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**„Only the Past When You Were Happy
Is Real”: Feminine and Masculine
Mourning in Eugene O’Neill’s
Long Day’s Journey into Night**

Abstract: The present article conveys a psychoanalytic Freudian and Lacanian examination of the feminine and masculine mourning in Eugene O’Neill’s 1940 modern tragedy *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. I will show that the work of mourning in this play is both feminine and masculine, but with a particular emphasis on the feminine mourning and, secondly, on the autobiographical aspect of the Tyrone/ O’Neill family. Whereas for the feminine character Mary Tyrone the darkness of her psyche appears within the sickness of the body and her mourning is repeated in a history of histerisation, Edmund Tyrone, the playwright’s alter ego and a seagull figure in the modern theatre, longs for death and he mourns nothing else but his own self.

Keywords: Eugene O’Neill, Confession; Mourning; Loss; Suicide; Drama; Tragedy.

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The Crisis of the Confession

Modern tragedy of the 20th century is articulated in the relation with the *other*, mainly in the crisis of this articulation. At first sight, the ordinary protagonist features realistic problems, ambitions and aspirations and his discourse of disarticulation breaks the conventional linearity of the narrative time in flashbacks and flash-forwards. However, this specific discourse of a searched relation, of both legitimacy and intimacy, encloses the other within parentheses: the other becomes as silent and amorphous as possible, while the self is structured by infinite strindbergian monologues in front of the audience, in front of the constructed history, with the ardent desire of telling the truth of one’s personal life. There is no transfer in this private confession and the character remains solitary in his pain – on a panoptical scene, in the center of a *theatrum mundi*¹. Moreover, the tragic modern hero reveals, through an autobiographical and hyper-subjective discourse, the intensity of

his experience, always conflictual and also inward. The long monologues in Eugene O'Neill's (1888-1953) tragedies depict the drama of transfiguration, the psychic inspection of the collapse of the self – all due to an actual and effective embodiment of the loss or to an estranged mourning. The work of mourning in the play *Long Day's Journey into Night*, 1940, is both feminine and masculine, but with an emphasis on the feminine mourning and on the autobiographical aspect of the Tyrone/ O'Neill family. "... We are tragedy, the most appalling yet written or unwritten!"² affirms the American playwright, claiming probably that the gender intertextuality of mourning is based on the disintegration of the concept of family (the members of this family are always drunken or on drugs), specifically on "«a crisis in figurability» which is articulated, not as «the loss of the paternal fiction», but as the loss of a maternal reality."³

The curse of the Tyrones consists in the trauma of repetition or in the persistence of this trauma: "the things life has done to us"⁴ as the feeling of an unvanquishable fate; it is what Mary confirms: "Let's remember only that, and not try to understand what we cannot understand, or help things that cannot be helped – the things life has done to us we cannot excuse or explain." Each family member deals with his own traumatic experience which outlines his identity, but, more essentially, there is a relentless and inherent trauma that is unyieldingly inscribed in the very name of the Tyrones as well as in that of the Mannons (*Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1929; in three parts: *Homecoming*, *The Hunted*, *The Haunted*) or in the determining name of any other family in O'Neill's

plays – the collective guilt as the repetition of sin and the guilt without sin. In a dreamy appearance of innocence and youthfulness and always with a different facial expression, Mary Tyrone thinks that the morphine "... kills the pain. You go back until at last you are beyond its reach. Only the past when you were happy is real." The reality of happiness is always previous. If the repetition refers exclusively to the aspect of temporality, to the unceasing flowing of time towards an unattainable future from an unrecoverable past – genuine repetition as *forward recollection*⁵ –, then the problem of the feminine character Mary Tyrone is that the liquidity of time keeps her from becoming who she is: in her case, O'Neill writes about "expressions of intense suffering by the memory". In the impossibility of her renewal and maybe in the impossibility of a genuine repetition, she *has been* in an undecided past (of perpetual happiness), she *is not* in the present time and she *cannot become* in the future, that is to say she is not able to take herself *back* since her present refuses the uniqueness of her individual presence. In this context of crisis, the failure of the confession lies in the O'Neillian rupture with traditional drama, specifically in the novelistic quality of his characters' (interior) monologues that become some true scenic soliloquies, consistent flows of thoughts, *strange interludes* (as in the drama with the homonymous title from 1928). The theatrical detail is mingled with the novelistic one: authors from the end of the 19th century and from the beginning of the 20th are cited or exposed in the family library. There is also a correspondence between the lives of the characters and the appearance of the volumes: "all these have the look of having been read

