besides the creative originality and the innovative genius of O'Neill, there were both propitious and prostrating intellectual cultures to prepare the background for O'Neill's experimental talent. On the one hand, there was a vast theatrical tradition of romantic and sentimental melodrama of the nineteenth century, which O'Neill had to alter; on the other hand there were powerful revolutionary intellectual milieu in European and American soil, which helped to prepare the fertile ground for the experimental Modernism in the American theater. There were three major factors determining the contemporary intellectual milieu: the American non-dramatic literary revolution of Theodore Dreiser, H.L. Mencken, Sherwood Anderson and so on; the influence of Ibsen and Post-Ibsen European playwrights; and finally the revolutionary momentum of the “little theatre” movement with which O'Neill was associated in the beginning. This intellectual background includes his innovative talent.

Against the theatrical tradition of romantic 'happy ending' and sentimental melodrama, O'Neill came as the pioneer of modern American theater. With O'Neill, American drama developed into a form of literature. He brought a wide range of new themes and styles to the stage. Richard Roland and Malcolm Bradbury claim:

O'Neill was from the first and experimental-if independent-modernist of self and society, he was initially moved by the material forces that diminish human choice, and he came to share the perspective of the naturalistic determinists. But his wide reading, especially in the Freud, Jung and Adler, gradually lead him to attempt dramatizing the inner struggles and conflicts that govern the search for existential meaning.

(328)

In the initial days of his apprenticeship as a dramatist there was the vogue towards social realism and naturalistic determinism in the literary art. But he was no longer content with either romantic, poetic or tragic melodrama. Passionately dissatisfied and restlessly seeking for some reliable ground of the theatrical artistry, he frequently took resort to Strindbergian nihilism and Freudianism. His massive study in Freud, Jung and Alder paved the way towards dramatizing the inner struggles and conflicts that govern the search for existential meaning.

The theme of inner conflict of modern complex life was the territory uninvaded by any playwright prior to O'Neill. Realism emphasizes on the reflection of exactly what it looks couldn't help O'Neill to reflect the spiritual sickness of life. So to avoid the "banality of surface" in his plays, "expressionism" became every reliable means. It became a very helpful way to reflect the inner sickness, fear and alienation of modern life

in the midst of material and technological society, which is fragmented into chaos and tragedy.

As a pessimist, he tremendously cared his drama with tragic elements as in his plays *Beyond the Horizon* (1917), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924) and others. About O'Neill's noticeable contribution to the modern tragedy, Edmund M. Gagey remarks, "No dramatist was more responsible for the revival of the unhappy ending and the triumphant return of the tragic spirit that Eugene O'Neill, the little theatre's gift to American drama" (39).

His early one act plays remain less significant in comparison to the plays written after *Beyond the Horizon* (1917), his first full-length play to reach to the stage, which won O'Neill the first of his four Pulitzers. Robert Mayo, a character in *Beyond the Horizon*, brings a tragic chain of events by abandoning his dream of life at sea, choosing instead to marry the woman his brother loves, and stays on his family farm. We can see the wanning love, the birth of disappointment, the corrosion of poverty and spit and disease. The romances burn itself out to an ugly cinder. So, going beyond the tradition of sentimental melodrama, O'Neill has presented this play as the play of grim, modern tragedy, a play of frustration and irony that ends in wholesale disaster as in his another play *Desire Under the Elms*.

*Desire Under the Elms* recreates the passion hidden within one family. In it, O'Neill made first effort at writing in the style of Greek tragedy. Lee .A. Jacobus comments as:

He did not follow the Greek tradition and choose a great figure of noble birth whom the fates would unravel their mystery. Rather, he was

deliberately democratic, choosing a New England farmer and his family as the protagonists, of his drama. Just as fate animates a Greek tragedy, the emotional forces of Jealousy, resentment, lust, and incestuous love animate *Desire Under the Elms*. (671)

His mastermind made him different from the Greek tragedy, since he altered certain ancient material to fit with the present demand on tragedy. Unlike the protagonist from the noble birth, O'Neill brought the ordinary man like farmer in his plays like *Desire Under the Elms* and *Beyond the Horizon*. Fate used to play the vital role in Greek tragedy, but for him fate becomes the emotional forces of jealousy, resentment, lust, and love as we find in *Desire Under the Elms* and *Beyond the Horizon*.

As in *Beyond the Horizon*, O'Neill kept on struggling in his experimental dramas. *The Hairy Ape* (1917) and *The Emperor Jones* (1920) are experiments in monodrama—a type of play whose purpose is the exhibition of a single character. *The Great God Brown* (1925) is an experiment with the masks on the line of classical Greek theatrical tradition, to distinguish between the assumed and the real attitudes of the characters.

Likewise, O'Neill continued to explore the Freudian pressures of love and dominance within the families in a trilogy of plays collectively entitled *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), based on the classical *Orestia* trilogy by Aeschylus. His *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) a powerful autobiography in dramatic form focused on his own family and their physical and psychological deterioration, as witnessed in the course of one night.

iii. Post- O'Neill's Era

The 1920s and 30s were a high point in American drama Susan Glaspell, Maxwell Anderson, Paul Green, Robert Sherwood and Thornton Wilder were following O'Neill. From 1940s onward the giant literary figure like Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and other came with their masterpieces, eventhough the world was in the grip of depression, World War II and the cold war.

World War II produced a large number of war novels and poetry whereas America herself entered to an age of anxiety. The terrific World War II destroyed the faith of many people in the basic goodness of human nature, and also created the rise of anonymity and consumerism in a mass urban society. In such critical and terrific time, Tennessee William came with his experimental and expressionistic plays like *The Glass Menagerie* (1944).

*The Glass Menagerie* is a memory play where characters are drawn from his own family and scenes from past and present are mixed. William's work generally focuses on disturbed emotions and unresolved sexuality within families. His *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* portrays the theme of homosexuality and marital sexual tension-the themes that were not openly discussed in America during that time. The most famous plays, not only of William's but also of Arthur Miller's show the alienation of modern man as their basic theme. Both of them specify the setting that is almost dream like, using Brechtian devices such as the visual images and screen legends flashed at appropriate moments in *The Glass Menagerie* and *Death of the Salesman*.

Arthur Miller (1915), to see separating from William, works even covering a wide range of material, much of its growing out of his childhood memories of a tightly knot

and somewhat eccentric family that provided him with the large gallery of characters. Miller's *Death of the Salesman* (1949), a study of man's search for merit and worth in his life and the realization that failure invariably looms. *Death of a Salesman*, a landmark work, still is only one a number of dramas Miller wrote over several decades, including *All My Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953).

After the death of O'Neill in 1958, the successful years of both Miller and William seemed over, and the American theater met the crisis. Critics of drama of the major newspapers, therefore, started to look beyond the huge theaters of Broadway for good drama.

By the end of 1950s, America found new movement in drama along with the introduction of Edward Albee (B. 1928). The alienation and stress underlying the 1950s found outward expression in the 1960s in the United States in the civil rights movement, feminism, antiwar protests, minority activism, and the arrival of counter-culture whose effects are still being worked through society. America even was not restricted from the influence of European trend.

Albee's *The Zoo Story* (1958) focused the difficult in conversation as in absurd plays between the characters Peter and Jerry. Although Albee often uses the methods of the absurdists, critics regard him as a social critic and satirist. This is clear in his another famous play *The American Dream* (1961) where he attacks on the false values in American society. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* his masterpiece is a nontraditional psychological work where he reflects his own soul-searching and his paradoxical approach.

American dramatic movement was representing a continuous shift from 1930s to 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. From 1960s onwards, playwrights, novelists, poets came with multiple voices seeking their identity and showing their own problems. Black playwrights like Lorraine Hansberry, James Baldwin, Leola Roy Jones and others valorized their own problems and identity.

#### iv. O'Neill's Contribution

In America, world war second followed by the protest movements of the 1960s, the decade long Vietnam conflict, the cold war, and environmental threats. The change that has most transformed American society, however, has been the rise of the mass media and mass culture. First radio, then movies and now all powerful, ubiquitous television and film have changed American life. In the development of literary field America acquired culmination, but the credit to develop drama goes to O'Neill.

He is important because he experimented with new theme and technique, breaking completely with the trivial sentimental melodramatic tradition, which otherwise ruled and still rules the Anglo-American theater. His search for expressive form to incorporate modern ideas and notions about life and dramatic art, led him to undertake numerous experiments, which became influential for the new comers like Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee and others. Similarly, being one transitional playwright, his experimentation with symbolic figures, split personalities, masks, interior monologues, scenic effects, rhythms and sound effects came nearer to the coming generations as the inspirational sources. So, latecomers have been experimenting with the new ideas.

Thus, O'Neill took the materials of tragedy from ancient Greece and made it suited for America. He altered tragic hero from noble birth to ordinary man as farmers.

Later on, Arthur Miller couldn't stay far-fetched from the influence of O'Neill's experimentation on tragedy and the obvious example of Miller's tragedy is *Death of the Salesman*. Tragedy for O'Neill emerged essentially from the gulf between human aspiration and their consistently denied fulfillment. The same gulf, which could produce tragedy, could equally create a fierce current of absurdity and this sense of tragic transcendence really his works and the works impress the playwrights after him.

