

## ABSTRACT

Characters are the agent of enactment and hence, they are considered as the most important ingredient of drama. They give life to the blueprints of playwrights and develop an interaction with their living space. Characters, space, and the audience are the constituent units of modern drama. A play can only be considered a play when its characters interact with their living space. Nowadays, audience is also considered as part of the living space with whom the characters interact during the performance. Tennessee Williams had once said,

“A play in a book is only the shadow of a play and not even clear shadows of it... the printed scripts of a play are hardly more than an architect’s blueprint of a house not yet built or built and destroyed. The color, the grace, and the levitation, the structural pattern in motion, the quick interplay of living beings, these things are the play, not the words on paper, not thoughts and ideas of an author.”(68)

This definition of drama is indicative of the fact that in a performance the interaction and interplay of characters with their living space should be unleashed and most importantly the interaction of the characters with the audience because the audience itself becomes the co-creator. The audience is simultaneously the agent of creation and agent of reception. Audience’s reception of a performance can lead the characters to change and redirect their action. So, a positive interaction between characters and the audience is necessary to achieve the desired results.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore such interaction of Eugene O' Neill's characters with their living space that includes their interaction with the audience, the world outside that they envision through the opening of a window or a door, and their interaction with every object that is present on stage. This interaction does have a psychological and metaphysical impact on the characters. Even the costumes they wear and the books that they possess have a specific purpose. These unleash the mood and the psychological outlook of the characters. A change in costume often tells us about the change of relationship of characters and a change in psychological outlook. The objective of this dissertation is to explore this psychological and metaphysical outlook of the characters in selected plays of O' Neill. My methodology will be the close reading of the texts. The first chapter gives a detailed introduction to the research work. In second chapter O' Neill's use of dramatic space is explored. The third chapter focuses on metaphysical interaction of characters with their space and the fourth chapter entails psychological impact.