or reread." Through the strange interlude technique, the second life of the character is represented by a corresponding second time, by a complete metamorphosis of the soul, a grievous episode, an in-between and unfinished time, a trial or a preparation, close to the idea of purgatory (as in August Strindberg's *Inferno*). The O'Neillian interlude confirms at the beginning of the century not only the interval of the tragic (the collapse of the form of tragedy due to the surpassing of the monolithic tragical phenomenon), but also the intermission of the modern play itself, revealing an architecture of interruptions, a breathing time for recollectedness and rehearsal. They all represent countless blackouts in the chain of every personalized story. Within this new aesthetics of an epic theatricality and influenced by the sufferings and miseries of the post-war period, O'Neill's dramatic consciousness insists for an exorcism of the past in which reflection is disrupted by the diseased relations between catharsis and sensitivity, incoherence and imagination, agony and remembrance, psychic paralysis and sexual energy. In this sense, the protagonist – he illogically removes his mask since no one is around – doesn't talk to himself in his private confession, but to his personal mourning.

The Double Darkness of the Feminine Soul

It is a well-known fact that *Long Day's Journey into Night* assumes the story of Gene's life and, moreover, that it insists fatalistically on the impossibility of change: people cannot change, that is to say that characters cannot change – they reject the genuine repetition. The domestic tragedy

Long Day's Journey was written in blood and tears, in an organic fusion with the traumatic events of Gene's life: his father, the actor James O'Neill (born in Ireland) died in August 1920; his mother, Mary Ellen Quinlan (Ella, born in America, of Irish parents), a graduate of a convent academy in Indiana, 13 years younger than her husband, died two years later from a brain tumor; the next year, his brother Jamie, an alcoholic, died at the age of 45. In fact, in opposition with Mary Tyrone, the feminine character that she portrays, Ella O'Neill overcame her addiction to morphine and returned to the convent; she abstained until her death in 1922. Also, biographers suggest that Ella underwent a mastectomy in 1918 due to a breast cancer. She was closer to the dead brother Jamie than to the living one, Eugene, and she was careless about his tuberculosis, an illness that determined his stay in Gaylord Farm Sanatorium. It is in this fatidic place – a place of passage, a place of a *strange interlude* – that he decides to become a dramatist, assimilating the essence of European philosophical drama, through his readings from Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, George Bernard Shaw, Luigi Pirandello and, most importantly, August Strindberg, which he eulogistically mentions in his Nobel acceptance speech.

O'Neill's mourning and grief lasted for two decades and determined Eugene to dramatize and even to unmask the tragedy of this multiple loss in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The playwright finds meaning and sense of humanity only in the works of mourning and despair, under the European influence of a *fin-de-siècle* rhetoric – the ineffable loss, the morbid atmosphere, a nostalgic ideal that is always absent, the figure

of the sufferer who does not have the ability to suture the self that was split against itself, overall a traditional Western culture of mourning and sorrow (the poetry of Fr. Hölderlin or Ch. Baudelaire, the novels of Dostoevsky, W. Benjamin's aesthetic criticism or S. Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholia"):

The cluster of losses overwhelmed the playwright and put him in a state of mourning that lasted two decades and determined the qualities, themes and characters of everything he wrote from then on. After 1920, nearly every O'Neill play is either directly or indirectly about death, loss and mourning, and most have bereaved characters (such as Eben Cabot in *Desire Under the Elms*⁶ or Nina Leeds in *Strange Interlude*) who struggle unsuccessfully to let their dead be dead and to live their own lives without feeling haunted. Over the next two decades writing was the vehicle for O'Neill's mourning.⁷