In dramatic field, O'Neill lifted America up to the attic, so Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury appreciate as:

The work of O'Neill, Odets, Maxwell Anderson, Wilder, Sarovan -and later Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams - represents for the most part the nation's only serious achievement in the world of dramatic literature. But even at the height of their power and influence, none of these writers, not even the best of them, Eugene O'Neill, could be thought of as an important cultural force in the nation life. (330)

America had and has important playwrights to make her prosperous in plays, but the most important, till now regarded, figure is Eugene O'Neill. His incessant struggle in playwriting brought the beginning to be counted America in the history of drama.

Similarly Joseph Wood Krutch writes:

In more than one respect Eugene O'Neill is unique among serious contemporary playwrights. No other has written so much or remained so persistently in the forefront of discussion; no other has devoted himself with such dogged insistence to the single task of writing plays. (77)



History of American drama will be uncompleted, if O'Neill is omitted from the pages of literary history. American film and television have brought drama nightly into every home in modern time, but the credit to establish ground goes to O'Neill. Thus, O'Neill was important not only in his time but equally he is important today also.

## CHAPTER-III

### Classical Form and Modern Aesthetic

#### i. Myth and Modern Sensibilities

In various ways, the idea of myth points toward the realms of nature, of cultural history, and of unconscious thought. It has the connection with all aspects of human life and experience; it refers to the origin and the nature of the universe, the gods and mankind; it claims to reveal historical facts or may describe psychological truths. Furthermore, it makes emotional valuation and concerns itself with moral and physical issues; it may convey beliefs, superstitions rituals, literary images, social ideas, and it may use symbols and allegories. Myth then may be said to comprise both the outer and the inner world in all its aspects, it appears as tale, which was originally transmitted by primeval art of story telling. The narrated events that form a mythic tale are not normally verifiable, their origin is nearly always unknown, and yet they have a claim to truth. Giambattista Vico writes, "It follows that the first science to be learned should be mythological or the interpretation of fable [ . . .]" (290). He conceived of a heroic age in which men constructed myths, symbols, and rituals that served as the basis for the slow growth of the human consciousness of history and reality.

Mythology is in one sense, just a collection of myths, but as scientific research increased during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this research has also been called mythology. It is the term that denotes the body of myths and the study of myths. Contemporary writers also turn to myth to reflect on the relation between twentieth-century reality and irrecoverable past, and address the failed aspiration to civilization. They think that it is necessary to dig at the root of pain and suffering of today's people.

So, reviving the primitive religious instinct, which, they think, can comfort the life from the fear of death. These mythical forms are still available because in another sense they are outside of history, residing in a timeless world below the threshold of consciousness.

The most influential name associated with the study of myth in early twentieth-century is that of Sir James G. Frazer, who begins *The Golden Bough* by conjuring up an extraordinary scene that took place for many years in ancient times at Nemi, South of Rome. In this regard, Lee W. Bailey writes:

James G. Frazer's monumental *Golden Bough* patched together several late nineteenth-century themes of myth criticism [. . .] Frazer applied comparative ethnology to the Greek and Roman classics, elevating the themes of the death and resurrection of the king fertility to new prominence. Thus, behind the noble deities of the classical pantheons—Diana, Artemis, Dionysus, Demeter, Attis, Adonis, Osiris—Frazer saw darker, primitive vegetation spirits repeating the annual death and resurrection cycle. (814)

Frazer examines most closely the myths and rituals of Attis, Adonis, Osiris and Dionysus. For these deities are the main examples of the type of the vegetation god, or corn spirit, that he found at the heart of primitive religion. Ackerman writes, “Frazer always looking [. . .] how the god suffered and wound as the results of a combat with either a wild animal or an adversary, died and was buried [. . .] and show himself again in the rebirth of green and growing things” (132). Sir James George Frazer, whose *The Golden Bough* made the sad-happy career of the dying but reviving god, divine kings, and fertility rites well known to educated person. In turn Dionysus, Attis, Osiris, Adonis,

and the rest of their tribe profoundly affected the poets, novelists and dramatists, writing between the worlds wars; the indebtedness to Frazer expressed by T.S. Eliot in then notes to *The Waste Land* is the most famous acknowledgement of such literary influence.

Frazer explains that the weird custom originated in a vegetation myth, and he demonstrates that comparable myths have extended not only in antiquity but also among contemporary savage tribes. Though he recognize and fully illustrates the workings of myth in human culture, myth for his a primitive habit of mind that we have largely outgrown; it is an addiction to magic. Frazer's main contribution was to demonstrate the essential similarity of man's chief wants everywhere and at all times, particularly as these wants were reflected throughout ancient mythologies.

Once we accept mythical thought as having a validity of its own, we find that something very much like myth is still at work beneath the surface of rational or civilized mind. Sigmund Freud often touches on this affinity between myth and the unconscious, notably in his account of the Oedipus complex. In this regard, M.H. Abrams writes:

Building on earlier suggestions by Freud himself, Jones explained Hamlet's inability to make up his mind to kill his uncle by reference to his Oedipus complex that is, the repressed but continuing presence in the adult's unconsciousness of the male infant's desire to posses his mother and to have his rival, the father, out of the way [. . .] Jones proposes that Hamlet's conflict is "an echo of a similar one in Shakespeare himself" and goes on to account for the audience's powerful and continued response to the play, over many centuries, as a result of the repressed Oedipal conflict that is shared by all men. (250)

Freud's assistance with the myth of Oedipus facilitates him to analyze and dig out the psychology of the people. His idea expanded more to account for many developments and practices in the history of civilization, including warfare, mythology, and religion, as well as literature and other arts.

For Carl Gustav Jung the idea of myth is more important. He postulates a "collective unconscious" beneath individual unconscious, and he maintains that it is "an ocean of images and figures" (Adams 783). His "collective unconscious", which yields inborn possibilities of ideas and keeps our "fantasy active within certain category" (Adams 783). Jung brings the concept of "archetypes" which are instinctual, primordial; they are the radical elements of all myth and of all the fantasies and dreams of men. Jung defines:

The primordial image or archetype, is a figure-be it a demon, a human being, or a process- that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure. When we examine these images more closely, we find that they give form to countless typical experiences of our ancestors [. . .] but the mythological figures are themselves products of creative fantasy and still have to be translated into conceptual language. (Adams790).

The primordial images constantly recur in our history, culture and civilization. Writers are bound to express them because the images belong to the creative fantasy of them. We know of images only by means of the overt myths, fantasies, and actual

behaviour that give the specific content in individual instances and that are the conscious embodiment of the unconscious archetypes.

His contention of “collective unconscious” and “archetypes” earns immense popularity among critics and writers. Hazard Adams believes, “his many erudite studies of dreams, myths, and symbols have been of immense interest those who study conventions of literary symbolism” (783).

It may be asked what attitude consciousness should take toward the unconscious myth making forces and toward the universal archetypes that subsume even the individual unconscious. Jung replies that consciousness has grown out of the unconscious as a very late development in nature, but nevertheless it can claim to be a necessary condition for any truly human life. Jung is much concerned with asserting the inherent value of archetypes, and hence of the myths in which they are revealed. The archetypes are the essence of man; in them the whole nature of man strives to realize itself. If myth making is as fundamental a human function as Jung asserts, the persistence of myth in all literatures is readily explained. Even without falling back on Jungian psychology, however, we may be tempted to identify myth with art in general and particularly with heart of poetry.

The writers and critics of twentieth century took help of “myth” to apt the need of this century. The most significant member of the British school was Sir James Frazer, whose monumental *The Golden Bough* has exerted an enormous influence on twentieth-century literature, not merely on the critics but also on such creative writers as James Joyce, T.S. Eliot and O’Neill and others. M.H. Abrams writes:

James Joyce in *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wakes*, T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, Eugene O'Neill in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and many other writers have deliberately woven their modern materials on the pattern of ancient myths, while W.B. Yeats, like his admired predecessor Black, undertook to construct his own systematic mythology, which he expounded in *A Vision* (1726) and embodied in a number of remarkable lyric poems such as "The Second Coming" and "Byzantium". (171)

James Joyce taking help from myth experimented with modern technique in his novels. His *Ulysses* represents the events of an ordinary day in Dublin by modeling them on the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey*. T.S. Eliot treats Joyce's use of the *Odyssey* as an effort to find an external order and a source of meaning that will land form and value to the confusion of modern life.

Eliot even has taken help of myth in his widely read poem *The Waste Land* and becomes successful to contrast the glories of the past with the sordidness of the present. The use of mythical method has aided Eliot in communicating his meaning. He has realized that he is indebted to Miss Jessie L. Weston and James Frazer while preparing this poem. Margaret Ferguson, Mary J. Salter and Stallworthy write:

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the symbolism of the poems were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail Legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). He further acknowledged a general indebtedness to Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* (12 volumes) Adonis, Attis, Osiris, in which Frazer deals with ancient vegetation myth and fertility ceremonies [. . .] Eliot, following Weston, thus uses a great

variety of mythological and religious material, both occidental and oriental, in order to point a symbolic picture of the modern waste land and the need for regeneration. (345)

On the eve of the composition of *The Waste Land*, Miss Weston's book supplied him with the myth of the Grail and The Fisher King, and from the *Golden Bough*, he derived his knowledge of a number of vegetation and fertility myths and rituals, specially those connected with Attic, Adonis and Osiris. His poetry marks a complete break from nineteenth century tradition. It is a new kind of poetry, the result of the poet's desire to mirror the complexity and intricacy of modern life. His character's gross sensuality and animality, love degenerates into lust, and the perversion of the sexual function are shown to be the root cause of degeneration and decay. Eliot believes, "artist and that the poet must develop a sense of the presentness of the past" (Admas 760).

The catastrophic world shattered the values of religion and faith invited economic depression and the world became the absurd theater. In such time, Albert Camus came searching through his own thoughts about suicide to see if he could come to a conclusion about life that would be positive in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). To see this, he brings ancient myth as an allegory for our own time. In this regard, Sheedhar P. Lohani, Rameshwor P. Adhikari and Abhi N. Subedi write:

In the case of *The Myth of Sisyphus* Camus tells us the classical myth, giving us some of the details as they appear in Homer and others as they appear in the works of other classical writers. Then he gives us his version of what Sisyphus is doing in the myth, hoping that we will



eventually see how Sisyphus's situation is parallel to that of most people.  
(70)

For Camus myth becomes the vital material to show the plight of modern people and becomes one influential figure in the literature.

Similarly, in dramatic genre, myth become the useful material to dramatize the human's plight of modern time and the dramatists like Eugene O'Neill, T.S. Eliot and others started to decorate their dramatic world getting the help from it. Manipulating myth, Eugene O'Neill in his popular dramas like *Desire Under the Elms*, *Mourning Becomes Electra* and others bring the new taste in modern plays. Marion B. Smith views the modern American plays as:

The author's view that modern drama, and especially modern American drama, uses myth to propound a deeply pessimistic new of man is reinforced by O'Neill's treatment of the *Orchestra* material in his trilogy, *Mourning Becomes Electra*. (174)

In *Mourning Becomes Electra*, the story itself is almost identical with the classical story while the characters are men and women essentially like ourselves. Further Smith writes, "O'Neill is the first" Dickinson asserts, "to attempt the transposition of classical myth into the theatrical style of modern realism" (174).

The plot of *Desire Under the Elms* also re-enacts many of the tragic incidents of the Old Greek myths. As in *Oedipus*, the son fights with the father, and commits adultery with the mother. As in *Medea*, the wife kills her child in order to gain revenge on the husband but the plot of *Desire Under the Elms* changes the pattern of the Old Greek tragedies so radically that it creates an essentially new myth. Because the mother is now

a third wife, and therefore a young stepmother to the matured son, the love of the two becomes wholly natural, though technically incestuous. And because the stepmother kills her infant because of a deluded love for the stepson, the cold violence of Media's hatred is transformed into a warm love. The plot of *Desire Under the Elms* creates a modern myth with new relationships; it suggests a new interpretation of the tragedy.

Thus, the early twentieth century literary figures brought the myths and experimented in their writings to interpret the lives in modern context. Furthermore, the modern return to mythical forms can be taken, as an attempt to reconstitute the value-laden natural environment that physical science has tended to discredit. At the same time, it is a repossession of a cultural heritage. Though history itself has produced the increasingly rational, disinherited mind of modern man, history may also be invoked as a non-rational, mythical memory, a man-made record of the intuitive conceptions of themselves.

O'Neill, Fate and Tragedy in Modern Time in Relation with Classic

#### 1. Fate

Fate concerns the fixed natural order of the universe. It is the irresistible power of agency that is conceived of as determining the future, whether in general or of an individual. It is regarded as the fixed timeless of events that is inevitable and unchangeable.

The idea of fate dominated many phases of poetry, theology, and philosophy from the Homeric age to the present time. The Greek mind was apt to perceive the significance of fate most clearly in the conflict of unseen power with human character as in Sophocles' *Oedipus*. In Greek tragedies, it is obvious that fate or *Moria* is the chief

determining force, often leading an entire family to an irresistible doom. In Aeschylus's plays fate plays a significant role. It is Zeus, whom he has characterized as the president of the immortal, who governs humans' action. Even Sophocles character like Oedipus is fated to marry his mother and kill his father. But his determination to escape from the fate leads the tragic doom of the characters. So Greeks accepted fate as an inexorable power and wondered how and why fate works as it does, whether by chance or design, by necessity or reason. However, they commonly agree that the fate is spun by the Moira at birth, so that the flourishing life will be limited by necessity.

The renowned critic James Duffy shows the identical relation between fate and the will of Zeus citing the example of Homer's conception of fate. "One critics maintains that Zeus, at one time subject to Moira, and that at another time he takes her place he spins out to men their fortune. Others say that the will of Zeus and fate are same" (477).

Homer in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* has shown man's destiny at his birth in the hands of Zeus and is not allotted to him by a power superior to Zeus. Further it is stated that destiny comes from Zeus. Duffy writes, "When the poet mentions a good or the god, it must be interpreted as meaning Zeus since it is only the highest god who has apportioning of fate" (479).

By birth individual is destined to perform to do this or that. None of one can escape from the fate or Moira. Moira for Homer has a bad signification. In his epics, it has the linkage with death, which is often spoken of as the fulfillment of destiny, Duffy writes, "It shows the close connection between death and Moira. It is natural to suppose that Moira bring death and fate more often in the *Iliad* than in the *Odyssey* on account of the nature of the subject matter in the poems" (478).

The ways in which life may be lived or enjoyed are not encompassed by the moira. That depends on the gods, or as other would say, on the disposition of the soul. On the other hand, Moira sets a limit to what a mortal may or may not achieve in his life, and sets a limit to life itself. Normally the gods do not protect mortals from death when their time has come. O. E. James analyzes Homer's and Hesiod's concept of fate as:

The concept of Moira as the death-bringing agent was retained in close association with the figure of Erinys, but undergoing important changes, fate governing the life of the individual in a variety of aspects. Both are deprived of the personality they had in the popular cult, and several concepts of fate exist side by side, tending to become more impersonal as man was increasingly made responsible for his own destiny. (234)

The ancient authors and philosophers believed that they were controlled and destined by God. But in twentieth-century the philosophers like Nietzsche declares, "God is dead". Furthermore, due to catastrophic world wars the concept of human beings changed drastically. In this regard, O'Neill believes:

The playwright today must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it—the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfying new one for the surviving primitive religious life and to comfort its fears of death with. (O. Cargill, Fagin and Fishers 115)

Contemporary playwrights turn to Greek tragic plots to reflect on the relation between twentieth-century reality and irrecoverable past, on a failed aspiration to civilization. In the ancient Greek literature, the Gods control human destiny. A divinity shapes the end. Modern literature replaces the Gods with that of psychoanalysis that can

mean and end to repression. Now the Gods are gone except for the atavistic traces they have felt in the basis legend.

In more recent time the Myth and Fate have been explained through their close relation to rituals and magic manipulation or to institutions and social customs. They have been seen as metaphors originating in the unconscious layers of the human mind as in Sigmund Freud and in the offshoots of his psychoanalytical thought, for example, Freud explains fate as:

His destiny moves us only because it might have been ours-because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him. It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse toward our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father.

Our dreams convince us that that is so. (Jacobus 73-74)

Freud believes that it is not only Oedipus but we people are equally fated and cursed before our birth to keep our relationship with mother hating the father. Only the difference, however, we find ourselves with Oedipus that we suppress it within us and bring fourth in disguise form. Exploring myth of Oedipus, Freud successfully analyzes the psychology of modern people.

Among modern dramatist Eugene O'Neill is considered as one of the greatest playwrights for exploring human nature and reviving the Greek themes. Many of O'Neill's characters are obsessed by something good or evil bigger than their conscious minds, which makes them interesting to their creator. He enriches the drama with new and renewed techniques, and he was led to do this because he had a compulsion to express deeper-than-surface reality. Though O'Neill anticipates with Greek tragedies, for

him fate is the emotional forces as in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*. Rightly, Lee A. Jacobus claims on O'Neill's use of fate that, "Just as fate animates a Greek tragedy, the emotional forces of Jealousy, resentment, lust, and incestuous love animate *Desire Under the Elms*" (671).

ii. The classical tragedy

All types of dramatic poetry known in Greece in fifth Century B.C. namely tragic, satyric and comic originated in the worship of Dionysus, the deity of wild vegetations fruits and especially the wine. In his honour at the opening of spring season, dithyrambs, hymns were performed by the chorus. They used to dress like satyrs, the legendary followers of Dionysus. They also presented song and copy dance, stories from the adventurous life of the God. K.J. Dover, et. al writes, "Dramatic festivals, like all Greek festivals, were held in honour of gods, and included processions and sacrifices" (55).

The word tragedy is often used to describe any sort of disaster or misfortune more precisely; it refers to a work of art, usually a play or a novel dealing with the fortune of heroic character. The subjects of Greek tragedy were taken from Greek legends and legendary history. The tragedies were acted in the great theater of Dionysus at Athens. Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides were the playwrights of Athenian tragedies. Out of their many plays, thirty-three plays are still there in the theater.

In early tragedies the role of the chorus was vital. There was only the choral dance in tragedy, it was Aeschylus who for the first time introduced a second actor and reduced the role of chorus and assigned the leading part to the dialogue. To bring two opposite or sympathetic characters face to face to exhibit the clash of principles by means of the class of personalities was a change put forward by him into a new world. Gilbert

Norwood believes: “Aeschylus was first to introduce two actors and Sophocles increased the number to three” (11).

Euripides added prologue in the play, which precedes the first song of the whole chorus. He added the interludes, which were not affiliated to the subject of the play. It was just for fun to the audience. Gradually, the masks were introduced to defamiliarize the actors. They were the survivals of the religious service in which the human beings must not be themselves. They must disguise their faces as a hero or a god. There was no curtain and each break of the play was informed by choral song. The scenes of the play were simple. There were no under-plots and sub-plots. There was no mix up of tragic and comic plots like in the Elizabethan tragedies. The speech was long, and the voice of the characters used to play a significant role in their rank. We are told that characters used to spend many years in training their voice. The dramatist also evolved the principle of 'unity of action' to which Aristotle gave more emphasis.