Mary Tyrone is described as a 54-year-old woman, with a graced figure and a distinctly Irish visage; in her youth, she must have been extremely pretty, considering her healthy but thin and pale figure, her long and straight nose, her sensitive lips or her dark brown almost black eyes – a very eloquent nun-mother appearance of a vibrant and labyrinthine truth in a hopeless ruin or resignation, significantly related to Katharine Hepburn's performance as a Greek tragedienne in specific moments of confused panic of frightened anger. Mary's extreme nervousness is very striking since her hands are never still, moving restlessly, with

an ugly crippled and regressive look due to the morphine addiction; O'Neill writes that "one avoids looking at them, the more so because one is conscious she is sensitive about their appearance and humiliated by her inability to control the nervousness." The most appealing quality of her face is "an innate unworldly innocence" which makes common cause with her personal complaint that she has lost her soul in this terrible tension and, moreover, that no one believes her. Thus, there is a reciprocity between the pain of the hands and the loss of the soul, as there is a connection in Ingmar Bergman's film *Persona* (1966) between the comparison of the hands (caresses, slaps, coverings) and the silence-muteness of the feminine character.

But how can you understand, when I don't myself. I've never understood anything about it, except that one day long ago I found I could no longer call my soul my own. But some day, I will find it again – some day when you're all well, and I see you healthy and happy and successful, and I don't have to feel guilty anymore – some day when the Blessed Virgin Mary forgives me and gives me back the faith in Her love and pity I used to have in my convent days...

Taking into consideration his Irish Catholic background, O'Neill insists on the aspect of the feminine creation with respect to the Immaculate Conception and to the idolatrous attitude towards the Blessed Virgin. What is interesting is that both Mary Tyrone and Mary Ellen bear substantial identifications with prostitutes⁸, despite the virginal and complicated

representation in the eyes of the son. Regrettably and cynically, the two Marys have betrayed their sons running away from motherhood responsibilities into foggy shadows, which could be described as appropriate detachments in voices and manners, blank denials, mysterious and unnatural retreats from words and actions, particular moments of dead silence. Overall: repeated nights of fog, double darkness of the soul⁹. Dedicating the manuscript to his wife Carlotta¹⁰, a woman addicted herself to a strong sedative (potassium bromide), O'Neill admitted that he had faced his death "at last" and he had regarded the departed "with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness", getting very close to the Freudian theory of mourning¹¹. Just like Strindberg, Gene was an unwanted child, a misbegotten (see the play from 1942, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*). He realized that his entrance into this world – similar to the birth of Edmund from *Long Day's Journey*, who became a self-destructive individual – was the cause for his mother's morphine addiction: a shameful feminine secret, full of anxiety and depression. Like Ella, Mary Tyrone was a fragile mother who succumbed to daily reverie and anorexic symptoms in the illusory peace of her mingled thoughts and for whom the past was both present and future, so she sadly recognizes the existence of the misery of life: "We cannot help what life has done to us", "We all try to lie out of that but life won't let us". Intimately incompatible with the house of her father, she was never at home in her husband's wrong, indecent and cheap house, always associated with a lonely and dirty room in a one-night stand hotel: "In a real home one is never lonely. You forget I know from experience what a

home IS like. I gave up one to marry you – my father's home." Mary's feminine grievance, a dramatic expression of her losses, points to the fact that her sufferance does not have the same representational power as that of her husband's after thirty-five years of marriage, as if the male was the only norm; her overlasting renouncement does not bear the same seriousness as the grief of her husband, a "rigid binarism"¹² that lengthens the traditional distance between the feminine and the masculine. Truly affected, James Tyrone sees in front of his eyes "the girl she had once been, not a ghost of the dead, but still a living part of her."

Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Mary Tyrone is very close to Niobe, the feminine figure of mourning, wife of Amphion; at the sight of her dead children, Niobe was turned into stone and, as she wept unceasingly, waters started to pour from her petrified complexion. As I have shown earlier in 2021¹³ on the subject of the most anguished woman of O'Neill's feminine characters, Mary Tyrone, like Nina Leeds or Vinnie Mannon, is a living dead who prematurely began the mourning for her not-ended-life or for the life she could have had, since the memorable is associated only with the most painful. Such psychoanalytical insight into the feminine psyche was never encountered before in an American drama or tragedy. Although she is still searching for her own story, Mary is caught into the logic of the impossible salvation. The anatomy of the O'Neillian drama is shaped starting not only from the psychological collapse of the character, but also from Eugene's personal psychoanalysis

in 1927: after this year, the most Freudian plays were written. Freudian in the sense that the loss becomes the dominant subject for the victim, and not the lost object. For Freud (in *Trauer und Melancholie*, 1917) the correlation of mourning and melancholia is clinically sustainable and justified: mourning represents a normal disposition to loss, whereas melancholia represents a pathological one. In addition, whereas mourning is a *regular* reaction to the loss of a loved person or to the loss of some abstraction (sometimes the rehabilitation develops up to the point of the substitution of the beloved object), the melancholic remains caught in his loss, in a self-destructive incorporation of the object to which his delirium increases. The melancholic suffers a *profoundly painful dejection, a cessation of interest* in the outside world and a *loss of the capacity to love*. The Freudian mourning is a painful mood, a normal reaction to a history of loss, to a history that represents the loss, to the trauma of repetition. The world of the mourner is desolate and miserable: the self passes through an eclectic process of loss, desertification and abandonment: "In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself"¹⁴. A fallen shadow, Mary Tyrone feels abandoned, but she also abandons the other Tyrones. Mourning is a complex and eclectic process of inner transformation that affects both the images of the self and of the object in the mourner's representations. As I have mentioned in the first chapter of this paper, the work of mourning (fr. « le travail du deuil », an examination or a labor of reality, an affect of grief; germ. « die Trauer »), throughout the failure of the private confession, is veiled in brutal and

long monologues offering intense and conflictual images of the human psyche. As a result, every O'Neillian tragedy is autobiographical in nature and in construction.

For Mary Tyrone, the moment of giving birth to Edmund, doubled by a lonely scream in despair, was the beginning of her extreme anxiety and of her everlasting punishment which transforms her into a *mater dolorosa*, the self invoked incorporation of Virgin Mary: "I knew something terrible would happen." And the narcotic escape, as a pseudo-idyllic reclusion or the hypostasis of sin and temptation, contributes to the irreversible transformation of this fallen woman who is often named "a ghost" or even "Ophelia" by the Tyrones... it contributes also to the *history*¹⁵ of her unmanageable unhappiness exposed in a failed confession right at the end of the play that hopes to rebuild the ideal times:

I had a talk with Mother Elizabeth. She is so sweet and good. A saint on the earth. I love her dearly. It may be sinful of me but I love her better than my own mother (...) I told her I wanted to be a nun (...) But Mother Elizabeth told me I must be surer than that, even; that I must prove it wasn't simply my imagination I said, of course, I would do anything she suggested, but I knew it was simply a waste of time. After I left her, I felt all mixed up, so I went to the shrine and prayed to the Blessed Virgin and found peace again because I knew she heard my prayer and would always love me and see no harm ever came to me as long as I never lost my faith in her (...) That was in the winter of senior year. Then in the spring something happened to

me. Yes, I remember. I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time.

Freud considers that Oedipus and Hamlet represent the double emblem of grief and patricide: the death of the father constitutes the origin of the mourner. Oedipus is the unconscious meaning (*he did not know*), while Hamlet is the conscious surface (*he knows*) and he conveys a mourning for the sake of mourning. Hamlet is the father of the melancholic prince, with an unhappy consciousness, caught in a play of sorrow/ mourning, the *Trauerspiel*¹⁶, the German baroque drama. Here, the values of the classical world are lost for the modern hero, thus the *Trauerspiel* reflects the mourning for the idea of the past. In his (re)reading of Freud, Jacques Lacan¹⁷ writes about the Oedipal nature of the play of Hamlet that comes from the repetition of mourning: it is the phallus which is mourned, as an original lost object (*Das Ding/ La Chose* as a primordial unbearable loss). To be more specific, the mourning is provoked by a hole in the real opened up by a death: in the work of mourning, different images fill the hole in the real caused by the death of someone. Mary's mourning began twenty-five years earlier with the death of her child Eugene, who seems to have the same name as the author of the play, the true and original Eugene O'Neill. Maybe it was Eugene O'Neill's repressed desire and dramatic identification to be the origin of his mother's infinite and repetitive mourning. Since this real loss did not have a proper ritualization, but an insufficient mourning – Mary remained immediately pregnant with another child –, the hole of real came to be filled in by ghosts and fog.