There were only a few characters-two characters and a chorus. The characters used to be above the level of ordinary men. The protagonists and other characters used to be kings, queens, princes and princesses. The idea of 'domestic' tragedy in which the characters on the stage are “just like ourselves” would have been quite strange to Greek tragedians. The murder and violent scenes or the evil deeds were done off the stage. The audience learned them from the chorus or the messengers. The dress of the hero also differed from the modern one. The Greek tragedians did not include comic relief, and subplots to relax the tension of the audience.

To sum up with Greek tragedies, it contains common subject matter of legends, a few characters of high rank, dislike of evil scene on the stage, no mixing of comic and tragic elements, small plot. There the tragedy was performed on the esteem of Dionysus.

Differentiating tragedy from comedy Aristotle claims, “Comedy aims at representing men as worse, tragedy as better than in actual life” (Butcher 13). Further, he defines in his poetic:

Tragedy then is an imitation of action that is serious, complete, and of certain magnitude; language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the plays; in the form of action, not narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. (Butcher 23)

The imitation of a certain type is the prime object of a tragedy. The action should not be ludicrous or morally trivial but noble and of great consequence, such that it has relevance for the wider humanity. The imitation is strengthened in beauty by language with verse and song. The dialogue is spoken in verse and the choral parts are rendered in lyrical song. Its form should be dramatic not narrative excludes all epic poetry and modern novel from the domain of tragedy. Pity and fear are the effects of the dramatic imitation on the audience.

Tragedy, according to Aristotle, has six formal constituents: Plot, character, thought, diction, spectacle and song. He gives plot the highest place in the hierarchy of the relative importance of the six constituents of tragedy; and the place of character comes only next as secondary action. He argues: “tragedy is an imitation not of men but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a



quality” (Butcher 27). Aristotle’s emphasis is not on qualities of the status of mind and soul of protagonist. The plot, according to him, must be complete, whole and of certain magnitude having organic whole like the organs of living creature, which has beginning middle and end. He views:

A beginning is that which does not follow anything by causal necessity, but after something naturally is or comes to be. And end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other things, either by necessity or as a rule, but has nothing following its. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. (Butcher 29)

This unity of plot, which Aristotle says consists in the unity of action, not in the unity of the hero. The events that happen in the life of a person are usually so multifarious that they do not form the organic unity we look for in a tragedy. Aristotle says, “the plot, being and imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that if any one of them is displaced or resumed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed” (Butcher 35). Aristotle excludes all double plots and episodic parts from being suitable to tragedy. The double plots violate the contradiction of effect possible in the imitation of one complete action. He explains about simple and complex plots, where in simple plot the change of fortune of the tragic hero takes place without the reversal of the situation and without recognition. In complex plot, the change is accompanied by the reversal of the situation and recognition that arouse pity and fear to the audience and give exit to such emotions by purgating them.

Aristotle talks about three unities; time, action and place. For him the unity of time that only the single revolution of the sun is suitable for tragedy. Action keeps

tragedy alive, and when the tragic action occurs of friend against or between those who are near and dear to one another, it is the most tragic plot that excites pity and fear. If the action is of enemy against enemy or of neutral against neutral, it has nothing to do with pity and fear.

In Aristotle's *Poetics* character posses the second position. He aims four things at character. The character must be good, appropriate, true to type, and true to his action and nature. There should not be sudden changes in the nature of the character. Then only the character is appropriate for the tragic plot. The tragic hero is like ourselves having infirmities and virtues, tilted more to the side of good than evil. In *Poetics*, Aristotle defines that ideal hero as one "who is not eminently good and just" yet whose misfortune is brought about" not by vice or depravity but by some error or frailty" and "who is highly renowned and prosperous" (Butcher 45). The tragic personage should be a man between two extremes. He should be superhuman in his moral elevation so that we can admire him and feel pity for him in his downfall. At the same time he should have sufficient human frailty so that we can identify with him and feel fear for us. He is neither a blameless character nor a notorious villain. Aristotle's concept of the hero of high rank goes unquestioned in classical, Elizabethan and neo-classical tragedy. The hero must have some error of judgment, i.e. hamartia on his part, which causes him suffering. That is the main source of the purgation of emotion in tragedy. Due to serious of errors, which bring him the crisis and his pitfal fall in the tragedy. When he discovers his own error, there is a sudden change in him from ignorance to knowledge. Thus, hamartia is the cause that makes the tragic hero suffer severely and the audience feels pity and fear.

The other component is diction, which is the expression of thought, and bears the feelings and point of dramatic personae. Action is the expression of thought. Melody, which provides pleasure to audience, is also an element of tragedy and goes to the part of chorus. The spectacle is the craftsmanship of the stage, which also plays significant role for arousing pity and fear. The tragic effect is dependent on the performance also.

### iii. The Modern Age

Literature is a part of a continuing tradition with its established genres, structures and styles. The tradition undergoes marked changes in the course of time. In theatre, for example, the language of poetry gives way to that of prose in modern age. The world war changed the view of world and the modern writer is forced to experiment with new forms of expression. Rightly Glicksberg in *The Tragic Vision* says, “The old bottle cannot hold the new fermenting wine” (6).

Modern tragedy seeks to study a complete elaborate social reality dealing with the socio-economic setting where a character is broken into different “isms” such as socialism, structuralism, existentialism and so forth. As being a changing social genre, tragedy deals with the changing social conventions adopted by human. Neither the Greek nor the Elizabethan tragic form can suit for modern man. The religious faith out of which they grew in the past is no longer shared today. Yet, the modern tragic hero like the tragic hero of past lives at the mercy of alien and unpredictable forces. The condition of modern hero is ambiguous, and he has not final explanation for the mystery of pangs and suffering and the character seems frustrated, despaired and isolated from life itself

Charles Glicksberge is in the opinion that:

The new form of tragedy is not only possible in our times, it has been produced by such men as Faulkner, Malraux, O'Neill, Sartre, and Camus.

There are writers who have accepted Nietzsche's premise that God is dead, but have nevertheless found ways to express the tragic vision, often in defiance of the meaningless to the absurd. (Glicksberg vi)

Twentieth century is another mark for the development of tragedy, breaking certain validity of the glorious Greek or Elizabethan past. Though modern tragedy gains its full intensity, the authors like O'Neill, Camus, Sartre and other are indebted with Nietzsche who believes God is dead.

For Nietzsche, tragedy is the outcome of a fruitful tension between diverse urges; Apollonian and Dionysian. Both, the two formative forces of nature are opposite and hostile to each other, but in a well-lived life as in a sublime art, they are forged into a delicate balance. In Greek myths, Apollonianism is embodied in Apollo, the god who stands for intellect, clarity, order and calm; Dionysianism is embodied in Dionysus the god who represents passion, obscurity, disorder and anarchy. For him "the inner force" and "outward appearance" are embodied with Dionysianism and Apollonianism. Apollo is the god of "appearance" and Dionysus represents the primordial force that takes form in appearance.

The appearance, as the particular manifestation of the primordial energy, is not complete in itself. The separation from the "primordial one" is the prime cause of all suffering, which Nietzsche calls the principle of individualization. In Greek myth, the titans tore Dionysus as a boy to pieces. Nietzsche says that the Greek tragic hero is the dismemberment of Dionysus. As dismembered part, he suffers and his death is the

affirmation of the joyful union with the primordial one. The appeal of tragedy, despite the painful realization of the horrible truth it imparts to us, lies in the glimpse of the end of individuation. So, Nietzsche views:

This view of things already provides us with all the elements of a profound and pessimistic view of the world, together with the mystery doctrine of tragedy; the fundamental knowledge of oneness of everything existent, the conception of individuation as the primal cause of evil, and of art as the joyous hope that the spell of individuation may be broken in augury of a restored oneness. (Draper 128)

The death of the protagonist is merely the destruction of appearance and after it; there will be affirmation of the primal unity and joy of life.

In the plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, O'Neill, modern tragedy gains its full intensity and starts afresh with a complete break from the glorious Greek or Elizabethan past. The tragic protagonists do not have the majestic arrogance of Oedipus or Hamlet. They all in modern tragedy come from the ordinary walks of life. Both Arthur Miller and J.L. Styan's arguments and the practice of modern tragedy show that the tragic protagonist need not necessarily be a person of high rank. Arthur Miller believes, "The common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were" (Jacobus 811). The fate of a person from common walks of life can be serious enough to be of universal scope and his fate brings into play the social, psychological elements, which lend tragedy such as scope, as in O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*, *Desire Under the Elms* where the characters are from common walks of life. Even an ordinary individual, therefore, is fit enough to be an ideal tragic protagonist. The examples of modern

playwrights like Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, O'Neill, Miller and Bckett show that the fate of a common individual can be serious enough to be tragic significance. The protagonist's tragic victory needs to be related to his consciousness. Society is a trap and whoever lives in society is automatically trapped and one becomes a victim. So, the modern dramatist, avoiding the ancient plot, insisted on the inner psyche of the hero. Allain Robbe-Grillet views, "Tragedy may here be defined as an attempt to reclaim the distance that exists between man and things, and gives it a new kind of value, so that in effect it becomes an ordeal where victory consists in being vanquished" (Drabble 14).

Tragedy differs from age to age and author to author both in tragic vision and the dramatic form. Plot, character, dialogue and setting, which mainly constitute the dramatic form, are manipulated variously as the vision changes, such that no rigid set of rules can be accepted as prescription for all types of tragedy. In this respect Eugene O'Neill developed tragedy that could reveal to his time. He struggled to create a new dramatic form for the American stage, one which transcended melodrama and achieved tragedy. He opines, "I'm always actually aware of the force behind- (Fate, God, our biological past creating, our present, whatever one calls it-mystery certainly)- and the eternal tragedy of man in his glorious self-destructive struggle " (Granger 180). The self-destructive struggle is overtly dramatized in most of his tragic plays like in *Beyond the Horizon*, which one of the miserable characters Robert struggles in the farm to cultivate good harvest but finally face the doom. His tragic characters are struggling in "hopeless hope" which, eventhough unachieved, is in itself a victory. Further O'Neill says:

People talk of the 'tragedy' in them, call it 'sordid', 'depressing',  
'pessimistic'—the works unusually applied to anything of a tragic nature.

But tragedy, I think has the meaning the Greeks gave it. To them it brought exaltation, an urge toward life and ever more life. (Alexander 261)

O'Neill tried to adopt Greek tragedy into a twentieth-century model. His understanding of tragedy stemmed from his reading of Nietzsche. For him, the world is a dark abyss; man suffers because he cannot penetrate this darkness; though the tragic hero makes the attempt. In this regard, O'Neill views:

Yes, because any victory we may win is never the one we dreamed of winning. The point is that life itself is not. It is the *dream* that keeps us fighting, willing-living! Achievement, in the narrow sense of possession, is a stale finale. The dreams that can be completely realized are not worth dreaming. The higher the dream, the more impossible it is to realize it full [ . . . ] A man wills his own defeat when he pursues the unattainable.

(Alexander 261)

Tragedy for O'Neill emerged essentially from the gulf between human aspiration and their consistently denied fulfillment. The same gulf, which could produce tragedy, could equally create a fierce current of absurdity and this sense of tragic transcendence really his works and the works impress the playwrights after him.

## CHAPTER-IV

### Farm and Fate: A Search for Grand Tragic Vision

This chapter studies the farm as fate and confinement to the major characters in O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*. Confinement generally denotes the close space where individual is forced to stay. One lacks the chance of freedom and emancipation. The more one tries to be emancipated the more s/he merges into the abyss of confined world. It not only denotes the physical confinement, but also has the close attachment with psychological confinement.

O'Neill's characters are confined in the farm from which they can't escape, and equally we can't ignore fate which guides them. Fate concerns the fixed natural order of the universe. It is the irresistible power of agency that can be conceived of as determining the future, whether in general or of an individual. It is regarded as the fixed timeline of events that is inevitable and unchangeable. Walter Shear further adds:

For most scholars of American literature, Fate suggests the tradition of naturalism [. . .] the sense of fate in the period, seems to evolve its complexities in term of psychological action of the self- with the social arena as what is given rather than what is to be analyzed [. . .] Fate becomes the strange mating of the external and the internal. (40)

O'Neill, in his two prominent plays *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*, outlines the forces of fate which are related not only with the divine will but also are related both with human impulses: emotion, passion, jealousy, pride, hate and love, and comic world: community, circumstances, and chance. O'Neill presents the characters, “splendidly-suffering bit of chaos the tragedy of which gives Man a



tremendous significance, while without losing fight he would be a tepid, silly animal” (Alexander 262). In both plays, he shows the fate of a common individual having seriousness enough to be called tragic.

*In Beyond the Horizon*, it is the misplacement of the characters' skill, because Robert is suited for a wanderer's life, whereas Andrew is for the farm and Ruth. The problem arises after the marriage between Robert and Ruth. Desperately seeking consolation, Andrew leaving home, goes beyond the horizon but Robert remains in the farm only to see chain of deaths. As a result, Robert and other family members are entrapped in the farm in such a way that the chain of tragic events occurs leading the death of Robert. Love-hate relation, resentment, and jealousy are the ingredients embedded in the characters of *Beyond the Horizon* as in *Desire Under the Elms*.

*Desire Under the Elms* is a play about the greed and possessiveness, greed for land, wealth and security. The characters are confined in the farm; they can't isolate themselves away from it. As a result, Abbie smothers the child from the issue of farm raised by Eben to prove her sacred love to him, and both of them are arrested and imprisoned deserting old Cabot alone.

Both the plays are tragedy but the characters in *Beyond the Horizon* meet tragic doom due to the ignorance about farm, whereas *Desire Under the Elms*, it is due to the lust for farm. The forces of fate center on the farm in both the plays, and almost all the characters are affected by it.

In the case of *Beyond the Horizon*, the first scene of the play opens with Robert's telling to his brother Andrew about the romantic dreams of sailing “beyond the horizon”. From this act, it becomes clear that Andrew doesn't have any desire to go "beyond the

horizon" because he is "a son of the soil, intelligent in a shrewd way" (573). It also becomes clear that Robert's desire is not to earn rather he says, "I was to tell you that it's just beauty that's calling me" (577). He further adds in the discussion with Ruth:

So, I used to stare out over the fields to the hills, out there - (he points to the hills, out there - (He points to the horizon) and after a time I'd forget any pain I was in, and start dreaming [. . .] There was all the mystery in the world to be then about that-far-of see-and there still is! I called to me then just as it does now. (after a slight pause) And another terms my eyes would follow this road, winding off into the distance, to ward the hills, as if it, too, was searching for sea. And I'd promise myself that when I grew up and was strong, I'd follow the road, and it and I would find the sea together. (with a smile) You see, my making this trip is only keeping that promise of long ago. (580/81)

His interest is about the mystery beyond the hill-cupped farm where, "just beauty that's calling" him. He has vision of the adventures that lie beyond the limits one can see, and the opportunity of the voyage with his uncle comes as an answer to an unspoken prayer. As a frail child, he has been confronted by the beauty that lies in the cloud and he hears the voices of illusion calling him. In such case, we audiences can't imagine his life in farm. Though each brother loves very much to one another, love couldn't forge Robert's intense desire to go "beyond the horizon".

On the night before Robert is to set sail for three year's cruise around the world, but his neighbor's daughter, Ruth confesses her love to him blinded by the flame kindled

in the moment of her confession, he lightly forgoes thought of the world beyond the horizon, plans to settle at once on the farm with his jubilant bride. He says:

[ . . . ] I won't go, Ruth. I promise you. There! Don't cry! (He presses her to him, stroking her hair tenderly. After a pause he speaks with happy hopefulness). Perhaps after all Andy was right than he knew when he said I could find all the things I was seeking for here, at home on the farm [ . . . ] Oh, Ruth, our love is sweeter than any distant dream (583)!

This is the turning point of the play where Robert and Ruth, becoming blind to the future, have consciously adopted their love. Robert, on the other hand, smoothers his years nurtured dream for the sake of love, whether it will be proved as the unity of two souls or a mere infatuation. While accepting Ruth's love, Robert "speaks with happy hopefulness" for the future, which compels both the characters to live and to struggle, though there is no any certainty of achievement of their hope. O'Neill claims, "let your love unto life be love unto your highest hope; and highest hope the highest thought of your life" (Alexander 262).

Robert watches serenely enough while his heart wrenched brother sets forth on the cruise that was to have been his. On the other hand, his unromantic brother is a true son of the soil, born to do nothing but work its field and sure to wither if uprooted. Both the brothers have known their nature. Andrew says Robert, "farming ain't your nature. There's all the difference shown in just the way us two feel about the farm" (576). Similarly, Robert says Andrew, "You're wedded to the soil [ . . . ] I'm not made that way" (576). Leaving their desire and nature, they adopt the different path. The characters can't see their vitiation of their life by choosing misfit path. They themselves don't

remain under their own control; they are trapped by fate and invite their own desolation. After such mistake in choice, Robert and Ruth are entrapped in the farm, which doesn't let them to be freed. Andrew even can't make progress as he could do in the farm and becomes an idol to hear and see the death of family members.

It is not only Andrew, but also Robert and Ruth, who are equally liable for blame because their impetuous decision and stubborn nature to choose the misfit job, there occurs the chain of tragic events in Mayo's family. For Aristotle it is "error or frailty" in judgment. In other words, it is the tragic flaw, which leads the characters like Robert and Ruth to merge into the gulf of problems. Though Robert knows, "farming ain't" his nature, he is destined to choose the wrong life and easily persuaded that love, is "sweeter than any distant dream". Robert believes everything what he has been seeking is found at home on the farm and the love is "sweeter" than any distant dream, but the plight he including Ruth meet not "sweeter" rather than bitter taste in life after their settlement in the farm.

Father, on the other hand, has believed, "Mrs. Atkins can't do nothing' with the place ought to be done. She needs a man, a first-class farmer, to take hold o' things; and Andy's just the one" (589). The furious father - who had counted on Andrew, a "born farmer", to take over - warns him not to run "against your nature and you're goin' to be a mighty sorry for it if you do" (596), and heaps scorn and curses on him when he remains adamant. But merely a farewell in which Andrew confesses that he is leaving to forget Ruth and to cement the brothers' love for each other. The hope of cementing love between brothers remains mere hope, in turn, Robert rears hate, jealousy and doubt about Andrew in his heart.