The feminine character, absent and present simultaneously, within her maternal semiotic power and maternal loss, remains the most anguished woman in O'Neill's plays, although she is forever committed to a tragic struggle for happiness. True past and true self are two impossible poles of the happiness in the present. The initial sin – the death of Eugene – caused Mary's real guilt, the abandonment of her family into her foggy interior episodes. Mary blames not only her son Jamie (an actor of 34 years old) for having infected the baby with a fatal case of measles, but also herself in a cycle of existential pain:

It was my fault. I should have insisted on staying with Eugene and not have let you persuade me to join you, just because I loved you. Above all, I shouldn't have let you insist I have another baby to take Eugene's place, because you thought that would make me forget his death. I knew from experience by then that children should have homes to be born in, if they are to be good children, and women need homes, if they are to be good mothers. I was afraid all the time I carried Edmund. I knew something terrible would happen. I knew I'd proved by the way I'd left Eugene that I wasn't worthy to have another baby, and that God would punish me if I did. I never should have borne Edmund.

To put this into a different perspective, the very absent dead – Eugene – embodies the living presence in this Oedipal family, the (hi)story behind the repetitive feminine mourning. The effects of morphine cannot replace the child who had died. Jacques

Lacan writes about a metonymic displacement in the body concerning the couple history – hysteria (fr. *hystérie* – *hystorisation*). The body of the hysterical represents a dream that has to be interpreted because it speaks about the erotical history of the subject. Also, the woman experiences the limit of the complaint by way of the hysterisation of her history. Associating uterus with hysteria, the woman gives herself to the history of another (*s'hystériser* – *s'hystoriser*; *l'hystéreuse*). The hysterisation of history is suspended in the chain of generations, even in the case of Vinnie's disappearance into the Mannon temple (*Mourning Becomes Electra*): the end of the hereditary sin over generations, the end of the feminine transmission, consequently the end of her race:

Alors ceci nous amène à considérer que l'hystérique dont chacun sait qu'il est aussi bien mâle que femelle, l'historique... si je me permets ce glissement, il faut considérer en somme qu'elle n'est... je la féminise pour l'occasion, mais comme vous allez voir que je vais y mettre de l'autre côté mon poids, ça me suffira largement à vous démontrer que je ne pense pas qu'il n'y ait des hystériques que féminines... l'historique n'a en somme – pour la faire consister – qu'un inconscient, c'est la radicalement Autre. Elle n'est même qu'en tant qu'Autre.¹⁸

The Sea-Mother's Son.

Recognition and Atonement

Dreaming, not keeping lookout, feeling alone, and above, and apart, watching the dawn creep like a painted

dream over the sky and sea which slept together. Then the moment of ecstatic freedom came. The peace, the end of the quest, the last harbor, the joy of belonging to a fulfillment beyond men's lousy, pitiful, greedy fears and hopes and dreams! And several other times in my life, when I was swimming far out, or lying alone on a beach, I have had the same experience. Became the sun, the hot sand, green seaweed anchored to a rock, swaying in the tide. Like a saint's vision of beatitude. Like the veil of things as they seem drawn back by an unseen hand. For a second you see – and seeing the secret, are the secret. For a second there is meaning! Then the hand lets the veil fall and you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason! It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish. As it is, I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death!

In *Long Day's Journey into Night* the youngest son and actor Edmund Tyrone, an artist as a young man (born in 1888), perhaps a modern romantic and an atheist, is actually the alter ego/ autobiographical avatar of Eugene O'Neill: he is more "like his mother (...). His mouth has the same quality of hypersensitiveness hers possesses." Edmund ("the reflector"/ Edmund-Eugene) as the image of masculine despair and sufferance embodies Gene's ("the author"/ Eugene-Edmund) necessity for a personal

mourning due to the wound created by his family. Being a witness and an unwanted spectator at the failed private confessions of the members of his family, Gene – a prince of sorrow in a modern *Trauerspiel* – created a tragedy in blood, pity and forgiveness, a psychodrama of poetry or a lyric poem. In a similar manner, Edmund expresses his anger towards his father in “an endless round of guilt-accusation-remorse-forgiveness-and-counterattack”¹⁹, the Shakespearean actor James Tyrone, 65 years old: if he’d spent money for a decent doctor for his mother when she gave birth to him, she’d never have known that morphine existed. He’s named, ironically, “Mama’s baby and Papa’s pet”, “the family White Hope”, “the baby of the family”, although everyone knows that he will eventually die of tuberculosis (as Mary’s father); also, his father James gave him whiskey as medicine when he was a baby and his brother Jamie wishes he were dead. James Tyrone blames his elder son Jamie for having corrupting Edmund and his perception of femininity:

You’ve been the worst influence for him. He grew up admiring you as a hero! A fine example you set him! If you ever gave him advice except in the ways of rottenness, I’ve never heard of it! You made him old before his time, pumping him full of what you consider worldly wisdom, when he was too young to see that your mind was so poisoned by your own failure in life, you wanted to believe every man was a knave with his soul for sale, and every woman who wasn’t a whore was a fool!

Like his mother, Edmund has rotten and blue feelings and he likes long – real or

imaginary – walks in the fog, an ideal and sublime place to hide, where he wants to be for eternity. His hands look like his mother’s, with the same long fingers and with the same mark of extreme nervousness; he is in a very bad and unhealthy shape, with feverish eyes, sunken cheeks and parched skin. “It is in the quality of extreme nervous sensibility that the likeness of Edmund to his mother is most marked.” The mother-son relationship is an organic one, symptomatic for the rationale of the modern tragedy – Mary as a living-dead Antigone, Jamie as a not-so-well-intentioned Lear and Edmund as Hamlet –, although full of guilt, ambivalence and common Irish-Catholic analogies mother – Blessed Virgin.

Edmund’s famous monologue and poetic speech of philosophical influences (Nietzsche, Swinburne, Wilde and Marx) represents not only an epiphany of O’Neill’s presence in his dramatic writing, but also Edmund’s desire to escape from the pain of his existence: he is a stranger in his home and life, a crucial victim always *in love with death*. Always a figure of the past (meaning of what the past has made of him) when everyone was happy, never a figure of the future, the son of a generation condemned to death and dying, anyhow an individual different from the generation of Irish immigrants. Edmund is also the hero of an usurpation: he took the place of the dead baby Eugene and also the place of the *true* and *original* Eugene. In other words, Edmund undeniably longs for death and he mourns nothing else but his own self: “If the other Tyrones continually mourn the death of their lost selves, Edmund wants nothing as much as to lose himself...”²⁰

An anguished instrument for survival, Edmund's fatidic monologue insists on a lost innocence and on repeated experiences which he misses to recapture. Time as enemy is evident in his transcendent monologue by the sea and it is associated with the long (although motionless) and desperate journey into night, with an artistic disease. The real disease – the undiagnosed consumption rather than malaria – and the real journey to the state sanatorium “couldn't have come at a worse time for him” (the words of his father). Despite its idealism, it is the journey without great expectations of a wounded seagull, a ruined “morbid”²¹ poet/ philosopher. Articulating a mystical self-transcendence, Edmund is “a ghost within a ghost”, a sea person dissolved in its liquidness: in the language of the sea full of warnings, contradictions and deaf sounds. The allegory of the seagull evokes at a first

level maritime connotations, but at a deeper sight it stands for a true comprehension of things, the spiritual core of the play. Being unable to create a new and original theatrical form, Treplev, a very Hamletian character in Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1895), commits suicide at the end of the play and takes *ad litteram* his life into his own hands. The seagull – the bird but also the dead character – is connected to the artistic consciousness of the play in an eternal geography of regret at the end of 19th century and it symbolizes its inherent destruction and dissolution. Finally, Edmund's desire to be a seagull translates a language of unforgetfulness (his own language, a newborn soul maybe) in beautiful moments of intimacy with the self and of drinking himself to death (a mortiferous *jouissance*²²), it is thus a reading and an understanding of the tragedy in a time that hasn't come yet.