The play proceeds through the inevitable results of the fatal mistake of the characters. Robert is a failure as a farmer though he struggles with it and his life becomes one long struggle against his wife's nagging, his mother-in-laws complains and his own sense of inadequacy. He realizes his "share of troubles trying to work this cursed farm" (612), but there is no any alternative choice for him to be freed. He tries to escape from the farm, but as a caged bird, he can't emancipate himself from it. Cursing the distant hills, "[. . .] walls of a narrow prison yard shutting me in from all the freedom and wonder of life" (614), he is forced to confined within the hill-cupped farm and becomes one helpless creature to bear the problems one after another.

He struggles his best to solve the problems, but as he tries, more the problems emerge. Even the tenuous relation between husband and wife withers as flower in the moving passage of time. Ruth comments:

I s'pose you think I ought to be proud to be your wife-a poor, ignorant thing like me! (fiercely) But I'm not. I hate it! I hate the sight of you. Oh, if I'd only know! If I hadn't been such a fool to listen your cheap, silly, poetry talk that you learned out of books! If I could have seen how you were in your true self-like you are now-I'd have killed myself before I'd have married you! I was sorry for it before we'd been together a month. I knew what you were really like-when it was too late. (616)

She believes her life has been spoiled marrying Robert. Unable to content herself when he deprecates Andrew's prosaic accounts of his travels, Ruth castigates Robert for his incompetence and defiantly tells him she loves Andrew: "He'll show what a man can do! I don't need you" (616). In act one, scene one she said, "I don't love Andy [. . .] Oh,

Rob! Don't go away [. . .] I won't let you! I'd break my-my heart" (582). But such love for Ruth was no more than infatuation when she comes to face the challenges of life.

Robert's recited poetry, which attracted her before three years, now, becomes "cheap" and "silly". His separation from her would break her heart, but now she tells, "I hate the sight of you", and "I always loved Andy".

Robert as a helpless creature can do nothing but keep on listening instead of treating the fading love which was "sweeter than any distant dream" before marriage. He becomes the center of hit from every aspect of his life. Without realizing the effect upon Robert, Ruth tells, "He will show what a man can do! I don't need you" and "I always loved Andy" but one's wife in love with another, obviously makes husband jealous and angry with the wife's lover who, no matter, can be his own brother as Andrew. Both Robert and Ruth, in this time at the height of their emotion and passion, have become the slave of their own emotional forces of fear, anger and jealousy. Up on Andrew's return, Andrew tells Robert and Ruth separately that his passion for her was forgotten in a few months. To Ruth, it could be the end of hope - to Robert, an added irritation - but Andrew senses the situation and leaves them after only a day's visit. So, O'Neill digs up deeply into the human heart and shows how human beings are eventually crushed into the wave of nets set by human passion and cosmic world. Robert and Ruth have been tormented by both forces: inside (emotional, resentment, jealousy) and outside (community, circumstance).

Eight years later, the tragedy has progressed naturally in terms of daily routine. The farm is in debt and almost totally decayed, Ruth has aged horribly, Robert's mother and daughter are dead, and he is dying of consumption. The setting of the play also

shows the chromatic decay of Mayo's family. Clean and well-kept farmhouse of the beginning sequence of the play when there was the unity in family is now totally changed and becomes as:

The room, seen by the light of the shade less oil lamp with smoky chimney, which stands on the table, presents an appearance of decay, of dissolution. The curtains at the windows are torn and dirty and one of them is missing. The closed desk is gray with accumulated dust as if it had not been used years. Blotches of dampness disfigure the wallpaper. Threadbare trails, leading to the kitchen and outer doors, show in the faded carpet. The top of the coverless table is stained with imprints of hot dishes and split food. (631)

In many instances the setting not only provides a "proper environment" for the action but also contributes to influence or even directs the action. In every instance the setting is an important part of the playwright's construction, and in this play the farmhouse seems as if it has been deserted for a long time. If people are staying there, certainly they must be poverty stricken and careless like Mayo's family in recent years. Similarly, the outlook of the characters also matches with the setting. Handsome and young Robert of the beginning scene is changed now and seems older than his age, dying of consumptions. Beautiful Ruth, on the other hand, appears now in the "negligent disorder of her dress, the slovenly arrangement of her hair, now streaked with gray, her muddied shoes run down at he heel" (631), and it shows her miserable life.

Three of the characters rear their hope of betterment in future, but they can do nothing except becoming the audience of the inexorable process of death. Rightly,

“Hellen called the exquisite chromatics of decay. You might almost say, then, that the play is alive because it follows the inexorable process of death” (O. Cargill, Fagin, Fisher 136). It becomes inexorable because of their misfit choice. For Robert and Ruth there remains nothing more than to blame for themselves and their fate. Robert says, “I’ve tried to keep things going in spite of bad luck” (621), and keeps hope to make better by “going to see the sun rise. It’s any augury of good fortune” (637). But augury of good fortune never comes throughout his life, only the realization of his unsuccessful struggle with farm comes time and again and says in defeated voice, “I’ve been an utter failure”, “It’s the farm that’s ruined our lives, damn it” (635).

At the end Robert speaks to his returned brother, Andrew, with the clear vision of dying. He asks him to take care of Ruth, whom Andrew and not Robert should have married in the first place and of the land, which Andrew and not Robert should have remained to till. Robert says:

I’m a failure, and Ruth’s another - but we can both justly lay some of the blame for our stumbling on God. But you’re the deepest - died failure of the three, Andy, you've spent eight years running away yourself. Do you see what I mean? You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership. And now - (He stops as if seeking vainly for words). My brain is muddled. But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray - so you’ll be punished. You’ll have to suffer to win back [. . .] It’s no use. (647)



All of O'Neill's power of invention has dramatized the contrast between dream and reality, focusing the dream of beauty and ugliness of reality. Andrew in Act one, Scene one says to Robert, "I've heard there are great opportunities [. . .] well, if you get to be a millionaire all of a sudden, call 'round one in a while and I'll pass the plate to you" (576). Somewhere in his heart, he had the dream to be rich. For him, "beyond the horizon" is the place to accumulate the property, and as he gets chance to go, he rears the dream of prosperous man and converts himself from wheat raising to wheat gambling but resulted in failure. Finally, he reveals his bitter taste of reality, "it was the business that wound me up" and "I'm sick of it all" (642). All the characters in the play are living just the silly, immature, compromising way and their struggle is glorious self-destructive struggle, which is very important for O'Neill who believes, "A man wills his own defeat when he pursues the unattainable" (Alexandra 261). Whether seeking gold in California, or seeking to possess farm, or seeking to be millionaire going beyond the horizon, his major characters are to follow the same rainbow to the same end. Rejecting what security they already possessed, they are all to imaging the romantically impossible and to destroy themselves in their quest for it as Robert, Ruth and Andrew do. Andrew finally determines to do penance so that he may win back the "harmonious partnership" with life he had once known but as Robert says, "It's no use."

Andrew's return to the farm after eight years is merely to watch Robert's death on the ruined farm and to hurl accusations against Ruth for what she has apparently done to his brother. Robert, on the other hand, knows the reality that he is dying, crawls at last out of the hated house to die on the road he should have traveled, looking towards the hills he never crossed. He doesn't repent on his own death, but says to Andrew:

(In a voice which is suddenly ringing with the happiness of hope) you mustn't feel sorry for me. Don't you see I'm happy at last - free - free! freed from the farm - free to wander on and on - eternally! (He raises himself on his elbow, his face radiant, and points to the horizon.) Look! Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come - (exultantly) and this time I'm going! It isn't the end. It's a free beginning - the start of my voyage! I've won to my trip - the right to release - beyond the horizon! Oh, you ought to be glad -glad - for my sake! (He collapses weakly.) Andy! (Andrew bends down to him.)

Remember Ruth. (652)

Robert is dying expecting a happy union between Ruth and Andrew and the long - awaited travel for himself. The result of human compulsion, driven out reason, has set them on the path of death or emotional disaster. O'Neill's characters live in their own glorifying world without any future prediction of defeat from anybody and anything. Robert accepted the challenge of farm and love whereas Andrew accepted the world "beyond the horizon". Similarly, Ruth accepted the challenge of life with Robert. So each of the character is wrong headed and stubborn and becomes ready to struggle but entrapped in the forces in such a way that defeat comes on their hand. Robert's dream of "beyond the horizon" can't wither easily, though he is entrapped by fate in farm. He keeps struggling incessantly with the farm, but achieve merely family fragmentation and death. But his death is not the death of life rather than "It's a free beginning - the start of my voyage!" His repetition of the word "free" is apt because he can be "free from the farm" and "fate" which can confine him no longer after his death. Indeed, it is the tragedy

not only of Robert, but Andrew and Ruth are also equal participants in it. Thus Robert is physically dead, but so are the spirits, if not the bodies of Andrew and Ruth, each torn apart by anger, jealousy, hatred, and greed.

Similarly, in *Desire Under the Elms*, O'Neill explores the elemental passion of the characters, and each of the character is tethered with lust, hatred, and anger. Though it is repulsion and attraction to the farm in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms* respectively, the causative agent for the tragic doom of the characters is the farm in both the plays. The farm is the most essential asset to any farmer and it holds all the major characters and becomes the source of greed for three of the characters Ephraim Cabot, his son Eben and his new wife Abbie in *Desire Under the Elms*. Due to their greed and lust, they are unnoticingly confined in the farm till to their tragic doom.

Ephraim describes the poor condition of the farm when he first came in that new land. From his hard struggle with the land, he becomes successful to convert the barren and stony land into fertile farm. His struggle in the farm shows his hard working as:

God's hard! God's in the stones! Build my church on a rock - out o'  
stones an' I'll be in them! That's what [. . .] stones. I picked 'em up and  
pile 'em into walls. You kin read the years of my life in the walls,  
everyday a hefted stone, climbin' over the hills up and fencin' in the fields  
that was mine, whar I'd made thin' grow out o' nothing' - like the will o'  
God, like the servant o' His hand. (684/85)

This was hard work, but Ephraim Cabot did not mind the back - breaking work because he felt that God was hard, and this was part of His plan. As Ephraim erected the fence to cover the farm, equally he has erected the fence of confinement. On the moving

passage of time, the fence keeps on towering from which characters cannot escape besides Peter and Simeon.

Ephraim's three sons Peter, Simeon, and Eben hate him for what he had done to them. Simon shows his hatred, as his brothers, and says, "We've wuked. Give our strength. Give our years. Plowed 'em under in the ground - (He stamps rebelliously.) - rottin' - makin' soil for his crops! (A pause) Waal the farm pays good for here bouts" (674).

From their early age, Ephraim forced them to work in the farm, and the circumstance becomes such that they start to hate him. Realizing that Simeon and Peter want to go to California yet have no money to take them there, Eben thinks up a plan to get rid of them once and for all; providing them money and making them to sign a paper renouncing all claims to the farm. At least they are freed from the farm, going to California as Simon says, "We're free, old man - free o' yew an' the hull damned farm" (680). Both Peter and Simeon are rightly claiming, "hull damned farm" which enchants and doesn't let the other characters to be free until their tragic doom. Simeon and Peter's departure from the farm is in effect the example of family fragmentation. Both Ephraim and Eben agree that Ephraim's first and second wife struggled in the farm till to their last breathe. Here we cannot ignore the farm, which confined the two females and forced them to meet their tragic end, and further more this tragic end of them can be taken as the beginning point to Cabot's family fragmentation and death. Old Ephraim is the center of hate from all: his sons and wives. Peter and Simeon hate him because of his persistence upon hard work, and Eben hates because he had stolen the land that had belonged to his mother and had then worked her to death on it. Ephraim even has realized, "She tried t'

be hard. She couldn't. Never knowed me nor nothin'. It was lonesomer 'n hell with her. After a matter o' sixteen odd years, she died" (685).

Ephraim believes on hard working, but his two wives, though wanted to be hardworking, couldn't work and died. Ephraim follows his hard god and runs the farm without mercy, so he becomes the character of hatred by his family members.

As in *Beyond the Horizon*, the characters of *Desire Under the Elms*, for the time being at height of their emotion and passion, have become the slave of their own emotional forces of fear, anger, hatred, and jealousy. O'Neill digs deeply into the human heart and shows how human beings are eventually crushed into the wave of nets set by human passion and cosmic word. Characters have been tormented by the inside and outside forces that are the ingredients of modern man's fate for O'Neill.

Despite the fact of Ephraim's seventy-five years old age, he marries thirty-five year old lady, only to cheat his sons of their inheritance and to avoid the tragic sense of loneliness. So he says, "Then this spring the call come –the voice o' God cryin' in my wilderness, in my lonesomeness – t' go out an' seek an' find [. . .] I sought ye an' I found ye" (685). This marriage further leads the characters into the abyss of problems as their develops the three way struggle to possess the farm.

Though Abbie Putnam is thirty – five year old, she accepts at once to marry with the old man, and by the time she moves into the Cabot homestead, she is determined that whatever happens the farm will be hers someday. Poverty was challenging for her, and for the security and betterment of future Cabot's farm could be beneficial, so she says, "What else'd I marry an old man like him fur " (681). The problem created by her poverty in her past life becomes explicit when she says:

I've had a hard life, too - oceans o' trouble an' nothin' but wuk fur reward. I was a orphan early an' had t' wuk fur others in other folks' hums. Then I married an' he turned out a drunken spreer an' so he had to wuk fur others an' me too again in other folks' hums, an' the baby died, an' my husband got sick, an' died too, an' I was glad saying' now I'm free fur once, on'y I diskivered right away all I was free fur was t' wuk agen in other folks' hums, doin' other folks' wuk till I'd most give up hope o' ever doin' my own wuk in my own hum, an' your paw come [. . .]. (681)

Back breaking work of day and night means her reality but there was no security for her future life. The only hope was the child who also died and the drunkard husband remained no longer. She thought that that was her best opportunity of freedom from husband and every other problem. In reality, that freedom was the birth of another confinement, which is near about to come. Her pride to be the sole possessor of the farm after the marriage with old Cabot, “this be my farm – this be my hum this be my kitchen – (681), gradually leading her to the abyss of problems. She has the higher dream, which is not easy to bring in reality. O’Neill has rightly stated, “The dreams that can be completely realized are not worth dreaming. The higher the dream, the more impossible to realize it full [. . .]” (Alexander 261).

Dream of Abbie to be the sole possessor of the farm is crushed when she encounters with her stepson, Eben. Eben Cabot equally hates any other woman’s coming to take this mother’s place and claims the farm that rightfully belongs to him because he says Ephraim has “stealin’ my Maw’s farm” (677).

Ephraim on the other hand believes:

When I come here fifty odd years ago - I was just twenty an' the strongest an' hardest ye ever seen - ten times as strong an' fifty times as hard as Eben. Waal this place was nothin' but fields o' stones - folks laughed when I tuk it [. . .] stones. I picked 'em up an' piled 'em into walls [. . .] I tuck another wife - Eben's Maw. Her folks was contenstin' me at law over my deeds t' the farm - my farm! That's why Eben keeps a talkin' his fool talk o' this bein' his maw's farm. (684/85)

He shows his incessant struggle upon the farm, which was stony when he arrived there. He claims "my farm" and "if I could, I would, by the Eternal! 'R if I could, in my dyin' hour, I'd set it afire an' watch it burn - this house an' every year o' corn an' every tree [. . .]" (683), but Eben claims the farm rightfully belongs to him as his mother's legacy. Rightly John Gassner views, "The tensions produced by New England Patriarch authority and the struggle for land figured in *Desire Under the Elms*" (325). Everyone in the play wants the farm, despite the fact that when Ephraim first came in it, many people considered it worthless. He removed all the stones from the fields, planted them, and raised his animals. It is as a result of these years of hard work that makes the farm so attractive to everyone. So the struggle of three characters goes on continuing until they meet their tragedy.

On the one hand, there is the struggle for the possession of the farm; on the other hand, there is the development of love - triangle among Eben, Abbie and Ephraim. They desire farm and at the same time, they succumb to the desire for each other; their lust unfolds with excessive openness.

The play moves to the tragic situation in which all the characters are forced to make conscious choices for the sake of higher good. Abbie realizes that an heir of her own would be the surest road to her purpose and undertakes to seduce Eben by whom she hopes to bear a son. Her passion for security and a home enables her to overlook the nature of her marriage. Her drive to acquire Eben's body is hardly more than an irresistible sexual urge to gain something unavailable from her aging spouse. Similarly, after some days, Eben begins to notice that life on the farm is easier since his stepmother has arrived. Eben's almost unnatural attachment to his mother's memory is driven out by the raw sex literally thrown at him by the sensuous Abbie.

O'Neill's use of setting imparts the sense of a passionate fate in one of the most dramatically gripping scenes. In Act II, Scene II, he has presented with the downstairs closed off and the two upstairs bedrooms opened up, Abbie sits disconsolately on the bed as her mate, speaking but unheard, lies beside her. She stares at the thin partition separating her from the equally disconsolate Eben on the other side. Once Ephraim departs for the barn, the two begin to sense the rising eroticism that will soon bring them together and Abbie says Eben as:

I'll sing fur ye! I'll die fur yer [. . .] don't cry Eben! I'll take yer maw's place! I'll be Everythin' she was t' ye! Let me kiss ye, Eben [. . .] don't be afeered! I'll kiss ye pure, Eben - same 's if I was maw t' ye - an' ye kiss me back 's if yew was my son - boy - sayin' good night' to me! Kiss me, Eben [. . .] don't leave me, Eben! Can't ye see it hain't enuf - lovin' ye like maw [. . .]. (687)



The rocks on the farm are unforgiving and so is the fate that Abbie and Eben face. Abbie lures Eben into his mother's parlor, a room that had not been opened since her death, and seduced him, breaking down his scruples with the suggestion that by cuckolding his father he could revenge for Ephraim's treatment of his mother. Neither Abbie nor Eben can control the sexual impulse, and indulges in it.

The long hate relation between Abbie and Eben converts into sexual relation and as result they beget the child. To celebrate the child's birth, Ephraim invites all the neighbors to dance in the kitchen of the farmhouse. Many of the guests suspect the true circumstances and say so as openly as they dare. Almost all the time there is the roar of laughter when Ephraim talks with his neighbors but he pays no attention to the insinuations and out danced them all. In reality, Cabot is nearly blind both physically because he is nearsighted and figuratively because he cannot see the adultery in his own home.