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NOTES

1. As in the cinematic adaptation of *Long Day's Journey into Night* by Sidney Lumet (with his excellent cinematographer Boris Kaufman) from 1962 (174 mins.) with Katharine Hepburn, Ralph Richardson, Jason Robards and Dean Stockwell. The screenplay was directly used from O'Neill's play. By the end of the film, at a round table, Mary, a woman addicted to morphine, is in the center of masculine accusations (three alcoholic men), in a growing circle of conflicts and desperation.
2. Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer, Eds., *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 159.
3. Gerardine Meaney, "Long Day's Journey into Night: *Modernism, Post Modernism and Maternal Loss*" in *Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night*, ed. and with an Introduction by Harold Bloom, Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009, p. 53-67.
4. The quotations in this paper are from Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, online edition, date first posted January 2004, <https://gutenberg.net.au>.
5. Søren Kierkegaard's concept and book *Repetition* (Dan. *Gentagelsen*, 1843).
6. *Desire Under the Elms*, O'Neill's tragedy from 1924.
7. Stephen A. Black, « "Celebrant of loss": Eugene O'Neill 1888-1953 », in *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*, ed. by Michael Manheim, p. 5.
8. See Laurin Porter, "Long Day's Journey into Night: Descent into Darkness", p. 19-35 in *Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night*, ed. and with an Introduction by Harold Bloom, Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009: "Though at first glance the identification of Mary with prostitutes seems incongruous, biographical facts further substantiate this connection. O'Neill's mother, though actually named Mary Ellen, at age fifteen dropped "Mary" for "Ellen" and after her marriage switched to the name "Ella," which from that time forward she used on all her legal documents, including her will. Although psychiatrists and critics have suggested that by calling her "Mary" in *Long Day's Journey* O'Neill intended to link his mother to the Virgin Mary, stressing symbolically her desire to renounce earthly responsibilities for loftier spiritual concerns, which is likely enough, the name "Mary Ellen" was also a slang expression for an amateur prostitute, a term with which O'Neill was familiar. By using the name Mary, the playwright reminds us that his mother's given name was not Ella, but Mary Ellen."
9. O'Neill's explanations from the stage directions are very accurate and occasionally similar: "The strange detachment in her manner has intensified. She has hidden deeper within herself and found refuge and release in a dream where present reality is but an appearance to be accepted and dismissed unfeelingly – even with a hard cynicism – or entirely ignored. There is at times an uncanny gay, free youthfulness in her manner, as if in spirit she were released to become again, simply and without self-consciousness, the naive, happy, chattering schoolgirl of her convent days."
10. "For Carlotta, on our 12th Wedding Anniversary// Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift, it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play – write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for ALL the four haunted Tyrones.// These twelve years, Beloved One, have been a Journey into Light – into love. You know my gratitude. And my love!// Gene// Tao House//July 22, 1941."
11. See *Infra*.

12. Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering Melancholia. Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 13.
13. Noemina Câmpean, "Long Life's Journey into Truth. Søren Kierkegaard, Eugene O'Neill and the Woman" in *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology*, vol. XI, no. 1, 2021, p. 139.
14. S. Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917 [1915]) in *Complete Works*, online edition, Staferla.free.fr.
15. See the following paragraphs for the couple *history – hysteria*.
16. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama/ Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1925/1928).
17. With reference to his seminars: *Le Séminaire, livre VI: Le Désir et son interprétation* (1958-1959) and *Le Séminaire, livre VII: L'éthique de la psychanalyse* (1959-1960), online editions, staferla.free.fr.
18. J. Lacan, *Séminaire XXIV. L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre* (1976-1977), online edition, Staferla.free.fr, p. 11.
19. Laurin Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
20. Kurt Eisen, "The Spare Room: *Long Day's Journey into Night*" in *Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night*, *op. cit.*, p. 85-113.
21. His father's characterisation.
22. The relation between jouissance and death reveals the sickness and the desire for death – the death drive (Germ. *Todestrieb*, S. Freud), marked by repetition, irreversible collapse, the risk of desubjectivation, of self annihilation (see, for example, Antigone analysed by Lacan in *The Seminar Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*).