While a dance in honor of the newborn child goes on in the kitchen, the father and son quarrel outside. Spitefully, Ephraim taunts his son with his knowledge of how Abbie had tricked him out of his inheritance. Furiously Eben turns on Abbie threatening to kill her and telling her he hates her and the child he has fathered when she tricks him. So he scolds her as:

Ye've made a fool o' me – a sick, dumb fool - a purpose! Yo've been on'y playin' yer sneakin', stealin' game all along - gettin' me t' lie with ye so's ye'd hev a son he'd think was his'n, an' makin' him promise he'd give ye the farm and let me eat dust, if ye did git him a son! (Staring at him with

anguished, bewildered eyes.) They must be a devil livin' in ye! T'ain't human t' be as bad as that be! (69)

For Eben farm becomes so important than his own begotten child. Indeed, Ephraim Cabot is blind both physically and figuratively, but Eben is not less to him. He cannot see himself clearly, though he professes to be only his mother's son, the other characters constantly see his father in him as Simeon says, "like his paw", " waal - let dog eat dog" and Peter says, "Dead spit'n' image"(678). On the other side, Abbie's lust for farm changes into love for Eben who constantly accuses her of betraying him. The more she tries to clarify her genuine and sacred love to him, the more she is bitterly accused and scolded, "I do hate ye! You're a whore - a damn trickin' whore"(691). In this scene, she is really helpless and no one understands her. Thinking the child is the obstacle keeping them apart, she smothers it in an effort to prove her lover that it is neither farm nor the child whom she wants, so she says:

I didn't want t' do it. I hate myself fur doin' it. I loved him. He was so purty – dead spit'n' image o' yew. But I loved yew more – an' yew was goin' away – far of where I'd never see ye agen, never kiss ye, never feel ye pressed agin me agen - an' ye said ye hated me fur harin' him - ye said ye hated him an' wished he was dead - ye said if it hain't been fur him comin' it'd be the same's afore between us. (693)

Abbie sacrifices her son in an attempt to ensure love and enjoyment of the present with Eben. The son becomes the result of their passion in which neither Eben nor Abbie had the control. To kill the child is her impetuous decision and obviously she has to pay for her follies. Eben, on the other hand, is equally stubborn like his father, clinging only

in one matter. As a blind, he can't see beyond the farm, and for both Ephraim and Eben there we don't find any regard and respect to the son rather than farm. Ephraim wants to watch burning everything of the farm on his deathbed rather than to pass it to his son, an Eben, for the sake of farm, forsakes his own son, "I wish he never was born! I wish he'd die this minute" (692). So for the death of the child, issue of the farm plays the significant role and also Eben is not less responsible for this infanticide.

When Eben discovers what has happened he is enraged and shocked and he sets off to get the Sheriff for Abbie's arrest. If Eben had not scolded Abbie, it could be possible that she would not have killed the helpless, innocent child. The child, a very helpless and innocent creature faced death unknowingly from its own mother only to make strong love relation between mother and father, and to make his father the sole possessor of the farm. On his return to the farm, Eben begins to realize how much he loves Abbie and how great her love for him must have been to induce her to take the child's life. He solemnly tells:

I got t' pay fur my part o' the sin! An' I'd suffer wuss leavin' ye, goin' west, thinkin' o' ye day an' night, bein' out when ye was in - (lowering his voice) 'r bein' alive when yew wass dead. (A pause.) I want t' share with ye, Abbie - prison 'r death 'r hell 'r anythin' [. . .] if I'm sharin' with ye, I won't feel lonesome, leastways. (695)

So, he announces his love and his will to share whatever punishment is met out to her.

The guilt for the death of child, Eben insists, is mutual.

The farm influences almost all the characters in *Desire under the Elms*. Even the Sheriff covets, "It's a jim - dandy farm, no deyin'. Wished I owned it (696)! It is the

farm that drives the characters and affects their feelings, emotions, and outlook on life. Coveting the farm Ephraim, Abbie and Eben come to meet their unpredictable doom. Farm enchants the characters from where they can't free themselves and further become the victim of fate. Lee A. Jacobus believes, "The forces of fate center on the farm" (671). O'Neill has presented the characters embedded with the impulses of love, hate, resentment, lust and greed which are the unseen forces beyond of human's control. Being the victim of the unseen forces, though wanting to be the sole possessor of the farm, Eben and Abbie come to commit a crime and they are taken off together, both destined for punishment. So Jacobus believes, "Cabots are victims of passion" (612). Ephraim, on the other hand, wants to defy the time of his loneliness by possessing farm, wife and young son, but becomes in effect an exile living alone on the farm that has now become a curse not only to him but also to Eben and Abbie.

It can be concluded that to be cut off from the unseen hidden forces is to be without life. Then, we can ask these questions: are the human beings able to lead their lives defeating these forces? Can they ever free from the intense and immediate fortune? Of course, they cannot be free and able to overcome these unseen forces hidden deeply outside in community, circumstance, etc and within us. So, it is obvious that even if human beings achieve some success, they must begin a new battle, aiming at the unattainable until they have met their final defeat.

## CHAPTER-V

### Conclusion

This thesis looks at the idea of farm as the symbol of fate and confinement for both Mayo's and Cabot's family, and as a result there occurs family fragmentation and death. Taking this line as an interpretive possibility, it allows me to make some sense of curious ending of the plays: *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*. The characters in the plays develop jealousy, hatred, lust, greed, and resentment and create misunderstanding among them who are to meet doom at the end of the plays.

The true importance of the farm, which affects the characters' feelings, emotions and outlook on life, becomes clear in both the plays. Throughout history, land has been a source of life and death in many civilizations, and it can create social status, as it is a limited commodity. Land is more than likely what brought Mayo and Cabot's ancestors to America. Those ancestors saw the true value of the land, as Mayo and Cabot's family saw. O'Neill has raised the issue of farm in his plays *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*, and dramatized the characters in it, which ultimately leads them to face their tragic doom.

*Beyond the Horizon* traces the irony of the characters' fate. Marriage yokes the dreamer Robert and Ruth to domesticity and farm, whereas practical Andrew goes "beyond the horizon". These three characters succumb to their destiny. Their impetuous decision entraps Robert and Ruth in the farm, which doesn't let them to be free. Robert struggles in the farm only to be proved as a failure farmer and to be a helpless one to see the tragic chain of events. His wife, Ruth, castigates him for his incompetence and defiantly tells him she loves Andrew. On the one hand, he bears the agony of his father,

mother and daughter's death; on the other hand, he becomes one failure and hated creature not only from his wife but also from his neighbours. Obviously, the relation between husband and wife is broken when Ruth time and again curses and tells, "I hate the sight of you" (616). Their plight is symptomatic of the generalized failure and both Robert and Ruth, in this time at the height of their emotion and passion, have become the slave of their own emotional forces of fear, anger, hate and jealousy.

Unromantic Andrew is a true son of the true soil, born to do nothing but to work its field and sure to wither if uprooted. The dream of prosperity converts him from wheat raising to wheat gambling after his departure from home to beyond the horizon but resulted in failure. Rejecting what security they already possessed, they are to destroy themselves in their quest for higher good as Robert, Ruth and Andrew do.

It is common to the characters in a tragic situation that they are conformed to a choice. Choice is at the heart of tragic drama, and the choice may be taken without much consideration as we find by the choice made by the characters in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*. In *Beyond the Horizon*, Robert chooses to stay in the farm getting married with Ruth. Ruth chooses Robert instead of Andrew and stays in the farm whereas Andrew chooses to go "beyond the horizon" instead of staying in the farm. Their choice ultimately proved to be a wrong choice and as a result, watching tragic chain of events, Robert meets physical death, so are the spirits of Andrew and Ruth, if not their body, each torn apart by anger, jealousy, hate and greed as the characters of *Desire Under the Elms*.

Similarly, in *Desire Under the Elm*, O'Neill's depiction of human impulses of love, hate, lust, and greed gives an impression of human nature as convincing and

complete as the more complex studies of his other plays. Once Ephraim Cabot arrives with his new wife Abbie, the three-way struggle develops for the possession of the farm. Farm binds all the characters and becomes the source of greed for Ephraim, Eben and Abbie. They are the products of their natural environment, evident in the suffocatingly close trees, stonewalls, and the ceaseless demands of the farm. Abbie, whose passion for security and a home enables her to overlook the nature of her marriage. Her drive to acquire Eben's body is hardly more than an irresistible sexual urge to gain something unavailable from her aging spouse. Eben's almost unnatural attachment to his mother's memory is driven out by the raw sex literally thrown at him by sensuous Abbie.

Though Ephraim marries Abbie to avoid his loneliness, and to dispossess his son's claim to the farm, Eben is strongly attracted to Abbie as she to him. In the passionate conflict, which follows, Abbie bears a son by Eben and then murders the child to prove to Eben that her love is real. Her murder of her son is a willful act, done solely on her own volition. Eben himself, determined to avenge his mother's suffering, though fighting nature in his resistance to Abbie's siren call, defies his father not only by uniting sexually with his stepmother but also by producing a son and reveling in the secret satisfaction of having cuckolded his parent. Then, at the end, having fled to get Sheriff, in horror at Abbie's deed, he faces the full realization of their deeds and returns to stand at Abbie's side to face the upcoming punishment leaving old Cabot alone in the farm. Old Cabot, though turns the livestock loose in the woods and plans to go away, can't loose his loneliness away from himself and remains in the farm as one helpless creature.

Thus, O'Neill deals with the man and his struggle with his own fate, which inevitably crushes man: man is predestined to failure. But he must fight back; thus tragic

nobility lies in the glory of waging a losing battle. For, even if a man achieves some success, he must begin a new battle, aiming at the unattainable until he has met his final defeat. In his plays, he shows the struggle between the littleness of man and the vast nature of the universe. He treats individual in relation to great forces, which function outside. In his plays *Beyond the Horizon* and *Desire Under the Elms*, characters fight desperately with their own emotional forces of jealousy, revenge, resentment, hate, lust and anger as well as the outside forces such as: community, circumstances etc. Thus the farm affects the characters, and also both “inside” and “outside” forces defeat them.